THE OLD ENGLISH SEMANTIC FIELD OF THOUGHT IN *BEOWULF* AND *THE*

WANDERER

A RESEARCH PAPER

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

BY

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JULY 2019

Introduction

Speakers of any given language are aware of all the possible contexts a word might be used in whenever they hear it, read it, speak it, or write it (Hanks, 2014). Therefore, knowing the full range of uses of a specific word, as well as other words in the same semantic field, is indispensable to understanding a historical language in the way its speakers would have understood it. Traugott (1989) points out that "polysemy is structured in terms of fuzzy sets […] or prototypes that are dynamically flexible" (p. 33-34) due to the nature of language change; when extended to synonyms, that means that related words must be minutely examined for the extents of their meanings to be determined. It is for this reason that semantic field studies of Old English (OE) are vital.

According to Lang's (1989) survey of OE semantic field studies, "[t]erms for knowing and intellect in OE have not been studied extensively" (p. 78). Of the studies he cites, Ogura (1986), which examines *wēnan*[1], *þyncan*, *þencan*, *geþencan*, *smēagan*, and *gemunan*, is the only one treating a similar set of words[2] as the current paper, which explores the semantic fields of *wēnan*, *þyncan*, *þencan*, and *geþencan*, as well as *gelȳfan*, *hycgan*, and *hogian*. Ogura herself cites Gorrell (1895) as the only work treating a similar set of words as hers, and like Ogura's work, Gorrell's is not so much a semantic field study as it is a grammatical study built around a semantic field. It is therefore clear that a semantic field study on words of cognition in OE is sorely needed. Drawing on the methodology of the Behavioral Profile (BP) approach popularized by Gries (2010), the present paper illuminates the ways in which the aforementioned set of core

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[1] In keeping with convention, long vowels are indicated in words under discussion in this paper, but not in direct quotes from OE source material.

[2] "words" is used here in a loose sense to refer not only to the exact form of the word given, but to all inflections and derivations thereof as well. The same applies to the words listed, viz. "*wēnan*" refers to *wēne*, *wēn*, etc., *hycgan* refers to *hycge*, *hycgende*, *hyge*, etc., and so on.

wordsfrom this field is used in two OE poems, *Beowulf* and *The Wanderer*. Although poetic language may not be identical to spoken language, as Sweetser (1992) points out, the former is built on a foundation of the latter and can only be understood in reference to it. Taking that statement a step further, it can be argued that what potential a word has to be used in literary contexts is a part of its profile. Additionally, it is worth noting that Hanks (2014), in his BP of *urge*, found nearly 90% of his tokens were of normal, unremarkable uses of the word (although it must be admitted that he did not draw his data from poetry). Because of this, a study of how words are used in poetry can illuminate an important aspect of their definitions.

Furthermore, it is worth taking a moment to consider the study done by Louwerse (2004). He uses a variety of statistical methods on 16 novels of the Realist and Modernist periods to show that there is little empirical support for hypotheses regarding idiolect, gender-sociolect, or time period-sociolect due to the finding of a great number of differences between texts written by a single author. Obviously, the narrowness of the data considered limits the study's generalizability, so we cannot be certain that the same findings apply to any other case. This is especially true when considering OE, which was spoken and written at a time when technological and socio-political differences (such as the non-existence of mechanical printing and the instability of the pre-Norman kingdoms in what is now England) meant that there were different forces in effect on the language of the time. However, with that caveat in mind, this study raises the possibility that differences between authors only a short time period apart are meaningless, and therefore, which texts are used for any particular investigation are unimportant, as the information yielded by each will be equally valuable as that by any other. In other words, it does not matter that this study examines *Beowulf* and *The Wanderer*, because nothing learned from them can be safely generalized to their specific dialects or time periods (likely early 8th

century West Saxon and late 9th century West Saxon, respectively) that cannot be generalized to the language as a whole.

As mentioned above, the specific words under investigation in this study are *wēnan*, *gelȳfen*, *þencan*, *geþencan*, *þyncan*, *hogian*, and *hycgan*. This study takes as its starting point Ogura (1986), and accordingly, this word list is a modified version of the one used in her study. The following changes were made: *gemunan* 'to remember' was excluded on the basis that the nature of memory is somewhat different from that of cognition; *gelȳfan* was added because it is one of the principle words investigated in this category in Gorrell (1895); and *hogian* and *hycgan* were added in order to expand on Ogura (1986) and because they were perfect candidates for such a study as this, being not rare but rarely remarked upon. The word *smēagan*, whose complex multiplicity of definitions in Bosworth-Toller (B-T) include 'consider', 'ponder', and 'accept as the result of inquiry' ("smeágan", 1898) and which would therefore seem be an ideal word for this study, is not found in either poem. *Smēagan* is therefore omitted from any further consideration in the present study.

The definitions for the other words, according to B-T, are:

- *wēnan*: 1. to ween, suppose, think, imagine, opine, believe 2. to hope, expect, look for ("wēnan", 1898)

- *gelȳfan*: to believe, confide, trust, hope ("gelýfan", 1898)

- *þencan*: to think; this definition is further divided into: 1. to meditate, cogitate, consider 2. to think, have in the mind 3. to think, suppose, hold as an opinion or belief 4. to think of, consider, employ the mind on a subject 5.[3] to think of something, where it is implied that

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[3] B-T omits the expected fifth subheading in this entry, skipping straight from number IV to number VI (Bosworth, 1898, pp. 1046-1047). Additionally, when information is drawn from the Supplement, the Supplement's definitions are appended to the end of the original list of definitions and the numbering continued from where the original list

effect will be given to the thought; to determine, devise, mean, purpose, intend 6. to think of doing something with hope or expectation, desire, seek 7. to think, call to mind, originate in the mind ("þencan", 1898)

- *geþencan*: 1. to think, conceive, perceive, reflect upon, weigh 2. to think about, remember, consider maturely, to take to heart 3. to think of, bear in mind, remember 4. to excogitate, devise, invent, conceive 5. to resolve, intend, wish 6. to think, deliberate, take counsel or thought 7. to think a thought 8. to suppose, hold as an opinion or a belief. 9. to employ the mind on a subject, think of or on, consider. 10. to think of something, where it is implied that effect will be given to the thought, to determine, resolve, intend, purpose, mean 11. to form an idea in the mind, conceive 12. to effect by thinking, think out, devise, design 13. to perceive after consideration, learn 14. to remember a person or thing 15. to bear in mind a fact (that should influence conduct or opinion) stated in a clause 16. to keep in mind what is to be done, take care that 17. þencan for þyncan ("geþencan", 1898; "geþencan", 1921)
- *þyncan*: 1. to seem, appear 2. to seem fit ("þyncan", 1898)
- *hogian:* 1. to employ the mind, think, mind, consider, know, understand, care, be solicitous or anxious, purpose, strive, intend, be intent on, resolve 2. to think, have such and such thoughts 3. to be wise, prudent, etc. 4. to think about, employ thought about a matter 5. to take thought in order to do something, busy oneself 6. to take heed, take care to secure a result 7. to have anxious thought, be anxious, troubled 8. where thought implies intention, purpose, endeavor ("hogian", 1898; "hogian" 1921)

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ended, rather than being begun again with number 1. The numbers given here do not therefore match those of B-T exactly.

- *hycgan:* 1. to employ the mind, take thought, be mindful, think, consider, meditate 2. to direct the mind to an object, be intent upon, intend, purpose, determine, endeavour, strive 3. to direct the mind with a feeling of confidence, hope 4. to think, have such and such thoughts 5. to think of, about 6. expressing purpose, endeavor 7. to call to mind, remember ("hycgan" 1898; "hycgan" 1921)

As should be apparent from these lengthy and mostly redundant definitions, the words examined here express many shades of meaning, and very often, the same meanings as each other. However, it is widely accepted that there is no such thing as a true synonym (Liu & Espino, 2012; Thipa, 1979), and so a study to identify and expose the differences in such heavily overlapping words is needed.

Literature Review

The structure of the mental lexicon, the way we encode, store, and access our vocabularies, is still a subject of investigation. Fay & Cutler (1977) suggest that the mental lexicon is divided first by number of syllables, then stress pattern, then left-to-right distinctive features, and then possibly by syntactic categories. Notably, they find no evidence that semantics influences the structure of the mental lexicon. In contrast, Romney, Brewer, & Batchelder (1993) cite previous research showing that people tend to remember items in free-recall tasks by semantic field. Romney et al. then use the same technique using words from only a single semantic field at a time, finding that participants better recalled those items that clustered closer together in terms of meaning. This strongly suggests that the cores of semantic fields exist.

There are a number of ways to determine semantic relatedness. According to Aijmer & Vandenbergen (2004), semantic relatedness can be determined by how many semantic features two words share. This is rather vague, but there have been attempts by other researchers to

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clarify such concepts. In attempting to define the concept of a semantic field, Thipa (1979)

discusses the narrower concepts of contiguity, overlapping, inclusion, and complementarity.

Contiguity refers to related words that differ in an important way, such as *scold* vs. *joke*. Both

refer to an act of verbal communication, but one denotes a person expressing negative feelings

towards another with connotations of the former person being of higher social status than the

latter, while the other represents an attempt to use humor with possible connotations of equality

in social status. Inclusion involves the meaning of one word being presupposed by another, such

as how the meaning of *talk*, that is, an act of verbal communication, is presupposed by *scold*. All

three words therefore have overlap in their meanings insofar as they all refer to verbal

communication. Finally, complementarity occurs when two words have opposite definitions that

imply each other. For example, if a person buys an object, then another person must sell that

object; *buy* and *sell* therefore are complements. However, despite the seemingly easy to

understand and useful relationships identified here, they prove hard to operationalize when

actually trying to define limits to a semantic field within the complexity of a natural language.

Thipa attempts to examine the semantic field of judging in two Southern Bantu languages and

uses a list of criteria to determine whether words belong to the field. Such criteria include that

there is an affected person, that there is an accused person, etc. However, such criteria do not

build upon, rely upon, nor are validated in Thipa's article by the relationships here identified.

Furthermore, trying to create such definitions from scratch cannot usefully delimit a semantic

field. This is evidenced by Thipa's noting that the investigation includes words that do not fit the

criteria, such as *despise*, because they logically require judgement as a prerequisite. In other

words, Thipa needed to rely on intuition about the semantic field in order to select the words

most appropriate for examination, rather than picking them on the basis of the categories

described above. Therefore, while Thipa's identification of the types of relationships between related lexical items is an important theoretical foundation to keep in mind during any exploration of semantic fields, the aforementioned difficulty in operationalizing that foundation is justification for the present study's use of a set of words from previous studies as its basis.

One of those studies, as mentioned previously, is Gorrell (1985), one of only two studies up to this point that looked at the semantic field of thought in OE. Gorrell was the first to consider it. His focus, however, was not on the semantic field itself, but rather on the conjunctions, adverbs, and secondary verbs that occurred alongside main verbs of thought as part of his broad survey of indirect discourse in OE, with a special focus on the mood of the secondary verbs. He finds some interesting grammatical patterns with this field, especially with its most prominent member, *wēnan*. For example, he observes that the omission of *þæt* "is frequent after *wenan* and verbs of petition of command" (p. 350), which he attributes to *wēnan* and its ilk becoming somewhat grammaticalized and thus, weakened. (The present study, however, will show that *wēnan* is not very much weakened.) Most importantly, however, he notes that "[o]f all the verbs introducing indirect discourse *wēnan* is the most consistent in requiring the subjunctive of the dependent verb" (p. 384), and that the indicative is only used after *wēnan* and similar verbs to emphasize "the reality of the statement" (p. 352). This tendency is so strong, that "even in close renderings of a Latin original," a Latin indicative can still be translated by the subjunctive with *wēnan* (p. 386). He summarizes his view with the strong claim that with *wēnan*, "the event or action contained in the dependent clause is not considered to take place at all, and its existence is merely a conjecture in the mind of the speaker or writer; it is conceived, therefore, from a wholly subjective viewpoint" (p. 384).

Ogura's (1986) work on the field bears little resemblance to Gorrell's (1895). In fact, she refers to him only to present an alternative to the subdivisions of the field which she proposes. She combines Gorrell's first two categories, which are supposition and "thought directed to the accomplishment of an action" (Gorrell, 1895, p. 384) respectively, into a single category that more broadly covers thinking in general, combines his third and fourth categories of belief and doubt into a single second category, and then adds on her own third category which encompasses memory. As explained above, she focuses on six main verbs in her study: *wēnan*, *þyncan*, *þencan*, *geþencan*, *smēagan*, and *gemunan*. These six were chosen on the basis that they are used in most texts, with the first two being the most common in the prose that was examined. Using the entire corpus of OE poetry and twelve major prose works as her data source, she is able to conclude that the frequency of the words in any given work is the result of "the author's taste and needs" (p. 327) and does not change diachronically overall. By far the most important finding in this work is that *þencan* is more syntactically versatile than *wēnan*, which, she argues, is probably why Present-Day English (PDE) retains a descendent of *þencan* in the form of *think*, but not of *wēnan*. Ogura also goes beyond just the syntax to investigate collocations, leading her to assert that *þencan* and *geþencan* "are [the] most colorless of all these verbs of frequent occurrence" (p. 341). This supports Gorrell's (1895) claim that *þencan* and related verbs had become weakened by the historical OE period, although it disagrees with Gorrell insofar as he implied that *wēnan* was the most weakened. (The current study supports Ogura's claim, but in a much restricted form.) However, despite the invaluable strides Ogura (1986) made, there is a gap in her study in her exclusion of verbs classified by her as Group II, defined as verbs meaning 'believe' or 'doubt'; as the present study shows, this group cannot be separated from her Group I

verbs, those defined as 'think' or 'consider'. This alone shows that there is space to build upon her work, although there is also room for a study that is more semantically based.

The closest any other study comes to treating the words in question is Seebold (1974). He looks at OE translations for L *sapiens*, *sapientia*, and *sapienter* (the *sapiens*-group) and *prudens*, *prudentia*, and *prudenter* (the *prudens*-group). He finds that there is a general division between West Saxon (WS) and Anglian. In general, the *sapiens*-group is translated in Anglian by forms of the word *snottur*, but in WS by *wis*. The *prudens*-group was also translated by Anglian texts with the *snottur*-group, but in some cases by both Mercian and WS texts with forms of the word *gleaw*. These are not the only OE words to be found as glosses or translations of the *sapiens* and *prudens*-groups, and the additions to the list only add to the confusion. Though Seebold is very thorough, the picture that emerges is one only of complexity, a complexity that is not easily untangled by appealing to either dialectical differences or authorial style. And nothing is simplified by the use of double translations such as *Ymb ðyllic is <u>to ðencenne & to smeaganne</u>,* 'About the like is to think and to consider' for *Cui <u>considerandum</u> quoque est* from the *Pastoral Care* (cited in Ogura (1986), underlining and translation mine), a phenomenon also mentioned by Seebold. Ultimately, Seebold almost raises more questions than he answers.

Many authors have looked at other words and semantic fields in OE and other archaic Germanic languages. One of the best (and most comparable to the present study in terms of methodology and aims) is Carlson (2012). This study on the semantic field of fear in Gothic examines all the Gothic words that signify fear or related emotions. Carlson is able to determine the connotations that were held by each word for native speakers of Gothic. He divides the semantic field into six families of related words and gives a count for each family, showing that not only does *agis* have the most forms, but it is also the most frequently occurring (particularly

in its preterit-present form *og*). His main claim is that *agis* and *faurhtei* represent opposite kinds

of fear. *Agis* is expectant, *faurhtei* is shocked; *agis* may inspire action, while *faurhtei* is frozen in

fear; *agis* is fear of the divine, *faurhtei* is fear of the mundane. Importantly, *agis* is potentially

also a good emotion to have from the point of view of the Christian audience of the Gothic Bible,

as it is present in those with faith, whereas *faurhtei* is a fear which affects only those who lack

faith. Carlson finds evidence to support his claims by comparing the gospels of Luke and Mark,

both with each other and with the original Greek from which they were translated. He builds

upon this fundamental divide by comparing *gaþlahsnan* to *agis* in Luke, concluding that they

have much in common. He considers *usgeisnan* in Mark, which he says is outside the categories

represented by *agis* and *faurhtei*, since it does not imply a moral judgment of the value of the

fear, nor does it specify a cause or a possible result. Its relationship to the word for "spirit", being

related to OE *gǣst* (> PDE *ghost*) or Modern German *Geist*, is also noted. He points out a

possible problem in that *usgeisnan* is used where *agis* would be expected, and where it was used

in Luke. However, by interpreting the meaning of the passages, he shows that neither *agis* nor

faurhtei would be appropriate to the intended meaning, because both reflect a moral judgment on

the value of the fear, which would be out of place in Mark. This not only explains the word

usgeisnan, but also reinforces his claim about the different meanings of *agis* and *faurhtei*.

There have been many other small-scale studies of other OE semantic fields. Feldman

(1987), for example, explores how words now traditionally relating to Christian concepts of evil

are used in *Beowulf*. She states that *feond* means 'foe', 'enemy', or 'antagonist', and only means

'fiend' when applied to Grendel, with only a single exception – when Grendel dies, he is

probably going to the land of fiends, not simply into exile. Furthermore, the *deofl*s in the poem

have no power over the soul, thus placing the referents more firmly in the realm of mortality than

a literal usage of the PDE word *devil* would imply. She continues with *synn*, which she claims means 'crime' rather than 'sin', though this claim is based in larger part on her own interpretation of religious views of the time than her other claims are. Finally, she suggests most instances of *hel* 'Hell' be emended to 'hall', based on Grendel's frequent physical presence in Heorot and on Hell's absence as a setting in the poem. Although she fails to substantiate with external evidence the views that underlie her interpretation of *synn*, she makes a strong case for her other claims.

Ogura's (1988) study is worth noting, though this one is not on thinking verbs, but rather on OE words for serpent-like creatures. She gives a definition of *wyrm*, *nædre*, and *draca*, along with their etymologies and cognates. She uses a variety of data sources to support her interpretations, including manuscript illustrations and the mythological contexts of the Germanic and Christian religions. Most important was her consideration of OE glosses for Latin originals.

Okasha (1976) uses a unique and interesting methodology in which chunks of seven lines (the line containing the token, the three preceding lines, and the three following lines) are considered at a time. This allowed each instance of OE *bēacen* 'sign' to be explored – a daunting task if the entirety of each work in which *bēacen* appears were to be examined – while still allowing for more information to be gleaned than would be possible from examining only the three words on each side of the token. In addition, she also considers cognates in other West Germanic languages and a possible Latin origin for the OE word. Collocations that appear at least three times are also taken into account, as are runic inscriptions and verb forms and compounds containing *bēacen*. Using this methodology, she is able to determine that *bēacen* has four separate meanings in OE, including 'sun' or 'moon', 'monument' or 'banner', a crucifix, and the cross on which Jesus died.

Wentersdorf (1972; 1973a; 1973b; 1975) focuses on OE *drēorig* 'bloody', 'gloomy'. In his earliest study (1972), he traces the word's semantic development from Proto-Germanic **dreuz-* 'flowing blood' to ModE *dreary*. His major contribution to the field in this work is to sketch out various intermediate definitions for this word not generally accepted but which make sense both theoretically and in context. The evolutionary journey he presents takes the word broadly from concrete to abstract and through weakening/amelioration, from 'bloody' to 'dying' to 'painful' to 'doomed' to 'gloomy'. In another study (1973a), he contends that etymology does not equal "a reliable clue to meaning" (p. 233-234) and therefore relies on context entirely to support his argument that *drēorig* cannot mean 'headlong' in *Battle of Brunanburh*, as B-T suggests, and so must be 'ill-fated, doomed' in this poem. In another study of the same year (1973b), Wentersdorf focuses on the compound *heorodrēorig*, traditionally glossed as something like 'blade-bloody'. This time, he relies mostly on the OE poem *The Phoenix* to assert that *heorodrēorig* in fact means 'doomed to die'. While he fails to adequately address how *heoru* 'sword, blade' is to be interpreted, he argues convincingly in both articles that *drēorig* must in the given examples be interpreted as 'doomed to die'. Finally, in his fourth study (1975), Wentersdorf makes slight modifications to the usual interpretations of *The Wanderer*, changing instances of *dreary* to *doomed*. He also considers *seledrēorig* 'doomed to exile, lit. hall-doomed'.

Stuart (1975) determines the overlap and distinctive meanings of *lǣcecræft* 'leech craft' and *lǣcedōm* 'leechdom' in eight OE medical texts.

Redwine (1982) builds upon Stern's (1921) claim that "[w]hen an adj[ective] denoting swiftness is applied to living beings, [it comes to imply] that the reason of the swift movement or action is the eagerness or willingness of the subject" (p.19). His conclusion is that words denoting haste in *Beowulf* are pragmatic signals of sincerity.

Ono (1994) considers *ēadig* and *gesǣlig*, both meaning 'happy' or 'wealthy' but both later translating Latin *beatus* 'blessed', with the particular aim of determining the meaning of *ēadig* in *Beowulf*. He investigates the words using multiple approaches, considering all tokens of either word in the entire corpus of OE. He specifically looks at how Alfred and Ælfric translated Latin *beatus* as well as *felix* 'happy, lucky, blessed' into English, as well as at the history of translations of the two occurrences of *ēadig* in *Beowulf*. He concludes that *ēadig* may have been ambiguous in *Beowulf* between the meanings 'wealthy, happy' and 'blessed', but overall in the language, there was a clear shift in the meaning from 'wealthy, happy' in earlier times to 'blessed' in later.

Although Oakshott-Taylor (1983) works with PDE, his finding are relevant to OE as well. He divides matrix verbs (or verb phrases) in PDE into three classes, based on what position towards the factuality of the statement the speaker takes, including what evidence the speaker has to support it. Most of the words considered in the present study fall under Oakshott-Taylor's Class I, which is the class for words of mental activity, such as *think*. The defining characteristic of this class is that the speaker is expressing knowledge or belief about the world which may be either confirmed or refuted by new evidence. Class II is verbs of appearance or perception, which includes *seem* in PDE and would include *þyncan* if the same scheme were applied to OE. The final class, Class III, is verbs of received information, and is not relevant to the present study. Besides suggesting that perhaps *þyncan* is different enough from the other words in this study that it need not have been included, the most relevant implication from this classification is that the strength of the speaker's commitment to the truth of what is said is not enough to divide words into separate categories. This suggests that words offering any level of tentative commitment are essentially the same, and this in turn lends support to the interpretation of the

present study that *wēnan* can cover most of the spectrum of commitment – essentially a one-word exemplar of the whole class.

Liu & Hu (2008) focus on frames as a way of classifying verbs. They claim that verbs in each frame share "grammatical and collocational associations" (p. 68) which differ between frames. Frames must therefore differ by necessity between different languages. Because of this, it is impossible to make strong claims regarding OE using Liu & Hu's Mandarin frames system, but it is worth noting that there are three different frames that correspond to the semantic area covered by *wēnan*: an opinion frame, represented by words glossed as 'think' and 'feel'; a certainty frame, represented by words glossed as 'sure', 'believe', and 'doubt'; and a knowing frame, represented by words glossed as 'know' and 'understand'. This goes to show how wide-ranging the meanings of *wēnan* are, because it covers all three of the categories. Additionally, although they are only glosses, it is telling that 'think' and 'believe' have ended up in mutually exclusive categories in Liu & Hu's scheme. This is further evidence for *wēnan*'s versatility.

Of all the possible methodologies described above, the most rigorous and the most illuminating is the Behavioral Profile. Though built on a foundation of previous work, Gries (2010) is often cited as the source of the BP methodology. Gries describes a way of determining the meanings of words by looking at both their semantic and syntactic environments. It is a corpus-based approach that involves coding each token's surrounding environment for tense, aspect, and other grammatical markers. For example, an adjective's head noun may be coded as either concrete or abstract. Running various statistical tests on the resulting data allows for empirical differentiation between synonyms, and this methodology has been found to agree with triangulation methods based on native-speaker intuition. Returning to the above example, a

researcher could determine whether any of a set of synonym adjectives preferred abstract nouns over concrete nouns, thus differentiating them along one parameter.

The debt owed by BP to previous work is usually summed up by the users of the methodology in their reference to Firth's (1968) assertion that "You shall know a word by the company it keeps!" (p. 179; cited by Gries, 2010; Hanks, 2014; D. Liu, 2010; D. Liu & Espino, 2012). (Thipa (1979) cites Trier as being the first to come up with the basis of the theory behind BP – as well as the concept of semantic fields – which is that meaning is created through the combination of similarities and differences between related lexical elements; however, Thipa (1979) does not cite Trier directly, so this has been difficult to verify. Firth himself cited Wittgenstein as an influence (1968)). According to Gries (2010), this is the basis of most corpus linguistics.

BP utilizes frequency information of authentic data, and this is the key to its power. For example, one question BP and its focus on statistics can help answer is the question of whether to lump or split senses that are both similar and different. One method BP has for doing this is looking at distributional properties, which is essentially what meanings the word is used in the presence of. For example, if we have two sentences, "X ran from Y" and "Z ran to W," we can say that *run* has two different meanings, both related to a particular form of movement: one meaning in which the source is specified and one in which the goal is. However, if the existence of a sentence such as "A ran from B to C" is found, then we must say that these two different uses of *run* are in fact a single sense, one which implies both a source and a goal but which may make only one of those explicit. On the other hand, compare two sentences with *run away*: "X ran away with Y" and "Z ran away from home." These are also two obviously related sentences, both being the notion of speed on foot metaphorically extended to mean escaping an unpleasant

situation. However, unlike with *run*, if no example sentences are found that contain both comitative *with* and a source, then we must conclude that *run away* has at least two separate senses. It should be stressed that one of BP's main strengths lies in the fact that it deals only with real data, and not with hypotheticals. A critique of the conclusion that *run away* has two different senses is easy to imagine – a sentence such as "I ran away from home with my brother" is a well-formed English sentence that includes both comitative *with* and a source. However, if no such sentence is found, then the point is moot. Speakers can say it, but they simply do not, so we cannot say for certain that such a sense of *run away* that involves both a source and two people actually exists in the language. BP examines only what we can be certain exists. (Hanks, 2013). Such a simple and objective answer to what meanings should be split and which should be lumped is sorely needed, as is obvious from the number of answers and methodologies chosen to pursue such answers profiled in the present study.

An example of BP in use is Divjak & Gries (2006). This is a study on what they call tentative verbs in Russian, verbs expressing trying or attempting. The BP approach was chosen for its strengths – it is precise (i.e. manual coding is more consistent than computerized coding), objectively verifiable, and comprehensive. The researchers manually coded 1,585 sentences for 87 variables to create 137,895 data points. Such variables as each token's TAM were recorded, or "tagged", as well as, in a second round of coding, accompanying adverbs, connectors, and particles.

Another good example is Jansegers, Vanderschueren, & Enghels's (2015) study on the Spanish verb *sentir* 'feel'. They break the BP methodology down into four steps: collecting data from corpora; creating ID tags (coding the data); converting the data to a table; and then running statistical analyses, in particular a hierarchal agglomerative cluster analysis (HCA). They point

out that frequency may be a marker of prototypicality, but so may a variety of syntactic contexts, illustrating another advantage of the BP approach, which always codes for syntax. They also argue that syntax correlates with meaning, viz. polysemous meanings with similar distributional patterns have similar meanings. For example, various epistemic uses of *sentir* in Spanish usually have *que*-complementation, which slightly different uses, such as cognitive uses, do not. Their results show that *sentir* is shifting towards more subjectivity, which is in line with Traugott (1989).

While this methodology is indeed empirically rigorous, even supposedly objective methods can in fact be influenced by subjectivity. For example, Smith (2016), in his diachronic study of the *fl-* phonestheme (a sub-syllabic unit that has meaning) in English, uses keywords in OED definitions to collect and code data, expressly in order to keep the study as little subjective as possible. However, even he has to acknowledge the arbitrariness of the wording of definitions in a dictionary. Obviously, BP is not at risk from exactly this type of subjectivity. Nevertheless, there is a certain amount of subjectivity involved in deciding exactly what to code, especially when doing an exploratory study as opposed to seeking an answer to a specific and narrow question. In other words, it is impossible to keep a human factor out of a study of language. However, Jansegers et al. (2015) point out that even if the judgment calls of quantitative analyses are not inherently more objective than introspection, they are easier to replicate. BP is likely still the most objective methodology we have in lexical semantics.

A cautionary tale that explains why this more objective methodology is needed comes from Storm & Storm (2005). In a previous study, Storm & Storm had 525 words categorized by "expert judges". For the 2005 study, they had 50 undergraduate students verify the previous judgments, only to have the students classify *pity* as "sadness", while the previous judges had it

listed as "love", due to its similarity to *compassion* and *sympathy*. One takeaway from this experience is that it is preferable to rely on native speaker judgments from as many speakers as is feasible, but of course, this is not at all possible in historical linguistics. The next best thing is to use a methodology that is as objective as possible in order to avoid the pitfalls evidenced by Storm & Storm (2005).

Methodology

Digital copies of the poems available online were used for convenience. Using the browser's find feature, searches were done for the following forms: "wen", "gel", "þenc", "þync", "þoht", "þuht", "þanc", "þonc", "ðenc", "ðync", "ðoht", "ðuht", "ðanc", "ðonc", "smea", "hog", "hycg", "hicg", "hyg", and "hig". Such a search allowed for all forms of the words to be found, including compounded or prefixed words that did not begin with that exact sequence of characters. The section of the poem in which the word appears was collected. For the purposes of this study, sections of a poem were considered to be the stretch between sentence junctures or semicolons. Though such punctuation is at the discretion of modern editors, it is assumed that the editors do not apply it arbitrarily, and so a chunk containing a grammatical sentence with a clear meaning is to be expected. Not all words with the specified sequences of characters were collected, of course; for example, the name Hygelac and instances of *þanc(ian)* 'thank' were excluded. Additionally, prefixed verbs such as *ofþyncan* 'to cause regret or sorrow', *oferhogian* 'to despise', *forhicgan* 'to neglect, reject, despise, condemn', or *oferhygd* 'pride, arrogance' were excluded, but compounds such as *mōdgeþonc* 'thoughts' were included. *Hogu* is also excluded, as it means 'care' rather than 'think', though it is probably etymologically related to *hycgan* ("ho", 2019). Also excluded is *orþanc* 'genius' on the basis that genius is an inborn characteristic rather than a discrete act. An exception is *aþencan*, which was included because it

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retains a meaning of 'to think'. The decision whether to include each word was made on a case-by-case basis as they were encountered in the works, but the underlying reasoning is that any word derived from one of the words under investigation which retains a meaning related to cognition was worthy of inclusion.

It is worth noting that the choice to exclude words related to emotion, especially *ofþyncan*, reflects a modern conception of the mind which is at odds with an Anglo-Saxon conception. According to Geeraerts & Gevaert (2008), the Anglo-Saxons viewed the mind as being composed of what we today view as three separate functions: cognition and thought, emotions, and volition. By excluding the category of emotions, an important part of the semantic field of thought, from inquiry its connection to the other parts of the mind is being ignored. However, this study is already focused on a narrow part of the cognition part of the field. The investigation is therefore not much compromised by this omission.

The data were coded for many of the features modeled by the BP approach. For example, the tense of each token was noted, as was its person for verbs, and patterns were searched for among each word's collocations. A general meaning, both in terms of a PDE translation and in terms of a less restricted definition and including the level of certainty expressed where appropriate was then determined from the context of the word. A fuller BP approach was not opted for due to reasons of practicality. This decision is justified by Divjak and Gries's (2006) study, which was empirically extraordinarily rigorous, but which yielded results that generally agreed with more intuitive analyses. Additionally, there have been valuable contributions from BP studies which found the manual coding of so many data infeasible, such as Liu & Espino (2012). Finally, procedures must vary according to word class (Liu, 2010), and because this study looked at both nouns and verbs, a full BP would have been complicated by the data.

Results and Discussion

A total of 92 tokens were collected for this study. There were 27 tokens of *wēnan*, 5 tokens of *gelȳfan*, 14 tokens of *þencan*, 6 tokens of *geþencan*, 5 of *þyncan*, 7 of *þanc*, 2 of *hogian,* and 26 of *hycgan*. It must be remarked immediately that the relative raw frequencies of these words is surprising, since, as was mentioned in the introduction of the present study, *hycgan* has been little remarked upon before now. One might expect that the reason for this relative obscurity in the literature on OE linguistics is due to relative infrequency, but the data here paint a different picture. However, of the 26 instances of *hycgan* in the present data, only 1 is a verb. This explains why researchers interested in the syntax of OE verbs of thought would have ignored *hycgan*. An overview of each of the words under consideration in this study will be given, with interesting points about each, and then an overall map of the semantic field will be given. The implications of *hycgan*'s derivations will be discussed in the relevant section.

Of the 27 tokens of *wēnan*, all of which were found in *Beowulf*, 8 of them (29.6%) were nouns and 19 (70.4%) were verbs. Of those 19 verbs, 8 (42.1%) were in the 1st-person singular present. All of those 1st-person singular present verbs were part of dialogue, as were 6 additional tokens, meaning that the tokens were almost evenly split between dialogue and narration (14 in dialogue and 13 in narration). The firmest conclusion that may be drawn from these data is that *wēnan* is used more than twice as often as *wēn*, the noun form, is, and noting also that there are no adjectival uses at all, it can be said that the verb form is the dominant form. An additional inference that can be made from these data is that, since *wēn* never weakened to become similar to PDE 'thing', and *wēnan* – having the same range of meanings and a form with a transparent relationship to *wēn* – is clearly related to *wēn*, the presence of so many nouns lends strength to the argument that *wēnan* was not colorless; at the very least it must have had meanings similar to

wēn in the minds of its users. Further conclusions drawn from these results must be tentative, but

a hypothesis may be offered. If the *Beowulf* poet's style can be shown empirically to vary

between dialogue and narration – as it gives the impression of doing – then the result showing

that *wēnan* appears equally often in both parts of the text could be indicative of *wēnan*'s role as

such a basic word of the language that it was indispensable regardless of the register. However,

such a conclusion requires further investigation to verify.

More interesting is what meanings are implied by the contexts in which *wēnan* appears.

Generally speaking, it can best be equated to PDE 'expect'. However, it covered a wide range of

epistemic force, from near total uncertainty to near total certainty. Consider the following

examples, with both literal glosses and idiomatic translations[4]:

(1) Heht ða þæt heaðoweorc to hagan biodan
Called which that battle-work to an enclosure to offer

up ofer ecgclif, þær þæt eorlweorod
up over an edge-cliff, there that noble-ward

morgenlongne dæg modgiomor sæt,
morning long day mind-mournful sat,

bordhæbbende, bega on wenum,
shield-having, both on expectation,

endedogores ond eftcymes
of the final days and returns

leofes monnes.
of the dear man.

'[Wiglaf] ordered that the events of the battle be reported to the camp on top of the cliff,

where the prince sat mournfully all morning long with his shield, expecting both the end

and the return of the dear man [Beowulf].' (*Beowulf* 2892-2897a)

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[4] All glosses and translations are the author's original work.

Here, the prince expects both for Beowulf to return and for Beowulf to be dead. Logically, both things cannot be simultaneously true, but the meaning is clear enough to PDE speakers as well – the prince does not know whether Beowulf will survive the battle or not, and so, in a sense, he in fact expects neither. However, even though the literal meaning indicates complete uncertainty, the presence of the word *mōdgēomor* 'mind-mournful', as opposed to, perhaps, *cearu* 'worry', suggests that the prince awaiting the news was already sad in anticipation of the news. In other words, the prince may have been uncertain, but he more strongly expected Beowulf's death than his survival. This suggests that *wēnan* had to be used in the presence of some sort of other opinion or feeling. On the one hand, this dependence on additional words in the sentence to give *wēnan* meaning is exactly what would be expected if *wēnan* had been weakened. On the other hand, though, the fact that *wēnan* could not be used for a complete lack of knowledge and/or commitment means that *wēnan* certainly retained some meaning.

Furthermore, consider:

(2)   Hine halig God
         Him Holy God

        for arstafum   us onsende,
        for kindness to us sent

        to   West-Denum,   þæs ic wen hæbbe,
        to the West-Danes, that I belief have,

         wið   Grendles gryre.
        against Grendel's terror.

        'Holy God sent him to us West-Danes to stand against Grendel's terror, that is my belief.'

        (*Beowulf* 381b-384a)

This is part of a forceful declaration Hrothgar makes to Wulfgar to explain why he is welcoming the Geats to his hall. The firmness with which he speaks can be seen more clearly in the next sentence:

(3)   Ic þæm godan sceal
        I to that good must

        for his modþræce madmas beodan.
        for his spirit-force treasure give.

        'I must give treasure to that good man for the force of his spirit.' (*Beowulf* 384b-385)

The use of the obligatory *sceal* 'must' indicates obligation in no uncertain terms. For Hrothgar to feel no tentativeness about his obligation, then the belief from which that obligation derives cannot be uncertain either. In addition, because there are no other words in the same sentence as *wēn* that could support or reinforce its meaning, the full strength of the declaration comes from *wēn* alone. Such a strong meaning counters the assertion that *wēnan* was becoming meaningless, because it could still convey the force of belief beyond the simple presence of a feeling as in (1).

It might be argued that the wide range of force *wēnan* could convey in itself implies weakening, because it relies on context for its strength to be determined. However, *wēnan* also had meanings beyond indicating the simple presence of anticipation or opinion. Importantly, it could also be used as part of commands.

(4) Ðys   dogor þu geþyld hafa
     With this day   you patience have

        weana gehwylces, swa ic þe   wene to.'
        for grief everyone's, as   I   you expect to.''

        'Have patience this day for everyone's grief, as I know you will.'' (*Beowulf* 1395-1396)

This is Beowulf advising Hrothgar to be patient while he (Beowulf) hunts Grendel's mother down. The word *hafa* 'have' is in the imperative form. *Wēnan* is therefore not carrying the full

weight of the command, but it is strengthening it by implying that if Hrothgar ignores Beowulf's

advice, he will be disappointing the expectations his warriors have of him. This indicates a

pragmatic meaning beyond either a literal meaning of expectation or an epistemic meaning of

belief.

     Wēnan could also be used to assert ungrounded opinions for the purpose of effecting

change in social interactions.

    (5)   ne sceal þær dyrne sum
              not must there secret something,

        wesan, þæs ic wene.
         to be, that I believe.

       'There must be nothing secret, that I believe.' (*Beowulf* 272b-273a)

This is Beowulf's declaration to Hrothgar's coastguard of his intention of honesty. His reason for

expressing that opinion is that he is proposing the type of conversation he wishes to have with

the coastguard. This casts their conversation in that very mold, thereby affecting the world in

which the participants live. *Wēnan* is indispensable to this act, for it is *wēnan* that makes it a

metalinguistic act. Without it, the sentence could easily be interpreted as the explanation for why

Beowulf has come to the Danes. Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen (2004) claim that the field of

expectation overlaps with other fields, like certainty/emphasis and specification/hedging.

Emphasis and certainty are expressed in (2), (3), (4), and (5), and hedging or softening in (5).

These findings are therefore not completely surprising, but they have to the best of my

knowledge gone unnoticed up until now.

     Another usage beyond the meanings of expectation and belief is its use to mean 'know,

understand.'

    (6) Ðæt wæs ungeara, þæt ic ænigra me
        That was recent, that I any me

weana   ne   wende   to widan feore
of woes not expected to wide   far

bote gebidan, þonne blode fah
cure to wait,   then   blood color

husa selest heorodreorig stod, ---
house best blade-dreary stood,

wea widscofen   witena   gehwylcum
woe push extreme of the wise   every

ðara   þe   ne wendon, þæt hie wideferhð
there which not   knew, that them forever

leoda   landgeweorc laþum   beweredon
of the people   land-work   loathsome   thing

scuccum ond scinnu.
devil   and ghost.

'It was not so long ago that I did not expect any cure from afar for my woes when this

noblest of houses stood crimson blade-doomed, and woe pushed every wise one so far

that they didn't know where they were, that they and the land of the people were forever

under that loathsome thing, that devil, that ghost.' (*Beowulf* 932-939a)

There are two instances of *wēnan* in this passage, and the first maps fairly easily onto PDE

'expect'. The second one, however, is not so easily understood with the definitions so far

explored. The wise ones were pushed too far by Grendel's rampaging. When one is "pushed too

far", a reaction such as anger or revenge is expected. However, we know that no one successfully

faced Grendel until Beowulf arrived. Also, the fact that the people in question are described as

witena 'wise ones (genitive)', rather than strong, brave, fierce, etc. ones suggests that the value

these people hold in society is in their minds, not their physical prowess. So, with the focus of

the passage on the minds of the wise ones, the best way to interpret that they were *wīdscofen*

'pushed far' by *wēa* 'woe' is that they were pushed beyond their mental capacities. However, there is no reason to think that this is best interpreted as them somehow losing all their mental aptitude and becoming stupid, ignorant, or nonsensical. Rather, they were confused. This utter lack of understanding of the situation is expressed in this passage by *wēndon* (the plural past tense of *wēnan*), indicating that *wēnan*'s meanings stretched beyond simple feelings to complex cognitive functions.

Additionally, as cited in dictionaries such as B-T, *wēnan* can convey hope.

(7)   sibbe ne wolde
         peace not wanted

   wið   manna hwone mægenes   Deniga,
against men   few   of the army of Danes

    feorhbealo   feorran,   fea   þingian,
the deadly evil to remove, paltry   things,

ne þær nænig   witena   wenan þorfte
not there nothing of the wise to hope needed

beorhtre   bote   to   banan   folmum;
  clear   improvement to the murderer palms

'[Grendel] did not want peace with the few men of the Danish army, to remove the deadly evil for paltry things; there was nothing for the wise ones to hope he needed in exchange for a clear improvement from the hands of the murderer.' (*Beowulf* 154b-158)

The element of hope is conveyed by context, where a bad situation (*feorhbealo* 'deadly evil') is presented, as is a positive alternative (*sibbe* 'peace'), and a word that denotes movement from one state of affairs to the other is used (*bōte* 'cure, improvement'). The emotion related to such positive change is hope. Of course, it must be acknowledged that hope is related to expectation, as they are both thoughts or feelings a person has about the future, and because this passage is in the negative, that makes it even more difficult to distinguish between the two. The best that can

be said then, based on the available data, is that *wēnan* may have been related to the feeling of hope.

There are far fewer tokens of g*elȳfan* than there are of *wēnan*. There are 5, and all of them come from *Beowulf*. 4 of the 5 (80%) are in the past tense and none of them occur in dialogue. This might suggest that *gelȳfan* was a less basic word than *wēnan*, used more in writing or storytelling than in everyday speech. This would preclude an epistemic meaning for *gelȳfan*, in contrast to PDE *believe* or OE *wēnan*. However, this conclusion is once again contingent on proof that the *Beowulf* poet used different registers for dialogue and narration. Additionally, the sparse amount of data here means that all conclusions drawn must at best remain tentative.

The most interesting observation that can be made regarding the examples of *gelȳfan* is that 3 of the 5 (60%) are used in the presence of *God*, and two of those three refer specifically to belief in God's workings. This suggests that, while both *wēnan* and *gelȳfan* can be translated by PDE "believe", only *gelȳfan* applies to the particular kind of belief associated with religious faith.

Another interesting observation that can be made is that of the 3 tokens that are not associated with belief in God, all of them seem to represent stronger certainty than *wēnan* usually did. Consider:

(8)   geoce gelyfde
         rescue believed

     brego   Beorht-Dena,   gehyrde on Beowulfe
     ruler   of the Bright-Danes, heard   on Beowulf

      folces   hyrde   fæstrædne geþoht.
     people's shepherd   resolute   thought.

     'The ruler of the Bright-Danes believed they would be rescued when he heard the

     resolute speech of Beowulf, protector of the people.' (*Beowulf* 608b-610)

and

(9) grette   Geata   leod, Gode þancode
greeted the Geats' chief, God thanked

    wisfæst   wordum þæs ðe hire se willa   gelamp,
with wise-fast   words that that her the desire happened,

þæt heo on ænigne eorl gelyfde
that she on   any   earl believed

    fyrena   frofre.
of the violence comfort. (*Beowulf* 625-628a)

'[Wealhtheow] greeted the chief of the Geats and wisely thanked God that her prayers

were answered, and that she could believe in a warrior to relieve them from the violence.'

Both (8) and (9) are responses to speeches from Beowulf in which he declares that he will save

Heorot from Grendel. The strength of the hearers' belief, Hrothgar and Wealhtheow respectively,

is indicated by other words in the passages. In (8), Beowulf's intention is *fæstrǣdne* 'resolute',

foreshadowing his future success and giving Hrothgar good reason to believe him whole-

heartedly. In (9), Wealhtheow thanks God, which she would only do if her belief in Beowulf was

total. If she had any doubt about Beowulf's chances of success, she would be beseeching God for

His protection for Beowulf.

It can therefore be concluded that *wēnan* could represent a level of cognition beyond

belief, but only *gelȳfan* could represent a feeling of certainty felt without external evidence to

support it. This may be related to *gelȳfan*'s primary role as referring to religious belief, which

would prototypically involve as much if not more certainty, but we can make no claims about

which sense may have preceded and therefore resulted in the other based on the present data.

There were 14 tokens of *þencan* in the data. 7 of them (50%) are singular present tense

forms of the verb, and 6 of those (85.7%) are 3rd-person. Only 2 of the 14 (14.3%) are nouns, and

the tokens occur slightly more often in dialogue than in narration (8 of 14 in dialogue, 57.1%).

We can infer from these numbers that *þencan* did not yet carry the epistemic meaning that PDE

think has; if it did, we would expect to see more than one instance of it in the 1st-person singular

present. However, if the distinction between dialogue and narration is meaningful, then it can be

gleaned that *þencan* was a part of the basic vocabulary as much as if not more than it was a part

of literary vocabulary. Once again, however, the most interesting information we can find in

these data is in the patterns of meaning expressed by the set.

Of the 14 tokens, 6 (42.9%) represent intention, with seemingly different levels of

volition and certainty.

(10)   Swa sceal man don,
         So   must   one   do,

þonne he æt guðe gegan þenceð
when he at battle earn   thinks

longsumne   lof;   na ymb his lif cearað.
 lasting   praise; nor about his life cares.

'So must man do, when he thinks to earn lasting praise in battle, nor cares about his life.'

(*Beowulf* 1534b-1536)

(11)   wit unc   wið   hronfixas
          we us   against   whales

  werian   þohton.
 to hinder thought.

'We thought to hinder whales against us.' (*Beowulf* 540b-541a)

(10) is a part of the narration of Beowulf's battle with Grendel's mother. (11) is part of

Beowulf's story about his swimming contest with Breca. Both instances of *þencan* represent

intention, but with different additional implications. (10) is essentially entirely volitional. There

is not necessarily an element of planning involved; it is a question of reacting appropriately to

the rapid action of battle. Therefore, the part of the mind that would be involved in seeking glory

in battle would be mostly the feeling of desire. (11), on the other hand, describes the exact

opposite. Beowulf and Breca have brought swords with them in order to protect themselves from

whales. As this is a precaution, it clearly implies planning in advance of the trip. There is

possibly an element of expectation implied as well, viz. they were expecting to have to protect

themselves from whales, as opposed to them being prepared in case they had to protect

themselves from whales. In terms of volition, it only makes sense for a person to want to protect

themselves from a wild animal. However, logically, the best possible situation would be for the

person to not have to protect themselves from wild animals in the first place. In other words, the

desire to protect oneself exists alongside the desire to not have to do so, so saying that *þencan*

here expresses unmitigated volition would be an oversimplification of the results.

A related meaning that sheds light on the words from a new angle is attached to the

compound *geondþencan*. This compound appears twice in *The Wanderer* and literally means

'through-think'.

(12) Forþon   ic geþencan ne mæg   geond   þas woruld
     Therefore I   think   not can   throughout this world

    for   hwan   modsefa min ne gesweorce,
    for with what mind-spirit my not become dark,

    þonne ic   eorla   lif eal geondþence,
    then   I nobleman's life all through-think,

    hu   hi   færlice   flet   ofgeafon,
    how they suddenly dwelling abandoned,

    modge maguþegnas.
    noble warrior-thanes.

    'Therefore I cannot think how in the whole world my spirit cannot grow dark,

    when I think through a nobleman's life, how they suddenly abandoned the dwellings,

noble warriors.' (*The Wanderer* 58-62a)

(13) Se   þonne þisne   wealsteal   wise geþohte
Which then this   buildings-place wise thought

ond þis deorce lif deope geondþenceð,
and this dark   life deep through-thinks,

frod in ferðe, feor oft   gemon
old in soul,   far often remembered

   wælsleahta   worn,   ond þas word acwið:
carnage-rending great many, and these words speaks:

'When he wisely thinks of this town, and thinks through this dark life, old and wise in

soul, he often remembers from far away a great many carnage-slaughters, and speaks

these words:' (*The Wanderer* 88-91)

The meaning suggested by this compound is that of difficult and complicated thought. This

comes not only from the transparent meaning of the compound's elements, but also from its

collocations. In both (12) and (13), the concept that the thinker is thinking through is "life", a

term which covers the totality of human experience – there are few things more complicated that

humans are capable of comprehending. Furthermore, in both examples, an adverb is interposed

between *lif* and *geondþencan*. In (12) it is *eal* 'all', which reinforces that the thinker is thinking

about every possible aspect of the subject. In (13), it is *deope* 'deep', meaning that the thinker is

thinking deeply, a metaphor readily understood in PDE as well. This usage of *þencan* is clearly

related to the meaning of intention related above through the very complexity of the act.

Planning ahead, as in (11), requires a certain cognitive sophistication in order to imagine and

account for multiple possible futures, which is also required for the type of thinking described in

(12) and (13). However, *geondþencan* is distant enough from the meaning of (10), which is more

an instant feeling or a whim than a complex mode of thought, that these two uses of *þencan*

cannot be two examples of the same definition. It should also be noted that, because *geond* is a

preposition, the core meaning of the compound must be derived from the content word *þencan*.

Therefore, while the meaning of *geondþencan* may be somewhat modified from that of

uncompounded *þencan*, it must be a possible meaning of *þencan* that *geondþencan* is exploiting.

A separate usage of the word can be seen when it seems to apply to general cognitive

processes, something more akin to the non-epistemic uses of PDE *think*.

(14)   sibb   æfre ne mæg
          kinship ever not can

wiht onwendan   þam   ðe wel þenceð.
bit   to change to them that well thinks.

'Fraternity cannot ever change for one that thinks well.' (*Beowulf* 2600b-2601)

Here, "thinks well" cannot be said to apply to any particular instance of or characteristic of

thought. It refers to the sum or the general type of thoughts in the referent's head (or, more

accurately, heart, as the physical seat of the mind was believed to be in English culture of the

time (Geeraerts & Gevaert, 2008)). It could be that *wel þenceð* could be a poetic formula, or

possibly even a lexical chunk with a meaning composed of the collocation, since both instances

of *þencan* with this sense of the general workings of the mind use this particular phrase.

However, even if either of those possibilities is in fact the case, it does not discount the fact that

þencan could be exploited to mean non-specific thoughts and meanings in a way that other,

related verbs apparently could not.

A third interesting meaning for *þencan* appears when *þencan* is negated. There are two

such instances in the data, one verb and one noun.

(15) Ne þæt se   aglæca   yldan   þohte,
     Not that the formidable to delay thought,

ac he gefeng hraðe forman siðe
but he captured   the   first   after

slæpendne rinc,   slat unwearnum,
sleeping   warrior, tore the defenseless,

bat   banlocan,   blod   edrum   dranc,
bit the bone-enclosure, blood from the veins drank,

synsnædum   swealh;
sin-chunks   swallowed;

'The formidable one did not think to delay, but seized the first sleeping warrior that he

saw, tore the defenseless man apart, bit the bone-enclosure (body), drank the blood from

the veins, swallowed him in chunks.' (*Beowulf* 739-743a)

(16) Nænig heora þohte,   þæt he þanon scolde
Nothing their thoughts, that he thence must

   eft   eardlufan   æfre gesecan,
before homeland-love ever   visit,

 folc oþðe freoburh, þær   he afeded wæs;
people or   free-city, there he fed   was;

'It did not occur to them that they would ever again visit their homeland, the people or

the free city where they ate.' (*Beowulf* 691-693)

As a verb, the meaning is fairly clear. A particular, specific idea did not come into being in the

mind of the thinker (in this case, Grendel). This is further supported by the syntax of the first

line, where it is not the verb itself that is negated, but the pronoun *þæt*, which is a cataphor for

the delay. It is this single discrete cognition that did not happen in Grendel's brain/heart.

The syntax of (16) makes it a little trickier to interpret. The thoughts of the warriors that

they would ever return to their homeland is negated with *nænig* 'nothing'. This implies the

negation of all possible thoughts, not a single unique or discrete thought. However, the following

clauses serve to restrict the referent of *nænig*, so that it can be understood as "no thoughts related

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to the possibility of their returning home occurred to them." Further, the negation of a noun

mirrors (15) syntactically, which also suggests that a similar interpretation might be valid.

Þencan, then, can represent volition or intention, but it can also represent the mind as a

whole, or discrete thoughts. There may be an element of expectation present, but it is much

weaker than in *wēnan*, and there are no religious implications or strong commitments present as

with *gelȳfan*.

There are only 6 instances of *geþencan* found in the data, but, despite the paucity of data,

clear patterns can be detected, and they are telling. 3 of the 6 (50%) are nouns and 3 of the 4

examples (75%) found in *Beowulf* occur in dialogue. The proportion increases to 5 of 6 (83.3%)

if we include the examples from *The Wanderer* in the count, but it should be noted that *The*

Wanderer does not follow the prototypical narrative structure that we as modern readers expect

in which dialogue alternates with nonverbal action in the way that *Beowulf* does. Either count

suggests, however, and in direct opposition to *gelȳfan*, that *geþencan* was part of a more informal

register, more suited to speech than literature.

Most interesting of all is that 4 of the 6 instances (67.7%) imply a lack of complexity of

thought. This is done in three different ways. One is by using *geþencan* as an imperative.

(17) `Geþenc nu,   se mæra maga   Healfdenes,
      "Think   now, the great sons of Halfdane's,

   snottra fengel, nu   ic eom   siðes fus,
   wise   prince, now I   am   travel-ready,

    goldwine   gumena,   hwæt wit geo spræcon,
   gold-friend of the men, what we   you speak,

   gif ic æt þearfe þinre scolde
   if I   at need your must

       alder   linnan, þæt ðu me   a   wære
   to the eternity cease, that you me always were

forðgewitenum on fæder stæle.
departure   on father place.

'Think now, you great sons of that wise prince Halfdane, now that I am travel ready, a

gold-friend of the men, what we say to you. If I must eternally cease (die) at your need,

then you will take me to my father's place.' (*Beowulf* 1474-1479)

This is the beginning of Beowulf's speech before he enters the mere, in which he gives

instructions to the Danes. What is interesting about this short passage is that the instructions are

explicit. There is little cognitive burden placed on the Danes beyond determining if Beowulf is

dead or not. *Geþenc* in this passage can therefore be understood as something akin to PDE "keep

in mind". In other words, *geþencan* refers to the presence of a thought, but not of a process, and

not of a complicated or nuanced understanding.

The second way in with *geþencan* conveys this meaning is by appearing in the negative.

An example of this is (18).

(18) Hwilum he on lufan læteð hworfan
    While   He on loves   lets   change

monnes modgeþonc   mæran cynnes,
man's mind-thoughts boundary kinds,

seleð him on eþle   eorþan wynne
gives him on estate earth   joy

to healdanne hleoburh wera,
to   hold   safe-city men,

gedeð him swa gewealdene worolde dælas,
makes him so   ruled   world   parts,

side   rice,   þæt he his selfa ne mæg
widely kingdom, that he himself cannot

his unsnyttrum ende geþencean.
his   unwise   end   think.

'As long as He blesses a man with great thoughts, gives him the joy on the estate of Earth

to hold a city of men safe, and makes him ruler over parts of the world, a wide kingdom,

he cannot himself imagine his own unwise end.' (*Beowulf* 1728-1734)

This is part of Hrothgar's speech about God after Beowulf brings him treasure from the mere. As

with (17), a certain complexity on someone's part must exist. In (17), it was Beowulf who

expressed the complex thought, while the men to whom the verb *geþenc* applied had only to

remember the expression. In (18), a hypothetical but inevitable situation – the death of a king – is

raised. Such a situation is by its nature complicated – the causes leading up to it, the political

ramifications that follow, the emotional effects it has on people, etc. – but none of this

complication is implied by the negated verb *geþencean*. Rather, the simplest part of it, the very

fact that it will happen, remains ungrasped by the thinker in this passage. Once again, *geþencan*

refers to only the simplest forms of mental life.

The final way is the most straightforward: with an adjective.

(19)   Nu ge feorbuend,
          Now you foreigner,

mereliðende, minne gehyrað
 sea-sailing,   my   hear

anfealdne geþoht: ofost is selest
 simple   thought: haste is best

to gecyðanne, hwanan eowre cyme syndon.'
to   know,   whence you   are   come."

'Now, you sea-sailing foreigner, hear my simple thought: it is best to let me know

quickly where you've come from.' (*Beowulf* 254b-257)

This is the coastguard advising Beowulf to introduce himself. *Geþoht* 'thought' is being modified by *ānfealdne* 'single, simple'. Whether the thought is the only one in the mind of the coastguard or whether it is a simple thought, a lack of complexity is certainly implied.

The single clear counterexample is (8), repeated here.

(8)   geoce gelyfde
        rescue believed

        brego   Beorht-Dena,   gehyrde on Beowulfe
        ruler   of the Bright-Danes, heard   on Beowulf

        folces   hyrde   fæstrædne geþoht.
        people's shepherd   resolute   thought.

        'The ruler of the Bright-Danes believed they would be rescued when he heard the

        resolute speech of Beowulf, protector of the people.' (*Beowulf* 608b-610)

The "thought" in this passage refers to an eloquent ritualistic speech delivered by Beowulf. Such craft is anything but simple.

Geþencan, it seems, has no connection to *gelȳfan*, as no belief is expressed by it. There is a tenuous and antonymous connection to *wēnan* insofar as *wēnan* can – but does not usually – express understanding, while *geþencan* generally avoids understanding. *Geþencan* also does not express expectation. *Geþencan* and *þencan* express two different parts of thought: *geþencan* simple and discrete thoughts, *þencan* all the complexities of the mind as a whole (although it mainly expresses volition).

For *þyncan*, 5 tokens were found, all in *Beowulf*. 2 (40%) appeared in dialogue and 3 (60%) in narration. 4 (80%) were in the past tense and only 1 (20%) was in the present.

Because of the paucity of the data, and the fact that *þyncan* has somewhat of a different meaning as well as unique syntax, it is difficult to draw conclusions from only 5 tokens. Many more examples would be needed to establish any relevant patterns. What can be said is that 1

instance refers to a thought, opinion, or belief about social decorum; 1 an emotion; 1 a perception that could lead to an emotion; and 2 are judgments, one of which is mistaken and one of which could have been but wasn't. The interesting thing is that, as with PDE *seem*, *þyncan* overlaps heavily with the epistemic meaning of *wēnan*. Take, for example, (20).

(20) þuhte   him eall to rum,
      It seemed to him all too wide,

      wongas ond   wicstede.
      fields   and dwelling-places.

‘It seemed to him all too wide, the fields and villages.’ (*Beowulf* 2461b-2462a)

The first line could easily be rephrased as *he wēnde þæt eall tō rūm wǣre* ‘he believed that it was all too wide’ with only the slightest change in meaning. With *wēnan*, there is a certain amount of implication of subjective cognition – the subject thinks, i.e. creates the notion, that the world is too wide. With *þyncan*, the subject merely perceives involuntarily that the world is too wide. Yet, because it is involuntary, rather than something the subject chooses to believe, and because perception is by its nature as subjective as cognition, *þyncan* implies as little commitment to the proposition as *wēnan* – perhaps even less, since, as the present study has demonstrated, *wēnan* could convey quite strong certainty. Taken together, these facts suggest that *þyncan* is a closer synonym to *wēnan* than one might expect based on their differing syntactic roles, and are yet more evidence for the undisputed fact that true synonyms do not exist and that close synonyms have subtle shades of difference in meaning to be exploited by its speakers.

Þyncan is also similar to *wēnan* in the way that both can be used to express intention or desire towards the actions of the group.

(21) Ne þynceð me   gerysne   þæt we   rondas   beren
    Not seems   to me appropriate that we shield bosses carry

eft to earde, nemne we æror mægen
again to homeland, unless we before can

fane gefyllan, feorh ealgian
flag to finish, livingness to defend

Wedra ðeodnes.
Weders' king.

'It doesn't seem appropriate to me that we would take our shields home without first being able to finish the fight to protect the life of the Weders' king.' (*Beowulf* 2653-2656a)

This is part of Wiglaf's speech to Beowulf's warriors during the fight with the dragon, during which he attempts to rally them to support Beowulf. As with (5) above, when Beowulf declared to the coastguard that he believed ("*wene*") that there could be nothing secret between them, meaning that he wanted honesty in the conversation, Wiglaf is here expressing an opinion or belief about the actions of the hearers, meaning that he wants them to conform those actions to what he believes is best. In line with *wēnan* carrying more conviction, *þyncan* is perhaps less forceful, more of a suggestion than a request. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the coastguard and Beowulf are indeed forthright with each other, while the warriors to whom Wiglaf speaks hide from battle.

Interestingly, both *wēnan* and *þyncan* differ from *þencan* in their expression of intention. While *wēnan* and *þyncan* can be used to make requests, *þencan* is only for the reporting of one's intentions.

There are 7 examples of *þanc* in the data, all in *Beowulf*. 6 of them (85.7%) are nouns and 1 (14.3%) is an adjective; 6 occur in narration, and 1 in dialogue; and 6 of them are compounds, with 5 of those (83.3%, 71.4% of all instances of *þanc*) having *þanc* as the second element. 4 of the 7 (57.1%) examples in the data are in the instrumental/dative case. However, it is hard to

draw any conclusions about meaning from this last point, and all we can say about the former points is what has already been said about register.

The compounds are *mōdgeþanc* 'mind-thought', *heteþanc* 'hate-thought', *inwitþanc* 'malice-thought', *fōreþanc* 'forethought', *þanchycgende* 'thought-thinking', and *searoþanc* 'intricacy-thought'. These words span a spectrum of emotion and cognition, with *heteþanc* clearly representing a feeling, *inwitþanc*, *mōdgeþanc*, and *þanchycgende* representing something in between (or both) feeling and cognition, and *searoþanc* and *fōreþanc* representing complex intellectual thought.

For the one instance that did not appear as a compound:

(22)   breost innan weoll
         chest inside welled

þeostrum geþoncum, swa   him   geþywe ne wæs.
with dark thoughts,   as   to him   usual   not was.

'The inside of his chest welled with dark thoughts, which was unusual for him.' (*Beowulf* 2331b-2332)

(22) describes Beowulf's grief at finding out the the dragon has attacked his home. What is most interesting about this passage is that *geþoncum* 'thoughts', the only example of this word appearing uncompounded in the data, is preceded by the adjective *þeostrum* 'dark'. What this, the fact that it nowhere appears alone without either another half of a compound or an accompanying adjective, means is that *þanc* was almost meaningless on its own, indicating only internal life and implying no particular type or process of mentality.

The conclusion we can draw from the data examined so far is that, while the verb forms of *þencan* and *geþencan* may not be as "colorless" as Ogura (1986) claimed, this related noun

certainly was. Furthermore, a complete lack of volition, belief, or epistemics is also characteristic

of this noun.

Hogian is easily the most sparsely attested of the words considered in this study, with

only 2 tokens. As such, we can consider both examples in full.

> (23) `Ic þæt hogode,   þa   ic on   holm   gestah,
>   *"I that thought, when I on the ocean climbed onto,*
>
>   sæbat   gesæt mid minra secga gedriht,
>   *the sea-boat settled with my   troop of warriors,*
>
>   þæt ic anunga eowra leoda
>   *that I zeal   your people's*
>
>   willan geworhte, oþðe on   wæl   crunge
>   *will   worked,   or on slaughter yield*
>
>   feondgrapum   fæst.
>   *with the enemy's grip firm.*

'I thought this, when I set out over the ocean, with my troop of warriors settled into my

sea-boat: that I would zealously make your people's will done, or yield to the slaughter of

the enemy's tight grip.' (*Beowulf* 632-636a)

This is the first part of Beowulf's statement to Wealhtheow at the welcome feast before Beowulf

faces Grendel. It is a most interesting case in light of the other findings of the present study.

Hogode clearly means something similar to 'intended' in this sentence, but in a different way

from *þencan*. Recall that *þencan* can express volition without conscious or complicated thoughts,

as in (10) above. *Hogian*, however, is directly reporting thoughts. For an intention to be

verbalized, it must be conscious and at least partially thought through, unlike a feeling or a

whim. *Hogian*, then, certainly has a meaning related to *þencan*, but perhaps implying a certain

degree of assurance that the speaker's intention is not merely a whim. However, this analysis is

contradicted by (24).

(24) `Hu   lomp eow on   lade,   leofa Biowulf,
"How befell you on the way, dear Beowulf,

   þa   ðu   færinga feorr gehogodest
when you suddenly far   thought

   sæcce   secean ofer sealt wæter,
fighting to seek over salt   water,

   hilde to Hiorote?
battle to Heorot?

'How did it go, dear Beowulf, when you suddenly thought to seek battle far over

saltwater, in Heorot?' (*Beowulf* 1987-1890a)

This is Hygelac enquiring after Beowulf's adventure right after he firsts arrives home after

saving Heorot. Once again, there is an element of volition, where *gehogodest* expresses

Beowulf's desire to travel to Denmark. However, unlike in (23), no complex thought is implied

here. This is made clear by the inclusion of *fǣringa* 'suddenly', which suggests that the thought

came upon him with no cognitive labor required. This second example puts *hogian* in line with

þencan, showing that they could both express intention with varying degrees of planning behind

them.

The similar word *hycgan*, meanwhile, is almost the opposite of *hogian* in terms of

frequency. There are 26 tokens of it in the data, second only to *wēnan*'s 27. As mentioned above,

the reason it has so far been largely ignored by researchers exploring verbs of thought is because

its verb form rarely appears. Only one example (3.8%) was found, and that in the subjunctive. Of

the remaining 25 instances, 14 (53.8% of the total number) are nouns, 10 (38.5%) are adjectives,

and 1 (3.8%)[5] is an adjective used as a substantive. Of the 23 tokens that appear in *Beowulf*, 16

(70%) tokens are found in narration and 7 (30%) are in dialogue, which suggests this word has a

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[5] The percentages add up to 99.9 due to rounding to the nearest tenth.

slightly elevated tone but is not unsuited to the spoken register. However, the usual caveat that

we cannot be certain that a distinction between dialogue and narration in Beowulf is meaningful

applies.

17 of the 26 tokens (65.4%) appear as compounds. However, unlike *þanc*, which

overwhelmingly appeared as the second half of the compounds, *hycgan* appears almost equally

often as the first and the second element (8 and 9 times, respectively). Interestingly, in 7 of the 9

instances (77.7%) in which it appears as the second element the compound is an adjective, and in

5 of the 8 instances (62.5%) in which it appears as the first element the compound is a noun,

although this count includes the substantive adjective as a noun. Examples of both adjectives and

nouns follow.

> (25)   Ða   se æðeling giong
> *Then the prince   went*
>
> þæt he bi wealle wishycgende
> *that he by wall   wise-thinking*
>
> gesæt on sesse;
> *sat   on a seat;*
>
> 'Then the (wise?) prince went and (wisely?) sat on a seat by the wall.' (*Beowulf* 2715b-
>
> 2717a)

This is in the cave, right after the dragon's poison begins to affect Beowulf. While the meaning

of *wishycgende* is easy enough to glean from its PDE translation of 'wise-thinking', there is

some ambiguity present, which is why two possible translations were offered in (25), indicated

by parentheticals and question marks. Does this passage mean that Beowulf was wise as a trait,

or that he was wise in this particular instance to sit down when the poison hit him? In fact,

compound adjectives with *hycgende* as the second element can mean either. Consider (26) and

(27).

(26)   fægere geþægon
        fair   drank

  medoful   manig   magas   þara
  mead-cup   many   the strong there

  swiðhicgende   on sele þam   hean,
  strong-thinking on   hall   the   exalted,

  Hroðgar   ond Hroþulf.
  Hrothgar and Hrothulf.

  'The powerful drank well many a mead-cup there, strong-thinking in the exalted hall,

  Hrothgar and Hrothulf.' (*Beowulf* 1014b-1017a)

(27)   æghwæðrum   wæs
        it to each of the two   was

  bealohycgendra   broga   fram   oðrum.
   evil-thinking   dread   from   the other.

  'Each of the two were wishing evil on and feeling dread of the other.' (*Beowulf* 2564b-

  2565)

In (26), which describes the victory banquet held after Beowulf's defeat of Grendel,

swīðhicgende is unlikely to refer to a temporary thought in the minds of the warriors. After all,

during a victory feast, thoughts of triumph and joy would be more expected than ones of

strength. The reason the warriors are described as "strong-thinking" is because strength of mind

– as OE speakers would have conceived the concept – is a permanent trait of the referents.

This is in contrast to (27), which describes Beowulf and the dragon. The feelings they

hold towards each other, the *broga* 'dread, terror' which was *bealohycgendra* 'evil-thinking', last

only as long as their conflict.

There is one more interesting point to consider about (27). The word *bealohycgendra* in

this context means that Beowulf and the dragon both wanted to hurt the other. However, this is

the only indication of volition associated with any example of *hycgan* found in the data, and it is

a fairly weak implication, inferred from the idea that if one is thinking about harm befalling an

enemy in battle, then it logically follows that that person wants to harm the enemy. That

inference depends strongly on context to be made. Additionally, consider (28):

(28) Hyge   wæs him   hinfus,   wolde on heolster fleon,
Thoughts was to him ready to go, wanted on darkness flee,

 secan deofla   gedræg;
to seek devils' company;

'It was his thoughts that he wanted to go, to flee in the darkness, to seek the company of

devils.' (*Beowulf* 755-756b)

This passage describes Grendel being shocked at Beowulf's strength. It is the presence of the

word *wolde* 'wanted' that is important. If *hycgan* could imply volition as strongly as *þencan* or

hogian, *wolde* would not be needed to make Grendel's desire explicit. We can therefore conclude

that *hycgan* was only very weakly volitional at best.

(29) Þæt wæs þam gomelan gingæste word
That was that   aged   youngest word

breostgehygdum,   ær   he   bæl   cure,
 chest-thought,   before he funeral pyre chose,

hate   heaðowylmas;
heat of the war-flames;

'That was the last word from the thoughts in the old man's chest before he chose the

funeral pyre, the heat of the war-flames;' (*Beowulf* 2817-2819a)

This passage refers to Beowulf's dying moment. *Breostgehygdum* clearly means 'mind', and

what it implies about the mind is that it is a thing of multiplicity and complex design. Very

possibly, the "word" is being conceived of as a single small piece of the mind, in which case the

mind implied by *hycgan* is one of intricate composition, being made of many small parts. The only possible counterexample, (30), is largely dependent on context for its interpretation.

(30) hine fyrwyt bræc
      him curiosity broke

    modgehygdum,   hwæt þa men wæron.
    to the mind-thought, what which men   were.

'Curiosity to know who these men were broke into his thoughts.' (*Beowulf* 232b-233)

This is the coastguard's reaction to seeing Beowulf's arrival with his warriors on the beach. The use of the word *bræc* 'broke' implies a change in the subject of the coastguard's thoughts, and, presumably, until the arrival of Beowulf, he did not have much to do, so it can be supposed that his thoughts were wandering idly. It could very well be then that *hygd* simply means 'mind' with no further implications; however, even idle thoughts are thoughts and need not be simple ones, and because there are no other examples which indicate a lack of complex thought, it must be concluded that *hycgan* implied, at the very least, the existence of sentient thought.

Overall, the general meaning of *hycgan* can be said to overlap strongly with feelings, with the general workings of the mind, and with thoughts that are multiple but not complex. There is no volition or expectation present, nor can *hycgan* be used for pragmatic purposes, such as making an indirect request.

Having now considered all the words collected for this study, we can now chart them on a map of the semantic field.
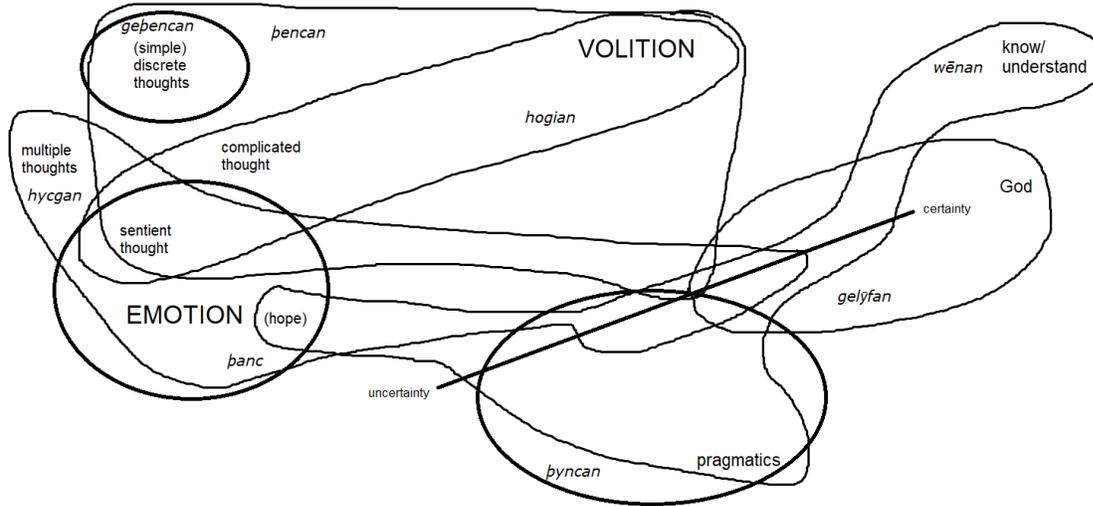
Fig. 1 A map of 8 OE words in the semantic field of thought

Limitations and Directions for Further Research

The most obvious limitation of this study is the limited number of data considered here. More data are always better, and so a similar study which accessed the complete corpus of OE poetry would not go amiss. Furthermore, it is questionable how generalizable the results of this study are to prose, which is presumed by its nature to be closer to spoken language, and so a similar study using prose texts as the data source is needed to verify the claims made in the present study. Ideally, a study using both poetry and prose and comparing the two could be done.

Another limitation of this study is that it did not use the complete BP approach. Essentially, collocations were not taken systematically or quantitatively into account. A much larger study with more fully coded data and more informative statistical analyses could address the problem of subjectivity which BP was designed to eliminate and from which the present study still suffers.

A third obvious limitation is that not all words in the semantic field of thought were examined. For example, *talian* 'to suppose, consider, reckon, account' would be an exciting addition to this study as it has a variety of meanings, all of which overlap with those of the words investigated here. A study could also extend its investigation closer to the edges of the field, investigating words with more tenuous connections to cognition such as *gemunan* 'to remember', as well as words from different word classes, such as *gemyndig* 'mindful'. A third possible way to expand the pool of words in a study would be to consider the other two parts of the mind identified by Geeraerts & Gevaert (2008), namely emotions and volition. Considering all three parts together is a potentially huge undertaking, but one that may turn out to be very worthwhile.

Another possible direction for future research involves an entirely different methodology. A methodology that has not been tried on OE is Dyvik's "semantic mirror" approach, which posits that if two words in language A are both often translated with the same word in language B, they belong to the same semantic field (Aijmer & Simon-Vandenbergen, 2004). The difficulty with this methodology is that most translations of OE into PDE are translations of poetry, and very often the translators try to render the result as poetic as possible in PDE rather than as literal as possible, and thus the results would be muddied. Nevertheless, if the methodology is sound for living languages, then such a study using OE could potentially still render highly interesting results that could either support or refute the conclusions reached in the present study.

A final possible subject worth further study is any change in the syntax of any of these verbs, especially *wēnan*, over time. Traugott (1982) mentions that words may undergo semantic-syntactic change in order to maximize their information content, and that this is a defense against grammaticalization. If, in later works, *wēnan* has undergone significant syntactic changes compared to earlier works like *Beowulf*, it would suggest that perhaps *wēnan* was indeed on its

way to becoming grammaticalized and was, after all, weakened, as Gorrell (1895) claims and the

present study has refuted.

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