SEMANTIC DOMAINS IN THE
DREAM OF THE ROOD

by
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1.1 Introduction

Per Aage Brandt has influenced greatly my thinking about semiotics, mental spaces, and conceptual blending, so much so that I can hardly write a word on the subject without hearing his soft *basso profondo* in the background. For me, one of Brandt's most influential ideas has been his treatment of semantic domains, and I have come to realize that a theoretically and methodologically satisfying application of mental spaces to the study of rhetoric and poetics must work with a more or less explicit account of semantic domains. Meaning construction operates within the architecture of semantic domains, for all mental spaces are structured and stabilized by such domains.

Within cognitive linguistics, the notion of a domain (labeled 'conceptual') is all-important for the creation of symbolic assemblies and constructions (form/meaning pairings), yet, as Brandt rightly points out, the very notion of a conceptual domain itself has been given little explicit theoretical attention.[1] It often operates as a methodological rule of thumb for intuiting the relevance for concept combination and metaphor analysis. Brandt's essay *The Architecture of Semantic Domains* (Brandt 2004) provides a model of meaning construction according to semantic domains, and should be far more influential than is currently the case.

My aim here is modest. I wish to honor Professor Brandt's contribution to cognitive semiotics with an application of a semantic

domains model for how readers understand and interpret the elegiac poem, *The Dream of the Rood*, a poem of keen interest to conceptual blending theorists interested in the phenomenon of 'fictive interaction'. But before proceeding to analyze this poem as an instance of mental spaces blending, some explicit statements about mental spaces, hermeneutics and common discourse ground are in order.

Mental spaces are often defined as 'conceptual packets' – active as we think, talk, and interact. This definition will suffice as a hasty, 'back-of-the-envelope' theoretical sketch for covering the gamut of cognitive linguistic phenomena, from anaphor to image schema to zeugma. Those of us interested in textual hermeneutics need something more restrictive. Taking the lead from Brandt & Brandt (2005), I will define a mental space as scenes and scenarios of perception, thought, and action that are capable of being presented or represented. All thinking involves networks of mental spaces, because thoughts are scenic. Thus, the mental space networks for *The Dream of the Rood* are specified in terms of whole scenes. Any understanding of salient parts depends on an intuition of scenic wholes.

Mental spaces theory as deployed here is a hermeneutic one. Hermeneutic mental spaces activate semantic domains. One does not 'generate' mental spaces without semantic domains. Hermeneutics is not really possible without either. Understanding the meaning and poetic force of expressions like *se ðe hēr on eorðan ær prōwode* ('who suffered here on earth') or *þāra þe him bið egesa tō mē* ('those who hold me in awe') in the poem is critical for receiving the Christological message of the Rood.

1.2 Hermeneutics and Mental Spaces

As Gallagher (2004) reminds us, all understanding is circular in nature, but not viciously so. In the textual world, to understand the meaning of a particular passage, we need to know how it relates to the text as a whole. The same goes for pictures, photos, movies, musical compositions, and anything else that has captured Per Aage's attention since the *dies mirabilis* of April 26, 1944. This narrowly hermeneutic notion is consistent with cognitive-scientific accounts of how we know objects – we must assimilate our knowledge of any object within a larger framework that can include such things as how we interact with it (its affordances, etc.) and then we can further differentiate and refine our understanding by accommodating the frame to that object.

It also fits with the cognitive-scientific accounts of how we know situations: understanding and interpretation take place in amorphous, open-ended problems that require insight – we live in ambiguous, embodied, pragmatically and socially contextualized situations. These situations consist broadly of an exigence, constraints, such as language, time pressures, etc., and other persons (cf. Bitzer 1969).

It likewise also fits with the cognitive social scientific focus on others: Second-person interactions cannot be characterized as simply the interaction of two brains. In our attempts to explain how we understand others we do not have to appeal to an obscure universal human spirit, as Schleiermacher and Dilthey did, rather we can see the meaning of this universal spirit in the emerging complex intersubjectivity skills first observed in infancy. From infancy, we are able to detect and complete the intentions of others by interpreting bodily movements as goal-directed intentional activity (see Gallagher 2004). This divinatory power is embodied and perceptual; it is fast, automatic, irresistible, and externally driven; these elementary understandings underlie the more sophisticated human singularities of concern in hermeneutics.

This brings us directly to hermeneutics, which is the study of meaning. What is meaning? A broad, phenomenological and philosophical hermeneutic position can be characterized simply as the relationship between an organism and its physical and cultural environment. In itself, this is too broad and vague, perhaps of little

help to us, except that it is the *point de départ* for any attempt to naturalize hermeneutics. It is against this backdrop and in concert with my friends in phenomenology, that there are three basic aspects of meaning that we use to build mental spaces: the *ontological*, the *intentional*, and the *intersubjective*. On the analytic back end, mental spaces are the 'products' of a dynamic meaning construction process (something we do all the time). And thus all mental spaces possess in some measure these three aspects.

1.3 Common Ground and Grounding Spaces

I will use the term grounding[2] here to underscore the importance of embedding the mental space network in a specific context of use – or rhetorical situation. This network and ground both concern the ontological, the intentional, and the intersubjective.

The *ontological* common ground concerns matters of being or existence. We can assume the poet of the Rood took the ontological reality of the Christ figure for granted; certainly this is the case for the poetic subject identified as the poet, the dreamer, and the sinner. The *intentional* common ground concerns matters of the directedness of attention and consciousness. Participants can occupy the same intentional common ground without 'occupying' the same ontological common ground. A first century Pharisee of the second temple period (which lasted from 516 BCE to 70 CE) would likely have known of Jesus, the Nazarene, as 'the one who calls himself Messiah', but would not have been ontologically committed to his existence as such (unless that Pharisee were named Saul and had had an epiphany on the road to Damascus).

More than one participant can co-occupy a common ground in the guise of distinct subjectivities, regardless of their ontological or intentional status. I can read *The Dream of the Rood* on my laptop computer, and so can Per Aage. A Pharisee would never occupy an

intersubjective common ground of the *Rood* under any historically imaginable circumstance, as Per Aage Brandt and Todd Oakley can empathize with, say, an Anglo-Saxon dairy farmer. That is, we can imagine ourselves as sharing an intentional and intersubjective common ground with an historical audience, even as we may not share the same ontological common ground. It is also possible to share an intersubjective common ground without sharing an intentional or ontological common ground. Suppose, for instance, that a fellow reader has no idea who the Christ figure is or, more plausibly, has no idea that 'rood' is another word for 'cross'. That person may be reading the poem without getting the conceptual blend of a 'speaking cross'.

Thus, there are several dimensions of metaphorical consanguinity among discourse participants for which the categories of the ontological, intentional, and intersubjective intersect.

It seems any reader, regardless of sect, can occupy an intersubjective and intentional common ground, without, however, embracing the same ontological common ground. For instance, transferring the suffering to the cross follows a strategy of ontological ambiguity, for it is a way of alluding to Christ's divinity by transferring all evidence of suffering away from the Christ figure.

2.1 *The* Dream of the Rood *as Blend*

The *Dream of the Rood* is an 8th century Anglo-Saxon poem of unknown authorship, which represents the Crucifixion as a battle, blending heroic verse and imagery commonly used in Anglo-Saxon poetry to explain the Passion: a blending of the monastic and the artistic. The poem's fascinating conceptual blend, of course, is the personification of the Cross-as-Christ's 'loyal retainer', who then narrates the story of the crucifixion.

Turner (2002) and Pascual (2008) comment extensively on the

central conceit of *The Dream of the Rood* as a conceptual blend, more specifically a fictive interaction blend whereby the cross speaks to the dreamer, who then relates it in to us in verse.

Figure 1 presents a schematic of conceptual blends structuring the poem.
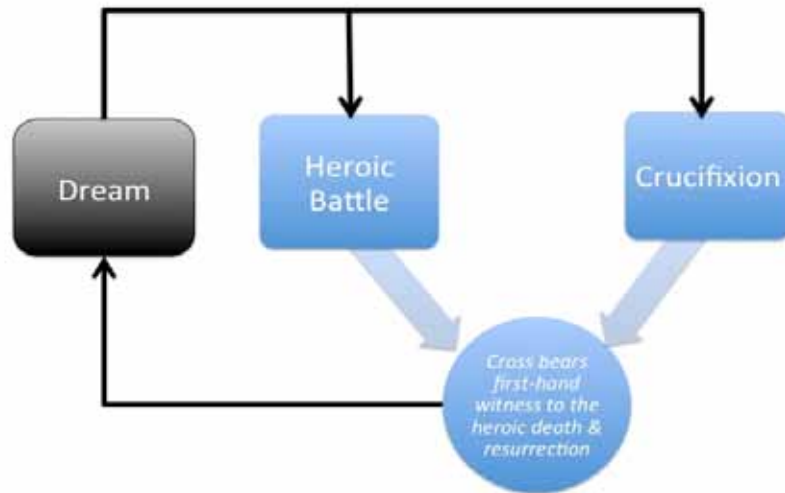

Figure 1: Mental Space Network for The Dream of the Rood

First, the poet has a dream and in that dreamscape a cross appears to him and begins to talk, recounting the events of the crucifixion at Golgotha. I refer to this as the displaced grounding space (more about grounding below), where the scenario of a dream vision grounds a conversation frame for the story. The cross (or *rood*) is fully personified and speaks as much of its own subsequent "fall and rise" as it does of Jesus Christ, the latter most prominently construed as a heroic warrior. The crucifixion itself is an act of heroism understood through the prism of an Anglo-Saxon warrior. Thus, it is not simply a matter of a speaking cross that animates the central

conceit of the poem; the cross is the squire to his knight. In this blended scenario, the Rood narrates the heroic events of Jesus, who, while being subjected to a common form of capital punishment for any first century Roman denizen convicted of sedition, is, in narrative fact, fighting the good fight of redemption by suffering the "slings and arrows" that any warrior suffers during battle. The Rood tells us of the fall and rise of the One who is fastened to it. As an integral part of the events of the crucifixion, the personified cross bears witness to the events of Jesus of Nazareth's death. Thus, the conceptual blend is of a speaking cross that recounts the events on Golgotha (aka. Calvary) from a first-person perspective, but does so through the scenario of a battle. It is not difficult for us to grasp the rhetorical power of this conceit: by recourse to speaking objects, one gets a first person account of an event shrouded in mystery. In this respect, the poem is one example in a long tradition of making objects bear witness to events and actions for which only objects are fully present (see Flint 1998, for an account of speaking objects in 18th century narrative prose).

Another layer (not presented in Figure 1) is that of the discourse ground of the poem, with the primary participant being the poet, a personage in the form of a "sinner," the wretched persona, who, in recognizing his own wretchedness, wishes to divine the "ancient hostilities " (*earmra ærgewin*) behind the gilded and bejeweled adornments of the cross, so that we, readers can hear the good news.

The decision to embody the wounds of Christ in the Rood itself might be in response to the Christological controversy over the ontology of Christ that was palpable in Pre-Conquest England. The orthodox (Pope Leo I's) view – codified by the Council of Chalcedon in 449 CE (Woolf 1995) – is that Christ is one person of two natures, as against the heretical views espoused by the *Monophysites* and *Eutychians* (Christ as immune from experience and suffering) and the *Nestorians of Antioch* (Christ being subject to all the natural pains of human nature). The poet equally stresses both aspects of

His nature, and this is imaginatively rendered by having the cross itself first appear wrapped in gold and gems (divinity), then appear covered in blood and sweat with visible "wounds" from arrows. Human suffering is transferred onto the cross – thus we read into the history of human interactions, just as we might if we found an Acheulean (Lower Paleolithic) axe fragment and were able to infer the history of its use from its condition. The cross becomes a cynosure for following Christ. And we should add that this is an argument about the Christ and not about the person of Jesus of Nazareth (cf. Aslan 2013).

I offer this analysis only as a starting point for a mental spaces hermeneutics, for the focus should be on what the conceit itself affords readers, particularly readers of 8th century England, for whom the divinity of Christ was a still simmering controversy despite the dominance of the Nicene creed and its further codification in the Council of Chalcedon.

2.2 Semantic Domains and the Context of 'Context'

These interpretive enterprises give significance to distinct mental spaces. The meanings we construct are dependent greatly on the 'domains' in which the concepts that populate our mental spaces are embedded. This leads to another issue for mental spaces theory, namely what 'domains' are and how they might operate. The notion of conceptual/semantic domain is widely used in Cognitive Linguistics, but it rarely is systematically modeled and deployed. First, I prefer to think of semantic domains as characterizing what phenomenologists call the 'human lifeworld' or *Lebenswelt* – the world that subjects may experience together, a living 'space' that is endowed with ontological, intentional, and intersubjective meaning (cf. Gallagher 2012:159-168). To that end, Per Aage Brandt has articulated a basic architecture of semantic domains that will help guide our analysis. Here, there are three layers of semantic domains – the gesture based; the practical; and the exchange based. There are others, such as discourse and knowledge based domains, but they are not directly relevant at this point.

The most basic kinds of domains are gesture based: we all have this layer, and its four domains are implicated in all linguistic acts, sometime overtly but just as often tacitly. They are also pre-ontological in the sense that they form the conditions of possibility for reflective consciousness about the nature of existence. Domain 1 (D1) specifies that which is physical; that the Rood is made of wood, and is not capable of self-propelled motion are salient facts relative to the domain of physics. Domain 2 (D2) specifies that which is social; that the Rood is part of a constituency of human beings, particularly Jesus and his apostles, and is largely dependent on them to adorn it: a salient fact relative to the domain of the social. Domain 3 (D3) specifies that which can be attributed to human thinking and reasoning. That the Rood is endowed with such powers, principally as a result of its metonymic connection to Jesus and his apostles via domains 1 and 2, is a salient fact of domain 3, where it is often the case that physical objects are made to speak because they narrate events from an epistemically privileged position. Domain 4 (D4) is that which issues from empathy and cooperative communication, making speech acts possible (D4 is derivative of the previous three domains, but still comprises part of the basic, pre-ontological set of domains). The poet's expression, *Sī mē dryhten frēond* ('May the Lord be a friend to me'), is an optative speech act, depending on an understanding of the meaning of Jesus's suffering. Such are the most basic, gesture-based domains that are implicated in virtually every meaningful act.

These four domains also limn out the basic framework of conversation. Thus, to have a conversation is to be grounded in a physical space (D1), with others subject to the same physical forces (D2), in which it is possible to experience utterances (D4) that are meaning-

ful to you (D3). These four domains provide necessary materials for modeling the more curious variants of conversation in which an inanimate object speaks. But such instances of "fictive interaction"[3] (cf. Pascual 2002, 2008) operate in relation to an expanded life-world of practical actions, exchanges, and modes of discourse. These are the satellite domains.

Radiating from these basic domains are the practical domains of concerted action in the world. With Domain 5 (D5) – a consolidation of D1 and D2 – the social and spatial proximity conspire to generate a people or set of peoples that form a polity. In first century Palestine, the polity consisted of several peoples, most prominently the Israelites, living under colonial Roman rule. Similarly, D5 concerns the conglomeration of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes living in Britain in the 8th century CE, well after the Roman garrisons had receded to continental Europe. Domain 6 (D6) – a consolidation of D2 and D4 – concerns ethnic and domestic identity; our empathy and cooperative impulses tend to go first and foremost with those with whom we have the most in common. Those within our 'household,' those who are members of our 'tribe,' who are most 'like us' and least 'like them.' In first century Palestine, the peasant Jews of Galilee, speakers of Aramaic, were very different from the Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria or Antioch. In 8th century Britain, however, the tribal differences among the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes had long given way to the linguistic and cultural homogeneity of the Anglo-Saxon, but certainly there remained kin and tribal differences among those dwelling North and East of the Humber and those dwelling South and West of the Thames – differences which manifested themselves most conspicuously in the Northumbrian and Mercian dialects, but which became considerably less important after the consolidation of all the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms under the rule of Alfred the Great in 878, to become completely consolidated into the Mercian dialect after the Viking raids of Northumbria in the 9th century CE. In short, D6 in Anglo-Saxon culture largely

confines itself to kinship and domestic relations rather than tribal ones, a situation decidedly not the case during Jesus of Nazareth's lifetime. Domain 7 (D7) – a consolidation of D1 and D4 – concerns matters of divine worship. That certain states of affairs are experienced as issuing from the divine calls for the creation of a hierarchical system of divine causes and human effects; that Jesus of Nazareth proclaims himself as Messiah has different implications in a mental space corresponding to the sacred Law of Moses, in which he came to fulfill a Davidian prophecy to unite the Twelve Tribes of Israel, than in a mental space corresponding to Paul's view of Jesus as wholly divine and come to redeem all of humankind. It is the latter notion of the sacred that concerns the poet of *The Dream of the Rood*, for what concern would an 8th century Anglo Saxon have with Jesus, the Jewish artisan from Nazareth sent to expel the Romans and cleanse the Temple of Herod, thereby fulfilling the Law of Moses in Judea, Galilee, Peræa, and Idumea? In 8th century Britain, the signal concern relative to D7 is the divinity of Jesus, the Christ, as it is articulated in the Nicene Creed.

The fact of Jesus of Nazareth being transformed into Jesus, the Christ, and later into Jesus Christ with an evangelical fervor extending over the known world, requires a lifeworld that becomes transformed by long distance exchanges. Pragmatic and practical domains give way to exchange-based domains; they are at once outcomes of practical interactions, which then feed forward to still more distal semantic domains that characterize our modern, document bound, scientific, and bureaucratic civilizations.

With domain 8 (D8) – a consolidation of D5 and D6 – the political and ethnic proximity of peoples leads to trade in goods and services. The domain of economics, then, concerns precisely the province of markets for tangible and intangible goods. In fact, Jesus of Nazareth's crime, the crime for which he was most certainly crucified as an act of sedition, was to throw the money-changers out of the Temple of Herod, thereby interrupting the monetary

exchanges between the high priest and those seeking a cleansing of the soul. What we know about Jesus of Nazareth was that he would perform miracles (or magic, depending on your perspective) for free. It was an activity not to be governed by the *quid pro quo* logic of the marketplace. (We should note that in the poem, the Rood itself was adorned with gold and jewels to signal its divine nature; more on this below.) Domain 9 (D9) – a consolidation of D6 and D7 – specifies our attitudes toward beauty, as aesthetic sensibilities bear directly on our sense of the familiar and the sacred. The gilded and bejeweled Rood references an aesthetic sensibility, inasmuch as that which is beautiful bears the mark of the sacred and that which is sacred has to be beautiful. Similar aesthetic sensibilities were certainly evident in first century Palestine, particularly among the priests in the Temple of Herod. Domain 10 (D10) – a consolidation of D5 and D7 – concerns all matters of justice. In first century Palestine, justice was the province of the Pharisees; their lifeworld was a theocracy. In late 8th-century Britain, Alfred the Great consolidated Mosaic, Christian, and German customary codes into a single Doom Book,[4] to be administered in county courts or "shires" by the diocesan bishop in matters ecclesiastical and by a sheriff in matters civil. The whole narrative thrust of the poem takes place within the background of D10, although the particulars of the case are never the focus of attention. Building on these exchange-based domain are the discourse domains. Domain 11 (D11) – a consolidation of D8 and D9 – pertains to descriptive discourse, as description is a function of entities and objects (some of which are marketable goods) and their "exposures", "revelations", and "showings", as beautiful or ugly. The Rood appears once as a gilded and bejeweled attendant and again as a gorged and bloodied combatant. Domain 12 (D12) – a consolidation of D9 and D10 – pertains to acts of argumentation, wherein participants "advocate", "assert", "argue", "convince", "dissuade", "persuade", "plead", "prove", "reason", "refute", or "suggest". The Rood refers in an aside to Jesus (*þæt wæs*

god ælmihtig) "that was God Almighty" – it is making an assertion that readers are to take as true. Domain 13 (D13) – a consolidation of D8 and D10 – pertains to narration in which discourse participants "announce", "disclose", "divulge", "inform", "relate", "report", or "tell". The central conceit of the poem is that the Rood 'tells' us *what* happened, *how* it happened, all the while alluding to *why* it happened; in a general sense, this telling was in actuality an act of divulgence or disclosure, not apparent to all but a select few.

Such are the relevant basic and satellite domains that provide the context for interpreting the *Dream of the Rood*. Brandt specifies yet another layer of knowledge-based domains – philosophy, science, & history – for which a fuller account will be reserved for another occasion.

Figure 2 presents a generic schematic of architecture of semantic domains.[5]
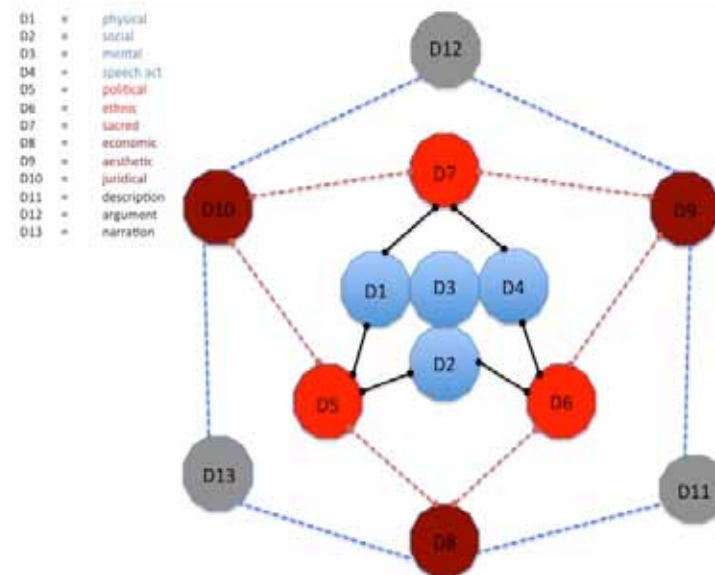

Figure 2: General Schematic of Semantic Domains

2.3 A Closer Examination of Semantic Domain Structure for
The Dream of the Rood

The architecture of semantic domains offers a substantial her-meneutical scheme for analyzing and interpreting even the most inconspicuous properties of literary artifacts, a specific application of which is beyond the scope of this contribution, however. The account given below suggests that the architecture of semantic domains affords a systematic way of accounting for diverse meanings of every element in the poem.

D1 is active whenever the poet describes the procurement of the cross from a forest, when he describes the hill upon which the cross was placed, and, poetically, when he, in line 42, has the cross say, *Ne dorste ic hwæðre būgan tō eorðan,* ('I dared not bow down to the earth'). Force-dynamically, the cross tends to let gravity win out, save for its will. In this case, the cross's 'knowledge' (D3) that this would displease Christ (D4) – akin to conversational implicature – trumps physical law.

D2 is active when the poet dons the mantle of the loner, in isolation from his fellow warriors, *syðþan reordberend reste wunedon* ('after the speech-bearers were in their beds'). Such isolation from his fellows (D6) singles him out as a special recipient of the Christian message. The fact that it is night is of additional significance, for it was be-lieved by 'insular Christians' (Christians among the non-believers) that midnight symbolized the advent of judgment day (Matthew 25:6). This domain is also active in combination with (D4) in the second part of the poem, when the cross addresses the dreamer and begins narrating the events of Christ's passion (D13)

D3 is especially active when the poet becomes self-consciously aware of his own wretchedness. He comes to know the good news of Christ's sacrifice and its causal implications for his soul.

D4 is signally active when the Cross commands the "beloved warrior": *'Nu ic þē hāte,/ þæt ðū þās gesyhðe secge mannum* ('Now I command you/ That you tell his vision to men').

D5 is rarely active and, if so, only subtly. The persona of the dreamer is that of a Thane, an Anglo-Saxon somewhere between a freeman and a nobleman. He is most likely a warrior, for the mantle of warrior is attributed to him throughout the poem, and there is no reason to exclude the dreamer from his martial status.

References to *strange fēondas* ('strong enemies') also activate D5, as an alien polity in 1st century Palestine (i.e., Romans and Phari-sees). The narrated events of the crucifixion by strong enemies also activate D10, as the cross is now the instrument for carrying out an execution. It is worth noting, however, that D10 is really only active in relation to the carrying out of the sentence on Golgotha, the practical political reasons for the crucifixion having long since been displaced by theological imperatives (D7).

D6 is active in particular whenever there is reference to the men-tal space of the heroic warrior, so much a part of the Anglo-Saxon culture. The dreamer is an Anglo-Saxon warrior, but so is Christ (*þā geong hæleð* 'young hero/warrior'); the cross, as instrument of the young warrior's death, is construed narratively as something like the warrior's charge or a knight's squire, as one who is really doing Christ's bidding. Implicitly, D6 is also active when the dreamer takes on the oracular identity as a witness bearer.

Of course, the sacred (D7) is the most salient domain in relation to the content of the dream and of the poet's ultimate Christologi-cal message, and thus is highly salient whenever the dreamer/poet refers to himself as sinner; it is also salient in the case of vocatives like "Almighty God"; compare also "Prince of Glory", "Lord of Victories", "tree of victory" – honorifics normally associated with the political but which have been coerced into the sacred, as in this world view the eternal power structure of D7 trumps any temporal and temporary arrangements of D5.

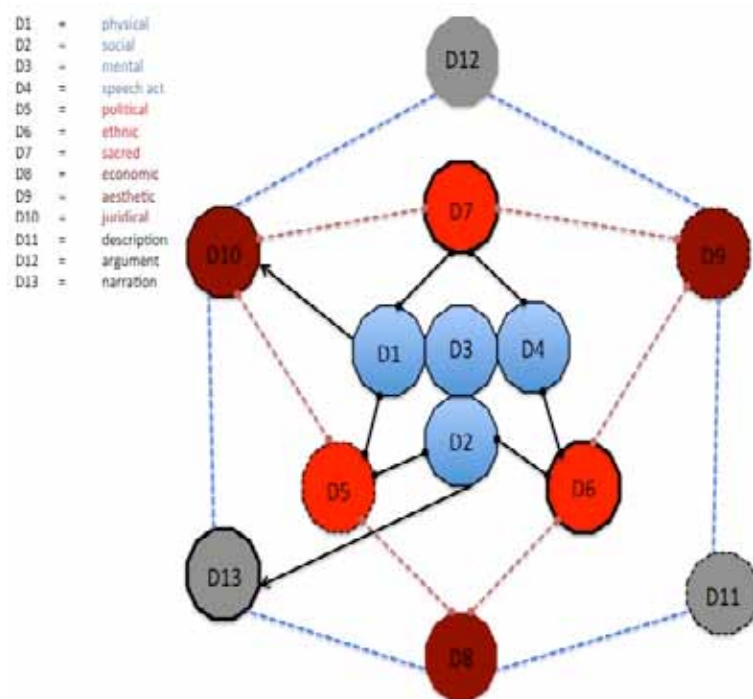Figure 3 depicts the relative activity of these domains in the conventional interpretations of the poem.

D1	=	physical
D2	=	social
D3	=	mental
D4	=	speech act
D5	=	political
D6	=	ethnic
D7	=	sacred
D8	=	economic
D9	=	aesthetic
D10	=	juridical
D11	=	description
D12	=	argument
D13	=	narration

Figure 3: Semantic Domains Active in The Dream of the Rood

Domains 1-4 are each encircled with a solid black boundary as a way of signaling their continuous salience throughout the poem. It is possible to conduct a more detailed analysis of each line to evince the dynamic influences of each domain, but such a task takes us too far afield. Notice, as well, the black arrow emanating from D1 to D10. This signals the emphasis on the physical spectacle of the crucifixion over any legal or political meanings. As spectacle, we might even suggest that D2 has a salient connection as well: the spectacle

of the cross, both pre- and post-crucifixion, is a continuous theme throughout. One can deny its significance, but one cannot disregard it. I, therefore, regard D6, D7, and D13 as the most hermeneutically critical for understanding the whole of the poem. With D6, we are getting a specifically Anglo-Saxon version of the Christian message, both in terms of the narrative structure and in terms of the poetic ethos itself. It is clear that this is a message to Thanes by a Thane. The persona of Christ is of a willing Warrior, eager to fulfill his heroic mission. Christ's eagerness, however, is motivated by the context of D7, for he is sent to fulfill a preordained mission. The Christ of the dream is eager for his punishment. With D13, we come to understand the narrative structure as an elegy, a melancholic but hopeful meditation on death that relates divine reasons to actions and events. D13 defines much of the rhetorical situation of the text, with exigence being the need to share the story with believers and non-believers, in a poetic language already familiar to them. The dark arrow running from D2 to D13 is meant to signal the privileged position of the lone dreamer, set apart from the others, as the vessel that carries the narrative of Christ to the Thanes.

Of significantly lesser salience are domains D5, D9, D11, each of which is encircled with thin, dashed bands. We have already discussed D5 as being coopted by D7 (that is, a signal feature of Christology was the coercion of common political concepts and designations for manifest sacred purposes).[6] D9 is active in conjunction with D11 anytime the physical dimensions and properties of the cross are being presented. Most arrestingly, this happens when the cross changes from gilded and bejeweled object of worship to bloodied and lacerated object of torture.

Still other domains, such as D8 and D12, are barely relevant at all, and thus are represented without any dark boundaries. Whereas gold and jewels are precious objects capable of functioning as goods in themselves, or as currency for goods, in the present context, preciousness is construed almost exclusively in terms of the sacred.

Here there are no goods to exchange; what is more, there is nothing to prove in any strict (theological) sense of the term.

Cashing out these three aspects of meaning also necessitates apprehending a basic architecture of the human 'lifeworld' in the form of semantic domains that pertain directly to the body, to the practical environment, and to the modes of exchange between persons. We have seen how the mental spaces capturing the poem focus attention (often tacitly) on one or more semantic domains. The configuration and salience of these domains might allow us to see where the ambiguities of a text arise.

3. Conclusion

The model of semantic domains stands as one among many of Professor Brandt's intellectual contributions to the fields of semiotics, hermeneutics, and cognitive linguistics. My rather modest aim in these pages is to show how the model works in limning out the semantic possibilities of a single poem. In doing so, I hope as well to bring some additional clarity to the mental spaces and blending theory as applied to textual hermeneutics.

A few things we may learn from this analysis. First, that mental spaces are structured by semantic domains, and that the network of mental spaces governing the principal narrative conceit of *The Dream of the Rood* are meaningful relative to a set of basic and satellite semantic domains, as proposed by Brandt. For instance, the fact that a cross speaks to a dreamer and then commands him to retell the story makes sense within a basic conversational frame, which itself is structured by D1-D4. While in reality, it is physically impossible for a cross to speak, it is nevertheless commonplace for humans to face a cross and interact with it as if one were interacting with another sentient being. In fact, the fantastical dream vision seems like a mere extension of the far more commonplace practice

of worshippers addressing a cross in a church, for instance. In this sense, the mental space for the dream that grounds the narrative satisfies the twin criteria of being at once intentional and intersubjective; for the dreamer, if not for the reader, the experience seems as real as anything else.

In addition, the substance of the narrative depends on mental space scenarios for the practice of crucifixion and of heroic battles. In fact, the crucifixion itself is construed in terms of a heroic battle, an unusual construal for anyone familiar with crucifixion as an historical practice – a punishment for treason or sedition. The blended conceit then offers an account that promotes the domains of the sacred and ethnic identity over the domains of the political and the judicial.

Much more is to be said about the poem and about semantic domains in general. Patient reading of the text reveals many instances of symbolic deixis of person, place, and time (perhaps in more concentrated form than is the case for other Old English verse), that function as important attention orienting devices for guiding the construction of meaning, such that the "we" at the beginning and end of the poem takes its meaning from a different semantic domain than does the "we" used in the middle; or that "here"/"there" limn out different proximal/distal perspectives capturing basic Christological theology.

An extended analysis of deixis in *The Dream of the Rood* is a future project, where Brandt's model of semantic domains will play a critical role. On matters of the theory of semantic domains, I believe much additional work needs to be done on clarifying their evolutionary and developmental implications, by comparing Brandt's model with, for instance, the phenomenological investigations by Husserl and Wittgenstein, and by inquiring whether the model can accommodate additional domains, such as those of the military and trade, and where their place in the model should be.[7]

Professor Brandt's attempt to outline the general structures of semantic domains should be required reading for anyone interested in cognitive semiotics.

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Notes

1   Clausner & Croft's (1999) detailed treatment of locational and configurational domains is an obvious exception.

2   See Clark 1996 for an extended discussion of common ground; see Langacker 2011 for a discussion of grounding elements in grammar.

3   Per Aage Brandt has registered some objection to term 'fictive' as insufficiently descriptive; however, it is the conventional term of art among cognitive linguists. In cases like, "The trees running along the highway," it seems to me that 'fictive' is the more appropriate term for emphasizing the underlying reality of the situation, while simultaneously signaling its unreal construal. It may be more accurate, however, to regard the speaking cross in *The Dream of the Rood*, or the famous "Debate with Kant" blend (cf. Turner & Fauconner 2002; Oakley 2009) as instances of 'fictional interaction.' I use the conventional term to cover both types.

4   Not to be confused with the Doomsday Book of around 1000 CE, which primarily is a 'geld book' (tax book), not a 'doom book' (a legal code).

5   Careful readers of Brandt's essay will notice subtle differences between his architectural rendering and mine. In Brandt's version, D3 enjoys prominence as an open circle, planet-like, with D1, D2, and D4 as external extensions thereof. Figure 1 renders the relationship between D1-D4 as equivalent elements, forming a metaphorical 'blastocyst', the basic developmental structure of any human being. Brandt's rendering may be interpreted either as a Cartesian assertion of D3's pride of place or as merely a scalar effect, suggesting that D1, D2, and D4 are equipotential constituents of the self, at least developmentally. This is my view, but I suppose Brandt professes a more Cartesian sense of internal mental life. For the present purpose, our disjunctive conceptions of the 'blastocyst' are negligible; however, this disjunction becomes significantly

discordant along other philosophical dimensions.

6   The sacred and political are often intimately intertwined, but the point here is analytic. Some religious sects (even Christian sects) separate the sacred from the political and thus use separate vocatives and honorifics. Christianity, however, has a history of coopting common political and ethnic designations for sacred purposes.

7   Oakley (2009: 147-148) argues that Military is an exchange-based domain.

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