Characterization in Ælfric's *Esther*

A Cognitive Stylistic Investigation

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Sy wuldor and lof þam welwillendan Gode,
se þe æfre rixað on ecnysse.

Abstract

This thesis examines characterization in Ælfric's Old English version of the biblical book of Esther, from the perspective of cognitive stylistics. This area of study uses concepts and methods from linguistics in order to better understand both how literature works and how language works. The study investigates explicit characterization cues, discourse presentation, semantic fields, and deixis to illuminate how Ælfric's careful linguistic choices construct characters that remain true to their biblical *exempla*, make sense to his Anglo-Saxon audience, and underscore the doctrinal themes of the narrative.

Chapter 1 describes the textual history of Esther, from its origins to its reception in the early Middle Ages. This is followed by a discussion of the history of Ælfric's version of the story and its treatment by scholars in the modern era. Chapter 2 outlines my methodology, based in cognitive stylistics, which draws on concepts from cognitive science and related fields to understand what happens in the reader's mind during reading. In addition, I occasionally draw on corpus stylistics methods, and this is also described.

The results and discussion of this analysis form the bulk of Chapters 3 through 6. Chapter 3 focuses on explicit cues, those things that directly describe a character's personality traits. Speech, thought, and writing presentation are the focus of Chapter 4, which examines how these modes of discourse are presented and how this presentation contributes to the characterization. In Chapter 5 I examine two semantic fields of particular importance in this text: emotions and food. Finally, Chapter 6 addresses two aspects of deixis: relational deixis and Deictic Shift Theory. Although, in all chapters, the analysis primarily focuses on the five main characters (Ahasuerus, Esther, Vashti, Mordecai, and Haman), other apposite characters are also discussed, including the Jews, the Persians, God, and even Ælfric.

This kind of cognitive stylistic analysis of Old English and other historical literature is doubly useful. First, it offers new and valuable insights into this literature. The present study, for example, notes minute linguistic details that offer significant characterization cues and also explains the peculiar sense of many Anglo-Saxonists (and other historians) that they know very well people whom they have never met.

Second, such examination demonstrates that the chosen methods are robust enough to cope with literature much older than that normally engaged in modern stylistic studies. This not only verifies the utility of the methods, but also attests to the universal nature of their underlying principles.

Table of Contents

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Abbreviations

AB7	Carey A. Moore, *Esther*, The Anchor Bible, 7 (Garden City, NY: Anchor-Doubleday, 1971)
AT	A-Text of the book of Esther, also known as the Lucianic recension
BT	Joseph Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Online*, ed. by T. Northcote Toller and others, compiled by Sean Christ and Ondrej Tichý (Prague: Charles University, 2010) <www.bosworthtoller.com>
CASD	J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 4th edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960)
CH	Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*
DOE	*Dictionary of Old English: A to H Online*, ed. by Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey, and others (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2016) <http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doe/dict/index.html>
DRV	Douay-Rheims Version of the Bible, Challoner revision
KJV	King James Version of the Bible
LS	Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*
LXX	Septuagint
MHRA	Modern Humanities Research Association
MS	manuscript
MT	Masoretic Text
OE	Old English
OEC	*Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, compiled by Antonette diPaolo Healey with John Price Wilkin and Xin Xiang (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2009) <http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doecorpus/>
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) <www.oed.com>
OL	Old Latin
PDE	Present Day English
TOE	*A Thesaurus of Old English* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow) <http://oldenglishthesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/>

YCOE   York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose,
                <http://www-users.york.ac.uk/~lang22/YCOE/
                YcoeHome.htm>

Sigla for the Old Latin Manuscripts of Esther

R   OL text attested in MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, lat.
                11549 and others

J   OL text attested in MS Lyon, Bibliothèque de la Ville 430 (356)

F   OL text attested in MS Madrid, Biblioteca de la Universidad
                Complutense 31

Introduction

In the fifth century BC, an obscure orphan girl married the most powerful monarch the world had yet seen and then risked her own life in order to save her people.

Such is the premise of the biblical book of Esther.[1] Regardless of whether we accept her story as factual, it undeniably holds inherent human interest. Esther's story is filled with intrigue, rivalry, courage, and treachery. Centuries later, she is still honored among Jews and Christians, who see in her an example of how to live a virtuous life even while living amongst an unbelieving people. Her victorious intervention is commemorated annually during the Jewish festival of Purim, a much-loved and much-celebrated time.

Even non-religious readers of Esther's story find something to interest them. For some, it is a romance, in which the unknown but beautiful girl marries far above her station and finds that she is truly loved and valued. For others, it is a thriller, filled with plots for assassination, genocide, and personal vengeance—all of which are foiled when the savvy protagonists outwit their opponents. For still others, it is an example of feminism in the ancient world, featuring one woman (Vashti) who is willing to defy her husband's command to protect her own dignity and free will, and another (Esther) who risks his wrath in order to save the lives of others.

Of course, not all readers are so enamored of Esther. Some see in the story indefensible masculine domination over women, feminine manipulation through food and sexuality, or insubordination motivated by petty personal grievances. For some it is a godless tale of power plays and immorality, only made palatable by the underdog

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[1] In accordance with MHRA guidelines, references to the biblical book are set in roman type (no italics). In contrast, references to Ælfric's Old English version are italicized, as is traditional for works in this language.

narrative, in which the powerless ultimately triumph over the powerful—but at too great a cost.

Regardless of any individual reader's interpretation, the story undoubtedly inspires strong reactions.

The text itself is a complex one, employing multiple rhetorical devices to increase its aesthetic appeal—including exaggeration, irony, parallelism, duality, and chiasmus. It employs Persian language, adding to the exotic appeal of the narrative, which is set in a foreign land (one which would have been foreign to most readers even when it was composed).[2] It hints at long-standing tribal feuds between members of the Persian court, which add fuel to the personal feud that drives the plot. Add to all this the complicated textual history, which constitutes a puzzle so complex that modern scholars cannot fully untangle the questions of when or where it was composed, in which language it was composed, or whether it was based on historical fact, and the text becomes one of not just emotional interest, but deep intellectual interest as well.

Around the turn of the eleventh century AD, the Anglo-Saxon monk and scholar Ælfric of Eynsham composed a summary version of the story in Old English. Like its biblical counterpart, Ælfric's text is filled with both textual and historical complexity. It is extant only in one manuscript, a transcription made in the seventeenth century by William L'Isle (who, like Ælfric, was both a cleric and a scholar), but the original Anglo-Saxon source material is now lost. It is thus shrouded in mystery, with little indication of Ælfric's reasons for composing it, nor of his intended audience. A great deal of confusion persists concerning his source material, as well, for while he certainly based his text on the biblical book of Esther, it is unclear whether he was working from the Vulgate or the Old Latin translations, whether the Carolingian commentators influenced him, or whether he was working from a specific exemplar (or exemplars) or merely from his own memory.

What is certain, though, is that Ælfric had a deep and thorough understanding of the book of Esther—its textual structure, literary themes, and religious messages— and that he carefully composed his version so as to guide his audience's perceptions. Always a meticulous scholar, Ælfric manages to summarize the story of Esther in a way that both adheres closely to his source(s)[3] and re-works it into a story that reflects the Anglo-Saxon society of which he was part.

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[2] See Chapter 1, 'Date and Location of Composition'.

[3] Although some have argued that Ælfric's text differs significantly from his source, these arguments usually assume that he was working from a Vulgate text. See Chapter 1, 'Ælfric's Version', for further discussion.

This thesis examines Ælfric's Old English version of Esther from the perspective of modern stylistics. This area of study uses concepts and methods from linguistics in order to better understand both how literature works and how language works. (For this reason, it is also known as 'literary linguistics', and I use this term synonymously with 'stylistics'.) While it is always a risky proposition to apply modern methodologies to texts composed in another time period, I believe that stylistics has much to offer the study of Old English literature. Because the discipline is based in linguistics, which seeks to understand human language broadly and universally, the concepts that have emerged in stylistics should apply equally to any literature, regardless of the time or place of composition. At the same time, applying these principles to a temporally distant literature (like that of the Anglo-Saxons) has the potential to refine those principles and deepen our understanding of human language and its development over time.

I have chosen to focus this investigation specifically on the aspect of characterization. There are two reasons for this, one practical and one personal. First, from a practical standpoint, it is necessary to limit the scope of the present study. Even with a relatively short text like this one (roughly 2,500 words), stylistic methods can become quite involved, and limiting the scope of analysis to one particular aspect of the narrative makes it easier to deal with, both for the researcher and the reader.

Second, from a personal standpoint, I am particularly intrigued with the question of how readers construct mental models of the characters they encounter in fictional narratives. This interest is heightened by the history of character studies in traditional literary criticism, which has often been dominated by one or two strong voices, including those that have denigrated character to such an extent that it has been almost entirely ignored for decades at a time.[4] However, although scholars may argue that characters do not exist—being merely a mental trick based on the words on a page—and therefore ought not to be studied as though they did exist, both scholarly and non-scholarly readers alike continue to conceive of characters as though they were real people. While I agree that scholars ought not attempt psychological analysis or the construction of characters' past or future lives in the story-world they inhabit,

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[4] Weinsheimer, for example, took the extreme position of referring to Emma Woodhouse (from Jane Austen's *Emma*) as 'it', driving home the structuralist point that characters are nothing more than textual constructs and should not be studied as though they were real people; see Joel Weinsheimer, 'Theory of Character: Emma', *Poetics Today*, 1 (1979), 185–211. This position—a reaction to the psychologist view that had become prevalent in the early twentieth century—dominated the discussion of character within literary studies for some time, to the point that the subject was rarely treated by literary critics during the late twentieth century. A similar view is expounded in Algirdas Julien Greimas, *Sémantique Structurale* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1966).

the fact remains that readers of fictional texts do these things regularly, whether in written form (e.g., fanfic, sequels, prequels, etc.) or in friendly conversation (when leaving the cinema, for example). Character may be an illusion—but it is this very illusion that I find so intriguing.

With this thesis, therefore, I have set out to examine the language of Ælfric's *Esther* and how it contributes to readers' mental models of the characters in the text. In so doing, I hope to illuminate not only how modern readers of the text might understand these characters, but also how an Anglo-Saxon audience might have.

SYNOPSIS OF ÆLFRIC'S *ESTHER*

Ælfric's *Esther* might best be thought of as a summary of the biblical book and frequently omits scenes that appear in the Latin versions. I will therefore provide a synopsis of Ælfric's version to aid in my analysis of characterization in the text, followed by an outline for a more succinct overview. The story can be viewed either as a standard five-act narrative, or as a three-act narrative with prologue and epilogue; the latter is my preference, though the distinction is rather immaterial.

The text begins by introducing Ahasuerus as a powerful king in an earlier time, reigning over 127 provinces. He orders an enormous feast to be held for all his nobles, in order to display his power and wealth. At the same time, his beautiful wife, Vashti, holds a feast for the women of the court. Ahasuerus summons Vashti to appear before him, desiring to display her as well, but she spurns his command. As a result, she is deposed and a decree is made to search for a new queen to fill her place.

Mordecai is now introduced as a pious Jew living in the city of Susa (the capital city of Persia), along with Esther, his brother's daughter whom he has adopted, since both her parents are dead. When Esther is presented to the king as a potential bride, he immediately decides to marry her, and their wedding is celebrated. Esther, however, is not to reveal her Jewish heritage for Mordecai's sake. Shortly thereafter, Mordecai overhears two royal chamberlains plotting to assassinate the king; he relays this information to Esther, and she to the king. The plot is foiled and Mordecai's good service is recorded in the Persian chronicle.

Haman is next introduced. A member of the king's court, he has been promoted to second-in-command of the kingdom, and the king has commanded that all are to do obeisance to him, as they would to Ahasuerus himself. However, Mordecai refuses (on religious grounds) to obey this command, thus enraging Haman, who decides to wreak revenge not just on Mordecai but on all the Jews of Persia. Having gained the king's sanction to do as he pleases about the matter, Haman plans to have all the Jews

slaughtered on the same day. Mordecai mourns for his people's fate and sends a message to Esther, requesting that she use her influence to stop the slaughter. Esther responds by asking that all the Jews fast for three days, promising to do likewise, at the end of which she presents herself to Ahasuerus, despite the fact that he has not summoned her. Ahasuerus, pleased to see her, asks what she wants and offers to give her anything, even up to half of his kingdom. However, Esther merely requests that Ahasuerus and Haman join her for a feast she will give at a later date. Ahasuerus immediately summons Haman and commands him to obey the queen in this request; upon returning to his own chambers, Haman again encounters Mordecai, is outraged by his continuing refusal to bow to him, and determines to build a gallows on which to hang his nemesis.

Later, Ahasuerus is unable to sleep and has the chronicle read aloud to him; as a result, he is reminded of Mordecai's warning about the planned assassination, as well as of the fact that this loyalty was never rewarded. The following morning, Haman comes to see the king, hoping to gain permission to have Mordecai hanged. Before he can state his business, however, Ahasuerus asks Haman to advise him concerning how to honor someone who has earned his good favor. Thinking that the king intends to celebrate Haman himself, he suggests the most magnificent tributes he can conceive of: having the king's own robe and crown set upon the honoree, the honoree then set upon the king's own horse, and the horse and rider led throughout the city with a herald to proclaim his worth. Ahasuerus then commands Haman to conduct this very celebration for Mordecai. Haman does so and then returns to the palace, in an unhappy mood, to attend Esther's feast.

At the feast, the king is very happy with his wife and again asks her what she desires from him. Esther pleads for her own life and those of her people, explaining that they are doomed to be destroyed. Shocked, the king asks who would dare plot such a thing; Esther reveals Haman as the enemy of the Jews, at the same time revealing her own Jewish heritage and her relationship to Mordecai. Incensed, the king goes out to his orchard to compose himself, but when he returns moments later, he finds Haman lying at the queen's feet to plead for mercy. Angry at Haman's physical nearness to the queen, Ahasuerus has the man bound and blindfolded while he decides what to do with him; when one of the servants mentions that Haman had a gallows built for Mordecai, Ahasuerus unhesitatingly orders that Haman be hanged on it. He then returns to Esther, who tearfully falls at his feet and asks him to help her and her people. Ahasuerus agrees to let Esther and Mordecai—to whom he now gives the goods and honors that were previously Haman's—to issue a new edict,

countermanding Haman's earlier one, effectively saving the Jews of the kingdom from annihilation.

In the final lines, Ælfric sums up the fates of Mordecai, Esther, the Jews of Persia, Haman, and Ahasuerus. The text ends with a formulaic closing, typical of Ælfric's homilies, in praise of God.

The main characters, as is evident from this synopsis, are Ahasuerus, Esther, Vashti, Mordecai, and Haman. In most chapters, I focus on these five characters and how Ælfric's language characterizes them, though additional characters—including God, the Jews of Persia, the wicked chamberlains, and even Ælfric himself—are occasionally also discussed. For the sake of consistency, I normally organize the discussion in the order given at the beginning of this paragraph. Ahasuerus and Esther are paired, with Vashti as an appendage to their story—her only function, as far as the plot goes, is to explain why Esther, an obscure Jewish woman, has come to be in such a powerful position. Mordecai and Haman are likewise paired, as their enmity drives the central plot.

OUTLINE OF ÆLFRIC'S *ESTHER*

I. Prologue
    A. Ahasuerus and the Persian setting are introduced
    B. Ahasuerus and Vashti give royal feasts
    C. Vashti's disgrace
    D. decree to search for a new queen
II. Setup
    A. Mordecai and Esther are introduced
    B. Esther is chosen and marries Ahasuerus
    C. Mordecai foils the plot of the wicked chamberlains
III. Conflict
    A. Haman and his enmity with Mordecai are introduced
    B. Haman plots against the Jews
    C. Mordecai and Esther mourn and seek help
        1. Mordecai mourns and goes to Esther
        2. Esther fasts and goes to Ahasuerus
        3. Ahasuerus offers her anything, but she only invites him and Haman to a feast
        4. Haman plots against Mordecai
    D. Mordecai is honored by Ahasuerus, through Haman

      1.   Ahasuerus, unable to sleep, is reminded that Mordecai has not been rewarded

      2.   Haman believes the king plans to honor him

      3.   Haman is made to honor Mordecai

    4.   Resolution

      E.   final feast, given by Esther

      F.   Haman's treachery is revealed

      G.   Haman is executed

      H.   the Jews are saved through the efforts of Esther and Mordecai

IV.   Epilogue

      A.   fates of Mordecai, Esther, the Jews, Haman, and Ahasuerus

      B.   formulaic closing

HOW DOES ÆLFRIC'S *ESTHER* DIFFER FROM THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT?

Since my analysis draws comparisons, at times, between Ælfric's version and the biblical version(s) of the Esther story, it will be necessary for the reader of the thesis to know something of the biblical account. For reasons of brevity, I will not include here a synopsis of the biblical version. Those wishing to read one are referred to one of the many excellent synopses already available in the scholarly literature; in particular, Levenson provides a lively summary with a useful level of detail,[5] and Moore's résumé, while more somber in tone, is likewise helpful.[6] However, I will briefly explain in this section some of the most significant differences between Ælfric's version and the biblical account, as these frequently come up during my analysis. These include the excision of duplicate language, the compression of time, the general omission of sexuality and violence, and Ahasuerus's conversion.

Perhaps the most noticeable difference is the compression of time (within the narrative) and space (in the text length). Ælfric's version consists of 2,316 words, whereas the Vulgate account is roughly twice as long. Of necessity, then, many passages and scenes have been shortened or altogether omitted in Ælfric's text. These cuts seem to be motivated primarily by a desire to present the narrative as succinctly as possible, since they often involve events or phrases that are repeated in the biblical

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[5] Jon D. Levenson, *Esther: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), pp. 1–4.

[6] AB7, pp. xvi–xx.

account.[7] For example, the Vulgate account includes ten distinct feasts, whereas Ælfric's version only includes three. Among the omitted feasts is one given by Esther. In the biblical account, when Esther first approaches the king in order to save her people, she invites him and Haman to a feast. During that feast, when the king again asks her what she wants, she invites them both to a second feast. This second feast is when she reveals her Jewish heritage, the plight of her people, and Haman's treachery. The first feast serves no clear narrative purpose and it is therefore unsurprising that Ælfric omits this one from his account; instead, Esther hosts only one feast, and it is here where she makes her climactic revelations. The biblical version makes extensive use of duplication and mirroring, and such events, phrases, and words are often cut down to one in Ælfric's version. These occur throughout the OE text and are too numerous to list individually. In a similar way, many details from the biblical account are omitted in Ælfric's text, including the number and names of Haman's sons (Esther 9. 6–10); the character of Zeresh, Haman's wife (Esther 6. 12–14); and the names of Ahasuerus's chamberlains and princes, who become *witena* 'counselors' in Ælfric's version (Esther 1. 10 and sentence 14, respectively).

Somewhat similarly, the passage of time seems to be compressed in Ælfric's version, so that events that take place over several days or even months in the biblical version seem to take only moments or days in Ælfric's. In the biblical account, for instance, when Esther is first brought to the palace as a potential bride for the king, she is admitted into the 'custody of Hegai, keeper of the women'[8] and subjected to a year-long ritual purification before being presented to the king (Esther 2. 12–14). Ælfric, however, makes no mention of this cleansing process or the passage of time, so that it seems that Esther is brought to the palace, presented to the king, and immediately betrothed to him, all in one day (sentences 17–21). Similar compression of time takes place during the initial feast given by Ahasuerus, as well as in the narrative of courtly rivalry between Mordecai and Haman.

When Esther is brought to the palace, in fact, the biblical version describes her living with a harem-like group of women, all of whom undergo the year-long ritual purification, and each of whom is presented to the king, in turn, each spending one night with him, before he chooses one as his bride (Esther 2. 12–14). The sexual implication is clear, though never overt. Such sexuality seems to have been

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[7] See Timothy Alan Gustafson, 'Ælfric Reads Esther: The Cultural Limits of Translation' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Iowa, 1995), p. 234.

[8] Esther 2. 8 (KJV).

problematic for Ælfric,[9] who entirely omits this passage, relying on such innocuous words as *sceawian* 'to look at, examine' to describe the king's selection process. The other women are mentioned, but only briefly and in a grammatically subordinated clause (sentence 17), so that their existence may be easily overlooked.

Violence, likewise, is largely excised from Ælfric's version, in particular the episode of Jewish retribution at the end of the story. In the Vulgate account, Haman's planned extermination of the Jews in the Persian empire cannot simply be reversed, since it has been enacted as a law, which—according to Persian law—cannot be reversed (Esther 8. 8). In order, then, to save the Jews from Haman's plotting, Ahasuerus issues a second decree allowing them to defend themselves against their enemies (Esther 8. 13). On the thirteenth of Adar, the day of the planned pogrom, the Jews take up arms and kill a great many Persians in self-defense (Esther 9. 1–16).[10] This episode has been problematic for many audiences over the years, Jewish and Christian alike, and Ælfric's omission has been much commented on. Some scholars have used this omission as the basis for their interpretation, viewing it as indicative of Ælfric's general dislike for violence; others, however, have pointed out that Ælfric seems to have no problem portraying violence in other Old Testament narratives.[11] However, the episode is likewise omitted from the Old Latin versions of Esther, and it is difficult to state with any certainty what motivated its omission in Ælfric's version. Certainly it is possible that he intentionally omitted it for some doctrinal or interpretative reason; however, he may also have been working from copies of the biblical account that omitted it. Since it does not exist in his version, it plays very little into my analysis of characterization, though I do refer to the episode at a few points.

Another significant change in Ælfric's version is his statement of Ahasuerus's righteousness, which comes during the epilogue. This is read by some as Ælfric's insistence that the king was converted to the true God, though this is not explicit. Nonetheless, it is a major departure from the biblical versions of the narrative, which nowhere suggest that Ahasuerus worshipped the Persian gods, let alone the monotheistic God of Abraham and Moses who prevails in Ælfric's version. Clearly,

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[9] Who, indeed, may not have been familiar with the concept of a 'harem', though he would certainly have understood the sexual implication of the biblical account.

[10] The numbers reported (300 in the city of Shushan, 500 in the palace of Shushan, and 75,000 in the provinces) are likely exaggerations; see Chapter 1, 'Problems and Canonicity', for further information.

[11] See Stewart Brookes, 'Ælfric's Adaptation of the Book of Esther: A Source of Some Confusion', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique & Medieval Studies, 2000), pp. 37–62 (p. 52). See Chapter 1, 'Recent Scholarship on Ælfric's *Esther*' for further discussion.

such an implication has great impact on Ahasuerus's characterization, and the king's 'conversion' is discussed at several points in the thesis.

Two further differences will be mentioned during my analysis: the ritual of sackcloth and ashes, and the execution of Haman's ten sons. The first appears in the biblical account when Mordecai bewails Haman's intention to slaughter the Persian Jews (Esther 4. 1–3).[12] It is a reference to the Jewish mourning ritual, in which the mourner wore coarse sackcloth as clothing and sat in ashes, also pouring them on the head, as a sign of humility and contrition. The tradition is frequently mentioned in both the Old and New Testaments,[13] though not specifically described in the Mosaic laws as given in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. While Ælfric certainly knew of this ritual, he does not mention it in his version of Esther. This seems to stem from a general aversion to talking in detail about Jewish practices, except where they could be used to stress the idea of continuity between Judaism and Christianity, between Old Testament and New.[14] The second occurs during the final scenes of the biblical account: as the Jews defend themselves against the Persians, Haman's ten sons are among those killed (Esther 9. 6–10). In Ælfric's version, however, the order for this execution is given by Ahasuerus, immediately following the final feast scene and the revelation of Haman's treachery (sentence 62). This is but one example—which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter 3—of the masterful and commanding character of Ælfric's Ahasuerus, an idea to which I return throughout my analysis.

GENERAL NOTES

For the sake of clarity and consistency in the thesis, I now pause to give some general notes about textual sources, terminology, and other such matters.

All references to the OE version of *Esther* are to the edition published online by Stuart Lee.[15] The full text of Lee's edition can be found in the Appendix, together with my own translation into Present Day English (PDE). For ease of reference,

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[12] Note that verse 3 mentions the Jews in the outlying provinces also practicing this ritual.

[13] E.g., Genesis 37. 34; Isaiah 37. 1; Lamentations 2. 10; Daniel 9. 3; Jonah 3. 5–7, 10; Matthew 11. 21; Revelation 11. 3.

[14] See, for instance, his piece in *LS* for Ash Wednesday, in which he describes the ritual of sackcloth and ashes in order to exhort his audience to fast during Lent, as both are outward signs of inner penitence; *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, 2 vols, Early English Text Society 76 and 94 & 114 (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1881–1885), I (1881), pp. 260–282 (esp. ll. 33–40). Special thanks to Stewart Brookes for bringing this passage to my attention.

[15] 'Esther', in *Ælfric's Homilies on Judith, Esther, and the Maccabees*, ed. by Stuart D. Lee (Oxford, 1999) <users.ox.ac.uk/~stuart/kings/> [accessed 28 December 2017].

portions of the text have been numbered, and these numbers will be used throughout the thesis as the text is cited. For lack of a better term, I refer to these numbered portions as 'sentences', although they do not always correspond to PDE or OE sentences. At several points, I reproduce portions of the text in the body of the thesis; in such instances, emphatic typography (i.e., bold type, italics, or underlining) is always my own, not found in the original text.

I have additionally found it useful to check the Latin versions of Esther to assist in my analysis. Any references to the Vulgate text are to the *Biblia Sacra Vulgata*,[16] while references to the Old Latin (OL) versions are to the excellent edition by Jean-Claude Haelewyck, recently published through the efforts of the Vetus Latina Institute in Beuron.[17] Haelewyck's edition represents an exciting development for Esther scholars, as it includes both line-by-line comparison of the extant OL texts of Esther and a detailed and useful editorial apparatus, which far exceeds the utility of the Sabatier edition, originally published in the eighteenth century, which has been for many years the standard reference for those wishing to consult the OL biblical texts. In consulting Haelewyck's edition, I sometimes refer to the versions that are represented there, using the same sigla as Haelewyck; these can be found in the list of Abbreviations at the front of this thesis. In all cases, when citing a specific verse or passage in Esther, I use the MHRA convention of referring to chapter and verse with Arabic numerals, separated by a full stop, thus: 4. 14. Additionally, all translations into PDE—whether from Latin or from OE—unless otherwise noted, are my own.

I frequently consult the standard dictionaries of OE throughout this study. The Toronto-based *Dictionary of Old English* (*DOE*) is always preferred, as being the most recent effort (therefore incorporating a good deal of linguistic and lexicographical research that has been produced over the last century or so of Anglo-Saxon studies), as well as the most thorough and rigorous in its approach. However, as only the first nine fascicles have so far been published (A though H, including *Æ*), its utility is limited. When necessary, therefore, both Bosworth-Toller (BT) and Clark Hall (*CASD*) have been consulted, usually together. Full bibliographic information for all of these can be found in the Bibliography, as well as in the Abbreviations list at the front of the thesis. In addition, I occasionally consult the *Oxford Dictionary of English Online* (*OED*) for information regarding PDE words; the full bibliographic information for this resource can likewise be found in both the list of Abbreviations and in the Bibliography.

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[16] *Biblia Sacra: iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, ed. by Robert Weber, 4th edn (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1984).

[17] *Hester*, ed. by Jean-Claude Haelewyck, Vetus Latina vol. 7/3 (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2008).

As my analysis is largely about the effect of the language on those who read or hear it, I frequently refer to this group. As I explain in Chapter 1, while it is unclear just what purpose Ælfric had in mind when he composed this version of Esther, it is reasonably likely that he meant it to be used as a homily, which would have been read aloud in religious gatherings. Of course, since it is also in written form, the text would also have been read, and this form of reception continues to the present day. Thus, the text may have been received by listeners and is still received by readers. I will signal this mixed reception mode by referring to the 'audience', which should be taken as referring to someone receiving the text in any mode. I will also, at times, refer to the reader(s) of this thesis, and this will always be indicated with the term 'reader'. This distinction will, hopefully, minimize confusion as to whether I am referring to the reader of Ælfric's *Esther* or of the thesis in hand.

Finally, the discussion of characterization is always fraught with some difficulty in terminology, since the word 'character' has a number of possible meanings. Most notably, it can refer to the qualities distinctive to an individual, someone's personality—as in, 'It is out of character for Clark to run away from a fight.'—and also to the individual 'people' in a narrative text—as in, 'The play is full of flawed but redeemable characters.' I will normally use 'character' to mean the latter of these and 'personality', 'disposition', or 'traits' to mean the former. Additionally, by 'characterization' I always mean the process of creating and interpreting the personality of characters in the text—a complex process, which will be described in more detail in Chapter 2.

OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

In Chapter 1, I describe the textual history of Esther, from its origins to its reception by Christian and Jewish communities in the first centuries AD and its subsequent history in late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. The text has a complicated history, both in terms of its origin and of its reception by these religious communities, largely because of problems relating to its historical authenticity (or lack thereof), its close association with the Jewish festival of Purim, and the lack of overt references to God and religious practice. I consider each of these, along with the re-emergence of the text in Christian communities of the early Middle Ages, beginning with the Carolingian period and then moving into Anglo-Saxon England. From there, I discuss the history of Ælfric's version of Esther, including what information we have about its origins and preservation, as well as its treatment by scholars in the modern era.

I describe, in Chapter 2, my methodology for the present study, which is based in the tradition of stylistics. Cognitive stylistics, one strand of the discipline, attempts to understand what happens in the reader's and/or the author's mind while reading or composing the text, and draws on developments in cognitive science and related fields (such as psychology and computer science) in order to do so. In particular, my approach draws on concepts such as theory of mind and attribution theory as ways of understanding how humans attribute traits and personalities to other beings—both human and non-human—and applies these to the question of how readers attribute such traits and personalities to characters in a narrative text. In addition, I occasionally draw on corpus stylistics methods, as an additional piece of evidence to support my arguments. Corpus stylistics relies on (especially computer-based) methods of corpus linguistics to draw conclusions about the language of literature. This approach is likewise described, along with my specific methods for creating a small corpus from Ælfric's *Esther* and others of his writings, and the types of information I draw on from this corpus.

Explicit cues, which are discussed in Chapter 3, include things that characters say about themselves and one another, as well as things that the narrator says about them. As I argue, explicit cues primarily include noun phases, adjectives, and (to a lesser extent), adverbs. The explicit cues in Ælfric's *Esther* nicely set up the characters for their primary characterizations: Ahasuerus, the powerful king; Esther, the supplicant; Vashti, the disobedient wife; Mordecai, the pious exemplar; and Haman, the villain. In addition, I address explicit characterization cues for some minor characters (namely, the wicked chamberlains, the Persian people, and the Jewish people). Finally, I examine explicit characterization of God. This is a significant topic for the book of Esther, which was (and still is) often viewed as problematic by religious communities because of a lack of overt references to God in the biblical text. This is one way in which Ælfric's text differs significantly from the Vulgate, and God is therefore discussed as a separate character.

I focus on discourse in Chapter 4, examining how characters' speeches are presented—whether Direct, Indirect, or in other ways—and how this presentation contributes to the characterization. In general, characters with greater authority are more likely to speak in Direct Speech, while Indirect Speech is more common for characters with lesser authority. In addition, I discuss instances of Free Direct and Free Indirect Speech that occur; while these are often thought of being peculiar to narratives in the tradition of the modern novel, which emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, they are by no means absent from earlier narratives, and in Ælfric's *Esther* they have interesting effects for the characterization. In addition, I

address thought and writing presentation, which—although they occur less frequently than speech—likewise provide strong cues for certain characters.

In Chapter 5 I examine two semantic fields of particular importance in this text, namely emotions and food-words. Emotions are carefully presented in Ælfric's *Esther*, in order to engender the audience's sympathy with some characters and their antagonism toward others. They also subtly emphasize Ælfric's teachings about righteous Christian living, drawing attention to the undesirability of strong emotions, with the exception of those that are divinely inspired. At the same time, feasting is a frequent activity in the text, and the related activities of drinking and fasting are likewise significant. I demonstrate that Ælfric's use of words relating to these activities contributes to the characterization of the main characters and—as with emotion-words—helps to emphasize his own position regarding proper use of food and drink.

Finally, I focus in Chapter 6 on deixis, those words that situate the speaker in time and place, as well as in other contexts. Indeed, these other contexts are the focus of my analysis, which addresses relational deixis—words that situate the characters in their social and personal relationships to one another—and how these contribute to characterization. Royal words and words indicating social status are particularly salient here, as are words that mark out the marriage relationship of Ahasuerus and Esther. In the latter half of this chapter, I explore Deictic Shift Theory, which originally developed in the mid-1990s as a way of understanding how human cognition processes deictic words in a fictional context. This theory posits that certain linguistic cues indicate to the reader a shift from one level of the narrative structure to another. In Ælfric's *Esther*, some of these shifts allow us to glimpse Ælfric, the real-world author–translator of the text, and to characterize him accordingly.

As each chapter employs a different method of stylistic analysis, I begin each with a sort of mini-literature review, explaining the concepts at play and their use in stylistic explorations to this point. Having done this, I then apply the concepts to Ælfric's *Esther*, presenting my results and analysis—usually together, though in Chapter 5, the results are presented first, without analysis, and the relevance of the findings to characterization are discussed afterward.

CONCLUSION

My primary aim in this study is to demonstrate the relevance of modern literary linguistics to the study of Old English literature. The discipline of literary linguistics has gained both momentum and a great deal of sophistication since its emergence in the mid-twentieth century. Nevertheless, it remains largely unexplored—even

unknown—by Anglo-Saxon scholars. The present study, which brings these disciplines together, establishes the utility of literary linguistics in investigating the literature of this period, demonstrating at the same time a general unity of literary techniques and human cognition from the early medieval period, through the Early Modern period, to the present day. In other words, though the English in use during each period may look, on its surface, quite different from those in other periods, there is in fact a significant commonality between all of them—partly due to their linguistic relationship, and partly to the universality of the principles underlying modern linguistic and stylistic inquiry.

The Textual History of Esther to Ælfric

The biblical story of Esther has a long and complex history, among both Christian and Jewish religious communities. This chapter examines this history, from the earliest extant ancient versions up until the eleventh century and Ælfric's Old English translation. I consider questions of the book's date and location of composition and its canonical acceptance in both Christian and Jewish communities—including the problems surrounding religion and historicity, which have greatly affected its canonical status. I then describe its reception by the patristic writers of the early Christian period, as well as by the Carolingians. Having brought the discussion to this point, I then discuss Ælfric's version of the text in his vernacular language, describing likewise its manuscript history and its publication and treatment by scholars in the modern era.

ANCIENT VERSIONS

Three distinct ancient versions of the Esther story are extant: the Masoretic Text (MT), the Septuagint (LXX, sometimes known as the B-Text), and the A-Text (AT). The MT was composed in Hebrew, its primary purpose to provide the history and justification for the popular Jewish festival of Purim. The LXX and the AT are both in Greek, and both also contain extensive passages not found in the MT, now called the 'Additions'. The presence of the Additions in both versions led early scholars to regard the AT as a recension of the LXX.[1] However, in the mid-twentieth century,

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[1] Pierre de Lagarde believed that this was the Lucianic recension of Esther, as spoken of by Jerome, and referred to it as such when he published it in 1883; because of this association, the AT is sometimes still designated as L. See Carey A. Moore, 'A Greek Witness to a Different Hebrew Text of Esther', *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 79 (1967), 351–58 (p. 351); also Gillis Gerleman, *Biblischer Kommentar: Esther* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener-Verlag, 1973), p. 38.

Moore[2] and Cook[3] noted the significant differences in the non-Addition portions of the AT and LXX, and their work has led to the now widely-accepted belief that the AT was in fact a separate translation from the LXX.[4] The Additions are clearly shared between the two texts—they are almost identical to one another, while the remaining portions show frequent variation, both lexical and syntactic.[5]

The Additions comprise six passages, usually labeled A through F, and varying greatly in their content and style. Most modern scholars believe that they were composed by different authors at different times before finally being merged into the Greek versions of the story. Additions A, C, D, and F are 'sufficiently simple in style' to have been composed in Hebrew, but B and E are highly rhetorical and appear to have been originally written in Greek.[6] The final merging of the Additions into the LXX and AT certainly occurred before AD 93–94, when Josephus paraphrases from them in his *Antiquities of the Jews*.[7] The contents of the Additions are, briefly, as follows:

A. a dream of Mordecai
B. the first letter of the king, issued by Haman and calling for the pogrom against the Jews
C. the prayers of Mordecai and Esther before her unsummoned appearance before the king
D. Esther's appearance before the king, in considerable detail
E. the second letter of the king, issued by Mordecai and authorizing the Jews to defend themselves against their enemies
F. the interpretation of Mordecai's dream

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[2] Moore, 'A Greek Witness'.

[3] Herbert J. Cook, 'The *A* Text of the Greek Versions of the Book of Esther', *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 81 (1969), 369–76.

[4] Charles C. Torrey had earlier suggested that the AT was representative of a different tradition from either MT or LXX, but provided little evidence for this, instead offering it as a possible reason for the stylistic differences he noted between the versions; 'The Older Book of Esther', *Harvard Theological Review*, 37 (1944), 1–40.

[5] On the shared Additions, see Carey A. Moore, *Daniel, Esther, and Jeremiah: The Additions* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), p. 165 (hereafter cited as Moore, *Additions*). Also Cook, p. 376; and Jean-Claude Haelewyck, 'The Relevance of the Old Latin Version for the Septuagint, with Special Emphasis on the Book of Esther', *Journal of Theological Studies*, 57 (October 2006), 439–73 (p. 473).

[6] AB7, pp. lxiii–lxiv.

[7] See AB7, p. xxiii.

DATE AND LOCATION OF COMPOSITION

The precise dating of the original composition of the Esther story is difficult to ascertain, but it is fairly certain that it was composed in a Semitic language sometime between 400 BC and 114 BC.[8] The earlier date falls toward the end of the Persian Empire, while the later is in the Hellenistic period.

Evidence supporting an earlier date is both internal and external. Internal evidence includes the details of Persian court life and lack of Greek words; external evidence includes the reign of Xerxes I (519–465 BC)[9] and the dating of comparable books of the Bible such as Daniel, Ecclesiastes, and Chronicles.[10] In addition, Gerleman sees certain narrative elements as supporting an earlier date of composition: Persians and Jews generally get along in the story, he says, and this would be quite surprising in a text composed in the Hellenistic age, given the extreme racial tensions that Jews of that period experienced.[11] He further notes the lack of an explicit Persian setting in the introductory verse, which relies instead on the reader's presumed knowledge of Persian history, so that when the story is introduced as taking place during the reign of Ahasuerus, the setting immediately becomes clear; such a technique would be unlikely, he feels, for a Palestinian Jew writing several centuries

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[8] See AB7, pp. lvii–lx, esp. at p. lix; also L. E. Browne, 'Esther', in *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, ed. by Matthew Black and H. H. Rowley (Glasgow: Routledge, 1999), 381–85 (p. 381).

[9] Although the Greek versions (and Jerome's Vulgate translation of the Additions) name Ahasuerus as Artaxerxes, the association with Xerxes I is long-standing—so long, in fact, that I can barely find evidence of when it began. Browne (p. 381) mentions the accurate facts of the extent of his empire (from India to Ethiopia) and of his ruling over both Persia and Media. Otherwise, though, this view is so widely accepted that I have found no other mention of the reasoning for it, or even of its origin; see, e.g., AB7, pp. xxxv, 3–4. Michael V. Fox declares that 'the biblical name Ahasueros […] has been positively identified with the Persian *xšayārša*, Anglicized (via Greek) as Xerxes', but provides no sources for this positive identification—though he does note that Josephus used this name-form; *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther*, Studies on Personalities in the Old Testament, 2nd edn (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), p. 14 (including n. 2).

[10] See AB7, p. lvii, for the comparison with other biblical books.

[11] At first glance, it might appear that Judeo–Persian relations in the story are poor, given that the Persians are set to slaughter all the Jews on 13 Adar. However, Gerleman points out that this plan is instituted by Haman, the only character in the story explicitly identified as an 'enemy' of the Jews (Esther 3. 10), and suggests that his hatred is in fact motivated by the ancient hostility between Agag (Haman's progenitor) and Saul (Mordecai's progenitor); Gerleman, pp. 37–38. David J. A. Clines takes a similar view of the Judeo–Persian relations in the story; *The Esther Scroll: The Story of the Story*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 30 (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1984), pp. 14, 42–46.

after the Persian empire.[12] Indeed, most modern scholars prefer an earlier dating for the text.[13]

On the other hand, some evidence suggests a later date of composition, during the Hellenistic period. This evidence is almost entirely external and includes historical inconsistencies, similarity to other Hellenistic texts, the absence of Esther and Mordecai from fourth- and third-century BC extrabiblical Jewish writings, and the highly artistic style of the text.[14] Notably, Berg argues that the lack of Greek expressions (and abundance of Persian terms) may be a deliberate archaizing attempt on the part of the original writer, suggesting that the writer may have been working in the Hellenistic period but intentionally choosing language that would make the text sound older, much as a historical novelist might do now.[15]

Uniquely, Levenson suggests a date of composition between these two extremes, around the fourth or third century AD. However, owing to the 'dearth of Jewish literature' from this period, he concedes that such a date would be very difficult to prove, and further points out that if this date is correct, Esther 'may well be the sole surviving legacy of a Jewish culture very different from those of either Palestine or the rest of the Diaspora'.[16]

The location of composition depends largely on the date. If the text was composed in the earlier period, around 400 BC, then it was most probably written by a Jew living in the Persian diaspora. If it was written in the later period it was almost certainly written in Palestine.[17] The evidence for either location is largely the same as that cited in determining the date of composition.

PROBLEMS AND CANONICITY

Esther's canonical status was questionable for several centuries, in both Jewish and Christian communities. Indeed, the narrative presents several potential problems,

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[12] Gerleman, p. 36.

[13] So Demetrius Dumm, 'Tobit, Judith, Esther', in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. by Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), p. 576–77 (p. 576); Gerleman, pp. 36–38; Shemarayahu Talmon, '"Wisdom" in the Book of Esther', *Vetus Testamentum*, 13 (1963), 419–55 (pp. 452–53).

[14] So Browne, p. 381.

[15] Sandra Beth Berg, *The Book of Esther: Motifs, Themes, and Structure*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 44 (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), pp. 170–71.

[16] Jon D. Levenson, *Esther: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), p. 26.

[17] For this concise summary, see F. B. Huey, 'Esther', in *NIV Bible Commentary*, ed. by Kenneth L. Barker and John Kohlenberger III, 2 vols (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1994), I: The Old Testament (1994), 726–28 (p. 726).

some of which are still controversial today. These problems can be classed into three broad categories: (i) historicity, (ii) origins and celebration of Purim, (iii) religion/morality.

The historical veracity of the book has been questioned for some time, at least by modern scholars.[18] Personal names from the narrative are largely unattested in the extrabiblical historical literature;[19] reported numbers are either inaccurate or—in cases where accuracy cannot be determined—likely exaggerated;[20] and a number of elements in the narrative do not accord with the known customs or historical facts of the Persian empire at this time.[21] Such problems have led most modern scholars to regard the book as historically inaccurate, a fictional tale artfully told for the purpose of explaining the origin of Purim and validating its celebration.[22] Some, however, have pointed out that although many elements in the narrative are highly improbable, they

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[18] As Moore points out, we cannot be certain to what extent the historicity of the book was questioned in the ancient period; *Additions*, 159; see also AB7, pp. li–lii.

[19] Only Ahasuerus can be identified with a historical personage, Xerxes I (see n. 9 above). The name Mardukâ appears in an undated Persian document, and it has been argued that this is the original Persian name transliterated in the MT as מָרְדֳּכַי (Mordecai)—though whether this refers to the same person in both texts is a different question, as Levenson points out (p. 24; see also Fox, p. 135). Heinrich Zimmern and Peter Jensen theorized that the names Mordecai and Esther were based on those of the Babylonian gods Marduk and Ishtar, and Haman and Vashti on the Elamite gods Humman/Humban and Mashti (as discussed by Moore in AB7, pp. xlvii–xlviii); while this theory is still mentioned by biblical commentators (e.g., Browne, p. 381) and online forum posters (e.g., Ted Carr, post on 12 July 2012 at 10:57 PM <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/967-ahasuerus> [accessed 28 December 2017]), it is largely dismissed by recent scholars.

[20] These include the 127 provinces under Ahasuerus's rule (Esther 1. 1; Herodotus reports 20 satrapies in Xerxes' kingdom), the feast lasting 180 days (Esth. 1. 4), and the 75,000 enemies slain by the Jews throughout the empire (Esth. 9. 16). See AB7, pp. xlv–xlvi; and Levenson, pp. 23–25.

[21] These include the letters sent to all provinces in all languages, rather than in Aramaic—the official language of the Persian empire—and the elevation to queen of an obscure Jewish girl, despite the known custom that a queen could only come from one of seven noble Persian families. Dates are also problematic, when compared with extrabiblical sources, particularly in regards to Mordecai's relocation to Persia during Nebuchuadnezzar's reign (but see Levenson, p. 23, who notes that several scholars suggest a different interpretation for the verse in question, Esth. 2. 6); and the years when Esther was supposedly queen, a time when Xerxes I would have been away in Greece. See AB7, pp. xlv–xlvi; and Levenson, pp. 23–25. Clines (pp. 17–22) additionally points out the importance to the plot of the irrevocability of Persian law, as well as the unlikelihood that such a system would exist in actuality, despite the almost proverbial repetition of this point in Daniel (6. 8, 12, and 15) and Esther (1. 19).

[22] Browne (p. 381) takes a particularly strong stance on this point: 'It is therefore agreed by all modern scholars that Esther was written long after the time of Xerxes as a novel, with no historical basis'. See also Carol Meyers, 'Esther', in *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. by John Barton and John Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 324–30 (p. 325).

are not at all impossible.[23] Thus, while it is certainly *improbable* that a Jewish woman of unspecified ancestry should become the wife of a powerful Persian monarch, there is nothing in this circumstance inherently *impossible*. In addition, several accurate details have also been noted, including an abundance of Persian terms and a generally accurate knowledge Persian history and customs.[24] Based on such evidence, a number of scholars have adopted a mixed view of the text's historicity, dubbing it a 'historical novel' or 'diaspora novella'[25]—an essentially true story, presented in a stylized fashion to heighten its narrative appeal.

Purim presents another potential problem, and one this time that has greatly affected the book's canonical status. Esther is the only book of the Old Testament that has not yet been found, even in fragments, among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, and this has often been taken as evidence that the book was considered non-canonical by the Jewish community there.[26] Perhaps more tellingly, the liturgical calendars at Qumran do not include Purim among the festivals to be celebrated, a fact which leads Talmon to conclude that the community there did not consider the book canonical.[27] Purim is mentioned indirectly in 2 Maccabees 15. 36, where the fourteenth of Adar (the traditional date the festival) is called 'Mordecai's day', suggesting that the festival was celebrated and the story known by the second century BC.[28] But regardless of whether the story was known or the festival celebrated at any

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[23] As pointed out by Moore (AB7, p. xlv), who advocates the historical fiction view; and by Murphy, who favors a view of the book as pure fiction (Roland A. Murphy, 'Esther', in *Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther* [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981], pp. 12–14, [pp. 13–14]).

[24] These include the topography of Susa, the separation of the acropolis of Susa from the city of Susa, the efficient postal system, and the lists of Persian officials given in proper ranking order. See AB7, p. xli; Levenson, pp. 23–24; on the ranking of officials, see Clines, p. 46.

[25] 'Historical novel', AB7, p. lii; 'diaspora novella', Arndt Meinhold, cited in Meyers, p. 325. Talmon terms it a 'historicized wisdom-tale', though this could be seen as the opposite view: a kernel of wisdom literature given a historical appearance, rather than a kernel of historic truth given a literary appearance ('"Wisdom"', pp. 426, 455). Also Levenson, p. 26: 'The enormous amount of exaggeration and inaccuracy in Esther suggests a motive other than precise reporting in the modern, Western sense.'

[26] Shemarayahu Talmon, 'Was Esther Known at Qumran?', *Dead Sea Scrolls*, 2 (1995), 249–67 (pp. 266–67). Also Dumm, p. 576; AB7, p. xxi.

[27] Talmon, 'Was Esther Known?', p. 267; similarly, he says, the Jews at Qumran did not include Hanukkah in their calendars, and he finds this supporting evidence—both books were non-canonical and therefore, both festivals were unacceptable. Significantly, though, Moore (AB7, p. xxi), points out that the Qumran Jews did include non-Mosaic festivals in their calendars, meaning that this argument cannot be reversed: The festivals can be unacceptable because the books were non-canonical, but the books cannot be non-canonical because the festivals are non-Mosaic.

[28] AB7, p. lviii.

particular time, this does not necessarily indicate canonical status for the book, and Esther was not officially canonized as Jewish scripture for several more centuries. Needless to say, the emphasis on a Jewish festival in the narrative did nothing to endear it to the early Christian church.

Perhaps most damaging to the canonical status of Esther is the noticeable lack of overt religious elements in the MT. In this form, it is the only book of the Christian Bible or the Jewish Scriptures that never mentions the name of God, not even a single time—though, as Moore points out, the Persian king is mentioned 190 times in 167 verses.[29] Moreover, other religious elements, such as covenant, temple, and the kosher laws concerning food are nowhere to be found. Fasting and the traditional sackcloth and ashes of mourning are the only religious practices mentioned, and even then the reader is left to infer that these have religious significance. In fact, some scholars have noted that, if we assume Esther's fast immediately followed Haman's casting of the lot, then it must have taken place over Passover—a most singular and impious action.[30] Features such as these have led some to characterize the book as secular or profane.[31] Indeed, the complete lack of any mention of God in the MT has led some scholars to speculate that the divine name was excised from this version in order to avoid accidental profaning of it during the often boisterous celebration of Purim, during which the story of Esther was to be read aloud.[32]

However, even if the divine name *was* excised from the MT, this would not account for the lack of other religious elements. An alternative explanation may be that the story of Esther is a 'historicized wisdom-tale',[33] designed to demonstrate how one might live the wisdom encoded in both biblical and extrabiblical Near Eastern literature of this genre. 'Just as the usual elements of Jewish piety', explains Moore, '[…] are virtually ignored' in the biblical wisdom literature, 'so these things are completely ignored in Esther.'[34] Or, as Talmon puts it, wisdom literature attempts to codify how one can live effectively and wisely in 'any human situation, irrespective of

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[29] Moore, *Additions*, p. 157.

[30] Levenson, p. 18.

[31] So Browne, p. 381: 'The Book of Esther occupies the same place in sacred scripture as the villainous rogue in a story or play which has been written with a moral purpose.' Gerleman (p. 23) refers to the book's reputation as being worldly (*weltlich*) and profane (*profan*) in order to refute this reputation, but does not name specific sources for the view.

[32] Lewis B. Paton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Esther*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1908), p. 95; Moore (*Additions*, p. 157) further cites F. Kauler, G. Jahn, and A. Barucq.

[33] Talmon, '"Wisdom"', p. 426.

[34] *Additions*, p. 157.

politico-national or religio-national allegiances'—and therefore de-emphasizes, if not wholly ignores, such issues.[35] This theory does seem to explain the absence of religious elements in the text, but tends to be viewed with interest rather than conviction.[36]

Quite apart from the question of religion, modern audiences have sometimes questioned the morality of the characters' actions. Esther is only motivated to intercede for her people once her own personal danger has been pointed out to her (Esth. 4. 13–16);[37] her sexual ethics are suspect;[38] she uses food and sexuality to manipulate events to her liking.[39] The Jews slaughter their enemies in a fit of vengeance, killing over 500 in the palace alone, another 300 in the capital city, and 75,000 in the provinces (Esth. 9. 6, 15–16). The king is foolish, incapable, and given to fits of violent anger.[40] Even Mordecai is suspect, forcing Esther to hide her true identity and stubbornly disobeying the king's own commands.[41]

All these problems—lack of religion, Purim, and historicity—are highlighted the more by a careful study of the Greek versions of the book, which seem to be trying to resolve them.[42] God and religion are pervasive in the Greek texts, not only in the Additions but also in the canonical portions with parallels in the MT. Besides this, there are further strong religious elements in Additions A, C, and F, in which Mordecai's premonitory dream is described and then explained (A and F, respectively), and Esther and Mordecai faithfully pray for deliverance before taking intercessory action on behalf of their people (C). Similarly, the historicity of the story is strengthened by the added details in D and by the purportedly verbatim royal edicts of B and E. Purim is also de-emphasized in the Additions, which would likely have made the story more 'palatable' both for Christians and also for those Jews who were skeptical about the festival's appropriateness.[43]

Although these problems cast doubt on the canonicity of the book for quite some time, it was accepted as canonical among Jews as early as the first century AD,

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[35] Talmon, "'Wisdom'", p. 430. On Esther as Wisdom literature, see also A. Barucq (cited in Moore, *Additions*, p. 157 n. 8); and Murphy, pp. 12–14.

[36] Meyers' comment is representative of the prevailing attitude: 'That such [royal courtier] tales contain many elements of wisdom literature is also a compelling consideration' (p. 326).

[37] Browne, p. 381.

[38] Paton, cited in Meyers p. 325.

[39] Fuchs, cited in Meyers p. 325.

[40] On the king's anger, see AB7, p. xli. On his foolishness and incapability, see Clines, pp. 19, 31–33.

[41] See, for example, Huey, p. 727.

[42] Moore, *Additions*, p. 156; Meyers, p. 325.

[43] See Moore, *Additions*, p. 160 for 'palatable'.

and definitely by the fourth century.[44] Christians were even less unified in their decision as to the book's status, with the church in the West nearly always considering it canonical, and the church in the East frequently omitting it from the canon. By about the fourth century, however, it had been accepted in the canon for most Christians in the West, and the book is frequently attested in Bibles and part-Bibles from this period and later.[45]

EARLY CHRISTIAN TREATMENT

Translations of the Bible into Latin abounded in the first three centuries after Christ, made for the benefit of the growing Latin-speaking Christian community. These were based on the Septuagint and are now known as the 'Old Latin' versions. There is considerable variation among these, as they were made separately from one another, by translators of widely different linguistic skill and, often, divergent doctrinal views. Indeed, Marsden notes that 'there is no evidence that a complete Old Latin Bible was ever compiled' and that the translations 'were sometimes of very poor quality'.[46] The book of Esther does, however, survive in some Old Latin translations.[47] The early Church Fathers generally relied on this version, although some also consulted the Septuagint and even the Hebrew versions.

In AD 382, Pope Damasus I commissioned Jerome to compose a new Latin translation of the Bible. For the Old Testament translations, including Esther, he worked from the Hebrew MT. However, he also referred to the LXX during his translation, rendering the Additions and placing them at the end of the book—apparently unconvinced of their divine origin, but unwilling to risk leaving them out entirely. Jerome's translation, though not universally or immediately accepted, eventually became the most popular reading of the Bible during the Middle Ages, as evidenced by its later denomination, 'Vulgate'. While the Vulgate was by far the most commonly used translation during the Middle Ages, Marsden cautions that Old Latin versions may sometimes intrude; not only were these translations still sometimes used

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[44] AB7, pp. xxii–xxv; Moore gives as evidence the Council of Jamnia, Josephus' inclusion of Esther in his paraphrases of Jewish scripture, and two mentions of Esther in the Talmud which indicate that their authors considered her story canonical.

[45] AB7, p. xxvii.

[46] Richard Marsden, 'Wrestling with the Bible: Textual Problems for the Scholar and Student', in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. by Paul Cavill (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2004), p. 71.

[47] See Haelewyck, 'Relevance of the OL'.

in the medieval period, but they were deeply familiar—through the liturgy and the patristic traditions—to the scribes and copyists producing manuscripts.[48]

During this period, the book of Esther received little attention from the Church Fathers. Gustafson provides an exhaustive list of every mention of the book in this period, noting its frequent pairing with Judith and the use of Esther as an example of faith and piety. The patristic writers also ignore the episode of Jewish retribution at the end of the narrative, a circumstance which cannot be due solely to the reliance on the Old Latin versions (which likewise excise the episode), as those Fathers familiar with the LXX and the MT (both of which include the episode) also fail to mention it. Furthermore, the patristic commentators pay little heed to Vashti, all but ignoring her.[49]

However, even after Esther's canonicity had been affirmed, the book was rarely commented upon, and then only cursorily, until the Carolingian period.

CAROLINGIAN AND EARLY MEDIEVAL TREATMENT

The first extant Christian commentary on Esther of any length was made by Rabanus Maurus, c. AD 836.[50] His *Expositio in librum Ester* is an extensive typological treatment and departs from the patristic tradition in many ways. As Gustafson surmises, 'With no patristic models to acknowledge, perhaps Rabanus felt authorized to clear new ground'.[51] Like the patristic writers, he pairs Esther with Judith, writing commentaries on both within a few years of each other and dedicating them together to his royal patroness. Unlike the Fathers, though, Rabanus wrote explicitly about the festival of Purim and the Jewish violence at the end of the narrative, treating both as extensions of his typological interpretation. His commentary involves a more complex treatment of violence, gender, and religion than had been attempted by any of the patristic writers.

Rabanus presents the entire story of Esther as an extended allegory in which King Ahasuerus represents Christ,[52] Esther the Christian Church, and Mordecai the Christian teachers. Having established the protagonists as symbols of Christianity, he

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[48] Marsden, 'Wrestling', pp. 84–85.

[49] Timothy Alan Gustafson, 'Ælfric Reads Esther: The Cultural Limits of Translation' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Iowa, 1995), 50–88.

[50] *Patrologia Latina* 109, available online at <http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk/> [accessed 28 December 2017].

[51] Gustafson, p. 89.

[52] As Gustafson pithily observes, 'The king who gives a feast and marries a bride is a type of Christ', p. 98.

selects the Jews as their enemy, casting the antagonists Vashti and Haman as symbols of the Jewish synagogue and the Jews more generally. Gustafson points out the contradictory nature of this treatment, in which the Jews of the original story become Christians and the Gentiles (Persians) become Jews. Odd as this may seem to a modern reader, it allows Rabanus to discuss at length some of the elements that had been omitted by Christian writers for centuries before him. Vashti, generally ignored by the patristic writers, becomes a symbol of the Jewish synagogue, which had spurned Christ (Ahasuerus) and was therefore replaced by the Christian Gentiles (Esther). Similarly, the episode of Jewish retribution becomes a symbol of eternal Jewish damnation: because the Persians represent the Jews in Rabanus's commentary, their slaughter of the Persians becomes a symbol of the ultimate triumph of Christianity over all its enemies (for Rabanus, the Jews). Finally, he explains that Purim, celebrated in honor of the Jewish triumph, typifies the eternal feast Christians will celebrate in the heavens.[53]

In addition to this allegorical theological treatment, Gustafson detects a hint of political concern in Rabanus's commentary on Esther. He notes that Rabanus dedicated it, along with his commentary on Judith, to the Empress Judith, who was at the heart of a political upheaval during the rule of Louis the Pious. Judith was Louis' second wife, and Louis had earlier codified his intention to divide the empire among his sons by his first wife: the eldest, Lothar, would receive the power and title of emperor, while the two younger would become kings over extensive lands in the empire. However, after Louis married Judith and sired a son by her, he announced his intention of rescinding the earlier provision in favor of this son, Charles the Bald. Lothar revolted, successfully seizing the throne for a brief time before it was restored to Louis. In the midst of this turmoil, the Empress Judith became the scapegoat, accused of adultery and lasciviousness and cast as the cause of all the troubles. Gustafson suggests that Rabanus saw an opportunity to offer 'models of behavior accompanied with flattery' in his commentaries on Judith and Esther. That is, Esther offered a biblical reminder that 'victory and marital chastity should go hand in hand', thus allowing Rabanus to offer subtle political critique without himself impugning the empress's virtue.[54]

In addition to Rabanus's commentary, we know of an *opusculum* made by his contemporary, Haymo of Auxerre, but this is no longer extant.[55] One further

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[53] See Gustafson, pp. 98–108 for further discussion.

[54] Gustafson, p. 93.

[55] Haymo's work dates to c. AD 840 to 860; see Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952), p. 39.

commentary exists from this period, which has been attributed to Rabanus's pupil, Walafrid Strabo. Gerleman notes the similarities between Rabanus's commentary and that of Strabo, who likewise treats Esther, Vashti, and Ahasuerus as types of the church, the synagogue, and Christ, respectively.[56]

Perhaps due to Rabanus's lengthy commentary and its dedication to royalty, Esther became a common role model during the early medieval period, particularly for queens. She stands alone among biblical women as being both faithful and politically powerful. Klein notes that she was 'frequently presented to early medieval queens as an exemplar of piety and, more specifically, as a model of how a queen might strengthen the faith of her husband and her people'.[57] After pointing out Rabanus's dedication of his *Expositio in librum Esther* to Empress Judith, she further explains that he later re-dedicated it (and the commentary on Judith) to Empress Ermengard after Lothar I assumed the throne. Likewise, Pope John VIII asked the next Carolingian empress, Richildis, wife of Charles the Bald, to act as an advocate for the Christian church as Esther did for her people. Shortly thereafter, Esther was invoked twice in the coronation *ordo* for the marriage of Judith and Æthelwulf of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Wessex. As we shall see, this association of Esther with queens in the early medieval period has led modern scholars to surmise that Ælfric wrote his version with queens in mind.

ÆLFRIC'S VERSION

Ælfric's version of Esther is extant in only one manuscript, Oxford Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 381, where it is given under the Old English heading *Be Hester* 'On Esther'. This manuscript is a codex of Anglo-Saxon writings relating to the Bible and Christianity, transcribed by William L'Isle in the seventeenth century. The exact date of this transcription is unclear, but it was certainly made before 1638, when L'Isle died and William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, acquired it.[58] Ælfric's original work on Esther is now lost and, thus, it is preserved today only in a transcript made several centuries later. This, of course, means that we must be cautious about accepting it as a

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[56] Pp. 2–3. On Strabo's general reliance on Rabanus's work, see Smalley, p. 58.

[57] Stacy S. Klein, 'Beauty and the Banquet: Queenship and Social Reform in Ælfric's "Esther"', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 103 (2004), 77–105 (p. 81).

[58] Sutart D. Lee, 'Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 381: William L'Isle, Ælfric, and the *Ancrene Wisse*', in *The Recovery of Old English: Anglo-Saxon Studies in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. by Timothy Graham (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), pp. 207–42 (p. 201). Lee refers to the manuscript, after its initial introduction, as 'Laud 381', and this designation will be reproduced in quotations in this thesis.

true copy and not a forgery, but Assmann has given ample evidence of its authenticity and of Ælfric's authorship, and scholars since then have willingly accepted it, largely on the strength of its rhythmic prose style, so characteristic of Ælfric.[59]

Ælfric most likely composed *Esther* between AD 1002 and 1005.[60] He did not include it in his *Lives of Saints*, although he did include some other Old Testament summaries, and this collection was published before the death of his patron Æthelweard in 998 or 1002. He did, however, mention it in his *Letter to Sigeweard*,[61] composed after Ælfric's installation as abbot of Eynsham in 1005. Thus, although Clemoes has chosen 1002 and 1005 as the most likely range of dates for its composition, it is possible that it was written as early as 998 and as late as 1006. No modern scholar has seriously questioned Clemoes's dating, though, and there seems little reason to do so.

Ælfric's *Esther* was first published in the modern era by Bruno Assmann in 1886.[62] Three years later, Assmann published a collection of Old English homilies and saints' lives, including his edition of Ælfric's *Esther*; this entire collection was reprinted in 1964 with a supplementary introduction by Peter Clemoes.[63] Most recently, Stuart Lee has published online an updated edition of Ælfric's *Esther*, along with his versions of Judith and Maccabees.[64] Lee's edition includes useful, though not extensive, notes on the manuscript, authorship, style, date of composition, sources, and themes in the text, as well as source tables.

It is unclear just why Ælfric chose to write the Esther story in Old English, especially given the tenuous canonicity of the book in the patristic tradition. Assmann made no comment on its purpose. Clemoes, in his supplementary introduction for the

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[59] See Bruno Assmann, 'Abt Ælfric's angelsächsische Bearbeitung des Buches Esther' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Universität Leipzig, 1885).

[60] This dating is suggested by Peter Clemoes in the Supplementary Introduction to Bruno Assmann, *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 3 (Kassel, 1889; repr. with supplementary introduction by Peter Clemoes, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), p. xxvii; see also Peter A. M. Clemoes, 'The Chronology of Ælfric's Works', in *The Anglo-Saxons: Studies in Some Aspects of Their History and Culture Presented to Bruce Dickins*, ed. by Peter Clemoes (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1959), pp. 212–47 (p. 244).

[61] Available in *The Old English Version of the Heptateuch, Ælfric's Treatise on the Old and New Testament and His Preface to Genesis*, ed. by S. J. Crawford, Early English Text Society 160 (London: Oxford University Press, 1922).

[62] Bruno Assmann, 'Abt Ælfric's angelsächsische Bearbeitung des Buches Esther', *Anglia*, 9 (1886), 25–38.

[63] Assmann, *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*.

[64] *Ælfric's Homilies on Judith, Esther, and the Maccabees*, ed. by Stuart D. Lee (Oxford, 1999) <users.ox.ac.uk/~stuart/kings> [accessed 28 December 2017].

reprint of Assmann's 1889 edition, suggested that Ælfric intended it as 'pious reading-matter for any suitable occasion';[65] earlier, he had grouped it with several other Old Testament narratives,[66] suggesting that they were all meant to serve as 'moral *exempla*', biblical stories illustrating the principle that 'obedience to God is best'.[67] Given the frequent association of the book with that of Judith, it is hardly surprising to learn that Ælfric made translations of both—but this association is not sufficient, in my view, to serve as a motivation for his translation of Esther.

More recently, Stuart Lee has convincingly argued that Ælfric originally wrote his version of Esther as a homily.[68] He bases this conclusion on a close analysis of the entire collection of Old English writings in Laud Misc. 381, which he suggests was part of a large-scale project on L'Isle's part to collect and eventually publish all the biblical writings in Old English that he could find.[69] While we have no other preserved manuscripts with which to compare L'Isle's transcription of Ælfric's *Esther*, we do have additional versions of some of the other material in this collection, including *Job* and *Judith*.[70] By comparing the versions preserved in L'Isle's collection with the versions preserved in other manuscripts, it becomes clear that Ælfric originally wrote both *Job* and *Judith* as homilies and that L'Isle, in transcribing them, left out non-biblical material such as introductions, explanatory passages, and conclusions. Moreover, L'Isle often made these omissions without any indication that he had done so. It is possible, therefore, that Ælfric originally wrote his version of *Esther* as a homily, and that L'Isle transcribed only the biblical portions and omitted the homiletic portions.[71] 'Indeed', as Lee aptly explains, 'if L'Isle's transcription of *Be Hester* were a complete version of the original homily, it would be unique within Laud 381, for none of L'Isle's other transcriptions in the manuscript presents a complete text of any work by Ælfric.'[72] His remark emphasizes the likelihood that Ælfric originally intended the piece as a homily, read out by a priest and heard by the church-

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[65] In Assmann, *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, p. xxvii.

[66] The others are Judges, Kings, Maccabees, and Judith.

[67] Clemoes, 'Chronology', p. 240.

[68] Lee, 'Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc 381'.

[69] Though this project was ultimately abandoned, apparently due to lack of interest on the part of the publishers. See Lee, 'Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc 381', pp. 208 (incl. n. 8), 212–42.

[70] Lee discusses both Ælfric's *Job* and *Judith* as possible parallel texts for *Esther* and the likelihood, based on this comparison, that his *Esther* originally included either introductory or concluding material, or both; Lee, 'Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc 381', pp. 223–24.

[71] Lee, 'Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc 381', pp. 221–25. Lee specifically notes the potential implications of L'Isle's methods for the text of *Esther*.

[72] Ibid., p. 225.

going audience. Though I am not as fully convinced of this conclusion as Lee seems to be, the possibility of Ælfric's *Esther* as a homily cannot be ignored, and I have borne this in mind throughout the thesis.

In his *Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, Ælfric lists Esther among the liturgical texts to be read in the fourth week of September (along with Judith and Esdras).[73] This suggests that he expected the monks to read Esther every autumn as part of the liturgical calendar. It seems reasonable to assume, then, that Ælfric translated Esther as a kind of study aid, to assist the monks of Eynsham, and potentially other clergy, as they studied the biblical book in Latin—something akin to the readers, children's books, and illustrated/animated versions of Bible stories that abound today for the aid of children and others new to the biblical materials.

Even if we accept Lee's conclusion that the text was intended as a homily, the question still remains as to why Ælfric chose to write a homily on Esther. As noted above, Esther was rarely discussed in the patristic commentaries, and when she was it was often only to deny canonicity to her story. With no patristic tradition to speak of, it seems likely that Ælfric based his choice on the Carolingian treatments of Esther and her increasing popularity as a model of queenly piety in the early medieval period. It is well documented that Ælfric was not only familiar with Carolingian commentators like Rabanus Maurus, Haymo of Auxerre, and Walafrid Strabo, but that he used their works as sources for his own. The *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* database lists 341 entries among Old English literature with Haymo as a source, out of which 323 are in texts authored by Ælfric; of the 33 instances of Rabanus Maurus as a source, 14 are in Ælfric's works.[74] Given his frequent use of both commentators, and especially of Haymo, we cannot rule out possible influence by one or both of them. However, since the Esther commentary by Haymo is no longer extant, we cannot verify this as a source for Ælfric. And, as Gustafson has demonstrated, Ælfric's treatment of the narrative differs in many respects from that of Rabanus: unlike the Carolingian writer, Ælfric does not associate Esther with Judith and excises the Jewish violence.

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[73] *Ælfric's Letter to the Monks of Eynsham*, ed. by Christopher A. Jones, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 24 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 146–47. Special thanks to Stewart Brookes for bringing this to my attention.

[74] *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici: World Wide Web Register*, ed. by Fontes Anglo-Saxonici Project (Oxford: Fontes Anglo-Saxonici Project, English Faculty, Oxford University) <http://fontes.english.ox.ac.uk/> [accessed 28 December 2017]. Walafrid Strabo has no entries in the database and therefore appears to have been unknown or unused by the Anglo-Saxons; this would be in line with Beryl Smalley's (p. 58) observation that 'medieval scholars did not think very highly of Strabo'.

Apart from this possible Carolingian influence, we must of course also consider Ælfric's biblical source material. There is a strong case to be made for the Vulgate, which had become by far the most common version used in Anglo-Saxon England. Modern scholars have tended to accept the Vulgate as Ælfric's source for *Esther* without serious question. Assmann gives extracts from the Vulgate in his first edition of Ælfric's *Esther*; similarly, Lee talks of the 'straightforward' identification of the Vulgate as Ælfric's source and uses this as the basis of his source tables.[75] Clayton likewise assumes the Vulgate as Ælfric's source.[76] Gustafson and Klein, while aware of the possibility of other source material, nonetheless proceed on the assumption of the Vulgate as Ælfric's source.[77] Indeed, the lack—until recently—of any reliable critical edition of the Old Latin translation virtually necessitated the modern scholar's working from the Vulgate in reviewing Ælfric's work.

However, we must consider the distinct possibility that Ælfric relied on source material other than the Vulgate. Marsden points out Ælfric's familiarity with both the convoluted history of Bible translation and with the long tradition of biblical exegesis which drew on different versions.[78] He was likewise familiar with the patristic writers, who relied on the Old Latin translations even after Jerome's translation was completed. Proceeding from such grounds, Stewart Brookes has argued that Ælfric may have used the Old Latin version as the basis for his adaptation of Esther. He notes several points in Ælfric's version that have parallels in the Old Latin translation but not in the Vulgate. For example, in the Vulgate account, Esther requests that Ahasuerus hang Haman's ten sons after his treachery has been revealed, but in Ælfric's version the king decrees this without Esther's prompting. Brookes points out that although this has been interpreted as a deliberate change on Ælfric's part, in fact

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[75] Assmann, cited in Stewart Brookes, 'Ælfric's Adaptation of the Book of Esther: A Source of Some Confusion', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory or Lynne Grundy*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique & Medieval Studies, 2000), pp. 37–62 (p. 48); Lee, *Ælfric's Homilies*, 'Sources: Introduction'.

[76] Mary Clayton, 'Ælfric's *Esther*: A *Speculum Reginae*?', in *Text and Gloss: Studies in Insular Learning and Literature Presented to Joseph Donovan Pheifer*, ed. by Helen Conrad-O'Briain, Anne Marie D'Arcy, and V. J. Scattergood (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999), pp. 89–101 (p. 90): 'The Vulgate, most probably Ælfric's source […]'.

[77] Both adopt the method of comparing Ælfric's version with the Vulgate and then checking their observed variations against the OL; see Gustafson, pp. 21–26, and Klein, p. 79.

[78] Richard Marsden, *The Text of the Old Testament in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 53–54.

the same version of events takes place in the Old Latin translation.[79] Perhaps most intriguing is the episode of Jewish retribution against their enemies in the final chapters of the Vulgate narrative, which is missing from both the Old Latin readings and Ælfric's homily. This episode has likewise been interpreted as a significant change made by Ælfric, but if he was relying on the Old Latin as his exemplar, then we cannot accept it as such. Such evidence, while compelling, is by no means conclusive, and Brookes also points out places in Ælfric's *Esther* that have parallels (i) in the Vulgate but not in the Old Latin, (ii) in the Vulgate *and* the Old Latin, and (iii) in the Greek versions but not the Latin versions.

It is also possible that Ælfric may have worked from a Vulgate exemplar, but that the Old Latin version intruded on his work, as Marsden notes how frequently this occurred in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts;[80] however, given Ælfric's careful attitude to his work, this seems unlikely. Perhaps the most likely solution is that Ælfric was attempting to produce in Old English a version of Esther that synthesized multiple traditions—Vulgate and Old Latin translations, patristic and Carolingian commentaries, Anglo-Saxon language, literature, and culture, and possibly even other sources—into a text that would be relatable for his audience and serve his purposes. A mixed approach of this kind is posited by both Brookes and Gustafson, both also pointing to the eclectic approach espoused by Gregory the Great as a precedent that may have helped Ælfric to feel justified in using a similar approach in his *Esther*. Despite the similarity of their reasoning, however, Gustafson afterward insists that 'there is clear evidence that in Esther Ælfric worked from the Vulgate', whereas Brookes contends that 'the changes necessary to a Vulgate text in order to bring it into line with the version produced by Ælfric would need to be greater than those required for the Old Latin source'.[81] Though the final solution to this riddle remains difficult to untangle, I likewise find compelling evidence to suggest that Ælfric, at the very least, was familiar with one or more Old Latin texts of Esther and that this influenced his own version; whether he was working from a copy of such a text or whether it was his only exemplar remains unclear.

One further, and related, possibility should be noted. The influence of the oral literary tradition—still strong in late Anglo-Saxon England, despite the burgeoning

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[79] Brookes, p. 50. Scholars interpreting this as Ælfric's change to the Vulgate text include Clayton, p. 92, and Gustafson, p. 272. Brookes further notes that the Greek AT and LXX offer no support for this reading; p. 50 n. 47.

[80] For example, *Text of OT*, p. 11, and 'Wrestling', p. 50. Also Richard Marsden, 'Old Latin Intervention in the Old English *Heptateuch*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 23 (1994), 229–64.

[81] Gustafson, pp. 24–25, esp. at 25; Brookes, pp. 55–57, 61.

written literary culture—means that poets would have approached their sources quite differently from the way those in a culture of written literature do. That is, the poets in an oral tradition tended to view their sources as a collection of shared knowledge that could be drawn upon and re-mixed, depending on individual circumstances (e.g., the audience, the purpose of the narration, the length allotted to the story-telling, etc.). As a member of an oral-centric society, Ælfric may well have approached the biblical sources somewhat differently from how modern scholars do. His careful habits and constant admonitions to copyists not to change his words as they worked indicate that he was more a conscientious scholar than many others in the Anglo-Saxon period; however, it is possible that his conception of his biblical source material was somewhat more fluid than is readily perceptible to us in the present day.

Given the complex history of the Bible in the Middle Ages, it may be impossible to definitively answer the question of Ælfric's source materials for *Esther*. The lack of a reliable scholarly edition of the Old Latin texts has only exacerbated the problem. For many years, the only available edition of the Old Latin text was that edited by Pierre Sabatier, originally published in the eighteenth century, and this is the edition that modern scholars of Ælfric's *Esther* have relied on so far.[82] Recently, however, Jean-Claude Haelewyck has published an edition of surviving Old Latin manuscripts of Esther.[83] This newer and eminently useful edition, it is to be hoped, will add greater clarity going forward to the question of whether the OL may have been used, at least in part, as a source for Ælfric's *Esther*.

RECENT SCHOLARSHIP ON ÆLFRIC'S *ESTHER*

Since Assmann's nineteenth-century publication of Ælfric's *Esther*, the piece has gone largely ignored by the academic community. Peter Clemoes found Assmann's collection of Anglo-Saxon texts, including Ælfric's *Esther*, important enough to reprint it in the 1960s with updated introductory information based on Anglo-Saxon scholarship in the intervening period. Stuart Lee included Ælfric's *Esther* alongside *Judith* and *Maccabees* in his doctoral thesis, in which he produced a new edition of these three homilies.[84] In an effort to fill the gap of a modern edition he published this

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[82] Pierre Sabatier, *Bibliorum Sacrorum latinae uersiones antiquae seu uetus Italica*, 3 vols (Rheims, 1743–49). Both Brookes and Klein rely on this edition.

[83] *Hester*, ed. by Jean-Claude Haelewyck, Vetus Latina vol. 7/3 (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2008); hereafter cited as OL.

[84] Stuart D. Lee, 'An Edition of Ælfric's Homilies on Judith, Esther, and the Maccabees', 2 vols (unpublished doctoral thesis, King's College London, 1992).

work, with some modifications, online.[85] Like Lee, Stewart Brookes included *Esther* (together with others of Ælfric's Old Testament writings) in his doctoral dissertation, and his work on the sources for Ælfric's *Esther* has already been noted.

The most extensive treatment to date is an unpublished doctoral dissertation by Timothy Gustafson.[86] He is primarily concerned with the question of translation as a cultural act and focuses especially on the treatment of violence and gender in Ælfric's version. After providing a detailed history of the treatment of Esther by Christian writers before Ælfric, he argues that Ælfric conformed to hagiographic character roles that his audience would be familiar with. In this argument, Mordecai is the Christian, Haman the pagan, and Ahasuerus the noble pagan ripe for conversion. The female roles are 'more complex', as Gustafson puts it,[87] and he proposes a kind of composite role for Esther that combines the hagiographic roles of virgin (physical beauty) and chaste wife (moral character), albeit one who is not explicitly represented as chaste. Vashti is more straightforward, filling the role of temptress. Zeresh, Haman's wife, is excised from Ælfric's text, and Gustafson argues that this is because she does not get her just deserts as a wicked woman, since the Jewish retribution was also erased from the text. This view of Ælfric fitting the characters into existing, familiar hagiographic roles is tempting in many ways, but Gustafson's argument is convoluted, especially concerning the female characters. It seems just as plausible that this is not a deliberate act on Ælfric's part, but simply the result of a man attempting to make sense of a troublesome text through the filter of his own culture.

In his final chapter, Gustafson addresses the question of violence in Ælfric's *Esther*, more specifically the omission of the Jewish retribution at the end of the narrative. Although he acknowledges the precedent from the Old Latin version for removing this episode, he does not consider this a satisfactory solution to the question of why Ælfric left it out. He examines the treatment of violence throughout Ælfric's writings, noting that he was capable of a range of responses to violence, but these are always affected by the filter of Christian theology. He further discusses the concept of just and holy kings in Ælfric's work and suggests that his erasure of the Jewish violence in Esther was related to his desire of presenting such a king in this text. In Ælfric's *Esther*, Gustafson suggests, not only is the king converted to God's laws but he reigns in a peaceable kingdom, where ethnically and religiously distinct groups of people can live together without violence.

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[85] *Ælfric's Homilies.*

[86] 'Ælfric Reads Esther'.

[87] P. 246.

Lee's online edition of Ælfric's *Esther*, published four years after Gustafson's thesis, seems to have revived scholarly interest in the piece, at least to a degree. As mentioned earlier, Stewart Brookes has examined the possible sources for the text. Besides this there have been, to my knowledge, two scholarly publications addressing Ælfric's version of Esther, both focusing largely on the concept of queenship in the piece.

Mary Clayton suggests that Ælfric wrote his version of Esther in response to events of his day, namely the St Brice's Day massacre and the marriage of King Æthelred II to Emma of Normandy.[88] The massacre took place on the command of the king, who, in response to renewed Viking aggression, had decreed that all the Danes in the kingdom should be slaughtered on the same day in 1002, the feast day of St Brice (13 November). Clayton surmises that Ælfric would have disapproved of this wholesale slaughter, based on evidence such as his sympathy toward merchants (who would likely have been most affected by the massacre), and his condemnatory attitude toward a similar action taken by Theodosius against the citizens of Thessalonica—an episode which he added to his 1005 revision of *Catholic Homilies II*. Ælfric was disturbed, she suggests, by the royally-decreed mass murder and chose to translate Esther in an attempt to prevent similar actions later on. At about the same time, Æthelred was married to Emma of Normandy, a Danish-French noblewoman, and Ælfric saw an opportunity to tactfully suggest that she help restrain her husband in future. Thus, Ælfric's *Esther* becomes for Clayton a kind of *speculum reginae*, demonstrating to a specific queen how she might act to save her people and convert her husband to more Christian behavior.

On the other hand, Stacy Klein is less interested in a specific queen and more so in the generic role of queens as depicted in Ælfric's *Esther* and how this might have worked to effect social change.[89] She notes that in Ælfric's version, Esther is particularly pious but stripped of any political or secular power, pointing out how this differed from the reality in Ælfric's time, when queens were becoming increasingly involved in the secular affairs of the kingdom. Both Æthelred's mother, Ælfthryth, and wife, Emma, were quite involved in the king's political business, both apparently attending meetings of the royal council and influencing the administration of royal lands. Thus, Ælfric's *Esther* cannot reflect the reality of queenship in his lifetime, and Klein suggests instead that he was attempting to construct a model of the ideal queen, in hopes of influencing public, royal, and clerical opinions and expectations regarding

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[88] 'Ælfric's *Esther*'.

[89] 'Beauty and the Banquet'.

how a queen should appropriately behave. Klein goes on to discuss Ælfric's portrayal of both Esther and Vashti as wives and of their bodies as objects of beauty, arguing that his portrayal of each is meant to draw attention to the role of Esther as ideal queen and wife and of Vashti as a negative example for both these roles.

Both Clayton and Klein cite textual evidence to support their claims, each pointing out alterations that Ælfric made in his version and the effects these alterations have on the reader's interpretation of the text. Clayton notes that 'Esther's sensuality […] is toned down in Ælfric', who removes the elaborate preparations for Esther's presentation to the king, her residence with the harem-like group of virgins, and the one night each of these virgins spends with the king prior to any marriage.[90] She also notes the omission of the Jewish retribution at the end of the biblical narrative, as well as the added detail that Esther converted her husband Ahasuerus to God's laws. Klein likewise notes the conversion aspect of Ælfric's *Esther*, pointing out the very explicit nature of Ælfric's comment as opposed to the oblique suggestion in the Vulgate that the king might have converted to the Jewish faith (Esther 16. 15–16). Such changes underscore the salience of Ælfric's sources—for, as previously mentioned, our knowledge about what he changed is only as certain as our identification of his source material.

Similarly, the mode of preservation into the modern period becomes important as we try to determine Ælfric's intentions with this piece. Clayton heavily emphasizes the fact that Ælfric's version of Esther contains no commentary of any kind, arguing that this is due to his desire for tact and subtlety in attempting to tell a queen how to behave.[91] However, as we have seen, L'Isle's method of transcription was haphazard when it came to indicating omissions from his exemplars and he was particularly prone to omitting commentary that was non-biblical in origin.[92] Thus, it is slippery ground to use Ælfric's lack of commentary as evidence of anything, since we simply cannot be certain how much commentary he did or did not include in his original piece.

Likewise, Klein notes several linguistic cues in Ælfric's version. These include his almost exclusive use of the term *cwen* 'queen' to refer to Esther, rather than her name; the use of *leof* 'sire' to demonstrate her sincere love for her husband and of *cynehlaford* 'liege-lord' to emphasize the lord–retainer model of their marriage relationship; and the use of *wlitig* 'beautiful' to describe both Vashti and Esther but *fæger* 'fair, lovely'

[90] Clayton, pp. 91–92.
[91] Clayton, p. 100.
[92] Lee, 'Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc 381', pp. 221–22.

only to describe Esther.[93] Each of these patterns, she suggests, is indicative of Ælfric's attitudes and intentions as an author: his attempt to bring about social reform while making the text relatable to his audience and at the same balancing the need for doctrinal correctness and clarity. However, all of these observations are based on just that: observation. They are not connected with a systematic analysis of the linguistic patterns, and some of them are tenuous at best. Vashti, for example, is mentioned only 22 times in the entire text (compared with 75 for Esther and 140 for Ahasuerus), and among these only two refer to her physical appearance—a minute sample size if we are to compare the language of her physical appearance with anything at all, including the description of Esther's beauty.

Like Klein and Clayton, Gustafson also offers little in the way of linguistic evidence, basing his argument primarily on critical literary and translation theory. Although he provides useful information about the history of the text before Ælfric and suggests plausible reasons for some of the observed changes Ælfric made to the narrative, he does not work from any systematic examination of the language. His observations about what constitute Ælfric's intentional changes are suspect, owing to his assumption that the text was based on the Vulgate (despite being aware of the possibility of Old Latin influence), as are, as a matter of course, his explanations for those changes. In addition, many of his conclusions are confusing, since they do not seem to be in line with his own reasoning. For example, though he notes the many omissions in L'Isle's transcription of Ælfric's homily on Job, he nonetheless concludes that Esther was not written as a homily and that the lack of commentary in the Laud Misc. 381 manuscript is due to Ælfric, not L'Isle.[94] Also like the others, his conclusions are based on observations but without grounding in a specific linguistic framework.

CONCLUSION

Almost from its inception, the book of Esther has been a source of difficulty for numerous groups: Jewish and Christian, clerical and lay, ancient and modern. Its history is complex, still confounding modern biblical scholars; its content is problematic, inspiring both deep loathing and heart-felt loyalty. These complications have made the book a prime target for revision and adaptation, according to the needs of specific groups. Many modern biblical scholars see the earliest extant texts—MT,

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[93] Klein, pp. 102–03.

[94] Gustafson, pp. 13–21.

AT, and LXX—as evidence of early adaptation in this manner, filling in narrative gaps, asserting historicity, and clarifying theological points. And, as we shall see, Ælfric seems to have been carrying on this long tradition of alteration and adaptation, shaping characterizations to fit the time and culture of his audience.

Modern scholars have largely neglected Ælfric's version of the Esther story, even during periods of intense interest in Ælfric and his works. This neglect is, I think, unjust. Although the text is relatively short and the prose generally straightforward, it maintains the inherent human interest of the biblical account, and Ælfric demonstrates again and again his skill as a word-smith, manipulating the language to highlight the text's themes and draw distinct characterizations, often in subtle ways. While those scholars who have addressed this version in recent scholarship have drawn on linguistic evidence for their conclusions, a stylistic analysis seeks to not only observe the language of the text, but also to understand why it creates particular effects, based on our ever-increasing knowledge about how human language and human cognition work. I will expand on this distinction concerning methodology in the following chapter.

Methodology

Cognitive-based examination of Anglo-Saxon literature has only recently been advanced in the academic world. As Harbus points out, despite the enormous interest in cognition within psychology and related fields since the 1960s, researchers studying cognition from a science-based perspective (psychology, neurobiology, etc.) rarely turn to literary sources for data to assist in their research, and even more rarely look to historical information.[1] The analysis of literature from a cognitive perspective has been left almost exclusively to stylisticians, who have on the whole embraced this type of analysis.[2] Historical literature has been slowly gaining more interest within stylistics, but this interest usually stretches no further than the Early Modern period, particularly the works of Shakespeare.[3] The analysis of Anglo-Saxon literature from a cognitive stylistic viewpoint, then, is uniquely poised to bridge the gaps in our knowledge of human cognition on several fronts. The information thus gleaned can help us to better understand the development of human cognition diachronically, while at the same time offering insights into the cognitive life of the Anglo-Saxons.

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[1] Antonina Harbus, *Cognitive Approaches to Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2012), pp. 162–70.

[2] See, for example, *Cognitive Stylistics: Language and Cognition in Text Analysis*, ed. by Elena Semino and Jonathan Culpeper (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2002); Peter Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002); as well as the plethora of additional studies that will be cited in this and later chapters.

[3] See Jonathan Culpeper and Elena Semino, 'Constructing Witches and Spells: Speech Acts and Types in Early Modern England', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 1 (2000): 97–116; Jonathan Culpeper, 'Keyness: Words, Parts of Speech and Semantic Categories in the Character-Talk of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*', *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 14 (2009), 29–59; *Stylistics and Shakespeare: Transdisciplinary Approaches*, ed. by Mireille Ravassat and Jonathan Culpeper (London: Bloomsbury, 2011); and Mike Scott and Chris Tribble, *Textual Patterns: Key Words and Corpus Analysis in Language Education* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2006), esp. pp. 59–63.

To my knowledge, this is the first cognitive stylistic examination of characterization in an Old English text.[4] While I hope that the study works equally well within both disciplines—Anglo-Saxon studies and stylistics—it is situated primarily within the former. No ground-breaking new stylistic frameworks are developed; rather, well established methods are applied to a text that has been largely ignored in both disciplines. In this chapter, then, I will describe the theoretical underpinnings of the study, explaining what stylistics is and why I have chosen to use it in analyzing characterization in Ælfric's *Esther*.

I begin by describing stylistics and, in particular, the sub-field of cognitive stylistics, which primarily informs my investigation. Next I describe cognitive stylistic approaches to characterization, namely those developed by Jonathan Culpeper and by Peter Stockwell and Michaela Mahlberg, with reference to the work of other stylisticians. Ultimately, I find that the current frameworks are lacking for my purposes and therefore propose a combined model, which I work from for the remainder of the study.

Since I also draw on corpus stylistic methods in my analysis, I describe this sub-field as well, focusing on specific corpus linguistic concepts that I use—namely wordlists, frequency counts, keywords, and concordances. As I have developed a small corpus of Ælfric's writings, which I use for occasional comparative data, I describe this in some detail, including the software used and how the corpus was collected and prepared for analysis.

COGNITIVE STYLISTICS

Stylistics is a branch of linguistics that examines literary texts by means of linguistic principles and methods. The aim of stylistics is to better understand both literary texts and the creativity of human language by examining how language is used to create literary effects. Some of these effects are localized to specific texts or passages within a text; others are more global, occurring throughout an entire text, genre, author's corpus, or in all literature.

Stylistic analysis aims to be scientific, in the sense that it is rigorous, retrievable, and replicable.[5] It is rigorous in that the analysis is based on a clearly defined methodology, which is systematically applied to the text at hand. It is retrievable in

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[4] Although Antonina Harbus offers excellent cognitive stylistic analyses of Old English poetry, she does not examine character.

[5] For these 'three R's' of stylistics, see Paul Simpson, *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students* (Oxford: Routledge, 2014), p. 4.

that the methodology is explicit and transparent, employing shared, well-defined terminology, which allows other researchers to follow the pathway of the analysis and see how the conclusion has been reached. It is replicable in that other researchers are able to use the same methods and verify them, either by analyzing the same text or by applying them to other texts. Although debates continue as to whether stylistics (and, for that matter, linguistics) can ever be truly scientific, or whether it should be, the fact remains that the discipline has aimed from its inception for precision, verifiability, and falsifiability.[6] While the stylistician understands that what she ultimately produces is an interpretation of the literary text's meaning, and that this interpretation is inevitably subjective in some ways, she commits to making the reasoning behind her interpretation visible and open to examination by others.

To consider this from another perspective, let us ask the question this way: What is the difference between *style* and *stylistics*? The answer lies in what, exactly, the study describes. Traditional literary investigations of style describe the overall manner of writing in the text (or genre, author's corpus, etc.), often in abstract terms such as 'flowing', 'aggressive', 'halting', 'poetic', or 'invertebrate'.[7] Language-based examinations of style describe the specific language that creates this impression. These are often quantitative in nature, describing the number or percentage of words in the text that are (for example) nouns, adjectives, passive verbs, or personal pronouns; for this reason, this line of inquiry may be called 'stylometry'. Stylistics, while it may describe both abstract impressions and the stylometry of the text, goes beyond these to explain *why* the language gives a particular impression.[8]

Stylistic analysis, properly done, is doubly useful in that it provides greater understanding of the text and also of human language more broadly. Often, the texts that draw the greatest interest from stylisticians are those that push the boundaries of language and literature, usually in ways that have not been sufficiently accounted for in general linguistic theories. In analyzing such a text, the stylistician not only produces an interpretation of the text, but often also uncovers problems that the linguistic theories of the day have overlooked. This, in turn, allows linguists to re-work their theories to become more robust and comprehensive.

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[6] For an excellent discussion of the philosophy of the discipline, see Michael Toolan, 'The Theory and Philosophy of Stylistics', in *The Cambridge Handbook of Stylistics*, ed. by Peter Stockwell and Sara Whiteley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 13–31.

[7] See Simpson, p. 4 for 'invertebrate'.

[8] Special thanks to Jacqueline Cordell for helping to develop this framework. Katrina Wilkins and Jacqueline Cordell, 'Crossing Academic Boundaries: Linking Literary Linguistics to Old English Pedagogy' (unpublished paper, Teachers of Old English in Britain and Ireland conference, University College Cork, 21 October 2017).

Cognitive stylistics emerged as a sub-field of the discipline in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and has been a highly productive area. As Semino and Culpeper explain:

> Cognitive stylistics combines the kind of explicit, rigorous and detailed linguistic analysis of literary texts that is typical of the stylistics tradition with a systematic and theoretically informed consideration of the cognitive structures and processes that underlie the production and reception of language.[9]

Or, to put it another way, cognitive stylistics involves thinking about what we are doing when we read.[10] In addition, then, to the linguistic methods and theories that inform all stylistic research, cognitive stylistics also draws on concepts from cognitive science to better understand what takes place in readers' minds as they read. Cognitive approaches have received much attention in recent years, due in part to the increasing focus on cognition in psychology and related fields, and also to the usefulness of these cognitive approaches in better understanding the language of literature and the interplay between author, text, and reader.

A foundational concept in cognitive stylistics is that of foregrounding.[11] This term, borrowed from art criticism, describes the cognitive capacity of humans to differentiate figures from grounds—that is, to notice what is near or far from us, what is moving, or what is most important to our given situation. When gazing across a field, for example, you might notice that something is moving across it. The field is the ground: it is static, uninteresting, the backdrop against which something happens. The moving thing—perhaps it is a horse and rider, or a wolf, or a snake—is the figure: it is dynamic, interesting, the thing that is happening. Our innate capacity to notice this moving figure and to recognize that it is distinct from the ground is fundamental to the survival of the human race: if the figure is an angry snake, for example, we will be on high alert to ensure that we do not become its next victim. Should the snake stop moving, we will soon realize that it does not pose a danger to

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[9] Elena Semino and Jonathan Culpeper, 'Foreword', in *Cognitive Stylistics*, p. ix.

[10] See Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics*, p. 2.

[11] For accessible introductions to linguistic/stylistic foregrounding, see Mick Short, *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays, and Prose* (London: Pearson Education, 1996), esp. Chapters 1 and 2; Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics*, esp. Chapter 2; and Simpson, *Stylistics*. These and other scholars have drawn on, among many others, Geoffrey N. Leech, *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (London: Longman, 1969); Willie van Peer, *Stylistics and Psychology: Investigations of Foregrounding* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); and Guy Cook, *Discourse and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

us, and it will soon blend into the ground (that is, the field), while our attention shifts elsewhere, seeking things of more immediate interest to us.

In this example, it is the snake's motion that distinguishes it from the field, since its dynamic movement deviates from the static background. This deviation is what we mean by the term 'foregrounding'. When something deviates from what is around it, our minds notice that thing and try to make sense of it, to interpret its meaning. Motion is not the only thing that distinguishes a figure from the ground on which it acts, however: other features, such as size, shape, line, distance, and overall attractiveness may also factor into our decision (unconscious though it may be) as to what is a figure and what a ground. At least, this is the case in visual foregrounding— whether in the real world, in visual art, or in literary art.

Literary art, because it is composed of language, may additionally employ deviation in the words of the text. When you open a novel, the size of the typeface used for the title foregrounds that language, as compared against the smaller (and more abundant) body text; the title deviates visually from the rest of the text. But within the body text, the patterns of words may additionally foreground different elements. Referring to a person's body as a 'house', for example, would be deviant, since this word normally describes a man-made structure, deliberately constructed from materials, in which people live. This kind of deviation is precisely what causes our literary appreciation for Old English words such as *banhus* 'bone-house';[12] the deviant use of *hus* 'house' to describe the dwelling-place of bones (i.e., the body) foregrounds the word and makes us think about its interpretation. Similarly, alliterative phrases are relatively unusual in everyday language, and the regularity with which such alliteration occurs in Old English poetry is one of the features that signals to us that there is something particularly noteworthy about that literature.[13] The deviation indicates that there is something important happening here. Such deviations and the foregrounding effect they have are the very foundation of stylistic studies, which seek to both identify the deviations in a literary text and to understand how these deviations affect our interpretation of the text.

It should be noted that deviation can be created by unexpectedly irregular uses of language—as with the examples of *banhus* and alliteration noted above—or by unexpectedly regular language. Those who distinguish between these call the latter form 'repetition', while maintaining the term 'deviation' for the former. This

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[12] E.g., *Beowulf*, ll. 2501, 3143; also found in *Exodus*, *Andreas*, and *Guthlac*.

[13] Of course, because alliteration is so pervasive in OE poetry and rhythmic prose, it becomes the ground within these genres, and other kinds of deviation are more apt to draw interpretative interest from the reader.

distinction is used in Culpeper's characterization model, discussed in the following section, as well as in works by Short and Leech.[14] However, others have noted that repetition is just one type of deviation—the unexpectedness is what matters, they argue, and whether it is created through regularity or irregularity is immaterial.[15]

Many stylistic studies have additionally drawn on concepts and models such as metaphor, conceptual blending, and text-world theory (TWT). While these frameworks certainly have great potential in the analysis Old English literature, including Ælfric's *Esther*, they are beyond the scope of the present study. Thus, although the reader is likely to see these concepts mentioned with some frequency in cognitive stylistic analyses,[16] he will not encounter them in this thesis.

One criticism often leveled at stylistics is that it does not produce any new insights into the text, but instead merely reiterates the interpretations that others have already made. This criticism is unjustified on two counts. First, it is often simply untrue; a number of stylistic analyses have produced fresh insights into literature. Michael Stubbs, for instance, notes that syntax contributes to the sense of unreliability and uncertainty in Joseph Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*. While literary critics had long noted words in the semantic fields of darkness and obscurity (such as 'fog', 'gloom', and 'dark'), the grammatical patterns (e.g., 'something/body/where', 'kind of', and 'like') had seemingly escaped their notice.[17] Dan McIntyre, in investigating mind style in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, finds that the main character's abnormal mind style (he is widely regarded by critics and general readers as having Asperger's Syndrome) does not lead to a lack of understanding metaphor, as was previously suggested by Elena Semino;[18] rather, the character uses and processes metaphors regularly—but the metaphors are different than those commonly used by the general population.[19] As such studies demonstrate, the insights derived through stylistic analysis are by no means unoriginal; rather, they at times contradict the researchers' (and other literary critics') expectations, and they very often identify specific linguistic devices contributing to readers' general interpretations, in ways that would be impossible or highly unlikely by intuitive interpretation alone.

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[14] See above, n. 11.

[15] This is the line followed by Stockwell, *Cognitive Poetics*, and by Simpson.

[16] Including Harbus, Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

[17] Michael Stubbs, 'Conrad in the Computer', *Language and Literature*, 14 (2005), 5–24.

[18] Elena Semino, 'Pragmatic Failure, Mind Style and Characterization in Fiction about Autism', *Language and Literature*, 23 (2014), 141–58.

[19] Dan McIntyre, 'From Steam to Software: On the Use of Computers in Stylistics' (unpublished paper, Poetics and Linguistics Association conference, West Chester University, 20 July 2017).

Second—and far more importantly—this criticism misses the point of stylistic investigation. The point is not necessarily to produce new interpretations, but to more explicitly explain how those interpretations are arrived at, how we are able to derive meaning from literary language—meaning that is often starkly different from that of everyday language use. The criticism, indeed, is something akin to claiming that science has done nothing valuable by explaining why the sky appears blue. On the contrary, in investigating why the sky is blue, science has added much to our understanding of the physical world and of human cognition, including the phenomenon of light as waves, the mechanics of optics, and the cognitive processing that leads to the perception of a particular range of light wavelengths as the color we label 'blue'. Although the sky remains blue, the investigation—conducted in a rigorous, retrievable, and replicable manner—has immensely improved human knowledge. While this comparison is perhaps a bit extreme, it illustrates the principal concern of stylistics: not the interpretation, but investigating how that interpretation is arrived at. Indeed, it is not uncommon in stylistic studies for the researcher to first examine common or strongly expressed reactions to a text, as a precursor to explaining the linguistic principles that might have led to such reactions. Stylistics seeks not only to describe the effects and meanings we perceive from reading a particular piece of literature, but also to explain how the author produces those effects and how readers interpret those effects to arrive at a given meaning—not only to describe the 'what' of literary interpretation, but also the 'how' and the 'why'.

COGNITIVE STYLISTIC APPROACHES TO CHARACTERIZATION

Not long ago, a conversation with my doctoral supervisor turned to the question of whom we would prefer as a dinner companion: Wulfstan Archbishop of York or Ælfric of Eynsham. My supervisor said that she would by far prefer Wulfstan, since he would be entertaining to talk to and she liked his fiery temperament; I, on the other hand, felt that I would appreciate Ælfric and his quieter demeanor. My supervisor scoffed. 'Ælfric,' she said, 'is the sort of person who would take a little boiled potato and then stiffly sit in a corner refusing any other food and looking coldly at anyone taking a second helping.'

In many ways this conversation was not particularly remarkable; after all, similar conversations are held every day, the world around. But, in a sense, that is precisely what *is* so remarkable about such a conversation. My supervisor and I have never met either of these Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastics, since they lived about a thousand years

before either of us was born. Not only have we not met these men, but we know relatively little about them: there are no portraits or snapshots of them in existence; we no longer know where they are buried, and thus have no physical remains we could examine; we do not even know when they were born. Indeed, we have only a few sketchy details about their lives, such as their religious appointments and, in Wulfstan's case, his death date. The only other information we have about them is what we glean from the writings they have left behind them (no insignificant matter, to which I will return later in this chapter). Given that we know so little factual information about these men, how could we possibly discuss their potential as dinner guests?

This is precisely the kind of question that a cognitive approach to characterization seeks to answer. Although in stylistics, the question generally concerns characters in a (literary) text, the methods it draws on—most of which originate in cognitive science fields, including neurobiology and cognitive psychology—apply equally to the scenario described above. In other words, a cognitive stylistic approach to character proceeds from the principle of continuity across life experiences; that is, it assumes that we conceive of fictional characters in much the same way as we do real people.

Within stylistic inquiry, Culpeper's psychology-based approach to characterization has been particularly influential, as has the cognitive psychological concept of mind-modeling—based on Theory of Mind (ToM)—which has been employed by several scholars, including Stockwell and Mahlberg in a recent study of characterization in Dickens's *David Copperfield*. In this section, I will therefore discuss each of these approaches before describing my particular approach, which combines elements of both models.

CULPEPER'S (2001) MODEL

Jonathan Culpeper, in his seminal work on characterization in (primarily dramatic) fictional texts,[20] proposes that building a mental model of character is a dual process, involving both top-down and bottom-up information processing. Top-down processing occurs when the reader activates prior knowledge about a certain character type, which may be literary (e.g., protagonist, anti-hero, sidekick) or quotidian (e.g., mother, shopkeeper, musician) in nature, and uses this knowledge in attributing traits to the character. Bottom-up processing occurs when the reader picks out specific cues

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[20] Jonathan Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation: People in Plays and Other Texts* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education, 2001).

from the text and builds these together into a working model of the character. These processes are by no means mutually exclusive, nor temporally distinct; rather, both happen simultaneously and iteratively, so that the reader continually tweaks his model of the character as he reads. Some of Culpeper's case studies in the monograph describe this kind of simultaneous and iterative process, demonstrating how, for example, the text of *The Taming of the Shrew* might activate a reader's prior knowledge concerning shrews; once this is activated, the reader will then use local textual cues to both reinforce and contradict this prior knowledge and build a mental model specific to the character of Katherina.[21]

Culpeper's model draws extensively on psychological attribution theories. Such theories attempt to explain how humans attribute traits to ourselves and others. In particular, Culpeper draws on Jones's correspondent inference theory and Kelley's covariation theory.[22] Jones suggests that we attribute traits to people when they behave in unexpected ways, while Kelley argues that we attribute a trait when people behave consistently in different circumstances. In many ways, as Culpeper points out, these theories are opposite sides of the same coin: 'Jones concentrates on unexpected irregularity and Kelley on unexpected regularity'.[23] Culpeper then relates this to foregrounding theory: Jones's theory relies on a form of deviation, and Kelley's on a form of repetition.[24]

Culpeper groups linguistic characterization cues into three broad categories: explicit, implicit, and authorial. Explicit cues are those things that a character or the author overtly states about a particular character; implicit cues involve the character's actions, from which the reader may infer what that character is generally like; finally, authorial cues are those that do not originate with any character, but rather come from the author—those things over which 'the character notionally has no power of choice',[25] including names and physical features. He further divides the 'explicit' category into those cues where a character directly describes her own nature ('self-

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[21] *Language and Characterisation*, Chapter 6.

[22] Edward E. Jones and Keith E. Davis, 'From Acts to Dispositions: The Attribution Process in Social Psychology', in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, ed. by Leonard Berkowitz and others (New York: Academic Press, 1964–), II (1966), pp. 219–66; Harold H. Kelley, 'Attribution Theory in Social Psychology', in *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, ed. by Marshall R. Jones and others (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1953–), XV: ed. by David Levine (1967), pp. 192–238.

[23] Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation,* p. 133.

[24] Though, it should be noted, Culpeper is careful not to claim that these concepts are precisely the same as foregrounding; ibid., pp. 133–135.

[25] Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation*, p. 229.

presentation') and those where one character describes another ('other-presentation').[26]

This model primarily developed with reference to dramatic texts, especially Shakespseare,[27] and Culpeper's categorization system reflects this. Most significantly, his 'authorial cues' are not particularly useful for narrative prose. The category is intended to capture the characterizing information in stage directions and proper names. However, stage directions are non-existent in a narrative prose text, which relies instead on narration of action to convey this kind of information. On the other hand, most narrative prose does involve a narrator, and characterization cues can emanate from this entity. Additionally, the use of a narrator allows the possibility of ambiguous cues, where the line between narrator and author or between narrator and character can be blurred. In such cases, it may be impossible to definitively claim that a cue emanates from one or the other; instead, the reader (or researcher) could reasonably argue that the cue emanates from either. In such cases, the notion of 'authorial cues' becomes even more problematic.

In order to mitigate these problems, Dan McIntyre suggests that cues might be more appropriately categorized according to the discourse level at which they occur,[28] as outlined by Mick Short.[29] Thus, for narrative prose McIntyre would identify characterization cues as occurring between the author and the reader (discourse level 1), between the narrator and the narratee (discourse level 2), or between one character and another (discourse level 3) (see Figure 2.1). Further, McIntyre notes that in reality all characterization cues ultimately emanate from the author and that Culpeper's own definition of authorial cues itself implies a humanizing approach to character—an approach that both Culpeper and McIntyre dismiss as inadequate to understanding the ontological status of character.[30] McIntyre's revisions to the model allow it to be applied to a great variety of texts with only minimal tweaks in terminology, at the same time clarifying the tricky issue of ontology.

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[26] Ibid., *Language and Characterisation*, 167–72.

[27] Although other types of texts are occasionally discussed—including radio ads, jokes, newspapers, and films—Culpeper never explicitly addresses narrative fiction. The model has been used, however, in the study of character in narrative fiction: Brian Walker, 'Character and Characterisation in Julian Barnes' *Talkig It Over*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Lancaster University, 2012); Katrina Wilkins, 'Characterization in Narrative Prose Fiction: A Corpus-Based Analysis of Two Characters from J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* Books' (unpublished master's dissertation, Lancaster University, 2005).

[28] Dan McIntyre, 'Characterisation', in *The Cambridge Handbook of Stylistics*, ed. by Peter Stockwell and Sara Whiteley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 149–64 (pp. 156–57).

[29] Short, pp. 169, 257.

[30] McIntyre, 'Characterisation', pp. 149–151; Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation*, pp. 5–12.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                               │
│   Addresser 1      Message      Addressee 1   │
│   (Author)                      (Reader)      │
│                                               │
│                                               │
│   Addresser 2      Message      Addressee 2   │
│   (Narrator)                    (Narratee)    │
│                                               │
│                                               │
│   Addresser 3      Message      Addressee 3   │
│   (Character A)                 (Character B)  │
│                                               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
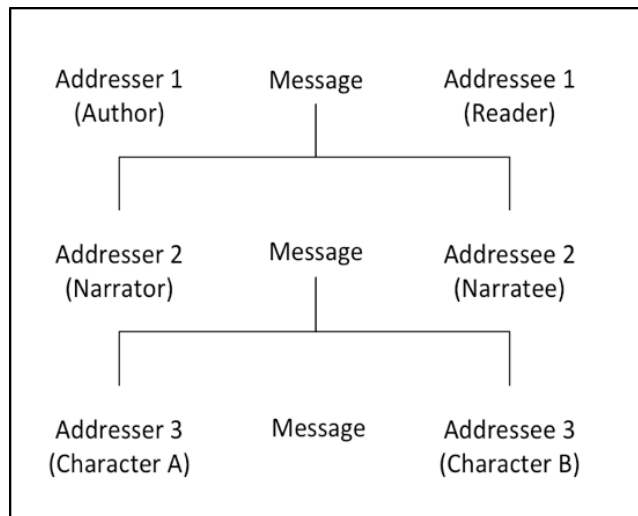
Figure 2.1 Discourse structure of narrative prose fiction (based on Short, p. 257)

As will be discussed below ('Synthesizing Models'), however, this method of categorizing cues according to discourse level does not, in fact, map directly onto Culpeper's notions of explicit versus implicit cues, as both types of cues may occur on any discourse level. Rather, Culpeper's distinction between explicit and implicit cues parallels the distinction between the top-down and bottom-up reasoning processes the reader must use to build a mental model of the character. Explicit cues trigger a top-down process, while implicit cues require a bottom-up process. Culpeper suggests that as we read about fictional characters, we build our knowledge of them by drawing on generalized prior knowledge[31] first, and then gradually building these out into fuller schemas for the specific characters we encounter. Characters who never progress beyond such generic schemas are, in Forster's terminology,[32] flat characters; the fuller and more complex a character's schema becomes, the more round that character becomes. In contrast to this, early theories of characterization worked from a blank-slate model, in which it was assumed that the reader comes to the text with no

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[31] Specifically, Culpeper discussed schemas, one particular 'brand' of knowledge conceptualization. While the specifics of schemas are still widely debated—including how information is structured, how it is activated, and how new information is organized into pre-existing or new structures—there is ample evidence to suggest that they do exist, in some form or another; see Chapter 3, 'Explicit Cues: A Working Model', for further discussion. On a grammatical note: many writers use *schemata* as the plural (based on the Greek), but I prefer the more English-friendly *schemas*; the same is true for *lemmas*, which are discussed later (both in this chapter and subsequent ones).

[32] E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (London: Arnold & Co., 1953; originally published 1927), pp. 63–79.

preconceived notions of what a character is like and then builds up a mental characterization as they accumulate information from the text.[33]

Culpeper's model of characterization, while useful and highly influential, is not without fault. Notably, he does little to identify specifically what kinds of textual information might be considered characterization cues, much less what distinguishes explicit from implicit cues, linguistically speaking. He was, however, the first stylistician to develop any systematic approach to characterization, a topic that has long been avoided by literary scholars as a result, largely, of the debates throughout the twentieth century concerning the ontological status of character—which culminated in the rather extreme position that since character is not real, it has no place in the study of literature.[34] Perhaps Culpeper's greatest contribution—beyond re-opening the discussion of character—is his position that readers do not begin their characterization with a blank slate, but rather draw on their prior knowledge as they encounter fictional characters. This idea will be taken up further in the following section and in the introduction to Chapter 3.

THEORY OF MIND AND MIND MODELING

Theory of mind (ToM), a concept from cognitive psychology, posits that one of the hallmarks of being cognitive beings is the ability to recognize our own consciousness, and to recognize the consciousness of other beings—including, crucially, understanding that others' consciousness is not exactly like our own.[35] In other words, we are constantly—whether aware of it or not—modeling the consciousness of other human beings.[36] Stylisticians have drawn on ToM to explain how readers construct mental models of characters in a text. In essence, they argue, what we traditionally think of as characterization is merely an extension of attributing consciousness to other human beings—an extension of ToM, that is.

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[33] Ibid., pp. 43–79.

[34] E.g., Joel Weinsheimer, 'Theory of Character: Emma', *Poetics Today* 1 (1979), 185–211; Algirdas Julien Greimas, *Sémantique Structurale* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1966).

[35] For an introduction, see 'Theory of Mind', *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <www.iep.utm.edu/theomind> [accessed 28 December 2017]. See also David Premak and Guy Woodruff, 'Does the Chimpanzee Have a Theory of Mind?', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 1 (1978), 515–26; *Theories of Theories of Mind*, ed. by Peter Carruthers and Peter K. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Ian Apperly, *Mindreaders: The Cognitive Basis of 'Theory of Mind'* (Hove: Psychology Press, 2010).

[36] As well as non-humans (e.g., pets) and even non-conscious entitites (e.g., Mother Nature).

The marvelous thing about ToM is that it works with even very slim information about another person. Most people I encounter during the day I give very little thought to, often not bothering to even ascribe them a consciousness as I pass them in the street or in the corridor. But if I sit someplace—say, in the café outside my university building—and people-watch, I can easily begin building mental models for the people I see there, even just based on their appearances. Since I am a student at my university, I tend to assume that most people I see here are also students. But if the person at the table next to me looks older than me, I am likely to assume that she is staff rather than a student. If she appears to be younger than me, I might assume she is a first-year undergraduate student; and if she is very young indeed, I might assume that she is here on a school trip or with a parent or guardian and is not a student at all (at least not at this university). Of course, any of these assumptions might be correct or not: the older woman at the table next to me might in fact be a student and not staff, and the very young woman might be a child prodigy who is studying for a degree at the university. In each case, I can search for additional evidence to support or disprove my ideas.

So far, this mental model is based entirely on appearance—and only one factor of appearance, age. Other information, from her clothing to her vocabulary, from her facial expressions to her gait, can all offer me further information, which can then be worked into my mental model—but none of it is necessary for me to construct the model to begin with. If you have ever known someone with a particularly active imagination, you may have witnessed how they are able to build quite complex and detailed mental models, including personal histories, for people they have never even spoken to. The accuracy of such a model is another question, but the point is that we can and do build these mental models of others, often based on very minimal information.

To return to the earlier example, mind-modeling is what allows my supervisor and me to talk about what Wulfstan and Ælfric would be like as dinner guests. The main sources for our information about these men and their personalities are the writings they have left behind. In this case, since they were each engaged in the church as a profession, we have a great number of religious writings, plus some other writings such as personal letters and teaching aids. Ælfric, in fact, is the author of the greatest number of texts in the surviving Old English corpus (apart from Anonymous), and we thus have quite a quantity of his words to use as the basis for our mind-modeling of his consciousness. Writing, because it is a product of a mental process, inevitably bears some mark of the consciousness that created it; we may call it 'voice' or 'style', but in essence, some small part of Ælfric's unique consciousness

and personality has survived in his writings, which we, as temporally distant readers, can use to model his consciousness or personality.

In a similar way, we are able to build cognitive models of the characters in a narrative text, who—though they are non-human, non-conscious entities—bear some resemblance to conscious human beings. When applied in literary research, this approach is usually termed 'mind modeling' or 'mind reading', and it has yielded interesting results in many studies,[37] including one by Stockwell and Mahlberg which will be discussed shortly. In addition to ToM, mind modeling draws on possible worlds theory and the principle of minimal departure.[38] That is, researchers assume that when we model the consciousness of a character (or of a real person), we begin by assuming that the other's consciousness is similar to our own. Since it is the one we are most intimately familiar with, we use our own consciousness as a template for all others, updating it as we find evidence to contradict or support whatever is in the model. This is combined with the cognitive science view that personality is heavily influenced by—even the same as—one's consciousness. This conclusion arises from several studies concerning cognition and its relationship to emotion and other traits that we generally think of as 'personality'. Cognitive function, as it turns out, is closely linked to traits such as generosity, courage, and jealousy—among other things.[39] Thus, modeling another's consciousness amounts to modeling their personality, or character. It is not difficult to see the application to fictional textual characters: as we read, we model the consciousness, or personality, of the characters, just as we do so often with any other being—conscious or not. A cognitive stylistic examination of character, then, seeks to understand how we build these mental models as we encounter literary characters by examining how the specific language of the text contributes to the process.

Recently, Stockwell and Mahlberg have used the mind-modeling approach to examine characterization in Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*.[40] While acknowledging

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[37] See Mark Turner, *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Lisa Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2006).

[38] Marie-Laure Ryan, 'Fiction, Non-Factuals, and the Principle of Minimal Departure', *Poetics*, 9 (1980), 403–22.

[39] This is the overarching theme of Antonio Damasio's series of popular science books: *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon, 1994); *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion, and the Making of Consciousness* (San Diego: Harcourt, 2000); and *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain* (London: Vintage, 2004).

[40] Peter Stockwell and Michaela Mahlberg, 'Mind-Modelling with Corpus Stylistics in *David Copperfield*', *Language and Literature*, 24 (2015), 129–47.

the value of Culpeper's 2001 model, they raise concerns about its reliance on schema theory and the problems surrounding the question of just what constitutes a schema or how it is formed, maintained, or accessed by the brain—problems which are persistent throughout all schema models[41] and related theories.[42] Mind-modeling, in contrast to this, is based on the cognitive scientific principle of continuity across life experiences—suggesting, that is, that we think about real-life people and imagined people in essentially the same way. Thus, where Culpeper's model proposes that we draw on pre-formed schemas for the initial mental construction of character, Stockwell and Mahlberg suggest that we always begin with our own cognition as the basis for any character's cognition. This process is iterative, continuous, and active: as long as new information continues to come in (by continued contact with the person/character), we continue to adapt our mental model of that person's consciousness.

Stockwell and Mahlberg identify five main types of characterization cues:

- 'Direct descriptions of physical appearance and manner, gestures and body language;
- 'The presentation of speech for an apparently autonomous sense of characters' personality, mood and perspective, and narrative suspensions within direct speech, and the framing discourse;
- 'The representation of thought, beliefs and intentions (almost as if the reader has telepathic ability);
- 'The reactions of other characters (including the narrator) who can serve as counterparts for a reader's own directed, preferred reading response;
- 'Social relationships defined by deictic markers, defining and sustaining all the divergences of characters' viewpoints from the reader's own.'[43]

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[41] Roger C. Schank and Robert P. Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals, and Understanding: An Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structures* (New York and London: John Wiley & Sons, 1977); and David E. Rumelhart, 'Schemata: The Building Blocks of Knowledge', in *Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension*, ed. by Rand Spiro, Bertram Bruce, and William Brewer (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1980), pp. 35–58.

[42] These include framing theory (Marvin Minsky, 'A Framework for Representing Knowledge', in *The Psychology of Computer Vision*, ed. by Patrick Henry Winston [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975], pp. 211–77; Leonard Talmy, *Toward a Cognitive Semantics*, 2 vols [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2000], I: *Concept Structuring Systems* [2000]); scenarios (Anthony J. Sanford and Simon C. Garrod, *Understanding Written Language: Explorations of Comprehension Beyond the Sentence* [Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1981]); and idealized cognitive models (George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987]).

[43] Stockwell and Mahlberg, p. 134.

These categories are not particularly groundbreaking—as they themselves note, roughly these same categories are identified in several other studies.[44] However, their paper innovatively blends cognitive and corpus approaches, a combination that has seen greater use and acceptance within stylistics in recent years. (See below, 'Corpus Stylistcs: Methodology, Tools, and Data' for more on this combination.)

SYNTHESIZING MODELS

As Stockwell and Mahlberg note, the five different kinds of information they identify as being useful in building a mental representation of character are also identified by Culpeper, though often in different terms. However, Culpeper prefers to differentiate between what is explicitly stated and what is implicit in each category. Thus, while characterization cues concerning a character's thoughts, beliefs, and intentions are likely to be explicit in nature—often being presented as direct or free indirect thought, 'almost as though the reader has telepathic ability', as Stockwell and Mahlberg say[45]— they may well be implicit, the reader only recognizing them based on patterns of behavior throughout the text. For Culpeper, these different types of cues, implicit and explicit, trigger different kinds of cognitive processing (bottom-up and top-down), and this is what matters for him.

In other words, Culpeper categorizes cues by the type of mental processing required of the reader, Stockwell and Mahlberg by the type of information they contain. As mentioned earlier, McIntyre would prefer to categorize according to the discourse level where the cue occurs. Synthesizing all of these models, we might very roughly map the categorizations against one another as follows (Table 2.1):

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[44] These include Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation*; Michaela Mahlberg, *Corpus Stylistics and Dickens's Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2013); John Frow, *Character and Person* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Routledge, 2001); and Blakey Vermeule, *Why Do We Care about Literary Characters?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

[45] P. 134.

Table 2.1: Comparison of three models of characterization cues

Stockwell & Mahlberg	Culpeper	McIntyre
direct descriptions of physical appearance, manners, gestures, body language	implicit	narrator–narratee (level 2)
speech, narrative suspensions in speech, framing discourse	implicit explicit	character–character (level 3) narrator–narratee (level 2)
thought, beliefs, intentions	implicit explicit	character–character (level 3) narrator–narratee (level 2)
reactions of other characters (incl. narrator)	implicit explicit	narrator–narratee (level 2) character–character (level 3)
social relationships defined by deictic markers	implicit explicit	narrator–narratee (level 2) character–character (level 3)

Note that Stockwell and Mahlberg's list does not account for Culpeper's authorial cues (McIntyre's level 1, author–reader cues). This seems to reflect McIntyre's contention that ultimately all characterization cues derive from the author and therefore this is not a useful distinction.[46] Culpeper includes in this category the stage directions, which the reader of the play sees/reads, but which do not seem to emanate from a character or narrator. Naturally, in narrative fiction this group of characterization cues is not pertinent, and the kinds of cues that would be presented as stage directions in a play generally emanate instead from the narrator.

Proper names, the other type of information included in Culpeper's authorial cues, do occur in narrative prose texts, of course, and his comments on this category can be helpful. As Culpeper points out, names may convey implicit information, such as age, nationality, and gender. At times, names may even be almost explicit in their characterizing information, as with Anthony Dull (Shakespeare's *Love's Labours Lost*), Pip and Estella (Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*), and Beowulf (whose name literally means 'bee-wolf' and is often considered a kenning for 'bear'). While there is certainly a great deal of characterizing information that may be gleaned from proper names in Old English literature,[47] the names in Ælfric's *Esther* have not been chosen by Ælfric. Rather, the names are pre-determined by his source materials. Although

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[46] 'Characterisation', pp. 156–57.

[47] For an excellent overview of literary onomastics, including examples from the OE period to the modern era, see Paul Cavill, 'Language-Based Approaches to Names in Literature', in *The Oxford Handbook of Names and Naming*, ed. by Carole Hough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 355–67.

they may still convey characterizing information to an Anglo-Saxon audience—most notably, a sense of exoticism, since they are all Persian in origin—they do not emanate from Ælfric and therefore do not help us in understanding his particular characterization techniques. For this reason, proper names are not included in my analysis of characterization cues.

Likewise, it is interesting that Stockwell and Mahlberg's categories include several that, in Culpeper's conception, could be either implicit or explicit. (The only exception seems to be the first category, that of direct description of physical phenomena; I cannot think of any description of physical attributes or actions that might offer explicit characterization cues, though I would be happy to be proven wrong.) Stockwell and Mahlberg, I suspect, would argue that all characterization cues are ultimately implicit, since the reader must constantly assess things such as reliability, bias, and discourse structures in order to decide whether a seemingly explicit cue can really be taken at face-value. Indeed, bias is a topic I discussed at some length in a previous study of characterization.[48] Certainly, explicit cues are not as straight-forward as Culpeper's categories seem to suggest. However, it seems to me that a fundamentally different kind of cognitive process is triggered for the reader when encountering a cue such as 'Jane was proud and self-important' versus several scenes in which Jane acts proudly and self-importantly, but without those words being used explicitly.

In my analysis of characterization in Ælfric's *Esther*, I rely in part on Culpeper's explicit–implicit distinction, but do not proceed in the same manner as he does. One chapter is devoted wholly to explicit characterization cues (Chapter 3), while subsequent chapters focus on various kinds of implicit cues, namely discourse presentation, the semantic fields of emotion and food, and deictic language. In these chapters, I refer at times to the explicit–implicit distinction, at times to the discourse level where the cue occurs, and at other times to the type of information contained in the cue.

CORPUS STYLISTICS: METHODOLOGY, TOOLS, AND DATA

While my analysis is primarily based in the cognitive stylistic tradition, I draw at times on corpus-based information. The rest of this chapter therefore describes corpus

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[48] Wilkins, 'Characterization in Narrative Prose Fiction'.

stylistics, a sub-field of linguistics, along with the specific methods—including software and data preparation—I have used.

CORPUS STYLISTICS

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in the use of corpus linguistic methods to assist stylistic analysis. Such studies draw upon corpus-based techniques and concepts in order to investigate, verify, refine, or refute the stylistic hypotheses of the researchers. Corpus methods are uniquely positioned to offer detailed analysis of language in a particular context, as well as a broader view of language patterns within and across texts, genres, authors, or time periods.[49] The quantitative data yielded by these methods also provide a foundation for standards of proof, including replicability and falsifiability, that are much more difficult (if not impossible) to provide from a purely qualitative analysis. However, in my opinion, while quantitative data offers valuable insights, it cannot, in and of itself, tell us anything particularly interesting about a text and must therefore be accompanied by qualitative analysis of those results. Such an integrated approach, to use Dan McIntyre's phrase,[50] has become increasingly accepted in stylistics research during recent years, though it is still not the prevalent mode of analysis and many stylisticians continue to restrict their analyses to one strand or the other (and, indeed, some are openly hostile to their non-preferred mode of analysis).

Semino and Short use corpus stylistic methods to investigate the representation of speech, writing, and thought in a corpus of written texts,[51] using their data to test the validity of speech and thought presentation categories proposed by Leech and Short;[52] McIntyre and Walker use similar methods to investigate speech, writing, and thought presentation in a corpus of historical texts.[53] In a further study, Semino uses corpus techniques to investigate metaphor in everyday language, demonstrating the oversimplification of some conceptual metaphors that have been widely accepted in

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[49] See Simpson, p. 100.

[50] Dan McIntyre, 'Towards an Integrated Corpus Stylistics', *Topics in Linguistics*, 16 (2015), 59–68, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/topling-2015-0011>.

[51] Elena Semino and Mick Short, *Corpus Stylistics: Speech, Writing, and Thought Presentation in a Corpus of English Writing* (London: Routledge, 2004).

[52] Geoffrey N. Leech and Mick Short, *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose* (London: Longman, 1981; reprinted in a revised 2nd edn, Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman, 2007).

[53] Dan McIntyre and Brian Walker, 'Discourse Presentation in Early Modern English Writing: A Preliminary Corpus-Based Investigation', *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 16 (2012), 101–30.

the linguistic community for several decades.[54] Michael Stubbs' corpus-based analysis of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* reveals several patterns in the novel, including some not previously noted by literary critics, using a variety of methods ranging from simple word frequencies to collocations to grammatical patterns.[55] In a handbook of corpus linguistics, McIntyre and Walker demonstrate how corpus methods can be used to investigate the language of poetry and drama, finding in their data evidence to both support and cast doubt on the findings of literary critics and film studies scholars.[56] Michaela Mahlberg draws on corpus methods to investigate the language of Charles Dickens's fiction, revealing how he makes frequent and effective use of 'clusters' of language (phrases of five or more words with specific linguistic patterns) to create and reinforce the authenticity of his text worlds and characters.[57] More recently, Dan McIntyre has used a blended cognitive–corpus approach to investigate aspects of mind style in Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, as well as the counterintuitively immersive experience reported by viewers of HBO's television series *Deadwood*, despite the frequent use of anachronistic language in the show's dialogue.[58] As these and other scholars have amply demonstrated, corpus methods allow us to test existing stylistic theories, validate or refute the findings of previous studies, and offer new insights about the literature by illuminating patterns that cannot be seen in any other way.

Although my study is not primarily a corpus stylistic investigation, in the way that the above-cited examples are, I do occasionally draw on corpus evidence as an additional datapoint with which to support my arguments. The following sections outline these methods. I first describe some common corpus linguistic measures,

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[54] Elena Semino, *Metaphor in Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). A conceptual metaphor is a metaphor that is embedded in our cognition, sometimes so strongly that we do not even realize it exists until it is pointed out; an example is UP IS GOOD (and DOWN IS BAD), which manifests itself in phrases such as 'cheer up' and 'down in the mouth'; see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). Conceptual metaphors are traditionally set in small caps. Two conceptual metaphors that Semino specifically addresses include ARGUMENT IS WAR and A SUCCESSFUL LIFE IS A BUSINESS.

[55] 'Conrad in the Computer'.

[56] Dan McIntyre and Brian Walker, 'How Can Corpora Be Used to Explore the Language of Poetry and Drama?', in *The Routledge Handbook of Corpus Linguistics*, ed. by Anne O'Keeffe and Michael McCarthy (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 516–30.

[57] Mahlberg, *Corpus Stylistics*. See also Mahlberg, 'A Corpus Stylistic Perspective on Dickens' *Great Expectations*', in *Contemporary Stylistics*, ed. by Marina Lambrou and Peter Stockwell (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 19–31.

[58] 'Towards an Integrated Stylistics'.

namely wordlists, frequency counts, keywords, and concordances. I then describe the software I have used, and finally explain my methods of data collection.

CORPUS METHODS: WORDLISTS, FREQUENCY COUNTS, KEYWORDS, CONCORDANCES

One of the most basic corpus methods is the compilation of a wordlist. This involves, quite simply, listing every word used in a given text along with pertinent information, such as the number of times that word occurs in the text, where it occurs, what percentage of the total text consists of that word, and so on. In large corpora, where more than one text is included in the same corpus, information about which text(s) the word occurs in may also be given.

Not surprisingly, the most frequently-occurring words in a text are usually function-words, such as pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, and auxiliary verbs. Many corpus analysis tools allow the user to disregard such words (usually based on a set of words that the user has pre-defined) either by deleting them from the wordlist altogether, or by excluding them from statistical calculations. Even such basic information can yield interesting information; however, frequency is not the same as salience, and it is therefore usually far more interpretatively beneficial to use raw frequency data only as a starting point for further analysis. In my own analysis, I draw on frequencies of specific words to verify their salience in Ælfric's *Esther*.

Analyzing keywords for a text is slightly more complex and requires at least two different texts or corpora. Keyword analysis involves comparing the words in the target corpus with those of a background corpus, in order to learn which words occur with greater or lower statistical frequency than might normally be expected, as compared with the reference corpus. Words occurring with greater frequency are said to be 'key' or to be 'positive keywords', while those occurring less frequently are 'negative keywords'. Positive keywords can provide a sense of the main topics or themes of a text, or about the feeling or mood it evokes, while negative keywords can provide information about what a text is *not*. While a text as short as Ælfric's *Esther* yields very few keywords—since the short length makes it difficult to verify a statistical significance—a few keywords do stand out; these are addressed in Chapter 6 during the discussion of relational deixis and its effects on characterization.

A corpus concordance, which is not unlike a traditional concordance, displays a list of all instances of a specified word within the corpus. Most concordances offer a limited view of the co-text, allowing the user to see n number of words on either side of the search word; some also offer a way to see a larger co-text for specific uses. Concordances are useful for seeing multiple uses of a word in context, allowing the

researcher to see what other words frequently occur with the search word (collocates), as well as overall patterns for how the word is used. For example, a concordance could help a user see that in academic writing, one may say that a paper 'argues', 'concludes', or 'proves' something, but not that it 'wants' or 'believes' something. In this study, concordances are mainly used to find other instances, in context, of specific words or phrases that are pertinent to characterization in the text. For instance, I use a concordance to search for occurrences of the words *wlitig* 'beautiful' and *fæger* 'lovely' to look for patterns in how these are used in relation to physical versus internal traits, considering how these words and their connotations impact on the characterization of Vashti and of Esther.

SOFTWARE: *WORDSMITH TOOLS*

The software I have used for my corpus analyses is *WordSmith Tools*,[59] a suite of programs for investigating words in texts. Developed by Mike Scott, it has been widely used in scholarly research since at least 1996.[60] It has been used by Oxford University lexicographers and by language teachers and students.[61] In addition, *WordSmith Tools* offers support for research in many languages: not only English but also French, German, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, and many others. Its long-established utility for academic research and its broad support for languages other than PDE makes it an ideal choice for the present study.

   WordSmith Tools reads files using Unicode,[62] which allows it to read the ash (Æ, æ), thorn (Þ, þ), and eth (Ð, ð) characters of Old English without difficulty. One concern is the handling of the thorn and eth characters; because these characters do not differentiate words in Old English, it would be preferable for the program to read these as two variations of the same letter. Given that *WordSmith Tools* offers support for languages like Arabic and Hebrew, which use multiple forms of the same letter depending on the position of the letter in a word, it seems likely that something similar is possible to handle the thorn–eth variance. However, it so far escapes me,

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[59] Mike Scott, *WordSmith Tools 6.0*, jointly published by Lexical Analysis Software and Oxford University Press, 2015, Windows.

[60] Including Semino, *Metaphor in Discourse*; Mahlberg, 'Perspective on Dickens' *Great Expectations*'; and McIntyre and Walker, 'How Can Corpora Be Used?'. For an extensive—though by no means exhaustive—list, visit <http://lexically.net/wordsmith/research> [accessed 28 December 2017].

[61] See 'Introduction to WordSmith Tools' <http://www.lexically.net/downloads/version6/HTML/index.html?getting_started.htm> [accessed 28 December 2017].

[62] Specifically, UTF16 Unicode, little-endian.

and I have found that it makes very little impact on my use of the corpus, which rarely relies on statistics. When necessary, I have lemmatized words in order to better examine them (see 'Lemmatization, Stop-Lists, and Match-Lists', below).

WordSmith Tools supports all of the above-mentioned corpus linguistic methods, and additionally offers robust user customization options in order to manipulate the text as the researcher wishes.

DATA COLLECTION AND PREPARATION

My primary data for this study is the text of Ælfric's *Esther*, based on the online edition by Stuart Lee.[63] The text, which is already in digital form due to Lee's publication method, has been saved as a plain text file using Unicode encoding, which allows it to be read by *WordSmith Tools*.

In addition to the *Esther* text, I have prepared a reference corpus for keyword analysis and concordance information, which consists of Stuart Lee's editions of Ælfric's versions of *Judith* and *Maccabees*,[64] as well as the collections of texts in Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* and *Catholic Homilies*. These have likewise been prepared as plain-text files with Unicode encoding. These texts were chosen for two main reasons: first, they were all authored by Ælfric; and second, they all deal with Christian religious themes, including several texts that involved translation or adaptation from biblical sources— certainly true of *Judith* and *Maccabees*, and also for many of the texts in *LS* and *CH*.

These last two texts were pulled from the York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE).[65] These files have been tagged for part of speech in plain-text Unicode files. In order to strip out the part-of-speech tagging, I created a macro in Microsoft Word to search for and delete the tags. The resulting text, which contained only the Old English, was then saved as a plain-text file, Unicode-encoded, to ensure compatibility with *WordSmith Tools*.

Lemmatization, Stop-Lists, and Match-Lists

One potential problem with corpus methods is that grammatical variations of the same word can be counted as different words by computer software. Thus, 'run', 'ran', 'running', and 'runs' are all counted as separate words. Sometimes this is appropriate

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[63] *Ælfric's Homilies on Judith, Esther, and The Maccabees*, ed. by Stuart D. Lee, 1999 <users.ox.ac.uk/~stuart/kings/> [accessed 28 December 2017].

[64] Ibid.

[65] YCOE, <http://www-users.york.ac.uk/~lang22/YCOE/YcoeHome.htm> [accessed 28 December 2017].

and desirable, but at other times the researcher may wish to view such words as variants of the same lemma, in this case RUN.[66] *WordSmith Tools* offers support for such lemmatization in various ways. The manual option is to drag words from a wordlist onto the head-word for the lemma; once this has been done for all the words in the text, the wordlist can be saved for future use. This method is manageable for smaller texts and would work for Ælfric's *Esther*, but it is cumbersome and time-consuming for larger texts, such as *LS* and *CH* in the reference corpus.

Another option is to automate the process by creating plain-text files that can be loaded into *WordSmith Tools* before analyzing a text. The plain-text file (called a lemma-list for this function) specifies a head-word for each lemma, along with the variations that should be counted as part of the lemma. While this does save time in the long-run, it is also very time-consuming on the front end, requiring the researcher to consider every possible grammatical and orthographic permutation of a word—no small feat for any language, let alone one like Old English with no standard spelling conventions. The task is made somewhat easier by using *DOE*, which lists all attested spellings of a word in the entire corpus of Old English. However, only the first nine fascicles of the dictionary have been completed so far (A through H, including Æ), and the researchers estimate that approximately 60% of the total entries for the project are now complete.[67] For those words not yet in *DOE*, I am forced to rely on my own knowledge of the language, with the aid of trusty reference materials, but this makes the task much more risky, since no other reference (and certainly not my own knowledge) accounts for all possible orthographic variations. I spent around six hours creating lemma-lists for the first 25 lemmas in *Esther*, a text that contains 829 types; at that same rate, coding lemmas for 700 words (a very rough estimate, since some words are variations of a lemma) would take 168 hours. Lemmatizing for the entire reference corpus, containing 11,989 types, would take well over 1,000 hours—well beyond the scope of the present research project, particularly given that corpus methods are not the primary method of analysis.

Without the resources to produce full and complete lemma-lists, I have chosen to simply use non-lemmatized data for my analysis. This is not uncommon, and some researchers using corpus methods for Middle and Early Modern English have noted

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[66] Lemmas are traditionally set in small caps, as are cognitive metaphors and schemas (see Chapter 3, 'Explicit Cues: A Working Model'). See Chapter 2, n. 31 above on the plural form *lemmas*.

[67] See 'About the Dictionary of Old English' <http://doe.utoronto.ca/pages/index.html> [accessed 28 December 2017].

that lemmatizing their data did not have a particularly strong effect on the statistical analyses.[68]

WordSmith Tools also offers the possibility of creating stop-lists and match-lists, both of which are likewise plain-text files with lists of words that are to be handled differently from the majority of words in a text. A stop-list contains words that are to be deleted from wordlist and keyword analyses and resulting statistics (though the words still appear as co-text surrounding search words in concordances). This is particularly useful for function-words, proper nouns, or foreign-language words. Match-lists, on the other hand, contain lists of words that the researcher wants to mark for some reason. Upon choosing a match-list for the software to use, the researcher is able to specify what should be done with the words in the match-list: mark matched words, delete matched words, or delete un-matched words. This allows for quick creation of wordlists and statistics for specific semantic fields or other groups of words. Although also time-consuming and prone to the same problems as lemma-lists, match-lists contain far fewer lemmas and so are much more manageable to produce.

For Ælfric's *Esther*, I have not used stop-lists, but have employed some match-lists. In a more in-depth corpus analysis of the text, stop-lists would potentially be useful, particularly in omitting Latin words from the reference corpus. However, the time required to produce such a list is beyond the scope of the present study. I have, however, used some match-lists for emotion-words and food-words in the text, which has allowed me to target these semantic fields (see Chapter 5).

CONCLUSION

A cognitive stylistic approach to characterization seeks to understand what happens in a reader's mind as they read a text and build a mental model of characters. My analysis of characterization in Ælfric's *Esther*, then, examines how the language of this specific text informs the reader's/audience's mental models for the characters, focusing especially on the five main characters—namely, Ahasuerus, Esther, Vashti, Mordecai, and Haman. I place greater weight on the language that is unique to Ælfric's version of the story, as compared against his Latin sources, since this language clearly indicates his distinctive perspective about these characters and how he wanted his audience to think about them.

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[68] Irma Taavitsainen and others, *Towards a Corpus-Based History of Specialized Languages: Middle English Medical Texts* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2005); *Early Modern English Medical Texts: Corpus Description and Studies*, ed. by Irma Taavitsainen and Päivi Pahta (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2010).

While my analysis is primarily based in cognitive stylistics, it is supplemented with corpus data. The data gleaned from these methods provide an additional piece of evidence, but the analysis always focuses on a cognitive-qualitative interpretation of the raw corpus data.

My analysis begins, in the following chapter, with explicit cues, which serve as a useful starting point. As suggested by Culpeper's model, these cues tend to center on schemas and broad category-based characterizations. In later chapters, I turn to implicit cues, which allow for subtler modifications to these categories, even while reinforcing the explicit characterizations.

Explicit Characterization Cues

Explicit cues offer an obvious starting point for investigating characterization cues. While they are far from the only cues an audience uses in constructing a mental model of textual characters, they are in many ways the easiest to spot. Assuming that Culpeper is correct in his assessment, they also require a fundamentally different type of cognitive processing than do implicit cues, since explicit cues tend to relate to categories of prior knowledge (e.g., schemas). This chapter therefore focuses on explicit characterization cues in Ælfric's *Esther*, while remaining chapters will primarily focus on some of the implicit cues.

I first review the concept of explicit characterization cues, drawing on the work of a few stylisticians who have addressed characterization. Of necessity, this will involve some slight repetition of information already covered in Chapter 2; I then proceed, however, to describe my own process, which synthesizes categories and information from a handful of different models. Following this, I present the explicit characterization cues for the main characters (Ahasuerus, Esther, Vashti, Haman, and Mordecai) in Ælfric's *Esther*, along with my analysis of how these cues may affect the audience's perception. I end with a discussion of explicit characterization cues for some of the minor characters, including God.

EXPLICIT CUES: A WORKING MODEL

As explained in Chapter 2, Culpeper's model of characterization distinguishes between explicit and implicit cues, the distinction reflecting the different mental processing required of the reader for each type of cue: explicit cues trigger top-down

processing, implicit cues bottom-up processing.[1] This model draws heavily on schema theory. This theory suggests that, in order to more efficiently process the copious amounts of information encountered in a given day, the human mind links information into meaningful groupings, or schemas. The precise mechanisms of schemas—that is, how these groupings are organized, how information is linked to them, and how the information is processed when needed—are still widely debated in cognitive science. However, there is ample evidence supporting the basic concept, as well as demonstrating that the activation (or lack of activation) of a schema can significantly affect linguistic comprehension.[2]

Importantly, schemas are different from prior knowledge. The term 'prior knowledge' refers to any knowledge the reader already has when encountering a text (as opposed to new information he will gather while reading). A schema, on the other hand, is an organized collection of various bits of prior knowledge, which allows efficient processing of information. It is possible for a person to possess all of the necessary prior knowledge to understand a situation or passage of text but still struggle to comprehend a text (or situation) if the appropriate schemas are not activated. For example, Bransford and Johnson, in a widely-cited experiment, read aloud a paragraph of text which described a common activity; some participants were told the topic of the paragraph before hearing it, others learned the topic afterward, and a third group were never explicitly told the topic. After listening, all answered the same comprehension questions. The experimenters had carefully written the paragraph so as to avoid using terminology commonly associated with that activity, so that participants heard sentences such as

> First you arrange things into different groups depending on their makeup.

Participants who learned the topic—namely, washing clothes—before hearing the paragraph scored significantly higher in both comprehension and recall than those who learned it afterward or not at all.[3] The study demonstrates that semantic context plays an important role in synthesizing prior knowledge in order to understand new information. While Bransford and Johnson's study involved auditory language

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[1] Jonathan Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation: People in Plays and Other Texts* (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education, 2001); for the discussion of schema theory and its role in characterization, which is described in the following paragraphs, see especially Chapter 2.

[2] See below, n. 4.

[3] John D. Bransford and Marcia K. Johnson, 'Contextual Prerequisites for Understanding: Some Investigations of Memory and Recall', *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*, 11 (1972), 717–26 (esp. pp. 722–24).

processing, numerous subsequent studies have focused on reading comprehension, with similar conclusions.[4] Findings such as these demonstrate the importance of schemas in comprehending a text.

Indeed, the concept of schemas helps explain a situation that Anglo-Saxonists tend to be very familiar with, namely the difficulty that students experience when encountering medieval literature for the first time. Because medieval literature differs in many ways from the literature that students are generally exposed to, their schemas for literature are only minimally helpful in interpreting medieval texts. In addition, their schemas for the cultures that produced this literature are often wildly misleading, based primarily on medievalism in popular culture, and this requires radical re-structuring of their schemas, both for medieval culture and for literature in a broad sense. All this re-structuring makes it feel excessively difficult to read and interpret medieval literature. The perceived difficulty is the outcome of the amount of cognitive processing students must perform in order to make sense of the literature.

Culpeper's model of characterization posits that when readers encounter explicit characterization cues, these activate a schema, which the reader draws on to construct their mental model for a particular character. Thus, when the reader learns that Beowulf is a warrior, the reader's WARRIOR[5] schema is activated; it may contain information like 'brave', 'strong', 'carries weapons', 'fights in battle', and so on. Information connected to the schema may well factor into the reader's mental model of Beowulf, even if it is never explicitly mentioned in the text. If the reader's mental model of the character never moves beyond this schema-based characterization, the character remains flat (in Forster's terminology). Thus, explicit characterization cues, as described in Culpeper's model, are inherently category-based and static, while implicit cues help round out the character and imbue him with a greater sense of realism.

While this distinction of explicit and implicit cues can be useful and certainly seems to be justified both by the linguistic cues and the cognitive processes of reading and of character attribution, Culpeper does little to identify just what kind of language counts as characterization cues, whether explicit or implicit. He does briefly outline, in

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[4] See Walter Kintsch, *Comprehension: A Paradigm for Cognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Perry W. Thorndyke, 'Cognitive Structures in Comprehension and Memory of Narrative Discourse', *Cognitive Psychology*, 9 (1977), 77–110; Walter Kintsch and Teun A. van Dijk, 'Toward a Model of Text Comprehension and Production', *Psychological Review*, 85 (1978), 363–94; Richard C. Anderson and P. David Pearson, 'A Schema-Theoretic View of Basic Processes in Reading Comprehension', in *Handbook of Reading Research*, ed. by P. David Pearson and others, 4 vols (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1984), I (1984), pp. 255–92.

[5] Schemas, like lemmas, are traditionally set in small caps. See Chapter 2, n. 31.

his section on implicit cues, some of the information that we might find useful in constructing mental models of characters, including lexis, syntax, accent/dialect, conversational structure, conversational implicature, and paralinguistic features. This list, however, does not appear to apply to explicit cues, as his analysis here focuses simply on self-presentation and other-presentation, without clarifying just what language constitutes an explicit cue in either category.

On the other hand, in her investigation of character in Charles Dickens's work, Mahlberg identifies several different kinds of information that readers may draw upon to construct character, namely:

- direct descriptions of physical appearance
- speech presentation
- thought presentation
- reactions of other characters (including the narrator)
- social relationships defined by deictic markers.[6]

Mahlberg does not seem to be concerned with whether the information is explicit or implicit, nor with the kind of cognitive processing required of the reader. Indeed, all of these different types of information can be presented in either way. However, her list offers a good starting point in identifying the specific language that is relevant to characterization.

In order to more effectively identify explicit cues, then, I combine elements from both of these frameworks to create a practical protocol for searching the text. Mahlberg's list of character information serves as a useful guide to the kind of information I am interested in, while Culpeper's distinction of explicit versus implicit cues provides some help in considering the linguistic forms that are likely to be of interest. Any language that describes specific attributes or mental states of the character is explicit, since it directly describes the character's traits. Conversely, language that describes physical appearance or actions is implicit, since readers must work out what these traits or actions indicate about the character's personality.

Part of speech likewise plays a role in distinguishing explicit from implicit cues. Adjectives are inherently more explicit than are nouns, which are more explicit than verbs and adverbs. Thus, the sentence, 'He was brave' is more explicit in characterizing the character than is the sentence 'He was a warrior', while 'He fought valiantly' is implicit. The reader or listener must combine this last sentence with other information to decide whether the character is in fact brave rather than another

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[6] This list is based on Peter Stockwell and Michaela Mahlberg, 'Mind-Modelling with Corpus Stylistics in *David Copperfield*', *Language and Literature*, 24 (2015), 129–47 (p. 134), which succinctly summarizes information from Michaela Mahlberg, *Corpus Stylistics and Dickens's Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2013).

option (e.g., he was particularly motivated in this battle, or he fought out of fear for his life).

In this chapter, then, I focus primarily on the adjectives and nouns that describe characters in Ælfric's *Esther*. These are the most likely to trigger a category-based, top-down cognitive process in the reader's modeling of the character's cognition. Indeed, as Elise Louviot notes, the characters in Old English literature, while not purely allegorical, are closer to this than to the characters modern readers are conditioned to expect, who resemble real-world people.[7] In other words, the characters of Old English literature are more category-based than are the round characters that we tend to expect in modern literature. Explicit characterization cues, then, are well suited for interpreting character in an Old English text, and this is therefore my first port of call in the current study.

EXPLICIT CHARACTERIZATION CUES IN ÆLFRIC'S *ESTHER*

The explicit characterization cues are distributed fairly evenly throughout the text (see Figure 3.1), with a rough average of one per sentence and few gaps of more than two sentences. Two notable exceptions occur, at sentence 20 and sentence 65. Sentence 20 contains four explicit cues all referring to Esther; it will be discussed in further detail below. Sentence 65 forms part of Ælfric's coda to the text, in which he describes the fates of each of the primary characters.[8] Here, we find no fewer than ten explicit characterization cues piled up together, describing the final outcomes for Mordecai, Haman, Esther, and Ahasuerus. This effectively serves as the moral of the story, and Ælfric astutely notes the reversal of fortunes for Mordecai and Haman, a theme prevalent throughout the ancient and Latin versions of the Esther-story. The high occurrence of explicit characterization cues here creates a foregrounding effect, alerting readers to the importance of these cues in interpreting the message of the story. Ælfric uses a similar compounding technique to great effect at several points in the text, and I shall return to this idea throughout the thesis.

The vast majority of explicit characterization cues in the text emanate from the narrator. This means that any self-presentation or other-presentation (to use Culpeper's terms) is foregrounded and is likely to receive greater weight in the reader's

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[7] Elise Louviot, *Direct Speech in Beowulf and Other Old English Narrative Poems* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2016), p. 256.

[8] Except Vashti, whose fate has already been described in sentence 13, when she is deposed, and who is therefore omitted from this final summing-up.

mental model. Ahasuerus has the most explicit cues, followed by Esther and Haman. Mordecai and the Jews each have a handful of explicit characterization cues, Vashti three, and the wicked chamberlains two; even the Persian people, broadly conceived, have one explicit cue. Finally, and significantly, five explicit cues refer to God. I shall treat each of these in turn.
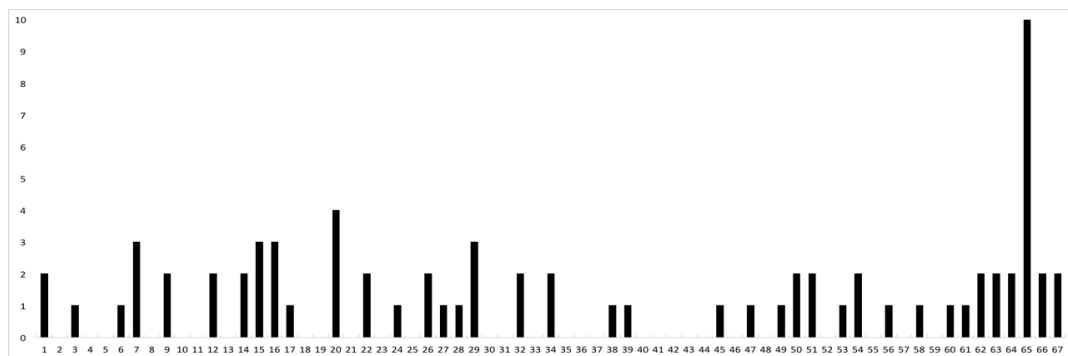
Figure 3.1: Distribution of explicit cues for all characters

AHASUERUS

Ahasuerus is explicitly characterized more often than any other character, with twenty explicit cues. Most of them are quite straightforward in their characterization, such as the term *rice* 'powerful', the first characterization cue of any kind in the entire text. Five of the explicit cues for Ahasuerus refer to his anger (e.g., *yrre*, *gebathyrt*, *gram*), while four describe gentler emotions (including *blīþe* and *mildelice*). I will discuss at length these overt emotion-words, as well as those for the other main characters, in Chapter 5; for now, suffice it to say that Ahasuerus is clearly presented as having a volatile, highly emotional nature. While it may be tempting to argue that, in each instance, the emotion is justified by some external factor, the fundamental attribution error suggests that the audience is likely to discount such external factors and instead think of Ahasuerus as a passionate man, whether for good or ill.[9]

As mentioned, the first explicit characterization of Ahasuerus appears to be quite straightforward: he is called *rice* 'powerful' in the opening phrase of the narrative. However, it is worth noting that there is no parallel for this term in the Latin versions.

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[9] The fundamental attribution error refers to the human tendency to attribute traits to people, regardless of circumstances that may have encouraged or discouraged the behavior in a particular context. For more, see Culpeper, *Language and Characterisation*, pp. 136–39; Lee Ross, 'The Intuitive Psychologist and His Shortcomings: Distortions in the Attribution Processs', in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, ed. by Leonard Berkowitz and others (New York: Academic Press, 1964–), X (1977), pp. 173–220.

Similar terms do occur, including *potentia* 'power', *divitia* 'riches', and *gloria* 'glory' in the Vulgate and *dominabatur* 'ruled' in the OL;[10] however, these all seem to be covered by other clauses in Ælfric's version. The Latin versions do not include this kind of pithy and explicit characterization of Ahasuerus in the opening line, as Ælfric's rendering does. This is also an unusual use of the word *rice* among Ælfric's writings, being used as an adjective. The adjectival form of the word means 'powerful, mighty', while the nominal form means 'power, might, empire'.[11] A search for the word in my corpus of Ælfric-authored texts reveals 101 total instances of the word;[12] of these, only one instance is the adjectival form, occurring in *Lives of Saints*.[13] The unusual adjectival usage in Ælfric's *Esther* gives it added weight in interpreting Ahasuerus's character. Thus, within the first dozen words or so, Ælfric succinctly but effectively characterizes Ahasuerus, indicating his role as that of powerful monarch.

All but one of the explicit cues for Ahasuerus originate with the narrator. The only instance of self-presentation is a revelation of his motivations, presented in direct speech near the end of the text (sentence 62, my emphasis):

> 'Ac ic swiðor wille þæt man ofslea eac Amanes magas **for his micclan swicdome**.'

> 'But I greatly desire that Haman's relatives should also be slain **on account of his great treachery**.'

This revelation of his motivations and desires is not unexpected. At the beginning of the story, the narrator has explicitly stated Ahasuerus's motivations for hosting the rich banquet with his retainers and for summoning Vashti during the festivities—in both instances, that he wanted to show off his high status, including his beautiful wife. But this instance, as the only time when Ahasuerus tells the audience, in his own speech, the motivation for his actions, is foregrounded and therefore particularly salient to his characterization. He is about to execute Haman's entire family—an episode that is given far less attention in Ælfric's version than in the Latin versions— and it is important that readers understand his motivation for this extreme action.

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[10] Esther 1. 4 (Vulgate); Esther 1.1 (OL-F).

[11] *CASD*, p. 281.

[12] The vast majority of these occur in *LS* and *CH*—unsurprisingly, given the length of these works. Of the 101 occurrences, nearly half (49) are directly preceded by *Godes* 'God's', *heofnan* 'heaven's', *heofonlican* 'heavenly', or *fæder* 'father's', indicating Ælfric's primary use of the word in reference to the heavenly kingdom of God.

[13] In the *Life of St Edmund*; in *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, 2 vols, Early English Text Society 76 and 94 & 114 (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 1881–1885; reprinted 2003), II (1885), pp. 314–335.

Significantly, Ahasuerus is not only the first character to be explicitly characterized in the text, but also—aside from the formulaic conclusion in praise of God—the last. He is characterized quite regularly in the opening sequence of the text, with the narrator describing his power and wealth, as well as his desire to exhibit these to his people. Very little is then said explicitly of Ahasuerus's character until the end of the text, during the final feast, when we hear first of his rage (*grama*) upon learning of Haman's treachery, then of his motive for executing Haman's household, and finally of his conversion to the true faith through Esther's influence. Ælfric's clustering technique is at play again in this final instance, as we are treated to five explicit cues, piled up one after the other (given in bold in the following extract, from sentence 65):

> … & se cyning **wearð gerihtlæht** þurh þære cwene geleafan Gode to wurðmynte þe ealle þing gewylt, & he herode God þe hine **geuferode** & to cyninge **geceas** ofer swilcne anweald. & he wæs **rihtwis**, & **rædfæst** on weorcum …

> … and the king **became converted** through the queen's faith to the honor of God who controls all things, and he praised God who had **elevated** him and **chosen** him as king over such kingdom. And he was **righteous**, and **wise** in works …

The fact that Ahasuerus frames the narrative, along with the high number of explicit cues describing him, suggests that he is the main character in the text, at least in Ælfric's version. Indeed, Ahasuerus is the only character who shows any kind of personal growth or change throughout the story. Of course, this is a modern conception of what constitutes a main character, and further narratological work on Old English texts would be required in order to substantiate the extent to which it holds true in this period and genre.

In fact, it has long been noted that Ahasuerus is frequently mentioned in the Latin version—one of the criticisms of the book of Esther, particularly in the nineteenth century, was that it contained no mention of God whatsoever, but 190 mentions of the Persian king.[14] It is therefore possible that the high incidence of explicit characterization cues relating to Ahasuerus in Ælfric's version may have resulted simply because of the character's prominence in the source materials. However, this does not account for the framing technique, which places Ahasuerus in a prominent position not only at the beginning of the text but also—and more importantly—at the end, where it is all but impossible to ignore him.

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[14] See AB7, p. xxxii.

ESTHER

Esther's introduction into the text focuses on her familial relationships. In fact, her uncle and foster-father, Mordecai, is first introduced as a pious Jew serving in the royal household; Esther is then introduced as *his broðor dohtor* 'his brother's daughter' (sentence 15). This relationship has specific associations in Judaism, in which Mosaic law stipulates that special care should taken for the fatherless,[15] and thus serves to further characterize Mordecai as a God-fearing man. While the associations in Anglo-Saxon England are not precisely the same, this close familial relationship did still bear connotations of social status and obligation, serving also to characterize Esther as one who is in full fellowship with her community of origin. Her status as an orphan is explicitly identified in the text with the word *unmaga* 'orphan', which has no direct counterpart in the Vulgate but does in the Old Latin versions.[16] Her orphanhood notwithstanding, Esther enjoys the protection and advantages of society, her social status being mitigated by the close connection to Mordecai and to the wider community of Jews in the Persian diaspora.

Following this introduction, Esther is nearly always characterized in terms of her external traits, both her physical appearance and her manners. Adjectives such as *wlitig* 'beautiful', *fæger* 'fair', and *lufigendlic* 'lovable' characterize her physical appearance, which is itself mentioned as her *hiw* 'appearance', *wæstme* 'figure', and *nebwlite* 'face'; coupled with these are descriptions of her personal comportment, including her *fægerum þeawum* 'virtuous habits' and the fact that she is *wislice geþeawod* 'truly well-mannered'.

Some of these words are particularly interesting because of their connotations. For example, while *wlitig* is nearly always used to describe literal, physical beauty, *fæger* has a much broader range of meaning, being used both literally and figuratively, often with a spiritual association. This distinction has significant ramifications for the characterization of both Esther and Vashti, which I will address in more detail in the section below on Vashti. Additionally, the word *lufigendlic* is curious in that it occurs nowhere else in my corpus of Ælfric's works, making its usage here the more significant, and I shall return to it in a moment. Finally, *wæstm* has a broad range of meanings, and was often used in the story of Adam and Eve to describe the fruit of

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[15] Along with widows, strangers, and Levites; see Deuteronomy 14. 28–29 and 26. 12–13.

[16] Esther 2. 7; see Stewart Brookes, 'Ælfric's Adaptation of the Book of Esther: A Source of Some Confusion', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 2000), pp. 37–62 (pp. 50–51) for this observation and its implications concerning Ælfric's source text(s).

the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, a point to which I shall return in a later chapter.[17]

All these words referring to Esther's physical traits—both appearance and behavior—come to a head in sentence 20, where four such references occur in close proximity. These appear to be a fairly close translation of the Latin source texts:

> erat enim formonsa valde et incredibili pulchritudine omnium oculis
> gratiosa et amabilis videbatur (Vulgate 2.15)
>
> for she was very fair and, on account of her incredible beauty,
> appeared agreeable and lovely in the eyes of all
>
> erat autem Hester inveniens gratiam ab omnibus qui invenerat eam
> (OL-R 2.15)
>
> now Esther found favor from those who found/discovered her

In particular, it is striking to note that the Vulgate account offers four explicit characterization cues at this point, all referring again to Esther's appearance and manners. Though Ælfric's translation here is not a word-for-word gloss, it closely parallels the structure of the Vulgate, with four phrases all describing Esther. It seems he may have copied this clustering technique from his source texts; nevertheless, it is a highly effective technique—which may explain why Ælfric chose to copy it in his own version.

Ælfric's choice of *lufigendlic* 'lovely' here is particularly apt, capturing as it does the many senses conveyed in the Latin words *formonsa* 'fair', *pulchritudine* 'beauty', *gratiosa* 'agreeable', *amabilis* 'lovely', and *gratia* 'favor'.[18] Bosworth-Toller suggests that the OE word *lufigendlic* often glossed the Latin *amabilis*, and this would seem to be the word that underlies Ælfric's translation here, as well. Given the wide range of meaning for *lufigendlic*—which can describe physical traits, spiritual traits, and even the quality of being worthy of love[19]—we might interpret this as a reference to either her manners or her physical beauty. The reference to onlookers (*onlociendum*), though, pushes us toward an interpretation favoring her physical features.

The heavy emphasis on her physical form and manners sets Esther up as an ideal of femininity and is paralleled in the end of the text with explicit comments about her internal motivations, specifically her religious faith and righteousness: she is moved by her awe of God (*mid Godes ege onbryrd*), worships him in Abraham's manner (*on*

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[17] Chapter 5, 'Food-Related Words in Ælfric's *Esther*'.

[18] Esther 2. 15, 17 (Vulgate).

[19] See BT and *CASD*.

Abrahames wisan), and converts the king through her faith (*þurh þære cwene geleafan*). Thus, Esther's physical beauty serves as an external marker of her internal beauty—she is not only lovely to look at, but lovely to be with. Though this connection is not made explicit until the epilogue of Ælfric's text, it is so frequent a literary technique that we can reasonably expect his Anglo-Saxon audience to have made this connection much earlier.

A curious phenomenon occurs with respect to Esther's characterization. The first three explicit characterization cues that refer to her occur before her introduction into the text, so that these three cues can be thought of as characterizing Esther, but only hypothetically. The three cues in question refer to the king's future bride. The first is presented in the direct speech of his counselors, who advise him to find someone unlike his present wife, Vashti (sentence 12); the latter two are both presented by the narrator in describing the decree that is issued in search of a woman who is worthy of the position, both in figure and in ancestry: *wlitiges hiwes þe him wurðe wære & swilcere gebyrde þe his gebedda wære* 'of such beautiful form as should be worthy of him and of such birth as to be his bed-companion' (sentence 14). Those encountering the text for the first time will be unaware that these cues characterize Esther until she is later introduced, though they might rely on contextual information—including the fact that the text bears Esther's name[20]—to surmise that she will be the woman to fulfill these conditions. In either case, the reader encountering the text for the first time has to hold this information in mind as characterizing some as-yet unidentified character (who might possibly be Esther) and later, upon learning of Esther's marriage to the king, synthesize this information to include these three characterization cues in their mental model of Esther and her character.

Like the other characters, Esther is nearly always characterized by the narrator, only two explicit cues emanating from characters within the text. The first of these is the instance, mentioned above, when the king's counselors advise him to find a wife unlike Vashti. The second, and arguably more salient, is an instance of self-presentation that occurs near the end of the text, during the final feast scene. Having

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[20] This is, of course, dependent on circumstances: while most modern readers will likely see Esther's name at the beginning of the text, there are situations where this will not be the case. As to whether an Anglo-Saxon reader or audience would have encountered her name so early, this is highly debatable, since it depends so strongly on the text's original purpose, which remains unknown. If it was written as a homily to be read out during services, then the audience might or might not have encountered her name before this point, depending on the priest's particular presentation; if it was written as pious reading for the religious class, then it would likely have borne her name. The fact that William L'Isle's title for the text is given in Old English in his manuscript collection leads me to surmise that his source text, at least, included a title.

been forbidden by Mordecai to disclose her Jewish ancestry to the royal court, Esther now does just that in order to expose Haman as her enemy. For the first time, Esther self-identifies as belonging to the community of Jews who have been maligned and threatened by Haman, pleading for her own life and that of her people and friends (sentence 51):

> 'Ic bidde þe la, leof, mine agenes lifes & mince folces feores, & minra freonda eac. We synd ealle belewde to ure lifleaste, þæt we beon toheawene mid heardum swurdum, þæt ure gemynd beo mid ealle adilegod.'

> 'I request of you, oh sire, my own life and that of my people abroad, and of my friends also. We are all betrayed unto our death, that we should be hewn with hard swords, that our memory and all that concerns us should be hidden.'

In this revelation, she first places herself at the head of a list of those who are in need of the king's intervention, explaining that she desires her own life, and also that of her people and her friends; she then combines all of these groups syntactically with her use of the first-person plural pronouns *we* and *ure* as she describes the imminent danger of their being wiped out, both physically and historically. The deviation that arises from the fact that this is Esther's only self-presentation foregrounds the statement, making it highly salient to her characterization. Indeed, this is the climax of the plot, when the audience must hold their collective breaths wondering how this revelation will be received and whether the king will come to her aid. Ælfric's choice to report Esther's pleading, including her self-presentation as a Jew, in direct speech further emphasizes the crucial point.[21]

VASHTI

Only three explicit characterization cues refer to Vashti, a surprisingly low number, even given her short role in the story. The first two both emanate from the narrator and comment on her physical appearance: she is *swiðe wlitig* 'very beautiful' and *swiþe wlitig on hiwe* 'very beautiful in figure'. As with Esther, Vashti's explicit characterization focuses on her external traits. Stacy Klein has pointed out that Vashti's beauty is described only as *wlitig*, while Esther is described also as *fæger*, and points to this as evidence that Vashti is merely physically beautiful, while Esther is beautiful both

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[21] See Chapter 4 for more on speech, writing, and thought presentation.

physically and spiritually.[22] While I find her evidence somewhat lacking, the usage of the words in Ælfric's corpus does bear out this argument, with *wlitig* referring exclusively to physical appearance, while *fæger* often describes a metaphorical, usually spiritual type of beauty. In addition, the word *lufigendlic* 'lovely', which likewise describes Esther in Ælfric's version, has been used to describe physical appearance, external manners, and even being worthy of love (something akin to 'loveable'). While I am still hesitant to make any strong claims about Vashti on this basis, given that her beauty is referred to only twice against eight times for Esther, it does seem that Ælfric has carefully characterized Esther, at least, as being beautiful in every way possible, not only physically.

Vashti and Esther form a contrastive pair of characters, and the focus on both women's external beauty sets up the contrast in their manners and social relations. Both are extremely beautiful and both defy the king's authority; however, Vashti does so for her own personal reasons—*heo … nolde gehersumian* 'she … did not want to obey'—while Esther does so only in deference to her heavenly king.

The third and final explicit characterization cue referring to Vashti is other-presentation and occurs in direct speech by the king's counselors, who describe her as *seo ðe þe ungelicige* 'she who displeases you'. Once again, this utterance emphasizes the contrast between Vashti and Esther, as Esther will be the woman who is unlike the present queen, whom the counselors advise the king he should now seek out.

MORDECAI

Mordecai is the counterpart to Haman in the Esther-story: the two are set up from early on not only as rivals within the text-world, but also as literary opposites, each attempting to foil the other but with divergent reasons and tactics. Indeed, some have argued that their struggle is the central plot element in the Esther-story.[23] Regardless of whether this is true, their story-arc requires that they be a contrastive pair—equals in importance and ability but differing in one key aspect. The explicit characterization cues clearly delineate that this difference is their motivations, with Haman seeking personal glory and Mordecai seeking God's. Ælfric heightens the juxtaposition of their characterizations, ascribing motivations and internal states to each to explain their behavior in a way that elicits sympathy with Mordecai and antipathy toward Haman.

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[22] 'Beauty and the Banquet: Queenship and Social Reform in Ælfric's "Esther"', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 103 (2004), 77–105 (pp. 100–02).

[23] Moore identifies Mordecai as the (potentially) historical 'core' of the story; AB7, p. liii.

Much of Mordecai's explicit characterization centers on his internal thoughts and motivations. In the sentence introducing him, we learn that he *gelyfde soðlice on þone lifiegendan God æfter Moyses æ* 'truly believed in the living God, according to Moses' law' (sentence 15). We later learn that his motivation for stubbornly refusing to kneel to Haman is his fear that he might anger God by giving too much honor to a mortal man (sentence 26). After he hears of Haman's plot to destroy the Jews of the empire, he becomes *micclum … geangsumod* 'greatly anxious' and mourns *for his agenum magum get micele swiðor þonne for him selfum* 'for his own kinsmen much more than for himself' (sentence 32).

In addition, Mordecai is described as the source of Esther's goodness. He raises her in *fægerum þeawum*, a phrase with a range of possible translations, including 'virtuous habits', 'lovely conduct', or 'pleasing manners'. Not only does he raise Esther as a well-mannered girl, but he also instills religious piety in her, *æfter Godes æ & his ege symle* 'according to God's law and awe of Him' (sentence 16). Stewart Brookes notes that this language appears to be based on phraseology in the OL versions.[24] In any case, no parallel language occurs in the Vulgate, suggesting that either Ælfric relied in part on the Old Latin versions, or that he added this information about Mordecai's character. Thus, while Esther is characterized as the ideal of womanhood, Mordecai is the ideal teacher, rearing his adopted daughter so that she, like Christ, might find 'favor with God and with man'.[25]

In the epilogue, Ælfric describes Mordecai's final fate: *Mardocheus eac miclum wæs gewurþod, & swiðe geuferod for his eadmodnysse* 'Mordecai also was much honored and greatly elevated for his humility' (sentence 65). The word *geuferod* is relatively rare in Ælfric's works—in fact, I find no other occurrences in my corpus. In his *Esther*, however, it occurs three times, each in reference to a different character: Haman, Mordecai, and Ahasuerus (in that order). In Haman's case it appears to be a translation of the Latin words *exaltavit* 'exalted', *glorificavit* 'glorified', or *honoravit* 'honored';[26] in the cases of Ahasuerus and Mordecai, there does not seem to be any Latin counterpart. Ælfric's repetition of the word cleverly highlights another reversal of fortune, entirely in keeping with the Esther-story: Haman is humbled on account of his arrogance, while Mordecai is elevated on account of his humility. Indeed, such a reversal is a common theme of the Old Testament, particularly in the Wisdom books, and the fates of Mordecai and Haman offer an illustration of the proverb, 'He that is

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[24] Brookes, 'Ælfric's Adaptation', p. 50.

[25] Luke 2. 52 (KJV).

[26] 3. 1 in Vulgate, OL-R, and OL-J (respectively).

of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat.'[27]

At the same time, the use of *upahafen(nysse)* demonstrates that there are different kinds of elevation and honor. God elevates Ahasuerus to be king over a mighty empire; Ahasuerus elevates Haman within his empire; and God, through Ahasuerus, elevates Mordecai. Thus, while earthly status and power are not necessarily indicative of divine approval, nor of righteous motivations, yet God may choose to elevate some men over others as a reward for their piety and goodness.

HAMAN

Tellingly, the expression *for his upahafennysse* 'because of his arrogance' acts as a pair of bookends around Haman. The phrase first occurs in sentence 26, immediately after his introduction into the story. The narrator has explained that the king has promoted Haman to his second in command, issuing also the injunction that all others should kneel to him just as they would to the king himself. When Mordecai refuses to do so, we are told that it is because of Haman's arrogance; Mordecai does not want to give him any more honor than is his due, lest he anger God—setting the tone for Mordecai's characterization throughout the text. Finally, in the epilogue, Ælfric explains that Haman was *gehynd for his upahafennysse* 'humbled for his arrogance', highlighting the appropriate reversal of fortune in Haman's fate.

This characterization of Haman as arrogant has no direct parallel in the canonical Vulgate text. However, it may have its precedent in the Additions. These refer to the similar concepts of *ambitio* 'ambition, pomp' and *superbia* 'pride, arrogance'; similarly, Jerome's translation of the Additions uses *arrogantia* 'arrogance'.[28] The OE word *upahafennysse* is relatively rare, occurring only once in the rest of my corpus.[29] Thus, its occurrence twice in this text, both in reference to the same character, strongly foregrounds it as Haman's primary character trait.

If this is not enough to convince the audience that Haman is the villain, Ælfric makes use of two instances of other-presentation to drive the point home. These both occur in the final feast scene, when Haman is exposed as a traitor. In the first, Esther describes him as *se wyrsta feond* 'the worst enemy' (sentence 53) of the Jews; in the

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[27] Proverbs 28. 25 (KJV); similar expressions are found in II Samuel 22. 28; Psalms 12. 3, 40. 4, 101. 5, 138. 6; Proverbs 16. 18; Isaiah 2. 12, 13. 11.

[28] E. 12 in OL (R and F); 16. 12 in Vulgate.

[29] But 8 more times in Ælfric texts not included in my corpus, according to an online search of the *OEC.*

second, Ahasuerus explains that he plans to execute Haman's family *for his micclan swicdome* 'because of his great treachery' (sentence 62). These further serve to characterize him as the villain of the piece, while at the same time creating sympathy for Ahasuerus, who has now seen the mistake in his judgment and is prepared to rectify his errors.

Other words used to describe Haman include *sorhfull* 'sorrowful' and *unþances* 'unwillingly'. He is also the only character besides Ahasuerus who displays anger, being described as *swiþe gram* 'very angry, furious' after Mordecai's slight. It is difficult to find a parallel for *unþanc* in the Latin texts, though the Vulgate does describe Haman as *lugens*[30] 'grieving' when he returns from honoring Mordecai at the king's command; however, the Latin versions here include a short episode between Haman's return and his joining the queen's feast, which Ælfric omits[31]—making it unlikely that this word describes, at least in the Vulgate, Haman's state of mind when arriving at the queen's feast. The same word could be the precedent for *sorhful* 'sorrowful' in Ælfric's version, as grieving and sorrow are strongly associated; however, there is an even stronger parallel for this word in the Old Latin text, where Haman is called *dolens* 'sorrowful'.[32]

Haman's internal motivations are more frequently and more clearly described than those of any other character, only Ahasuerus approaching this level of explicit internal motivation. Upon Mordecai's refusal to bow to him, we are told, Haman was not content with having revenge upon Mordecai alone,

> ac wolde miccle swiðor eall þæt manncyn fordon Iudeisces cynnes,
> þæt he wræce his teonan
>
> but desired much more to destroy all the people of Jewish race, that
> he might avenge his injuries
>
> (sentence 27)

Later, as he returns to his chambers after having been invited to the banquet with the king and queen and once again finds Mordecai unwilling to do obeisance to him, Haman hyperbolically declares to his attendants (sentence 39):

> 'Nu þingþ me þæt ic næbbe nænne wurðscipe on life swa lange swa
> Mardocheus me nele abugan.'

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[30] Esther 6. 12.

[31] In this episode, Haman complains to his household about his treatment and his wife Zeresh declares that he will never prevail over Mordecai; Esther 6. 12–14.

[32] Esther 6. 12, OL-R.

> 'Now it seems to me that I will have no dignity in life so long as
> Mordecai will not bow to me.'

We know his motivations when he goes to visit the king in the morning (sentence 45):

> wolde þæt he hete ahon Mardocheum
>
> desiring that he should command Mordecai to be hanged

and also when he answers the king's query about how to honor someone (sentence 47):

> Þa wende Aman to gewissan þinge þæt se cyning wolde wurþian
> hine swiðor & nænne oþerne …
>
> Then Haman thought it certain that the king wanted to honor him
> more greatly, and no other …

Virtually at every turn, we are treated to explicit indications of Haman's inner thoughts, desires, and motives. Ælfric is particularly concerned to make his audience understand Haman's wicked intentions and prevent them from attributing sympathetic motives to him. Haman is, after all, the undisputed villain of this story and we must hope for him to be foiled in his plans and punished for his actions.

MINOR CHARACTERS: THE WICKED CHAMBERLAINS, THE PERSIANS, AND THE JEWS

Several minor characters are presented in the text, and three of these are explicitly characterized: the wicked chamberlains who plot to assassinate the king; the Persian people; and the Jewish people.

The wicked chamberlains appear approximately one-third of the way through the story, where they are twice characterized explicitly (sentence 22). Their part in the overall story is small but significant, for it is Mordecai's foiling of their plot that endears him to the king, providing a reason for the king to favor Mordecai and his kin over Haman. As the chamberlains plan their attempt, they are described as *mid bealuwe afyllede* 'filled with malice' and they desire *swiðe unrihtlice* 'very unjustly' to kill their king. The two phrases are an intrusion of Ælfric's voice over the narrator's and leave the audience in no doubt as to how he views their plot.[33]

Ahasuerus ensures, after the plot is foiled, that the episode is recorded in the imperial chronicle. The Persians' custom of chronicling the important events in their

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[33] I explain, in Chapter 6, 'Deictic Shift Theory', why they are intrustions of Ælfric's voice and how this affects characterization, particularly of Ælfric.

history is described as being done *swiðe wislice* 'very wisely'. The phrase applies to the Persian people, as broadly conceived. Once again, the phrase is an intrusion of Ælfric's voice and implies his approval of the practice, perhaps as a commentary on the similar Anglo-Saxon practice of chronicle-keeping. Given the close connection of his patrons to the royal court of Æthelred II, Ælfric would undoubtedly have known about this practice and may have found it convenient to offer his approval when the subject arose during his work on *Esther*.

Just after the episode of the wicked chamberlains, Haman embarks upon his plot of destruction, this time against the entire Jewish people within the empire. It is at this point that we hear the first explicit characterization of the Jews as a group, and it emanates from the narrator, who tells us that the Jewish people *Godes æ heoldon æfter Godes gesetnyssum* 'kept God's law according to God's decrees' (sentence 28). In the next sentence, Haman makes a speech to Ahasuerus in order to gain the king's approval and authority for his proposed pogrom and he offers his own characterizations of the Jews, in devastatingly harsh terms. The Jews, he claims, do not keep the laws and customs of the Persians (*næfð ure þeawas, ne ure laga ne hylt*), and they are bound to damage the kingdom with their negligence (*receleasnysse*) and foolishness (*stuntness*) (sentence 29). Given the harsh treatment of the Jews in Haman's speech, we can read the earlier statement in sentence 28 as Ælfric's attempt to mitigate Haman's speech. As we have seen, Ælfric has taken pains to ensure that readers do not sympathize with Haman; conversely, it seems that he is here trying to ensure that the audience *does* sympathize with the Jews.[34]

After Haman's speech to the king, three further explicit cues characterize the Jewish people. The first occurs during the 'final feast' scene. In her request for help, Esther reveals her Jewish heritage and identifies herself as a member of this group, at the same time describing their problem in fervent language: they have been betrayed (*belewde*) and will be 'hewn with hard swords' (*toheawene mid heardum swurdum*)—indeed, all trace of them wiped from the Earth (*þæt ure gemynd beo mid ealle adilegod* 'that our memory and all that concerns us should be hidden'; sentence 51). Because of her self-identification in this group, her words can be considered self-presentation, as noted earlier. However, because she stands alone before the king, apart from the general mass of Jewish people in the kingdom, we can also think of this speech as being other-presentation; in effect, Esther is both a member and an 'other' of this group

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[34] Note that this effect is made possible through the use of direct reported speech by Haman, a topic which I treat in further detail in Chapter 4.

while she speaks of their plight, the grammar of the first-person plural (*we*, *ure*) being the only indication of her inclusion.

Finally, Ælfric characterizes the Jews in his coda, explaining that they 'lived in peace' (*on friþe wunedon*) and 'rejoiced wonderfully' (*wundorlice blissodon*) after Esther's intervention. Not only this, but they *heoldon þa Godes æ þæs þe glædlicor* 'kept God's law afterward more gladly' (sentences 63–64). Occurring in the epilogue, these phrases offer a commentary on the way the faithful should behave once they have seen God's hand in their lives: the faithful do not simply return to their previous state, but find greater joy and happiness in keeping God's commandments.

GOD

Although God is explicitly characterized only a handful of times, the fact that he is explicitly mentioned at all is significant. The Vulgate never once mentions God explicitly, and the fact that he is so overtly discussed in Ælfric's version suggests that he relied, at least in part, on the Old Latin translations. As these were based on the LXX, they contained more overt references to God. It is certainly possible, however, that Ælfric relied primarily on the Vulgate but took advantage of the opportunity to 'improve' the story by making God more visible in its events.

However that may be, several references are made to God in the final lines of the text, during the epilogue (sentences 65–67). First is a reminder that God controls the universe (*ealle þing gewylt*), followed by the explanation that he controlled Ahasuerus' fate, as it was he who had 'elevated' (*geuferode*) Ahasuerus and 'chosen him as king' (*to cyninge geceas*) over such a powerful kingdom. These occur at the same time that we are being told of Ahasuerus' conversion to the true faith and his righteous life henceforward. The combination of explicit cues describing both Ahasuerus and God underscores the message that those with great power can, and indeed must, serve God faithfully, not only because they influence the people they lead but also because it is only through God's grace that they have been so elevated to begin with.

The final words of the text likewise explicitly characterize God, this time as benevolent (*welwillendan*), all-powerful, and eternal (*se þe æfre rixað on ecnysse*). Though these expressions are part of a formulaic closing used in several of Ælfric's homilies and saints' lives, they are no less important in making God's works and will explicit throughout the text. Such expressions in the conclusion of the text tie together earlier, sometimes oblique, references to God and religion, including Mordecai's keeping of the law of Moses, the Jews' keeping of the law of God, the fasting during a time of national crisis, and Esther's faith according to the way of Abraham, allowing religion to pervade the text in a way that is entirely absent in the Vulgate translation of Esther.

CONCLUSION

Explicit characterization cues in Ælfric's *Esther* draw flat, category-based characterizations for the main characters. Ahasuerus is the powerful king, Esther the pious wife and powerful intercessor, Vashti the disobedient wife; Mordecai is the pious teacher, and Haman the self-important villain. Further, characterization cues situate Mordecai and Esther within the community of Jews—though this is mitigated somewhat for Esther, who is both inside and outside of this group until she places herself within it again through self-presentation as the narrative draws toward its close. Ælfric leaves his audience in no doubt as to each character's goodness or wickedness, nor about their place in the overall story. As we shall see, although the implicit characterization cues add subtlety and nuance to these characterizations, they also largely reinforce the category-based characterizations. That is to say, the characters' discourse, emotions and food behaviors, as well as the deictic language of the text, continually reaffirm those personality traits that have been overtly presented, whether by the characters in the text (self-presentation and other-presentation) or by the narrator.

Speaking, Thinking, and Writing: Discourse Presentation

What characters say and how they say it is one type of behavior, and is thus available to the reader as a way of inferring characterization. Hence, in Culpeper's terminology, speech is a form of implicit characterization cues. Not only does a character's choice of words affect the audience's characterization, but so does the author's choice of how to present that character's speech. Similarly, the thoughts that take place inside a character's head—which other characters will not be aware of, but which a narrator can present explicitly for the benefit of the reader—may affect the reader's mental model of that character. Like explicit cues, such discourse presentation tends to be fairly easy to spot, and so this is a natural starting point for examining implicit cues.

This chapter examines the characterization cues present in the discourse presentation in Ælfric's *Esther*. I should note that the chapter concerns discourse *presentation*—not necessarily the discourse itself. In other words, I am less concerned with the content of characters' speeches (or thoughts or writings), and more so with Ælfric's choice of how to present this content, as well as how this presentation affects characterization. In the first section, I review the concept of speech and thought presentation (S&TP), as it has been practiced within stylistics, along with modifications to this model that must be made in order to apply it to Old English literature. Next, I discuss the speech presentation patterns of the main characters: Ahasuerus, Esther, Vashti, Mordecai, and Haman. Finally, I examine some notable instances of thought and writing presentation in the text.

SPEECH PRESENTATION IN THE STYLISTICS TRADITION

While certain categories of speech presentation—particularly Direct Speech, Indirect Speech, and Free Indirect Speech, and the relationship among these—have been of interest to literary theorists since the early twentieth century,[1] it was Leech and Short's influential *Style in Fiction* that brought the subject to the fore in stylistics.[2] Leech and Short examined the three categories of speech presentation just mentioned, developing them into a cohesive model that would potentially cover all speech presentation, which involved developing three futher categories. Additionally, they extended this model to capture thought presentation, which has been particularly important in the development of the English novel since the mid- to late-eighteenth century. Their careful examination included identifying both formal and contextual features that distinguish each category from the others and discussing the literary effects that certain categories have on the audience. This section introduces Leech and Short's model, which is based on modern (nineteenth- and twentieth-century) literature, and all the concepts, tables, and lists reflect this. At the end of the section, I will discuss the modifications that must be made in order to apply the concepts to Old English literature.

Leech and Short's model of speech and thought presentation envisions the different categories on a cline or scale: at one end is speech over which the narrator notionally has great control, while at the other end is speech over which the narrator notionally has no control. Of course, in any narrative, the author ultimately controls all the language that is presented; hence, the cline represents speech over which the narrator 'notionally' has control. In this conception, the speech on the Direct end of the scale is meant to be read as speech which the character actually produces, word-for-word, in the text-world and which the narrator merely reproduces in written form.[3]

This cline is represented in Figure 4.1, with the different categories of speech presentation appropriately placed along it. Several scholars have used this model for stylistic analysis of narrative fiction, newspaper reporting, (auto)biography, and even

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[1] See, among others, Norman Page, 'Categories of Speech in *Persuasion*', *The Modern Language Review*, 64 (1969), 734–41.

[2] Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short, 'Speech and Thought Presentation', in *Style in Fiction* (London: Longman, 1981), pp. 318–51.

[3] However, see below on the notions of authenticity, faithfulness, and original utterance (in Leech and Short's model), versus 'represented speech'.

spoken discourse, in texts originating from the sixteenth to the twenty-first centuries.[4] As a result of these analyses, Leech and Short modified the model slightly for the second edition of *Style in Fiction*, published in 2007.[5] Additionally, Semino and Short added a third, parallel scale of writing presentation categories for their corpus-based study of written texts. For now, I focus on speech presentation, but I will take up thought and writing presentation again in the final section of this chapter.
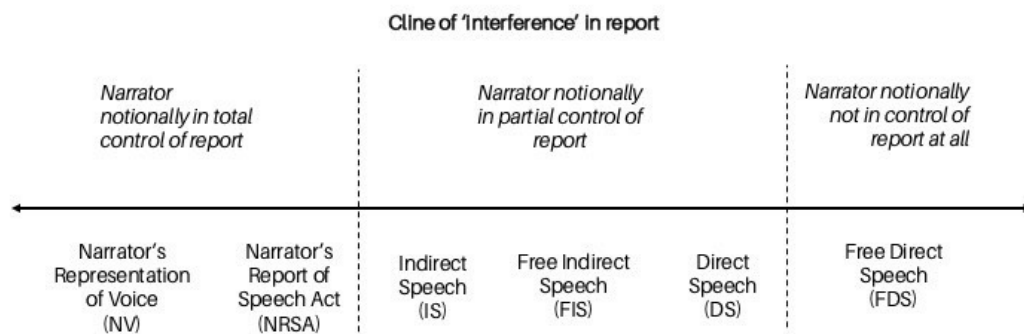
Figure 4.1: Cline of narratorial 'interference' in speech presentation modes (adapted from Leech & Short, *Style in Fiction* [2007], p. 260)

Of course, it is absurd to argue that the speech attributed to characters in a fictional world is in any way actually spoken or uttered. Indeed, as Elise Louviot points out, the speech we think of as 'Direct Speech' in narrative fiction is not, in

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[4] Particularly influential has been Semino and Short's examination of discourse presentation in a diverse corpus of English writing, including narrative fiction, narrative non-fiction ([auto]biography), and news reporting from the late twentieth century, expanding and refining Leech and Short's original model; Elena Semino and Mick Short, *Corpus Stylistics: Speech, Writing and Thought Presentation in a Corpus of English Writing* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004). To note only a few others: Dan McIntyre and Brian Walker examine discourse presentation in sixteenth-century prose fiction and news reporting ('Discourse Presentation in Early Modern English Writing: A Preliminary Corpus-Based Investigation', *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 16 [2012], 101–30); Michaela Mahlberg and others offer a corpus-based analysis of direct speech in Dickens's fiction (1837–70) ('CLiC Dickens: Novel Uses of Concordances for the Integration of Corpus Stylistics and Cognitive Poetics', *Corpora*, 11 [2016], 433–63); Kieran O'Halloran conducts a corpus-based analysis of thought presentation in Joyce's 1914 short story 'Eveline' ('The Subconscious in James Joyce's "Eveline": A Corpus Stylistic Analysis that Chews on the "Fish Hook"', *Language and Literature*, 16 [2007], 227–44); and Joe Bray produces a brief but compelling analysis of Free Indirect Discourse in David Foster Wallace's *The Pale King* (2011) ('Speech and Thought Presentation in Stylistics', in *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics*, ed. by Michael Burke [Abingdon: Routledge, 2014], pp. 222–36 [pp. 226–36]).

[5] Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short, 'Speech and Thought Presentation', in *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*, revised 2nd edn (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007), pp. 255–81. Hereafter all citations of Leech and Short refer to this edition.

actual fact, spoken in the real world. She therefore suggests the term 'represented speech' rather than 'reported speech'.[6] While I agree with this view of the ontological status of the speech in question, I do not see that it changes in any significant way the different categories of speech presentation, nor the linguistic features that distinguish them from one another. Even for Louviot, it does not change the terminology for this particular mode, which she still refers to as 'Direct Speech'. For the sake of brevity, then, I shall discuss such speeches as though they took place in the real world, but the reader should bear in mind that these are, in fact, constructed speeches that take place in a constructed text-world.

Direct Speech (DS) is the category of speech presentation most easily recognized in modern narrative fiction. Features that distinguish this speech category from others include:

1. punctuation to set off speech
2. reporting clause
3. deictic language (relatively) proximal to the speaker
4. distinctive linguistic features typical of the speaker
5. faithfulness to 'original' utterance

The most readily noticeable among these is the modern convention of using quotation marks or inverted commas to set off the speech,[7] in order to convey a sense that the content within these punctuation marks is a verbatim quote of what the character says in the text-world. DS also employs a reporting clause (e.g., 'she said'), which may precede, follow, or interrupt the speech. Further, DS employs relatively proximal deixis. I will discuss deixis in greater detail in Chapter 6, but for now it will suffice to say that deixis is that language which indicates the location of the speaker in time, space, and other contexts. The deixis in DS, as mentioned, is proximal to the character who produces the speech: first- and second-person pronouns and present-tense verbs. It should always be noted, though, that the specific deictic forms occurring in DS (or in any other presentation category) are dependent on the narrative conventions of the particular piece of narrative under analysis. In a novel or poem narrated in the first-person, for example, the use of first-person pronouns is not a sufficient indicator of DS. Further, DS may include idiosyncratic speech unique to the character who produces it, including vocabulary, syntax, and regional/dialectal

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[6] Elise Louviot, *Direct Speech in* Beowulf *and Other Old English Narrative Poems* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2016), esp. p. 17.

[7] For the sake of simplicity, I will hereafter refer only to quotation marks, with the understanding that the same applies to inverted commas.

variations.[8] These distinctive speech patterns may also include punctuation (such as exclamation points and ellipses) or interjections (such as 'oh', 'hey', or 'er'), which are intended to convey the manner in which something is uttered. Finally, DS is highly faithful to the 'original' utterance; that is, the content of the speech represents as closely as possible the words that the character speaks in the text-world.

Indirect Speech (IS) is similarly very familiar to most readers of narrative fiction. IS shares two features with DS: use of a reporting clause and high faithfulness to the original utterance. The other three criteria listed above, however, are all different for IS. Thus, IS does not employ quotation marks; its deictic markers are (relatively) distal to the speaker; and it generally avoids the distinctive features of the speaker (i.e., the character), employing instead a voice similar to that of the narrator. Both DS and IS occur frequently in English-language narrative fiction, especially since the development of the modern novel, and the relationship between them is readily apparent to most readers. However, these are far from the only forms of speech presentation.

The category between DS and IS on the cline of narratorial intervention is known as Free Indirect Speech (FIS). As Leech and Short's revised chapter on S&TP demonstrates, there is a great deal of flexibility in how FIS is presented, its main defining feature being simply that it is a mixture of DS and IS features. FIS may or may not employ quotation marks; some writers regularly use quotation marks with FIS, while others do not.[9] Generally, FIS employs a reporting clause—but this is often dropped in long stretches of FIS, so that by the time the reader reaches the end of the speech, he only vaguely remembers that there was a reporting clause at all.[10] Similarly, FIS may use proximal or distal deixis, and it may or may not employ the distinctive speech patterns of the speaker. But crucially, these features cannot be mixed in the same way they are for DS or IS—otherwise, the speech will simply be either DS or IS.

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[8] Leech and Short, for example, point out instances of FIS (discussed below) in Charles Dickens's literature that employ the distinctive speech patterns of the character who is speaking (p. 263). This phenomenon is not unknown in OE literature: Fred C. Robinson claims that the messenger's speech in *The Battle of Maldon* is 'the first literary use of dialect in English', which he argues is meant to convey that this messenger is a Viking speaking in a Norse-influenced dialect ('Some Aspects of the *Maldon* Poet's Artistry', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 75 [1976], 125–40 [p. 123]); however, see Sara Pons-Sanz, 'Norse-Derived Terms and Structures in *The Battle of Maldon*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 107 (2008), 421–44, which largely refutes Robinson's claim.

[9] Charlotte Brontë, for example, regularly employs quotation marks for FIS, whereas Jane Austen never does.

[10] See Leech and Short, p. 261 for a good example from Jane Austen's *Persuasion*.

Looked at another way, we can define the different speech categories using the five criteria already noted, using each criterion as a binary option. Table 4.1 displays this style of definition for IS, FIS, and DS:

Table 4.1: Definition of IS, FIS, and DS by binary options

	IS	FIS	DS
quotation marks	N	(Y/N)	Y
reporting clause	Y	(Y/N)	Y
proximal deixis	N	(Y/N)	Y
character's distinctive speech patterns	N	(Y/N)	Y
faithful to the original utterance	Y	Y	Y

where N indicates that the feature is not present in that mode and Y that it is present; the signifier '(Y/N)' indicates that the feature may or may not be present. In the case of FIS, as mentioned above, the first four features may or may not by employed—so long as the final pattern is not identical to that of either IS or DS. In fact, changing only one of those features can transform what would otherwise be DS or IS into FIS.

Leech and Short's model includes only one category that is further toward the 'no narrator control' end of the cline than DS, and that is Free Direct Speech (FDS). This mode of speech presentation retains all the features of DS, except that one or both of the first two criteria are not present: the quotation marks, the reporting clause, or both, are omitted. This omission removes the narrator even further from the exchange than in DS, leaving an impression that the characters are speaking entirely for themselves. This presentation category often occurs in conjunction with other categories—for example, interspersed with DS—but may occur entirely on its own, sometimes for long stretches.[11] In terms of the binary options noted earlier, the first two criteria are optional (Y/N)—so long as at least one of them is absent—while the remaining three are present (Y).

In the other direction on the cline of narratorial control, the model includes two further categories of presentation: Narrator's Report of Speech Act (NRSA) and Narrator's Representation of Voice (NV). These both lie toward the end where the narrator exerts greater control over the form of the speech that is reported. Both of these categories present the speech with less faithfulness to the original utterance than

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[11] Leech and Short, for example, point out a passage in a short story of Ernest Hemingway that opens with one line of DS, followed by 'some twenty-eight lines of' FDS; p. 258.

do IS, FIS, DS, and FDS. So the fifth criterion listed above would be 'N' in our binary options. The crucial difference distinguishing NRSA from NV is the question of whether the reporting clause indicates the illocutionary force of the utterance.

Illocutionary force is a concept in speech act theory, originally developed in the writings of J. L. Austin and John R. Searle.[12] In speech act theory, the literal meaning of an utterance is its locutionary force, while the intended meaning of the speaker—which may or may not be explicit in the actual linguistic form of the sentence—is its illocutionary force. To repeat an oft-cited example, when a speaker asks, 'Can you pass the salt?', the locutionary force of the utterance is a question about the addressee's ability to move the salt. But, as most speakers of English are aware, this is not usually the speaker's intended meaning in uttering these words; rather, it is most probably a request for the addressee to hand the salt to the speaker. The *locutionary* force of the utterance is a question—but the *illocutionary* force is a request. The illocutionary force of any utterance is its speech act: what the speaker hopes to accomplish with the speech.[13] The question of how to determine whether something is a speech act is still open to debate, but some common ones, on which there is generally strong consensus, include informing, persuading, requesting, commanding, and promising.

In NRSA, the reporting clause may be quite short, and the degree of faithfulness to the original utterance is usually lower than in the categories of presentation previously discussed. The amount of detail given about the topic under discussion may also vary significantly. But, crucially, the illocutionary force of the utterance is indicated in the verb of report. In NV, on the other hand, the narrator indicates that speech has taken place, but gives no indication as to the content or illocutionary force of that speech. Of the following sentences, 1 and 2 are NRSA, reporting the illocutionary force of the speech, while 3 and 4 are NV:

> (1) She promised to return the following day to see him again.
>
> (2) She entreated him.
>
> (3) He uttered something unintelligible.
>
> (4) They spoke at length.

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[12] J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

[13] The classical approach to speech acts posits a third 'meaning' of an utterance, namely the perlocutionary force, which has to do with the hearer's behavior in response to the utterance. See Austin (esp. pp. 101–32) and Searle (esp. pp. 22–26).

Table 4.2 summarizes all of the information so far presented, including the three categories just discussed (FDS, NRSA, and NV), as well as the sixth criterion (illocutionary force):

Table 4.2: Binary options for all speech categories

	NV	NRSA	IS	FIS	DS	FDS
quotation marks	N	N	N	(Y/N)	Y	(Y/N)
reporting clause	Y	Y	Y	(Y/N)	Y	(Y/N)
proximal deixis	N	N	N	(Y/N)	Y	Y
character's distinctive speech style	N	N	N	(Y/N)	Y	Y
faithful to the original utterance	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
illocutionary force	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Of course, this table only summarizes the formal features that distinguish each presentation category. But context and co-text are often just as important as these formal features in determining the category for a particular stretch of reported speech. An instance of speech may, in isolation, seem to be either IS or FIS, for example; but if that sentence occurs within a long string of FIS (its co-text), we can reasonably classify it as FIS, given that most readers are likely to interpret it this way. Similarly, as has already been noted, features of the narratorial style (its context)—such as the narrator's omniscience or limited knowledge, or the first- or third-person narration style—may affect which category of presentation applies to a particular speech.

Semino and Short, in their study of discourse presentation in an extensive corpus, proposed additional sub-categories in the model. These were meant to capture information about the speech where relevant to understanding the function of the speech, but did not constitute a separate category in and of themselves. These sub-categories could (at least in theory) be applied to any of the main categories. Two in particular are relevant to my study of speech presentation in Ælfric's *Esther*: embedded speech and hypothetical speech. Hypothetical speech is a stretch of language presented in one of the standard categories, but which has not actually taken place in the text-world—at least not yet. Embedded speech, on the other hand, is a speech by one character that is embedded within the speech of another character. Both of these occur in Ælfric's *Esther*, and I will return to these sub-categories later in this chapter (see 'Esther' and 'Thought and Writing Presentation in Ælfric's *Esther*').

Leech and Short argue that different discourse presentation categories have different literary effects for the reader. In particular, they suggest that each discourse

mode (which, for them, includes speech and thought, but not writing) tends to be presented as one particular category more often than any other, and that any discourse presented in another category from this norm therefore has particular effects for the reader. For speech, the norm is DS, and when a reader encounters FIS—which is further to the left on the cline of narratorial interference—this has a kind of ironic, distancing effect. The narrator has, in effect, inserted herself into the text as an interpreter for the speech, and the reader consequently feels less sympathy for those characters whose speech is presented in this way. On the other hand, the norm in thought presentation is Indirect Thought (IT), and so the move to Free Indirect Thought (FIT)—further to the right on the cline of interference—has the opposite effect: rather than distancing the reader, it tends to engender close affinity and sympathy with those characters whose thoughts are presented in this manner. Their argument has particular reference to the different effects of Free Indirect presentation, but we may extrapolate from it the more general notion that when a shift occurs in discourse presentation category, the direction of that shift, in terms of the cline of interference, suggests the degree of sympathy the reader is likely to feel for the character whose discourse is presented. Of course, the argument depends heavily on the question of what is actually the norm for presentation in each discourse mode (speech, thought, writing) in a particular genre, language, period, author, and so on.

Before proceeding to my analysis of the speech presentation in Ælfric's *Esther*, it will be necessary to consider what modifications to this framework are necessary for identifying and analyzing speech presentation categories in Old English. These are surprisingly few—attesting to both the robust nature of Leech and Short's model, as well as to the close relation of OE to PDE (which should be obvious, but often becomes overshadowed by the differences in the languages and their related cultures and literatures).

The primary modification concerns the use of quotation marks. Since these are not used in Old English orthography, this particular feature is of no use in determining the presentation mode. Although this is often the most easily identifiable feature to distinguish DS in literature of the last few centuries, it is by no means the only distinguishing feature, and we can still determine whether a stretch of speech is presented as DS by the use of proximal deixis and distinctive speech patterns. Of course, modern editions of OE texts often insert quotation marks as appropriate, and this is the case with Lee's edition of *Esther*, which is the basis for my analysis. However, in order to avoid relying too heavily on Lee's editorial decisions in my

analysis, I have ignored his inverted commas while examining speech presentation, and have also compared his edition with L'Isle's seventeenth-century manuscript.

The manuscript itself makes minimal use of punctuation marks, primarily points and the *punctus interrogativus*. The points generally occur at what modern editors would consider sentence boundaries (i.e., in place of a full stop) or clause boundaries (i.e., in place of a comma), or where modern punctuation would use an apostrophe (for example, in *Moyses' æ* 'Moses' law', which is written in the MS as *Moyses. æ*). While a point does often occur before a stretch of speech, this is not always the case, and is better taken as marking a pause in breathing or a mild break in the grammatical flow—something akin to a comma or semicolon, rather than to quotation marks. On the other hand, the *punctus interrogativus* occurs three times, always marking the end of a question—but not of all questions, as the grammar makes the question clear in most cases, thus rendering the *punctus interrogativus* redundant.[14] While further study of the manuscript's punctuation might reveal more specific patterns, my cursory analysis suggests that it does not correlate with speech per se.

Additionally, the literary device of dyads—common in OE literature, particularly of a poetic nature—may occur in reporting clauses. A writer might say, for example, 'He answered and said …', followed by a stretch of either indirect or direct speech. I consider such instances to be part of the same reporting clause, and have treated them as such in my analysis. Obviously, though, this kind of construction is different from the simple, 'He said …', and is salient to the reader's interpretation of the text and its characters. I will therefore note these dyadic instances and discuss the possible effect on the reader in the analysis that follows.

SPEECH PRESENTATION IN ÆLFRIC'S
ESTHER

To give the reader a sense of what the speech presentation categories look like in an OE text, and in Ælfric's *Esther* in particular, I begin this section by giving examples of each of the categories. Following this, I examine the distribution of speech presentation categories among the main characters, demonstrating how the speech presentation for each character affects his/her characterization.

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[14] Lee's edition, by comparison, includes six question marks.

SPEECH PRESENTATION CATEGORIES

The most common speech presentation categories in Ælfric's *Esther* are NRSA (21 occurrences) and IS (18 occurrences), closely followed by DS (14 occurrences). FIS and FDS each occur once, while NV does not occur at all (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3: Speech presentation categories in Ælfric's *Esther*

NV	NRSA	IS	FIS	DS	FDS
0	21	18	1	14	1

As noted earlier, the norm for speech presentation in a particular corpus of literature can help us better understand the literary effect of shifting to a different presentation category. While a systematic examination of the speech presentation categories in the extant OE corpus, or even a sizable portion of it, is beyond the scope of the present study, it is clear from Table 4.3 that the norm for speech presentation in Ælfric's *Esther* is NRSA. Thus, any speech presented in a more direct, less narrator-mediated way than this creates a sense of familiarity or empathy with that speaker—with one notable exception.

A typical NRSA speech occurs after Mordecai has foiled the attempted assassination of the king, when Ahasuerus orders that the affair be recorded in the royal chronicle (sentence 24):[15]

> Þa het he awritan hu **hine <u>gewarnode</u>** Mardocheus se þegen, þæt hit on geminde wære.

> Then he commanded that it should be written how Mordecai the retainer <u>**warned**</u> **him**, that it might be remembered.

Here, the reporting verb indicates that Mordecai warned the king, but no more detailed information is provided as to just what words Mordecai used in this speech. In this particular case, this is because the sentence serves to sum up the episode of the wicked chamberlains and their planned assassination of the king, and so the reader already knows what kind of information was conveyed in the warning. Although we know the illocutionary force of Mordecai's utterance (i.e., warning) we are told virtually nothing of the form in which he uttered it.

A typical example of IS occurs in sentence 33:

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[15] Throughout this chapter, the discourse (speech, thought, or writing) is set in bold type, while the reporting verb is underlined.

> Þa **bebead** seo cwen **þæt hire cynn eall sceolde fæstan þreo dagas on an & Godes fultum biddan** […]
>
> Then the queen **commanded that her people must all fast three days continuously and pray for God's help** […]

Here, the speech itself is subordinated by the use of the conjunction *þæt*, a feature typical of IS. However, since *þæt* may be elided (just as with 'that' in PDE), this cannot be considered a necessary condition for the identification of IS. Unlike the example of NRSA cited above, it is quite simple to change this sentence into DS, merely by changing the pronouns and the verb tense (where I have added inverted commas, to more clearly indicate the DS):

> *   Þa bebead seo cwen, 'Min cynn eall sceal fæstan þreo dagas on an & Godes fultum biddan […]'
>
> *   Þa bebead seo cwen, 'Ge ealle sculon fæstan þreo dagas on an & Godes fultum biddan […]'

While it is possible that the Esther in Ælfric's text-world used different words in her utterance, the ease with which the speech can be shifted into DS indicates the high degree of detail offered in this instance.

Perhaps the most unusual instance of IS occurs in sentence 2, as Ælfric introduces us to the setting and characters of the story that follows. Of Ahasuerus, he says:

> **Hundtwelftig scira he soðlice hæfde & seofon scira**, swa swa us **secgað** bec, **on his anwealde, ealle him gewylde**.
>
> **He had indeed 127 provinces**, as the books **tell** us, **in his kingdom, all within his control**.

Here, Ælfric appeals to the authority of 'the books'—what we would today call the Bible—in describing the extent of Ahasuerus's kingdom. In doing so, he effectively puts this information in the 'mouth', so to speak, of the books, using a reporting clause to indicate that this information comes directly from his written sources. As Leech and Short point out, interrupting the locutionary clause in this way is often a feature of FIS or FDS, and this 'inversion' of the reporting clause—which is most commonly given before the reported speech in PDE[16]—can have a startling effect on the reader, who must reassess the speech that came before in light of this new

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[16] Additional work, beyond the scope of this study, would be required to verify whether this is the case in OE.

information.[17] With this reporting clause, Ælfric both appeals to the authority of the written account and personifies that account—an act of prosopopoeia that is still in common use in PDE. The reporting verb *secgan*, indeed, is the very reason that this instance has been classified as speech presentation, rather that writing presentation, since the verb suggests speech, despite the grammatical subject.

The next most frequently occurring speech presentation type is DS, an example of which appears when Haman condemns the Jews before Ahasuerus (sentences 28–29):

> Aman […] began hi to **wregenne** wið þone cyning þuss: **An mancynn wunað, leof, wide tostenced under þinum anwealde on gehwilcum scirum, þe næfð ure þeawa, ne ure laga ne hylt; & þu wel was, leof, þæt hit wile hearmian þinum cynerice heora receleasnysse, gif him man ne gestyrð heora stuntness. Læt hi ealle fordon, & ic gedo þæt þu hæfst tyn þusend punda to þinum mydercum.**[18]

> Haman […] began to **accuse** them before the king thus: **There is one race, sire, dwelling widely dispersed under your jurisdiction, in any number of provinces, who neither have our customs nor keep our laws; and you know well, sire, that their negligence will harm your kingdom, if their foolishness is not restrained. Let them all be destroyed, and I will ensure that you have ten thousand pounds in your money-chest**.

Despite the lack of quotation marks, a number of deictic markers indicate that this is DS: person-deixis, evident in both the pronouns and the verb forms; time-deixis in the verb forms; and relational deixis in the terms of address, which suggest the distinctive speech of Haman. Pronouns—including first-person *ic*, *ure* and second-person *þu*, *þin*—and verb forms—including first-person *gedo* and second-person *was*, *læt*, and *hæfst*—mark out Haman as the deictic center of the speech and Ahasuerus as his addressee. The verb forms also indicate, by their tense markers, that the time of this utterance is the text-world present of Haman and Ahasuerus—rather than, say, the narrator's present in telling the story. Finally, the term of address *leof* occurs twice, and is a further indicator that this is DS, since the narrator has no motivation for using this honorific in reference to Ahasuerus.

[17] Leech and Short, p. 267–68.
[18] The inverted commas of Lee's edition have been removed.

The clearest example of FIS occurs when Esther—weeping with awe of God—falls at the king's feet and begs him to save her people (sentence 60):

> Seo cwen þa aleat to þæs cyninges fotum mid agotenum tearum, mid Godes ege onbryrd, & **bæd** hire cynehlaford **þæt he lete awritan oðre gewritu to eallum þam scirum þe þa Iudeiscan on eardedon, togeanes þam gewritum þe Aman ær awrat, þæt þa Iudeiscan moston for his micclan cynescipe beon ealle on friðe & unforhte to þam dæge þe Aman him gecwæþ to heora agenum slege**.

> The queen then knelt at the king's feet with streaming tears, inspired by awe of God, and **asked** her liege-lord **that he might have other writings written to all the provinces where the Jews lived, against the writings that Haman had previously had written, that the Jews might all, on account his great majesty, be peaceful and unafraid of that day on which Haman had commanded their slaughter**.

In this passage, the phrase 'for his micclan cynescipe' includes a term of address, suggestive of Esther's distinctive speech pattern (indicative of DS), but deictically distal (indicative of IS). This blending of Esther's style of speech with the deixis of the narrator makes it difficult to definitively say whether the narrator is merely reporting the content of Esther's speech, or whether Esther's own words are being used, and this blend of DS and IS features is the hallmark of FIS.

FDS occurs once, as Haman complains of his mistreatment by Mordecai (sentences 38–39):

> Þa wearð he swiþe gram þam Godes þegene, & cwæþ to his cnihtum þæt him forcuþlic þuhte þæt se an Iudeisca hine forsawe. **Se cyning me wurðað, swa swa ge witaþ ealle, & seo cwen ne gelaðode nænne oðerne to hire butan me ænne to eacan þam cyninge. Nu þingþ me þæt ic næbbe nænne wurðscipe on life swa lange swa Mardocheus me nele abugan**.[19]

> The he [Haman] became furious with the servant of God [Mordecai], and said to his attendants that he thought it disgraceful that he, a Jew, should despise him. **The king honors me, as you all know, and the queen invited none other to her but me alone, to join the**

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[19] The inverted commas of Lee's edition have been removed.

**king. Now it seems to me that I will have no dignity in life so long
as Mordecai will not bow to me**.

The FDS portion of the passage, indicated in bold, is immediately preceded by what is clearly IS, employing both a reporting clause (*cwæþ*) and distal deixis (in the verb forms and pronouns). The sudden shift of deixis is a clear indication that the speech reflects Haman's own words, but the lack of a reporting clause—which has been used in all other instances of DS in the text—indicate that it is FDS instead. For this important speech, a dramatic moment revealing the depth of Haman's anger and his vengeful nature, the narrator is removed completely, and the audience is allowed to hear Haman in his own voice. The effect of this speech in characterizing Haman is quite strong, and it will be discussed in greater detail below ('Haman').

CHARACTERS' SPEECH

The speakers of speech in Ælfric's text are diverse in number and character. They are sometimes only implied or hypothetical, and they include not only the main characters, but also several of Ahasuerus's servants (including several *cnihtas* 'servants' and *burðenas* 'chamberlains'), his advisers (*witan*) and their wives—even, hypothetically, the entire population of Persia and Media. However, for my analysis I am concerned only with the main characters: Ahasuerus, Esther, Vashti, Mordecai, and Haman. Of these, Ahasuerus has the most speech presentation, with 26 occurrences. Esther has 15, Haman 9, and Mordecai 5; Vashti has none at all. These counts can be found in Table 4.4, along with breakdowns by speech presentation category.

Table 4.4: Speech presentation by character in Ælfric's *Esther*

	NV	NRSA	IS	FIS	DS	FDS	Total
Ahasuerus	0	9	8	0	9	0	26
Esther	0	5	6	1	3	0	15
Vashti	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mordecai	0	4	1	0	0	0	5
Haman	0	3	3	0	2	1	9
Total	0	21	18	1	14	1	55

Among the five main characters, sixteen different verbs are used to report their speeches, ranging from those with a neutral sense (e.g., *cwepan* 'to speak', *secgan* 'to say') to those with quite specific illocutionary senses (e.g., *warnian* 'to warn', *dihtan* 'to

dictate'). Some of these verbs are used to report speeches of multiple characters, while others are unique to a given character and speech. Table 4.5 lists these reporting verbs, which will be discussed for each character as the analysis proceeds.

Table 4.5: Reporting verbs by character[20]

Ahasuerus	Esther	Haman	Mordecai
ANDWYRDAN 'answer' (1) [andwyrde]	AMELDIAN 'reveal' (1) [ameldian]	ANDWYRDAN 'answer' (1) [andwyrde]	BIDDAN 'request' (1) [bæd]
AXIAN 'ask' (0/1) [axode]	BEBEODAN 'order' (1) [bebead]	BIDDAN 'request' (1) [biddan]	CYÐAN 'tell' (2) [cydde]
BEBEODAN 'order' (1) [bebead]	BIDDAN 'request' (4) [biddan, biddende, bytst, bæd]	CWEÐAN 'say, speak' (2) [cwæþ, gecwæð]	SECGAN 'say' (2) [sæde, gesæde]
BEFRINAN 'inquire' (2/3) [befran]	CWEÞAN 'say, speak' (3) [cwæþ]	DIHTAN 'dictate' (1) [dihte]	WARNIAN 'warn' (1) [gewarnode]
CWEÞAN 'say' (5/7) [cwæþ, gecwæþ]	CYÐAN 'tell' (2) [cydde, cydde … forð]	OFAXIAN 'inquire' (1) [ofaxod]	
HATAN 'command' (11) [het, hete]	LAÐIAN 'invite' (1) [gelaþode]	SECGAN 'say' (1) [sæde]	
HERIAN 'praise' (1) [herode]	SECGAN 'say' (2) [secgan]	WREGAN 'accuse' (1) [wregenne]	
SENDAN 'summon' (1) [sende]			

Ahasuerus

Ahasuerus's speech is presented as NRSA, DS, and IS. Particularly of note here is the high incidence, comparatively, of DS in his speech, with nine occurrences: Ahasuerus,

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[20] Reporting verbs are given first in the infinitive form in all caps, with the PDE translation in inverted commas; this is followed by the number of occurrences for this character in parentheses, then the actual forms appearing in the text in square brackets. The verbs *axian*, *befrinan*, and *cwepan* for Ahasuerus all occur in instances of dyadic verbs (*befran and cwæþ* and *axode and cwæþ*), and the counts are therefore compounded: the first number indicates how many times the verb occurs in isolation, the second (separated by a slash) how many times it occurs altogether, including in combination with other verbs.

more than any other character in the text, is allowed to speak in his own voice. This is one way in which his position as king is highlighted, as his words are allowed to have their full effect in these instances, with very little narratorial intervention. However, he is not always allowed to speak in his own voice: just as many of his utterances are presented in NRSA (9), and nearly as many in IS (8).

Tellingly, of the nine occurrences of NRSA in Ahasuerus's speech, seven are reported with the verb *hatan* 'to command', underscoring his position of power—which, as we have seen in the last chapter, Ælfric stresses through explicit characterization cues. One of the remaining occurrences of NRSA, though it does not use the word *hatan*, has a similar illocutionary force, when the king summons Haman to attend Esther's feast (*Se cyning þa sende sona æfter Amane*, 'The king then summoned Haman immediately'; sentence 50). Commanding and summoning seem to be favorite acts of Ahasuerus.

Indeed, this is borne out by the reporting verbs associated with Ahasuerus's speech, for all categories of speech presentation, many of which indicate some kind of command. There is a good deal of foregrounding among these. First, the frequent occurrence of *het* in relation to Ahasuerus, with 11 total instances, is foregrounded by repetition, emphasizing the characterization of Ahasuerus as a man of power. This verb is all the more foregrounded because it occurs as a reporting verb only in Ahasueurus' speech and no other character's, making this a deviation. When combined with the verbs *bebeodan* and *sendan (æfter)*, both of which likewise convey the illocutionary force of a command, this pattern becomes particularly strong for Ahasuerus. Ælfric's chosen reporting verbs for Ahasuerus leave us in no doubt as to who wields the power in this text. With this pattern of commanding speech acts firmly established, however, Ahasuerus's final speech act deviates from the pattern, when he praises God (*he herode God*; sentence 65). This reporting verb (and its illocutionary force) is entirely new for Ahasuerus's speech, and its appearance at the end of the text—foregrounded through deviation—serves to highlight the king's conversion to righteous living, which is unique to Ælfric's text. As his heart changes, so too does his speech. Indeed, it is not so much a conversion, in the modern sense of that word, as it is a shift from Ahasuerus's independent use of knowledge to an acknowledgement that his power is dependent on God's providence. *Herode* is the only reporting verb in Ahasuerus's NRSA that has nothing to do with commanding, and this juxtaposition helps stress one of the text's major themes, namely that God is the most powerful king of all. Even the mighty Ahasuerus, in Ælfric's version, ultimately realizes his own dependence on God, his final speech act bearing witness to his newly-recognized position within the divine kingdom.

With so many uses of *hatan* in reporting Ahasuerus's speech, we must ask ourselves: What is the content of these speeches? Just what does Ahasuerus command to be done in his kingdom? Among other things, he commands that a wonderful feast be made for his court, a new queen be sought, and honors be prepared for his wedding to that new queen (sentences 3, 14, and 21, respectively). What particularly strikes one, however, are the king's commands as they relate to the other characters. In relation to Haman, the king first commands that all of Haman's subordinates should bow to him, as they would to the king; next, he commands that Haman should be summoned; then that Haman should obey the queen's invitation; and finally, that Haman should be bound fast (sentences 25, 37, 37, and 56, respectively). The commands Ahasuerus issues in relation to Haman reflect their changing relationship, which devolves from one of high esteem—when Haman is, in effect, the king's viceroy—to one in which Haman is increasingly subjugated: first to the queen's wishes and then to the king's bodily restriction of his former deputy. Ahasuerus's commands parallel Haman's character arc as his pride leads ultimately to his downfall.

The king's commands in relation to Mordecai similarly parallel that character's arc: first, the king commands that Mordecai's good services in warning of the assassination plot should be noted in the chronicle; later, he commands that this chronicle should be brought out and read aloud to him; and on the following morning, Haman hopes that the king will command that Mordecai should be hanged (sentences 24, 41, and 45, respectively). Obviously, this arc is intertwined with that of Haman, and the remarkable, even unbelievable, coincidence of the king's having been reminded of Mordecai's services on the very night when Haman is plotting for Mordecai's death has been much remarked in the scholarly literature concerning the Esther story.[21] But, believability aside, the commands Ahasuerus issues or does not issue in regard to Mordecai likewise parallel Mordecai's character arc, as his faithful service is rewarded in the end. The king's commands, indeed, offer a kind of microcosm of the fuller story—one character is ultimately punished for working against the kingdom of God, while the other is ultimately rewarded for his faithfulness—which is itself a kind of microcosm of Judeo-Christian theology and the conception of a just God, who appropriately rewards those who serve him and punishes those who serve only themselves.

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[21] E.g., Michael V. Fox, *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1991), p. 270; Roland A. Murphy, 'Esther', in *Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiates, and Esther* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 12–14 (p. 14); Carol Meyers, 'Esther', in *The Oxford Bible Commentary*, ed. by John Barton and John Muddiman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 324–330 (p. 328).

Tellingly, Ahasuerus issues no commands directly relating to Esther. Aside from ordering that a new bride should be sought and that his wedding to Esther should be celebrated in style, the king gives no orders directly affecting Esther's behavior. This lack of royal commands touching Esther suggests a relatively equal status in their marital relationship, Esther being allowed to live her life at court as she sees fit, with no interference, to speak of, from her husband. Clearly, though, this equality does not extend into the political realm of the Persian court, since Ahasuerus deems it necessary to ensure that his second-in-command will obey the queen's invitation to her banquet.

Finally, it is noteworthy that all three instances of speech being reported dyadically—that is, with two reporting verbs being used to report the same speech—involve Ahasuerus. These occur during the episode of Haman's commendation of Mordecai at Ahasuerus's request (sentences 43, 44, and 46). During a restless night, the king has the Persian chronicle read aloud to him and is reminded of the time when Mordecai prevented his assassination. He asks his servants what reward Mordecai received for this service, and they respond that he never received any—which apparently sets the king to thinking out a proper reward. When Haman arrives the following morning, Ahasuerus discusses the reward with his viceroy, ultimately leading to Haman heaping upon Mordecai the honors he hoped would be his own. In sentence 43, the king's question to his servants is introduced with the double verb *befran … & cwæþ* 'inquired … and said'; the servants' response in the following sentence is likewise reported with a double verb, *andwyrdon & cwædon* 'answered and said'. Finally, when Haman comes to request the king's sanction of capital punishment for Mordecai, Ahasuerus's question to Haman is once again reported with a verb dyad, *axode … & cwæð* 'asked … and said' (sentence 46). This episode, in fact, is the turning point of the whole plot, the moment when the audience realizes that things just may turn out differently than how they have been going along. The scene has long been recognized, further, as one of distinct irony and even humor,[22] as the proud Haman, plotting for himself the grandest reward he can conceive of, is made to dole this out instead to his arch-rival. The use of such dual reporting verbs emphasizes the revelations that are being demanded and given at these crucial points.

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[22] Jon D. Levenson calls this the 'funniest' scene of the story (p. 3); Meyers, 'marvellously ironic' (p. 328).

Esther

After Ahasuerus, Esther has the next most speeches in the text. Yet even so, she has only just over half as many speeches as he (14 total, compared to Ahasuerus's 26). Her speech is presented as NRSA, IS, and DS, with one instance of FIS. Again, she has, after Ahasuerus, the next most speeches presented as DS—but again, this is by quite a long margin, as Esther has only one-third as many speeches in this category as does Ahasuerus (three and nine, respectively).

Notably, a comparatively high number of speeches attributed to Esther are embedded or hypothetical (or, indeed, both). In total, 14 such speeches occur in the text, and—while most of the main characters have only one or two—fully half of them are attributed to Esther. Embedded and hypothetical speech suggests that Esther's voice is subordinated or disallowed in some way. And yet, this does not truly seem to be the case. In the first instance of hypothetical speech, Esther is forbidden by Mordecai to reveal her Jewish heritage (a prohibition reported dyadically): Esther is disallowed *hire cynn ameldian ne þam cyninge secgan hwilcere mægþe hire magas wæron* 'to reveal her nation nor to tell the king of what race her relatives were' (sentence 18). Although Esther obeys this embargo for some time, it is of course her breaking of it that marks the climax of the story, when she reveals during the final feast scene that she belongs to the group of people Haman is trying to eradicate. In the end, then, it is Esther's defiance of the prohibition on her speech that saves her people. Other hypothetical speech of Esther occurs in Ahasuerus's speech to her, when he twice inquires what she wants from him (sentences 35 and 50). In both of these cases, Esther responds in DS, making her voice clearly heard to the text's audience as well as to the other characters.

Likewise, Esther's embedded speech is not as subordinate as it might at first seem. Of three such instances, two occur in her own speech: first when she requests that the Jews fast and pray on her behalf and explains that she and her servants will do the same, *biddende æt Gode* 'asking of God' that he will spare them (sentence 33); and next when she invites the king and Haman to attend her feast and assures the king that she will tell him her full request at that time (sentence 36). It would be absurd to claim that Esther's voice is subordinated through embedded speech, when it is embedded within her own speech. Both of the above instances are also hypothetical, Esther explaining what speech acts she plans to perform in the near future. The final instance of embedded speech is in a stretch of Haman's speech, in which he exclaims that he is superior to Mordecai, using his invitation to the queen's banquet as evidence (sentence 39). Again, although this speech act of Esther is embedded within the speech of another character, it is there a report of a speech act

that Esther has herself already performed, and cannot be said to truly subordinate her in any meaningful way.

Notably, it is only in response to Ahasuerus's queries that Esther speaks in DS, first in the two cases (already noted above) when the king asks her what she desires. An additional instance occurs during the climactic final feast scene, when Esther responds to the king's demand to know who it is who dares to plot the destruction of his wife's people. Esther's reply reveals Haman as her enemy (*feond*) and then her true heritage as a Jew, including her familial relationship with Mordecai. The fact that Esther only uses DS in these scenes has a double effect. First, it heightens the drama of these scenes, which are after all the crux of the story, the reason that Jewish and Christian communities celebrate Esther and tell her story to others. By presenting her speech during these scenes in DS, Ælfric allows the audience to feel that we are hearing Esther herself, without any intervention or interpretation, and the courage of her speeches stands for itself. Second, the use of DS for Esther in these scenes serves to place her on an equal footing with Ahasuerus, the only other character who is allowed to speak so extensively without narratorial intervention. In a way, Esther's DS reminds us that she is royal, and though she may not wield the same degree of power that Ahasuerus does, nonetheless she is able to hold her own in the royal household.

Among the reporting verbs for Esther's speech, the most frequently occurring is *biddan* (four instances). The basic sense of this word is 'to request', and it may also be translated as the slightly more intense 'entreat', 'beseech', or 'pray', or the more imperative 'bid', 'order' or 'command'.[23] Ælfric presents Esther, then, as an imploring character, one who makes many requests. At first glance, this might seem to suggest that she is weak, needing the aid of others to achieve her ends. But that is precisely the point of this story, which offers a narrative example of the Christian paradox expressed by Paul in his second epistle to the Corinthians: 'When I am weak, then am I strong'.[24] Esther's willingness to request what she needs is what makes her a heroine and someone worth remembering and emulating. This becomes especially clear when we realize that she requests things only from Ahasuerus, her earthly king (sentences 35, 50, and 51), and from God, her heavenly king (sentence 33). It can hardly be said, either, that Esther is greedy, requesting things to suit her personal desires; her only request, ultimately, is the salvation of her people. As we have seen in the preceding

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[23] See *CASD* and BT. According to the *DOE*, 'The semantic gradation "ask, pray, exhort, urge, direct, enjoin, command" is such that the exact meaning at each occurrence cannot usually be established; but in late Old English the sense 5 "command" appears, perhaps by contact with *bēodan*' (entry for 'biddan').

[24] II Corinthians 1. 10 (KJV).

chapter, Ælfric's language in the text sets up Esther as a model of piety. Through her speech, he refines this characterization, making her an exemplar specifically of prayer: a model supplicant. Esther's humility in asking for help from her superiors—in both the temporal and the spiritual realms—is but one aspect of her pious character, but it is also the most important.

Vashti

Vashti has no speech presentation at all—that is, unless we are to consider the word *forseon* as a *verbum dicendi*, which I am not at all inclined to do.[25] This is perhaps surprising at first glance, as she is generally considered one of the main characters in the Esther story. But it is not so very surprising, after all, when we consider Vashti's role in the story, particularly in a highly condensed version like the one Ælfric produced. Vashti's role is rather small, compared with those of the other 'main' characters, appearing only in the early part of the story and then disappearing from it altogether, with no further mention of her after her deposition, either in Ælfric's version or in the Latin sources. Indeed, some have argued that Vashti's only real purpose in the story is a prefatory one, meant to explain why an otherwise obscure Jewish girl would find herself the queen of a vast and powerful empire such as Persia.[26] Given this slight role to begin with, it is certainly understandable that Ælfric should have given her so little time in his condensed re-telling of the story, and the lack of speech attributed to her is, thus, not so surprising after all. Just as Vashti's role shrinks in Ælfric's telling, so too does her speech—to the extent that she has virtually no voice.

Mordecai

Mordecai has surprisingly few speeches, given his importance to the plot: only five utterances are attributable to him. Of these, four are presented as NRSA and one as IS. Mordecai's speeches, in other words, are all presented with some degree of

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[25] The *DOE* entry for *forseon* includes the top-level definitions 'to despise, hold in contempt, scorn, disdain', and 'to spurn, reject scornfully, cast out, forsake' (as well other entries identifying specific grammatical uses). While it is possible to convey these things with words, the definitions suggest a mental state more than anything else. See Chapter 5, 'Emotions', for more on this word.

[26] See Sidnie Ann White Crawford, 'Esther', in *Women's Bible Commentary*, ed. by Carol A. Newsom and Sharon H. Ringe, expanded edn (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1998), pp. 131–37 (p. 134). Somewhat similarly, Talmon argues that Vashti exists merely to round out the cast of coupled characters: Mordecai–Esther, Haman–Zeresh, Ahasuerus–Vashti ('"Widsom" in the Book of Esther', *Vetus Testamentum*, 13 [1963], 419–455, p. 440).

narratorial interference and he is nowhere allowed to speak for himself, in his own words.

NRSA is used three times to describe Mordecai's warning about the assassination plot against the king, each in slightly different variations (sentences 23, 24, and 42). In the first instance, Mordecai tells Esther about the conspiracy of the wicked chamberlains, and it is through her that the plot becomes known to the king. This chain of speech—from Mordecai to Esther, Esther to Ahasuerus—suggests that Mordecai's position in the royal court is low enough that he is not himself permitted to address the king. At the same time, it foreshadows Esther's ultimate role in the story, as intermediary. By the end of the story, Esther will intercede on behalf of the Jewish people of Persia; but for now, she acts as an intermediary in relaying Mordecai's warning to the king. Tellingly, in both instances it is Mordecai who first recognizes the impending problem and then makes it known to Esther. As a man of God, he has the foresight to recognize peril and the worldly understanding to relay the information to the person who can do something about it.

This first speech of Mordecai's, indeed, is notable in that it is a kind of dyad—but instead of using two verbs to report one speech act, here only one verb is used to report two speech acts, by two different speakers (sentence 23):

> Þa wearð hit sona cuþ þam Mardocheo, þære cwene fæderan, & he **hit** þa **cydde** ardlice hire, & heo þam cyninge **forð** […]

> Then it was immediately made known to Mordecai, the queen's uncle, and he then quickly **made it known** to her, and she **onward** to the king […]

The reporting verb *cyðan* 'to tell' describes Mordecai's reporting of the plot to Esther, as well as Esther's passing the information along to the king. It is a curious grammatical construction, with the inflected form *cydde* referring to Mordecai's speech act and then, in the following clause, only the particle *forð* added to indicate a kind of forward motion in Esther's speech act of giving the same information to Ahasuerus. This construction still exists in PDE, and the phrase could be translated, 'Mordecai told the queen, and she the king'.

It is clear that Esther, in this episode, identifies Mordecai as the origin of this warning, since in the following sentence (24), Mordecai's deed is recorded in the chronicle. In this instance, the word *warnian* 'to warn' is used to report the speech act, making the illocutionary force of his original speech unmistakeable. The entry here recorded is later referenced when Ahasuerus has the chronicle read out to him and is

reminded of Mordecia's good deed (sentence 42), thus rousing his gratitude and, at the same time, preventing Haman's planned execution of Mordecai.

The only instance of IS in relation to Mordecai's speech occurs when, having informed Esther of Haman's genocidal plan against the Jews of the kingdom, Mordecai requests her help in preventing it. Indeed, both these speech acts of Mordecai's are reported in this sentence, the first as NRSA and the second as IS (sentence 32):

> Mardocheus […] **gesæde hit þære cwene; bæd þæt heo gehulpe hire mægðe & hire, þæt hi ealle ne wurdon to swilcere wæfersyne**.

> Mordecai […] **told it to the queen, requested that she should help her relatives and herself, that they should not all come to such a spectacle**.

This is the closest we come to hearing Mordecai's voice in Ælfric's text, with the content of the speech quite detailed and, presumably, faithful to Mordecai's (supposed) utterance in the text-world. The close approximation of Mordecai's voice at this point helps to underscore the severity of the situation and, thus, to heighten the tension that will be resolved by Esther before the story is over.

Somewhat surprisingly, there is no explicit speech associated with Mordecai's prohibiting Esther, earlier in the text, to reveal her Jewish heritage (see sentence 18). Rather, the prohibition is made by means of grammar alluding to a potential speech by Mordecai, the phrase *for Mardocheo* being the only indication that this silence about her heritage originates with Mordecai. As with all prepositions, *for* is difficult to translate, as it has a wide range of possible meanings. The most basic sense is 'before', particularly when it is used with noun phrases indicating location or position. Here, however, it precedes a proper name in the dative case. This construction, according to the DOE, suggests something akin to 'in the eyes of Mordecai' or 'for Mordecai's sake'. The phrase thus suggests that it is because of Mordecai that Esther may not reveal her heritage; however, there is no language in the phrase to explicitly link this with a speech of Mordecai, and it is just as plausible that Esther has decided, of her own accord, not to make her Jewish heritage known in order to protect Mordecai's position at court.

All in all, then, Mordecai's speech—or lack thereof—suggests that he is a man of few words. At first glance, this seems to undermine his role as 'man of God' in Ælfric's text, since the religious faithful in Christian literature—from the Bible to the patristic writers to the saints—tend rather to extensive discourse, expounding the will

of God and spreading the gospel to 'all the world'.[27] It is, moreover, quite antithetical to the Mordecai presented in the Latin sources—particularly in the Additions—who speaks a good deal, and often in DS. In contrast, Ælfric's Mordecai needs very little speech to effect the will of God in his world, and even when he does speak, his voice is not necessary. Rather, his voice is quietened, which prevents the audience from giving him too central a role in bringing about the favorable ending for God's people—which, after all, has ultimately been wrought by God himself.

Haman

Nine speeches in the text can emanate from Haman. Of these, three are presented as NRSA and three as IS; two as DS; and one, uniquely, as FDS.

Haman's NRSA speeches create a kind of scaffolding, preparing and reminding the audience of his wicked character and deeds. First, he asks around about Mordecai, seeking ways to destroy not only this one impertinent thegn, but his entire *mancynn* 'people, race' as well (sentence 27). This speech act prepares the audience for Haman's dastardly machinations, which are undertaken with speeches presented much more directly, in IS, DS, and FDS. The final speech act attributable to Haman is, in fact, embedded in Esther's speech, after his summary execution. This final speech act is a kind of mirror of the first one, as it reminds the audience, once more, of Haman's wickedness in attempting to wipe out the entire Jewish nation. One further instance of NRSA occurs in sentence 31, when Haman dictates the edict to have the Jews slaughtered; since this verb indicates two simultaneous modes of discourse—speaking and writing—I will address it more fully in the final section of this chapter, 'Thought and Writing Presentation in Ælfric's *Esther*'.

While the NRSA of Haman's speech frames his treachery, the treachery itself is achieved through IS, DS, and FDS. Indeed, the moments of Haman's greatest wickedness and arrogance are presented in the most direct speech presentation modes, with the least narratorial intervention. The first instance of DS occurs when he disparages the Jews to the king, in order to gain royal sanction for his planned pogrom (sentences 28–29):

> & began hi to **wregenne** wið þone cyning þuss: **An mancynn wunað, leof, wide tostecend under þinum anwealde on gehwilcum scirum** […]

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[27] Undoubtedly influenced, at least in part, by the quoted injunction of the resurrected Christ in Mark 16. 15 (KJV) (see also Matthew 28. 19).

and began to **accuse** them before the king thus: **There is one race, sire, dwelling widely dispersed under your jurisdiction** […]

This speech is reported by the verb *wregan* 'accuse, denounce', the only instance of the word in this text. This deviation foregrounds the verb, emphasizing Haman's duplicitous character. He uses speech for nefarious purposes: to recklessly accuse an entire race of people and, thus, secure his ultimate goal of destroying that race, all for the sake of wreaking vengeance on one man who (he feels) has wronged him.

DS also occurs in Haman's speech when he mistakenly believes that Ahasuerus wishes to honor him, even more than he has already. Believing this to be the case, Haman recommends the greatest honors he can conceive of: being arrayed in the king's royal symbols, riding the king's own horse, and being paraded about the entire capital—with someone declaring his great worth, just to make sure that the onlookers are left in no doubt. The request is a ludicrously grand one—Haman might just as well ask Ahasuerus to hand over the kingdom—and the direct presentation style heightens the absurdity, which in turn heightens the drama and irony when, moments later, Haman is informed that he is to bestow these grand honors instead on his nemesis. The speech allows the audience to glimpse, unencumbered by any narratorial intervention, the supreme arrogance of the story's villain.

Most striking, however, is the single occurrence of FDS in Haman's speech. This occurs when he declares to his household that life can have no satisfaction for him so long as Mordecai continues to defy him. It is immediately preceded by a speech in IS, which morphs into FDS as the speech continues (sentences 38–39; IS in italics, FDS in italics and bold):

Þa wearð he swiþe gram þam Godes þegene, & cwæþ to his cnihtum þæt *him forcuþlic þuhte þæt se an Iudeisca hine forsawe.* ***Se cyning me wurðaþ, swa swa get witaþ ealle, & seo cwen ne gelaþode nænne oðerne to hire butan me ænne to eacan þam cyninge. Nu þingþ me þæt ic næbbe nænne wurðscipe on life swa lange swa Mardocheus me nele abugan.***

Then he became furious with the servant of God, and said to his attendants that *he thought it disgraceful that he, a Jew, should despise him.* ***The king honors me, as you all know, and the queen invited none other to her but me alone, to join the king. Now it seems to me that I will have no dignity in life so long as Mordecai will not bow to me.***

The FDS, which begins with the words *Se cyning me wurðaþ*, is indicated only through deictic markers, which suddenly shift into deixis that is proximal to Haman in the

speech situation of the text-world, as opposed to the distal deixis of the IS immediately before. The first four words offer two distinct, unmistakeable indicators of this proximal deixis, with the first-person pronoun *me* and the present-tense conjugation of the verb *wurðaþ*, so that the audience understands straightaway that this portion of the speech is presented in Haman's own voice, not filtered through the narrator. The suddenness of the shift, however, is quite jarring, particularly with the jump from IS straight into FDS. In terms of Leech and Short's model, we have moved three steps to the right on the 'cline of interference', with no narratorial guidance or preparation for that jump. The suddenness of the shift creates a cognitive dissonance for the audience, forcing us into Haman's point of view with startling clarity as he expresses the depth of his anger and hatred toward Mordecai.

All of Haman's speeches, regardless of how they are presented, emphasize his nefarious character, as he uses his speech to curse his fate, to denounce others, to pridefully boast about his favored status, to seek vengeance on his nemesis, and, most significantly, to order the slaughter of the Jews. The shift from less direct to more direct modes of presentation further underscores his arrogance, deceit, and vindictiveness, particularly as these more direct modes (DS and FDS) occur at moments of great drama and emotion. In essence, Haman's own mouth condemns him,[28] and Ælfric allows the audience to draw their own conclusions about his character as they hear him speak.

THOUGHT AND WRITING PRESENTATION IN ÆLFRIC'S *ESTHER*

While literary criticism of the early twentieth century focused on different categories of speech presentation, Leech and Short's model made explicit the link between speech presentation and thought presentation. Both modes of discourse are often presented similarly in written narrative, but they offer vastly different kinds of information about the text-world and the characters in it. Semino and Short, in their corpus-based study, developed a third scale to capture writing presentation, which—although occurring less frequently—likewise offers a way of presenting language discourse.[29] Subsequent studies have frequently (though not always) used this expanded model of speech, thought, and writing presentation, often with the broader term 'discourse presentation'.[30] The model labels the thought and writing categories

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[28] See Job 15. 6.

[29] *Corpus Stylistics*.

[30] E.g., McIntyre and Walker, 'Discourse Presentation', among others.

similarly to those of speech presentation; thus, Direct Speech (DS) is complemented by Direct Thought (DT) and Direct Writing (DW), and so on. Narrator's Representation of Voice (NV)—the least direct category, and the only one to not use the word 'Speech' in its label—aligns with Internal Narration (NI) and Narrator's Representation of Writing (NW).

Ælfric's *Esther*, like many other texts, presents both writing and thought, though only minimally, with six occurrences of the former and three of the latter. While clearly not as prevalent in the text as speech presentation, both modes of discourse provide interesting characterization cues, which are the topic of this final chapter section.

Writing, which is presented exclusively as NW, is strongly associated with the law and governance—hardly surprising for the Persian, or indeed, the Anglo-Saxon periods. The first mention of writing occurs in sentence 12, where it is embedded in the speech of Ahasuerus's *witan*, as they respond to Vashti's (apparently unprecedented) refusal to obey him. They suggest that he *gesette þisne dom* 'set down this judgement'—namely, to have Vashti deposed and to seek a new wife to replace her. The verb *settan* has the literal sense of 'establish', with physical location implied; but it is also used to denote setting something into a more permanent form, specifically writing, and can thus be translated 'to compose' or 'to write'.[31] Given the context of this particular utterance, it is reasonable to suppose that this 'judgement' is meant to be written down in order to share it throughout the kingdom and see that it is carried out. A similar use of the verb occurs in sentence 24, when Ælfric explains that the Persians kept a chronicle of all the deeds in the kingdom.

The remaining four instances of writing presentation all use the reporting verb *writan* 'to write', the first of them occurring immediately where we have just left off. After describing the Persian custom of chronicle-keeping, Ælfric immediately explains that Ahasuerus ordered for Mordecai's warning about the assassination plot to be recorded in this book. In the climactic final feast scene, the verb is repeated when Esther requests that Ahasuerus allow new writings to be made to counteract Haman's edict ordering the slaughter of the Jews on the appointed day (sentences 60 and 62). With each repetition of the verb, the (implied) writer changes, reflecting the changing positions of the different characters relative to one another and to the kingdom at large. First, Ahasuerus is the implied writer—or rather, the instigator of the writing, as the grammatical construction *he lete awritan* 'he should allow to be written' (sentence 60) suggests that he is not the agent of this action, but the one who is able to set the

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[31] See BT (definition XIII) and *CASD*, respectively.

proper persons into action. Next (still in sentence 60), Haman is named as the writer of the anti-Jewish edict. Finally, Mordecai and Esther are implied as the writers of the new edict, which will overturn or at least mitigate Haman's (sentence 62). In the first of these three instances, we are reminded of the king's ultimate power within the kingdom; then of Haman's former power to issue an edict ordering the massacre of an entire race; and finally, the shift in power becomes manifest as the king authorizes Esther and Mordecai to issue a counter-edict. In fact, in each of these three instances, the noun associated with the verb is *gewrit*, denoting something written; this polyptoton—the constant repetition of the lemma *WRIT* in both verb and noun forms—emphasizes the importance of the writing act. Indeed, the writing of the edict and its subsequent reversal are the main, overarching storyline of the entire text.

The Vulgate account distinguishes between the writing of law and of royal edicts, and this appears to be quite deliberate. It is almost proverbial in the Old Testament that the laws of the Persians and Medes cannot be altered, a fact that is mentioned in Esther 1. 19 and reiterated no fewer than three times in the same chapter of the book of Daniel.[32] When Ahasuerus deposes the disobedient Vashti, this is done through an unalterable law:

> scribatur iuxta legem Persarum atque Medorum quam praeteriri inlicitum est
>
> let it be written as a law of the Persians and the Medes, which is not allowed to be altered

On the other hand, both Haman's decree condemning the Jews and Mordecai's/Esther's decree preserving them are given in letters, not as laws.[33] However, as the Vulgate text reminds us, a letter written in the king's name and sealed with his ring (as both are) holds nearly the same weight as the law, since no one dares contradict such a decree.[34] Thus, this version of the story carefully distinguishes between the law—which could not be altered—and letters of the king—which, though not unalterable, are incontrovertible. Ælfric, although his terminology differs for these cases (*gesette þisne dom* 'write this law' versus *awritað gewrita* 'write writings'), makes no mention of that proverbial unalterability of the Persian and Median law. One wonders how clearly he is aware of this proverb—appropriately appearing in

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[32] Daniel 6. 8, 12, and 15.

[33] Both *littera* 'letters' and *epistulae* 'letters' are used in reference to both edicts: see Esther 3. 12–15, 8. 5 (Haman's edict); 8. 5–13 (Mordecai's/Esther's edict).

[34] Esther 8. 8.

what Shemarayahu Talmon deems 'historicized wisdom tale[s]'.[35] Indeed, the absence of this information from Ælfric's account is one further piece of evidence suggesting that he worked, at least in part, from the OL account, which likewise omits it.[36]

However, Ælfric does emphasize the importance of Haman's edict and its eventual reversal in yet another way, with the verb *dihtan* 'to dictate, command' (sentence 31). This is the single occurrence of the verb in Ælfric's *Esther*, foregrounding the significance of Haman's act in dictating the initial decree.[37] The verb is a special case in discourse presentation, as it denotes both speaking and writing at the same time; to dictate something is, by definition, to speak it aloud and also cause it to be written. Occurring roughly halfway through the text, this verb signals a double discourse act, which is also the central discourse act of the narrative: everything before this has prepared us for this act, while everything after it will concern the attempt to counteract it. Moreover, the verb reminds the audience of Haman's power within the kingdom, since he has at his disposal people of whom he can demand that they write what he says.

I have stated above that there are three instances of thought presentation in the text. To clarify this point, thought presentation does not always indicate a process of reasoning or cogitation. Rather, thought presentation often involves what might be more properly termed 'perception'. Indeed, the feeling that the audience perceives the same things the characters of the text-world perceive is what creates the sense of an omniscient narrator. Cognitive scientists have demonstrated that human cognition involves two distinct types of processing, creatively named System 1 and System 2.[38] System 1 processing is involuntary: the intuitive, instinctive reaction we have to a stimulus, often resulting in an action (e.g., the fight or flight reaction); System 2 processing, on the other hand, involves the deliberate, rationalistic process that we

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[35] '"Wisdom"', pp. 426, 455; see Chapter 1, 'Problems and Canonicity' for more details.

[36] Cf. Esther 1. 19 (OL, all versions). Jerome's inclusion of this information appears to be based on the Hebrew MT, which does mention it. Indeed, as Levenson notes (p. 32), the irrevocability of Persian law is also absent in the AT; he suggests this was an invented detail added to the MT to heighten the drama of the final scenes.

[37] Indeed, the verb itself is relatively rare in the OE corpus, with roughly 70 occurrences; the related noun *diht* 'direction, order', on the other hand, is more common, with over 100 occurrences—and is disproportionately frequent in Ælfric's writings; see *DOE* entries on *dihtan* and *diht*, as well as the *OEC*.

[38] Sometimes Type 1 and Type 2. For an enjoyable introduction to this topic, see Daniel Kahneman's popular scientific monograph: *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (London: Penguin, 2012). See also Peter C. Wason and Jonathan St. B. T. Evans, 'Dual Processing in Reasoning?', *Cognition*, 3 (1974), 141–54; Jonathan [St. B. T.] Evans, 'Heuristic and Analytic Processes in Reasoning', *British Journal of Psychology*, 75 (1984), 451–68; and, more recently, Jonathan St. B. T. Evans, 'Dual-process Theories of Reasoning: Contemporary Issues and Developmental Applications', *Developmental Review*, 31 (2011), 86–102.

often mean when we talk about 'thinking' or 'cognition' and that is required for thinking about abstract concepts, such as working out math problems. Both processes, however, are essential functions of human cognition, and both are experienced by characters in narrative texts, as well. Thought presentation, then, is not only about the characters making reasoned, contemplative choices, but also about their instinctive reactions to the situations. If the narrator describes what is in the character's mind at a given moment—whether resulting from a System 1 or System 2 process—this is thought presentation.[39]

All three instances of explicit thought presentation loosely cluster together near the middle of the text. Two of them are thoughts clearly attributable to Haman, presented as Indirect Thought (IT). The first of these occurs after Haman is invited to the queen's banquet; on his way back to his chambers, he encounters Mordecai, who again refuses to bow, and this insubordination outrages Haman (sentence 38):

> him forcuþlic þuhte þæt se an Iudeisca hine forsawe

> it seemed to him [Haman] disgraceful that he [Mordecai], a Jew,
> should despise him

The reporting verb *þyncan* is an impersonal verb taking the dative case (here, *him*) and meaning 'appear, seem'. The cognitive process is implied but clear: the (dative-case) perceiver must do some mental work for the subject to appear to be anything. In this case, Haman's mental processing has led him to the conclusion that his situation is disgraceful, despicable. The OE word *forcuþlic* is rather rare, with only five occurrences in the extant corpus, twice in Ælfric's works; in other cases (including in Aldhelm and the translation of Gregory's *Dialogues*), it glosses the Latin word *absurdus* 'discordant, incongruous, absurd'.[40] This particular phrasing seems to be Ælfric's own interpretation of the scene; the Vulgate says simply *indignatus est valde* 'he was excessively angry', and the OL that Haman was *tristis* 'sad' after this encounter with his rival.[41] Nowhere do the Latin versions give any indication as to Haman's mental process at this time, nor do they mention Mordecai's Jewishness as being of particular significance to his emotional state. In Ælfric's version, then, this ethno-religious distinction holds greater weight and characterizes Haman as especially aware of and antagonistic to it.

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[39] By comparison, Semino and Short's list of reporting verbs for Indirect Thought includes, among others, *calculate*, *decide*, *persuade* (System 2), but also *believe*, *fear*, *guess*, *hope*, and *seem* (System 1).

[40] See *DOE* entry for *forcuþlic*.

[41] Esther 5. 9 (Vulgate) and 5. 10 (OL-R), respectively.

Having thus vented his frustration and formulated a plan to rid himself of his arch-rival once and for all, Haman presents himself the next morning to the king, only to find that he is to honor Mordecai. When Ahasuerus asks what he ought to do to honor someone, two references are made to thinking. Ahasuerus asks *Hwæt þingð þe, Aman […]?* 'What does it seem to you, Haman […]?' (sentence 46), inviting Haman to consider this situation. And that, Haman does; as Ælfric explains:

> Þa wende Aman to gewissan þinge þæt se cyning wolde wurþian
> hine swiðor, & nænne oðerne […]

> Then Haman thought it certain that the king wanted to honor him
> more greatly, and no other […]

The reporting verb *wenan* used here denotes hope, belief, or expectation.[42] This verb, together with the adjective *gewissan* 'certain', is another indication of Haman's extreme arrogance—he has no doubt that the king intends to heap more honor and praise upon him. In fact, this moment offers a kind of omniscient view of Haman's innermost thoughts, as is the case with all thought presentation. This sense of omniscience is expressed in the Talmudic teaching that the book of Esther must have been penned originally through divine inspiration:

> It is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Eliezer says: The book of Esther
> was said with the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, as it is stated: 'And
> Haman thought in his heart' (Esther 6. 6). If the book of Esther was
> not divinely inspired, how was it known what Haman thought in his
> heart?[43]

By this reasoning, thought presentation becomes a device to make God visible in the text—a device of great importance for this text in particular, where the general absence of God has been problematic for multiple religious communities through several centuries. Though the Talmud only mentions this one instance of thought presentation (and, indeed, the MT only includes this one instance, to judge by the Vulgate), Ælfric's version includes at least two other, similar occurrences: the first, mentioned above, involves Haman's thoughts; the second involves Mordecai's internal motivations.

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[42] See BT and *CASD*.

[43] Megillah 7a, in *The William Davidson Talmud* (Sefaria, 2017), <www.sefaria.org/Megillah.7a> [accessed 28 December 2017]; note that the Megillah later explains a refutation for this particular teaching. While Ælfric is unlikely to have been aware of this Talmudic tradition, it is interesting to note that his thought presentation aligns with this teaching.

In introducing the Mordecai–Haman feud, Ælfric explains why Mordecai will not bow down to Haman: *þy læs þe he gegremode God mid þære dæde, gif he eorðlicne mann ofer his mæðe wurðode* 'lest he should anger God with that deed, if he should honor an earthly man above his measure' (sentence 26). Although there is no reporting verb in this instance, the language tells us something about Mordecai's internal thoughts and motivations. It is possible to argue that this is simply the narrator's statement about Mordecai; but it is equally possible to argue that the content is FIT with the reporting clause omitted. Indeed, this kind of ambiguity between straight narration and FIT is not unusual in narrative prose and becomes increasingly more common in later stages of the development of the novel, particularly from the eighteenth century onward. As with the IT associated with Haman, this stretch of (possible) FIT gives a strong sense of narratorial omniscience; however, because it is further to the right on the cline of narratorial interference, the audience is likely to feel even greater sympathy with Mordecai in this moment. Ælfric deftly glides into this omniscient viewpoint at the vital moment of revealing the righteous motivation of the pious exemplar, in a way that is calculated to engender a sense that this is a correct and understandable motivation—indeed, to create a sense that the audience shares this motivation.

CONCLUSION

As is evident from the preceding discussion, speech is by far the most common mode of discourse presentation in Ælfric's *Esther*, followed by writing, and then thought presentation. In both PDE and EME, speech presentation tends to be more common than the other two modes,[44] though thought presentation tends to be more prevalent in these periods than writing presentation. Given the relatively small sample size of Ælfric's *Esther*, we cannot assume that this pattern of discourse presentation holds for the rest of the OE corpus, however; further analysis might well indicate that the proportions resemble more closely those of later periods than what this one short text would suggest. Of course, the use of thought presentation increases significantly along with the development of the modern novel, as I have noted elsewhere; but it is important to remember that thought presentation, including omniscient narrators and ambiguous presentation that cannot be definitively assigned to either the narrator or the perceiving character, by no means originated with the advent of the modern novel. Ælfric's *Esther* reminds us that such techniques were, in fact, already in use in the Old English period.

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[44] See Semino and Short; McIntyre and Walker, 'Discourse Presentation'.

The speech, writing, and thought presentation in Ælfric's *Esther*, indeed, offers significant characterization cues. Speech presentation underscores Ahasuerus's role as monarch and Haman's as the literary villain. Esther's speech indicates that she is not only a model of womanhood and piety, but specifically of supplication, relying on her God to accomplish those things she cannot by herself. Haman's villainy is strengthened by his speeches, in which he reveals in his own voice the depth of his narcissism and vindictiveness. This stands in sharp contrast to Mordecai, who rarely speaks in his own voice. This lack of DS in Mordecai's speech ensures that he does not himself take center stage in the drama, allowing the audience to instead focus on God's role in the miraculous deliverance of his people. Thought presentation again juxtaposes Mordecai and Haman: the former's thoughts exhibit his righteous regard for God's supremacy, while the latter's demonstrate, yet again, his own arrogance. Writing presentation indicates the shifting power relations in the text and remind the audience about the centrality of authority (that is, law and decrees) to the plot.

Discourse presentation is, of course, closely related to point of view in narrative. This is particularly true for thought presentation, where the author may well manipulate the text so that it is difficult or impossible to tease apart whether the thoughts and ideas presented are those of the narrator or a of specific character within the text world. Speech and writing presentation also contribute to point of view, however. Indeed, in each stretch of represented discourse there is opportunity for a deictic shift (a concept which will be explained in further detail in Chapter 6), and each such shift may also shift who speaks and who perceives at a given moment, potentially affecting the way the reader interprets the text.

First, however, the semantic fields of food and emotions are examined. Emotions, which have gained much scholarly attention in recent years, provide powerful insights into characters' inner lives, and they are highly salient in this text, where they clearly delineate godly versus ungodly characters. In addition, feasting plays a central role in the Esther story, and Ælfric's portrayal of food and drink—including who partakes, who abstains, and their attitudes toward each—likewise offer significant information about the characters.

Emotions and Food: Semantic Fields

This chapter focuses on two semantic fields in Ælfric's *Esther*, examining how these fields contribute to characterization. Since the term 'semantic field' has a long history, with some specific theoretical associations, I first explain what I mean by this term and my approach to this portion of the analysis.

Semantic field theory developed in the 1930s, aligned with the Saussurean structuralist approach to language, partly in an effort to extend the reach of linguistic study beyond phonology, phonetics, and morphology, which had become the primary focus of linguistic investigations in the preceding decades.[1] Scholars such as Jost Trier[2] (who was particularly influential) theorized that every word in a language was related to other words with similar meanings, and that these words constituted a semantic field. Such semantic fields describe the paradigmatic relationships of words in a linguistic system.[3] For example, the words 'tiger', 'elephant', 'whale', and 'cat' all belong to the semantic field of 'mammal', and each individual word carries with it additional information about the individual members of the field (e.g., wild/domestic,

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[1] For introductions to the topic, see John Lyons, 'Structural Semantics I: Semantic Fields', in *Semantics*, 2 vols (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977), I (1977), pp. 230–69 (esp. pp. 250–61); F. R. Palmer, *Semantics*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 68–70; Eva Feder Kittay, 'Semantic Field Theory', in *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198242468.001.0001>. Although semantic field theory gained prevalence in the 1930s and after, its roots can be traced to the work of earlier philosophers, such as Wilhelm von Humboldt (nineteenth century) and Johann Gottfried von Herder (eighteenth century).

[2] See, especially, 'Das sprachliche Feld: Eine Auseinandersetzung', *Neue Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Jugendbildung*, 10 (1934), 428–49.

[3] This is in opposition to the syntagmatic relationships (in Saussurean terminology), which concern how words can be placed sequentially to make larger units of meaning like phrases and sentences.

land/sea dwelling, etc.). Much of the work on semantic fields during the twentieth century has concerned either (1) the description of semantic fields in particular languages, from an anthropologic-linguistic viewpoint;[4] or (2) the theoretical mechanics of semantic field theory—the possible relations between words, the possible diachronic changes in fields, and the logical underpinnings of the relationships.

In its most formal version, semantic field theory suggests that all the words in a language can be assigned to a semantic field, such that no one word ever inhabits more than one single semantic field and every word is a member of a semantic field (i.e. no word does not belong to a semantic field). This strict structuralist approach is, of course, rather restrictive and ultimately absurd, given both the constant fluctuations in real language systems and the seemingly infinite creative capacity of humans that is reflected in language. Real language is far more messy than the structuralist view would have us believe. For this reason, this approach has long been viewed with disfavor. However, the basic concept of semantic fields—that is, groups of words with similar meanings—divorced from the strict structuralist view of language, continues to be useful as a way of thinking about and describing the meaning relations in particular languages. It is in this broader, generalized sense that I refer to 'semantic fields' in this chapter.

In my analysis, I distinguish, first, between words directly in the semantic field and those that are tangentially related to it; and second, within the tangential category, between lexically related and notionally related words. A word lies directly within a semantic field if it is related to the topic at hand both by definition and by use. To take as an example the semantic field of food, I include words that refer to the general notion of food (e.g., 'food', 'victuals', 'fare', 'meal'); words denoting specific meals ('breakfast', 'dinner', 'brunch', 'snack'); words that describe broad categories of dishes ('soup', 'vegetable', 'main', 'dessert') and specific dishes ('beef bourguignon', 'shepherd's pie', 'apple strudel'); and words relating to individual ingredients ('carrot', 'pork', 'coconut', 'almond').

Tangentially related words are those that do not lie directly within the field, but that are related to it *either* by definition (lexically) *or* by use (notionally). Notionally-related words are those that are not directly related to the semantic field in their definitional meaning, but that are often associated with it. (They might more traditionally be thought of as 'collocational' words; however, since the advent of

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[4] Much work, for instance, concerned the systems for color-words in various languages—e.g., Harold C. Conklin, 'Hanunóo Color', *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 11 (1955), 339–44; Brent Berlin and Paul Kay, *Basic Color Terms* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969).

computer-based corpus linguistics methods, the term 'collocation' has taken on a strong association with this methodology, which does not reflect the category as I envision it.) Such words may frequently occur in the context of the topic. In the example of food begun above, words such as 'knife' and 'farm' would be notionally related words. Knives are often used in preparing or consuming food, but they are not themselves food; likewise, a farm may produce food, but one could hardly eat the farm itself. Lexically related words are those that are related to the semantic field by their surface structure, but may be only distantly related to the topic itself. To continue our food example, words in this category might include 'apple-cheeked' or 'beefy' (in reference to someone's appearance). As is apparent, these are often metaphorically related to the topic of the semantic field but cannot be said to denote actual examples of the semantic field: though a person's cheeks may resemble apples, they are not really apples.

An illustration may be of help. Let us imagine a semantic field as a Venn diagram, with two circles overlapping one another closely (see Figure 5.1). One circle contains all the words that are related lexically to the topic (A); the other contains all the words that relate to the topic by their usage, but are not related to it *per se* (B). The large area of overlap between the circles (C) is the semantic field, and these are the words primarily under investigation in this chapter. However, when words related lexically (A, but not B or C) or notionally (B, but not A or C) occur, these will also be considered.[5]
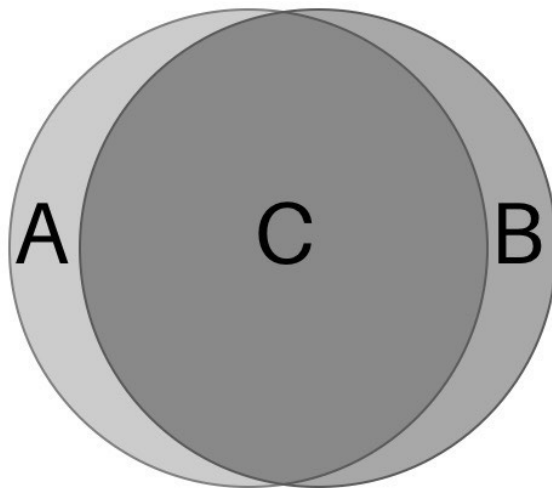
Figure 5.1: Venn diagram of semantic fields

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[5] This should not be considered a form of semantic set-theory, despite the use of the Venn diagram. See John Lyons, *Linguistic Semantics: An Introduction* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 107–14.

Obviously, the semantic fields in any text are too numerous to list, let alone to conduct in-depth analysis on them all. I have chosen, therefore, to focus on two semantic fields, namely emotions and food-related words. These are both significant to the action in the story and yield interesting insights into characterization. Emotions are in evidence throughout the text and reveal important characterizing information about the main characters. This is the topic for the first half of the chapter. Additionally, feasting plays a significant role in the biblical Esther story, and although there are significantly fewer feasts in Ælfric's version, these are no less crucial to the plot and to the characters who act in it. Feasting, therefore, and the related concepts of food, drink, and fasting (the antonym of feasting) are explored during the latter half of the chapter. Investigating semantic categories involves both explicit and implicit characterization cues: some emotion words, for example, explicitly describe a character's personality traits, while others only imply the character's emotional state, usually through their actions.

As a final note, this chapter is structured rather differently from the last two. Rather than presenting results and discussing the interpretation simultaneously, as in Chapters 3 and 4, in this chapter I present the results first and then, at the end of each half of the chapter, discuss how these relate to characterization.

EMOTIONS

DEFINING THE INDEFINABLE: WHAT IS AN EMOTION?

In order to investigate emotion-words in Ælfric's *Esther*, it is necessary to first determine what counts as emotional or emotion-related words. While certain words, like *bliþe* 'happy', *gram* 'angry', or *sorh* 'sorrow' may seem unequivocally related to emotions, others like *durran* 'to dare' and *eadmod* 'humble' are more difficult to classify with any certainty. Still others, such as *forseon* 'to despise, scorn' have such a broad range of meanings that they might be considered emotion-related in some instances but not in others. How can the researcher decide, then, which words to include and which to exclude when analyzing emotion in a given text? As it turns out, there is no simple answer to this question, despite its long and continued study in academic circles. In the following sections, I outline approaches to emotion in a variety of fields, including psychology, cultural studies, and linguistics.

Emotion in (Cognitive) Psychology

The nature and definition of emotion has been a topic of lively debate in psychology ever since William James published his ground-breaking essay 'What Is an Emotion?' in 1884.[6] At that time, the prevailing theory on emotion was that a person encounters an environmental element that triggers an emotion, which in turn causes physiological responses. For example, a hiker might encounter a threatening bear; feel fear; and then experience a quickened heartbeat, trembling, and sweaty palms. In contrast to this position, James argued that the physiological changes in fact triggered the experience of an emotion: seeing the bear charge, the hiker's heartbeat speeds up, his body trembles, and his palms become sweaty; realizing that he is experiencing these biological changes, the hiker knows that he is feeling fear. All this, of course, takes place in a very short span of time, nearly instantaneously, making it very difficult to discern which experience—the physiological changes or the psychological processing—happens first, but James made a strong argument on philosophical grounds that placed the physiological changes first.

Based on James' essay, psychologists suggested that emotion involved three main components: physiological arousal (in our hiker example, the racing heart and sweaty palms), motor expression (a startled jump, an involuntary shriek), and subjective feeling (the feeling of fear). These came to be known as the 'emotional response triad',[7] and the ongoing debate in psychology, to this day, largely involves questions about this triad: In what order do they occur? How do they influence one another? How many of them are necessary for something to be an emotion? In the early twentieth century, the James–Lange theory[8] suggested that the physiological changes were primary and in fact caused the sensation of feeling an emotion. This

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[6] William James, 'What Is an Emotion?', *Mind*, 9 (1884), 188–205. James was not the first scholar to show interest in emotion, but he was one of the first to argue that it is primarily cognition-based. Charles Darwin addressed emotion in 1872 (*The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, 3rd edn [London: John Murray, 1998]), and there was a general interest in emotion among scholars during the late nineteenth century, as evidenced by the work of James, Carl Lange (see n. 8 below), and Wilhelm Wundt (*Outlines of Psychology*, trans. by C. H. Judd [Bristol: Thoemmes, 1999], originally published in German as *Grundriss der Psychologie* [Leipzig: Engelmann, 1896]).

[7] Klaus R. Scherer and Vera Shuman, 'The Psychological Structure of Emotions', in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, ed. by James D. Wright, 2nd edn (Oxford: Harvard Libraries, 2015), pp. 526–33.

[8] Named after American philosopher William James and Danish physician Carl Lange, who each developed this theory independently of one another at roughly the same time. See James, 'What Is an Emotion?'; Carl Georg Lange, 'The Mechanism of Emotions', trans. by Benjamin Rand, in *The Classical Psychologists*, ed. by Benjamin Rand (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1912), pp. 672–84 <psychclassics.yorku.ca/lange> [accessed 28 December 2017].

theory was soon countered with the Cannon–Bard theory,[9] which argued that physiological and motor responses occurred simultaneously, and independently from the experience of emotion.

With the cognitive turn in the later twentieth century, psychologists hypothesized that emotion was connected with cognitive function. That is to say, a person experiences emotion only when the brain interprets the physiological and motor responses as a consistent, recognizable kind of feeling and labels it as such. In addition, several researchers have argued that emotion is linked to other cognitive functions such as decision-making.[10] According to this cognitive approach, an emotional experience consists of a trigger, cognitive appraisal of that trigger (e.g., is it relevant, positive, and so on), and the simultaneous experience of both subjective feeling and physiological changes. However, even researchers who agree on this basic sequence disagree as to how many and what dimensions are required in the evaluation process, which in turn affects the number and type of emotions that can be explained with this theory.[11]

But this is not all. Many researchers talk about action tendencies or action readiness, arguing that emotion is 'useless without intentions to act'[12] and that an emotion that does not elicit readiness to act is therefore not an emotion at all. Others have posited neurological responses and social context as further components of emotion. Thus, the list of possible constituents in emotion includes physiological response, motor expression, subjective feeling, cognitive processing, action readiness, neurological activity, and social context. Current research in both psychology and neurobiology tends to center on how many and which of these constituents are necessary and sufficient for an emotion to be an emotion.

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[9] Named after Walter Bradford Cannon and his doctoral student Philip Bard, who developed the theory together, based on experimental evidence demonstrating that the hypothalamus is responsible for emotional expression (i.e., physiological changes and motor expression) and the thalamus for subjective feeling. See Walter Bradford Cannon, 'The James–Lange Theory of Emotion: A Critical Explanation and an Alternative Theory', *American Journal of Psychology*, 39 (1927), 106–24.

[10] See, in particular, Antonio Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Avon, 1994).

[11] See Stanley Schachter and Jerome E. Singer, 'Cognitive, Social, and Physiological Determinants of Emotional State', *Psychological Review*, 60 (1962), 379–99; Magda B. Arnold, *Emotion and Personality*, 2 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).

[12] Marc D. Lewis and Rebecca M. Todd, 'Getting Emotional: A Neural Perspective on Emotion, Intention, and Consciousness', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 12 (2005), 210–35, p. 23; see also Rodrigo Aragão, 'Beliefs and Emotions in Foreign Language Learning', *System*, 39 (2011), 302–13.

One approach for answering this question is to classify emotions into (at least) two categories: basic and complex emotions.[13] Basic emotions are limited in number and are distinguishable from complex emotions in that they are biologically hardwired into humans, do not require higher-order cognition, and show different patterns of neurological activation than do complex emotions.[14] Though researchers disagree as to the number and type of these basic emotions, most include anger, fear, disgust, sadness, and joy on their lists.[15] Many researchers in the 'basic emotions' camp argue that these are universal emotions that all humans feel, regardless of when or where they live or the makeup of the society that influences them. Paul Ekman has conducted several experiments demonstrating that facial expressions for the five emotions listed above (as well as surprise) are universal amongst people living in diverse Western and Eastern literate cultures; his research suggests, though less conclusively, that contempt may also be universal,[16] which is particularly relevant to my analysis, as will be discussed later. His research, which subsequently greatly expanded on his original list, suggests that, although culture may place constraints on who may openly show which emotions to whom and when, there are nevertheless minute, involuntary bodily (especially facial) reactions to these emotions that are universal; knowing these 'microexpressions' and the emotions they reveal, he argues, allows a knowledgeable person to recognize emotions being experienced, even when the person experiencing those emotions is repressing or concealing them, or not consciously aware himself of what he is feeling.[17]

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[13] Alternatively termed 'first-order' and 'second-order' emotions (Carroll E. Izard, 'Forms and Functions of Emotions: Matters of Emotion–Cognition Interactions', *Emotion Review*, 3 [2011], 371–78), or 'primary' and 'secondary' emotions (Damasio, *Descartes' Error*).

[14] Izard, 'Forms and Functions', p. 372.

[15] Indeed, Paul Ekman has recently shown that most psychologists currently working in emotion research agree that some emotions are basic and also that the five emotions listed above are, empirically, among those basic emotions: 'What Scientists Who Study Emotion Agree About', *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 11 (2016), 31–34, p. 32. See also Carroll E. Izard, 'The Many Meanings/Aspects of Emotion: Definitions, Functions, Activation and Regulation', *Emotion Review*, 2 (2010), 363–70, who also includes interest in his list of first-order emotions; and Paul Ekman and Wallace V. Friesen, 'Constants Across Cultures in the Face and Emotion', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 17 (1971), 124–29, who include both interest and surprise.

[16] See, among others, Paul Ekman and Karl Heider, 'The Universality of a Contempt Expression: A Replication', *Motivation and Emotion*, 12 (1988), 303–08; David Matsumoto and Paul Ekman, 'More Evidence for the Universality of a Contempt Expression', *Motivation & Emotion*, 16 (1992), 363–68; and David Matsumoto and Paul Ekman, 'The Relationship Among Expressions, Labels, and Descriptions of Contempt', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87 (2004), 529–40.

[17] Paul Ekman, 'Facial Expression and Emotion', *American Psychologist*, 48 (1993), 384–92.

Complex emotions, on the other hand, involve more cognitive processing and are influenced, to varying degrees, by the time, place, and society in which a person lives. These might include emotions such as embarrassment, jealousy, guilt, and pride.[18] Complex emotions, as one might expect, are more prone to cultural influence than the basic emotions, so that what counts as guilt in one culture might not be considered guilt in another. What stimulates the emotion, how one reacts to it, and whether it is considered a positive or negative emotion may also be conditioned by cultural considerations.[19]

Researchers are additionally split as to whether feelings such as contentment and empathy count as emotions at all. Some, including those who espouse the action-tendency view of emotion, argue that these are not emotions, since they do not urge one to particular actions. Others label them 'calm emotions' and argue that they play an important role in cognitive functions related to emotions, such as learning, memory, and decision-making.[20] Still others label these as states of being, though again there is no consensus as to whether a state counts as an emotion or not. Indeed, such a label only seems to raise more questions: For how long must one experience a particular emotion before it becomes a state? To what extent does a state affect action tendencies and other cognitive processes? Must an emotion be directly triggered by a physical (or mental) situation in order to count as an emotion? No clear answers exist yet to these questions, but this does not prevent psychologists from using categories such as 'calm emotion' and 'state of being' in their research.

Another way of approaching emotions is to categorize them, usually based on oppositional relationships. Particularly influential in this approach has been Robert Plutchik's 'Wheel of Emotions' (which visually resembles a flower more than a wheel).[21] Plutchik identifies eight 'primary' emotions, along with varying degrees of these emotions, as well as emotions that combine two others. For example, sadness

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[18] This list comes from Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body, Emotion, and the Making of Consciousness* (San Diego: Harcourt, 2000), p. 51.

[19] For more on complex emotions, see Damasio's trio of books (cited in Chapter 2, n. 39 above), where he calls them 'secondary' emotions; also Paul Ekman and Daniel Cordaro, 'What is Meant by Calling Emotions Basic', *Emotion Review*, 3 (2011), 364–70; Paul E. Griffiths, 'Basic Emotions, Complex Emotions, Machiavellian Emotions', in *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, ed. by A. Hatimoysis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 39–67.

[20] For example, Reinhard Pekrun, 'The Control–Value Theory of Achievement Emotions: Assumptions, Corollaries, and Implications for Educational Research and Practice', *Educational Psychology Review*, 18 (2006), 315–41; Reinhard Pekrun and others, 'The Control–Value Theory of Achievement Emotions: An Integrative Approach to Emotions in Education', in *Emotion in Education*, ed. by Paul A. Schutz and Reinhard Pekrun (Amsterdam: Academic Press, 2007), pp. 13–36.

[21] Robert Plutchik, *Emotion: A Psychoevolutionary Synthesis* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).

lies across from joy, both primary emotions and placed on the second tier of the wheel. In the center of the wheel are the more intense emotions of grief (intense sadness) and ecstasy (intense joy); toward the outside of the wheel are the less intense emotions of pensiveness (mild sadness) and serenity (mild joy). Sadness lies next to surprise (another primary emotion), and disapproval lies in the intersection of these two: sadness + surprise = disapproval. While this kind of categorization can be a useful way of conceptualizing human emotions, it rests on *a priori* principles, which are not always borne out by empirical evidence. Plutchik, for example, includes anticipation and trust in his primary emotions, but these are not included in the 'basic emotions' espoused by Ekman and other empirical researchers. Additionally, while some of the oppositions in Plutchik's wheel are intuitive (joy/sadness), others are less so (anticipation/surprise); and the combination of basic emotions to produce other (presumably 'complex') emotions, in an almost mathematical manner, is highly suspect. Furthermore, as Stephen Graham has noted, the Anglo-Saxons did not necessarily conceive of emotions in the same kind of oppositions that we do today.[22] Thus, while sadness may be opposed to joy in Old English literature, it may equally be opposed with peace.[23] In other words, Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions and similar categorization systems are not sufficient for studying emotions in Anglo-Saxon culture and literature.

Cross-Cultural Emotions

In stark contrast to the cognitive science- and psychology-based notion of basic emotions, anthropologists and sociologists maintain that emotions are fundamentally shaped by the culture in which a person lives and that it is therefore all but impossible to map or translate emotions from one culture onto another.[24] In this view, there is no way to understand or even talk about an emotion across cultural boundaries, since the emotions of each culture are ultimately constructs of that culture and are therefore so

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[22] '"So What Did the Danes Feel?" Emotion and Litotes in Old English Poetry', in *Anglo-Saxon Emotions: Reading the Heart in Old English Language, Literature and Culture*, ed. by Alice Jorgensen, Frances McCormack, and Jonathan Wilcox (Farnham, UK, and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 75–90.

[23] Ibid., pp. 77–80.

[24] See Cas Wouteres, 'The Civilizing of Emotions: Formalization and Informalization', in *Theorizing Emotions: Sociological Explorations and Applications*, ed. by Debra Hopkins and others (Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag, 2009), pp. 169–93; Robert A. LeVine, 'Afterword', in *The Emotions: A Cultural Reader*, ed. by Helena Wulff (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), pp. 397–99; Lila Abu-Lughod and Catherine A. Lutz, 'Emotion, Discourse, and the Politics of Everyday Life', in *Emotions: A Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. by Jennifer Harding and E. Deidre Pribram (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 100–12.

fundamentally different from one another that they cannot be fairly compared. Complicating the issue, they argue, is the fact that the semantic range of emotion-words like 'fear' or 'anger' can be distinctly different, so that we may not even be certain that we are talking about the same type of emotion when trying to compare experiences.

Despite such objections, however, there has been a recent surge of interest in the history of emotions, and several scholars are conducting research into the emotions of temporally distant cultures.[25] Such studies have investigated the emotional life of past cultures, evidence for how emotions have changed over time, and the question of whether the words we use to denote particular emotions now are analogous to emotions of the same name in past cultures.[26] These researchers are primarily based in humanities and approach the issue from this perspective. Indeed, as Antonina Harbus points out, there is a distinct gap in the approaches to emotion research, with researchers in social sciences (anthropology, sociology, psychology, cognitive science) and hard sciences (neurobiology) rarely, if ever, showing interest in the evidence about emotion that can be gleaned from the arts, including literature; while humanities-based researchers draw from very little, if any, work that has been done in the sciences.[27] She concludes that cognitive approaches to emotion in literature from spatially and/or temporally distant cultures, such as the Anglo-Saxons, therefore have great potential to bridge this gap and increase our understanding of fundamental concepts around human emotion.[28]

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[25] Including the Anglo-Saxons: *Anglo-Saxon Emotions: Reading the Heart in Old English Language, Literature and Culture*, ed. by Alice Jorgensen, Frances McCormack, and Jonathan Wilcox (Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015). This burgeoning interest in the history of emotions is further attested in the focus of many scholarly conferences, such as the annual Gender and Medieval Studies conference, which in 2016 focused on 'Gender and Emotion'; see *Gender and Emotion in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Daisy Black and Amy Morgan (Woodside, UK: Boydell and Brewer, forthcoming).

[26] See Keith Oatley, 'Simulation of Substance and Shadow: Inner Emotions and Outer Behavior in Shakespeare's Psychology of Character', *College English*, 33 (2006), 15–33; Oatley, *Emotions: A Brief History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004); Robert A. Kaster, *Emotion, Restraint, and Community in Ancient Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[27] In the five years since Harbus was writing, emotion has been a highly productive area in the humanities, in particular producing the collection *Anglo-Saxon Emotions*, ed. by Jorgensen, McCormack, and Wilcox (see n. 25 above). Several scholars in this volume do draw on work in psychology and cognitive science, helping to bridge the science–humanities gap in this area. However, much work remains to be done in the study of emotions in temporally distant cultures, and Harbus's point about the importance of continuing investigation of this kind still stands.

[28] See Antonina Harbus, *Cognitive Approaches to Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2012), pp. 162–70.

Emotion and Language

Rather than attempting to identify emotions from the cognitive, psychological, or sociological point of view, we might instead use a linguistic classification, consulting linguistically-based category lists as a guide for determining which words in Old English can be considered emotion-related.

For example, the UCREL (University Centre for Computer Corpus Research on Language) research group at Lancaster University have developed, over several years, a semantic tagging tool for use in analyzing computer-based language corpora, the USAS (UCREL Semantic Analysis System).[29] Their system includes a multi-tier structure for describing the semantic content of PDE words, including a category for emotion. Various lexicographers have likewise devised systems for categorizing words in the English language. In the Hallig–Van Wartburg–Schmidt–Wilson model,[30] for example, the category for emotions subdivides into more granular categories for states of mind, emotions directed toward self, emotions directed outward, excessive emotions, religious sentiments, and so on. Some of these are further subdivided, and among this group are sub-subcategories for 'Trust/Distrust', 'Devotion', 'Contempt', 'Fear/Terror/Courage', and 'Enthusiasm'.

While such systems—essentially attempts to map in detail the semantic fields of the language—go a long way to solving the problem of what counts as an emotion-word in a PDE text, it leaves significant gaps when considering OE literature. What do we do, for example, with a word whose range of meanings includes both emotional and rational reactions or states? How well does a twentieth- to twenty-first-century semantic categorization system map onto a language in use a thousand years ago? How well does such a system align with modern-day ideas of emotion, to begin with? Although such linguistic categorization systems have been useful in a number of studies,[31] these unresolved questions make it unworkable for my analysis.

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[29] UCREL Semantic Analysis System (USAS) <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/usas/> [accessed 28 December 2017]; see especially Dawn Archer, Andrew Wilson, and Paul Rayson, 'Introduction to the USAS Category System' (October 2002) <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/usas/usas%20guide.pdf> [accessed 28 December 2017].

[30] Available online: 'Hallig_Wilson Model' <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/usas/Hallig_Wilson/Hallig_Wilson_Frameset.htm> [accessed 28 December 2017].

[31] Among them, Giuseppina Balossi's corpus-based analysis of characterization in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, which relies on the USAS tagging system: *A Corpus Linguistic Approach to Literary Language and Characterization*, Linguistic Approaches to Literature 18 (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2014), esp. Chapter 7.

Ancient and Anglo-Saxon Emotions

Lest I become too far engrossed in the modern academic research on emotion, I here pause to take stock of what exactly I am talking about. The word 'emotion' first entered the English language in the sixteenth century, with the meaning of physical movement or agitation.[32] The modern meaning of intuitive, instinctive feeling did not arise until the early seventeenth century, and this meaning became the most common only in the nineteenth. At the time when Ælfric was writing about Esther, no equivalent word existed; rather, the Anglo-Saxons spoke of things such as motion (*styrung*); ardor or passion (*wilm*); and mind, spirit, disposition, or mood (*mod*). Thus, our twenty-first century conception of emotion as an overarching category of things one feels internally that may affect behavior and thinking likely did not exist for an Anglo-Saxon audience. This does not mean, of course, that the Anglo-Saxons were not familiar with emotions, or even that they experienced emotions differently than we do, merely that they thought and spoke of them differently.[33] It does mean, however, that it is of very little help in deciding what counts as emotion in an OE text and what does not.

The *Thesaurus of Old English* (*TOE*) seems a likely source of help in this regard. The thesaurus is organized by category, allowing the user to look for OE words by semantic field rather than alphabetically (as in many thesauri). As with the PDE semantic categorizations mentioned above, each category may or may not be divided into further sub-categories. Thus, the category 'Heart, spirit, mood, disposition' (itself a sub-category of 'Feelings') includes sub-categories for 'Bad feeling, sadness' and for 'Good feeling, joy, happiness'. The former group lists, among others, the words *caru* 'care, sorrow, grief', *sorg* 'sorrow, anxiety, care', *heof* 'lamentation, grief, sorrow', and *modcearu* 'sorrow of heart, grief'; the latter includes words such as *bliss* 'bliss, joy', *dream* 'joy, pleasure, gladness', *eadwala* 'blessedness, happiness, prosperity', and *wynsummung* 'winsomeness, agreeableness, pleasantness'. While these are helpful lists, it turns out to be rather difficult to find all the categories that might reasonably be considered emotion-related. Some of the basic emotions identified in psychological research are so buried within the semantic hierarchy that the trail becomes counterintuitive. To find 'Anger', for example, one must follow the trail from 'Feelings' to 'Heart, spirit, mood, disposition' to 'Bad feeling, sadness' to 'Murmuring, complaint', where one finally finds the option to explore 'Anger' words. But anger is a

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[32] *OED* entry for *emotion*.

[33] When we consider the role of cognition in emotion, though, we might be tempted to say that the way we think about emotion fundamentally alters the way we experience it; but that is a subject for another researcher's doctoral thesis.

fundamentally different experience from complaining and it is somewhat un-intuitive to look for it in this part of the hierarchy. Additionally, some of the words included within the Feelings category do not seem to be particularly pertinent: *gehæl* 'Hosanna!', *gliwian* 'to joke, jest', *wordsige* 'successful in speech'. Perusing the category Feelings, it is apparent that many of the problems surrounding my own definitions of an emotion were experienced by the thesaurus compilers as well.[34] Some of the sub-categories involve states of being, the calm emotions, and even lack of emotion. Sadly, then, the *TOE* does not live up to its potential in offering a clear-cut solution to this thorny problem.

Indeed, the thorny problem of OE emotions is the subject of a recent collection, *Anglo-Saxon Emotions: Reading the Heart in Old English Language, Literature and Culture*. The volume, edited by Alice Jorgensen and others, explores emotions in Old English literature from a variety of perspectives: specific emotions, specific texts, broader cultural experiences of emotion, the distinction (or lack thereof) between heart and mind, and even the emotions that modern readers experience when reading OE literature. The volume represents a significant step in bringing together research on Anglo-Saxon emotional life and emotion as represented in the surviving literature of the period. The introduction, likewise, brings together many strands of modern research on emotions. Of particular note is the opposition between *emotion talk* and *emotional talk*: the former encompassing words that explicitly name emotions (e.g., 'angry', 'love', or 'broken heart'), while the latter expresses those emotions, 'for example through interjections, expletives, metaphors, intonation and the like'.[35] This distinction—only one approach among many discussed in the introduction and applied in the various chapters—has significance for my own approach, described in the following section. While the individual studies in the collection offer stimulating insights into emotions in the literature and culture of the Anglo-Saxons, the collection makes no attempt to establish a singular, unified approach to the subject.

My Approach

For my part, I see no convincing empirical reason to differentiate between reactive emotions and emotional states. Rather, I will consider both under the general heading of 'emotion'. The distinction between basic and complex emotions, however, is both intuitive and empirically valid, and I will therefore start from this position, using the

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[34] Though, of course, I do not know whether they considered these problems.

[35] Alice Jorgensen, 'Introduction', in *Anglo-Saxon Emotions*, ed. by Alice Jorgensen, Frances McCormack, and Jonathan Wilcox (Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 1–18.

five previously-listed basic emotions of anger, fear, disgust, joy, and sadness. Following on from this stance, I shall assume that these emotions are universal enough that we can reasonably accept these emotions as being similarly experienced by both twenty-first century humans and Anglo-Saxons alike, allowing us to not only talk usefully about those emotions, but to make assumptions about character and disposition based on them.

I am primarily concerned in this section with emotion words, as opposed to emotional language. That is, I am mainly interested in identifying words that explicitly denote specific emotions (including basic and complex ones) and how these contribute to the characterization. However, I also explore apposite speeches and actions that imply the emotions of the characters. These are particularly pertinent during the final feast scene, which is described in its own sub-section.

My analysis searches out words denoting these five basic emotions, checking these against the information in *TOE* and the standard dictionaries to triangulate my own instincts about what counts as an emotion-word. Other emotions beyond this list of five basic emotions are discussed separately. For those words where the range of meanings may include, but is not limited to, emotional states or reactions, I examine each instance individually, noting the possible interpretations and the likelihood that each instance might be emotion-based.

Because this portion of my investigation is focused on individual words, I have conducted the analysis in a word-by-word fashion, and this is manifest in the way I report my findings. Individual words are mainly referred to by their position within the entire text (e.g., word 316), while sentence numbers are given when longer stretches of the text become relevant in the interpretation of these cues.

EMOTION IN ÆLFRIC'S *ESTHER*

To begin with, I offer a few observations about the distribution of emotion-words in the text, taking them all together: words referring to basic, complex, and calm emotions, as well as those either lexically or notionally related to emotion (see Figure 5.2 at the end of the chapter). These comprise 37 discrete words in the text, among them 23 lemmas; these are listed in Table 5.1 ('Basic Emotions') and Table 5.2 ('Complex and Calm Emotions'). Just over half of the total occurrences refer to complex or calm emotions (20 of 37, or 54.1%); the basic emotions cover another 40.5% (15 of 37); the remaining 5.4% are tangentially-related to basic emotions (2 of 37).

Although emotion-words occur throughout the text, they are somewhat erratic in their occurrence, with large gaps and some clusters.[36] The first 129 words of the text serve as introductory material, first introducing the character of King Ahasuerus and then describing the initial event of the narrative, the great feast he gives during the third year of his reign. Perhaps predictably, no emotion-words occur during this portion, as Ælfric describes the splendor of the king and of his feast. Another large gap occurs between words 316 and 647; this portion of the narrative describes Vashti's defiance of her king's command to appear before him. I return to this gap below ('The Special Case of *FORSEON*'). The final gap occurs from words 1,406 to 1,769; the narrative here concerns Haman's machinations as he prepares a gallows on which to hang his nemesis, Mordecai, and then advises the king on the best way to honor a subject (believing that he himself is to be so exalted).

In addition to these gaps, emotion-words also occur in clusters in three places. In fact, just after the episode concerning Vashti's defiance of her king's command, we are treated to our first cluster of emotion-words as we encounter Esther for the first time, at 647 and 652: the king is 'pleased' by Esther (*him … gelicode*) and 'loved' her (*lufode*). Another close cluster occurs at 981 and 986, when we are told that Mordecai refuses to bow down to Haman on account of that man's 'arrogance' (*upahafennysse*), lest he should 'anger' God (*gegremode*) by so doing. From word 1,769 to the end of the text, emotion-words are particularly common, with rarely more than 50 words passing without an occurrence. This is the climax of the narrative, in which Haman's treachery is revealed and punished, and the safety of the Jewish people sought and granted. Again, I shall return to this scene later in my analysis (see 'Emotion in the Final Feast').

Basic Emotions

Of the five basic emotions identified earlier, only one does not seem to occur in the text, namely disgust. Anger, joy, sorrow, and fear are all present in one form or other, comprising 15 total instances (see Table 5.1).

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[36] I define a 'gap' as a group of over 100 words with no emotion-words, and a 'cluster' as a group of 10 words with more than one emotion-word.

Table 5.1: Basic emotions, including tangentially related words

Emotion Type	Lemma (PDE)	Count	Instances (Word No.)
basic (joy)	BLIÞE (JOYFUL)	5	bliþe (137; 237; 1,296; 1,835); unbliþum (1,961)
basic (anger)	GRAMA (ANGER)	4	gegremode (986); gram (1,405); graman (1,970; 2,039)
basic (anger)	IRRE (ANGER)	2	geyrsod (316); yrre (2,121)
basic (sadness)	SORH (SORROW)	2	sorhfullum (1,770); sorhfull (1,810)
basic (fear)	ABLYCGAN (TO MAKE AFRAID)	1	ablicgde (1,959)
basic (anger)	GEHATHYRT (ANGRY)	1	gehathyrt (1,984)
basic (fear)	FORHT (AFRAID)	1	unforhte (2,243)
notionally related to basic, sorrow	TEAR (TEAR)	1	tearum (2,199)

The lemma occurring most frequently is BLIÞE 'joyful', with 5 instances throughout the text. Four of these refer to Ahasuerus; the fifth and final instance, which is a negated variation, *unbliþum* 'unhappy', refers to Haman. The next most frequently occurring lemma is GRAMA 'anger'; however, when combined with YRRE and GEHATHYRT, two lemmas also referring to anger, we have a total of seven instances of anger-words—more, even, than the joy-related words. Of these seven instances, five indicate Ahasuerus as the angry individual, against either Vashti or Haman. One refers to Haman's rage against Mordecai for not bowing to him. The final instance refers to God's theoretical anger against Mordecai if the latter were to accord Haman more glory than his due; note that this final instance is cast in the subjunctive mood.

Sorrow is also evident, occurring twice. Both instances of *sorhfull* 'sorrowful' refer to Haman and both appear in the same episode. After Haman has offered the king his advice on how to honor someone, believing that that someone is himself, his expectations are overthrown when Ahasuerus instead reveals that Mordecai is the honoree—and that he expects Haman to be his herald. Understandably, Haman is deeply upset by this turn of events; not only is he humiliated by having to lead another man around the city, declaring that he is favored of the king, but he is made the instrument of glorification of his worst enemy. Ælfric specifies that Haman is

sorrowful both as he leads Mordecai around the city and also as he returns afterward to his own domicile (sentence 49):

> Aman þa dyde swa mid **sorhfullum** mode […]; & eode him ham
> siððan **sorhfull** to his cnihtum.

> Haman then did so with a **sorrowful** spirit […]; and afterward went
> home **sorrowfully** to his attendants.

Ælfric's use of *sorhfull* in the latter instance appears to gloss Latin *lugens* 'mourning' or *dolens* 'grieving, in pain';[37] however, the Latin texts do not indicate Haman's feelings as he goes out to lead his enemy's procession. The two instances of the word in Ælfric's version occur at the beginning and end of a sentence and act as bookends for the episode.

The only appearance of fear in the text is, in fact, a negative usage: *unforhte* 'unafraid' (sentence 60). It occurs during the dénouement, where it describes the anticipated state of the Jews after Esther's intercession. In one sense, we could consider it as referring to a calm emotion (or state), and this is reinforced by the co-occurrence of *friðe* 'peaceful' in the same phrase. Interestingly, this sole reference to fear in the text is set within a longer phrase all in the subjunctive; it is part of Esther's final request to her lord, that he allow a counter-edict to be written, so that the Jews might be *on friðe & unforhte* 'peaceful and unafraid' on the day that Haman had set aside for their death.

Perhaps surprisingly, it is only male characters who experience the basic emotions in Ælfric's version. Even then, it is only the two Persian male characters, Ahasuerus and Haman; Mordecai, the pious Jew, does not experience any of the basic emotions. The female characters, on the other hand, only serve to inspire these basic emotions in the king: twice he is joyful in Esther's presence and once he is angry with Vashti. Mordecai also inspires a basic emotion, namely anger, in his rival Haman. Of all the characters in the text, Ahasuerus is the most easily swayed by the basic human emotions—a characterization entirely in line with modern scholars' interpretations of his character[38]—and Haman is not far behind him.

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[37] Esther 6. 12, in Vulgate and OL (R, I, F), respectively.

[38] Shemarayahu Talmon, for example, sees in Ahasuerus a type of the 'powerful, but witless dupe', one-third of the traditional wisdom triad; '"Wisdom" in the Book of Esther', *Vetus Testamentum*, 13 (1963), 419–55, p. 441. Jon D. Levenson calls him 'a weak, passive, and unfocused person'; *Esther: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), p. 48. Similarly, Michael V. Fox considers Ahasuerus a 'lazy' and 'irresponsible' king, decrying his habit of allowing his decisions to be led by the advice of his courtiers without thinking them out for himself; the validity of such judgements is questionable, given that this mode of ruling would have been entirely appropriate for many kings in

Complex and Calm Emotions

The complex and calm emotions (of which I consider the latter a type of the former) are slightly more prevalent than the basic emotions, but they are far more equally distributed in terms of frequency. That is, while there are only 6 lemmas among the 15 occurrences of basic emotions, there are 15 lemmas in the 20 occurrences of complex and calm emotion-words, most occurring only once. The most frequent is the lemma LICIAN 'to please', which occurs three times. All three instances involve Ahasuerus. The first occurs when Ahasuerus is introduced to Esther and finds that she pleases him (sentence 17); the second is spoken by Ahasuerus, who tells Haman to do with the Jews as it pleases him (sentence 30); and the final is a negated version, *oflicode* 'displeased', describing Ahasuerus's emotion when he returns from his orchard to find the treacherous Haman kneeling at the queen's feet (sentence 56).

Likewise, the lemma DURRAN 'to dare' occurs three times, all near the end of the story. Two instances occur in Ahasuerus's speech, but the word is arguably more strongly associated with Haman. The first instance occurs when the king, having heard Esther's description of the predicament she and her people are in, asks her who has dared to do such a thing (sentence 52). The word next appears almost immediately afterward: Haman, having been outed as the instigator of the dastardly plot, quails before the king's fury, unable even to look at his liege: *ne he ne dorste beseon to his ansyne* 'neither dared he [Haman] look upon his [Ahasuerus's] face' (sentence 54). The final use occurs after Haman has been executed, when the king rhetorically asks Esther who will now dare to injure her people (sentence 61).

Two variant spellings of *upahefednysse* 'arrogance' occur, both in reference to Haman. The first explains Mordecai's refusal to bow to Haman, discussed earlier, while the second occurs in Ælfric's epilogue (sentence 65):

> Mardocheus eac miclum wæs gewurþod, & swiðe geuferod for his
> eadmodnysse, swa swa Aman wearð gehynd for his
> **uppahefednysse**;

> Mordecai was also much honored and greatly elevated for his
> humility, even as Haman was humbled for his **arrogance**;

Clearly, this distribution has significance for Haman's characterization, as he is both introduced and dismissed with the term, and this will be taken up during the discussion in 'Emotion and Characterization'.

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ancient and early medieval cultures, including Anlgo-Saxon England and quite possibly Persia; *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther*, 2nd edn (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001), pp. 173–76.

The remaining twelve occurrences of words referring to complex or calm emotions are relatively evenly distributed amongst the various characters. Two refer to Ahasuerus, two to Haman, and two to Mordecai; one each to Esther, the people generally, and the wicked chamberlains who plot to kill the king. Three refer to the Jews and their deliverance (*friðe* 'peace', *blissodon* 'rejoiced', *glædlicor* 'more gladly'). Only one is a negative form of the word, *unþances* 'ungratefully', referring to Haman's attitude when he is summoned to the queen's feast after his return from heralding Mordecai's honor.

Table 5.2: Complex and calm emotions

Emotion Type	Lemma (PDE)	Count	Instances (Word No.)
complex or calm (pleasure)	LICIAN (TO PLEASE)	3	gelicode (647); licie (1,152); oflicode (2,023)
complex (courage)	DURRAN (TO DARE)	3	dorste (1,921; 1,973); dear (2,274)
complex (arrogance)	UPAHAFENNESS (ARROGANCE)	2	upahafennysse (980); upahafednysse (2,395)
complex (love)	LUFIAN (TO LOVE)	1	lufode (652)
complex (rejoicing)	GEGLADIAN (TO REJOICE)	1	gegladode (772)
complex (mischief)	BEALU (MISCHIEF)	1	bealuwe (794)
complex (revenge)	WRACU (REVENGE)	1	wræce (1,031)
complex (anxiety)	GEANGSUMIAN (TO MAKE ANXIOUS)	1	geangsumod (1,205)
complex (gratitude)	ÞANC (THANKS)	1	unþances (1,823)
complex (awe)	EGE (AWE)	1	ege (2,202)
complex or calm (peace)	FRIÞ (PEACE)	1	friþe (2,241)
complex or calm (gentleness)	MILDE (MILD)	1	mildlice (2,265)
complex (rejoicing)	BLISSIAN (TO REJOICE)	1	blissodon (2,356)
complex (gladness)	GLÆD (GLAD)	1	glædlicor (2,371)
complex (humility)	EADMODNES (HUMILITY)	1	eadmodnysse (2,388)

The Special Case of *FORSEON*

I have stated that anger-related words are the most frequently-occurring emotion-words in the text. However, even with the combined anger-lemmas, there is yet another emotion-word that occurs with greater frequency than any other in the text. The lemma *FORSEON*, which I have so far left out of my analysis, may have an emotional meaning or a less emotional, more rational meaning. The *DOE* lists the following possible definitions:

- to despise
- to hold in contempt
- to scorn
- to disdain
- to spurn
- to reject
- to cast out
- to forsake
- to refuse (to do) something

Clearly, there is room here for both emotional and rational reactions: to *despise* someone or something is a far cry from *refusing* it.[39] In any case, *FORSEON* occurs 11 times in the text. Eight of these 11 instances occur during the second gap noted earlier, between words 316 and 647, where they are used in narrating Vashti's refusal to appear upon the king's command. During this episode, we are told that Vashti *forseah* her king and husband, and this word is used, in various forms, to underscore the theme of the entire episode. In the eight instances occurring here, Vashti is the agent or implied agent in the first five.[40] In the next instance, all the wives of Persia and Media are the hypothetical agents, as the king's advisors warn that Vashti's behavior will incite rebellion from every wife in the kingdom. The next instance is an extension of this warning, the advisors claiming that such a rebellion will then make the Persians and Medes despised in the eyes of other peoples. Ælfric then masterfully closes the episode with the comment that, after Vashti has been deposed, she now sees that she is *forsewen* 'despised, rejected' (word 504). This neat close to Vashti's part of the tale demonstrates Ælfric's mastery of both narrative structure—he has clearly noted, as has many a modern-day scholar, the theme of reversal in the story of

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[39] I have normally translated it as 'spurn' in the Appendix.
[40] Words 301, 319, 356, 378, and 407.

Esther[41]—and of language use, and is made all the more potent by comparison with the Latin source texts, in which this poetic justice is not explicitly pointed out.

Vashti's primary sin, in Ælfric's telling, is contempt for Ahasuerus—her husband, king, and royal lord (*cynehlaford*). Her defiance of one whom she ought to respect is her great offense and the basis of her role as villain in the narrative. It is this very trait which causes the king's *witan* so much concern, for they fear that if this behavior is tolerated in the royal household, then it will be emulated throughout the kingdom until all the women despise their husbands and rulers.

After Vashti's final appearance in the text, her role as villain is filled by Haman. What is especially striking about this replacement is the reversal of their roles with regards to *FORSEON*. Vashti is a villain because she despises her lord; Haman, on the other hand, is a villain despite being spurned by his subordinate. This is evident from the final three uses of *FORSEON*, in all of which Mordecai is the agent and Haman the object. Ælfric's use of this word (of which, again, there is no equivalent in the Latin versions) helps to ensure that we do not misunderstand this particular theme. Ælfric is not advocating blind allegiance to those in authority, but rather a considered allegiance to those worthy of it. Vashti is wrong to despise her husband and king, Ahasuerus, not simply because he is her husband or her king, but because he is righteous (as Ælfric takes pains to point out at the end of the text); however, Mordecai is right to despise Haman because he is self-important and proud. In the latter case, Mordecai chooses his allegiance carefully, not wanting to anger God, the only one who is always worthy of honor. Thus, although *FORSEON* is used throughout the narrative, this very continuity helps to highlight yet another reversal, this time of roles, as one villain spurns her superior and the other is spurned by his subordinate. The pattern adds a clarifying dimension to our interpretation of this theme: it is not only about respect for one's lord, but *proper* and *considered* respect for one's lord.

Emotion in the Final Feast

Emotion is nowhere more prominent in Ælfric's *Esther* than in the final scene, the 'final feast' at which Esther reveals her Jewish ancestry, the plight of her people, and Haman's villainy. The distribution chart in Figure 5.2 ('Distribution of Emotion-Words'; located at the end of the chapter) clearly shows that these words are particularly prevalent during this scene (words 1,830 to 2,319).

The character most associated with emotion-language in this scene is Ahasuerus. His initial appearance in the passage describes him as *swiðe bliþe* 'very happy' at the

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[41] See Fox, pp. 158–63. Also AB7, pp. lv–lvi.

feast given by his wife, Esther (sentence 50). However, the overriding emotion of Ahasuerus in the passage is anger, which is explicitly indicated five separate times: *graman* 'anger', *gehathyrt* 'furious', *micclan graman* 'great anger', *oflicode* 'displeased', and *yrre* 'anger'.[42] Rather tellingly, he does not display this great anger when Esther reveals that she and her entire people are in danger of their lives; his response to this seems to be merely confusion, asking who could possibly have ordered such a slaughter without his knowledge. It is only after Esther reveals his favorite, Haman, to be the traitor that Ahasuerus's anger is evident, not only through the explicit language noted above but also by implication in some of his actions. He rises quickly from the table to go outside, as though overcome by his emotion; later, he imperiously and impetuously commands that Haman be hanged. In fact, we are told that his anger is only appeased upon the carrying out of this order. Ahasuerus does display one other emotion in the passage, but I will address this later.

The next most emotional character in the final feast is Haman, whose dominant emotion is fear. As with Ahasuerus, this emotion does not manifest itself until after Esther's revelation. Haman then becomes terrified (sentence 54):

> Þa **ablicgde** Aman **unbliþum andwlitan**, & **ne mihte na acuman**
> þæs cyninges graman, ne he **ne dorste** beseon to his ansyne

> Then Haman **blanched** with an **unhappy face**, and **was not able to
> bear** the king's rage, **neither dared he** look upon his face

Interestingly, Haman's fear is presented, in the latter part of this passage, as absence of courage: *ne dorste*, *ne mihte na acuman*. This is particularly interesting in light of the king's earlier question to Esther (sentence 52):

> Hwæt is se manna, swilcere mihte, þe þas dæda æfre **dorste**
> gefremman?

> Who is the man, of such power, who ever **dared** to commit these
> deeds?

The OE verb *durran* (past tense *dorste*) has evolved into 'dare' in PDE, with essentially the same meaning: either of having the courage to do something, or of defying or challenging another. Thus, when the king asks Esther who has dared to order the slaughter of her and her people, he seems to be wondering aloud who would have the audacity to defy the king's own authority in ordering such a large-scale and outrageous scheme; but when Ælfric describes Haman's inability to look at the king, he implies

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[42] Occurring in sentences 54, 54, 56, 56, and 58, respectively.

that Haman's earlier courage (i.e., in defying the king through deceit and flattery) has suddenly deserted him. Haman's final act in the text, as a grammatical agent, is to fall at Esther's feet begging for his life to be spared, strongly implying by this action his deep fear. Ironically, this act only serves to further enrage the king, who almost immediately orders Haman's execution (again ironically, on the gallows that Haman himself had built for the execution of Mordecai).

Somewhat surprisingly, Esther shows very little emotion throughout the scene. We might consider the fearful undertone as she explains her request to the king (sentence 51):

> We synd ealle belewde to ure lifleaste, þæt we beon toheawene mid heardum swurdum, þæt ure gemynd beo mid ealle adilegod.

> We are all betrayed unto our death, that we should be hewn with hard swords, that our memory and all that concerns us should be hidden.

Words such as *belewde* 'betrayed', *toheawene* 'hewn' and *lifleaste* 'loss of life, death' suggest the fear that we might reasonably assume Esther and the Jews to feel at their anticipated fate; but the language itself is not overtly emotive—does not name her emotions, that is. It is only near the end of the passage, after Haman's execution, that she becomes explicitly emotional, kneeling at the king's feet with tears in her eyes to plead his further intervention. It is worth noting Ælfric's explanatory phrase *mid Godes ege onbryrd* 'inspired by awe of God' (sentence 60), as a parallel phrase does not exist in the Latin source materials. This attribution of Esther's deep emotion to her respect for God and his mercy perfectly aligns with Ælfric's (presumed) spiritual goals in composing a version of the story in his vernacular tongue, highlighting as it does both Esther's faith in omnipotent God and her willingness to seek his help.

And now, an astonishing shift occurs, when Ahasuerus speaks *swiðe mildelice* 'very gently' to Esther and Mordecai (sentence 61). Gentleness implies kindness, even love, which stand in stark contrast to the rage, anger, and fury Ahasuerus has so far exhibited in this scene. This sharp deviation serves to reinforce Ælfric's characterization of Ahasuerus as a rounder, fuller figure than that presented in the Latin texts. Earlier in his version, Ælfric has explicitly told his audience that Ahasuerus loves Esther: *and lufode hi swiðe ofer ealle þa oðre þe he ær gesceawode* 'and loved her greatly, above all the others whom he had previously examined' (sentence 17). However, in this earlier context, Esther's physical beauty is very much in evidence and it is easy to assume that the king's 'love' is wholly physical attraction. The final feast scene, in contrast, is framed by Ahasuerus's positive emotions toward his new wife: he

is *swiþe bliðe* 'very happy' in her company and speaks *swiðe mildelice* 'very gently' to her afterward (sentences 50 and 61, respectively).

These phrases are the first hint we have of Ælfric's unique characterization of Ahasuerus. The Ahasuerus of the Latin texts—especially the Vulgate—is characterized as a kind of benign fool, driven hither and thither by his emotions, unaware of what is happening in his kingdom, blinded by greed, and indecisive in political matters: he must consult his advisers to figure out how to deal with his defiant wife Vashti, and refuses to write the counter-edict to help the Jews, delegating the task instead to Esther and Mordecai. While Ælfric preserves all the facts of the Vulgate account (e.g., Haman's bribe and Esther's/Mordecai's writing of the final edict), he characterizes Ahasuerus, in spite of these facts, as a more benign king and one who certainly is more decisive. Ælfric's Ahasuerus does not hesitate in deciding what to do with Haman, and even his speech to Esther allowing her and her uncle to write new orders to save the Jews contains no hint of the indecision and helplessness that modern scholars have detected in the Latin versions.[43] Perhaps most significantly, Ælfric takes great pains to inform his readers of Ahasuerus's ultimate conversion to the true God (sentences 65–66):

> & se cyning wearð gerihtlæht þurh þære cwene geleafan Gode to
> wurðmynte þe ealle þing gewylt, & he herode God þe hine geuferode
> & to cyninge geceas ofer swilcne anweald. & he wæs rihtwis, &
> rædfæst on weorcum.

> and the king became converted through the queen's faith to the
> honor of God who controls all things, and he praised God who had
> elevated him and chosen him as king over such a kingdom. And he
> was righteous, and wise in works.

Ælfric's framing of the final feast scene with the king's milder, gentler emotions prepares the reader for this final characterization, almost the last words of the text.

Particularly striking in the final feast scene are the clusters of emotive language that occur. In particular, Ahasuerus's anger and Haman's fear cluster together, with no fewer than seven emotive words or phrases occurring near each other. Thus, while Ahasuerus's anger is referred to throughout the text, the clustering of *graman*, *aras hraþe*, and *gehathyrt* implies an intense level of fury upon learning of his favorite's treachery, while the clustering of *ablicgde*, *unbliþum andwlitan*, *ne mihte na acuman*, and *ne dorste* implies the intense fear of Haman in response to the king's anger. Further, the emotive language concerning Esther's gratitude clusters very closely, with three

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[43] See n. 41 above.

phrases following immediately on one another. This clustering has a kind of cumulative effect, serving to intensify the level of emotion being experienced. The clustering of *aleat to þæs cyninges fotum* 'knelt at the king's feet', *mid agotenum tearum* 'with streaming tears', and *mid Godes ege onbryrd* 'inspired by fear/awe of God' serves to intensify the emotion Esther feels as she kneels at the king's feet. This last instance is particularly interesting because of the invocation of God in the final phrase. She not only kneels at another's feet, but her emotion also manifests itself in tears—and not just any tears, but divinely-inspired tears. Clearly, Esther is in a deeply emotional state at this point. Ælfric's masterful writing style is plainly evident in this cumulative, intensifying technique.

Emotion and Characterization

The association of emotion-words with each character offers strong characterizing information for each. Ahasuerus and Haman are both volatile characters, given to bouts of anger and fierce vengeance, while Esther and Mordecai are largely unmoved by emotions. Esther only becomes emotional when she is explicitly moved upon by her awe of God, while Mordecai is apparently entirely unmoved by emotion. In addition, Ahasuerus's anger and volatility are tempered by his apparently real affection for Esther, inspiring both happiness and gentleness when he is near her.

This portrayal of emotion in Ælfric's *Esther* exemplifies the concept of the Wheel of Fate, as described in Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.[44] In answering the eternally vexing question of why bad things happen to good people and good things to bad people, Mod (Wisdom, the Old English correlate to Boethius's Lady Philosophy) explains that Fate governs all human life (and is, in turn, ruled by God, or Providence) and offers the analogy of a wheel. On this Wheel of Fate, God is the axle, stable and unmoving. Righteous men are on the hub of the wheel, close to the axle but not the axle itself. The further toward the rim of the wheel one lives, the more one is moved by the motions of the wheel. Bad and good things happen to all, but the righteous who live on the hub are less disturbed by them, while those who are absorbed by the things of this world (living near the rim of the wheel) are less

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[44] This Latin philosophical text was translated into OE in the Alfredian period (ca. AD 880–950) and was influential throughout the Anglo-Saxon period. See *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius's* De Consolatione Philosophiae, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

perceptive of the ultimate good to which all things tend under God's purview, being 'troubled and harassed [*gedrefde and geswencte*] both in mind and in body'.[45]

Thus, in Ælfric's version of the Esther story, the characters who are most given to emotion, namely Ahasuerus and Haman, are also those who live furthest from God. Both are pagan, at least at the beginning of the story, and both are easily swayed by their emotions. Esther, as righteous woman of God, portrays fewer emotions, and when she does, Ælfric explicitly tells the audience that this emotion is divinely motivated, by her righteous desires to save God's chosen people. Mordecai, as the most godly of all the characters, displays almost no emotion; perhaps because he lives so close to the hub on the Wheel of Fate, he is less prone to be swayed by such mortal concerns.

FOOD AND DRINK, FEASTING AND FASTING

FEASTING IN ESTHER

Feasting and food have long been recognized as significant components in the Esther story.[46] In the ancient versions, there are ten banquets in all, as follows:

1. Ahasuerus's feast for the nobility
2. Ahasuerus's feast for all the men
3. Vashti's feast for the women
4. Esther's enthronement feast
5. Haman and Ahasuerus's feast
6. Esther's first feast with Ahasuerus and Haman
7. Esther's second feast with Ahasuerus and Haman
8. The Jews' celebration feasting
9. The first feast of Purim
10. The second feast of Purim

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[45] Alice Jorgensen, 'Textual Memory and Emotional Culture: The Legacy of Neoplatonism in the Old English *Boethius*' (unpublished paper, International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 7 July 2015), p. 2 (her translation). See also Eleni Ponirakis, 'Interactions of Thought and Action in Old English Poetry' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Nottingham, 2017).

[46] See Sandra Beth Berg, *The Book of Esther: Motifs, Themes, and Structure*, Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 44 (Missoula, MT: Society of Biblical Literature, 1979), pp. 31–35; David J. A. Clines*, The Esther Scroll: The Story of the Story*, Journal of the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 30 (Sheffield: Journal of the Study of the Old Testament Press, 1984), pp. 36–37; Jon D. Levenson, 'Introduction', in *Esther: A Commentary* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), pp. 5–7.

As Michael Fox points out, these feasts occur in pairs and are the 'sites of important events', signaling 'shifts of power'.[47] Levenson, expanding on Fox's comments, notes several additional connections between feasts, including some that are not immediately apparent. Both also emphasize the appropriateness of feasting as a motif for the book in its ancient forms, given its etiological purpose of establishing and explaining the reasons for the Jewish festival of Purim. Levenson goes on to discuss fasting as the counterpoint to feasting in the text,[48] a point which Fox oddly seems to miss.[49]

In Ælfric's rendering of the story in Old English, the number of feasts is drastically reduced, leaving only three:

    A.   Ahasuerus's feast for both the nobility and the commoners

    B.   Vashti's feast for the women

    C.   Esther's feast with Ahasuerus and Haman

Feasts 1 and 2 from the first list have been combined into A in Ælfric's version, while feasts 4–6, and 8–10 have been left out of the text entirely. With the removal of the text's etiological purpose, given Ælfric's Christian audience, it is understandable that the number of feasts would be reduced in his version. Similarly understandable is Ælfric's impulse to remove several of the paired feasts, which can seem repetitious and thus are prime candidates for removal in a significantly abbreviated adaptation. Finally, the much-discussed removal of the Jews' revenge in the final scenes of the ancient version naturally takes with it several feast-scenes as the Jews rejoice at their deliverance. Although the act of feasting does not occur as frequently in Ælfric's *Esther* as it does in his source texts, feasting nonetheless remains an important act in the text (perhaps by virtue of its ubiquity in the source materials).

Fasting, likewise, does not have quite the same prevalence in Ælfric's version as it does in the source texts. Most notably, Mordecai's and the Jews' fasting, as part of their ritual mourning upon learning of Haman's intended pogrom, has been omitted. The Jews fast only peripherally, so to speak: It is implied that they will fast, but Ælfric never explicitly confirms this action on their part (sentence 33). Despite all these removals, though, fasting remains highly relevant in the text, as we shall see.

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[47] Fox, pp. 156–58, esp. at 156.

[48] Levenson, pp. 6–7.

[49] Fox addresses fasting only in his commentary, not going into depth about it in his otherwise insightful analysis of character in the narrative; pp. 58, 63, 123–27.

FOOD-RELATED WORDS IN ÆLFRIC'S *ESTHER*

In all, 14 food- and drink-related lemmas occur in Ælfric's *Esther*, comprising a total of 25 tokens. These lemmas are listed in Table 5.3, in order of frequency. The words can be grouped into four broad categories: (1) words relating to feasting and food, (2) words relating to drink, (3) words relating to fasting, and (4) tangentially related words; these are also indicated in Table 5.3. As can be seen in Figure 5.3 (at the end of the chapter), these words mainly cluster near the beginning of the text, with a few occurrences scattered throughout the remainder of the text, the final instance occurring at word number 2,046 (of 2,316).

Table 5.3: Food-related words in Ælfric's *Esther*

Food Category	Lemma (ModE)	Count	Variations (Word No.)
food & feast	feorme (provisions, feast)	4	feorme (65; 86; 200; 1,829)
fasting	fæstan (to fast)	3	fæstan (1,248), fæste (1,263), fæstene (1,286)
drink	drincan (to drink)	3	drunce (146), drænce (169), druncon (371)
drink	gebeor (guest, drinking companion)	3	gebeorum (133; 240; 467)
drink	gebeorscipe (feast, drinking party)	2	gebeorscipe (141; 1,346)
tangential	æppeltun (orchard)	1	æppeltun (1,991)
drink	byrle (cup-bearer)	1	byrlas (176)
tangential	fæt (vessel, container)	1	fatum (108)
tangential	genoh (enough)	1	genoh (184)
drink	scencan (to pour out drink)	1	scencton (177)
food & feast	þenung (service, meal)	1	þenunge (124)
tangential	wæstm (growth, fruit)	1	wæstme (717)
drink	win (wine)	1	wines (149)
tangential	gegaderung (gathering)	1	gegaderunge (322)

Food and Feasting Words

Only two words in the text explicitly denote food and feasting: *feorme* 'provisions, feast' and *þenung* 'service, meal'. Curiously enough, both of these words have primary meanings not directly related to feasting. The primary meaning of *feorme* is simply 'food', and by extension it can also mean 'a gathering where food is consumed'. *DOE* lists feasting as the second definition of four, though it indicates that the word was sometimes used to denote a specific type of banquet, such as a funeral banquet or wedding banquet.[50] The underlying meaning of *þenung* is 'service'; in relation to feasting, it can refer to the different meals, courses, or dishes served at a banquet. *Feorme* twice refers to feast A (both in sentence 3), once to feast B (sentence 6), and once to the final feast (sentence 50); *þenung* only occurs once, in reference to feast A (sentence 4).

Drink Words

Drink-related words are by far the most common in the text. They account for 42.8% of the lemmas (6 of 14) and 44% of the tokens (11 of 25) in the food-related words. In order of their appearance in the text, these lemmas are GEBEOR 'guest', GEBEORSCIPE 'feast, drinking-party', DRINCAN 'to drink', WIN 'wine', BYRLE 'cup-bearer', and SCENCAN 'to pour drink' (see Table 5.3 above). With one exception, these all occur near the beginning of the text, in reference to Ahasuerus's great feast (feast A); the exception is one instance of *gebeorscipe* which occurs later on, referring to the feast that Esther invites Ahasuerus and Haman to attend (feast C).

Putting aside for the moment this final use of *gebeorscipe*, let us focus on the drink-words in the initial feast scene. Ælfric is careful to explain to his audience that the king does not force drink upon anyone, instead ensuring that there is enough of his expensive wine for each man to drink as much as he wants, but without being compelled to drink more than he wishes. This seems to be a favorite theme of Ælfric's. As Stacy S. Klein points out, Ælfric's *Judith* was destined, at least in one version, for the perusal of his noble friend, Sigeweard, whom Ælfric had also admonished for his overindulgence in drinking.[51] However, this exemplary attitude toward the compulsion to drink is not Ælfric's invention, for it has a clear precedent in the Vulgate (Esther 1. 8):

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[50] *DOE* entry for *feorm*, definitions 1 and 2, esp. 2.a and 2.b.

[51] Stacy S. Klein, 'Ælfric's Sources and His Gendered Audiences', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 13 (1995), 111–19 (p. 115) <http://www.illinoismedieval.org/ems/VOL13/klein.html> [accessed 28 December 2017].

> nec erat qui nolentes cogeret ad bibendum sed sic rex statuerat
> praeponens mensis singulos de principibus suis ut sumeret
> unusquisque quod vellet
>
> Neither was there any one to compel them to drink who were not
> willing, but as the king had appointed, who set over every table one
> of his nobles, that every man might take what he would.

Nevertheless, given the fact that drink-related words occur (almost) nowhere else in the text, we might reasonably suppose that Ælfric happily took advantage of this opportunity to reinforce the teaching of moderation. Although Ælfric probably produced his version of *Esther* after the letter to Sigeweard, he was certainly familiar with the story already from his religious studies.[52] One can imagine him poring over these Latin words, contemplating the wisdom of the king's attitude, even adopting it as his own.

FEORME and *GEBEORSCIPE*

Before continuing, I should like to say a few words about *feorme* and *gebeorscipe* (and the related word *gebeor*) and my categorization of these words. They form an interesting variation, referring (at least in this text) essentially to the same act of feasting. Each word is used at least once in reference to two different feasts, Ahasuerus's marvelous banquet in the opening scene (feast A) and Esther's more intimate meal near the end of the narrative (feast C). From this usage, then, it does not appear that there is any particularly strong association of one or the other with large or intimate feasts.

What is curious about this pair is their underlying connotations. As mentioned earlier, *feorme* has an underlying meaning of 'food, provisions'. By contrast, *gebeorscipe* has as its root the word *beor* 'beer' and means roughly 'a party or gathering at which (alcoholic) drink is consumed'; its underlying connotation is of drink. It is questionable just how strong these distinctions were to the average Anglo-Saxon mind or to the (distinctly non-average) mind of a scholar and linguist like Ælfric. The *DOE* entries for both *beorscipe* and *gebeorscipe* include in their primary definition the word 'carousal'. However, *gebeorscipe*, which occurs much more frequently in the extant OE corpus (ca. 80 occurrences, as opposed to 11 of *beorscipe*), is also used in some

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[52] Indeed, in this self-same letter, Ælfric indicates that he intends to render Esther in Old English: *Hester, seo cwen, þe hire kynn ahredde, hæfð eac ane boc on þisum getele, for ðan þe Godes lof ys gelogod þæron; ða ic awende on Englisc on ure wisan sceortlice* 'Esther, the queen, who saved her people, also has a book in this collection, because God's glory is placed therein; this I (will) turn into English in our own manner shortly'. *Ælfric's Letter to Sigeweard* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 509), retrieved from *OEC* [accessed 28 December 2017].

distinctly religious senses, including in reference to the Last Supper, to the heavenly banquet, and, figuratively, to the feast of holy doctrine (this last in Alcuin).[53] As mentioned above, *feorme* is also used in reference to specific kinds of feasts, though these are not so religious in tone as those listed for *gebeorscipe*.[54]

Related to *gebeorscipe* is the word *gebeor*, meaning 'guest, drinking-companion', which occurs 25 times in the extant corpus of OE literature.[55] It likewise derives from the root word *beor* and therefore has an underlying connotation of drinking and possibly carousal; however, it is used relatively infrequently in the corpus of Old English, primarily in Ælfric. Again, it is difficult to tell at this stage just how strongly Anglo-Saxon writers and audiences would have associated this word with drinking, but because of its fundamental relation with that act, I have chosen to count it as a drink-related word, rather than a food-related word.

Fasting Words

The only word related to fasting or abstinence from food is *fæstan* 'to fast'. It occurs three times in quick succession, all in relation to Esther. Upon urging from Mordecai to do something to help her people, Esther first requests that the Jews fast with her for three days and pray to God for help; only after completing this fast does she brave the king's presence. Considering that she is the only character who fasts, this clearly has implications for her characterization, and this will be addressed later in the chapter.

Tangentially Related Words

Lexically related words include *æppeltun* 'orchard' and *wæstm* 'fruit, growth'; notionally related words include *fæt* 'vessel, container', *gaderung* 'gathering', and *genoh* 'enough'. These words, tangentially related to the semantic field of food and drink, are the second-largest group in the text, after the drink-related words, with five total occurrences (see Table 5.3).

The word *æppeltun* is a compound noun comprised of two nouns, *appel* 'apple, fruit' and *tun* 'enclosed land, settlement, habitation', from which is derived the PDE word 'town'. The compound noun, then, means, 'enclosed land for the cultivation of apple/fruit trees'—or, more simply, 'orchard'. Clearly, the word *appel* is food-related

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[53] *DOE* entries for *beorscipe* and *gebeorscipe*, esp. *gebeorscipe* 1.a, 1.b, and 1.c.

[54] Indeed, this usage aligns with the Hebrew text, which likewise uses terms referring primarily to a drinking-party, though food would surely also have been consumed. See AB7, p. 7.

[55] *DOE* entry for *gebeor*.

and so is the compound *æppeltun*, but the orchard in question is not very closely associated with food in the story. Indeed, Stewart Brookes has noted that *æppeltun* is fairly uncommon in the corpus of Old English,[56] and that Ælfric has used it to translate the Latin terms *hortus* 'garden' and *hortus arboribus* 'garden of trees'.[57] He suggests that Ælfric's use of *æppeltun* may contain echoes of the OE aphorism *on æppeltune gan anxsumnysse hefige getacnaþ* 'to go walking in an orchard signifies deep trouble'.[58] This piece of OE wisdom is certainly appropriate to the situation, as Ahasuerus wrestles with the knowledge that he has given his viceroy the power to destroy his wife and her entire race—deep trouble, indeed.

Likewise, *wæstm* 'growth, fruit' has strong food-related connotations but is not used so in Ælfric's *Esther*. While its overarching sense is that of growth or produce, BT gives as the first definition within this broad concept 'plant, fruit'.[59] However, in context in Ælfric's text, it refers to Esther's physical form or stature, coming at the end of a list of all of Esther's good attributes (sentence 20):

> Heo wæs swiðe wlitig on wundorlicre gefægernysse & swiþe lufigendlic eallum onlociendum, **& wislice geþeawod, & on wæstme cyrten**

> She was very beautiful in marvelous loveliness and very lovable to all who looked upon her **and truly well-mannered and comely in figure**

It is interesting to note, though, that Ælfric has chosen this word to talk about Esther's figure, since there are plenty more words he could have used. The bold portion of the above description has no parallel in the Latin versions, so Ælfric was unrestrained by translation needs. This word is particularly interesting in this context because of its connections with the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden,[60] as well as with the sense of 'progeny' in numerous Old Testament narratives. There is surely scope for a good deal of further study on this

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[56] Stewart Brookes, 'Ælfric's Adaptation of the Book of Esther: A Source of Some Confusion', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique & Medieval Studies, 2000), pp. 37–62. The word *æppeltun* occurs 7 times in the *OEC*.

[57] Esther 7. 7, in OL (*hortum* in R, I; *horto* in F) and Vulgate, respectively.

[58] Pp. 60–61.

[59] BT entry for *wæstm*.

[60] For example: *Ða geseah ðæt wif ðæt ðæt treow wæs god to etenne […] & genam ða of ðæs treowes wæstme & geæt […]*. 'Then the woman saw that the tree was good to eat […] and took of the tree's fruit and ate […]'. *The Old English Hexateuch*, London, British Library, Cotton MS Claudius B.IV, f. 6ᵛ; analogous to Genesis 3. 6.

word alone and its intertextual relationship with such biblical materials, as well as non-biblical OE literature.

The lexically related words are those that are not explicitly related to food, feasting, or drinking by definition, but that are contextually relevant to these acts in the text. To begin with, *fæt* refers to a vessel or container of some kind.[61] Though any number of things might be placed in a container, *fæt* seems to primarily be used in the corpus of Old English in reference to fluids, usually drinkable liquids. In Ælfric's adaptation, it is used in describing the opulent dinnerware with which the feast was served. Similarly, *gegaderung* is any kind of gathering, union, or bringing together, while in Ælfric's *Esther* it refers to the guests gathered at the king's feast. Rounding out this group is *genoh*, meaning simply 'plenty, abundant', referring here directly to the wine that Ahasuerus serves at his great feast. The notion of abundance, though not explicitly about food, seems to me to underscore the sense of magnificence and munificence with which Ælfric has striven to imbue this whole episode.[62]

Food and Characterization

Having introduced all the food-related words used in the text, along with relevant information about their meaning and usage in the extant OE corpus and where and how they are used in Ælfric's *Esther*, the question remains: What has all of this to do with characterization? In the following paragraphs, I address each character in turn, discussing how the food-related words contribute to their characterization.

Ahasuerus

The first feast mentioned in Ælfric's version is that given by Ahasuerus. In the Vulgate, Ahasuerus gives two distinct banquets, one for the nobility of his kingdom and one for all the people of Susa;[63] the former lasts 180 days and the latter begins after this and lasts an unspecified amount of time. Ælfric, however, conflates these two feasts into one, which Ahasuerus gives for both the nobility and the commoners, lasting the full 180 days.[64] Ahasuerus's reason for giving this elaborate feast is explicitly

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[61] Related to PDE 'vat'.

[62] We have a sense of just how intentionally he has striven to convey this in his mild lament: *Us is eardoðe to secgenne* 'it is difficult for us to tell' (sentence 4).

[63] *eallum his ealdormannum, & his eþelborenum þegnum, & eallum his folce, þe þa feorme gesohton* '[for] all his princes and noble-born followers, and all his people who desired the feast' (sentence 3).

[64] It does appear likely that Ælfric conflated these two banquets accidentally, rather than combining them purposefully, since Ælfric specifies that the feast is 180 days long, but then says that it is the seventh day of the feast when Ahasuerus sends for Vashti and she refuses to come, which surely would

attributed—in both the Vulgate and in Ælfric's version—to his royal ostentation, the desire to show off his wealth and glory:

> ut ostenderet divitias gloriae regni sui ac magnitudinem atque
> iactantiam potentiae suae
>
> that he might shew the riches of the glory of his kingdom, and the
> greatness, and boasting of his power[65]
>
> (Vulgate, Esther 1.4)
>
> wolde him æteowian his welan & his mærða
>
> he wanted to show off his wealth and glory to them
>
> (Ælfric, sentence 3)

Food- and (especially) drink-related words are most prevalent in this portion of the narrative, making them highly salient to the characterization of Ahasuerus. Significantly, this is also the opening scene of the entire narrative, meaning that it is the audience's first impression of the Persian king, and the multiple references to food and drink, combined with the language regarding the opulence and wealth of Ahasuerus's feast, highlight that this is a man of great power and, perhaps, also great generosity.

Of course, this is not the only feast in which Ahasuerus participates, as he also partakes of a feast at Esther's invitation. His participation in this banquet is that of a guest, rather than host, demonstrating that he is equally capable of sharing a feast prepared for him and not only those he presides over himself. Of course, this feast is ostensibly also in his honor, adding to the impression of his high status. At the same time, though, Ælfric explicitly tells us that the king is *swiþe bliðe* 'very happy' with Esther, a phrase that may be intended to gloss the Vulgate's indication of inebriation,[66] but which nonetheless hints at domestic bliss in a way not found in any source materials. Ahasuerus may be a royal show-off—but he also has a heart to temper his otherwise ostentatious nature.

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signal the end of the feast, for after this unprecedented display of willfulness Vashti is promptly dethroned and the search for a new queen begins. Surely the king does not sit at a banquet with his guests for another 173 days while deciding what to do about his headstrong wife. In the Vulgate, the first feast, for the princes and nobles, lasts 180 days; it is during the seventh day of the second feast, for all the men, that Ahasuerus summons Vashti (see Esther 1. 3–5).

[65] This translation is from the DRV.

[66] Esther 7. 2: *postquam vino incaluerat* 'after he was warm with wine'.

Indeed, the king's wise attitude toward drink during his opulent feast—providing enough for all to partake freely, but not forcing on anyone more than they wish—foreshadows his conversion. From the opening of the story, the audience is aware that this is an uncommonly good king, despite the volatile temperament he will display later on. Ælfric deftly weaves enough wisdom and kindness into Ahasuerus's characterization, from beginning to end of the narrative, that his ultimate conversion comes as no surprise.

Esther

Esther is, of course, the hostess of the final feast in the narrative, using it as a means of undoing her enemy Haman, while simultaneously seeking help from her king and husband Ahasuerus. Her role as hostess parallels Vashti's in her banquet for the ladies of the court, demonstrating her power and high position—a fact further highlighted by her invitation to Haman, a member of the royal court. At the same time, she is also entertaining her husband at this event, and the feast can therefore be read as a fulfilment of her marital duties. This feast serves multiple purposes, all of which can be mapped onto Esther's character: she is a wife, a member of the royal court, a woman of high position and relative power, a woman whose existence is threatened, a representative of her people, an intercessor on their behalf, a pious woman seeking assistance from both divine and earthly sources.

At least as important in characterizing Esther, however, is her abstinence from food and drink: her fasting in preparation for her intercessory role. Although she enjoins the Jews to fast with her, their participation is never confirmed in Ælfric's version (sentence 33), making Esther the only character who fasts. Her fasting, mentioned three times in close succession, heightens the dramatic impact of Esther's position, as she prepares to visit the king without invitation. More importantly, it signals her piety and devotion—her recognition that she will succeed not through her own powers alone, but only by the intervention and grace of her God—further highlighting her ultimate role as an exemplar of ideal womanhood.

Vashti

Like Ahasuerus, Vashti makes use of her royal status to offer a banquet for a large group, in this case the women of the court. Her banquet is a clear counterpoint to Ahasuerus's, given, apparently, to entertain the ladies while their husbands are carousing at Ahasuerus's drinking-party. It proves to be her undoing, however, for it is during this feast that she makes the fatal move of refusing her liege-lord's command, leading directly to her deposition. Ælfric does not explicitly name Vashti's reasons for

giving this feast, but readers might assume that her motivations are similar to those of her husband: a desire to demonstrate her power and high position to the ladies of her court. In light of later events and the indication of Vashti's willfulness, we might even suppose that she gives this feast as a way of asserting her equality to her king and husband.

Another way to look at Vashti and food, however, is to view her story as a sub-plot to Ahasuerus's feast. The fact that she is giving a feast for the women of the court is incidental and unnecessary to the plot, since her refusal to come when summoned does not seem to be influenced in any way by this fact. On the other hand, the fact that Ahasuerus is entertaining does appear to be pertinent to his summoning of his queen, which is apparently an extension of his desire to show off his greatness. Along with his wealth, glory, and power, he wishes to show off his beautiful queen. In one sense, then, it is really only Ahasuerus's feast that matters in this opening sequence of events, and Vashti's feast can be virtually ignored.

Mordecai

Mordecai, in Ælfric's adaptation, participates in neither feasting, nor drinking, nor fasting. This last is a conspicuous absence, especially where the fasting of ritual mourning is concerned. Perhaps Ælfric is suggesting that Mordecai, as the exemplar of piety, transcends the everyday workings of the mortal body, having no need of food and drink and being therefore unable to fast, since he cannot abstain from something he does not partake of. Just as Mordecai, living near the axle of the Wheel of Fate, is unmoved by earthly emotion, so too he has no need of physical sustenance. On the other hand, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, and it would be rather absurd to think that Ælfric's Mordecai does not eat or drink at all. In all likelihood, Mordecai's non-participation in these acts is influenced by Ælfric's Latin sources, which likewise make no mention of Mordecai feasting, drinking, or fasting.[67]

Haman

Like Vashti, Haman is associated with only one feast in Ælfric's rendering of the story. Also like Vashti, this feast proves to be his undoing. It is at Esther's feast for him and the king that Haman's treachery is revealed and he is summarily dispatched. The scene is a dramatic one, forming the climax of the narrative in Ælfric's version, and it is

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[67] Though it might be inferred, from Esther 4. 3 that Mordecai fasts, along with the other Jews in the kingdom who are mourning their fate.

fraught with tension and emotion as Haman is dramatically revealed as a villain, pleads for mercy from the queen, and is executed forthwith. He is a guest at this feast and nowhere plays the host in Ælfric's version; nonetheless, he takes the invitation as a sign of special favor from the king and queen (sentence 39), augmenting his already high opinion of his own importance. The symmetry of these feasts—one at the beginning of the story, one at the end, both leading to the downfall of the respective parties—further highlights the continuity between Vashti and Haman as villains in the two main portions of the story.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, both emotions and food offer important characterization information in Ælfric's version of the text. Emotions distinguish the godly characters from the ungodly and underscore Ælfric's message concerning proper respect for one's lord, both earthly and heavenly. The emotion-words in the text align with the conception of the Wheel of Fate, supporting the hypothesis that this metaphor was foundational to how Anglo-Saxons thought about emotions—or, at least, how a learned religious man such as Ælfric thought about them. The idea carries through to the portrayal of food and its associated activities, with the most godly characters (Esther and, especially, Mordecai) having the fewest and weakest associations with these activities.

Analyzing further semantic fields, of course, would yield additional information about the characters, but the two fields explored in this chapter are sufficient to demonstrate Ælfric's proficiency in composition. His careful word choices, linking specific characters with specific attitudes, draws out his doctrinal messages with grace and skill; indeed, at times no more than a single word is needed for the audience to grasp his meaning. In fact, a keyword analysis of the text indicates the importance of feasting in *Esther*, with the word *feorm* appearing statistically more frequently here than in Ælfric's other writings. Royal words are also prominent in the keywords, and a systematic analysis of this semantic field might yield interesting insights. Such words, indeed, are discussed at some length in Chapter 6, which addresses deixis as characterization cues—in particular focusing on relational deixis and Deictic Shift Theory.
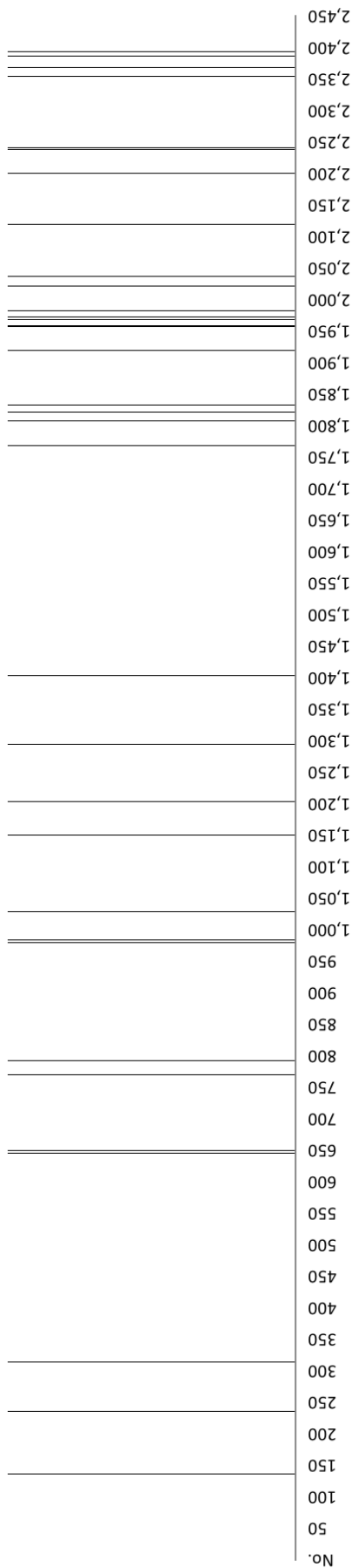
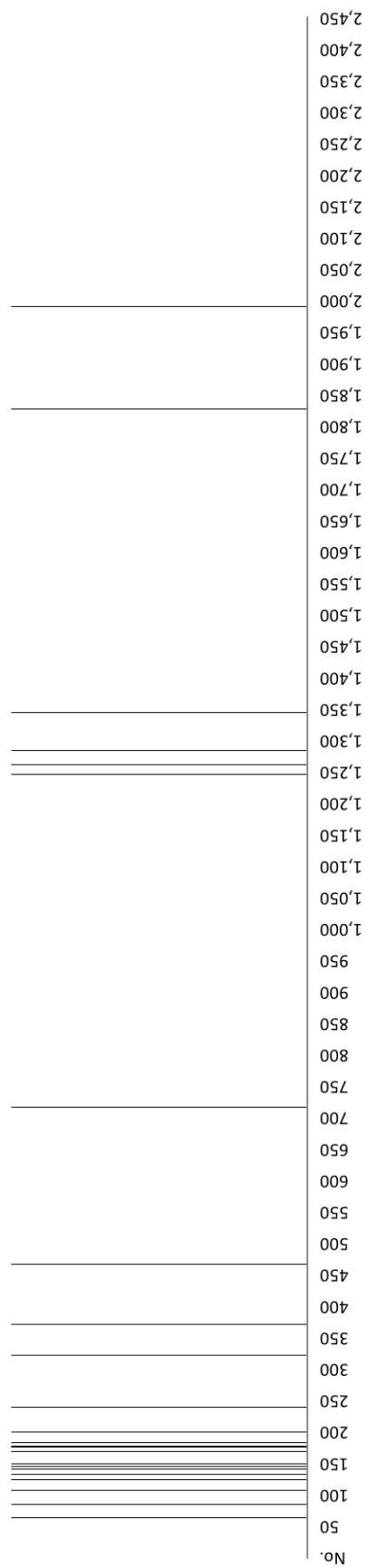**Figure 5.2:** Distribution of emotion words in Ælfric's *Esther*

Figure 5.3: Distribution of food-related words

Deixis

Deixis has long been recognized as a foundational concept in linguistic theory, particularly salient to semantic and pragmatic sense-making. While it has been studied in literature, it has rarely (if ever) been addressed as a characterization technique in its own right.[1] Rather, such studies have tended to focus on world-creation, and although characters are encompassed within this larger category, deixis has largely been ignored as a characterization cue. In this final chapter, I focus on deixis and examine how it can illuminate our interpretation of character in Ælfric's *Esther*. I first explain the general concept of deixis before going into more detail on one particular type, relational deixis, and examining characterization through this lens. In the second part of the chapter, I describe Deictic Shift Theory (DST), which was first developed in the 1990s and has been expanded upon more recently in cognitive stylistics. I then use DST to provide a partial analysis of characterization in Ælfric's *Esther*, focusing on a few particular characters, including Ælfric as narrator–translator.

DEIXIS

The term *deixis* comes from the Greek word for 'pointing' or 'reference'. Since the early twentieth century, linguists and philosophers have noted that deixis is an essential function of language and, indeed, that some words in a language have an almost exclusively deictic function.[2] That is, certain words encode information that

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[1] See Peter Stockwell, *The Poetics of Science Fiction* (Harlow: Longman, 2000), pp. 15–37 (esp. pp. 23–46); Elena Semino, 'Deixis and Context Creation' in *Language and World Creation in Poems and Other Texts* (London: Longman, 1997), pp. 31–50.

[2] Particularly influential among them have been Karl Bühler, *Sprachtheorie: Die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache* (Jena: Fischer, 1934); John Lyons, 'Deixis, Space and Time', in *Semantics*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), II (1977), pp. 636–724; and Stephen C. Levinson, 'Deixis', in *Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 54–96.

allows the receiver (hearer, reader, etc.) to locate the speaker in time and space. Words such as *I*, *here*, and *now* include information within them that anchors the speaker to a particular context, so that if I were to utter the sentence 'I am here now', that sentence—as uttered by me during the process of writing this chapter—would have a vastly different meaning in the real world than the same sentence uttered by you, the reader; you are a different person than I, and you are located in a different time and place as you read this than I am as I write it. Thus, the deictic information contained in this simple sentence allows—indeed, demands—you interpret its meaning differently depending on who uttered (or wrote) it. That person, the original speaker or writer of a piece of language, is the *origo* (also called the *deictic center*), and the deictic information in the language can help us to locate the origo in time and space.

As this last sentence implies, there are many kinds of deictic information that can be reflected in language: temporal location is one, spatial location another (though many scholars consider these inherently interrelated and speak of spatio-temporal or, less commonly, temporo-spatial deixis). Markers of temporal deixis in English include temporal adverbs (such as *now/then*, *soon/later*, *today/tomorrow*); temporal adverbial locatives (such as *in my youth*, *many years ago*, *when I was a lad*); and tense and aspect in verbs (such as *eat/ate/had eaten/will have eaten*). All of these markers offer clues, which the hearer can unravel, to locate the 'now' of the origo. Markers of spatial deixis in English include spatial adverbs (such as *here/there*, *near/far*, *up/down*); spatial adverbial locatives (such as *at the ranch*, *in the office*, *by the tree*); demonstratives (such as *this/that*, *these/those*); and verbs of motion (such as *come/go*, *bring/take*).[3] Again, these markers provide information that can be used to identify the 'here' of the origo.

Temporal and spatial deixis may be the easiest types for us to recognize, perhaps because they often have fairly concrete meaning in everyday life. In everyday spoken language, that is, one can often point directly to the real-world entity that the deixis indicates, but this process is less straightforward in literary texts. However, partly through literary analysis, scholars have identified several other types of deixis, including perceptual, textual, compositional, and relational.[4] While several of these

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[3] These lists are derived from Peter Stockwell, 'Cognitive Deixis', in *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 41–57 (pp. 45–46), where they are synthesized from a spate of other sources.

[4] See Stockwell, 'Cognitive Deixis', for this list. Perceptual and relational deixis have been addressed by numerous scholars (though the terminology may differ), including David A. Zubin and Lynne E. Hewitt, 'The Deictic Center: A Theory of Deixis in Narrative', in *Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective*, ed. by Judith F. Duchan, Gail A. Bruder, and Lynne E. Hewitt (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1995), pp. 129–55; and Elena Semino, 'Deixis and Context Creation'. Textual and

might impact the reader's cognitive model of character, I focus for my analysis on the last category, relational deixis. Although this category is rarely addressed in its own right in the scholarly literature, I believe that it has much to offer in a study of characterization and deserves greater attention.

RELATIONAL DEIXIS

Relational deixis is the information encoded within language that offers clues as to the origo's relationships, both personal and social, with others in his world. In English, markers of relational deixis include personal pronouns (*I*, *you*, *we*, *they*), which mark out different persons or groups of people. They also include expressions of modality, point of view, and focalization. Modality includes not only modal verbs (*can*, *should*, *might*, *shall*, etc.), but also other expressions of personal attitude or worldview (*there is a possibility*, *it is certain that …*, etc.). Point of view and focalization are closely related, both dealing with questions of how information is perceived and conveyed to the reader in narrative literature.[5] These have traditionally been distinguished from voice, which answers the question 'who speaks?', while focalization/point of view answer the question 'who sees?'[6] In some narratives, especially first-person narration, the same character does both the seeing and the speaking (as in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, which is both narrated and seen by the title character); in others, who sees and who speaks may be different characters within the story (as with Jay Gatsby and Nick Carraway in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*); while still others employ a narrator, existing entirely outside the story-world, who tells the experiences of the characters (as in J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* novels). As any careful reader knows, the personal worldview presented through point of view and focalization can be quite extensive and can even distort the 'true' events of a narrative, and it is the manipulation of this

compositional deixis are Stockwell's concepts, first appearing in *Poetics of Science Fiction*, pp. 23–42 (esp. pp. 39–42).

[5] Indeed, according to Chris Baldick, they are the same thing; see 'focalization', in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/97801992028272.001.0001/acref-9780199208272-e-467> [accessed 28 December 2017].

[6] This distinction was proposed by Genette in the late twentieth century and, although enthusiastically embraced by many narratologists and literary critics, has been extensively critiqued and refined—including by Genette himself—almost from the beginning; see Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980); Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse Revisited*, trans. by Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1988); and *Point of View, Focalization, and Perspective: Modeling Mediation in Narrative*, ed. by Peter Hühn, Wolf Schmid, and Jörg Schönert (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

worldview that creates an unreliable narrator, as in Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, where the first-person narrator deliberately does not tell us all he knows. In all of these cases, the language of point of view and focalization may provide significant deictic information, situating different characters and the narrator in relation to others, personally or socially.

A great deal of OE narrative literature employs a narrator external to the story-world. This is the case with nearly all hagiographical writing, as well as numerous homilies when they report events from the Bible, early Christianity, and the lives of saints. It is also largely the case with heroic poetry, such as *Beowulf* and *The Battle of Maldon*, as well as historical narratives such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Much of the elegiac poetry, on the other hand, includes a narrator who is also an actor within the story-world, narrated in first-person and presenting a worldview that is strongly colored with that narrator's voice and point of view. (I will address point of view and focalization in the latter part of this chapter, 'Deictic Shift Theory'.)

One way in which point of view and focalization can offer relational deictic cues is through evaluative word-choice. Any evaluative judgment indicates something about the worldview and mind style of the origo, as well as their relationships with that world and the people and objects in it. As we shall see, these evaluative comments are particularly salient in the characterization of Ælfric-as-narrator in his version of *Esther*. Again, evaluative word-choice is particularly salient to DST as it applies in this text, and I shall return to this concept later in the chapter.

Finally, relational deixis can be indicated by patterns of referring expressions (*that girl*, *the curly-haired one*, *the speaker*), including naming (*Katrina, Miss Wilkins, Kat, Aunt Trina*) and terms of address (*miss, ma'am, you there*). These inter-related categories help mark out the relationship between the origo and the addressee(s) and may offer significant insight into how these different persons think about one another. In some instances, one character's choice of a different name or referring expression can mark a significant shift in their relationship, as when a newly-married man refers to his spouse as 'my wife' for the first time.

Because deixis is so prevalent in language, it is impractical to produce a complete and exhaustive analysis of all the deixis in an entire work, even a relatively short one like Ælfric's *Esther*. Even focusing on just one category of deixis—here, relational deixis—becomes overwhelmingly complex when all possible cues are considered. For these reasons, the following analysis focuses in particular on referring expressions and how they build characterization and highlight important relations between characters (and the reader).

As in most of the preceding chapters, the analysis that follows focuses on the five main characters. However, due to the nature of the subject, the structure is somewhat different. Rather than addressing each character separately, in turn, the analysis proceeds by considering the intertwined relationships of the characters, as indicated by the relational deixis of the text.

REFERRING EXPRESSIONS IN ÆLFRIC'S *ESTHER*

Taking into account all references to the main characters, including pronouns, noun phrases, names, and terms of address, Ahasuerus is by far the most frequently referred to in Ælfric's *Esther*, with 184 total referring expressions. This is not terribly surprising, considering that Ahasuerus is present in the story from its opening line to its finale. By contrast, Vashti appears early on but then disappears, while Esther, Mordecai, and Haman do not appear until roughly one-fifth of the way through. Nevertheless, this high number of references clearly indicates that Ahasuerus is an important player in the events of the narrative.

Of these 184 references, 70 are noun phrases, names, or terms of address, nearly all of which indicate, more or less directly, Ahasuerus's royal status.[7] The majority of these refer to him as *cyning* 'king', in its various grammatical forms. In fact, there are only three references (apart from simple pronouns, such as *he*, *hine*, and *his*) that do not express royalty; two of these are simple statements of his two name forms (*Asuerus* and *Artarxerses*), while the last refers to him as Haman's *hlaford* 'lord'. This last instance, of course, is overtly related to nobility and therefore has strong associations with royalty. Indeed, given the unusually high incidence of the word *cynehlaford* 'royal lord' (or 'liege-lord', as I have translated it) in this text,[8] I would argue that *hlaford* here does in fact refer to royal status—not merely to the ruling class, but to the ruler of the ruling class. In any case, the referring expressions in the text leave no doubt for the audience that Ahasuerus is the king in this story. As we have seen, the explicit characterization cues about him rely on this basic categorization, indicating the great extent of his power and wealth, and the relational deixis further emphasizes this role.

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[7] In WordSmith Tools, the top three positive keywords in Ælfric's *Esther* are *cyning* 'king', *cwen* 'queen', and *cynehlaford* 'royal lord' (with my Ælfric corpus as the reference corpus, as described in Chapter 2). This result indicates that these words occur with statistically greater frequency in *Esther* than would be expected, based on their frequency in the reference corpus ($p < 5 \times 10^{-9}$).

[8] It occurs 7 times in Ælfric's *Esther*, as compared to 5 times in the rest of my Ælfric corpus. The *OEC* returns 45 hits for *cynehlaford* in the entire corpus of OE literature, most of which occur in royal charters (see also the *DOE* entry for this word).

Ælfric carefully constructs Ahasuerus as the king—always and only—throughout the entire text.

Along with such explicitly royal words as *cyning* and *cynehlaford*, there are nine instances of *leof* in the text, all in reference to Ahasuerus. This word may be used as an adjective to express pleasure, approval, or love; in this text, however, it is used exclusively as a term of address, in which case it expresses respect and/or love for the addressee, something akin to Modern English 'dear' or 'sir'. These all occur in direct speech to Ahasuerus from various other characters.[9] Its use in the text to refer exclusively to Ahasuerus adds strength to the characterization of Ahasuerus as the royal leader; he is not only obeyed, but is respected and loved as a leader—by his advisers, his servants, his deputy, and his wife. The referring expressions thus make it clear just what kind of relationship Ahasuerus has with those around him: powerful yet respected, even beloved.

Vashti is similarly always referred to in royal terms, with *cwen* 'queen' occurring seven times in reference to her. Though she makes only a brief appearance in the text, that appearance is laden with royal terms. She is referred to exclusively by her rank (*cwen*) or her name (aside from pronouns). But an interesting deviation occurs once this pattern has been established. In the first several references to Vashti, she is identified as the queen; however, for the last three mentions, she is referred to only as 'Vashti'. These instances all occur after the king, upon the advice of his council, has decided to depose her (sentence 13 and later). Once her fate has been decided, she is no longer the queen, but merely Vashti. Her relationship to the other characters has changed, and the relational deixis around her reflects this shift.

In fact, the last mention of Vashti, in any form, occurs during the scene of Esther's marriage to Ahasuerus, when the royal crown is give to her (sentence 20):

> … & se cyning hi genam to cwene þa, & gesette þone cynehelm on
> hire heafod sona þe Vasthi ær hæfde.

> … and the king took her as his queen then, and immediately set the
> crown upon her head, which Vasthi had previously had.

Of course, the transfer of this royal symbol signals Esther's new social position as queen. But this transfer is paralleled in the referring expressions, as Esther is almost exclusively referred to as *cwen* from this point on, just as Vashti was earlier in the text. Before this scene, the expressions referring to Esther focus on her familial relationship with Mordecai and her youth: she is *his broðor dohtor* 'his [Mordecai's]

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[9] See Chapter 4 for more on Direct Speech.

brother's daughter' and simply *dohtor* 'daughter' (in the phrase describing how Mordecai raised her; sentences 15–16), as well as *wlitig mædenmann* 'a beautiful girl' and *þam mædene* 'the girl' (sentences 16 and 19). But after the marriage scene, she is referred to only as the queen, with a few exceptions (noted in the following paragraphs). Thus, the relational deixis highlights the reversal of fortune in Vashti's and Esther's fates: the former falls from a position of power to one of obscurity, while the latter is raised out of obscurity into royalty.

Significantly, in the scene where Ahasuerus examines Esther—before their marriage—a reference is made to *hire fægra nebwlite* 'her beautiful face' (sentence 17). While we can reasonably read this as a reference only to her face, it is quite possible that it is in fact a reference, by synecdoche, to Esther herself—her whole being, not just one part of her body. Regardless, this reference to her face is a deviation from the other referring expressions for Esther, which either mention her social status as queen, her familial relationship with Mordecai, or her femininity. The fact that it is Esther's face which pleases Ahasuerus emphasizes the importance of her beauty in this interaction, a feature of Esther's characterization that is heavily stressed throughout the text. It may also prompt a revision to our mental model of Ahasuerus' character, implying that he is superficial and interested in Esther primarily as a desirable object that will enhance his position of power. In many ways, though, it simply underscores this part of his character, which was introduced earlier in his treatment of Vashti, whom—Ælfric tells us—Ahasuerus wanted to show off (*æteowian*; sentence 7). Ahasuerus' relationship with both of his queens, it seems, is primarily motivated by outward beauty.

Ahasuerus does twice call Esther by name in his direct speech, which helps to mitigate this part of his character, as it implies a degree of intimacy and familiarity (sentences 35 and 50). However, it is a one-sided kind of familiarity, since Esther always refers to him as *leof* and *cynehlaford*. This asymmetry in the way they refer to one another highlights the asymmetry of their relationship, in which Ahasuerus wields greater power than does Esther. This is a fairly reasonable assumption, given that Ahasuerus has (presumably) inherited his position as a descendant of royal lineage,[10] while Esther's position is dependent upon his good-will toward her; should she cross him, in the way Vashti earlier did, he has the power to revoke her royal status, just as he did then.

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[10] This assumption is borne out by historical evidence, if we assume that Ahasuerus is based on the historical figure of Xerxes I. See Chapter 1, n. 9.

Perhaps the most notable deviation in the expressions that refer to Esther occurs in the epilogue to the tale, when Ælfric describes the final fates of the main characters. In describing the Jews' future in Persia, he declares that they *wundorlice blissodon, þæt hi swilcne forespræcan him afunden hæfdon* 'rejoiced wonderfully, that they had found such an advocate for them' (sentence 64). This reference to Esther as an advocate is highly deviant, assigning to her a role far beyond any that has been expressed thus far. This single word rounds out Esther's ultimate characterization, pointing out the significance of her role in securing the future of the Jewish diaspora in Persia. So far, we have seen her as (foster) daughter, queen, and wife—but now, she is explicitly named as an intercessor, suggesting a further literary role as a type of Christ, who intercedes on behalf of all true believers.[11]

Just as Ahasuerus, Vashti, and Esther are all referred to primarily in expressions that indicate their royal status, Mordecai is frequently referred to as a *þegen*—a word that can be difficult to translate into PDE, as the role shifted somewhat over the course of Anglo-Saxon history. The most basic sense of the word is 'one who serves' (cf. OE *þegnian* 'to serve').[12] Over several centuries of Anglo-Saxon history, however, it came to designate someone in a position of nobility, but at the lower end of this class—somewhat similar to the landed gentry or the baronetage. A thegn held land and was lord over several people of lower social class, but also owed allegiance to the king. In the later Anglo-Saxon period, in which the present text was composed, thegns often held official positions at the royal court, such as minister, seneschal, chamberlain, or butler.[13]

When Mordecai is introduced in the text, he is referred to as *an Iudeisc þegen* 'a Jewish thegn'; later he is called *Mardocheus se þegen* 'Mordecai the thegn' (sentences 15 and 24, respectively). In the final feast scene, when the chamberlains have bound and blindfolded Haman and the king is deliberating what to do with him, the chamberlains explain that Haman had earlier built a high gallows on which he intended to hang Mordecai *þinum þegene* 'your thegn' (sentence 57). This designation implies that Mordecai's position is one that directly touches that of the king and his court. However, earlier in the narrative, Ælfric has explained that Mordecai became known to the king through his revelation of the wicked chamberlains and their assassination plot, which implies that his position is not high enough for the king to be aware of him. The biblical account specifies that Mordecai was a descendant of Shimei and

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[11] See Hebrews 8. 6; I Timothy 2. 5.

[12] I have translated it as 'servant', 'follower', or 'retainer' in the appendix.

[13] See Simon Keynes, 'thegn' in *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and others, 2nd edn (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), pp. 459–61.

Kish, part of the royal household of the Israelites;[14] it may be, then, that Mordecai, as a royal Israelite, has been allowed a place at the Persian court, but has not particularly come in the way of the king until the events described. In any case, he is important enough to warrant Ælfric's designating him as part of the *eorlisc* 'noble' class, as opposed to the *ceorlisc* 'common'.

One additional reference to Mordecai as *þegen* deviates from this pattern, however. When Haman expresses his chagrin over Mordecai's continued refusal to kneel before him,

> Þa wearð he swiþe gram þam Godes þegene …
>
> Then he became furious with the servant of God …
>
> (sentence 38)

Here, Ælfric calls Mordecai the servant *of God*, an expression that succinctly conveys his role in the narrative as the exemplar of piety. Mordecai may be a thegn in Ahasuerus' royal household but, far more importantly, he is also a thegn in God's kingdom, and his allegiance to his heavenly king outweighs any considerations for his earthly king. Indeed, it is this allegiance, we have been expressly informed, that motivates Mordecai's flouting of Ahasuerus' command that all should bow to Haman, his second-in-command, for Mordecai does not wish to offend God by giving any earthly man more than his due (see sentence 26).

Apart from these references to his status as thegn, Mordecai is primarily referred to by his name, with 22 references (out of 71 total). The only other character referred to by name so frequently is Haman, who is named 27 times (out of a total of 112 referring expressions). This pattern is one more indication of their rivalry, setting them up as counterparts even in the way they are referred to throughout the text. While Ahasuerus, Vashti, and Esther are each called by name only a handful of times, Haman and Mordecai are repeatedly named. They are thus set apart from the distinctly royal characters and, although they live and work in the royal household, they are referred to primarily in a neutral fashion that does not overemphasize their relative positions.

Speaking of their positions, it is worth noting that Ælfric, in fact, gives Haman the status of *ealdorman*, a word that is similarly difficult to translate into PDE. The term indicated a member of the nobility, on the high end of that class, often with

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[14] Shimei being connected to David, and Kish being the father of Saul; for the former, see II Samuel 16. 5 ff., I Kings 2. 8, and I Kings 2. 36–46; for the latter, see I Samuel 9. 1, I Samuel 14. 51, and I Chronicles 8. 33.

connections (by blood or through service) to royalty. An *ealdorman* might be authorized to act in the king's name, serving as a kind of emissary, and in some cases the term denoted a man of high social power, acting as a kind of prince or under-king in a region under the broader rule of the king. Thus, Ælfric's use of the term in reference to Haman may be an indication that Haman acts directly in the king's service and under his oversight—the kind of position that would be a prime candidate for promotion to viceroy. This juxtaposition of Mordecai's and Haman's positions, with the latter an ealdorman and the former a thegn, further strengthens the dramatic rivalry between the two men, around which so much of the plot revolves.

Some of the other phrases by which Haman is referred to shed further light on his characterization. Early on, he is referred to as an *eorðlicne man* 'earthly man' (sentence 26), which is the explanation for why Mordecai will not kneel to him—and, again, contrasts nicely against Mordecai's position as thegn in the kingdom of God: Mordecai serves in the earthly kingdom *and* the heavenly kingdom (giving the latter precedence when conflict arises), but Haman serves only in the earthly kingdom. Esther calls him *se wyrsta feond* 'the worst enemy' when she reveals him as the instigator of the intended pogrom against the Jews during the final feast (sentence 53). Both of these designations strengthen the villainous aspect of Haman's character. Shortly after this, Ælfric calls him *se oðer* 'the other' in explaining that the king gave Haman's former position to Mordecai (sentence 59). With this reference (the last one before the epilogue), Ælfric dismisses Haman as ultimately inconsequential—another example of Ælfric's subtle skill in characterization, as he (and, through him, Ahasuerus) dismisses the adversary with one simple phrase that manages, without placing undue emphasis on the villain, to underscore the text's primary theme of God's omnipotence.

Referring expressions, though not the only indicator of relational deixis, are particularly potent in this regard. In Ælfric's *Esther*, they both underscore the characterizations and serve to expand and refine these. Ahasuerus is a king, first and foremost, but he is also a loving and kind husband; Esther is primarily a queen, but she is also an intercessor; and Mordecai serves not only in the temporal kingdom of Ahasuerus but, far more importantly, in the eternal kingdom of God. In addition, Ælfric's skillful use of referring expressions highlights the theme of reversal in the narrative: both the Esther–Vashti and the Mordecai–Haman dichotomies—the former rising out of obscurity while the latter falls from grace—are revealed in the referring expressions.

DEICTIC SHIFT THEORY

Deictic Shift Theory (DST) developed in the 1990s in a research group out of the State University of New York at Buffalo. The interdisciplinary group was investigating issues relating to the phenomenology of narrative, including questions such as:

- How do human intelligences comprehend stories?
- What is the ontological status of fictive versus real-world information?
- What is the nature of fictional language—how is it structured, and what are its unique properties?[15]

Such questions had been asked for some time by philosophers, linguists, and logicians, and a good deal of time had been spent exploring them throughout the twentieth century. The research group at SUNY found additional help in answering them by consulting cognitive science (which, in turn, had developed largely from the field of computer science, as scholars sought to program computers to 'think' like humans do), working with the concept of the deictic center.

Taking the deictic center as a starting point, they attempted to explain how it is that humans can read a piece of fiction, fully understanding that deictic words in that text do not refer to the real world, but to some imagined world that exists only because of that fictional work. When reading, for example, *Jane Eyre*, I as a reader comprehend that the deictic words 'I', 'me', 'my', and 'mine' do not refer to myself, nor even to the author Charlotte Brontë, but rather to the fictional entity Jane Eyre. Further, the researchers realized that humans are capable of processing several different deictic centers in a fictional text and can switch seamlessly from one center to another. Thus, when reading Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, the reader encounters portions that are told from the point of view of (among others) Sydney Carton, Charles Darnay, and an omniscient narrator, but is able to shift between all these points of view with very little, if any, difficulty.

In order to account for this rather remarkable cognitive function in humans, some of the researchers at SUNY—most notably Mary Galbraith, David Zubin, and Lynne Hewitt—developed Deictic Shift Theory.[16] In essence, they theorized that, as we read, we construct a mental model that allows for multiple deictic centers, and that

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[15] These questions are quoted from a slightly longer list in the preface to the collection of essays by members of the group: *Deixis in Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective*, ed. by Judith F. Duchan, Gail A. Bruder, and Lynne E. Hewitt (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum), p. xii.

[16] Mary Galbraith, 'Deictic Shift Theory and the Poetics of Involvement in Narrative', in *Deixis and Narrative: A Cognitive Science Perspective*, ed. by Judith F. Duchan, Gail A. Bruder, and Lynne E. Hewitt (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1995), pp. 19–60; and Zubin and Hewitt, pp. 129–55 in the same volume.

specific language prompts us to shift from one center to another. At any given time, only one center is 'activated', but the others are there and ready for us to move back to them, as necessary. Borrowing from computer science, they conceptualized this as a vertical hierarchy of deictic centers and used the terms 'pop' and 'push' to describe moves between different levels.[17] The further away from the reader's real-world origo, the lower down on the hierarchy a given deictic center is: the story world itself is below the real world, while other fictive moves within the story world—such as a flashback, dream, fantasy, or story within a story—are lower still. A push is a move from one deictic center down to another on a lower level, while a pop is a move up to a higher deictic center. Thus, the reader, having oriented himself to a given character's deictic center, will push down to a new deictic center when the text narrates that character's dream; when the dream ends and the character returns to her everyday life, the reader will pop back up to the character's deictic center once more.

While most pushes end, at some point, with a pop back up to a higher level, this is not always the case. A particularly well-known example is Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, which begins with a lord playing a prank on a drunken tinker, who is taken to the lord's house and told that *he* is the lord; the tinker then sits down to watch a play, which is the story of Petruchio and Katharina that most of us are familiar with—but there is no final pop back to the deictic center of the tinker. The fact that most viewers and readers of the play barely remember anything about Sly, the tinker, is testament to a phenomenon called 'decomposition'.[18] In essence, the longer we are away from a particular deictic center, the less we recall about it, so that if it is again activated, it may take longer to cognitively process the shift, and more or stronger linguistic cues may be necessary to activate it.

Stylisticians have found DST useful in helping to explain literary effects in a number of texts and genres, and the theory has been further refined and applied to a great many narratives (both text-based and otherwise).[19] In particular, DST dovetails

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[17] For 'pop' and 'push' and their origin in computer science, see Galbraith, p. 47. Galbraith writes these in all captials, a convention also borrowed from computer science, and others have followed this convention; however, I find it distressing and not particularly helpful and have therefore opted to write the words normally.

[18] This term is Stockwell's; see 'Cognitive Deixis', p. 49.

[19] See, for example, Elena Semino, *Language and World Creation in Poems and Other Texts* (Lodon: Longman, 1997); Leslie Jeffries, 'The Role of Style in Reader-Involvement: Deictic Shifting in Contemporary Poems', *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 37 (2008), 69–85; and Jane Lugea, 'Embedded Dialogue and Dreams: The World and Accessibility Relations of *Inception*', *Language and Literature*, 22 (2013), 133–53.

nicely with Text World Theory (TWT), originally developed by Paul Werth[20] (coincidentally around the same time as DST) and subsequently expanded upon by Joanna Gavins.[21]

As mentioned earlier, specific cues in the text prompt the reader to shift from one deictic center to another. For example, direct speech prompts a shift to the origo of the speaker (usually a character), and the quotation marks that normally indicate direct speech are a sufficient cue to prompt this shift for the reader. Verb tense may well indicate a shift in deictic center, as well.[22] In a typical narrative text in English, the author may write in the present tense (as in a preface); the narrator may use the simple past to describe events of the narrative; and a character describing an episode in his past may use the past perfect. While the tense patterns in a given text may vary, a shift in the verb tense very often indicates a shift in deictic center. There are, indeed, many and varied ways to cue a shift in deictic center, and identifying these possible cues has formed a good portion of the body of work on deixis in literature.[23]

Shifts between the real-world origo of the reader or author and the story-world of the narrator and characters are prompted in a number of ways, not all of them strictly linguistic. The act of picking up a book and opening the front cover, for example, prompts the reader to shift into the deictic center of the author, at the very least, and sometimes of the narrator or a particular character. Certain generic conventions, such as the cover design, the title (and any subtitles), the author by-line, and a blurb describing the contents of the book, may all help prompt a shift into the deictic center of a narrator.

Some authors have quite cleverly exploited the potential of shifting deictic centers, particularly avante-garde and post-modernist authors, in order to keep the reader off-balance, so to speak, and uncertain of how to assign truth values to certain assertions in the text. For example, Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* plays with these deictic shifts when the first-person narrator claims to remember detailed facts about his birth and even his conception. Likewise, in *The Princess Bride*, William Goldman constantly toys with the reader's truth values by writing in the (implied) author's deictic center about certain 'facts' that we know cannot be real, including a lengthy explanation of the political history of Florin, a location that we know to be fictional.

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[20] Paul Werth, *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse*, ed. by Mick Short (Harlow: Longman, 1999).

[21] Joanna Gavins, *Text World Theory: An Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

[22] Indeed, this is precisely what happens in sentences 38–39, when Haman's Indirect Speech suddenly becomes Free Direct Speech; see Chapter 4, 'Haman'.

[23] In particular, see Stockwell, *Poetics of Science Fiction*, pp. 23–41.

But by writing about the fictional Florin in the same sentence with a very realistic-sounding conversation with his real-world wife, Goldman forces the reader to constantly question which deictic center we are in and, thus, the veracity or fictionality of every assertion made in the text, until it is virtually impossible to extricate the fictional narrator from the real-world author.

Of particular importance in my analysis is the shift that can occur with evaluative language. Evaluative assertions often prompt a pop from the story-world to the deictic center of the real-world author, or at least the implied author. Evaluative language orients the origo as inhabiting a particular kind of stance toward the thing or concept being evaluated. It is, in fact, one type of relational deixis, as it helps to situate the origo in relation to ideas, objects, and persons within her world. When we are cognitively situated within one deictic center and then an evaluation is made about that deictic center, this may (though does not necessarily) indicate that a voice beyond that particular deictic center is passing judgment. This judgment must, of necessity, proceed from another deictic center, and the reader must shift to this new origo in order to appropriately process the judgment, even if this is only briefly.

As is the case with any kind of deixis, there are far too many deictic shifts in even a relatively short text to make it feasible (or, indeed, desirable) for me to address all of them in my analysis. Rather, I will focus on a series of shifts which offer us a glimpse into the character of Ælfric, the real-world author–translator.

CHACATERIZING ÆLFRIC

I have mentioned elsewhere some statements in Ælfric's *Esther* that represent intrusions of Ælfric the author–translator into the story-world.[24] All three of these statements occur during the episode with the wicked chamberlains, when we read that they are *mid bealuwe afyllede* 'filled with malice'; moments later, we are told that they desire *swiðe unrihtlice* 'very unjustly' to kill their king (sentence 22). Immediately after this, the deed is recorded in the king's chronicle, and Ælfric explains that it was the Persians' custom, *swiðe wislice* 'very wisely', to keep a chronicle of significant events in the kingdom (sentence 24).

These phrases all express evaluative judgments about the characters in the story-world, and this language prompts a shift to the deictic center of Ælfric, in the real world of Anglo-Saxon England. In DST terms, these phrases pop us, momentarily, up to the real-world level of Ælfric, the author–translator, before pushing down once

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[24] See Chapter 3, 'Minor Characters: The Wicked Chamberlains, the Persians, and the Jews'.

more into the story-world. These pops are what give the sensation that the author has intruded into the story.

Perhaps more importantly, these pops offer the opportunity to characterize Ælfric, the real-world writer and monk. Such characterizing of Ælfric, indeed, is quite common amongst Anglo-Saxonists, particularly those who study his body of writings. Ælfric has a strong authorial voice, which he willingly inserts into his narratives as appropriate, very often to offer the kind of evaluative judgement we see here in his *Esther*, particularly when the narrative provides an opportunity for him to comment on proper Christian living. When such a pop occurs, the evaluation that he makes allows us to build a model of what Ælfric, the real-world man, was like—to characterize him, in other words.

The three phrases identified here offer us some insight into Ælfric and his character. It is clear, for one thing, that he finds the chamberlains utterly unjust, even wicked, in their planning to kill their king and lord. This attitude is clear from his use of the words *unriht* 'unjust, incorrect' and *bealu* 'evil, malice'. Ælfric leaves his audience in no doubt that he does not condone the violent extermination of one's lord. He does not comment, of course, on the chamberlains' motives,[25] which may well have mitigated their desires, at least in the minds of Ælfric's audience. The fact that he does not address their motives at all—especially when coupled with his explicit statement, not paralleled in the Latin texts, that clear evidence of their evil intent was discovered and even that they themselves admitted to the intended crime (sentence 23)—suggests that he viewed their intended assassination as wicked, regardless of any personal motivations, however strong or justifying these may have been. Obviously, assassination of one's lord presents a significant danger to the social order, and Ælfric here unquestionably condemns such acts—indeed, even the contemplation of them— as wicked and improper.

To close off this episode, Ælfric introduces the royal chronicle of the Persians, noting the wisdom of this practice. The chronicle will become important to the plot later on, when Ahasuerus has it read out to him during a sleepless night and, realizing that Mordecai was never rewarded for his loyalty, orders Haman to honor Mordecai on the following morning (sentences 41–48). At this point in the text, we only need to know that there was a chronicle and that the episode of the foiled assassination was recorded in it. But Ælfric takes the opportunity afforded to proclaim his opinion that the keeping of a chronicle is a wise custom.

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[25] Indeed, the Vulgate only states that they were *irati* 'angry'; Esther 2. 21.

It is difficult not to think of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, of course, when Ælfric thus expresses his approval of such a practice. While it is uncertain just how closely acquainted Ælfric was with the chronicle of his people or whether he had any kind of influence concerning its keeping, it is reasonable to suppose—given his patrons' close connection with the royal court—that he would at least have known about the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and was happy to express his approval of it when the opportunity presented itself during his composition of *Esther*.[26]

These are not the only pops that occur in the text, however. In addition, two deictic shifts occur earlier, but these are shifts in perceptual deixis. First, in describing Ahasuerus's kingdom, Ælfric writes (sentence 2):

> Hundtwelftig scira he soðlice hæfde & seofon scira, swa swa us
> secgað bec, on his anwealde, ealle him gewylde.

> He had indeed 127 provinces, as the books tell us, in his kingdom, all
> within his control.

The phrase *swa swa us secgað bec* includes a first-person pronoun, and in order to resolve this deixis we must conceptualize Ælfric as the origo for this pronoun. A similar comment occurs when, in the midst of describing the lavish feast that Ahasuerus prepared for his guests, Ælfric laments that *us is eardoðe to secgenne* 'it is difficult for us to tell [about the opulence of the feast]' (sentence 4). Again, the first-person pronoun *us* prompts a shift, for this brief comment, to Ælfric as the origo.

Perceptual deixis concerns those entities in the text that perceive what is happening in the story-world, and personal pronouns are one of the most productive ways in which it manifests itself. In these early moments, the first-person pronoun *us* forces the reader to conceptualize an entity—which, if it is not the real-world Ælfric, at least resembles him—as the origo in order to resolve the deixis implicit in the pronoun. Though seemingly trivial, these early pops are in fact highly important, for they set up Ælfric as a participant in the text-world—in many ways, as much a character in this text as any of the story-world characters. Because this has been established already, we are not hard-pressed when we encounter the evaluative

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[26] It is interesting to note that the Winchester version of the *Chronicle* (A, 'Parker') contains virtually no entries for the years 1001–1030, though the other versions continue. Ælfric's *Esther* was most likely composed sometime in the years 998–1005. If he was indeed connected in any way with the keeping of the chronicle at Winchester (where his monastic education was conducted), the phrase may be a tacit reminder that the practice should be continued. Further research would be required to verify this supposition, however. See *The Parker Chronicle*, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 173, fols 30ʳ–31ʳ, The Parker Library on the Web <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/actions/page_turner> [accessed 28 December 2017]. Special thanks to Paul Cavill for bringing this to my attention.

language later on that pops us again to Ælfric as author–translator, in sentences 22 and 24. As mentioned earlier, when a particular entity is not mentioned or deictically centered for some time, a process of decomposition takes place, making it necessary either for the author to include stronger shifting cues or for the reader to take longer in cognitively processing a shift to that entity. Conversely, those entities that are mentioned frequently are primed, so to speak, and the reader can easily and quickly process a shift to them as origo with only minimal cues. Since Ælfric has already appeared as an entity early on in the text, it is not particularly difficult to process the evaluative pops as emanating from him later on.

Indeed, the perceptual shifts offer us some additional insight into Ælfric's character. He is keenly aware of his source material and makes the effort to alert his reader to that material. This may be read as a traditional appeal to authority, to assure his audience that he is telling the truth. Not only is he aware of the source materials and keen to make his audience aware of them as well, but he feels in some part unequal to the task of appropriately rendering those materials into his vernacular OE. Perhaps his inadequacy in describing the magnificence of Ahasuerus's feast stems from the rather humble circumstances in which Ælfric himself lived; not having experienced a feast served on gold and silver plates, in multiple courses, with rich and colorful fabric hangings to decorate, he is unable to adequately describe the scene to others. Perhaps it stems from a feeling of uncertainty about the Latin phrasing, which is rather expansive on this point. Then again, perhaps he feels no such inadequacy but is merely feigning humility and/or incompetence as a way of expressing just how grand the feast really was.

Earlier I recounted an anecdote in which my supervisor and I opined about whether we would prefer Ælfric or Wulfstan as a dinner companion.[27] Indeed, when beginning my doctoral studies, I was not overly familiar with Ælfric and his writings, having come to Old English rather late in my post-graduate development, and was a bit surprised to find that many Ælfric scholars have quite strong opinions about the man and feel that they know his mind and his judgments quite clearly. I suggest that DST accounts for this sense scholars develop of intimately knowing Ælfric, even on subjects where there is no written evidence to indicate his position. These popping moments, when we shift to the origo of the real-world Ælfric, occur in many of his works; indeed, he seems rather fond of taking advantage of propitious moments in his writings to express his thoughts on how to live a good Christian life. These glimpses of Ælfric's mind offer us clues as to how he thought about the world, which

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[27] See Chapter 2, 'Cognitive Stylistic Approaches to Characterization'.

we then construct into a cohesive model of his cognition and, thereby, his character, allowing us to feel that we know him as we might know a close friend.

CONCLUSION

Although deixis abounds in any text, it is rarely considered in its own right as a method of characterization. This attitude, as I have demonstrated, is unjustifiable. Indeed, deixis offers important cues for characterization and deserves careful consideration in any serious study of characterization. In particular, referring expressions are rich with information about relational deixis and convey, in very few words, details of the social system of the text-world and of the relationships among characters. As we have seen, Ælfric uses referring expressions to great effect in both clearly defining the social roles of his characters—especially concerning their positions in the Persian court—and also in further refining their characterization. Furthermore, his careful choice of referring expressions emphasizes important themes in the text, including the reversal of fortune and God's ultimate omnipotence.

In addition, Deictic Shift Theory allows the audience to glimpse, as it were, the real-world Ælfric. We catch a hint of his own cognition through deictic shifts that pop us briefly out of the text-world and into the real-world, where Ælfric sits (in the historic present) hunched over his desk, scratching away at his parchment. Though brief, such moments allow us to mentally model Ælfric's mind, making educated guesses as to how he thought and behaved in the real world in which he lived—and, by extension, how he would behave in the present day at, say, a dinner-party.

Conclusion

This investigation of characterization in Ælfric's *Esther* has sought to do two things. First, to demonstrate that modern literary linguistic methods offer new and valuable insights in the study of Old English literature. By focusing on one specific text—and a short one at that—I have been able to dig deep into the language of that text and examine minute details that would otherwise be easily overlooked. Indeed, these very details establish—or rather, confirm—Ælfric's reputation as a master wordsmith, a careful writer who is deliberate in choosing his words and adept at turning them to his purposes. Through his pen, even small words and short phrases become powerful instruments for characterization, which in turn emphasizes important themes of the narrative, including the reversal of fortunes and God's omnipotence.

Second, the study has sought to demonstrate that applying cognitive stylistic principles in the study of historical literature is not only possible, but highly fruitful. The examination shows that the chosen methods are robust enough to cope with literature much older than that normally engaged in modern stylistic studies. This not only verifies the utility of the methods, but also attests to the universal nature of their underlying principles. Though some small tweaks are occasionally necessary, these generally deal with the form of the language (e.g., quotation marks), rather than with underlying principles. Ultimately, this has implications for the diachronic development of human cognition. Though we must always be careful not to impose our modern sensibilities on a people who are temporally distant from us, it is good to remember that certain aspects of the human experience remain constant, regardless of where or when one may live.

Each of the four areas explored in the study—explicit cues, discourse presentation, semantic fields, and deixis—reveals different aspects of characterization. Explicit cues are primarily category-based, focusing on roles such as king, pious girl,

man of God, and villain. The remaining areas both build on these categories and modify them, in subtle but significant ways. Discourse presentation emphasizes Ahasuerus's power and Esther's supplication; but it also entirely removes Vashti's voice and significantly reduces Mordecai's. At the same time, Haman's voice is clearly manifest in both Direct Speech and Free Direct Speech, allowing the audience to experience his vengefulness and villainy for themselves.

The semantic field of emotions emphasizes that living close to God makes one less subject to volatile emotions: Ahasuerus and Haman, the least godly characters, are by far the most emotional, while Esther and especially Mordecai are barely moved by emotion. Additionally, Ælfric's careful use of *forseon* 'to spurn' highlights the theme of proper, considered respect for one's lord and the heavenly King. The semantic field of food emphasizes the importance of feasting, drinking, and fasting to the narrative. Those in positions of power (Ahasuerus, Vashti, Esther) give feasts; those who seek God fast (Esther). Drinking is not only an important social function, but Ahasuerus's attitude toward drink at his feast foreshadows his ultimate conversion and recognition of God's supreme might.

Finally, deixis offers powerful, albeit subtle, cues about characterization. Referring expressions mark out clear social functions for each character: Ahasuerus is the king, Vashti and then Esther his queen, Haman an *ealdorman* and Mordecai a thegn. But these earthly roles are outweighed by the kingdom of God and the service of Mordecai, Esther, and—ultimately—Ahasuerus in that kingdom. Not only social, but also personal relationships are manifest in such referring expressions; in particular, these highlight the kindly, though asymmetrical, relationship between Ahasuerus and Esther. Further, deictic shift theory helps explain why some present-day readers feel that they know Ælfric intimately. Deictic shifts—especially perceptual and relational shifts—allow us to glimpse the mind of Ælfric, the real-world scholar, and in so doing, we are able to model his consciousness and, thus, his personality.

In addition to these findings, the examination has demonstrated that Ælfric's characterization techniques emphasize important themes of the narrative. Among these, God's omnipotence has already been mentioned in the preceding paragraphs; additionally, the characterization underscores the reversal of fortunes, which is prevalent in the Esther-story. Emotions, particularly despising (*forseon*), reveal this in the fates of Vashti and Haman: the former is ultimately debased because she spurned her king's command, while the latter is ultimately executed despite being spurned by his subordinate. Relational deixis highlights the reversal of fortunes between Vashti and Esther, as the first falls from a position of royal status into obscurity and the latter rises from obscurity to a royal position. Even discourse presentation stresses this

theme through the pattern of Ahasuerus's commands, which increasingly subordinate Haman (until his ultimate execution) while simultaneously elevating Mordecai.

The characters themselves are paired in opposition to one another. Most obvious among these are the Mordecai–Haman and Esther–Vashti pairings. Both pairs occupy similar social ranks in the Persian court, as is evidenced in the relational deixis of expressions that refer to each member. Mordecai and Haman each serve in the royal court (Mordecai as thegn, Haman as *ealdorman*), while Esther and Vashti are both, at different times, the queen of that court. Each pair stands opposed to one another, each character serving as a foil for the other, Haman's arrogance against Mordecai's piety, Vashti's pride against Esther's supplication. In another sense, then, each pair can be remixed: Mordecai and Esther, together, stand opposed to Haman and Vashti. The latter pair are the villains of the story—Haman replacing Vashti in this role after her dismissal from the court (and the text)—while the former pair stand together as the protagonists, bringing about the salvation of their people by their proper reliance on God.

Indeed, God himself can be paired with Ahasuerus, the heavenly king against the earthly. Though they might be opposed to one another through most of the text—Ahasuerus as the all-powerful earthly king, against God and his infinite, heavenly power—they ultimately stand on the same side, as Ahasuerus (in Ælfric's telling) recognizes his own subordination to and dependence upon eternal God. Even the emotions in the text support this pairing: Ahasuerus's anger is his over-riding emotion throughout the text (though it is tempered with happiness and gentleness), while Mordecai's religious belief sees him trying to prevent God's anger. Such anger on God's part is never manifested in the text, but the explicit connection of each character with this emotion supports this additional pairing, one that is not so immediately noticeable as those of Mordecai–Haman and Esther–Vashti.

Stylistic analysis of this kind has great potential in the discipline of Anglo-Saxon studies. How, for example, might the study of discourse presentation affect our interpretation of *Beowulf*? How might relational deixis illuminate the possible meaning(s) of *Wulf and Eadwacer*? What else can we learn from identifying deictic shifts in Old English literature, including shifts into the real world of the original author or the scribe? As Antonina Harbus has already demonstrated, examining cognitive metaphors, conceptual blending, and Text World Theory can supplement our understanding of texts such as *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, and *Genesis B*, among

others.[1] I would further suggest that examinations of mind style and cognitive grammar—which have already been productive areas of study in literary linguistics[2]—would yield interesting results when applied to Old English literature. Similarly, emerging trends such as counterfactuality and re-reading have compelling applications for Old English texts.[3] By the same token, applying these theories to literature of a temporally distant culture may help us to refine the theories themselves. What can we learn, for example, about reader engagement[4] by considering how modern readers became engaged—sometimes deeply so—in the literature of the Anglo-Saxons, composed over 1,000 years ago?

Asking and answering such questions is doubly useful. In the first place, it sheds light on Old English literature. Obviously, the potential of such studies reaches beyond the Anglo-Saxons, and similar work would be possible for other literature, including that of cultures contemporary with the Anglo-Saxons (e.g., Carolingian, Old Norse, or Iberian literature) and of cultures pre-dating and post-dating them (e.g., Egyptian, Roman, and Middle English literature). Secondly, such studies can only improve the state of literary linguistics, by either verifying or falsifying the methods (and their underlying theories) in that field. The field, after all, depends on its application to a diverse range of literature in order to ascertain how robust and universally applicable such theories are. For these reasons, it is my hope that the

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[1] Antonina Harbus, *Cognitive Approaches to Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2012); see, especially, Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Also Harbus, 'Metaphors of Authority in Alfred's Prefaces', *Neophilologus*, 91 (2007), 717–27.

[2] The term 'mind style' was coined by Roger Fowler (*Linguistics and the Novel* [London: Methuen, 1977]) and further developed by Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short (*Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictinoal Prose* [Harlow, UK: Pearson Longman, 2007], esp. Chapter 6); see also Elena Semino, 'Mind Style 25 Years On', *Style*, 41 (2007), 153–203; Elena Semino, 'Pragmatic Failure, Mind Style, and Characterisation in Fiction about Autism', *Language and Literature*, 23 (2014), 141–58. On cognitive grammar, see *Cognitive Grammar in Literature*, ed. by Chloe Harrison and others (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2014); Chloe Harrison, *Cognitive Grammar in Contemporary Fiction* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2017); and Chloe Harrison and Marcello Giovanelli, *Cognitive Grammar in Stylistics: A Practical Guide* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

[3] On counterfactuality, see Marina Lambrou, *Disnarration and the Unmentioned in Fact and Fiction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). On re-reading, see Chloe Harrison and Louise Nuttall, 'Re-Reading in Stylistics' (unpublished paper, Poetics and Linguistics Association conference, West Chester University, 19 July 2017); and Odette Vassallo, 'Text Engagement and Re-Engagement: A Comparative Study' (unpublished paper, Poetics and Linguistics Association conference, West Chester University, 19 July 2017).

[4] On reader engagement, see Peter Stockwell, *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); also Joanna Gavins and Peter Stockwell, 'About the Heart, Where It Hurt Exactly, and How Often', *Language and Literature*, 21 (2012), 33–50.

current study will be only one in a long line of continuing investigations into literature of the Anglo-Saxons and beyond.

Translation of Ælfric's *Esther*

What follows is the text of Ælfric's *Esther* in Old English and in Present-Day English. The Old English, based on Lee's edition,[1] provides what is essentially a diplomatic edition of L'Isle's seventeenth-century transcription, now found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 381, fols 140ᵛ–148ʳ. In this edition, abbreviations are expanded using italics; modern word and paragraph divisions are used; and modern punctuation has been supplied (including inverted commas for direct speech). The Old English letterforms thorn (þ) and eth (ð) are retained, but wynn (ƿ) is changed to modern 'w'. In opposition to Assmann, who formatted the text in half-line verse form, Lee produces the text with continual lineation, 'akin to modern prose'.[2] However, the line numbers of Assmann's 1889 edition[3] are given every ten lines in the right-hand margin, and the footnotes offer critical comparison with Assmann's edition, particularly where the latter contains errors and/or emendations. Finally, Lee provides his own line numbering in the left-hand margin, and also notes the foliation of L'Isle's manuscript in the right-hand margin. A detailed description of the dimensions and physical properties of the manuscript can be found in Lee, 'Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 381: William L'Isle, Ælfric, and the *Ancrene Wisse*'.[4] The reader interested in these details should refer to Lee's edition and article. In the version reproduced here, I have changed the Tironian *et* (⁊) to ampersand, which is more readily available in modern typefaces.

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[1] *Ælfric's Homilies on Judith, Esther, and the Maccabees*, ed. by Stuart D. Lee (Oxford, 1999) <users.ox.ac.uk/~stuart/kings/> [accessed 28 December 2017].

[2] *Ælfric's Homilies*, 'Editorial Symbols and Procedures'.

[3] 'Be Hester', *Angelsächsische Homilien und Heiligenleben*, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 3 (Kassel, 1889; repr. with supp. introduction by Peter Clemoes, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), pp. 92–101.

[4] In *The Recovery of Old English: Anglo-Saxon Studies in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. by Timothy Graham (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), pp. 207–42.

For the translation that follows, I have provided Lee's edition of the text on the left and my own translation into PDE on the right, with a 'sentence' number in the left-hand margin.[5] To aid reference to Assmann's and Lee's editions, every five sentences the corresponding line number for these editions has been provided in the right-hand margin: Assmann line numbers are set in Roman type, Lee's in italics. The folio numbers of Laud Misc. 381 are given within the running text of the Old English in square brackets.[6] I have included light annotation, in footnotes, for linguistic structures (both syntactic and semantic) that are particularly difficult or that have interesting connotations.

0	[fol. 140ᵛ] Be Hester	On Esther	0, *1*
1	Iu on ealdum dagum wæs sum rice cyning, namcuð on woruld, Asuerus gehaten, & se hæfde cynerice east fram Indian oð Eþiopian lande (þæt is fram easteweardan þissere worulde & suþweardan oð to þam Silhearwum[7]).	In olden days there was a certain powerful king, well-known throughout the world, called Ahasuerus, and he held authority in the east from India unto the Ethiopians' land (that is, from eastward of this world and southward as far as the Ethiopians[7]).	1, *2*
2	Hundtwelftig scira he soðlice hæfde & seofon scira, swa swa us secgað bec, on his anwealde, ealle him gewylde.	He had indeed 127 provinces, as the books tell us, in his kingdom, all subject to him.	
3	On þam þriddan geare his cynerices he het gewyrcan wundorlice feorme hundteonig	In the third year of his reign, he commanded a wonderful feast to be made, for 180[8] days	

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[5] Though I have called them 'sentences', for lack of a better term, these do not always correspond to sentences (whether in OE or PDE). See Introduction, 'General Notes'.

[6] The folio numbers are all versos, since the rectos contain L'Isle's translation into Early Modern English.

[7] = *Sigel-warum* = 'Ethiopians'; according to *CASD*, this spelling is mainly used by Ælfric.

[8] *hundteonig daga on an & hundeahtig daga*: Literally, '100 days continuously and 80 days'. Certain tens numbers, including 80 and 100, are formed with *hund* + [number] + *ig*. Thus, *hundeahtig* = 80, and

daga on an & hundeahtig daga[8] eallum his ealdormannum, & his eþelborenum þegnum, & eallum his folce, þe þa feorme gesohton—wolde him æteowian his welan & his mærða.

continuously, for all his princes and noble-born followers, and all his people who desired the feast—he wanted to show off his wealth and glory to them.

4   Us is eardoðe to secgenne þa seldcuðan[9] mærða on gyldenum beddum & agrafenum fatum, gyldene & sylferne, selcuþ æfre on pellum, & purpuran, & ælces cunnes gymmum, on menigfealdre þenunge þe man þær forðbear.

It is difficult for us to tell the rare[9] glory of the golden couches and the engraved vessels, both golden and silver, always varied in silks and purples and every kind of gems, in the multiple courses that were brought forth.

5   Se cyning bebead þam gebeorum eallum þæt hi bliþe wæron æt his gebeorscipe[10] & þæt ælc mann drunce þæs deorwurðan wines be þam þe he sylf wolde & him softost wære, & nan man ne moste neadian oðerne to maran drænce þonne his mod wold; ac þa byrlas scencton be þæs cyninges gesetnysse, ælcum men genoh, name þæt he wolde.

The king commanded all the guests to be merry at his party[10] and that each man should drink of the expensive wine according to his wishes, and no man should compel another to more drink than his heart desired; but the cup-bearers poured out, according to the king's decree, enough that each man should receive what he wanted.

20, *17*

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hundeteonig = 100. This seems to have been standardized as part of Æthelwold's language reformations at Winchester; for more on this subject, see Helmut Gneuss, 'The Origin of Standard Old English and Æthelwold's School at Winchester', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 1 (1972), 63–83.

[9] *seld* 'seldom' + *cuþ* 'known' = 'unusual, strange, novel'; also 'various'.

[10] *gebeorscip*: The word implies that alcoholic beverages are being consumed (*beor* = 'beer').

6   His cwen hatte Vashti, seo wæs swiðe wlitig. Heo worhte eac feorme mid fulre mærðe eallum þam wifmannum þe heo wolde habban to hire mærþe, on þam mæran palente þær þær se cyning wæs oftost wunigende.

His queen was called Vashti, who was very beautiful. She also made a feast with great glory for all the women whom she wanted to have, to her glory, in the great palace where the king was most often dwelling.

7   Se cyning þa het on þam seofoðan ðæge, þa þa he bliþe wæs betwux his gebeorum, his seofon burðenas þæt hi sceoldon gefeccan þa cwene Vashti, þæt heo come to him mid hire cynehelme (swa swa heora seode wæs þæt seo cwen werode cynehelm [fol. 141ᵛ] on heafode); & he wolde æteowian hire wlite his þegnum, forþan þe heo wæs swiþe wlitig on hiwe.

Then the king commanded—on the seventh day, when he was merry among his guests—his seven chamberlains that they should fetch the queen Vashti, that she should come to him with her crown (as their custom was that the queen wore a crown on her head); and he wanted to show off her beauty to his followers, because she was very beautiful in form.

8   Þa eodon þa burðenas & abudon þære cwene þæs cyninges hæse, ac heo hit forsoc & nolde gehersumian him to his willan.

Then the chamberlains went and announced to the queen the king's command, but she rejected it and did not want to obey his will.

9   Se cyning þa sona swiðe wearð geyrsod þæt heo hine forseah on swylcere gegaderunge, & befran his witan (þe wæron æfre mid him on ælcum his ræde þe he rædan wolde, & he ealle þing dyde æfre be heora

The king then immediately became very angry that she spurned him in such a gathering, and asked his counselors (who were always with him in his every plan that he wanted to plan, and he did all things according to their

ræde), hwæt him þuhte be þam be his forsewennysse.[11]

counsel), what they thought should be done about his being spurned.[11]

10 Þa andwyrdon sona sume his ealdormen, of Medan & of Persan, þe him mid druncon: 'Seo cwen witodlice, þe þin word forseah, leof, ne unwurðode na þe ænne mid þan, ac ealle þine ealdormenn & eac þine þegnas!

Then immediately answered certain of his princes, of Media and of Persia, who were drinking with him: 'Certainly the queen, who spurned your word, sire, disrespected not only you with this thing, but all your princes and also your retainers!

50, *42*

11 Ðonne ure wif geaxiað be þisum wordum æt ham, hu seo cwen forseah hire cynehlaford, þonne willað hi eac us eallswa forseon! Þonne beoð ealle Medas micclum forsewene & þa Pærsican leoda swa us na ne licað.

When our women ask about this story at home, how the queen spurned her liege-lord, then will they also spurn us likewise! Then will all the Medes be much spurned, nor will the Persian people, likewise, be pleased with us.

12 Ac, gif þe swa geþincð, leof, gesette þisne dom þæt ealle Medas cweðað anmodum geþeahte, & eac þa Pærsican, to þisre dæde: þæt seo cwen Vasthi ne cume næfre heononforð into þinum pallente betwux þinum gebeorum, ac hæbbe sum oðer wimman ealne[12] hire wurðmynt, hire ungelica seo ðe þe ungelicige.'

But, if such seems good to you, sire, set down this judgment, that all Medes proclaim the unanimous thought, and also the Persians, to this deed: that the queen Vashti should never henceforth come into your palace amid your guests, but some other woman should have all her honor from now on,[12] unlike to her who displeases you.'

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[11] *forsewennysse* = 'spurned-ness, the state of being spurned'.

[12] = *ealnig* = 'always, perpetually'; I have translated this with the phrase 'from now on'.

13   & se cyning Asuerus þisne ræd underfeng, & man cydde þa geond eall þæs cyninges willan, & Vasthi geseah þa þæt heo forsewen wæs.

And the king Ahasuerus received this counsel, and the king's will was then proclaimed abroad, and Vashti then saw that she was spurned.

14   Hit wearþ þa gecweden, þurh þæs cyninges witan, þæt man ofaxode on eallum his rice, gif ænig mæden ahwær mihte beon afunden, swa wlitiges hiwes þe him wurðe wære, & swilcere gebyrde þe his gebedda wære, & seo þænne fenge to Vasthies wurðmynte; & se cyning þa het embe þæt beon swiðe.

Then it was proclaimed, through the king's counselors, that one should inquire in all his kingdom, if any maiden might be found of such beautiful form as was worthy of him, and of such birth as to be his bed-companion, and she should then succeed to Vashti's honor; and the king then urgently commanded that this should be.

15   On þam dagum wæs an Iudeisc þegen on þære byrig Susa, Mardocheus gehaten, se gelyfde soðlice on þone lifigendan God, æfter Moyses æ; & he mid him hæfde his [fol. 142ᵛ] broðor dohtor.

In those days there was a Jewish retainer in the town of Susa, called Mordecai, who truly believed in the living God, according to Moses' law; and he kept with him his brother's daughter.

77, *65*

16   Seo hatte Ester, wlitig mædenmann on wundorlicre fægernysse, & he hi geforðode on fægerum þeawum,[13] æfter Godes æ & his ege[14] symle, & hæfde hi for dohtor, forðan þe

She was called Esther, a beautiful girl of marvelous loveliness, and he raised her in virtuous habits,[13] according to the law and awe[14] of God, and had her as a daughter, because both her father and

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[13] *fægerum þeawum*: Both words have a fairly broad semantic range. Taken together, they mean that Esther was well behaved: 'virtuous habits,' 'lovely conduct,' 'pleasing manners,' and so on.

[14] *Godes … ege*: This phrase, which occurs again in sentence 60, is analogous to the Latin *timor Dei*, frequently translated as 'fear of God', particularly in the KJV (though it does not occur in the Latin versions of Esther). I have translated it as 'awe of God', in both instances.

hire dead wæs ge fæder ge moder, þa þa heo unmaga wæs.

mother were dead, from which time she was an orphan.

17 Seo wæs ardlice þa gebroht & besæd þam cyninge, & he hi sceawode, & him sona gelicode hire fægra nebwlite, & lufode hi swiðe ofer ealle þa oðre þe he ær gesceawode.

She was then soon brought and introduced to the king, and he examined her, and her lovely face immediately pleased him, and loved her greatly, above all the others whom he had previously examined.

18 Ac heo ne moste na for Mardocheo nateshwon hire cynn ameldian ne þam cyninge secgan hwilcere mægþe hire magas wæron.

But, according to Mordecai, she was by no means allowed to reveal her kin, nor tell the king of what race her relatives were.

19 Mardocheus þa folgode þam mædene to hirede,[15] & hire gymæne[16] hæfde holdlice symle, wolde gewitan hu hire gelumpe.[17]

Mordecai then followed the maiden as a member of her household,[15] and always had a kindly regard[16] for her, wanted to know how it went with her.[17]

20 Heo wæs swiðe wlitig on wundorlicre gefægernysse & swiþe lufigendlic eallum onlociendum, & wislice geþeawod, & on wæstme cyrten; & se cyning hi genam to cwene þa, & gesette þone cynehelm on hire heafod sona þe Vasthi ær hæfde.

She was very beautiful in marvelous loveliness and very lovable to all who saw her, and truly well-mannered, and comely in figure; and the king then took her as his queen, and immediately set the crown upon her head, which Vashti had previously had.

97, *80*

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[15] *to hirede*: 'into the retinue, company, court, body of domestic retainers'. OE *hirede* also means 'house, family, members of a religious house, band of associates'. Gustafson has 'to the household'. I have taken some slight liberty in using the phrase 'as a member of the household'.

[16] *gymæn = gieman* = 'to take care of, observe, give heed to; correct, reprove'.

[17] *hu hire gelumpe* = 'how it happened to her' (subjunctive past tense). Gustafson has 'how it suited her'.

21   He het þa gearcian to heora gyftum swiðe mænigfealde mærða swa him mihte gerisan; & æfter heora gewunan he gewifode þa swa be his witena ræde on heora gewitnysse, & his folc gegladode & liþegode him on mislicum geswincum for ðære mærðe.

He then commanded for their marriage very many honors to be prepared, such as might be suitable for them; and according to their custom he married then according to his counselors' advice, in their witness, and gratified his people and relieved them from various labors for that glorious event.

22   Hit gelamp þa siððan æfter litlum firste, þæt twegen his burðena, mid bealuwe afyllede, woldon berædan swiðe unrihtlice heora cynehlaford, & hine acwellan, & embe þæt wæron.

It happened then, after a short time, that two of his chamberlains, filled with malice, wanted very unjustly to betray their liege-lord, and kill him, and were about that.

23   Þa wearð hit sona cuþ þam Mardocheo, þære cwene fæderan, & he hit þa cydde ardlice hire, & heo þam cyninge forð[18]; & man afunde mid him swutele tacna þæt hi swa woldon don (& hi sylfe sædon þæt hi swa woldon), & man aheng hi begen on healicum gealgan, & Mardocheus þa wearð þurh þa micclan hlyde[19] cuð þam cyninge for ðære gecyþnysse.

Then it immediately became known to Mordecai, the queen's uncle, and he quickly made it known to her, and she passed it on[18] to the king; and there were found among them clear signs that they wanted to do so (and they themselves said that they wanted to do so), and they were both hanged on a high gallows, and Mordecai then became known to the king through that

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[18] 'she passed it on': The word *forð* (which is connected grammatically with *cydde* < *forðcyðan* = 'to make known, announce') implies some kind of forward or onward motion.

great commotion[19] because of
that disclosure.

24	Hit wæs þa gewunelic swiðe wislice þæt man gesette on cranice ælc þæra dæda þe gedon wæs mid him on þæs cyninges belimpum oððe his leode fær. Þa het he awritan hu hine gewarnode Mardocheus se þegen, þæt hit on geminde wære.	It was then customary, very wisely, to put in a chronicle each of those deeds that were done among them in the king's affairs and his people's proceedings. Then he commanded that it should be written how Mordecai the retainer warned him, that it might be remembered.	
25	Sum ealdorman wæs þa, Aman gehaten, þone geuferode se cyning ofer ealle his þegnas, & ofer [fol. 143ᵛ] his ealdormen. & het hi ealle sittan on cneowum to him swa swa to þam cyninge.	There was then a certain nobleman, called Haman, whom the king elevated above all his retainers, and above his princes. And commanded them all to kneel to him just as to the king.	127, *105*
26	& hine sylfne he asætte on heahsetle fyrmest & ealle his men siððan him anum abugon, buton Mardocheus for his micclum geþingþum nold him abugan ne gebigan his cneowa to þam Amane for his upahafennysse, þy læs þe he gegremode God mid þære dæde, gif he eorðlicne mann ofer his mæðe wurðode.	And he sat himself upon the foremost high-seat and all his men afterward bowed to him alone, except Mordecai because of his great condition did not want to bow to him nor bend his knees to that Haman because of his arrogance, lest he should anger God with that deed, if he should honor an earthly man above his measure.	
27	Þa geseah Aman þæt he hine forseah, & he hæfde ofaxod æt	When Haman saw that he spurned him—and he had	

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[19] *hlyd* = 'sound, noise'.

oðrum mannum ær þæt he wæs Iudeisc, þe wurðodon symle þone heofonliccan God; & him þa þuhte to waclicre dæde þæt he fordyde hine ænne, ac wolde miccle swiðor eall þæt manncyn fordon Iudeisces cynnes, þæt he wræce his teonan.

discovered of other men before that he was Jewish, who continually worshipped the heavenly God; and then it seemed to him too paltry a deed that he should destroy him alone, but desired much more to destroy all the people of Jewish race, that he might avenge his injuries.

28 Aman þa smead swicollice embe þæt, hu he eall Iudeisc cynn fordyde ætgædere, þe Godes æ heoldon æfter Godes gesetnyssum, & began hi to wregenne wið þone cyning þuss:

Haman then deceitfully pondered about that, how he might destroy all the Jewish race together, who kept God's law according to God's decrees, and began to accuse them before the king thus:

29 'An mancynn wunað, leof, wide tostenced under þinum anwealde on gehwilcum scirum, þe næfð ure þeawa, ne ure laga ne hylt; & þu wel was, leof, þæt hit wile hearmian þinum cynerice heora receleasnysse, gif him man ne gestyrð heora stuntness. Læt hi ealle fordon, & ic gedo þæt þu hæfst tyn þusend punda to þinum mydercum.'[20]

'There is one race, sire, dwelling widely dispersed under your jurisdiction, in any number of provinces, who neither have our customs nor keep our laws; and you know well, sire, that their recklessness will harm your kingdom, if their foolishness is not restrained. Let them all be destroyed, and I will ensure that you have ten thousand pounds in your money-chest.'[20]

30 Se cyning þa sona slypte his beah of & forgeaf Amane, & be þam mancynne cwæþ: 'Hafa

The king then immediately slipped off his ring and gave it to Haman, and concerning that

157, *131*

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[20] The *word mydercum* is a *hapax legomenon*, appearing nowhere else in the extant OE corpus. The meaning is therefore uncertain, but based on the biblical source material, it appears to be 'money-chest, coffer'.

þe þæt seolfor to þines sylfes bricum, and gedo be þam folce swa þe best licie.'

people said: 'Keep that silver for your own use, and do about the people as it best pleases you.'

31 Aman þa, sona swa he þis gehyrde, dihte gewritu be þam Iudeiscum to ælcere scire þe hi on wunodon, þæt man hi ofsloge sæmtinges ealle, ealde & iunge, eall on anum dæge; & him fultum gesænde to heora slege micelne[21] to þam ylcan andagan þe he him gewissode.

Then Haman, as soon as he heard this, dictated writings about the Jews, to every province in which they lived, that they should be slain all together, old and young, all on one day; and help should be sent to them for their great slaughter[21] on the appointed day that he had indicated to them.

32 Mardocheus þa micclum wearð geangsumod, & for his agenum magum get micele swiðor þonne for him selfum, & gesæde hit þære cwene; bæd þæt heo gehulpe hire mægðe & hire, þæt hi ealle ne wurdon to swilcere wæfersyne.

Mordecai then became greatly anxious, and cried out for his own kinsmen much more than for himself, and told it to the queen, requested that she should help her relatives and herself, that they should not all come to such a spectacle.

33 Þa bebead seo cwen þæt hire cynn eall sceolde fæstan þreo dagas on an & Godes fultum biddan, & heo sylf eallswa eac swylce fæste, biddende æt Gode þæt he geburge þam folce & eallum þam manncynne on swa micelre frecednesse.

Then the queen commanded that her people must all fast three days continuously and pray for God's help, and she herself should also fast likewise, asking God that he might protect the people and all the race in such great danger.

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21 *him fultum gesænde to heora slege micelne*: Haman ensures that troops (*fultum* = 'help', but also 'military forces') are sent into all the provinces in order to carry out the slaughter of the Jews, since it is such an enormous undertaking.

34 Þa eode [fol. 144ᵛ] seo cwen æfter þam fæstene, swiðe fægeres hiwes, ætforan þam cyninge; & he swiðe bliðe bicnode hire to mid his cynegyrde & gecwæþ þas word:

Then the queen went, after the fasting, very lovely in appearance, before the king; and he very agreeably beckoned to her with his scepter and spoke this word:

35 'Hwæs bytst þu, la Hester? & þeah þu biddan wille healfne þone anweald þe ic hæbbe under me, þu scealt beon tiþa untweolice þæs.'

'What do you request, o Esther? And though you should ask half the kingdom that I have under me, you shall undoubtedly be a receiver of it.'   181, *151*

36 Seo cwen cwæð þa to him: 'Leof cynehlaford, ic wille þæt þu beo æt minum gebeorscipe, þu leof, & Aman, to þinum wurðscipe, þæt ic þe mage secgan minne willan.'

The queen then said to him: 'Beloved liege-lord, I desire that you should be at my feast, you sire, and Haman, in your honor, that I may tell you my request.'

37 Þa het se cyning clypian Aman, & het þæt he wære gehersum þære cwene to hire willan to hire gereorde, & Aman þa gecyrde sona to his inne.

Then the king commanded Haman to be summoned, and commanded that he should be obedient to the queen, to her desire for her dinner-party, and Haman then immediately returned to his chambers.

38 Mardocheus þa sæt þær ute, & nolde alutan ne lyffettan þam Amane. Þa wearð he swiþe gram²² þam Godes þegene, & cwæþ to his cnihtum þæt him forcuþlic þuhte þæt se an Iudeisca hine forsawe.

Mordecai then was sitting outside there and would not bow or pay court to Haman. Then he became furious²² with the servant of God, and said to his attendants that it seemed to him disgraceful that he, a Jew, should despise him.

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²² *swiþe gram* = 'very angry'.

39 'Se cyning me wurðaþ, swa swa ge witaþ ealle, & seo cwen ne gelaþode nænne oðerne to hire butan me ænne to eacan þam cyninge. Nu þingþ me þæt ic næbbe nænne wurðscipe on life swa lange swa Mardocheus me nele abugan.'

'The king honors me, as you all know, and the queen invited none other to her but me alone, to join the king. Now it seems to me that I will have no dignity in life so long as Mordecai will not bow to me.'

40 Þa cwædon his magas þæt he macian sceolde ænne heagan gealgan, & habban hine gearwe, & biddan æt his hlaforde þæt he lete ahon þone Mardocheum þe his mihte forseah; & he þa swa dyde be heora dyslican ræde.

Then said his relatives that he ought to make a high gallows and have it ready and request of his lord that he should allow Mordecai to hang, who spurned his power; and he then did so, according to their foolish advice.

203, *168*

41 Hit gelamp þa on þære nihte þæt se cyning læg wæccende lange on forannihte, & he het þa forðberan þone cranic fram his yldrena dagum & rædan ætforan him, oððæt he fulge on slæpe.

It happened then on that night, that the king lay awake long in the evening, and he then commanded that the chronicle should be brought forth from his earlier days and should be read before him, until he should fall asleep.

42 Man[23] him rædde þa fela þæs þe gefyrn gelamp, oððæt hit becom þærto hu his burcnihtas woldon hine sylfne amyrran, & hu Mardocheus hit sæde þære cwene, & heo cydde þa him.

They[23] then read to him many of those things that had previously happened, until it came to the part about how his chamberlains wanted to destroy him and how Mordecai told it to the queen, and she then made it known to him.

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[23] The subject and verb are singular, employing the generic pronoun *man* 'one'. As this pronoun continues to decline in use in PDE, I have chosen the more commonly employed generic plural pronoun 'they'.

43   Þa befran se cyning his cnihtas & cwæþ: 'Hwilce mede hæfde Mardocheus for þam, þæt he swa holdlice hogode embe me?'

Then the king asked his attendants and said: 'What reward did Mordecai have for that thing, that he was so loyally concerned about me?'

44   His cnihtas him andwyrdon, & cwædon him þus to: 'Leof cynehlaford, ne com him nan þing to þance, þæt he swa getreowlice þæt þe geopenode.'

His attendants answered him and said to him thus: 'Dear liege-lord, nothing came to him as thanks that he thus faithfully disclosed that to you.'

45   Hwæt, þa on ærne mergen com Aman to þam cyninge, wolde þæt he hete ahon Mardocheum.

Lo and behold, then in the early morning Haman came to the king, desiring that he should command Mordecai to be hanged.

222, *186*

46   Ac se cyning axode hine sona & cwæð: 'Hwæt þingð þe, Aman, hwæt hit mage beon [fol. 145ᵛ] þæt ic gedon þam menn þe ic gemynte wurþscipes?'

But the king immediately asked him and said: 'What does it seem to you, Haman, what may it be that I should do to that man whom I intend to honor?'

47   Þa wende Aman to gewissan þinge þæt se cyning wolde wurþian hine swiðor, & nænne oþerne, & he andwyrde þus: 'Done man þe se cyning wile wurðian mid his gife, man sceal embscrydan hraþe mid cynelican reafe, & settan on his heafod sumne cynehelm eac, & lætan hine ridan on þæs cyninges radhorse; & læde sum ealdormann hine geond þas burh, & secge þam

Then Haman thought it certain that the king wanted to honor him more greatly, and no other, and he answered thus: 'That man whom the king would honor with his gift shall be clothed about immediately with a royal robe and a crown set upon his head also, and let him ride on the king's riding-horse; and some nobleman should lead him throughout the city and say to the citizens that

burhmannum þæt þus beo
gewurðod se man þe se cyning
wile wurðscipe hæbbe.'

thus is honored the man whom
the king desires to have honor.'

48 Þa cwæþ se cyning to Amane:
'Ic cweðe þæt ic wille þæt þu
genime Mardocheum & þisne
wurðmynt him gedo, & loca þu
georne þæt þu ne forlæte nan
þing.'

Then the king spoke to Haman: 'I
declare that I want you to take
Mordecai and do this honor to
him, and look you diligently that
you neglect not one thing.'

49 Aman þa dyde swa mid
sorhfullum mode, & gelædde
Mardocheum mærlice
gescrydne, & mid helme, geond
þa burh, swylce he his
horscniht wære, and sæde
eallum mannum þæt se cyning
mihte on þa wisan mærsian
þone man þe he wolde; & eode
him ham siððan sorhfull to his
cnihtum.

Haman then did so with a
sorrowful spirit, and led
Mordecai, splendidly clothed and
with a crown, through the city, as
though he were his groom, and
said to all the people that the king
might glorify in this manner that
man whom he would; and
afterward went home sorrowfully
to his attendants.

50 Se cyning þa sende sona æfter
Amane, & he unþances þa com
to þære cwene feorme, & se
cyning Asuerus swiþe bliðe
wæs þæs dæges mid þære
cwene Hester, & cwæð hire þus
to: 'Hwæs bytst þu, la Hester,
þæt ic þe forgife?'

The king then immediately sent
for Haman, and he came
unwillingly then to the queen's
meal, and the king Ahasuerus was
very happy that day with the
queen Esther, and spoke to her
thus: 'What do you request, o
Esther, that I should grant to
you?'

246, *208*

51 Hester seo cwen þa cwæð to
þam cyninge þus: 'Ic bidde þe
la, leof, mines agenes lifes, &
mines folces feores, & minra

Esther the queen then spoke to
the king thus: 'I request of you, o
sire, my own life and the life of
my people, and of my friends

freonda eac. We synd ealle belewde to ure lifleaste, þæt we beon toheawene mid heardum swurdum, þæt ure gemynd beo mid ealle adilegod.'

also. We are all betrayed unto our death, that we should be hewn with hard swords, that our memory and all that concerns us should be hidden.'

52   Se cyning þa befran þa cwene þus eft: 'Hwæt is se manna, swilcere mihte, þe þas dæda æfre dorste gefremman?'

The king then asked the queen again: 'Who is the man, of such power, who ever dared to commit these deeds?'

53   Heo cwæð to andsware: 'Us is se wyrsta feond, witodlice[24] þes Aman, þe hæfð gecweden andagan þæt he sceall acwellan mine agene mægðe for Mardochees þingon—se þe is min fædera, se þe me afedde.'

She said in answer: 'To us is the worst enemy, even[24] this Haman, who has proclaimed that he shall kill on one day my own relatives for Mordecai's sake—he who is my uncle, he who nourished me.'

54   Þa ablicgde Aman unbliþum andwlitan, & ne mihte na acuman þæs cyninges [fol. 146ᵛ] graman, ne he ne dorste beseon to his ansyne; & se cyning aras hraþe gehathyrt, & eode him sona ut binnon his æppeltun, swilce for rædinge.[25]

Then Haman blanched with an unhappy face, and was not able to bear the king's rage, neither dared he look upon his face; and the king quickly arose, angry, and immediately went out into his apple orchard, as if for consideration.[25]

55   Ac he hraþe sona eft eode him inn, & efne Aman þa niþer afeallen to þære cwene fotum,

But he very soon went in again, and then, behold!, Haman had fallen down at the queen's feet, that she might help him to his own life.[26]

270, *227*

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[24] *witodlice* = 'truly, indeed'.

[25] *rædinge* = 'reading, consultation'. Because the text makes no mention at this point of the king's otherwise ubiquitous counselors, I have chosen to translate this as 'consideration', which implies that the king is consulting with himself alone.

þæt heo him gefultumode to
his agenum feore.[26]

56	Þa oflicode þam cyninge, þæt he læg hire swa gehende, & þa cnihtas oncneowon þæs cyninges micclan graman, & gefengon þone Aman, & hine geblindfelledon, & hine fæste geheoldon to þam þe se cyning hete.	Then the king was displeased, that he lay so near to her, and the servants perceived the king's great rage and seized that Haman and blind-folded him and held him tightly as the king commanded.
57	Þa cwæð an þara burcnihta to þam cyninge þus: 'La leof cynehlaford, an lang gealga stænt æt Amanes inne, þe he gemynt hæfde Mardocheo, þinum þegene, þe þe hyldo[27] gedyde.'	Then one of the chamberlains spoke to the king thus: 'O beloved liege-lord, a tall gallows stands by Haman's chambers, which he intended for Mordecai, your servant, who did a kindness[27] for you.'
58	Þa cwæð se cyning to andsware: 'Ahoh hine þæron!' & hi sona swa dydon, mid swiðlicum ofste, ahengon þone Aman on þam healican gealgan þe he gemynt hæfde Mardochee on ær, & þæs cyninges yrre wearð þa geliþegod.	Then the king said in answer: 'Hang him on it!' And they immediately did so, with great speed, hanged that Haman on the high gallows that he earlier had intended to have Mordecai on, and the king's anger was then appeased.
59	Þa cydde seo cwen eall be hire cynne hire cynehlaforde, hwanon heo cumen wæs, & be Mardocheo hu he hire mæg wæs; & he eode þa inn toforan	Then the queen told her liege-lord all about her kin, whence she was come, and about Mordecai, how he was her relative; and he then went in before the king, and the

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[26] *feore = feorh* 'life'.

[27] *hyldo* = 'favor, grace, kindness, protection; allegiance, loyalty'.

þam cyninge, & se cyning him sealde sona þone beah (þe he genam of Amane) him to wurðscipe, & he underfeng þone anweald þe se oðer hæfde, & he his æhta betæhte þære cwene to hæbbenne.

king immediately gave him the ring (which he had taken from Haman) to give him honor, and he accepted the government that the other had, and he entrusted his possessions to the queen to have.

60 Seo cwen þa aleat to þæs cyninges fotum mid agotenum tearum, mid Godes ege onbryrd, & bæd hire cynehlaford þæt he lete awritan oðre gewritu to eallum þam scirum þe þa Iudeiscan on eardedon,[28] togeanes þam gewritum þe Aman ær awrat, þæt þa Iudeiscan moston for his micclan cynescipe beon ealle on friðe & unforhte to þam dæge þe Aman him gecwæþ to heora agenum slege.

The queen then knelt at the king's feet with streaming tears, inspired by awe of God, and asked her liege-lord that he might have other writings written to all the provinces where the Jews lived,[28] against the writings that Haman previously had had written, that the Jews might all, on account of his great majesty, be peaceful and unafraid of that day on which Haman had commanded their slaughter.

295, *248*

61 Se cyning þa andwyrde þære þus, & eac Mardocheo, swiðe mildelice: 'Aman ic aheng, [fol. 147ᵛ] & his æhta þe betæhte. Hwa dear nu gedyrstlæcan þæt he derige þam folce?

The king then answered her thus, and Mordecai also, very gently: 'I hanged Haman and entrusted his possessions to you. Who dares now to presume that he should injure that people?

62 Awritað nu gewrita be þam þe ge willaþ, þæt eall beo aidlod Amanes sirwung ongean þam Iudeiscum, & him ne derige

'Now write writings about this as you will, that Haman's plotting against the Jews might all be made useless, and no man might injure

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[28] *eardian* = 'to inhabit, dwell, abide, live'; the connection with *eard* = 'earth, home' implies a long-term residence; the Jews have put down roots, so to speak, in these provinces.

nan man. Ac ic swiðor wille þæt man ofslea eac Amanes magas for his micclan swicdome.'

them. But I rather intend that Haman's relatives should be slain on account of his great treachery.'

63 Þis wearð þa geforþod, & hi on friþe wunedon þurh þære cwene þingunge þe him þa geheolp & fram deaþe ahredde, þurh hire drihtnes fultum þe heo on gelyfde on Abrahames wisan.

This then was done, and they lived in peace through the queen's intercession which helped them and rescued them from death, through her Lord's help, in whom she believed according to Abraham's manner.

64 Þa Iudeiscan eac wundorlice blissodon, þæt hi swilcne forespræcan him afunden hæfdon, & heoldon þa Godes æ þæs þe glædlicor æfter Moyses wissunge þæs mæran heretogan.

The Jews also rejoiced wonderfully, that they had found such an advocate for them, and then kept God's law afterward the more gladly, according to the guidance of Moses, the great leader.

65 Mardocheus eac miclum wæs gewurþod, & swiðe geuferod for his eadmodnysse, swa swa Aman wearð gehynd for his uppahefednysse; & se cyning wearð gerihtlæht þurh þære cwene geleafan Gode to wurðmynte þe ealle þing gewylt, & he herode God þe hine geuferode & to cyninge geceas ofer swilcne anweald.

Mordecai was also much honored and greatly elevated for his humility, even as Haman was humbled for his arrogance; and the king became converted through the queen's faith to the honor of God who controls all things, and he praised God who had elevated him and chosen him as king over such kingdom.

320, *270*

66 & he wæs rihtwis, & rædfæst on weorcum, & he hæfde oþerne naman: Artarxerses.

And he was righteous, and wise in works, and he had another name: Artaxerxes.

67 Sy wuldor & lof þam   Glory and praise be to the
    welwillendan Gode se þe æfre   benevolent God, he who reigns
    rixað on ecnysse! Amen.   ever in eternity! Amen.

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