

The Journal of Germanic Mythology and Folklore

Issue 1
January 31, 2004

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Preface to The Journal of Germanic Mythology, Issue 1

"The tragic events of World War II prevented me from going ahead with my plan to study Germanic religion from a comparative point of view, especially with the distortion of the facts that its use and abuse by Nazi ideology too often entailed." – Edgar Polomé, *Essays on Germanic Religion*. (1989) Washington D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man.

Mission of the J.G.M.F.

The above quote is sadly the truth: The nature of national socialism and the climate it continues to create even after its death has been and will continue to be a serious threat to all progressive scholarly work on the subject of Germanic religion, Indo-Europeans and ancient Germanic peoples, but it is our aim to put aside these false fears. Not only must we consider all the people of Europe as victims and the genetic loss, which this victimisation inflicted, but we must also consider the scholarly loss of interest in this area as well. To expand on this fact, one need only compare the amount of work done before the war to that done after the war.

The Journal of Germanic Mythology and Folklore hopes to further stimulate interest and bring to light new scholarship as well as dispel misinterpretations and misunderstandings.

As a free web-based journal, we believe in open information. This is also why we accept submissions from academics and non-academics alike. It is designed as a forum to share new scholarship on topics relating to Germanic (sometimes referred to as Norse or Teutonic) mythology and folklore (ancient, medieval and modern).

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The Fetter, the Ring and the Oath: Binding Symbolism in Viking Mythology

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Abstract:

In the Viking myths, the theme of binding was reflected in many aspects of their stories: the images of gods and beasts bound in magical fetters, magical knots unable to be untied, fate woven by the Norns, and oaths sworn on rings. Most of the Norse myths involved a bargain, an oath related to the bargain, and a test of a character's ability to carry out a task in the bargain. Those who entered into bargains with the gods lost the game, but when the gods initiated the bargain they usually achieved their desires. The gods were also selective in abiding by the terms of the oaths: oaths made to outsiders were merely ways to deceive and trick, but oaths to each other were adhered to in a scrupulous fashion. The Viking myths stressed that loyalty to kinsmen and the ability to deceive outsiders were the two "virtues" that had to work together for a Viking to be considered a mature and well-balanced person.

The Norse religion was as violent as the Vikings themselves during the Viking age in Europe from 800 to 1000 A.D. Although most of the Norse people were peaceful farmers and hunters, many of their myths and gods reflected the adventurous, aggressive and warlike spirit of the Viking raiders. The Viking or Norse myths have a distinctive adventurous element to them that emphasizes the quest. In the beginning of most of the Norse myths, the gods face a dilemma and must find some way of working their way through a problem. The quest also revolved around some kind of oath or bargain, and the gods used all their cunning to avoid fulfilling the terms of their agreements. Almost always the myths involved a journey to the mysterious and dangerous land of the giants or dwarves, in an attempt to find or recover strength, immortality, an object of beauty, a weapon, or even a lover. Just as the Norse gods, the Vikings were constantly traveling to foreign lands to bring back riches. Yet though the myths reflected a great deal of the warlike economy of the Vikings, there was still more to be found in the myths that cannot be

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath explained simply as reflections of their economy. The Viking religion was violent but it also sought to remedy the flaws of the people and provide them with symbols to guide them. Most of these religious symbols were related to binding and were derived from their skills with knots, metallurgy and weaving; all of these skills had magical powers associated with them in the Norse myths. This binding symbolism was prevalent in Viking religion because the Vikings keenly felt bound by oaths, obligations and fate, and this condition was reflected in their myths and arts.

The Vikings actually believed that their fate was woven by beings called Norns and that they were unable to lengthen their lives through any means. In the Viking world fate was the greatest power and even the gods and goddesses were subject to this power. Fate was a great web woven of bonds. This does not mean that the Vikings believed that all their actions were controlled. Rather they felt that fate had already determined the day of their death. For the Vikings, people always had control over the attitude they adopted when they met conflict or death, and

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ideally that would be an attitude of fearlessness and even humor.

The concept of fate helped them to be fearless warriors since they believed that they could not avoid their death; they might as well try to win fame with a heroic death:

Cattle die, kinsmen die, the self must also die; but
glory never dies, for the man who is able to achieve
it.. (Larrington, 1996, p.24)

This yearning for permanence, for immortality, is the central aspect of many ancient religions and the realization of this goal through fame was one of the ways that Vikings believed that they transcended the mundane world.

One of the persistent symbols in Viking myth was that of the unification of the opposites and the result of this union was often linked to alchemical symbolism. The Norse myths of creation and destruction were both examples of this process of opposites coming together to create a new world. At creation, there were two realms: Nifheim in the north, a realm of ice and snow and Muspell in the south, a land of molten lava. The two realms touched and ice was thawed sufficiently to form a giant named

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Ymir. Creation proceeded with the sacrifice and dismemberment of Ymir by the gods who then made the world out of his body.

Similar to the creation story, the story of the destruction of the world at Ragnarok also contained this same theme of unification.

An army of those who were good, those allied with Odin and Thor, and an evil army of those allied with Loki the trickster, would meet each other on a great plain and battle each other. After a the gods fought a great bloody battle, the god Surt covered the world with fire and the earth sank into the sea. Finally, however, the earth emerged from the sea renewed and cleansed. Surviving the cataclysm were the daughter of the sun, two human beings and a few good gods who find gold chess pieces in the grass of the new world. The process implicit here was similar to the alchemical symbolism that Mircea Eliade so well described in his book, *The Forge and the Crucible*. Alchemists believed they could create gold, a symbol of immortality since it did not tarnish, through a marriage of male and female elements. Marriage also implied an ensuing birth. To help this alchemical marriage, the alchemists and

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Iron Age smiths believed that some kind of blood sacrifice even human sacrifice would help the production of new metals. (Eliade, 1979, p.67-68) The next stage involved heating the elements in a crucible, and reducing them to the primal matter out of which gold should form according to ancient alchemical theory. Ragnorak followed this same pattern. The two opposites, good and evil, met on the battlefield. The blood sacrifice was implicit in the battle. After this Surt covered the world with purifying fire and then it sank into the primal matter, the sea. From this a new world was born and the gold chess pieces were the symbolic result of the unification, the bonding of the opposites. Chess pieces were also representations of people; these golden people were a symbol of human immortality. Ancient alchemists believed that they could forge for themselves divine bodies. In China for example the ancient alchemists believed that “as to the true man, he makes gold because he wishes, by the medicinal use of it that is by assimilating it as food, to become immortal.” (Eliade, 1979, p.114) Through the principle of like effects like, the alchemists believed that the

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath alchemical process of the creation of gold would affect him in such a way that he would come to perfection and immortality. (Eliade, 1979, p. 160) The same symbolism was present in the myth of Otter in *Skaldskaparmal* in which Odin, Loki and Hoenir took an oath to compensate Otter’s father for his son’s death. These gods vowed to stuff the skin of their dead son with gold and cover it completely with gold. In a symbolic sense they were forging a divine golden body for Otter. The Norse were an Iron age people whose economy depended on their ability to use the forge and they greatly prized gold not only as a currency but also for use in works of art. The metals produced and worked at the forge were central to their religious symbolism. Gold was not simply a metal but a magical substance that symbolized incorruptibility and immortality; Otter’s golden body and the golden chess pieces in the beginning and after Ragnorak were not random details but were alchemical symbols of purity and immortality.

Another common magical symbol described in the myth of Ragnorak was the symbol of bonds. All bonds broke at Ragnorak.

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Loki, who the gods bound to a rock with the entrails of his son, escaped just before Ragnorak. The wolf Fenrir whom the gods bound with a magic fetter broke free. The Midgard serpent that circled the world biting his tail finally released his tail and came to fight the gods. Also all bonds of trust and obligation were broken.

Voluspa described the story of Ragnorak:

Brother will fight brother and be his slayer, brother and sister will violate the bond of kinship; hard it is in the world, there is much adultery, axe-age, sword-age, shields are cleft asunder, wind-age, wolf-age, before the world plunges headlong; no man will spare another. (Larrington, 1996, p.10)

All familial bonds and all laws broke as chaos ensued. By the end of the story, the surviving gods restored the familial bonds since they took over the roles of their parents: the daughter of the sun rose in her place, Balder the son of Odin took his father's place, Thor's sons inherited their father's hammer. The scene following the battle was one of peace and contemplation. The gods reflected on the battles and on the deeds of those who went before them. The memory of the deeds made them endure and became a link with the past. For the Vikings, the greatest tribute to the dead was to

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath remember their deeds, and this practice showed their loyalty to the gods who fought and died at Ragnorak.

Odin the All-Father of the gods, the god of fury and war, fit well into the binding symbolism of the Viking world. One of the ways the Vikings offered human sacrifice to Odin was by hanging these victims from trees. This custom of hanging was similar to the Norse custom of strangling concubines who would volunteer to accompany dead chieftains to the next world. Odin was called, *Hangagud*, God-of-the-hanged. (Young, 1954, p.48) In the Viking age this ritual of hanging was a parallel to the hanging of Odin on the world tree Yggdrasil. The Vikings believed that the world tree united the three levels of the cosmos: Asgard the world of the Gods; Midgard the men, and Niflheim, the land of the dead. To gain knowledge and transcend the physical world, Odin stabbed himself in the side to pin himself to the world tree with his spear. Thus connected to the world tree, Odin was connected to the source of all life and truth. When Odin hung from Yggdrasil he symbolically died, was reborn and gained knowledge from the

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experience of suffering. He gained knowledge from being bound to the world tree and he also received sacrifices that were hung on trees. He suffered nine long nights to win knowledge of the future. In a sense he died to transcend the physical world, and through the endurance of suffering became mature. Just as in many ancient rites of passage, a person had to endure suffering to advance, Odin did just this. In contrast, Thor was never seen as fully mature since he never sought wisdom and thus was always fooled by illusion.

Odin was a master of bonds and fetters that the Norse considered magical. Religion, *religio*, and yoga mean to bond, attach or yoke together. Through bonds religious people attached themselves to the divine. In the Indo-European tradition, knots had varying uses; sorcerers believed knots could cause evil and others believed that knots could prevent evil. Knots were associated with birth, death, and marriage rituals. Even today the marital expression “to tie the knot” is in common use. The magical symbolism of knots was that they bound one to either good or evil. In Viking religion, many people were sacrificed to Odin by being

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath hanged and there were also initiation ceremonies in which initiates were symbolically hanged, (Eliade, 1964, p.380) presumably to gain an attachment to Odin. Additionally, in many Indo-European languages, magic is etymologically linked to binding: to tie or bind with magical charms was a common idiom used. (Eliade, 1952, 92-124) Speaking of Hindu mythology, Mircea Eliade, the scholar of comparative religion, said “first, that in the cosmos as well as in human life, everything is connected with everything else in an invisible web; and secondly, that certain divinities are the mistresses of these “threads” which constitute, ultimately, a vast cosmic ‘bondage.’” (Eliade, 1952, p.114) Odin, like Varuna of Hinduism, was a master of bonds. In the *Havamal*, Odin bound his enemies with magic but he himself could not be bound:

I know a fourth one [spell], if men put chains upon my limbs; I can chant so that I can walk away, fetters spring from my feet, and bonds from my hands. (Larrington, 1996, p. 35)

In contrast, when Thor tried to open a magical knot the giant Skymir tied around his bag of food, Thor was unable to untie it. Odin, not Thor, was the master of magic and knots. Even one of

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Odin's servants, a Valkyrie, had the name *Herfjotur*, "Fetterer-of-an-army;" (Young, 1954, p.61; Davidson, 1964, p. 64) the Valkyries bind with the fetters of death. In the *Poetic Edda* in the *First Poem of Helgi Hundingsbani*, there is an example of the Norns weaving the destinies of men:

They twisted very strongly the strand of fate in
Bralund; they prepared the golden thread and
fastened it in the middle of the moon's hall.
(Larrington, 1996, p. 115)

In this poem the Norns wove threads of destiny. Existence was a vast net of golden threads and the Norns were the mistresses of the web. Rings and necklaces were the external signs of the bond that linked two people together in marriage in Norse culture. Bonds were broken and reestablished at times of initiation, birth and death. Bonds, laws restraints and oaths were necessary for society to exist, and without these bonds humanity would be destroyed in chaos. Eliade suggested that the prevalence of the binding complex "is probably due to man's recognizing in this complex a sort of archetype of his own situation in the world." (Eliade, 1952,

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath
p. 117) The Vikings felt bound by many obligations and oaths; they felt caught in the web of fate.

Viking art was a reflection of the binding symbolism in their culture. Their art was full of vigor and action, and is characterized by its interlaced patterns. In their rock and woodcarving and on their brooches, many figures of twisted animals and humans have ropes interwoven all around them. Often these ropes encircle the necks of the figurines, which may imply the hanging custom. Through their art, the Norse showed that the bonds of oaths and fate were central to their psychology and existence.

In the myth of Ragnarok the breaking of the magical bonds represented an irruption of the forces of chaos into the world. Bonds in Viking mythology were magical and held evil forces at bay until the power of fate released them. Fenrir the great wolf could break any bond because of his great strength until the dwarves made a slender magical fetter:

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This was made from six things: the noise a cat makes when it moves, the beard of a woman, the roots of a mountain, the sinews of a bear, the breath of a fish, and the spittle of a bird. (Young, 1954, p. 57)

Though the chain was deceptively thin, its strength lay in its magic, and deception and magic were stronger than brute force. Thus the fierce animal nature was bound up until the end. Loki was bound to a rock with the entrails of his own son until Ragnarok. Biting its own tail encircling the sea, the World Serpent of Norse myth can be seen as being bound to itself. All of these forces were repressed or suppressed by social and religious laws until the end of the world when all these bonds broke. Loki the trickster and his children the serpent and the wolf represented the sometimes fierce instinctual nature that must be bound up so that civilization could prosper. Since the Norse culture was really just beginning to enter the civilized world, these symbols were central to the culture and were a type of paradox. The Vikings were ruthless and at times seemed to let out their animal nature. Indeed some were referred to as Berserkers who attained such a fury in

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath battle that they believed they were invincible. Coming to battle naked or clad in wolf skins, the Berserkers received their inspiration and fury in battle from Odin the God of fury who protected them. Their wildness was often compared to that of wolves; they “went without mail coats, and were as frantic as dogs or wolves.... They were called wolf-coats.... [they] were said to be shape-changers, and sometimes to take on animal form.” (Davidson, 1964, p. 66-68) The Vikings were a group that was emerging into civilization but had not quite left behind the habits and attitudes of their tribal past. The myths reflected this animal nature, the fierceness, ruthlessness and cunning nature that was bound up when they were at home, and unbound when it was needed in battle away from home.

These same themes of binding symbolism were present in Norse poem, *The Lay of Voland*. When Voland and his brothers were hunting, they found three Valkyries weaving flax. The three brothers took the Valkyries as wives and lived happily for many years. As time passed, the Valkyries grew restless for war, left the

three brothers, and did not return. Voland's two brothers set out to search for their wives leaving Voland alone. Being a marvelous smith, Voland acquired a great wealth of seven hundred gold rings that he bound together with a rope. But one day a king had one of Voland's rings stolen off the rope while Voland was away from his home. Returning home and counting the rings, Voland realized that a ring was missing. He rejoiced thinking that his wife had returned and claimed a ring. However, when Voland woke the next morning he found that the king's men bound him in fetters. They brought him to the king, and he saw that his stolen ring was given to the princess. The king ordered his men to cut Voland's hamstrings so that he could not escape, and sent Voland to an island to forge treasures for the king. Secretly Voland swore that he would avenge himself, and one day he gained the chance when the princess came to the island. The princess's ring (the same stolen from Voland) was broken and she asked Voland to mend it. Taking the ring with promises that he would fix it, Voland gave the princess beer, which put her to sleep. Voland then slept with the

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath princess. The return of the ring to Voland gave him the powers of flight, and Voland flew off the island to see the king. Unable to reach or smite the hovering Voland, the king listened in sorrow to Voland's account of his exploit with his daughter. Finally, the king had to accept Voland's demand that the princess marry him.

In *The Lay of Voland* the ring is a symbol of a bond, and this is emphasized by the detail that all the rings were bound together with a rope. At the beginning of the story Voland lost the bond with his wife who is a type of goddess or angel. The result of this was Voland's loss of power that was symbolized by the loss of his ring (symbolic of his bond to his wife). Constraining fetters that bound him to the earth then replaced the bond to his wife that was lost. Furthermore the king cut Voland's hamstrings so that he lost even more mobility. The king placed him in a situation in which he was alone on an island, constrained, bound to the earth, and in servitude. He lost his bond with the feminine and with heaven represented by his divine wife. Voland regressed to a state of isolation and servitude and was unable to transcend or fix his

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situation until the reappearance of the feminine. By recovering his contact with the feminine, his power returned to him. The ring returned was a symbol of reuniting with the feminine aspect of his life and reestablishing his contact with the heavens: he was no longer bound to the earth and could fly. It was through his bond to his new wife that he regained his power.

A pattern similar to that in *The Lay of Voland* was present in the myths of Thor who was known for his masculine approach to problems. Like Voland, Thor was a smith who had problems particularly with the feminine aspect of his personality. Just like Voland, he lost his power and only regained it by recovering his bond to the feminine. In *The Lay of Thrym*, a giant named Thrym stole Thor's hammer, and Thrym demanded that the Gods give him Freya in exchange so that he may take her as his wife. Therefore, Heimdall devised a ruse in which Thor disguised himself as Freya in a bridal gown and veil so that he could gain access to Thrym's hall. Initially Thor resisted this scheme and said that it would be unmanly to dress as a woman, but he finally

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relented when he saw no alternative. Thor's disguise was effective and Thrym eventually placed Mjollnir in the lap of the bride to bless her and promote her fertility, which was a practice at Norse weddings. The hammer of Thor was a fertility symbol and was associated with the thunderbolt and fertility. When they placed the hammer on Thor's lap, he grabbed his hammer, swept off his disguise and proceeded to kill all the giants in the hall. In the most general sense, the symbolic structure of the story can be summarized as follows: Thor lost the symbol of strength and fertility (the hammer is clearly phallic here), he became a woman to recover his manhood, and he recovered his hammer and once again became a man.

The problem that this myth set out to solve was that of Thor's excessive masculinity. Thor most often confronted problems with violence rather than thought or craftiness. If there was a problem, Thor characteristically announced who he was, threatened the adversary with death, picked up his hammer and, with no ruse or guile, faced the enemy man to man in combat. In *The Lay of*

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Thrym, the other gods mocked and humbled Thor, who had lost his masculine power. Thor had to use trickery and intelligence to solve his problem rather than just force. The other gods symbolically forced him to embrace his feminine side and through this he recovered his power: he became a psychologically whole and balanced person. Though the Vikings saw violence and direct confrontation as a masculine way of combating problems, they also saw the need for deception, magic, and craftiness which they identified with femininity:

The words of a girl no one should trust, nor what a woman says; for on a whirling wheel their hearts were made, deceit lodged in their breasts. (Larrington, 1996, p.25)

In a sense they were also justifying their own use of trickery in warfare by identifying it with the gods. As warriors, the Vikings made deception and ruse into an art, and here they were showing that masculine force cannot solve all problems; to be truly effective, a person needed also to bond with the feminine and use thought, craft, and illusion to outwit his opponents. As in *The Lay*

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of Voland, male and female aspects must be unified in the personality for there to be wholeness and potency.

Just as Voland, Thor was associated with rings, and these rings were symbolic of bonds. In Thor's temples there were rings of gold and silver on which the Norse people swore oaths. (Davidson, 1964, p. 76-77) The Norse people saw Thor as trustworthy, since he was so straightforward and was not inclined to ruse or deception, and therefore it was appropriate that Thor would oversee the fulfillment of oaths of allegiance which bound together the Norse community. With his great strength, Thor's role was to protect the people from outside invasion from the giants and he also protected the community from internal conflict by overseeing that the people held to the oaths that bound them together. At the same time the Norse people saw Odin as untrustworthy since he was so deceptive. Thor was the God of the common people and in death the common people journeyed to Thor's hall. In contrast the nobles, if they died a good death in battle they journeyed to Odin's hall, Valhalla. Odin was the model of the Vikings since he showed

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the Vikings how to deceive the outsiders. Thor was a civilizing
God since the oaths sworn to Thor bound the common Norse
people together.

Another similarity to *The Lay of Voland* is that Thor was a
divine smith. In the Iron Age, the smiths reputedly had magical
powers and many saw them as powerful, dangerous and often
pernicious beings. Though Thor was a benevolent figure, he was
associated with the smiths in several ways. In rituals, the Norse
used Thor's hammer not only to hallow the bride or promote life,
but also to bless children at birth and the dead at funerals.
(Davidson, 1964, p. 80) In the myth of Thor's journey to Utgard-
Loki described in the *Prose Edda*, Thor used the hammer to
reanimate and reincarnate the bones of dead goats. (Young, 1954,
p.70; Faulkes, 1982, p. 37) The hammer was symbol of life-giving
potency. In funerals, the Norse blessed the dead with confidence
that they would regain their bodies in the heavens. The hammer
was also a symbol of the thunderbolt that Thor threw at his
enemies. Through his comparative study of religions, Mircea

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Eliade noted that "the weapons which the smith-gods or divine
smiths forge for the celestial gods are thunder and lightning."
(Eliade, 1979, p. 100) In this study, Eliade noted that the smith
was often a civilizing hero, a rainmaker, and a person associated
with rites of passage and oaths. (Eliade, 1979, 87-108) These traits
were common to smiths since they produced the tools that made
agriculture and defense easier. The smiths produced the weapons
of war and the plowshares which were both necessary for
civilization. Thor was a civilizing god who was associated with
the agriculture that was the basis for a sedentary civilization, the
war that would defend or expand the civilization, and the oaths and
laws that bound it together.

Thor embodied the traditional characteristics of masculinity: he
was adventurous, brave, violent, wrathful, straightforward,
physically strong, and consistent. He was a great eater and drinker.
Thor however, lacked any feminine qualities, and several myths,
like *The Lay of Thrym*, tried to illustrate this deficit in Thor. *The
Lay of Harbard* also showed how Thor was stifled by his excessive

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masculinity. In this myth, Thor desired to cross a river, and he called to the ferryman on the other side of the river to take him across. Yet the ferryman who called himself Harbard was really Odin in disguise, and Thor did not recognize Odin, his father. Harbard replied to Thor that Thor's mother was dead and called Thor a barefoot, homeless beggar. Harbard and Thor began a long exchange of insults and boasts. Yet it was the type of insults that is significant. While Thor boasted of his success in war, and Harbard boasted of his success in seducing women, his cleverness, his deceptiveness and even his practice of stirring up war. When Harbard asked Thor his name, Thor was straightforward and provided it, while Harbard in disguise dissembled about his name. Ridiculing Thor, Harbard called him a woman-killer, and claimed that his wife had another lover. Thor could only insult Odin back and call him "womanish" and cowardly. Finally, Harbard sent Thor to find his mother, and Thor, unable to use threats or his strength to get across the river, had to find his way around the river. This exchange of insults exemplified the difference between

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Odin and Thor. Odin was the subtle, deceptive, instigator of conflict who was successful with women. Thor lacked any subtlety or artifice in his contest with Odin, and Odin accused him of being unsuccessful in his relations with women (his wife was cheating on him, his mother was dead, he was a killer of women). On the other hand Thor called Odin "womanish" and indeed from the Norse perspective Odin did have more female qualities than Thor: Odin was characterized by deception, subtlety, and magical trickery rather than straightforward physical violence. The Vikings believed that the use of sorcery to injure and opponent was an unmanly way to win a battle: Georges Dumézil said that the Vikings believed magic was "attended by such wickedness that manly men considered it shameful to practice it, and so it was taught to priestesses." (Dumézil, 1973, p. 28) Odin was always resorting to his magic and deception to win his battles whereas Thor relied almost solely on strength. In this contest of wits with Harbard, Thor was ultimately the loser and this was another example of his humiliation. In this myth Thor was a raging child

throwing a tantrum and Odin finally sent Thor to find his mother at the end of the story. For the Viking the ability to deceive was an art that was associated with maturity. In *The Lay of Harbard*, Thor was portrayed as a raging child who was too immature to see through artifice.

A third myth of Thor's humiliation, which can be found in the *Prose Edda*, concerned his journey to visit Utgard-Loki. During their expedition, Thor's party came upon a huge giant called Utgard-Loki and they decided to travel with him. They came to the giant's hall where the giants put Thor's party to several tests. When it was Thor's turn to prove himself, he bragged that he could drink more than anyone, but he failed to drain the horn of mead the giant gave him. When he was asked to lift the giant's cat, he failed in this task also. The giants also challenged him to wrestle an old woman and the woman brought him to his knee. Finally the giant revealed that he had been using magic to deceive Thor. The end of the horn of mead was in the sea, and the sea had ebbed since Thor drank so much. The cat was the serpent that encircled the world,

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath and the old woman was "old age." As with Harbard, Thor was in a situation where his power was useless and impotent when it was necessary to confront deception. Thor was not unintelligent but rather was tied to the physical world of appearances and unable to identify deception.

The myths of Thor had a significant impact on the Viking psyche and were a reflection of their use of trickery and deception in their warfare. For them deception was a great virtue if used against enemies. Though strength was always necessary, to defeat enemies with a really cunning ruse was a truly poetic victory. It was this cunning, this break with the physical world, with the world of strength and force, that made a person really mature. For the Vikings, deception was a type of knowledge practiced by the mature of their society, by those who learned to control their outbursts of rage and know the limits of their force. This otherworldly knowledge of deception, which was linked to magic, was a central aspect of the Viking religion. Odin was the chief God of the Viking pantheon, the Allfather, because he, unlike

Thor, was a master of deception and magic. No bond could hold him, and only a few of the very wise could see through his disguises. Maturity for the Vikings was the ability to transcend the world of the physical by mastering the world of illusion and deception.

If deception, however, was maturity then it might seem as if Loki was the most mature of the Norse Gods, but this was not the case. Though the God Loki was a master of deceit, he lacked the loyalty to his peers that would have made him a model for the Vikings. These two Viking “virtues” of loyalty and deception had to work together as Aquinas said Christian virtues depended on each other. For the Vikings, deception was a virtue if it was directed toward outsiders or enemies. Loyalty was the virtue that was needed and required within the Norse culture to bind it together. Loki was a God who ultimately used deception to kill Baldur, a god to whom he owed loyalty. Thus Loki was the ultimate sinner for the Norse since he practiced deception without regard to the bonds of loyalty to his comrades. Bonds of loyalty

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath held Norse society together and Loki ultimately was a force against civilization – he was the opposite of Thor, the straightforward god of oaths.

Oaths were at the heart of the Norse religion and most of the myths in the *Poetic Edda* and *Prose Edda* involved some kind of oath or agreement. For the Norse Gods, oaths, promises or agreements with outsiders, foreigners or giants were just another way of tricking and deceiving these beings out of their property. There were many examples in the Norse myths in which outsiders initiated a bargain with the gods hoping to profit from this bargain. To formalize the bargain, parties often swore oaths or made some kind of agreement. For example the *Prose Edda* described the myth in which a giant disguised as a man approached the gods and offered to build a wall around Asgard in exchange for Freyja, the sun and the moon. After the Gods set what they believed was an impossible time limit to his task, they agreed, swore oaths to uphold the bargain, and gave him safe passage.

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Now there were strong witnesses to their bargain and it was confirmed by many oaths, because the giant did not consider it safe to be among the Aesir without safe conduct if Thor should come home. (Young, 1954, p. 67)

When the gods saw that the builder would complete his task on time they blamed Loki and threatened him with death unless he found a way for the gods to win the wager. So Loki swore oaths that he would find a way, which of course he did. The gods then violated their initial oaths of safe passage and killed the giant.

When, however, the Aesir saw for certain that it was a giant who had come there, no reverence was shown for their oaths and they called on Thor. (Young 1954, p. 67)

Oaths made to outsiders were not binding in the gods' eyes, but even a trickster like Loki fulfilled his oath to his peers.

There were numerous examples of the outsiders trying to trap the gods, profit from them, and bind them with oaths. Yet those who sought to bind the gods with oaths, never achieved what they desired. In *Scaldskaparmal* Loki, Odin, and Hoenir were traveling together attempting to cook an Ox but an eagle used magic to

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath prevent them from cooking. They agreed to give the eagle his fill if he would allow the cooking: Loki became angry that the eagle took too much, and hit the eagle and was captured by the eagle. He was only released when he swore to bring to the eagle Indun's apples. Though he does carry out his part of the bargain he was able to undo his deed by rescuing Indun and returning her to her position. When Odin, Loki and Hoenir were traveling they killed Otter but made a bargain that they would compensate Otter's father by covering the skin of Otter with gold. Also in *Scaldskaparmal* was a story in which the gods killed Skadi's father but compensated her with the choice of a husband by his feet. Skadi desired Baldur for a husband and assumed that he would be the one with the best feet. She however was deceived and choose Njord. This was another bargain in which the person who tried to bargain with the gods did not get what she wanted. In all these stories an individual approached the god and initiated a bargain with them and some oath was sworn to bind the gods to their words. However it seems that the gods could not be so easily bound. The

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gods took advantage of the desires of the outsiders and entrapped
them. Odin, in particular, was not known for keeping his oaths:

I thought Odin had sworn a sacred ring-oath, how
can his world be trusted! He left Suttung and made
Gunnlod weep. (Larrington, 1996, p.110)

Yet despite the gods' deceit, in Norse society breaking oaths was
seen as a great evil meriting eternal punishment:

There she saw wading in turbid streams men who
swore false oaths and murderers, and those who
seduced the close confidants of other men; there
Nidhogg sucks the bodies of the dead – a wolf tears
the corpses of men – do you understand yet, or what
more? (Larrington, 1996, p.. 9)

In these examples, however, it is clear that the gods were an
example to the Norse people and so oaths were sacred only
between the Norse people themselves. Oaths to outsiders,
however, were just another ruse or means of deceit to entrap them.

In *The Lay of Vafthrudnir*, the giant Vafthrudnir entered into a
bargain with Odin and this giant bet his head that he would win in a
contest of wits against Odin. Odin who used deception and
disguised himself was able to vanquish his rival in wisdom. In the

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story of Thor and Gerriod, Loki under duress swore to a Giant to
bring Thor to his hall without his hammer. Loki did this but it was
the giant who was killed by Thor. In *The Lay of Thrym*, the
marriage of Freya to Thrym is the price of the return of Thor's
hammer. Again this bargain made with the Gods is doomed to
fail. Making a deal with the Norse gods was like making a deal
with the mafia – they always found a way to change the terms and
only rarely did individuals receive from the bargain what they
desired. In all of these cases it was an outsider who approached
the gods and tried to bargain for something from them. They tried
to use oaths and agreements with the gods for their advantage. Yet
those that entered bargains with the Norse gods never received what
they wanted; ultimately the gods outwitted them, cheated them
out of their reward or killed them for their impertinence. As a
reflection of the Norse society this made some sense. The Vikings
used trickery and deceit in dealing with their enemies. They made
bargains with the conquered or those who feared them, and they
like the gods found ways to gain much and lose little in these

bargins. The Viking society was divided into those who went on expeditions and those who stayed at home. “Wits are needful for someone who travels widely, anything will do at home.”

(Larrington, 1996, p.15) In their dealings without outsiders, giants or dwarves, the gods used oaths to deceive and thus profit. Yet the gods were faithful to oaths amongst themselves. This was the model for the Vikings: deceive with promises and bargins the outsiders, yet hold to oaths made to kinsmen. Oaths of loyalty that bound the Norse society together, and that was why hell in their view was populated with oathbreakers. Breaking an oath to a kinsman was a capital sin for the Norse. Promises to those within the society were sacred:

If you want a good woman for yourself to talk ot as a close confidante, and to get pleasure from, make fair promises and keep them well, no man tires of good, if he can get it. (Larrington, 1996, p. 32)

Clearly the Vikings had a completely different set of ethics for those whom they conquered.

The gods also had desires and they sometimes initiated bargins and used oaths for their benefit. The gods promised Fenrir that they would release him if he failed to break magical fetter:

Then the gods said that he would soon snap so slight a ribbon of silk, when he had broken great fetters of iron before “and if you don’t succeed in snapping this cord you need not be afraid of the gods; we will soon set you free again.” (Young, 1954, p. 58)

Wisely the monster did not trust the gods and so the brave Tyr put his hand in Fenrir’s mouth as a pledge of good faith that the gods would set him free: the gods broke this promise as well and Tyr lost his hand. In this case the gods had no intension of keeping their agreement, and so the bargain and pledge were simply deception. Similarly in *Scaldskaparmal* Loki bet his head in a wager with Brokk the dwarf that he could not make treasures finer than the ones the Gods possessed. Loki lost the bet but through cleverness kept his head. Through this bet the gods profited immensely by gaining Thor’s hammer and several other treasures. Additionally, Freyr made a bargain with Skirnir that he must bring him Gerd and in return Freyr would give him his sword. In this

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case the god did get what he wanted and his henchman Skirnir used threats of magical torture to scare Gerd into binding herself to Freyr – it was an offer she could not refuse. He first bribed her with riches, then threatened her with physical force to no result. It was the threat of magical curses that was the element that caused Gerd to turn. In a fitting way Freyr lost his manly power, his sword, for the love of a woman. He did however get what he wanted at a price. In the story of the mead of poetry Odin (Bolverk) also entered into a bargain with the nine thralls. He used their desire for a whetstone to deceive them, kill them. Later in this story he offered Baugi a wager in which Odin Baugi would help him get the mead of poetry if he were able to carry out the work of the nine thralls. Odin of course passed the test and used the bargain to attain the mead. In contrast to this story, the giant who attempted to build the wall around Asgard failed the test. In all these cases the gods used oaths to get what they wanted but they also took on some suffering or task to achieve their success. Tyr gave up his hand; Loki had to suffer by having his mouth

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath sewn shut; Freyr gave up his sword; Odin had to perform the work of nine thralls; and Loki had to seduce a horse. The lesson was that deception also involved work and sacrifice for it to be truly effective. In these examples, the gods used bargains and oaths to profit but if any giant or dwarf tried to do the same, the Gods outwitted him. Bargain, oath, test, and trickery were all characteristic of the Viking myths. In these stories, the gods showed that, even though they too were ensnared by fate, they were powerful enough and clever enough to avoid getting entangled in the bonds of oaths with outsiders or enemies.

In a dramatic example of fidelity to oaths made to kinsmen, Odin kept his promise to Loki who had just murdered his son through a ruse using the blind god Hod. Though the other gods sought to prevent Loki from entering their hall because of his many crimes, Loki appealed to Odin and said:

Do you remember, Odin, when in bygone days we mixed our blood together? You said you would never drink ale unless it was brought to both of us. (Larrington, 1996, p. 86)

Odin remembered his oath and allowed Loki to join the feast.

Odin, a god known for breaking his oaths, kept his oath to one of his peers, his son's murderer.

This ethnocentric ethics of fidelity to oaths made to kinsmen, but not to outsiders, was really just another example of the Vikings' loyalty to each other. Yet in addition to cultivating this virtue, the old Norse people, through their religion, sought a type of knowledge that would allow them to transcend the physical and achieve maturity. Thor became more mature by embracing the feminine, that which he was lacking, and thus achieved his quest. In *The Lay of Thrym* he overcame his tendency to value only physical strength. Odin was an example of the height of maturity since he could see through deception and also deceive others. He could escape any bond and could see the fates of others. The world itself was a web of bonds and Odin was maybe not the master of fate since he was fated to die also, but rather was the wisest god who saw where these bonds led to in the end of time. Voland like these two Gods was also associated with bonds and he

Enochs: The Fetter, The Ring and the Oath also showed his growth into a powerful being. Like Thor he lost his bond with the feminine and was bound to the earth. It was when he regained this bond that he was literally able to transcend the earth and achieve what he desired. Even the growth and evolution of the world in the Norse cosmology was a an expression of the Norse binding symbolism. All bonds that held the society together, all the laws, broke at Ragnorak. The ultimate step in evolution in the Norse cosmology was for the world itself to expose the evil forces and allow them to become manifest so that they could be overcome. All that was opposed to loyalty and was not subject to the laws of society that bound people together was finally destroyed. Fate was directed toward ridding the world of that which was opposed to civilization. When Fenrir the wolf killed Odin at Ragnorak, Odin's son Vidar avenged his death by killing the wolf; this was the great sign of loyalty. Modi and Magni, the sons of Thor, inherited their father's hammer when Thor was killed and they took on his responsibility and authority. The bonds of loyalty overcome this final tale of destruction. It was

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also a symbol of maturity that the children assume their parents' role in a way that was loyal and faithful. In their religion the Vikings did show a longing for some kind of wisdom that would allow them to transcend the mundane world. Their religion led them to look beyond the physical world of appearances, to accept their condition, to remain faithful to their oaths and obligations, and to meet their fate with a cheerful sense of resignation.

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The Specter of Wotan: Evolution of Proto-Indo-European God of Death¹

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Abstract:

This paper examines the evolution and outgrowth of the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) God of Death (as defined by, among others, Gimbutas) through the late Norse period, when Christianity effectively replaced the old religion. With a primary focus of examining who Odin was as well as his place and role within the greater mythological structure, the development and change over historical time of the PIE God of Death can be seen. Although, the focus here is primary on the development into the Norse Odin, Loki and several other mythological beings are also examined.

¹ This paper combines two related papers originally presented at the 95th annual conference of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Studies (Chicago, IL, April 2001) and the 8th annual Midwest Graduate Seminar in German Studies (Chicago, IL, April 2001).

² I would like to thank Dr. Thomas DuBois (Wisconsin) for this insights and suggestions on this paper as well as my wife, Angela Horn Templin, for her comments and editing assistance.

Introduction

As a daughter religion of the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) religion, the Germanic religious system is a series of reflections of the Germanic societies during its various periods: Its gods are representations of elements that it hopes and aspires to embody; its gods' enemies are the forces which it fears; and its gods' stories are its explanations of its history and its life. Although this concept is a fundamental idea to scholars such as Emilé Durkheim³ and Mircea Eliade⁴, it has yet to be fully applied to the Germanic religious system.

Two figures that have intrigued and puzzled scholars for many centuries are Odin and Loki. The personalities of these two figures have been a source of trouble for scholars for many centuries, as they were ambiguous at times and often seemed contradictory in nature. The picture becomes clear, though, when one exposes and studies their PIE roots through the works of

³ Durkheim, Emilé. (1915). *The Elementary Forms of religious Life*. New York: Macmillan.

⁴ Eliade, Mircea. (1978, reprint) *History of Religious Ideas* (3 volumes). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Georges Dumézil⁵ and Marija Gimbutas⁶ and examines religion in ways similar to that of Durkheim. This approach not only yields satisfactory results in regard to understanding both the true nature of Odin and Loki, but it also forces a radical reinterpretation of the entire system.

Before one can examine the system using this new approach, one must agree on a few other points.

- The Germanic religious system is a localized religion, which means that it is not uniform across the region and that no or little standardization exists such that the religion is in constant flux – being altered by the local cult leaders to meet their needs and describe their conditions.
- Durkheim's research demonstrated that religions go through stages of evolution, and when looking at the system and the PIE religion, many early stages, like those involving nature worship, may be largely ignored, because

⁵ Dumézil, Georges. (1973, reprint). *Gods of the Ancient Northmen*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁶ Gimbutas, Marija. (1997). *The Kurgan Culture and the Indo-Europeanization of Europe*. Washington, D.C.: Institute for the Study of Man.

these stages occurred in the early and middle PIE periods, and there is little information about them. By the time that the system reaches the late PIE stage and early Proto-Germanic one, the shift is clear, as the worship is not of solar and celestial bodies but rather of the forces that move them.

- It is better to call the Germanic religion a religious system rather than a religion, because the term system suggests and allows for variation and, more importantly, “parallelism”.
- Parallelism is the term that I use to describe multiple stories about gods/figures that seem to conflict with or contradict each other; such stories are, in fact, neither conflicting nor contradicting at all, because they are stories that have been created by cults in different regions and that migrated and, at some point, crossed paths.
- The Germanic peoples were largely “agnostic” – the gods were only important in bad times (famine, disease, etc.) and war, and they were easily forgotten by all (except the cult

leaders and, to some extent, chieftains) in good and prosperous times⁷.

- The “Old Europe” Europeans⁸ influenced the system at different points and in different ways (based on the time and place of contact). These influences are largely one way (i.e., importation and adaptation of aspects of Old Europe into the PIE structure).
- There exists neither good nor evil in the Germanic religious system, rather forces of chaos (giants, monsters, dwarves, etc.) and forces of order (gods, men, elves, etc.) – this is an important distinction that scholars, past and present, seem not to have fully understood or valued.

Keeping these points in mind, one can examine the late PIE religious structures established by Dumézil and Gimbutas and apply them to the Germanic religious system. Although both scholars look at the PIE religion, their approaches are quite

⁷ Similar ideas are outlined by Hilda R. Ellis Davidson in such works as *Pagan Scandinavia* (Westview Press, 1967) and *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (Routledge, 1993)

different, and therein lies their merit. Dumézil uses a comparative method that emphasizes the PIE caste system (“3-tier-caste structure”), while Gimbutas uses a comparative method combined with archaeology that emphasizes aspects/traits of the gods (“aspectual structure”). These approaches work best when combined.

Dumézil applied his three-caste system to divide and understand some of the original places of the gods, but he limits himself to only certain gods.

(Adapted from Polomé 1989: 56):

(Note: the square brackets are my own insertions, while the rest are Dumézil’s.)

1. gods of sovereignty [gods of chieftains and priests] – justice/order (Tyr) [Forseti] and magic (Odin)
2. warrior gods – [let this include hunting gods] (Thor) [Heimdall] ⁹ [Ull, Magni, Modi, etc.]
3. food production (fertility, wealth, etc.) – (Njord, Frey, Freya) [Balder/Hod, Frigg]

Gimbutas’s structure is more complex, and so it would be of little value to describe it here in its entirety. The focus of this

paper is on one of the gods in Gimbutas’s structure (i.e., the PIE God of Death), but it is important to list the features of the main god (i.e., the PIE God of the Shining Sky) as well, because his traits pertain to Odin’s evolution.

(Adapted from “Functions and images of [the] Proto-Indo-European gods and goddesses based on comparative Indo-European mythology and archaeological finds of the 4th – 2nd millennia BC[E].” Gimbutas 1997: 348 – where the brackets are mine.)

<u>God of Death and Underworld</u> Cruel and angry god of death imagined as an old man or a dark god. Creator of ugly animals and birds of prey, coniferous trees and roots. Animals [Epiphanies]: stallion and bear. The usual epiphany in fight with [the] Thunder-god: monstrous serpent hiding in water. Weapons: spear, loop of cord for hanging. God of Contracts.	<u>The God of the Shining Sky</u> Year god, inseparable from the sun – new, young, mature – and the changing seasons, appearing in different shapes in each season. In spring and summer aspects, he is a young and beautiful god dressed as a king. Creator of vegetation, birds and domestic animals. Epiphanies: white horse, birch. Weapons: dagger, sword, halberd. Guardian of contracts. God of peace and friendship.
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It would be a simple mistake to connect Odin with the PIE God of the Shining Sky, especially in light of Dumézil’s system of organizing the gods by class and the evidence from the Norse

⁸ “Old Europe” and “Old Europe Europeans” are established terms for the pre-Indo-European inhabitants of Europe (Gimbutas)

⁹ This position for Heimdall was also suggested by De Vries (Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte, De Gruyter, 1956), but Dumézil disagreed.

period, but the “darker side” of Odin reflects a much deeper and more truthful image of his original role.

Odin: ‘It’s all in the Name’

Odin’s name is very indicative of his nature. Related to modern German *Wut* (‘fury’), he is the embodiment of such, but one must remember that the meaning of this term has shifted semantically from the original and should be understood as fury, inspiration or passion¹⁰ – qualities more befitting the god of magic.

According to the Norse variation of the creation story, Odin gave humans *önd* (as Edgar Polomé suggests, and I think correctly, is one of the three Germanic concepts of soul, in this case “A breath concept (Gmc. **and-* [ON *onð*] and **eþma-* [OHG *atum*, OE *æðm*, etc.] – essentially, the animating life force given by the gods” (p. 89, the brackets are his)). This then means when one understands “*Wut*” with all three meanings (i.e., fury, passion and

¹⁰ This interpretation has come into acceptance in the last thirty years or so and is widespread.

inspiration), then Odin gave to human kind fury, passion and inspiration.

Towards an early Odin and Tyr¹¹

It has been thought by some scholars – and I think it fair to state, now widely accepted, that Tyr is a god, who by the Norse period is a shadow of his former self. Many 19th century scholars theorized that Odin was a late addition to the system and replaced Tyr, but this idea has gone out of fashion – mainly because of the prominence of Odin in the system. Dumézil and De Vries both agreed that Tyr was a good candidate for god of order/justice on the 1st tier of sovereignty for many reasons; among them is the loss of his right hand/forearm (the one used to swear oaths) and the etymological connection (via Germanic **Tiwaz*) with Greek *Zeus*, Latin *deus* and Sanskrit *Dyaus*, the reflection in the Old Norse *tivar* (“gods”, only attested as a plural). The widespread appearance of place names in his honor – not to mention that he is one of the few gods who are granted a day of the week (Tuesday) – are further

evidence of his former strength and following. Tyr is often contrasted with Odin, because unlike Odin, he is noble, honest and courageous¹² and a god of light and day. Taking this into account as well as other reasons beyond the scope of this short paper, Tyr is a reflex of the PIE God of the Shining Sky¹³.

Some further (and less theoretical) evidence for this exists: Saxo¹⁴ tells of Odin's rule in Asgard, home of the Æsir, being interrupted twice: first, because of the breach of vows by his wife, Frigg¹⁵; and the second time, because he himself broke the sanctity of marriage (although he seems to do this without problems in most cases). His replacements during these times were Mithothyn (cf. ON *mjotudr* "he who metes out"), a ruler who promoted a more systematic organization of order unlike Odin's more autocratic and less predictable order, and Ollerus (= Ull "royal glory", whose function among the Æsir is a revival of Tyr's – interestingly

enough, their names appear in geographically complementary distribution with one and other). It would be hard to understand why Odin's routine breach of the contract of marriage would warrant any particular punishment or why Frigg as the matron of marriage and symbol of ideal family values would make such a harmful breach of her roles; so, one must understand this as Saxo's attempt to make sense of the shift of Asgard being ruled by Tyr before Odin absorbed his role. The second account must be understood as a revival of Tyr's original place through Ull.

The Odin that the Norse period presents us with is a god who has absorbed many functions of "minor" gods as well as having displaced Tyr and taking some of his traits. Snorri Sturluson's *Edda* makes him the father to most to the gods – including Tyr, as a clear signal of his dominance – and one of the creators of humankind. Being one of the oldest gods (one of the three oldest living gods along with his brothers), he is part god and

¹¹ Tyr: *Tiwaz (Gmc)- Tiu/Zio (OHG)- Ty/Ti/Tiw (OE)- Tyr (ON)

¹² The "T"-rune bears his name and means strength and courage.

¹³ Tyr is not the sole reflex; Balder is part of the set of PIE divine twins but takes aspects of the PIE God of the Shining Sky as well.

¹⁴ This story is in his multi-volume *The History of the Danes* (Eng. translation).

¹⁵ who through my approach can be traced back to the PIE Mother Earth, another one of Gimbutas's PIE gods

part giant¹⁶. He is one of two shape-shifters¹⁷ in the system, the other being his blood-brother Loki, who is not a god but a giant (he has no direct blood relation to either the Æsir or Vanir)¹⁸. This ability allows Odin to walk amongst giants and humans unnoticed. According to Snorri, it was he who gave us poetry (Odin only speaks in verse), which he stole (a typical Odin trait).

Odin has a duality built into him: the priestly magic element connected to inspiration as well as magic itself (1st tier) and the warrior aspect as god of the spear, fury and battle (2nd tier); and this has misled some 19th and early 20th century scholars to even think that he is a synthesis of two (or more) gods, but this is clearly wrong as Odin's duality exists because of his original role and its branching out into other areas.

He is the eternal wanderer. His broad hat which covers the missing eye, which he sacrificed for wisdom, and blue cloak are

¹⁶ There are several races of creatures in the system (Norse names are used here but others exist): gods (Æsir and Vanir); giants; elves (light and dark) and humans as well as other minor figures such as wights and dysir. For this paper, it is only important to understand that the gods and giants have some genetic ties but are largely antagonistic with each other.

identifying tags of Odin in a countless number of later literary works. He is the only god who goes in disguise among men for reasons that remain not entirely unclear. He is the symbol of mystery and of the mystical: the witch and warlock combined. He is a dark figure concerned with selfish matters, and he was the god of so many functions, that one must presume that he was the most malleable of the gods. He is at the center of all things as Yggdrasil, the World Tree/Ash, can mean none other than 'Odin's horse' (Yggr 'the awe-inspiring or terrifying one' - who can only be understood as Odin and his duality - + drasill which is a common poetic term for horse) (Simek, etc.).

Odin has taken the functions of so many gods that it is impossible to define him completely, because in some areas of the Germanic world, he likely had some different roles than in other parts: He is the god of the spear (his symbol and weapon), the god of poetry, the god of the gallows, the god of war, the god of the fallen warriors (which he houses in "Valhalla" 'hall of the fallen'),

¹⁷ He can become human, giant or animal, but unlike Loki, he usually shifts into a male, whereas Loki does both genders.

the god of wisdom, and so on – so many names and titles are given to Odin to elevate him, but it seems that no one has asked why. In a religious system that has been so long characterized as pessimistic and overly realistic (in the belief that religions are meant to inspire and uplift), the answer seems out of reach, but when one examines Gimbutas's PIE God of Death, there is only one candidate that fits: Odin. His weaponry is the same (i.e., spear, loop of cord for hanging – which makes him the god of the gallows), and his title (god of the Underworld/World of the Dead) is a close match, but the PIE God of Death did not just evolve into Odin. As Odin gained more importance, his more sinister aspects needed to be moved away from him, and thus Hel, Loki and the Midgard Serpent evolved. The creation of these beings allows Odin to become more palatable as leader of the gods and removes more difficult contradictions. After all, the leader of the gods cannot logically take actions that would have only negative consequences.

¹⁸ For many centuries, scholars have mistakenly called him a god.

Odin as the PIE God of Death

When one begins to examine the details of Odin, there is one common factor: death.

Tacitus¹⁹ writes that the Germanic peoples only offered human sacrifice to 'Mercury', who must equate to Odin (attested through the Mercury compounds found on rune stones in the Romanized part of the Germanic world). Turville-Petre²⁰ suggests that Odin's cult declined in the later age and in Iceland because of growing dissatisfaction with kings and more centralized government, so these people chose to honor gods, who upheld rules of kinship and independence such as Thor, Njord and Frey. Part of that theory is supported by the lack of cult-place names for Odin as well as a lack of name compounds. I disagree however; Odin never faded, as you would not want to name your children after such an unheroic and sinister god. Furthermore, one must remember that the population was as a whole agnostic.

¹⁹ In his *Germania*.

As a war god and the one who grants victory in battle, he also functions as the god of the honored dead, the 'Einherjar', who train to fight with him at Ragnarok. But being one of Odin's favorites is not the most desirable of things as he often kills them so that they can join him in Valhalla, sooner than they normally would. This can be viewed as a type of sacrifice: The warrior is being sacrificed to Odin to help a possible future victory. For all Odin's powers, he is an unheroic figure – he never fights his own fights, he lies, he steals, he tricks. Odin is such a non-Warrior, that he will not kill a single monster (and unlike Frey, he has no reason not to claim one kill) at Ragnarok.

Odin's two ravens circle the world and tell him the news they find. They are Hugin ("thought") and Munin ("memory", "soul"), and as they travel the world, Odin fears that they may not return, but he fears more for Munin than Hugin. Hugin fears more that he may lose memory or soul than thought. One of the aspects that the ravens represent is the spiritual functions of Odin. It is

important to note that the ravens are sometimes called hawks or sea gulls, these birds are like the ravens: They all are predatory-scavengers (i.e., they are predators, but they also scavenge). Odin also has two wolves: Freki and Geri (both meaning "the greedy one"). Snorri writes that Odin feeds them from his own table as he lives only on wine. The wine part of this must be a later Christianization as wine was imported into the Germanic world and often associated with Christianity (while mead and beer were associated with the older religion). The function of the wolves is less clear than that of the ravens, but they serve as instruments of death. Ironically, it is the wolf Fenris who will eat Odin.

Odin's wolves and ravens represent his "darker" side (Polomé, Turville-Petre). The ravens are not only a spiritual function, but along with the wolves, they represent the more sinister side of Odin as god of the dead, as they are all animals that eat the dead corpses of battle.

Odin has the Valkyries (ON *Valkyrja* "choosers of the slain/fallen ones"), beautiful young women who are mounted upon

²⁰ Turville-Petre, Gabriel. (1964). *Myth and religion of the North*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

(winged?) horses and armed with helmets and either spears or shields, collect the fallen warriors and bring them to Valhalla. If they are armed with spears, one must understand them to be symbols of Odin, but I think that it is more likely that they would be carrying shields, as then they would symbolize the role of women in battle. They also serve as Odin's messengers and when they ride forth on their errands, their armor causes the Aurora Borealis. It has been suggested that they may be a result of later Christian influence as corresponding beings to angels, but this does not work well as angels were almost exclusively male (cf. the gender of angel in gendered Germanic languages) and the Valkyries did the same duty as women did in battle: They mended the wounded and took out the dead.

Odin's horse, Sleipnir (“slipper, sliding one”), is a product of Loki (as a mare) and a giant’s horse according to Snorri, but this story is not attested elsewhere and is considered by scholars as an invention of Snorri’s in order to express attributes to Loki, but this is uncertain and could easily be an old story. He is a gray foal and

perhaps a symbol of fertility as the horse and his phallus are well-known fertility symbols (and often associated with Frey), but one must remember here how the symbols of fertility are also often associated with death, which seems likely be the case here.

Sleipnir is gray, a color of horse often associated with death, which further supports this assumption. As the swiftest of horses, Sleipnir is depicted and described as having eight legs and runes carved into his teeth (which gives him magical powers/qualities); scholars have long debated whether the depictions were designed to show the horse’s speed by making it appear to have eight legs (i.e., the movement is so fast that it appears to have eight legs) or the description came first, whereby he should have eight legs.

Turville-Petre also reminds one that “misshapened [sic] horses with varying numbers of legs have been widely recorded as portents of evil” (qtd. in Polomé p.34). Sleipnir also had the ability to fly and run over water. Horse sacrifices are found throughout the Germanic world, and they were the most honored and praised of animals in the PIE world.

Vali, Vidar and Hermod are all, at least in some part, aspects of Odin, which have long since broken away, but Odin's three obscure sons present little interesting data. Vali, the son of the giantess Rinda, is born to avenge Balder and does so at one day old. Less his survival at Ragnarok, there is no mention of him. He is perhaps the vengeance aspect of Odin, which likely originally belonged to the justice function of Tyr. Vidar, who is called the 'silent god' by Snorri and avenges his father's death with his shoe, is another survivor of Ragnarok. One can suppose that these are the gods of the first tier who will replace Odin and Tyr after Ragnarok. In such a scenario, Vali should replace Odin (as they both are wrathful and murderous), and Vidar should replace Tyr (as he gets justice for the death of his father)²¹. Hermod, a god only named by poetry and otherwise only known as a hero in poetry, appears to be much like Bragi: i.e., a human who has been elevated to the level of godhood (Simek etc.).

²¹ The gods who survive Ragnarok all function like this: One must understand the survivors as replacements or rebirths of the functions of the gods. Balder and Hod must become the gods of fertility (3rd tier as before!), Modi and Magni

Odin's spear, Gungnir ("the swaying one"), is the instrument that is used to signal the beginning of a battle (as it did in the Æsir-Vanir war, and in many tales and sagas). It appears as a spear, reed, javelin or shaft and is a marker for sacrifices to Odin. According to Snorri, Gungnir was made by the same elves that produced Thor's hammer, which must be understood as proof that both weapons were of great – if not equal – power. As its name indicates, it can sway the course of battle. The spear was also the weapon of Germanic cavalry as described by Tacitus as well as a common weapon for foot soldiers. J. Schwietering²² suggests that the spear is a symbol of ruling power as well and was therefore at one time associated with Tyr, but this is clearly wrong, as the spear's association is not with power but with death – it marks sacrifices to Odin. In battle, one would not sacrifice one's victims to Thor or Frey but rather to Odin. His function as a god of the dead is a holdover from his older role as god of the underworld.

become the gods of war (2nd tier), and Vali and Vidar become the gods of sovereignty (1st tier).

²² In Simek, Rudolf. (1993). *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*. Rochester (NY): St. Edmundsbury Press.

Further evidence of this role as god of the dead are his role as god of the gallows and his ability to speak with the dead.

Another feature of Odin is his tendency to feed off strife and conflict. Several stories cite him bragging that he has caused more war than peace. Here, one sees Odin not as the dualistic element of inspiration but also as a ‘demon of emotion’, an aspect that he shares with one other figure in the system: Loki.

“Demons of Emotions”

Recall that neither good nor evil exist in the Germanic religious system rather forces of chaos and order. It is the struggle between these two forces that creates the tension that will lead to Ragnarok, where again from the chaos, order will be created. This cycle of chaos to order to conflict to aftermath/chaos to ultimate order is the theme by which the system paces itself. For every action, there exist reactions and balances (but not consequences as it is a cycle).

Demons of emotion feed not only from negative but also from positive emotions and events. Just as the ancient Greek Olympian athletes pledged their energies at the games not towards winning but rather towards the gods, these creatures thrive off emotional energies, and they will create circumstances where unnecessary energies are used. Their ranks include not only the largely but not purely negative spirits who could be called demons, but also the likes of Odin and Loki.

Their presence was so robust that they remain in the historical memory²³ of the Germanic peoples, and the field of psychology has created many a work about them. They remain a hidden theme in art and literature such as the five statues containing a non-human creature in them in Vigeland-Park in Oslo (source?? for further investigation?). The creature begins as a small, playful animal with a young child, and it grows with its host by feeding off the emotional energies, both negative and positive,

²³ Utilizing Jung as well as Eliade, “historical memory” is another concept in my approach; it implies that there exists a collective subconscious in a given culture or society and that this influences us indirectly and without our knowledge or awareness.

and eventually overwhelms or exhausts its host and destroys the host – as is depicted in the last of the five statues.

Loki, the “more sinister” extension of Odin

Loki shares many of Odin’s personality traits: shape-shifter, deceptive, cunning, “demon of emotion”, and so on, and this is because Loki and Odin were once one and the same.

There is no evidence to suggest a cult of Loki nor does he seem to have any places or people named after him. He is a figure who later Christians associated with the devil, and therefore it is likely that much of the information that makes Loki out to be of a very evil nature (especially his role in Balder’s death) could very well be later additions. He helped the gods out of many difficult situations (although he often was the reason that they got into such situations in the first place), acquired the hammer Mjollnir for Thor and helps the gods cheat out one of his one kin (a fellow giant) during the construction of the wall around Asgard, but he is

also the father of Hel, the Midgard Serpent and Fenris the wolf – all opponents of the gods.

Loki’s name remains etymologically unclear. Many scholars of the 19th and early 20th century tried to make Loki more devilish and link him with the Old Norse *logi* (“fire”), while others have tried to link him with the faded god Lodur²⁴. The former has been accepted by the popular medium (compare any modern image of Loki in most any publication), although no compelling scholarly evidence has been found. The latter is a stretch as the consonants are an unlikely pairing and only circumstantial evidence exists (e.g., both are often companions, never named together, etc.).

De Vries is among the select group of scholars who have tried to see Loki in a slightly more neutral light. He places him into a category of tricksters who are found in many archaic religions and makes him both a culture-hero and deceiver; the psychological interpretation makes Loki the representation of an “impulsive intelligence” (i.e., an unruly urge for activity and

malignant attitude). The various aspects of Loki have been linked to parallels in other Indo-European religions: After killing Balder, Loki is eventually chained – similar to the Caucasian giant Amiran and the Greek Prometheus (Olrik)²⁵ – all of these beings also have outstanding intelligence and are rebellious. Although it was once thought that Loki was a manifestation of Odin’s darker side (because of the close connection with each other), the modern thought is that this is an oversimplification (Simek, etc.); but it is not an oversimplification when one examines the PIE roots and sees that Loki is missing in the parts of the Germanic world that were Christianized early on (southern, western), this dates Loki as a “fairly” recent creation (i.e., if he is only in and just before the Norse period, then he must have been created just prior to that time).

The link between Loki, Hel, the Midgard Serpent shows the genetic link in the evolution, but the link was likely added later, as

²⁴ I think that the best evidence for who Lodur is has come from Dr. Anatoly Liberman in “A Few Enigmatic Gods, Whose Names begin with an L” (SASS 2003, Minneapolis, MN)

²⁵ From Simek.

Loki is the most recent development of the three (Hel the being is younger but Hel the realm is older). The link between Loki and Fenris, who is to kill Odin at Ragnarok, is interesting, as it must be a later addition to make Loki more “evil” – just as Snorri tries to make Odin more “good”.

One obvious and less theoretical piece of evidence of this connection and interchangeability of Odin and Loki is in the *Harbarzljod* (The Lay of Harbardh) in the Poetic Edda, where one could imagine Loki playing the role of trickster as Odin did.

A Few Last Remarks about Odin

In the section of the *Hávamál* known more commonly as Odin’s rune song, he has hung himself upon the great ash Yggdrasil for nine long days and nights without being fed mead or bread. When he sacrifices himself to himself, it is only then that he sees the runes, and by taking up the runes, he is freed from his bonds. The act of self-sacrifice is the noblest of all – one cannot give more. Odin not only hangs himself and sacrifices himself to

himself, but he gains knowledge of the most powerful kind. It is not his sacrifice – his warlike action, his fury – but rather his control and patience that allows him to acquire the greatest magic of all – reading and writing.

This poem has often been cited as a later Christianization because it resembles the Christ on the cross, but the fact that sacrifices made to Odin occurred in battle (chiefs or warriors pledged their victims to Odin), in the shrines or holy grooves (as a priestly function), in fire (as the story of the Swedish uprising against their King Olaf Woodcutter; when in a time of famine they ‘gave their king to Odin’ by burning him in his house) and on the gallows (as is related in tales from many sagas such as in the tale of Odin’s champion Starkað and King Vikar in Gautrek’s Saga), suggests that Odin is making a sacrifice rather than a reference to Christ in hanging himself (and such sacrifices are often marked by the spear).

Within the Proto-Indo-European religion, his function served as a god of the first tier as the sovereign power of magic.

According to the West Norse tradition, he is taught by Freya another type of magic (“seiðr”), which the other Æsir consider to be bad and unmanly mainly because it undermined the warrior-spirit, was mainly practiced by women and connected to the practice of ergi - which in the case of men was associated with homosexuality. This tale represents the fact that Odin, after the Indo-European conquest, takes over all forms of magic, even the type practiced by the Old Europe Europeans²⁶. His magical powers include the ability to paralyze warriors, make their weapons useless, make them possessed by fear, blind them and make them deaf. He granted victory by those means – all very much not in line with the spirit of the hero and warrior.

The secondary more mystical characteristics (i.e., his magical abilities, his sacrifice of the eye, his sacrifice of himself to gain the runes, etc.) must however have also been things attached to Odin very early on if he did not have them prior to his divergence from his original role.

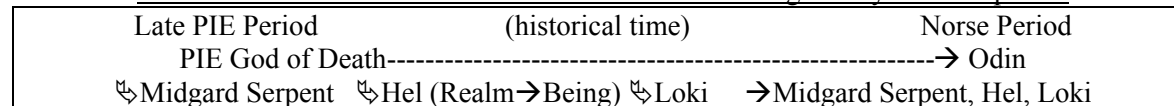
²⁶ Freya, through my approach, is considered the main Old Europe influence on the system.

Conclusions

Odin is not the high-seated ruler of the gods; rather he is a “demon of emotion”, a trickster, a cheat and an all-round self-centered selfish god, who cares only for himself. He fights only battles that are already won – with only one fatal exception -, and only helps others, when in doing so he is helped. This picture of Odin is very different than the Norse one. Once Loki is added to his personality, the whole evolution is clear, as is Odin’s earlier

persona. The PIE God of Death became Odin, Loki, Hel and the Midgard Serpent and influenced beings such as Ran (via Aegir). As a societal archetype, he is likened to a modern day conman or hustler; he is the trickster in folk lore; he is the self-driven, self-centered, ruthless businessman; he is the member of the motorcycle gang; he is all three main characters in The Good, The Bad and the Ugly. He represented all that is unfair in life, all that is good, all that is to aspire to and all that is to be ashamed of – he is the essence of being: *ond*.

The PIE God of Death’s Evolution in the Germanic Religious System Simplified



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Ghostbuster: Cotton Mather's Invocation of the History of the Specter in the Justification of the Salem Witch Trials

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Abstract:

Spectral evidence refers to the legal argument that the Devil is capable of projecting the image of one individual or group to another, and is the one most striking common feature of the nineteen cases resulting in execution tried in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692. Each of these cases can be traced back to a common impetus: the appearance of the specters of the accused to a group of young girls who claimed to be tormented by them. The willingness of the inhabitants of Salem to accept the reality of the girls' testimony can be explained by an extensive history of belief in the Devil appearing in or projecting human forms. However, it was the peculiar interpretation and conviction of their minister, Cotton Mather, that spectral evidence is not only proof of the guilt of the party projected, but also evidence of the innocence of the accusers, that served the necessary condition for the high conviction rate of the Salem Witch Trials.

A Brief Early Modern History of Spectral Projection

In 1436 Johannes Nider stated in his *Formicarius* (*The Anthill*) that the Devil will appear in human form to witches at the sabbath,¹ an idea that is later reiterated in H.B.'s *A pleasant treatise of witches* (London, 1673).² In *Malleus Maleficarum* (*Hammer of the Witches* c.1487), Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger declared that the Devil can fool an individual in five ways: by artificial trick, by natural method (placing a foreign body in front of another to hide a given object), by confusing the organ of sight, and by using his power over the imagination, or *by presenting himself in another form*.³ Ludwig Lavater (London, 1572) corroborated all of the ideas that were originally expressed nearly one hundred years earlier in *Malleus Maleficarum*. Lavater described the Devil's ability to appear in the form of a man, in the form of an animal (carried over from a long standing pagan

¹ "They saw a demon visibly in an assumed human form, to whom the disciple had to pledge that he would deny Christianity" Nider in (Bailey 43).

² "The Wizards and Witches being met in a place and time appointed, where the Devil appears to them in human shape" (H.B. 2).

³ My italics for emphasis. "The third way is when in an assumed body he presents himself as being something which he is not" (Kramer and Sprenger 60).

belief),⁴ or by using natural elements to trick the eye into believing they see something or someone who isn't really there.⁵ Reginald Scot (London, 1584) can be viewed as one of the earliest skeptics on the debate on specters. He claimed that it would be utterly impossible for devils or spirits to take on human form, since they are simply made up of different (physical versus nonphysical) elements.⁶ Pierre le Loyer (London, 1605) provided a clear definition of his concept of a specter, "A Specter, or Apparition, is a substance without a Bodie, the which presenteth it selfe sensibly unto man, against the order and course of nature, and maketh them afraid" (Loyer B). He argued that devils are capable of entering one's body and speaking through it, which is a device used by angels and devils to represent themselves to individuals and

⁴ "Ideas such as the magical transformation of witches into animals and the night flight to the sabbath were rooted in what appear to be the remnants of archaic shamanistic practices widespread in European culture" (Bailey 46).

⁵ "But it is no difficult matter for the deuill to appeare in diuers shapes, not only of those which are alive, but also of deade menne, or in the fourme of beastes and birdes. [And] by his knowledge in naturall things, he may easily deceyue the eye sight" (Lavater 167).

⁶ "For an organically bodie must have bones, sinewes, and flesh: which cannot be made of aier. Niether can an aierie bodie recieue or have either shape or figure" (Scot 516).

communicate some sort of message. He also claimed that actually taking over a body isn't necessary, as devils and angels can just as successfully communicate through a projected form or vision.⁷ Loyer believed that spirits will most often chose to make an appearance in the form of man by using a body of air,⁸ which stands as a direct contradiction to Scot's statement that spirits can't shape or form air. John Cotta's (London, 1616) description of the Devil's habits is closely related to the idea of how the Devil uses specters in Salem Village in 1692. Cotta argued that although the Devil cannot create a body,⁹ he is capable of projecting the image of an individual into one place, while their real, God-created body remains in another.¹⁰ Richard Bernard's *A guide to grand-jury men* (London, 1627) also stated the reality of the Devils ability to

⁷ See Loyer E2, 44-45.

⁸ "Devills and Angells may take a body of any element, and they do soonest of all take vnto them a bodie of the ayre" (Loyer 45).

⁹ "Creation is the worke of an infinite power, and therefore God alone, because there can be but one Infinite. The Deuell then cannot create or cause transmutations by generation" (Cotta 33).

¹⁰ "We must thinke that the diuell is a Juggler, presenting the likely shape & pourtraiture of a body (here he talks about Pythagoras) in one place, while the true substance is certainly and truly seene in another place"(Cotta 33).

take on human form.¹¹ One unique point that Bernard emphasized, is he claimed that typically to an educated individual the Devil would appear as a man, whereas to someone uneducated the Devil would appear in a more base form, such as an animal.¹² Several years before the occurrence at Salem, John Webster made an argument in *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (London, 1677) against the possibility of the Devil taking on human form, but his argument was mostly against the physical reality of a spirit taking on human form and he did not address the possibility of these spirits creating specters. Webster claimed that angels and devils do have the ability to change shape, as a chameleon would, but nowhere in the scripture does it state that they can take on whatever form they choose, and they can't take over a body as there isn't room for two souls in one body.¹³ One of the final defenders of the reality of witchcraft, Richard Boulton (London,

¹¹ "Diuels appeare not in one, but in varietie of shapes and formes, as the shape of a Man, or Woman, or a Boy" (Bernard 105).

¹² See Bernard 107-108.

¹³ See Webster 319-320.

1722), claimed that Devils do appear in any shape they choose.¹⁴ The idea of the Devil appearing or projecting an image in the form of man is apparently one that many authors felt imperative to analyze and debate.

The Societal Function of the Specter

The literature documenting the religious and legal belief in specters from 1430-1730 indicate that the authors needed to prove the existence or non-existence of specters as a response to the perpetual changes in societal conditions. Johannes Nider, a German Dominican theologian, wrote *Formicarius* in c.1437; the work primarily focuses on witchcraft, which was inspired by a drive for spiritual reform.¹⁵ He began his writing during a fragmented age in history; Europe was essentially in a state of turmoil with the primary events being the Great Schism (1378) to

¹⁴ “Devils can insinuate their ill Representations into the Minds of Men, and torture their Bodies, so they have Power to assume Bodies when they please, and appear in different shapes” (Boulton 498).

¹⁵ See Bailey 8.

Luther’s break with Rome (1521).¹⁶ After 1400, the perception of a diabolical threat to Christianity becomes more evident,¹⁷ and with this idea of a threatening diabolic power on earth came a fear of a vast conspiracy of cults of witches who were coming together and employing the power of Satan to destroy Christianity.¹⁸ This new idea of a diabolic presence on earth logically inspired discussions of the abilities of the Devil. Nider is one of the first writers to make the essential link between necromancers, who could conjure evil spirits, and witches, who up until now had been feared for performing common maleficia (or harmful magic such as killing a neighbor’s cow) but had not been feared for having power granted by the Devil.¹⁹ The association of witches and their said ability to either communicate with or conjure the Devil in

¹⁶ See Bailey 10.

¹⁷ “Although clearly rooted in long-standing Christian conceptions of sorcery and diabolism, this fully developed notion of the diabolical, conspiratorial witchcraft emerged only in the fifteenth century” (Bailey 30).

¹⁸ See Bailey 2.

¹⁹ “They are properly called necromancers who claim that they are able to raise the dead from earth to speak on occult matters, they, through a pact with the demons manifest certain things by the revelation of demons and harm those around them by evil sorcery.’ *Formicarius* declared explicitly that witches and necromancers were identical, and witches could do nothing by their own power” (Bailey 40).

human form was bound to evoke a fear of witches that could easily give rise to widespread panic throughout the Christian world.

One of the most influential writings on witchcraft is *Malleus Maleficarum* (c.1487) by the former professors of Theology, Inquisitors Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger. This text was also primarily prompted by a fear of a great conspiracy of female witches in league with the Devil to destroy Christianity.²⁰ Kramer and Sprenger were encouraged in their inquisitorial procedures by Innocent VIII, who in his Papal Bull expressed his own fear of heretics and an overall abandonment of the Catholic faith.²¹ Although Martin Luther made a formal break with Papal authority in 1521, he seemed to adhere to these positions regarding the danger of witchcraft. In *The Table Talk* (1566) he was also inspired by a fear of decaying religion to write on the subject of

²⁰ “Witches were the bane of all social order; they injured not only persons but property. They were the active members of a vast revolutionary body, a conspiracy against civilization” Rev. Montague Summers in (Kramer xxxix).

²¹ “It has come to our ears that many have abandoned themselves to devils and by their incantations, spells, conjurations, have slain infants, cattle...and above all this they blasphemously renounce the Faith, they are a cause of scandal and a danger to many” an excerpt from the Bull of Innocent VIII in (Kramer xliii).

witches and their involvement with diabolical spirits, he claimed the Devil is tormenting us to make our beliefs stronger.²² Thus, Luther seems to rely on witches’ involvement with spirits as a means of proving God’s devotion to good Christians by testing them.

In 1572 Ludwig Lavater, a Swiss Protestant priest, wrote *Of Ghostes and Spirites Walking by Nyght* to serve as a treatise on the existence of spirits and their appearance to men. One aspect of Protestant beliefs that varied greatly from the Catholic beliefs is in the reality of Purgatory. Lavater apparently subscribed to this way of thought, as in the introduction to his book he claimed that those who believe in spirits communicating from Purgatory are either overly superstitious or greedy.²³ Lavater stated that all spirits on earth are either angels or demons, but none are escaped spirits from

²² “Though Satan ceases not to plague the Christians, and to shoot at us fiery darts, ‘tis very good and profitable for us, for thereby he makes us the more sure of the word and doctrine, so faith increases, and is stronger in us” (Luther 262).

²³ “Such as are fearefull and superstitious. And some (cheefly those which hunt after gaynes, by the soules of dead men) affirme that the most parte of such things which are hard or seene, are the soules of dead men, whych craue helpe of them that are liuing, to be deliuered out of the tormentes of most cruell payne in Purgatorie”(Lavater b).

Purgatory²⁴. It was inevitable that a treatise such as this would inspire a Catholic response. Pierre le Loyer wrote *A treatise of specters or strange Sights, Visions, and Apparitions appearing sensibly unto men* (1605) as a commentary on Lavater's work and on the fearful rise of Protestantism. Unwittingly, Loyer raised a problematic point, if ghosts or specters are spirits that are able to leave Purgatory and return temporarily to earth, they are not necessarily all evil spirits that have been conjured by a witch in league with the Devil. This implication of Loyer's work was apparently not taken into consideration by the Inquisitors, as this work was written at the start the major witch persecution in Europe, and many continued to be put to death on the basis of communicating or fornicating with spirits or demons in the form of a men, thus encouraging a belief that only evil spirits are at work on earth.

²⁴ "I discusse what manner of things they are, that is, not the souls of dead men, but either good or euill Angels. Some are still deceived by the devilish doctrine of the Papists" (Lavater b.ij., 222).

By the late 1600s the trend toward more rationalist thought was well on its way toward eliminating the all-consuming diabolical threat of spirits on earth. Looking back on the historical track record it is apparent that the writings on witchcraft and specters were prompted in a large part by a religious crisis; and the trend in historical writings on the same subject from 1600 onward, while still driven by religious crisis, seems to place an importance on disproving former beliefs in a direction toward a more humanistic viewpoint. John Wagstaffe, a devout skeptic, wrote *The Question of Witchcraft Debated* in 1669, and stated that we should suspend belief of witches until they could be thoroughly proven.²⁵ He also made the controversial claim that witchcraft is a delusion maintained by the Catholic Church in an effort to maintain their authority.²⁶ Around the same period of time John Webster wrote *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (1677), in which he claimed that the only relation man can have with the Devil is

²⁵ See Wagstaffe xix.

²⁶ "Witchcraft was little more than a cunning subterfuge or act of state, promoted by wily politicians in order to maintain their bogus authority" (Wagstaffe xiii).

mental and spiritual, therefore the Devil can possess no physical shape or locality²⁷ but this doesn't successfully deny the existence of a spiritual world and the possibility of specters, since they are apparitions in human shape. Webster's writing was primarily a response to growing Rationalism, which he held suspect, due to his belief that it would ultimately lead to atheism.²⁸

In 1684 Richard Bovet from Somersetshire wrote a strong defense of specters, *Pandaemonium*, in an area that was fanatically Protestant. He declared that the devils could take on whatever shape they chose, and he supported this not only with a plethora of short case histories as examples, but also with the basic premise that there are just some things that are beyond our comprehension. Bovet argued that we do not question the existence of God though we don't physically see him/her, and we can't even understand our own body and soul, so how could mankind possibly grasp this?²⁹ One must simply look at the evidence of many witnesses and many

²⁷ See Webster xv.

²⁸ See Webster xiv.

²⁹ See Bovet 44-46.

repeat occurrences and judge for oneself. Similarly, Richard Baxter wrote *The certainty of the world of spirits* (1691) also as response to an increasing decline in religious conviction, due to a lack of sufficient belief in the spirit world.³⁰

By 1718 when Francis Hutchinson wrote *An Historical Essay concerning Witchcraft* society was in the stage of Post Enlightenment Rationalism, which didn't leave much room for discourse on the former beliefs in witchcraft. Most of the elite or educated concluded that witchcraft was only for the ignorant and the superstitious.³¹ Concurrently, religion had begun to be displaced by science,³² and the view of scripture as valid evidence concerning specter was now discredited,³³ and with the rise of studies into psychology, scholars began to stress the idea of mass

³⁰ "All the Atheists, Sadduces, and Infidels, did seem to profess, that were they but sure of the Reality of Apparitions and Operations of Spirits, it would cure them" (Baxter A4).

³¹ "They that have their brains baited, and their Fancies distemper'd with Apprehensions of Witches, I find to be marshall'd in one of these five Ranks; Children, Fools, Women, Cowards, sick or black Melancholick discomps'd Wits" (Hutchinson 12).

³² See Hutchinson vii.

³³ See Hutchinson xv.

Spectral Evidence in Salem Village

hysteria³⁴ as an explanation for events such as the children being attacked by specters in Salem. Hutchinson devotes a chapter in his essay to the events in Salem, namely by urging people to see the error of their ways³⁵ and by being careful not to accuse anyone of witchcraft based on spectral evidence alone.³⁶

Richard Boulton, author of *The Possibility and Reality of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft, demonstrated* (1722), is among the last vehement writers arguing the existence of witches. Like several other authors, he was terrified that disbelief in witchcraft and specters would lead to a rejection of Christianity, and if such a sin as witchcraft was allowed to go unpunished, society would be ultimately led on a path straight toward moral decay.³⁷

In Salem, Massachusetts in 1692, several young girls claimed that the specters of citizens from the town had been sent by the Devil to come and torment them. Twenty people were tried, eighteen hanged, Giles Cory was crushed to death, and Sarah Osburne died in jail. In Oct. of 1692 Cotton Mather was called upon by the governor to write *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (1692)³⁸ in which he attempted to clarify why the girls were being abused by the specters and justify why so many people had been put to their deaths and still more were awaiting trial (several individuals were at that time sitting in prison while twenty others had already been sent to their deaths after their involvement in witchcraft had been ostensibly proven by the appearance of their specters). Mather argued that the Devil would be drawn to torment the villagers of Salem because God views the people of Salem as exceedingly holy, they chose to settle in the Devil's land, and it is a great conspiracy in which Christianity and the church are

³⁴ See Hutchinson xix.

³⁵ "When others see an Error, let not us continue in it" (Hutchinson 114).

³⁶ "If Magistrates do their Duty in true Judgment, and punish Offenders only for their own real Acts of Wickedness, not for Effects that Spirits work in other Mens Shapes without them, then his appearance will hurt no Body." This appears to be an attack on the judges of Salem for both their initial reluctance to admit that anything had gone wrong, and Hutchinson is supporting the accusation that innocent people were put to death in Salem without appropriate evidence (Hutchinson 110).

³⁷ See Boulton xvi.

³⁸ See Mather, I. viii.

being attacked by invisible hands.³⁹ As was the case in the writings of Nider in *Formicarius*⁴⁰ and Kramer and Sprenger in *Malleus Maleficarum*,⁴¹ again here the fear of a plot against religion has been brought to the foreground. Cotton Mather was aware of not only the literature on specters,⁴² but also the fear that many authors had expressed that if the world loses witchcraft and specters it will become a world of atheism.⁴³ This fear struck a cord in the heart of this Boston minister. In order to show that the Devil was at work in Salem, there needed to be proof that the specters that appeared to the girls were sent to torment them with permission given by the individual that was being projected. This

³⁹ See Mather, C. 12, 14-16.

⁴⁰ “The idea of a conspiratorial cult bent on subverting the order of the Christian world appeared in the early fifteenth century” (Bailey 2)

⁴¹ Kramer xxxix, xliii.

⁴² He quoted Richard Baxter, and his father cited George Sinclair, Martin Luther, Joseph Glanvill, John Cotta, and Richard Bernard (Mather, I 111, 278, 230, 238, 257, 256)

⁴³ “The Mathers were well aware of the struggle being mounted against atheism in London. They had read the books and were friendly with some of the participants. They themselves had published books intended to show the reality of unseen phenomena and providential judgements. The respectability of such notions among leading intellectuals, when combined with the Mathers' heightened millenarian expectations at the time of the Salem crisis, inevitably led to them being caught wrong-footed by the paroxysms of the accusers. They wanted to believe but they feared that the Devil was deceiving them” (Harley).

would link the individual into a pact with the Devil and prove them guilty of a crime punishable by death. The prerequisite for the outbreak and the conviction rate was Mather's belief that only those who had a pact with the Devil could be projected spectrally, and that those who were possessed were innocent victims.

When examining the scholarship previously written regarding this topic, it becomes apparent that most specter theorists, until Mather, agreed, as there must be an agreement, that the Devil needed an individual's permission to appear to them and project their image. When Johannes Nider's *Formicarius* (c.1437) linked witchcraft with necromancy, evidence of an inherent pact with the Devil was provided,⁴⁴ as there must be an agreement between the summoned spirit and the summoning magician. In 1616 John Cotta concluded that for a man to be able to project his image, or specter, to another he must be in league with the Devil,⁴⁵

⁴⁴ “Sorcerers had surrendered their souls to Satan, had become members of a cult under his direction, and were thus his servants” (Bailey 38-39).

⁴⁵ “That what man soeuer shall vndertake these supernaturall jugglings, which are only possible in the powers of Spirits, and of the Diuell alone, is thereby as

as only the Devil has the ability to perform such tricks. In *The certainty of the worlds of spirits* (1691), Richard Baxter declared that devils would be incapable of causing us any sort of harm without our consent.⁴⁶ Significantly, in contrast to what Baxter previously stated, that Devils could only answer the guilty, he never called the innocence of the girls of Salem, Massachusetts into question. After the executions in Salem, in 1722 Richard Boulton discussed this aspect of the Salem trials and differentiated between the possession⁴⁷ (the girls who are not in league with the Devil) and projection as specters, concluding that the Devil needs

truly convinced to be a Witch or Sorcerer, and wherein man can have no power, but by and through him” (Cotta 36).

⁴⁶ “But seeing it is the free will of Man that giveth the Devils their hurting power, and they can do us no harm, nor make us sin, without our own consent or yielding” (Baxter A8)

⁴⁷ “If Imaginations (seeing one’s specter) proceed from the Suggestions of an evil spirit, the Person may be said to be possessed, though no Compact were made” (Boulton 382).

permission in order to appear in the form of an individual,⁴⁸ therefore those tried at Salem must have been guilty.⁴⁹

The trial records corroborate that all of the nineteen cases included in the table invoked spectral evidence. The table is divided into two sections to elaborate the amount of spectral evidence charges that were raised against the accused and the charges of acts of non-spectral magic or witchcraft. The information is based on the records presented in the books edited by Elliot Woodward and Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum. All of the accused were initially brought to court on the basis on spectral evidence.

⁴⁸ “Witchcraft, requires the Consent of the Person who is the Devil’s agent” (Boulton 488).

⁴⁹ “As for the evil spirits appearing in a Woman’s shape, they ought to wear the Livery or Likeness, for it is her Compact with the evil spirits and she employs them to do Hurt or Mischief” (Boulton 392).

Table 1
Spectral Evidence against the Accused at Salem Village

Legend	
A	Specter Causes Bodily Harm
B	Specter seen with familiar (animal)
C	Transformation into animal
D	Specter seen with Devil's book
E	False Church Service (Sabbath)
F	Specter Reports Guilt of Murder
G	Bite/Pinch Victims
H	Choke Victims
I	Induce Fits

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1. Sarah Good	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
2. Martha Cory							X		X
3. John Proctor	X			X	X		X	X	X
4. Rebecca Nurse	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
5. Bridget Bishop	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
6. Sarah Wilds	X			X					X
7. Susanna Martin	X		X	X			X	X	X
8. George Jacobs	X			X		X		X	X
9. John Willard	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
10. Ann Pudeater				X		X	X	X	X
11. Mary Easty				X			X	X	X
12. Martha Carrier				X		X	X		
13. Elizabeth How	X						X	X	X
14. Willmot Reed	X			X				X	X
15. George Burrough	X			X		X	X	X	X
16. Samuel Wardwell				X	X		X		
17. Mary Parker									X
18. Giles Corey	X			X	X	X	X	X	
19. Margaret Scott								X	

Non-Spectral Evidence against the Accused

Sarah Good: Muttering (assumed curses). Bad tempered. Caused the death of livestock after arguing with neighbor. She was a beggar. Noticed missing at night.

Martha Cory: Asked an incriminating question that implied the use of witchcraft.

John Proctor: -----

Rebecca Nurse: She's sick/ old. Can't properly hear/ answer questions. Argued with a neighbor. Cursed husband and he died. A child died after she visited.

Bridget Bishop: Cause neighbors wheel to get stuck after an argument. Possible thief. Take away men's strength. Cause the deaths of livestock. Drink, gamble, party. Neighbor fall ill after argument. Scratch a boy's face. Poppets found in her wall. Caused herself to miscarry several times. Threaten several men (esp. in dreams).

Sarah Wilds: Hasn't been to church recently.

Susanna Martin: Men got lost walking passed her house. Cursed cattle. Argue with a neighbor over work. Denied neighbor food, then his cattle died. She walked a long distance without getting more than her shoes wet (no mention of rain at the time).

George Jacobs: Accused of beating girls with a staff.

John Willard: Wife say he beats her. He ran up an unusually steep hill after looking under his house. A man is thrown off his horse and he thinks of Willard. Strange noises come from his house. Two neighbors fall sick after seeing him.

Ann Pudeater: Ointments found. Woman falls ill after her visit. Reports that she had poppets. Enter her house too swiftly.

Mary Easty: Argue with neighbor, who falls ill after.

Martha Carrier: Threaten neighbor who she thinks is stealing her land, he gets sick. Another neighbor falls sick after arguing with her.

Elizabeth How: Child falls ill after she visits. Accused of cursing poles, she says they won't work because Pearly worked on them and they don't. Caused neighbors illness, and put a curse on tobacco (it ignites after her visit).

Willmot Reed: Argue with neighbor, who falls ill after.

George Burrough: Argued with wife, accused of having unnatural strength.

Samuel Wardwell: Confess relation with the Devil then retract it. Told fortunes, cursed people, control livestock.

Mary Parker: After arguing with a neighbor they are terrorized by a hog. Child fall ill after her visit (they burn a section of his hair to see the specter of who caused the illness). Needed to be carried home once (drunk? sick?).

Giles Corey: Argued with neighbors over borrowing platters.

Margaret Scott: A man who died two years prior said she made him sick.

This table invokes the question, why would Cotton Mather instantly believe in the innocence of the girls and the guilt of those whose specters were projected? What legal, religious, or other traditional basis was there to the belief that those being projected were guilty and those being tormented by the specters were

innocent? The basic belief of witchcraft from 1400 onward had been that the witch cannot project her own specter, so she must be in league with the Devil.⁵⁰ However, it would seem historically that those who are attacked by the specter are also guilty of sinning against God in some way. Most of the writings on specters agree that the Devil can only attack someone (with a specter) who is guilty of committing a sin, although Mather was extremely well read,⁵¹ he refused to see this as a possibility at Salem; in his eyes the girls are completely innocent and the individual being projected was in league with the Devil.

Johannes Nider argued in *Formicarius* that the Devil or a witch can only appear to an individual after some form of a moral lapse, and he recounted a story told to him by Peter of Bern, a witch-hunter, to prove this point. A group of witches (formerly prosecuted by Peter) realized that Peter had returned to the area and used a magic light to make him believe it was late in the day.

⁵⁰ For example, John Cotta stated, "These jugglings notwithstanding are things also supernaturall, and tricks onely possible to Spirits and impossible to man, who soeuer undertake these jugglings is conuincd to be a Witch" (Cotta 36).

⁵¹ See footnote 42.

Peter, in a hurry to rise, forgot to cross himself and when he stumbled down the stair he cursed. Hence, this fault in his normally impeccable morality made him susceptible to witchcraft.⁵²

In *Malleus Maleficarum* the authors cannot seem to make up their minds as to whether it is primarily the guilty or the innocent who are attacked by the Devil.⁵³ Luther made a distinction between the pious and the impious. Though the Devil can torment them both, the pious he torments physically and the impious he torments spiritually.⁵⁴ This is close to the interpretation that Mather invoked in his assumption of the innocence of the girls in Salem and the guilt of the people who are being projected as specters. In H. B.'s *A pleasant treatise of*

⁵² "Because of this moral lapse, Peter fell into the power of the witches" (Bailey 124).

⁵³ "Therefore the Devil can hurt only the guilty who are bound to him by a pact, and never the innocent," and in the following paragraph they write, "Nevertheless, devils at times, in their own persons hurt even the innocent; and formerly they injured the Blessed Job" (Kramer & Sprenger 128).

⁵⁴ "Those whom he possesses corporally, he has permission from God to vex and agitate, but he has no power over their souls. The impious, who persecute the divine doctrine, and treat the truth as a lie, these the devil possesses spiritually" (Luther 267-268).

witches (1673) he related the story of a man who was being beaten by a specter. A passerby sees the event and upon saying a prayer the vision disappeared, and the abused individual later told the man that he had committed "great, most wicked crimes."⁵⁵ He also related a story of a boy who is attacked by the Devil in the shape of a man; he was confronted after committing a treachery against his parents.⁵⁶ These tales deliver the message that only those who are guilty of a certain crime or sin will be approached by a specter. Similarly, Boulton expressed the belief that only someone who has forsaken God in some way could possibly be possessed.⁵⁷

Cotton Mather in his *The Wonders of the Invisible World* stated that only on rare occasions has the Devil been known to invoke the specter of someone innocent, but this is extremely unusual, normally only the specters of the guilty will appear.⁵⁸ If

⁵⁵ See *A pleasant treatise of witches* (H.B. 69-70).

⁵⁶ *Ibid* 70.

⁵⁷ "Nor can I think Province would suffer any to be possessed, if they had not in some measure forsaken him" (Boulton 391).

⁵⁸ "Devils may have permission to Represent an Innocent Person, as Tormenting such as are under Diabolical Molestations: But threat such things are Rare and Extraordinary" (Mather, C. 18).

Mather had genuinely subscribed to the idea that only the guilty could be targeted by the Devil, and if he had mentioned even once that the tormented girls seemed to have been abused by the Devil, the entire outcome of the Salem trials would have been turned upside down, and perhaps twenty lives would have been saved. It seems that although Mather genuinely wanted to maintain the piousness of the people of Salem and prove to them that through their religious crisis of God singling them, the most holy, out to be persecuted; he ignored the possibility that the girls could have been guilty of a sin themselves, which would have disproved the inherent guilt of those whose specters were projected. Evidently, Mather's beliefs required that the public believe in the innocence of the girls, otherwise there would be no more witches, no more specters, and eventually, as he, a minister, evidently feared,⁵⁹ no more religion. The girls' visions provided unarguable proof (as there was no way to disprove the appearance to the specter) of a presence of an immanent threat from the spiritual realm

⁵⁹ "The Mathers were well aware of the struggle being mounted against atheism in London" (Harley). See also Webster xiv.

necessitating the Church as a defense, an idea that was losing currency in an increasingly Rationalist world.

But were the girls as innocent as Cotton Mather portrayed them? In fact, it appears likely that they had been participating in questionable, witch-like activities. Indeed, as Chadwick Hansen points out in *Witchcraft at Salem*, it is very likely that at least two of the accusing children from Salem had dabbled in the occult.⁶⁰ This also makes one wonder whether or not those executed at Salem were actually guilty of a crime punishable by death. In his sermon of 1692 Samuel Willard questioned whether or not the Devil could impersonate someone who was innocent, clearly prompted by a doubt of the guilt of those accused, and he questioned the validity of the use of spectral evidence in court cases.⁶¹ Evidently, his concerns were ignored by those on the jury

⁶⁰ John Hale mentions the trouble in Salem could have begun when, "some young persons, through a vain curiosity to know their future condition, have tampered with the Devil's tools. I knew one of the afflicted who did try with an egg and glass to find her future husband's calling" (Hansen 30).

⁶¹ "Samuel Willard in his sermons of 1692 attacked spectral evidence, and while he maintained that the children's fits were real he remained dubious about their alleged origins. After meeting the children he publicly sermonized that Satan did

in Salem. In Wendel Craker's article "Spectral Evidence, Non-Spectral Acts of Witchcraft, and Confession at Salem in 1692" he argues that no one in Salem was put to death on the basis of spectral evidence alone.⁶² Increase Mather, Cotton's father, was also unwilling to doubt the rightness and justness exhibited by the members of the court at Salem in condemning those who were actually guilty,⁶³ but concerning spectral evidence, he appeared willing to admit that the Devil can impersonate the innocent.⁶⁴ The events at Salem can be viewed as a culmination and explosion of all the built up religious tension and fear regarding a growing

atheism that needed to be disproved by a belief in witches and their specters.

employ specters" He urges caution when proceeding with a court case based on spectral evidence alone. (Robbins, S. 596-597).

⁶² "Not one person was even called to trial, much less hanged, on the basis of spectral evidence alone. The single magnet that most notably attracted the court's attention was the charge of non-spectral acts of malefic witchcraft" (Craker 333).

⁶³ "So that perhaps there never was an Instance of any innocent Person Condemned in any Court of Judicature on Earth, only though Satans deluding and imposing on the Imaginations of Men, when nevertheless, the Witnesses, Juries, and Judges, were all to be excused from blame" (Mather, I. 243) and "I hope the thinking part of Mankind will be satisfied, that there was more than that which is called Spectre Evidence for the Conviction of the Persons condemned" (Mather, I. 286).

⁶⁴ "Such is the malice and impudence of the Devil, as that he does accuse good Men, and that before God, and that not only of such Faults as they are really guilty of" (Mather, I. 231).

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Magic and Religion in Barbarian Europe

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Abstract:

This article discusses the culture of the Germanic tribes (Barbarian Europe) during the Roman times and the transition of Barbarian Europe from the Magic stage to the Religion stage as suggested by Sir James George Frazer in “The Golden Bough.”

¹ I would like to thank Dr. David Leinweber, Associate Professor of History, Oxford College of Emory University, Dr. E.O. Smith, Professor of Anthropology, Emory University, as well as the anonymous reviewers for editing assistance.

We can restore the original account of Posidonius {a Greek Explorer} with some probability, and thus obtain a picture of the sacrifices offered by the Celts of Gaul at the close of the second century before our era. The following seem to have been the main outlines of the custom. Condemned criminals were reserved by the Celts in order to be sacrificed to the gods at a great festival, which took place once in every five years. The more there were of such victims, the greater was believed to be the fertility of the land. If there were not enough criminals to furnish victims, captives taken in war were immolated to supply the deficiency. When the time came the victims were sacrificed by the Druids or priests. Some they shot down with arrows, some they impaled, and some they burned alive in the following manner. Colossal images of wicker-work or of wood and grass were constructed; these were filled with live men, cattle, and animals of other kinds; fire was then applied to the images, and they were burned with their living contents.²

Sir James George Frazer's "*The Golden Bough*" has been an information source for generations of anthropologists, psychologists, and historians to interested in magic and the use of ritual in culture, but how much can Frazer really teach us? Culture change is exceedingly

² Sir James George Frazer, FRS FBA., *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion.*, vol. 1 abridged version (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1922).

Marsh: Magic and Religion in Barbarian Europe common and can occur with great rapidity. What is performed one way this month might be done in a way that is drastically different the next time the behavior is observed. Ancient Germanic culture is gone, but its legacy, in the form of rituals and holidays, lives on in the cultures of modern Europe. The purpose of this paper is to explore the validity of the idea that there is a general underlying belief system that connects all fertility religions as suggested originally by Frazer in "*The Golden Bough.*" A thorough analysis of historical/archaeological evidence will be used to see if this idea is valid for the ancient German tribes.

Sources of information about "Barbarian" culture are controversial and widely contentious. Barbarian Europe – as I use it here – refers to the Germanic and Celtic cultures of Europe, not the "civilized" cultures of Rome and Greece. While it is unknown when exactly the ancient Germanic tribes came to Europe, estimates range from the third to the

second millennia BCE.³ There were a great number of border areas, which consisted of both Celtic and Germanic peoples.⁴

⁵ The close proximity of the two cultures along the borders virtually guaranteed some similarities between the two cultures. While they both celebrated holidays around the same time, such as the solstices, they had their differences. Written records from the European Barbarians are rare because they transmitted their folklore, mythology and knowledge orally.

Most information about the early Barbarians came from biased Roman sources, such as Caesar and Tacitus, who saw the Barbarians as enemies to be conquered and vanquished.

³ Glyn E. Daniel, "64. The Chronological Framework of Prehistoric Barbarian Europe," *Man* 51 (1951).

⁴ Michael Grant, *A Guide to the Ancient World: A Dictionary of Classical Place Names* ([Bronx, NY]: H.W. Wilson, 1986).

⁵ Sinnigen and Robinson, *Ancient History, from Prehistoric Times to the Death of Justinian*.

The nation of all the Gauls is extremely devoted to superstitious rites; and on that account they who are troubled with unusually severe diseases, and they who are engaged in battles and dangers, either sacrifice men as victims, or vow that they will sacrifice them, and employ the Druids as the performers of those sacrifices; because they think that unless the life of a man be offered for the life of a man, the mind of the immortal gods can not be rendered propitious, and they have sacrifices of that kind ordained for national purposes. Others have figures of vast size, the limbs of which formed of osiers they fill with living men, which being set on fire, the men perish enveloped in the flames.⁶

Roman scholars and historians would record information about the Barbarians in their journals, and such information was considered to be historical fact by historians at the time. Sensationalism, rumor, and innuendo can throw the accuracy of these historical records into question.⁷

⁶ Julius Caesar, *The Gallic Wars, Book VI, Chap 16*, trans. W. A. McDevitte and W. S. Bohn (The Internet Classics Archive, 2003).

⁷ This is a normal war tactic, which is practiced even today when one country goes to war; propaganda starts making the enemy look horrible, when really they are human beings just the same. In WWI and WWII, the Germans were drawn as monsters.

Archaeological evidence as a source for information about the Barbarians provides a different picture of Barbarian life than does the Roman account. Romans, for example, reported that Barbarians practiced human sacrifices, but no supporting hard archaeological evidence has been discovered. Most of the time archaeological evidence for sacrifices is circumstantial, such as weapons located near the body, facial expression in mummies, or wounds that may have been inflicted after death.⁸

Religion and faith do not leave artifacts, but religious practitioners can create artifacts. Interpretations of various artifacts, such as the Venus figures, and cave paintings in France lead anthropologists, such as Tylor, to believe that nature worship, a type of polytheism, was the first worship that was universal.^{9 10} If we assume that the development of

⁸ Miranda Green, "Humans as Ritual Victims in the Later Prehistory of Western Europe.," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 17, no. 2 (1998).

⁹ Indra Sinha, "The Five-Fold Sacrament," *Parabla* 20, no. 4 (1995).

sentient thought (conscious thought, self-awareness, and feelings) has a positive correlation with the development of culture and religion, then artifacts implying some sort of religious beliefs would support the idea that primitive humans were sentient and had some knowledge of the world around them. The sentience of humans, and therefore their knowledge of the world, is the basis of Frazer's most important argument is that societies' beliefs evolve with their knowledge so as knowledge increases the society progresses through more and more complex ideas through Magic and then to Religion.

According to Frazer, the first stage that a society goes through is the Magic stage, when the belief is widely held that all aspects of nature can be controlled by individual desire. Egalitarian societies are societies in which all people are truly equal and no one is much better than anyone else by

¹⁰ David Bidney, "The Ethnology of Religion and the Problem of Human Evolution," *American Anthropologist* 56, no. 1 (1954).

anything other than individual differences, and they tend to be less driven by status, traditionally they would be a hunting-gathering society.¹¹ There could be individual variation in power and prestige, but all of the members of an egalitarian society would be able to control the natural forces, and as such, would all be magicians because one person does not have any more magical knowledge than anyone else.¹² Only by chance, would one person's magic work better than others. If this were the case, then he or she would be known as a better magician and would be more likely to perform rituals than those less skilled. During the magic stage, there were no full time magic practitioners. After the magic stage is the religion stage, the transition to the religion stage is

¹¹ In egalitarian societies, everyone's power and privilege is the same, but their prestige for being able to do certain things better than others is the only difference. Compare this with non-egalitarian societies in which nothing is equal.

¹² Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*.

where the Barbarians were at the time of their fighting with the Roman Empire.

Art of the Magic period is very similar to and indeed covers the Paleolithic era because "Paleolithic religious life is indistinguishable from magic" and thus is indistinguishable from the Magic stage.¹³ Throughout caves in Europe, there are pictures of rituals designed to work magic, such as that of "the Sorcerer" in Caverne des Trois Freres. "The Sorcerer" shows a man dressed in animal skins and acting as an animal possibly in a hunting ritual where other members of the society are "play" killing him.¹⁴ If an animal is symbolically killed then it will be actually killed by the hunting party, this is called sympathetic magic or imitative magic.¹⁵ Another way of performing sympathetic magic would be to attack a model of the animal that one is trying to hunt and kill it,

¹³ Hartt, *Art: A History of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture*.

¹⁴ Laurie Adams, *Art across Time* (Boston: McGraw Hill College, 1999).

¹⁵ Buckland, *Witchcraft from the Inside*.

some clay creatures, such as the bison at Le Tuc d'Audoubert, Ariège, have actually been found with holes in them, which may or may not have been caused by magicians.¹⁶ The other type of magic is called contagious magic when one aspect can rub off on to another object, such as touching a healthy person so that a sickness can be cured.

Magic remains the dominant way of life for most of human history. In fact with the rise of agriculture fewer people are allowed to practice magic because with civilization comes stratification and the development of specialists. When a society moves to the Religion stage, magic is performed differently, rather than manipulate nature directly; religion seeks to indirectly influence nature by sacrificing to the gods.

In Upper Paleolithic Europe, religion brought greater attention to the fertility of animals and plants and, by the Neolithic period, archaeological evidence indicates that there

¹⁶ Ibid.

was a widespread organized religion.¹⁷ ¹⁸ This fertility religion

increasingly centered on the forces of nature believed to control the fertility of plants and animals challenged...villagers with concepts far more complex than those associated with animal spirits.¹⁹

It has been suggested that this emphasis on fertility has considerable antiquity. Dr. Marija Gimbutas, one of the first people to make a case for the antiquity of Venus of Willendorf (sculpted before the Indo-European invasion and are referred to as the "Old European Great Goddess"²⁰). These Venus statues, as they were called, after the Roman goddess, was the first European goddess of fertility, and these statues have been found widely distributed across Europe and

¹⁷ Hartt, *Art: A History of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture*.

¹⁸ Archaeologists found structures that they think are religious sanctuaries, but no one can be totally certain.

¹⁹ Richard Eugene Sullivan, Dennis Sherman, and John Baugham Harrison, *A Short History of Western Civilization*, 8th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994).

²⁰ R. N. Ostling and M. P. Harris, "When God Was a Woman," *Time*, 6 April 1991 1991.

as far east as Russia.^{21 22} The first people in Europe that practiced this fertility religion were neither the Celts nor the Germanic peoples, who came into Europe around the Bronze Age, but were instead a much older group. These early practitioners were likely scattered groups of people who were egalitarian and matriarchal.^{23 24} This stands in contrast to the invading Indo-Europeans, which were non-egalitarian (i.e., stratified), more aggressive, and male-dominated.²⁵ When the Celts came to Europe about 4000-5000 years ago, they slowly became a dominant sociopolitical and cultural force. At the time of the Celtic occupation, Venus figures were no longer being produced, and only a dominant fertility goddess

²¹ Ibid.

²² Brian M. Fagan, *People of the Earth: An Introduction to World Prehistory*, 9th ed. (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 1998).

²³ Richard B. Lee, Irven DeVore, and Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, *Man the Hunter* (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1969).

²⁴ Ostling and Harris, "When God Was a Woman."

²⁵ Michael Alexander, *Beowulf: A Verse Translation* (London: Penguin Books, 1973).

(or goddesses) remained.²⁶ Even though they were no longer produced at the time of the Celts, many still refer to the Venus statues as Celtic.²⁷ In fact, permanent representations of Celtic gods are not widely known.

The fertility goddess figures, such as Venus, also have a male companion known in modern times as Jack of the Green. The need for a male companion is derived from the requirements of procreation, "she who fertilizes nature must herself be fertile and to be that she must necessarily have a male consort."²⁸ The marriage of Diana, the Roman goddess of fertility and her consort, the King of the Woods is similar to the relationship between this fertility "Great Goddess" and Jack. Both are examples of a "sacred marriage" and both play similar roles.²⁹ Diana/"Great Goddess" makes the animals procreate and King/Jack

²⁶ Fagan, *People of the Earth: An Introduction to World Prehistory*.

²⁷ Ostling and Harris, "When God Was a Woman."

²⁸ Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*.

²⁹ Ibid.

protects the woods against unnecessary hunting as well as also having to mate with her.

The relationship of the followers of the Germanic gods to the Germanic gods themselves is very similar to the relationship between a child and an adult. Although the "supernatural agents [were] not regarded as greatly, if at all, superior to man," the supernatural agents were seen as more powerful.³⁰ The difference between a "spirit" and a "god" is up to individual interpretation in modern society and the line can get blurred. . The difference is often defined as spirits such as ancestors were once in a living body, while gods never were.³¹ Although they are different, they both live in the same spirit realm. The Germanic gods were more like the Roman and Greek gods, acting like immortal humans with flaws of their own. Through them people were still able to

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Merete Demant Jakobsen, *Shamanism : Traditional and Contemporary Approaches to the Mastery of Spirits and Healing* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999).

regain a sense of control that they would have as if they were still in the Magic stage.

A savage hardly conceives the distinction commonly drawn by more advanced peoples between the natural and the supernatural. To him the world is to a great extent worked by supernatural agents, that is, by personal beings acting on impulses and motives like his own, liable like him to be moved by appeals to their pity, their hope, and their fears. In a world so conceived he sees no limit to his power of influencing the course of nature to his own advantage.³²

The similarities between the gods and the people provided a basis for the worshippers to enlist the gods to do what Frazer argues that the gods were seen as all powerful while humans were seen as very weak.³³ The shift caused by the transition to agriculture from primarily personal magic to being all-powerful godly magic tremendously altered the attitudes of the people, since they were now a stationary society and could not move to where the food was available. For the first time, the farmers are dependent on something else to make

³² Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*.

³³ Ibid.

the crops grow and be successful. Instead of the spirits being weak-willed and controllable, the gods are strong and must be placated in order to make the rains come and the crops grow. During this time, prayer and sacrifice became the most important while magic itself became secondary since rarely did prayer and sacrifice fail to work.³⁴ In the event that prayer did not work, magic was still available to help the crops. The constant prayer and sacrifice to the gods took up so much time and was so important to the community that public offices such as priest-kings developed.

With the rise of agriculture, the gods and goddesses became more important since no longer were people praying to general spirits of the forest.³⁵ The year became split between bountiful and barren times, and so the year's seasons became associated with the life cycle of animals and

people.³⁶ Spring is the rebirth of all the crops and the multiplication of the animals. Summer is the time for maturation of the crops and the development of young animals. Autumn is the time for Harvest of the crops and the preparation for winter. Winter is barrenness, and the time when the fertility gods and goddesses either were dead or sleeping. That is why there were no crops. The only way to bring back the fertility was through special rites and harvest magic near the end of winter.

Harvest magic was very important, so accurate records of natural events and seasonal changes became vital to planting and harvesting. People had to perform the magic at the same time every year because if they didn't the crops would never come. The need to perform magic at the same time every year led to the beginnings of the priesthood, although during this early magic time the priests were older members of the egalitarian society. The rise of a true

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Buckland, *Witchcraft from the Inside*.

³⁶ Raymond Buckland, *Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft* (St. Paul MN: Llewellyn Publications, 1985).

priesthood comes with the stratification of society, which arose after the origin of agriculture or the mass domestication of animals.³⁷

The elders would be the ones who learned the rituals through years of repetition and learning by the side of the elders before them. The learning that goes on at the feet of the elderly “entertains as well as instructs” the youth in the ritual.³⁸ The youth do not consciously realize, but they are learning about ethics, traditions, values, as well as benefiting from the experience of their elders. In exchange for the learning, the young humans would pass on some of their fertility to the object of the ritual, contagious magic. This passing of knowledge through the different roles of the rituals, for example the children doing something simple but no less important than the roles played by adults is how the ritual is most likely learned. By imitating the death and

³⁷ Fagan, *People of the Earth: An Introduction to World Prehistory*.

³⁸ William A. Haviland, *Anthropology*, 8th ed. (Ft. Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1997).

celebrating the revival of the plants, the followers of harvest magic guarantee the crops will come back, so the "essence of all rites was the mimic death and regeneration of vegetation."³⁹ Some of the festivals have remained in the European culture, such as the May tree and the Corn mother, which were spring crop festivals primarily led by the very old and the very young.

The most famous of the fertility rituals is that of the May tree. Remnants of this ritual are still practiced by Western European nations as dancing around the Maypole.⁴⁰ The "May tree," which was cut down, moved into the village, stuck in the ground perfectly straight, decorated with ribbons and was danced around in early May.⁴¹ The next year, the

³⁹ Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ May trees (or May poles) represent fertility in a number of different ways. 1) It involves chopping down and physically replanting a dead tree, 2) It was ideal to replant it perfectly straight, when most trees in nature are not perfectly straight, so it makes it look like a large penis sticking out of the ground (the sky fertilizing Mother Earth), and 3) The

old Maypole was burned as a sacrifice and a new one was brought in to take the old one's place, as the old one had to be destroyed for the next one to reign, just like the crops have to die before the next batch is born, so "the renewal of the May tree is like the renewal of the Harvest."⁴² Dancing around the Maypole is a way of bringing up psychic energy to charge the wood with life and make it really a fertility charm. School children, even today, dance around the Maypole on May Day not knowing the purpose behind their activities.⁴³

The Corn Mother, also known as the Rye Mother depending on the crop she is tending, is a fertility ritual primarily and is found in Germany.⁴⁴ She is not so much a

burning of the tree when it is a year old, so a new younger one can take over.

⁴² Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*.

⁴³ This is also called Beltane in the Wiccan community and many other communities are starting to call it by its true name. It may or may not have been called Beltane by the Germanic tribes, no one knows because they did not write it down.

⁴⁴ Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*.

fertility symbol as a crop protector, making her seem more like the King of the Woods than a fertility goddess. As the legend goes, the Corn Mother would catch trouble-making children sneaking into the fields and would take them away so that they could not worry the emergent corn.⁴⁵ The Corn Spirit would "lurk in cornfields guarding the growing crops until [it was] captured and killed by the harvesters" before they were permitted to harvest the corn.⁴⁶ The elders would even make a mock corn-spirit to place out in the fields, which would be "killed" at the beginning of the harvest season, so it would be safe to harvest the corn. When the corn was being harvested, the Corn Mother was said to be present in the last handful of the corn standing.⁴⁷ Each different neighborhood in modern Germany treated the spirit in a different way, while some destroy the last piece of corn and others worship

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Jacqueline Simpson, *European Mythology* (New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1987).

⁴⁷ Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*.

it. In Danzig, the last piece of corn is physically made into a doll and brought home and, in Holstein, it is dressed up as a woman, though not made into a doll, and used as a rain charm to insure fertility of the land. In Brück, the Corn Mother is made into a wreath and either is used to placate the mice in the barn, or as in the majority of the villages,

the grain is rubbed out of [the wreath] by a seven year old girl and scattered amongst the young corn. At Christmas, the straw of the wreath is placed in the manger to make the cattle thrive. Here the [fertilizing] power of the Corn-mother is plainly brought out by scattering the seed taken from her body (for the wreath is made out of the Corn-mother) among the new corn; and her influence over animal life is indicated by placing the straw in the manger.⁴⁸

While the meanings behind the ritualistic prayers have been forgotten, some of the sacrifices have been discovered archaeologically. Deer skulls and antlers have been found near trees, sometimes plain and at other times decorated. The antlers suggest that demonstrates they might

⁴⁸ Ibid.

have been offered as a sacrifice to the goddess' consort to him that the hunters are grateful for their prey. As a token of the hunters' respect send part of it back to nature to encourage other prey animals to grow and be caught, so the hunters have a constant supply of meat.^{49 50} Other sacrificed animals were horses and oxen in order to encourage fertility of domesticated animals.⁵¹ Some animals are considered sacred and when one of these sacred animals was sacrificed, than it had to be taken to all the people before or immediately after its death.⁵² That is just a theory because it cannot be proven, even through archaeological evidence.

Through archaeological excavation and analysis of the patterns on the skeleton everything from the nutrition and

⁴⁹ Ken Dowden, *European Paganism : The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2000).

⁵⁰ Very rarely have any of these exact sites been mentioned in scholarly research.

⁵¹ H. Munro Chadwick, "The Oak and the Thunder-God," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 30 (1900).

⁵² Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*.

growth patterns, to what muscles were more developed than others, and sometimes how the person died is revealed. Most likely if someone was sacrificed, the victim would have human made marks as opposed to animal made marks on their bones, such as a knife scrape on one of the rib bones. The knife scrapes would be more even than those made by animals. Death by suffocation can be interpreted archaeologically, especially if the cervical vertebrae (bones in the neck) have been damaged or if there is something preserved around the neck.⁵³ In the event of being buried alive, the body would often be found in a pit and may have an unusually shaped skull, arms being tied together, or something holding the body into the soil.⁵⁴ However, little archaeological evidence for human sacrifice by the Barbarians exists making it seem more likely that the Romans were trying to discredit the Barbarians because of

⁵³ Green, "Humans as Ritual Victims in the Later Prehistory of Western Europe.."

⁵⁴ Ibid.

their ongoing hostilities.⁵⁵ For the little evidence that there is, we do not know if it was simply a criminal's execution or if it was a sacrifice.⁵⁶ There is some evidence among the Normans and the Icelandics that there were some human sacrifices of criminals to their gods, but in continental Europe animals seemed to be the preferred sacrifice.⁵⁷ Several human skeletons, such as those found in gravesites in La Tène, Switzerland, and were found with offerings to the deceased person called grave goods.⁵⁸

The difference between the offerings to the gods and offerings to the deceased (grave goods) is the purpose or the functionality of the gift, the location of a skeleton to the goods, and how many goods there were. A sleeping person appeared to be dead to his comrades, he even might talk to

⁵⁵ Peter S. Wells, *The Barbarians Speak: How the Conquered Peoples Shaped the Roman Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁵⁶ Green, "Humans as Ritual Victims in the Later Prehistory of Western Europe.."

⁵⁷ Chadwick, "The Oak and the Thunder-God."

⁵⁸ Hartt, *Art: A History of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture*.

the dead in his dreams, and "it seemed that the world of sleep was as the material world," so logically the world of the dead would be the same as the world of the living since the world of dreams was as the world of the living.⁵⁹ In graves that were often in east to west alignment, the grave goods are typically things that a warrior would need in his next life and would be located next to the warrior's body.⁶⁰ Armor and weapons were very commonly found in graves. Occasionally, some food might also be found in the graves as well.

One of the most famous archaeological sites for the discovery of weapons and armor is the site of La Tène in Switzerland. La Tène, meaning "the shallows" in French, was first mentioned in 1858 making it the oldest site in the area.⁶¹ Although the site lies near Lake Neuchâtel, the term

⁵⁹ Buckland, *Witchcraft from the Inside*.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Leonard Cottrell, ed., *The Concise Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, 1st ed. (New York,: Hawthorn Books, 1960).

has been used to describe the artifacts, such as weaponry, of the Iron Age Celtic culture that extended into the Low Countries and into part of Britain.^{62 63} In some of the lakes and rivers of the La Tène area, such as Rhine and the Danube, helmets and armor were excavated from the river, though there were no skeletons in the area. These weapons and armor were probably a sacrifice because many of them were piled on top of one another implying that this was a place where many rituals went on, as opposed to a single burial.⁶⁴ Perhaps these areas were Holy Sites and had some connection to the gods.

For those that are worshippers of nature all land is holy, but some is holier than others. Traditionally, nature worshippers believe all land is publicly owned and thus any place can be specified as a holy area, much to the dismay of the Greeks and the Romans who thought any group that

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Fagan, *People of the Earth: An Introduction to World Prehistory*.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

worshiped in groves, instead of temples were barbarians.⁶⁵ "Eating roast joints with milk and drinking, barbarously, undiluted wine" also contributed to their reputation.⁶⁶ Favorite spots to be made Holy were spots that had springs, stones, and trees, which were frequently found together anyway.^{67 68} Some Germanic tribes preferred to worship in certain areas more than other areas. The Germanic peoples, in general, seemed to have preferred groves though "the worship of springs and streams is common to all Indo-European peoples".⁶⁹

However, the Germanic people were so devoted to trees that the oldest Germanic sanctuary was located in a

⁶⁵ Dowden, *European Paganism : The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Sources do not specify what type of stones the Barbarians were looking for and what made the stones holy. Was it their color? Shape? Or just their presence?

⁶⁸ Dowden, *European Paganism : The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

forest.⁷⁰ Germanic law required the "life of a man for life of a tree," meaning that if a tree was chopped down, the person responsible would be killed if caught.⁷¹ Groves are "somewhere where human control runs out and [is] something of another world," it is an area far removed from the village, not necessarily in space, but in meaning.⁷² Groves are natural groups of trees, unlike groups of buildings in villages and towns, which are artificial groups. As such, groves have a magical primitive element to them. This form of paganism, the rural type, required that the Holy areas were of all natural materials. Much the early "Christian" like the Celts, the Germanics people continued to

pray to certain trees and streams of rivers and hilltops and gorges and to these, as though they were performing holy rites, they [sacrificed] horses and cows and thousands of other things, by decapitation.⁷³

⁷⁰ Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Dowden, *European Paganism : The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*.

⁷³ Ibid.

Most of the Germanic people would not give up most of their pagan ways and their holy groves at places like Nerthus⁷⁴ (an island grove named after an Ingævonian goddess of plenty and a Mother Earth figure)^{75 76}, Naharuali⁷⁷ (also spelled Naharvali or Naharvali located near the tribe of the same name)⁷⁸, and Semnonen⁷⁹ (near Berlin)⁸⁰ until their conversion to Christianity.

Polytheistic religions “can accept the beliefs and practices of others much more readily than more ideological religions,” so when the pagan temples were destroyed and churches rebuilt in their place, aspects of the old religion

⁷⁴ Chadwick, "The Oak and the Thunder-God."

⁷⁵ Cornelius Tacitus and Herbert W. Benario, *Tacitus' Agricola, Germany, and Dialogue on Orators*, Rev. ed., *Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture ; V. 8* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

⁷⁶ Francis B. Gummere, *Germanic Origins: A Study in Primitive Culture* (New York, : C. Scribner's sons, 1892).

⁷⁷ Chadwick, "The Oak and the Thunder-God."

⁷⁸ Cornelius Tacitus and Rodney Potter Robinson, *The Germania of Tacitus* (Middletown, Conn., : American Philological Association, 1935).

⁷⁹ Chadwick, "The Oak and the Thunder-God."

⁸⁰ W. Beare, "Tacitus on the Germans," *Greece & Rome* 11, no. 1 (1964).

remained closely hidden in the engravings along the Church walls, carefully put there by pagan artisans so that their fellow villagers could go to church but still worship the old gods.⁸¹ Jack of the Green, a horned person surrounded by foliage, was often found in carvings in medieval churches.⁸² As Procopius, a Roman historian said, "These barbarians, though they have become Christians...preserve the greater part of their ancient religion."⁸³ Many of their songs and poems such as Beowulf cannot be described as either truly pagan or truly Christian because it has aspects of both; the best way to describe it is "Germanic Christianity," which essentially means its "Paganized Christianity."⁸⁴

⁸¹ Dowden, *European Paganism : The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*.

⁸² Buckland, *Buckland's Complete Book of Witchcraft*.

⁸³ G Ausenda, ed., *After Empire: Towards an Ethnography of Europe's Barbarians*. (San Francisco: The Boydell Press, 1995).

⁸⁴ Dowden, *European Paganism : The Realities of Cult from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*.

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