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Vessel and Voice:

A Cognitive Semiotic Approach to the Prophetic Voice of *Völuspá*

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Abstract

The Old-Icelandic poem *Völuspá*, perhaps the most famous of all eddic poetry, features an encounter between the god Óðinn and the otherworldly mythological figure of the *völva* who conveys to him and an attendant audience mythological wisdom and prophetic visions. The *völva* speaks using an “embodied voice,” yet remains timeless: a narrator able both to “recall” in memory the creation of the cosmos and “see” ahead into the future destruction. Two manuscript variants of *Völuspá*, the *Konungsbók* and *Hauksbók* texts, exhibit considerable degrees of textual variation. Recent narratological analyses of these texts have yielded insights into the relationship between their common poetic material and their distinct narrative arrangements, as well as into the long editorial history that has seen these individual poems merged into an idealized and nonexistent composite text. Likewise performative theory speculates how *Völuspá* may have been staged as a dramatic rendition, with a human performer inhabiting the role of the *völva*. This paper proposes a cognitive semiotic approach to the study of voice, in both manuscripts, in order to examine how the *völva*’s voice, relative to the representation of consciousness, space, time and affect in *Völuspá*, further contributes to the narratological understanding of variation and the translation of each text into performance.

Í Völuspá er greint frá fundum Óðins og völvu sem flytur honum og hlýðendum kvæðisins goðfræðilega þekkingu og sýnir sínar og spásagnir. Völvan talar með eigin röddu en er þó tímalaus, sögumaður sem bæði getur rifjað upp sköpun heimsins og séð óliðna tíð og tortímingu. Í tveimur handritum kvæðisins má sjá mikinn textamun en nýlegar rannsóknir á frásagnarfræði textanna hafa veitt innsýn í samband þeirra, bæði vensl við hefðina og sérkenni sem varpar ljósi á útgáfusögu textanna sem blönduðust að lokum saman í endurgerðan blandaðan frumtexta. Eins veita kenningar um gjörninga innsýn í hvernig Völuspá er sett á svið sem leikrænn texti með manneskju í gervi völunnar. Í þessari rannsókn er rödd kvæðisins skoðuð í ljósi hugrænnar frásagnarfræði og fengist við báðar gerðir kvæðisins (*Konungsbók* og *Hauksbók*) til að skýra hvernig rödd völunnar kemur fram í vitund, rými, tíma og tilfinningu kvæðisins en það varpar jafnframt ljósi á tilbrigðin í gerðunum og hvernig þau geta flust frá orði á svið.

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Chapter I. Introduction

1.1 Introduction to *Völuspá*

The Old Norse-Icelandic eddic poem *Völuspá*, or “Prophecy of the Seeress,”¹ is usually dated to the tenth or eleventh centuries and exists as six variant texts extant in six medieval manuscripts: the *Codex Regius*, or *Konungsbók* (c.1270), *Hauksbók* (c. early fourteenth century), and four manuscripts containing *Snorra Edda* in which the poem is quoted: *Codex Uppsaliensis*, *Codex Traiectinus*, *Codex Wormianus* and *Codex Regius*. Of these variants, both the *Codex Regius* (alternatively known as *Konungsbók*) text and the *Hauksbók* texts of *Völuspá* (numbering 65 and 58 stanzas and henceforth referred to as *Völuspá K* and *H*, respectively) are considered “complete,” that is to say, not simply poetic quotations within another work, e.g. in *Snorra Edda*.

Völuspá involves an encounter between Óðinn and the otherworldly figure of the *völva*, or prophetess, for which the poem is named.² The presumed context for the encounter is Óðinn’s seeking to acquire specific knowledge via the *völva*’s power to prophesy. Over the course of the poem the *völva* conveys mythological wisdom to mortal and immortal audience alike using the performative mode of prophecy (*spá*).³ As narrator, she recounts the full chronology of mythological time, from origin to foreseen destruction and rebirth, and conveys the complete scope of her knowledge to Óðinn, as well as to the listener/reader audience. *Völuspá* therefore displays a present-tense narrative frame that moves into a past-

¹The *Hauksbók*, AM 544 4^{to} and *Konungsbók*, GKS 2365 4^{to}.

²The acquisition of special knowledge by Óðinn is regarded as one of the god’s specific thematic concerns; the otherworldly setting of the *völva*, quite possibly in the realm of the dead based its similarities to *Baldur’s draumar*, becomes the liminal space through which divine or magically-attained knowledge is acquired. For more information on Óðinn’s relationship to knowledge acquisition, see Jens Peter Schjødt (2008); for a narrower look at the relationship between Óðinn and the *völva*, see Pálsson (1996).

³ The Old Norse mythological figure of the *völva* (pl. *völur*) can be found in several eddic poems: *Völuspá*, *Baldur’s draumar*, and *Hyndluljóð*. This essay will solely address the mythological *völva*, although a long history of study centers on the comparison of the nature of *völur* as both “quasi-historical” and literary figures known from various saga texts, eddic and skaldic poetry, as well as archaeological finds. See John McKinnell, 2005, and for cultural distinctions in kinds of prophecy, McCreesh, 2003.

tense mythological history before briefly returning to the present and proceeds to prophetic visions of the future.

Although a monologic poem written in *fornyrðislag* meter,⁴ the narrative (or narrator) frequently alternates between first and third person speaker. This fact has led to many attempts to explain the shift in person, with interpretations ranging from the duplicity of speakers and indicating the narrator's connection to seeress, *Heiðr*, of stanza 22 (*K*) (Dronke, 1997), to more recent interpretations that the interchangeability of pronouns refers to the same speaker and indicates a potential hypnotic state (Clunies Ross, 1990). However, no explanation is entirely satisfactory due to the lack of discernable order or correlation between first and third person and tense shifts: both pronomial subjects narrate at various stages in present and past tenses.

As perhaps the most famous poetic source for Old Norse mythology, many aspects of *Völuspá* are the subjects of perennial debate. This includes, but is not limited to, the dating of the poem, debate concerning authorship, its oral or scribal origin, and the extent to which potential Christian elements may have informed the pagan material (See North, 2003; McKinnell, 2003; Samplonius 2001, 2003, 2013 etc.). In addition to such debates, there have been many attempts to link *Völuspá*, as a work of prophecy, to other literature, whether of genuine Scandinavian literary origin (Dronke, 1992) or to broader medieval genres and visionary literature, such as Latin sibylline traditions.⁵

Regarding the authorship debate, proposed theories span any combination of the poet or poetess (see Helga Kress, 1990) and the text as record of a pagan prophetess: *Sigurður*

⁴ Although primarily found in heroic eddic poems, the meter is considered typical of “epic narrative works” (Gunnell, 2008, 301) that could have been performed. Gunnell further characterizes works in this meter as commonly composed in the third person, and in which “the audience is informed of earlier events by a narrator who refers back to the past, thereby acting as middle-man between the past and the present (the audience... [These poems] recount actions and dialogues, but never personally leave the present world of the performance situation” (301).

⁵ For recent reference to proposed Christian influence refer to (Steinsland, 2013), (McKinnell, 2003), (Samplonius, 2013); the original proponent of the *völva* as a Scandinavian Sibyl was Anton Bang (Bang, 1879); and Sveinbjörn Rafnsson (1999) who argues the *Hauksbók Völuspá* was influenced by *Merlinússpá*, an Old Icelandic translation of the Latin visionary poem *Prophetiae Merlini*.

Nordal argues that the poem was the product of single poet writing as a prophetess (Sigurður Nordal, 1923), while Hermann Pálsson believes *Völuspá* to be the work of a poetess and “practising sibyl” (see Hermann Pálsson, 2006, 14). Oral-formulaic theories regard the poem as the product of multiple authors working over a long-standing oral tradition. It is widely accepted that the poem is a single composition formed from an oral background (see Mundal (2008) for an exemplary history of research on the debate concerning their possible interdependence). Nevertheless, in the study of eddic poetry scholars consistently turn to *Völuspá*, regarding it as a significant source of mythological content, in order to compare its poetic material and eddic style to other sources.

1.2 Background to the Study of Voice in Völuspá

Previous scholarly attention to *Völuspá* has focused on the poem as a source of mythological information, full of often enigmatic allusions and offering insight into a pagan worldview. However, before trying to interpret unexplained relationships between its contents and theoretical methodology I pose the question: do we fully know *what* something is until we know *how* something works? Narratological and performative studies have attempted to produce this answer in their own various ways. Yet these methods rarely reach common ground for lacking interdisciplinary synthesis.

Hence a gap persists in the study of *Völuspá* and other eddic poetry: narratological studies (Clunies Ross, 1990; Quinn, 1990, 1992) attempt to disambiguate the poems’ complexities and produce new interpretations, while performative studies (Lönnroth 2008; Gunnell, 1995, 1998, 2013) seek to explain how the poems would operate in their theorized purposeful oral performative setting. However, neither the narratological nor performative studies of the poem seem to incorporate fully the advanced strides made by one or the analytic mode. Simply put, the former approach does not propose to how the narrative would

operate during performance, while the latter does not address the issue of how known narratological variations among texts would perhaps reshape their respective performances. Additionally the use of eclectic editions of the poem skews the reality of the texts. The misalignment does not end there.

Past narratological studies do not include how eddic poems such as *Völuspá* might invoke affect, especially relative to voice. Coincidences between narratological structure and passages that may be deemed more or less affective due to their relative aesthetic qualities require new explanations for the compositional arrangement of the poem. In this sense, affect becomes a powerful tool useful to measure relative to other textual elements by which to test narratological assertions. Thus there arises a necessity to link these seemingly disparate techniques with a unified approach to an important common element in each: voice.⁶

Margaret Clunies Ross first paved the way for the subject of voice in eddic poetry from a narratological perspective, arguing that “the ability of narratological models to make fine-grained distinctions between voices is of special usefulness in the study of... the *Elder Edda*” (Clunies Ross, 1990, 220).⁷ Following the work of her analytical predecessor, Judy

⁶ To avoid confusion I will use the same specific definition for voice as Quinn does. Kennedy explains: “Speech implies not only the existence of another to whom the speech is addressed, but also that the speaker has a kind of otherness within himself or herself. The speaker’s voice is always a fiction that allows the speaker to address another in the sympathetic awareness of what it means to be an other... As with the speaker’s voice, so with the audience that the speaker addresses. Speakers and audiences together enter the discursive field as makers, shapers, formers, and transformers of meaning... To designate both speaker and audience as fictive, however, does not deny their concrete existential reality, nor does it abrogate the intentionality of the producing speaker or writer. On the contrary, it reinforces their reality as particular components of rhetorical expression while it confirms the intentionality of the producing agent. In writing as in speech the audience participates in a rhetorical contest with the producing agent” (Kennedy, 1987, 227-228).

⁷ Further, Clunies Ross attempts to demonstrate that “another major contribution that narratology has made to our understanding of complex texts is the ability to differentiate finely between voices that are extradiegetic, that is, above or superior to the stories they narrate, the so-called impersonal [unintrusive] narrator’s voice, and those that are intradiegetic, or within the related narrative.” She continues: “Not only narrators but also all other participating voices may be differentiated in this way, and this identification may be further refined by discovering whether the voices... participate in the stories in which they are narrator or actors” (Clunies Ross, 1990, 222). Clunies Ross’s treatment of the so-called unintrusive narrator problematizes her usage of the narratological distances between supposed and conventionally-conceived authorial voice (which she notably does not address, but which Quinn (1992) attempts to illuminate), what she perceives as the existence of the unintrusive narrator (a subject of considerable contemporary debate), and the intradiegetic textual voices. Needless to say, the inclusion of the debatable unintrusive narrator especially complicates a reading of the poem given the single versus multiple-author scenario. Even so, adhering to a cognitivist approach to the text I recognize the potential situation in which the arguable unintrusive narrator does not have

Quinn establishes a firm footing for voice, among other narratological pursuits, in the study of Old Norse poetry, specifically in regards to *Völuspá* (see: Quinn, 1992, 1999, 2002). From the start Quinn (1992) outlines what she perceives as the “discursive strategy” behind voices in eddic poetry through characterizing their verse form, meter, and narratological context; she also observes that “discursive styles are determined by the dialogic potential between speakers in a given narrative context” (Quinn, 1992, 128). Essentially, her study approaches the stylistic authorial voice, if it can be called as such, or its equivalent. She characterizes the nature of *fornyrðislag* meter and offers a formal context for the eddic poems to which she surmises *spá* adhere. She states that

the kind of speech-act that is uttered also appears to influence metrical form: the prophecies in eddic poems are always delivered in *fornyrðislag* (*Völuspá*, *Baldrs draumar*, *Gripisspá*, and *Hyndluljóð*), presumably because the discursive mode of the prophecy is so closely related to extradiegetic narrative (Quinn, 1992, 107).

In a 2002 article which follows the spirit of her previous work, Quinn expands her study of what she calls *völur* poems and argues for their recognition as a sub-genre of eddic mythological poetry, going so far to characterize their collective qualitative voices. Of these poems she writes that

by studying them together, and by examining the different representations of the *völva* according to the identity and mythological traits of her interlocutor, a clearer picture emerges of the *völva*’s function in the mythological scheme, if not of the *völva* herself, whose presence is imagined almost exclusively as voice (Quinn, 2002, 248).⁸

to exist. To say that one does have to exist requires the condition that we do know of its presence discernibly apart from the level of authorial voice.

⁸ Quinn’s (2002) conclusions about the *völva* “underline [the *völva*’s] importance not only in divulging her knowledge to the gods, but also in informing people of the history of the world from its beginning to end” (258). While I agree with this notion, the fact remains that even though certain aspects of the *völva*’s knowledge are theoretically elsewhere approachable, e.g. via the giant Vafþrúðnir in *Vafþrúðnismál*, her ability to see ahead and thus *shape* a future through her own perceptive and cognitive faculties are unique. No other mythological figure appears to wield this power. The prophetic voice of the *völva* thus encompasses a future only knowable, and therefore malleable, to her. This thesis aligns itself with the notion that in Old Norse literature and indeed pre-Christian culture, there existed a well known trope that for one to hear his future via prophetic means impinged the truth of that prophecy onto his future, as if written into fate. Though I intend an analysis restricted to the “mythological” *völva* (Mckinnell, 2005), the cultural context of prophecy in literature (which is presumed to be of pagan origin) is indeed relevant.

However, previous studies do not go so far as to speculate how this voice operates in accordance with performativity. How does the *völva* as the voice of *Völuspá* operate beyond simply her role in the “mythological scheme?” How can the study of the ontological components of the voice of the narrator contribute to a clearer picture of her perceptions? And how does her almost essential presence as voice operate when contextualized by dramatic recitation?

1.3 Purpose

In order to bridge this gap, this paper will employ a cognitive semiotic approach to voice and its ontological components, consciousness, space, time, and emotion in relation to both textual performer and readerly audience, in order to delve further into how semiotic properties of the might signal how it is implicitly intended to be interpreted.⁹

The question arises: how can one study the means by which features of voice, rhetorical and literary devices, and simple poetic diction might affect, for example, a proposed audience when any such features remain unknowns beyond the text itself? To this end, this paper proposes a cognitive semiotic approach to *Völuspá* in order to understand how elements of literary voice, in a narratological sense, relate to extradiegetic aspects of voice in performance. This methodology presupposes that artistic works utilize literary devices in

⁹ As such, the paper makes no claims regarding the speculative interpretation pertaining to cultural product whose debates range from the Classical to Germanic and pagan to Christian influences; the paper will merely perform a close reading of the *Völuspá* for the semiotic and narratological elements of “voice,” narrowing from the broadest sense of the term to focus on the poem’s semiotic inner-workings. That is to say that we are also in the interesting position of having a narrator of the poem (who also becomes a character participatory in her narrative) whose own prophetic “voice” as a narrator capable of visionary access beyond natural epistemological reach. Therefore a complete study of voice must reflect its full semantic field in the poem. See William Kennedy (1987), “Traditional rhetoric, however, assumes neither presence nor absence in voice and address. It instead construes them as heuristic devices. Rhetorical voice may resemble the living human voice, but it nowhere presumes to supplant the latter. Its function is wholly mediatory: it lends form to the speaker’s discourse. Likewise rhetorical address need not presume a living audience present in time and space. By heuristically construing a fictive audience, it indeed assumes the opposite. It assumes that audiences can suspend their limitations in time and space in order to interact with the text. As rhetorical terms, voice and address privilege neither presence nor absence because they freely admit both when they fulfill their heuristic function. As Paul Ricoeur has shown, they provide frames for the focus of discourse (1977:83-90).” (Kennedy, 1987, 224).

relation to other textual features in order to express meaning: what generates meaning is the control and manipulation of patterns of meaning that develop over time (Miall, 2008). A cognitive semiotic approach to literature asserts that these relative features when perceived by an onlooker, reader, or listener (depending on the art form) produce a subsequent effect on the subject. It is this form of interaction between text and presumed audience that the study of voice throughout Old Norse literature should also include. Therefore, a cognitive semiotic analysis of voice also includes elements of the artistic work perhaps otherwise ignored:

Voice should of course not be considered only relative to its enunciation, as it were, i.e., its manner of diction. Whatever the nature, style and grain of the talking in a narrative may be, it is never assessed in its own terms and in its own right. It voices relative to something: namely, relative to the story world and the protagonists' experiences of their situation in that world to which it gives access. Voice, considered under this aspect, is thus not a simply a question of manner of talking...—it also, and probably primarily, concerns the position of the voicing instance with respect to the experienced world it represents (Bundgaard, 2011, 4).

Additionally, cognitive semiotics also allows an unprecedented view of the poem through the narrative voice of the *völva*, which reveals how the poet, or indeed perhaps 'real' *völva* herself, understood the cognitive modes of her own recitation, including active recollection and most importantly how this contrasts with cognitive modes engaged during prophetic visions. A cognitive semiotic approach to voice in *Völuspá* reveals through the displayed narrator and character of the *völva*, which constitutes the prophetic voice of the poem, how the poem functions, in terms of operation between fictive speaker (writer) and audience, ought to be interpreted in terms of understanding the intentionality (of the "producing agent," be it poet or prophetess) and reinforces an understanding of how the literature perhaps functioned. In addition to revealing aspects of the *spá* as a text, a close reading of the representation of consciousness reveals how the text engenders affect, relating to the function text has on the reader as a performative and dialectically expressive textual act.

Therefore, rather than attempting to characterize voice in *Völuspá* relative to the genre of eddic poetry, the purpose of this study is to produce an in-depth critical analysis of voice and its internal textual dimensions with emphasis on the *K* text and reference to *H*, especially where the comparison is revealing. The study examines an imagined voice, advocating a whole-text treatment of the *K* and *H* manuscript variants as independently derived compositions and as the independent product of a poet. Because I intend to compare both texts, I will first address the issue of compositional variation in Chapter II and discuss how narratology justifies their individual character and shapes the critical approach to later comparison. Next, Chapter III analyzes the cognitive semiotic structure of each poem relative voice and its ontological components: consciousness, space, time and emotion. Chapter IV discusses the meaning effects generated by this semiotic structure and how it reveals unseen textual elements. Thereafter, Chapter V elaborates on how these semiotic features relate to affect generated for both a textual and extratextual audience through a cognitive approach to affect with the addition of performative theory. Finally, the concluding chapter will combine these findings and propose a new interpretive structure for *Völuspá* based on identified features of voice against previous scholarly research.

Chapter II. Manuscript Variation and Narratology

2.1 Compositional Variation in *Völuspá K* and *H*

Despite debates spanning almost two centuries concerning the origin and veracity of either manuscript variation, from a narratological perspective both redactions share many common features in terms of *fabula*, the narratological term for “narrative content” (i.e. an encounter between a *völva* and Óðinn that results in the telling of the Old Norse mythological story from creation to destruction), as well as commonalities in terms of *syuzhet*, or “narrative form” (the manner in which the story is related) (Cohn, 1981, 159). However, contrasts in the *syuzhet* of both *Völuspá* texts are significant and demand attention as they reveal a meaningful comparative analysis of what have gradually become rightfully regarded as two distinct poems.

Past editorial presentation and critical reception of these poems have pursued a so-called “eclectic approach” (Quinn, 2001)¹⁰ that, rather than simply acknowledging two very similar poems, seeks to dissect and assemble a text comprised of the deemed “best” or “most original” features of both the *K* and *H* texts in order to create a blended, and thus misrepresentative, composite “*Völuspá*” text. Such a practice fundamentally overlooks the narratological significances and unique aesthetics produced by the distinct narrative arrangement (*syuzhet*) of the two different poems. Therefore, this study argues for the treatment of *Völuspá K* and *Völuspá H* as two unique texts.¹¹ Through close reading it

¹⁰ For a complete survey on the editorial presentation of *Völuspá*, see Quinn (2001).

¹¹ Despite the long-standing scholarly assertion that, e.g. *Völuspá K* is the more or closer to an “original” (against often self-contradictory views, see e.g. Sigurður Nordal (1923), who treats each variant as independently derived from oral tradition, yet simply prefers the Codex Regius version and gives it almost singular attention), there has been a failure to qualify variation as both unique *and* independent texts. Instead the focus has been set on debate concerning whether scribal or oral tradition (or both, see Mundal) produced the variant texts commonly accepted as independent productions. Yet, irrelevant to the seemingly endless debate concerning origin, stands the elephant in the room: that the title “*Völuspá*” could very much indeed be a general umbrella nomenclature for a type of traditional poetic composition (the poems are not self-referential, and indeed no other titular reference remains aside from Snorri’s nomination) that merely uses common poetic stanzas and features for their cognitive semiotic, affective, and aesthetic meaning-effects; rather than a common

demonstrates how narrative and manuscript variation contribute to different aesthetic qualities which, in addition to their resulting effects on the reading/listening audience, are unavoidably significant in order to comprehend the seemingly minor and often dismissed peculiarities of variant texts.

In a previous study of compositional variation of *Völuspá K* and *H*, Judy Quinn proposes three categories of variation: 1). “at the level of the speech-act (*spá*)[the *syuzhet*] itself,” which she specifies as “variation in arrangement of parts of the prophecy and amplification of elements within”(Quinn, 1990, 317); 2). in narrative distinctions that “occur in the working out of the situation between the speaker and addressee,” that is to say, the elaboration of “personal elements not confined to the frame, at a subordinate level”(Quinn, 1990, 318); and 3). those found in the relationship between “speaking subject with putative audience,” which, in turn, also generate variation “manifested in the grammatical choices, such as pronomial, deictic, and tense usage” (Quinn, 1990, 318).¹² However, Quinn addresses only the practical nature of variation, not their poetic effects at the semiotic level.¹³

title among evolving versions of a singular work, the two sources of such independent compositions or recordings merely possess a common title that acknowledges a common cultural performative or compositional act. In addition, the New Critical approach would treat each variant as independent and equally meaningful, separate textual entities, as if, for example, each text marked a kind of different performance or version of the poem, effectively yielding two poems.

¹² For a helpful side-by-side breakdown of the narrative variation in terms of the rearrangement of content, see especially Quinn, 1990, 319-312, but also Mundal, 2008.

¹³ Although Quinn does return to that task in a 2001 article.

| st | R | H | st |
|-------|--|--|-------|
| 1 | Creation of the world, dwarfs and humans | Creation of the world, dwarfs and humans | 1 |
| 18 | Yggdrasill, Urðar brunnt and the norns | Yggdrasill, Urðar brunnt and the norns | 19 |
| 21 | The first war | | |
| 26 | Allusions to the master-builder myth | Allusions to the master-builder myth | 22 |
| 28 | Heimdallr's horn under Yggdrasill | Heimdallr's horn under Yggdrasill | 24 |
| 29 | The útisetar | | |
| | | → In aldna and tungls tjugari | 25 |
| | | → The first war | 26 |
| 31 | Valkyries, death and revenge of Baldr | Revenge of Baldr | 30 |
| 36 | Houses and punishments in other world | | |
| | | → The seeress's view of ragnarøk | 31 |
| 39 | In aldna and tungls tjugari | | |
| 41 | The herdsman of the giants, three cocks | The herdsman of the giants, three cocks | 32 |
| 43 | The seeress's view of ragnarøk | | |
| | | → Houses and punishments in other world | 34 |
| 44–67 | Ragnarøk | Ragnarøk | 37–59 |

Fig. 1. This visual displays similar compositional content and its narratological rearrangement between texts (reproduced from Mundal, 2008, 210).

2.2 The Relationship between Fabula, Syuzhet and the Mythological Chronology

Quinn (1990) argues that “the order of stanzas in each version of *Völuspá* reflects not only differences in the focus and pace of the unfolding vision, but also slightly different interpretations of mythological events.” Does this imply two slightly different mythological sequences? Or is it rather the case for either poem that variation was a rhetorical device that did not preclude different interpretations of events?

Fundamentally, *H* and *K* present the same general storyline: their *fabulae* chronologically display the Old Norse mythological timeline from cosmogony to apocalypse and subsequent worldly rebirth. Yet both texts differ in terms of *syuzhet*. To this end, stanza order largely dictates the narrative variation. When dealing with comparative analyses of stanza order, the question arises: does a rearrangement of stanza groups also fundamentally alter the temporality of the narrative? While there may be dissent on this point from some scholars (not coincidentally those also working from eclectic vantage points who therefore must rationalize contradictions), I find that when left to each poem’s separate devices

narrative variation does not appear to change the temporal outlook for either poem. Margaret Clunies Ross identifies three mythological temporal domains: past, present and future (Clunies Ross, 1994). Of the three essential time periods, only the present stage shows any significant rearrangement by comparison. Therefore, the major elements of the fabula remain essentially the same: contradiction need not arise, especially when considering an oral tradition behind the poems, when one passage or scene appears in only in a single text. Further, the cognitive semiotic analysis reveals additional layers of narratological significance for both texts and illuminates the present semiotic functions of these compositional arrangements.

Chapter III. Voice and Consciousness in Defining Semiotic Structure

3.1 *Modes of Narration and Consciousness in Völuspá K*

From a cognitive semiotic perspective, *Völuspá* presents a unique interpretive challenge. In the poem, the narrator's assumed modes of narration and modes of consciousness combine to form a highly complicated, and often vexing, voice for the monologic poem, not only made further perplexing by its very formal allusive and opaque elements as an eddic poem: full of mythological lore, personal memory, and visionary prophecies. But as at times almost pure "voice," the narrative is inherently colored by the representing consciousness and its engaged mode of thinking and expression. What is consciousness is now a relevant question. Although a vexing subject, in essential cognitivist terms consciousness implies a combined cognitive and emotional relationship to experience (See Johnson and Lakoff, 1999); these two elements comprise the "embodied mind." Assuming a human mind has composed these works, and the consciousness represented in it should exhibit at least some degree of realism (though the possibility exists that the figure isn't at all human), this isn't a bad place to start.

Therefore, deviations in narrative modes coincide with and relate to how the narrator's transitions across time and space are represented; deviations in these representational features generate global meaning effects for the poem. In sum, these cumulative elements of the narrating instance, combined with varying levels of density and scope, as well as changes in focalization, produce different meaning effects that fundamentally alter how the reader/listener interprets the scenes and thus engages different cognitive modes in the narrator and reader.

According to cognitive linguist Wallace Chafe, techniques for representing consciousness in fictional language include two combined means. The first involves using

either an immediate or displaced mode of narration. Immediacy implies the direct, “immediated” representation of an “online” experience; the narration is theoretically unfiltered and unmitigated by the time it takes to process the event being described. Displacement precludes some degree of spatial or temporal distancing from the narrating instance; the consciousness of the narrator can be thought of as the proximal representing consciousness who represents another, distal conscious experience, be it that of a character or that of her own past self.

The second aspect features what Chafe calls the introverted or extroverted representation of consciousness. Extroversion defines a consciousness whose mental states are responding to external stimuli, i.e. engrossed in experiencing, perceiving, and analyzing. By comparison, the introverted mode describes the representing consciousness (of a narrator) who engages in remembering or imagining; this state is thus characterized by mental states produced internally. (Chafe, 1994, 195-270). Therefore, a relationship develops between the *völva*’s mode of consciousness that becomes key to the identification of which stanzas convey “active” prophecy (visions of the future) as opposed to the recitation of mythological knowledge (lore about the past), as well as recollections of prophecy, i.e. which strophes display introverted or extroverted narration.

The ability to designate one or the other source of knowledge is indeed useful to Old Norse literary studies, for the eddic genre does not often disclose this discrepancy.¹⁴ Many scholars mistakenly refer to the *völva*’s knowledge of the past as part of her visions (see e.g. Hermann Pálsson, 1996)¹⁵, but this is not at all the case. There is a clear break between

¹⁴ Further, as we are forever separated from the original culture that produced the mythology it is also often uncertain how information is to be comprehended, or even recognized as general or specifically restricted information. For example, does the *völva* possess a desirable specialized repertoire of knowledge in addition to her skill as a prophetess? In eddic poetry there is also the analog thematic relationship between characters capable of recounting vast mythological knowledge, e.g. the giant Vafðruðnir in *Vafðruðnismál*, and character capable of prophesying. Only *völur* seem to possess this supernatural ability.

¹⁵ Pálsson says that “the sibyl’s vision encompasses both the past and the future, and our own real world as well as the imaginary ones of gods and monster” (Hermann Pálsson, 1996, 8). What Pálsson speaks of is the information obtained through the prophetess’ visionary capability, and (as will be demonstrated) this

cognitive modes engaged by the narrator: modes that depict visionary moments possess their own recognizable attributes visible when deviations in conscious representation are taken into account. As will be shown, the narrating voice's shifts in modes of consciousness serve as semiotic properties that generate many meaning effects: at the textual level these changes indicate the narrator's engagement of an ecstatic experience that leads the *völva* to prophesy. Further, these effects extend beyond the aesthetic realm and simulate for the extratextual listener/ reader audience the immediacy of the ecstatic experience, complete with its emotional bearings.

Regarding the modes of narration, the analysis employs Frank Stanzel's teller-and-reflector spectrum. Stanzel designates narrators or characters as "teller" types as they are produced by a classic narrator, a narrative mode characterized by "overt mediacy" of a narrator who can selectively relate the events of a story; alternatively a reflector type narrator "never narrates in the sense of verbalizing his perceptions, thoughts and feelings, since he does not attempt to communicate his perceptions or thoughts to the reader. This produces the illusion in the reader that he obtains an unmediated and direct view of the fictional world, seeing it with the eyes of the reflector-character" (Stanzel, 1981, 7). Stanzel explains the two types as binary oppositions along a spectrum, rather than as exclusive generalizations: thus a mode of narration can be more or less reflective or telling.¹⁶ It should also be mentioned that Stanzel describes a third phenomenon he calls teller-as-reflector type narration, in which "the agent of [narrative] transmission has most of the attributes of a teller-character, but

importantly does not include both "the past and the future" together; her prophetic visions do *not* include the past. Nor do I want to agree without analysis that we can triangulate precisely the extension of the mythological figure's powers of observation to include "our own real world" within her epistemic horizon. Thus, I call into question the fundamental relationship between how the poem is to be interpreted according to the sum of its speech acts and its attributed title as a "*spá*." I believe that taken as a whole the poem comprises the necessary pre-visionary, psychological introductory sequence to provoke or instill a trance across the first 20 stanzas, followed by variable mythological verse meant to simulate or mimic how a prophecy would have been conducted in a real setting. We do not find contradiction from other manuscripts of the poem.

¹⁶As Stanzel explains: "[in opposition] teller-character and reflector-character [act] as agents of transmission (telling/showing). The structural significance of [this] basic [opposition] emerges from the observation that a transformation of a narrative text determined by one pole of one of these oppositions into a text dominated by its opposite [element] usually alters the meaning of the narrative" (Stanzel, 1981, 2).

occasionally acts as though he were a reflector-character” (Stanzel, 1981, 12).¹⁷ Simply put, a teller narrator tells, a reflector shows. Over the course of *Völuspá*, the *völva* does both. This is an important observation, for the change in narrative mode also becomes a semiotic effect that contributes meaning to and explains *Völuspá*’s sudden shifts in perspective.¹⁸

Used in combination with vacillating narrative modes, the prophetic voice allows us to realize the *Völuspá* text as a series of performative acts or movements that indicate potential cognitive changes for the narrator (and by extension a presumed human performer inhabiting the narrator’s role). Thus characteristics of voice, and internal deviations from their standard, relate how we are to interpret and perceive both mythological knowledge and prophetic moments of vision, as well as in determining which scenes are relatively emotionally charged. The emotional charge, then, allows for interpretation given its content and context. This chapter addresses the textual level of meaning effects including textually performed emotional intensity, while chapter IV will turn to the extratextual dimension and how the poem generates affect. First, analysis of the more complex narrative of the *K* text will be used for an afterwords brief comparison to *H* and its different qualities of voice.

Völuspá begins *in medias res* with a narrating instance representing an introverted consciousness concerned with recollection. Here the prophetess, speaking in the immediate mode (Chafe, 1994), requests “silence” (hlióð, or “hearing”) to commence the recitation:

Hlióðs bið ek allar
helgar kindir,
 meiri ok minni
 mögu Heimdalar;
 vildu at ek, Valfóðr,
 vel fram telja
 forn spjóll fira,

¹⁷ For examples of various modern authors who experiment with these techniques, see Stanzel, 1981, 12-15.

¹⁸ Dorrit Cohn has conveniently summarized the intersections and application of terms employed by both Genette and Stanzel. To get a better sense of the nuances of their techniques, see (Cohn, 1981).

þau er fremst um man.
(ÍF *Eddukvæði I*, st.1)¹⁹

As the narrative frame this stanza establishes semiotic qualities of the narrative as the standard of the poem, from which deviations that indicate changes in cognitive mode are to come. She then proceeds into a spatiotemporally displaced mode of recollection, saying,

Ek man jǫtna
ár um borna,
þá er forðum mik
fædda hǫfðu;
nú man ek heima
nú íviðjur,
mjǫtvið mæran
fyr mold neðan.
(2).

The distance here separates the position of the proximal representing consciousness from the distal represented consciousness of the narrator's past self (Chafe, 1994). Hence her actual recitation begins in a displaced mode.

However, as the narrator's memory deepens, in the very next stanza the narrative represents remembrance using a slightly more immersive and immediate (yet still displaced) mode: "It was early in the ages..." (st. 3). In this instance the narrator delves beyond the first-person narrative frame, making the transition appear visibly less personally mediated or internally focalized. This effect allows the reader to be drawn into the story setting framed by the prophetess's initial invocation as if they were learning and imagining the creation of "nine worlds" for the first time.

But our understanding of her recitation can be further refined. It should be noted that from stanzas 3-18 (the dawn of the cosmos) the narrator must rely on knowledge rather than past experience, for it concerns a time before the very world that the narrator recalls in stanza 2 is created, which clearly precludes that this information is not known through personal

¹⁹ Stanza enumeration refers to Jónas Kristjánsson, *Íslensk fornrit Eddukvæði I*. Henceforth I will only cite the text by stanza number. English translation, when I feel it necessary to include comes from Dronke (1997) unless otherwise stated.

experience, rather simply acquired knowledge (likely due to her admitted relation to giants and their associations with wisdom). This fact allows one to conclude that the narrator reveals herself to be steeped in sacred lore—for the implied context of the *spá* is an otherworldly encounter between the resurrected *völva* conjured by Óðinn through presumably magical means (via *seiðr*, “sorcery”) (Dronke, 1977). Such information is perhaps relevant to an imagined exchange between narrator and narratee (“Valfǫðr”—Óðinn) and calls into question whether intra- or extradiegetic actions (i.e. actions occurring within or beyond the narrative frame) catalyze the later vision. Nevertheless, the illusion of im-mediation also enhances the immersive, dramatizing effect.

On the lexical level, the verbs depicting the introverted conscious mode, “to recount/narrate” (*telja*), “to remember” (*man*), and later “to know” (*veita*), establish a link between sapiential verbs and committed knowledge; such knowledge of course includes past experience stored in memory, as in st.27:

Veit hon Heimdalar
hljóð um fólgið
undir heiðvǫnum
helgum baðmi
(27)

In contrast, later experiential verbs, e.g. “to see” (*sjá*) reveal the immediate prophetic extroverted mode of consciousness, a form of online (or purely engaged) seeing.²⁰ As with the rest of the initial-state features of the poem, this passage serves in its juxtaposition against upcoming memories drawn from the narrator’s personal experience during the middle of the poem and which represent experience using different parameters of displacement.

²⁰ It is interesting to remark that the narrator begins with a recitation (*telja*), not a vision, leading one to suspect that it is perhaps the nature of the recitation, the magic provided in order to summon the resurrected voice (and hence why the *völva* becomes angry at being forced into vision (explaining her insults for she feels a betrayal—corroborated by reaction in *Baldrs draumar* and *Hyndluljóð*)), which may initiate the trance. Therefore, the semiotic properties of the poem, especially relating to the performative aspect of the narration, indicate and perhaps mimic the presumed trance state of the narrator in the representation of the language in an oral context—thus explaining seemingly odd or arcane features, i.e. dwarf list, or the analeptic subordinate frame identified by Quinn (Quinn, 1992).

Regarding the mode of narration, the prophetess begins speaking as a traditional teller-type narrator, but transitions to a slightly more reflective mode in stanza 3 (coinciding with increased immediacy) as the narrative becomes less overtly internally focalized (Genette, 1980) through her in the ongoing introverted mental state; the section (st. 3-17) notably does not contain evidence of an overt narrator and becomes (apparently) slightly more extroverted, supporting the claim that these stanzas contain not a distal represented experience but simple knowledge of described events. Thus here the narrating instance favors classification as more “teller as reflector” (i.e. a more apparently extroverted narrator) in its function (Stanzel, 1981). This type of narration suggests an abnormal, (pre-) ecstatic mental state in the narrator from the beginning of the recitation (Chafe, 1994, 251). From stanza 3 onwards, the prophetess teller-as reflector recounts the Old Norse cosmogony story (the formation of the earth out of the slain giant Ymir and the arrangement of celestial objects). In terms of fabula this period of the mythological past is a static state “golden age,” an era free of complications or negative character inference, which continues until stanza 17. Importantly, the mythological present and grammatical present appear to be conflated. Despite the presence of syuzhet variation between the *K* and *H* texts, their initial invocations remain basically identical to this point, which leads one to question whether this passage functions as a necessarily key pre-ecstatic ritual introduction. The following point perhaps supports this position.

The opening passages also establish guideline norms in levels of granularity and density for the poem (whereas scope varies widely from micro to macro levels (out to “nine worlds”) (Talmy, 2000). In simplest terms, most features appear set to average, universal human levels of experience, although granularity operates to an arguably higher-than-average degree during the displaced immediate mode (highlighting a supernatural focus or hypnotic state)—yet this fact may also be due to the prophetess’s degree of mastery of mythological

learning that, therefore, yields finer detail in recollection. Nevertheless, part of the first passages feature an internal deviation in density, highlighting its significance in relation to the narrating consciousness. Because this passage is also clearly told from an introverted narrating instance, such internal deviation displays the prophetess's increasing levels of perception (Bundgaard, 2008, 35)

For example, the stanzas of the so-called list of dwarves (st.11-16) have long perplexed editors of the poem (and so have been deemed an interpolation, occasionally removed from the poem in various editions), but which I believe can be understood to contribute powerful meaning effects when examined in light of deviations in density. The established average level density is clearly limited to perhaps a few specific proper name introductions or events per stanza: e.g.

Sól varp sunnan,
sinni mána,
hendi inni hægri
um himinjödur;
sól það né vissi
hvar hon sali átti,
stjörnur þat né vissu
hvar þær staði áttu,
máni þat né vissi
hvað hann megins átti.
(5)

But from 11-16, the density of objects, i.e. dwarf names recited increases sharply, becoming the sole focus of these stanzas, e.g.:

Þar var Draupnir
ok Dólgþrasir,
Hár, Haugspori,
Hlévangr, Glói,
Skirvir, Virvir,
Skáfiðr, Ái,
Álfr ok Yngvi,
Eikinskjaldi,
Fjalarr ok Frosti,
Finnr ok Ginnarr.
(15)

Það mun uppi
meðan ǫld lifir
langniðja tal
Lofars hafat.
(16)

Unz þrír kvómu
ór því liði
ǫflgir ok ástgir
æsir að húsi,
fundu á landi
lítt megandi
Ask ok Emblu
ørloglausa.
(17)

High density sustained over these five stanzas extends beyond a threshold of comprehension, meaning that it becomes increasingly difficult to retain the information. The effect creates one of two possible effects (perhaps one for the narrator, one for the audience): estrangement²¹ or indication of significance (Talmy, 2000). Regarding significance, the enumeration of dwarves may play a performative function for the audience as, for example, in a procession; alternatively, at the level of intertextuality it may point to a sequence of allusive stories relating to the understanding of this cosmology whose cumulative effect is to represent the cosmological totality. However, in relation to the narrating consciousness, estrangement seems a likely meaning effect for it qualifies the epistemic state of the narrator in transition between the physical forces of cosmogony and the sudden arrival of the existential forces of the fates in stanza 17 (Unz *þrír kvómu/ór því liði/ǫflgir ok ástgir/æsir að húsi...*).

The passages 11-16 are highly rhythmic, alliterative, and most important rhyming (a poetic quality elsewhere absent)—the language mimicking the continuum of trance and perhaps representing a magical quality. In this manner deviation in density here produces a jarring juxtaposition between trance-like diction and the subsequent weaving of fates for man

²¹Ironically, I suspect it is the feeling of estrangement that led editors to think that the stanzas provide no function for the narrative and therefore *must* be interpolation.

and gods alike. Ostensibly only a dwarf lineage, the inclusion of the list may have been to create this intentional estrangement effect, which may have served to impose a similar state of mind in the reader, and which deepens the narrator's ecstatic state before other aspects of the mode of consciousness change from stanza 21 onwards.

From here the narrative in relation to narrator grows implicitly personal, i.e. more mnemonically representative and emotionally charged—at times perhaps displaying the prophetess' own influential role in shaping the cosmological history (see also footnote 7). Importantly, the narrating instance persists with an introverted consciousness now expanding into her own experiential memory: the narrator “remember[ing]” (st. 21), “know[ing]” (st. 19, 27), and recalling having *seen* certain events which by the present time have already come to pass and hence are represented in the past tense (“She/I saw” in st. 30, 31, 37, 38). This is to say that the use of experiential verbs in past tense signal an occasion of past prophesying. Therefore, we can interpret the segment (st. 28-42) as the past personal vision of a distal represented consciousness remembered by the representing consciousness of the grammatically present narrator.²² Both consciousnesses are conflated due to the ability of the prophetess to be resurrected, who thus “saw” for Óðinn in a previous prophetic vision of the future that apparently halted in the now grammatical and mythological present (i.e. post-Baldr). These past tense stanzas (28-42) include an embedded narrative (from 31-38, beginning with “Ek sá Baldri”), the past tense verb of seeing concerning a previous prophecy about Baldr's fate and an encounter between Óðinn and the prophetess. In the present tense, these stanzas would have otherwise qualified as an extroverted experience, but because these past events have become memory, their recollection occurs via a mediated (in the Stanzel sense that they are filtered through a mind) introverted consciousness (Chafe, 1994). Such an

²² I must thank Sarah Eriksen for persuading me to adopt this reading of these stanzas.

arrangement produces a “topologically strange”²³ effect (Bundgaard, 2011, 12) due to the displacement of *both* representing and represented consciousnesses (to be discussed in the next chapter): because the content of the embedded narrative about Baldr’s death is an experience “seen” in prophecy, neither the prophetess’ distal nor proximal self has lived it. Therefore, continuity in the story’s chronology is not a prerequisite; time is presumed by the narrator to have passed between her moments of living memory, those which she has envisioned, and those which occur between occasions of her resurrection.

Thus, the personalized narration in this passage follows as a counterpoint to the gradual removal from an expository, impersonal teller frame narration to a more focused, singular conscious experience —perhaps initiated by the trance-like list, as if stimulated in a spellbound fashion. This transition reflects the obvious move to experiential memory that coincides with a shift towards a more reflective and immediate quality of the narrative mode spectrum.

More precisely, in stanza 28 the prophetess continues to narrate using displaced immediacy, in the teller-as-reflector narrative mode, yet with new, personalized parameters. Referring to the past experience using the third person, she recalls that

Ein sat hon úti,
þá er inn aldni kom,
yggjungur ása,
ok í augu leit:
“Hvers fregni mik?
Hví freistið mín?
Allt veit ek, Óðinn,

²³To explain Bundgaard writes: “I here follow Stanzel’s (1984) claim to the effect that there exists a whole subset of narratives in which the author, in order to trigger certain meaning effects rigorously correlated to the mode of narration, operates a deviation from the initial narratorial situation. This transformation can be instantiated and thus qualified in different ways, for example relative to voice itself: the transformation then concerns the phenomenological character of the telling instance which may go from being a clearly incarnated narrating instance (conveying to the reader, from the distance, post festum, the highlights of some past chain of events), to being a pure experiencing instance without any other temporal or epistemological horizon than the one crystallized in the narrative here-and-now; or it may concern the place from which the telling is done, which to begin with may be well-defined (retrospective armchair teller) and then, by way of reduction to pure experiencing (in a reflector mode), may become spatially undecidable, as it were, a-spatialized, non-localizable.”

hvar þú auga falt:
 í inum mæra
 Mímisbrunni.”
 Drekkir mjöð Mímir
 morgin hverjan
 af veði Valföðrs.
 Vituð ér enn—eða hvat?
 (28)

First, the use of the past tense reveals temporal distancing between the recollected memories (distal consciousness) and narrator (proximal consciousness), as does the third person perspective (though alternating first and third person can be taken to be semantically synonymous in the prophetic mode)(Chafe, 1994, 250). Further, the markers of immediacy in this stanza include online recollection, direct speech (Chafe, 1994), and crucially, use of the experiential verb “to see,” which aligns itself with the extroverted conscious state activated and represented during prophetic moments (beginning in st. 43/ln.6: “fram sé ek lengra/ um ragna røk/ röm sigtíva”).

Continuing to use displaced immediacy, the introverted narrator in st. 28 further enhances the level of reader and narrator immersion when the language represents in direct thought the narrator’s questions to Óðinn, “Hvers fregni mik? Hví freistið mín?” in the present tense. Increased immersion via immediacy coincides with the switching of first and third person perspectives, indicating that ecstatic separation begins even before a turn to the extroverted conscious mode: e.g. there is frequent, disorderly perspective changes beginning in stanza 21 to third person, then alternating to first in 28, again to third from 30-43, before returning to first person in 44 and 49; the poem concludes in the third person. Although one could argue when “she” is the subject, the narrating instance has reverted to a teller-type narration, contrary to a thus reflective narrative mode associated with the use of “I” and an experiential verb, this interpretation overlooks the nature of the ecstatic context in which there is assumed a synonymous interchangeability of voice.

Clunies Ross has compared the perspective switches to those of the subject of a hypnotic trance (Clunies Ross, 1990, 224). Although such an analogy is possible for the middle third as hypnotic trance allows for the recollection of memories, the analogy does not explain the perspective shifts when accessing future events: Clunies Ross argues about use of *ek* during moment of memory, e.g. st. 19, 28, 31 Neckel, as well as moments during the prophecy (44 and 49) (Clunies Ross, 1990, 224). This to say that a clear distinction must exist between the use of person shift during different cognitive modes, for they cannot be isometrical. For vision another analogy must be sought. Instead, I believe the activation of memory in this section triggers the dissociative state. Perhaps this justifies the cultural idea of another phenomenal/cognitive state in addition to waking and dreaming, that of trance.

Additionally, concerning the shift between persons Clunies Ross argues that “this narrative device allows us to perceive the angle of vision [here meaning focalization] through which the story is filtered in the text and also acts as a signal of the tensions operating between Óðinn and the *vǫlva* which has its objective correlative in a state of trance” (Clunies Ross, 1990, 224). If this interpretation is true, it must also hold true in reading of *H*. As will be shown in Chapter IV, the *H* text does not require the presence of Óðinn as a necessary intradiegetic narratee and actor. Further, stanzas which feature *hón* as subject seem to carry more explicit personal relevance.

Nevertheless, the perspective shift does likely signal a different mental or epistemic state for the voice. Bundgaard explains that the drift to an internally focalized third-person narrative seemingly exterior to the narrator (who afterwards becomes objectified) indicates a displacement of voice. This features occurs as a counterpart to the experiential state of the narrator.²⁴ Therefore the interchangeability of perspective, as Clunies Ross asserts, is likely.

²⁴ See Bundgaard, 2011, 10-11 for his application of Chafe’s example (Chafe, 1994, 257).

However, I believe we can take this one step further and presume that the semiotic effect of elevated immediacy and reflection, coinciding with changes in perspective, are meant to signal that we are to understand the nature of the trance here in different cognitive terms for the narrator than from the outset, but also *how* this occurs. Such elements appear directly proportional to the representation and inclusion of personal experience versus simple knowledge, brought to its most personal in stanza 28 during the direct address of the conflated distal and proximal narratee Óðinn. Óðinn becomes not simply the receiver of the present speech act, but is revealed to have been a past receiver of other prophecy. This reveals that the stanzas in past tense beginning in st. 28 are indeed represented as actual memories of the consciousness of the narrating instance.²⁵ Therefore, it becomes possible to insinuate that the allusions to certain characters or events in these middle stanzas are linked to presence of the homodiegetic narrator, meaning that the narrator now has a role in the story as a character, (i.e. when “remembered”) versus that which was seen during past trance experience (i.e. “seen”) by an intradiegetic narrator, simply before the grammatical temporal present (Clunies Ross, 1990, 222; Genette, 1980, 243-245).²⁶ Thus the interchangeable nature of perspective throughout this segment might indicate not only spatial distance but perhaps distance between states of being, i.e. living versus dead (as the vǫlva is often taken to be a resurrected voice).²⁷ In this sense, perhaps the vǫlva becomes an intradiegetic voice after her

²⁵See Clunies Ross (1990), 223.

²⁶But of course these stanzas also allow the possibility that “saw” here implies the narrator’s first-hand account, without ecstatic projection, of these events by the homodiegetic narrator in past life.

²⁷It is important to address whether the initial narrator is conflated with a living, speaking human performer, or if we are to understand that it is the vǫlva character, resurrected and present, acting as narrator and speaking from the beginning. In the former case, the later person shifts indicate the potential for the human speaker to be channeling the resurrected voice and acting as vessel. In this situation, it becomes further difficult to distinguish between voices (as there are no performative notes or cues) potentially online at different moments and commenting on the other throughout the various movements between pronominal changes. This is not to say that the poem exhibits a double-voicedness, merely the potential interpretation involving two narrators. That situation would occur via the embodiment of the initial narrator and the disembodiment of another voice, as if the narrator would become vessel for another speaker talking through her. If this were the intended representation, it cannot be certain without other cultural insights.

resurrection and homodiegetic voice by participating in the story of the personalized subordinate narrative frame taken to depict events during her lifetime.

In this regard, roughly the middle third of the poem functions as a proleptic bridge between not only mythological past and present, but also through consciousness by gradually transitioning from elements that characterize the introverted mode of consciousness to those which indicate the extroverted mode.²⁸ Displaced immediacy together with a teller-as-reflector-type narrating instance preempt the transition to the online experiential visions engaged and narrated through the extroverted consciousness that will now be discussed.

Stanza 43 is perhaps the most significant for *Völuspá* in terms of meaningful complexity. The stanza marks the trigger for a change in the narrator's cognitive mode, as well as the corresponding mode of narration, visible in the shift from a teller to reflector-type narrating instance. It also marks the transition from the prophetess's introverted recollection to extroverted experience and is thus the initial moment of her dissociative trance state and, at last, entrance into prophecy. In this way, the extroverted mode becomes a necessary counterpart to prophecy in the narrative and its identification.

Within three stanzas (41-43) the established mythological chronology from past to present collapses as her mode of narration returns momentarily from the past tense to the present tense of the initial narrating instance, before proceeding with the future tense in stanza 44 ("Brœðr munu berjask"). She says of the moments preceding the end of days:

Sat þar á haugi
ok sló hǫrpu
gýgjar hirðir,
glaðr Eggþér;

²⁸Further, according to Hernstain in Genette (1990), 758, internal analepsis is common to oral narrative, stating that "absolute chronological order is as rare in folkloric narrative as it is in any literary tradition, but that it is virtually impossible for an narrator to sustain it in an utterance of more than minimal length... to the extent that perfect chronological order may be said to occur at all, it is likely to be found only in acutely self-conscious, 'artful, or literary texts.'" This claim perhaps reinforces the theory that these poems are indeed recorded oral recitations with minimal to no scribal interference during transcription. However, regardless of tradition, as shown above I believe the analepsis contributes meaning, if not to the narrative, then to the narrating instance (i.e. to establish personal level between narrator and interlocutor).

gól um honum
 í Gaglviði
 fagrrauður hani,
 sá er Fjalarr heitir.
 (41)

Gól um ásum
 Gullinkambi,
 sá vekr hólða
 at Herjaðors,
 en annarr gelr
 fyr jörð neðan
 sótrauður hani
 að solum Heljar.
 (42)

Geyr Garmr mjök
 fyr Gnipahelli,
 festr mun slitna
 en freki renna.
 Fjölð veit hon fræða,
 fram sé ek lengra
 um ragna røk
 róm sigtíva.
 (43)

The harbinger of doom, *Eggþér*, plucks his harp and with a single note the prophetess fades away from memory and returns to her spatio-temporal present. The perhaps uncontrollable oncoming vision, visible in the phrase, “*Now* Garmr [the hound of hell] *bays*,” thrusts the narrative into present tense.

This sequence has two semiotic functions: one in relation to the fabula, the other to voice. First, the breaking of the fetter of *Freki* (literally “hunger”) refers to the Fenris wolf whose release symbolizes the first moment of the inevitable destruction of the world. The harp and this moment appear to be prerequisite triggers for visions of the future to occur: the artistic depiction of this moment becomes highly expressive of both the narrator’s change in cognition, her narrative mode, as well as the symbolic cascade of sounds hailing from a single note (the aesthetics of which are discussed in chapter V).

The result is a singular ecstatic moment for the narrator, in which the dissociative trance state drifts into the subsequent online experience of an extroverted and outwardly-perceiving (“seeing”), reflective speaker, signaled when she says, “Much she knows of old knowledge, ahead I see further.” The sentence forces both perspectives into one semantically paradoxical instance that unites introverted and extroverted modes of consciousness, spans both narrative modes and their seemingly double-voiced perspectives, and thus pinpoints the instance of ultimate dissociation. Notably, the narrating instance briefly changes from the previous teller-as-reflector to simply teller-type in stanza 43 (“Fjölð veit hon fræða, fram sé ek lengra”) before ultimately evolving into a true reflector-type narration after the latter half of the sentence, which contains the purely experiential verb of “seeing.” Thereafter, the visionary sequence of the future apocalypse at Ragnarøkr begins. The narrating instance continues in this extroverted mode of narration as a true reflector, both as a response to the induced visions, until the final moment in stanza 63. The narrator exclusively expresses herself now in terms of visual experience: she claims that “[She/I] see[s]...” and witnesses the end of days unfold.

The 63-stanza *K* poem can thus be roughly appraised in thirds: stanzas 1-27 in the introverted mode of consciousness and in the opening frame are related briefly by a teller; then a teller-as-reflector-type narrator throughout stanzas 28-43, which are also in the introverted mode yet with increased immediacy (despite displacement) using past tense verbs, and building to an imminent return to the present where the narrator’s dissociative climax (44); and lastly stanzas 44-62 are narrated in the mode of extroverted consciousness by a pure reflector-type narrator who, having achieved sublime access to the future, prophesizes throughout these verses until the poem’s conclusion. Key stanzas (27 and 43) mark transitions between these segments and also feature combinations of semiotic traits relating to the narrative modes of which segments they separate. It should also be noted that it is no

coincidence that these demarcations largely correspond to divisions in what has been called the “mythological timeline” of the poem. *Völuspá* encompasses the full chronology of the Old Norse mythology from the “mythological past” (creation), “mythological present,” i.e. sometime after the slaying of Baldr (represented as an embedded narrative allusion in st. 31-34), and some time before the “mythological future” (the inevitable destruction of the cosmos at *Ragnarøkkr*) (Clunies Ross, 1994, 48-56; Ólason, 2013; and Dronke, 1997). Therefore, deviations in narrative modes coincide with and relate to how the narrator’s transitions across time and space are represented; as such, deviations in these representational features generate global meaning effects for the poem. In sum, these cumulative elements of the narrating instance (and its representation of consciousness), combined with varying levels of density and scope, as well as changes in focalization, produce different meaning effects that fundamentally alter how the reader/listener interprets the scenes and thus engages different cognitive modes in the narrator and reader.

What are thus the meaningful effects formed by deviations in consciousness and narration? The change to pure reflector-narration contributes the vivid quality of the reader experience while denying the reader access to the introspections of the narrator; this forces the reader to experience the vision of doom singularly and unmediated to as great an extent as literature allows. It therefore intensifies the experience for both narrator and reader, which in turn instills in the reader a higher degree of affect. Such an increased level of affect is fitting here for the story’s construction, especially during the fateful scenes in which many of the Old Norse gods meet their end and the world is destroyed. It is the narrator’s combined extroverted reflection which elevates the narrative to its affective climax and catharsis at the rebirth of the world in stanza 56. However, semiotic effects generated by internal deviations in voice also contribute to the meaningful interpretation of these stanzas as prophecy.

3.2 Modes of Narration and Consciousness in *Völuspá H*

For the sake of comparison, it should be noted that the *Völuspá H* text contains many of the same cognitive semiotic features of consciousness and voice. To be brief, the *H* text involves the same modes of consciousness correlating with tense and subject matter relative to voice. The voice of *H* proceeds as a 1st-person teller-type narrator from stanzas 1-22 (stanzas 1-20 are essentially identical to *K*). The *völva* then moves into relating personal knowledge, e.g. about the war between Æsir and vanir, in a similar introverted teller-as-reflector mode. As many scholars have observed, many of these stanzas are nearly word-for-word identical to the *K* text. But as a unique point of semiotic variation, the *völva* of *H* does not move into a past tense “subordinate frame” (Quinn, 1990) (an “embedded narrative,” as Clunies Ross, 1990 argues), i.e. the passages in which the *völva* describes a past encounter with Óðinn with the past tense verb of seeing (st. 31-38). In fact the only past tense verbs of seeing appear in stanzas 34 and 35 about the vision of Náströnd, interrupting the future tense vision already engaged by the *völva* in st. 31’s Garmr refrain. Is the narrator of *H* similarly homodiegetic, i.e. participant as an actor in the narrative in addition to its narrator? This remains debatable. If so, to a far lesser degree than the in the *K* text, for much of the *fabulae* content that *H* lacks is personalized material. One could even argue that the verb of remembering in “Þat man hon fólkvig” (st. 26) could be assuming recollection of lore, rather than personalized memory, therefore excluding her from the category of homodiegesis and defining her as an intradiegetic narrator (contained within the story world but not a participant in the related narrative). If not the case, then the *völva* of the *H* text is classified as a homodiegetic teller narrator and figural character of *Völuspá*. In either event the narratological implications for audience will be theorized in chapter V. Otherwise, *K* and *H* exhibit identical progression, despite syuzhet rearrangement, through cognitive modes and concluding with prophecy.

3.3 Conclusions on the Narratological Structure of *Völuspá K* and *H*

Based on the overlapping content of *Völuspá K* and *H*, one might conclude that the perceived artistic function of both texts is basically identical, that the poems operate in comparable cognitive terms. Despite this fact, the rearrangement of stanzas contribute unique aesthetic combinations that require further analysis. However, it is possible to speculate on the commonalities from the cognitive semiotic perspective. That both texts contain virtually identical introductory sequences from st. 1-20 (including the *dvergatal*) only further reinforces a theory that these strophes perform a necessary (perhaps ritualistically-derived) pre-ecstatic invocation. Both texts engage in the movement from introverted to extroverted voice. Both texts employ the simultaneous shift from teller to reflector-type narrative modes which increases immersion. The combined effects of these properties of voice create highly artistic, expressive work. Based on these fact one can conclude that boths perform comparable, yet perhaps still independent, compositions.

Chapter IV. *Voice, Space, and Time in Determining Meaning Effects*

4.1 *Topological Strangeness of Voice*

The analysis in the previous chapter revealed a state “topological strangeness” of voice to be a definitive narratological arrangement of *Völuspá*’s semiotic structure. Peer Bundgaard (2011) “topological strangeness” discusses two types of topological strangeness of voice: the first type he defines as “concern[ing] ‘within’ text transformations of voice relative to shifts in the narratorial situation”(Bundgaard, 2001, 15), for example teller to reflector mode of narration or the change from an introverted first-person narrator to third-person (15). Bundgaard defines the second form of topological strangeness relative to the location of voice, i.e. involving the relationship between the positioning of voice (revealed by the narrating consciousness) relative to the (external) discernible spatial or temporal coordinates of the story world. Both types of topological strangeness appear in *Völuspá* and are inherently connected to one another. Since both *K* and *H* texts share the same attributes of strangeness, this chapter will simply focus on the *K* text in greater detail.

4.2 *Strangeness of Voice Relative to Mode of Narration*

The initial state of the poem depicts a retrospective teller narrator, but by the final stanza the narrator has shifted from teller-as-reflector to pure reflector style narration, the narrator representing the visions at the poem’s maximum level of immediacy and reflectivity:

Hlióðs bið ek allar
helgar kindir,
 meiri ok minni
 mögu Heimdalar;
 vildu at ek, Valförðr,
 vel fram telja
 forn spjóll fira,
 þau er fremst um man.
 (1)

Þar kœmr inn dimmi
 dreki fljúgandi,
 naðr fránn, neðan
 frá Niðafjöllum;
 berr sér í fjöðrum
 — flýgr völl yfir—
 Niðhoggr nái.
 Nú mun hon sökkvask.
 (63)

The initial displaced first person (ek) narrator gradually fades into an immediate reflective narrator (“Þar kœmr inn dimmi/ dreki fljúgandi”) during the *Völuspá*’s transitions between semiotic modes of narration. So, how can we comprehend what happens over the course of the poem, and what meaning effect does it contribute to the text? Not only does this internal deviation in voice facilitate story immersion, becoming most immersive during the reflector-type mode of experience that coincides with the use of future tense. However, the transition must occur gradually, and as has been shown, it does: the first third of the poem begins with a highly displaced pure armchair teller, the middle third grows gradually more reflective (exhibiting displaced immediacy), while the final third achieve full reflector mode and immediacy. The transformation occurs via remodalization (from introversion to extroversion) and very subtle refocalization (teller to reflector-type narration) of voice. As Bundgaard argues: “this modulation of the teller voice, this induction of topological strangeness with its spatial displacement of voice toward an undecidable location, is a meaning carrying [sic] formal counterpart to the process of dereliction undergone by the [narrator]” (Bundgaard, 2011, 10). It produces the effect of intensification of the story world by the re-focalization of the narrative (Bundgaard, 2011, 10). However, this type of topological strangeness comes to fruition during the narrator’s engagement of the prophecy, which importantly also alters the spatial and temporal positioning of the narrator relative to the story world. The greatest spatial and temporal distance covered beginning to ending is perhaps evident in the final line, reduced to third-person future tense “Nú mun hon

sökkvask.” Here voice could mark either a return to the initial introverted teller narrator or a more extreme distancing altogether.

4.3 *Strangeness of Voice Relative to Location: Phenomenology of the Visionary*

The *völva*’s expression of consciousness reveals that her prophetic cognition relies on bodily perceptions, chiefly the visual but also the auditory, i.e. not simply mental cognition. As previously mentioned, verbs of “seeing” (from *sjá*) indicate the use of prophecy during the extroverted expression of consciousness; this qualifies that the *völva* is a figure with an inherently “embodied” experience at the level of her cognition and that her perceptions are innately tied to her senses during prophecy. Spatial-metaphor theory explains that conceptual spatial and temporal linguistic metaphors are used to express, for example, perceived spatial distances in visual terms (Johnson, 2007); this includes an expression of future time at a distance in front of the perceiver and the past as behind, a feature built into language (Johnson, 2007). These metaphors of space and time reflect an embodied reality and are crucial to the phenomenology of the visionary mode.

By incorporating the concept of embodiment into the assessment of the *völva*, the phenomenological expression of her cognitive conceptualization of time and space can be approached in relation to voice. This becomes an especially effective tool when analyzing the *völva*’s visions. As philosopher Mark Johnson writes, “we conceptualize time via deep systematic spatial-movement metaphors in which the passage of time is understood as relative motion in space” (Johnson, 2007, 28). Metaphorical spatializations develop in two understandings: in terms of the “motion of objects past the observer” (in which the observer is stationary or moving) (29) and “the movement of our bodies through space” (in which the observer is not stationary) (29). Such an approach effectively allows one to determine the relative narratological spatio-temporal coordinates between the narrator, at least relative to

her position as observer, and the position of the observed storyworld objects, allowing one to construct a kind of mapping of mythological future time and space.²⁹ Therefore the narratological displacement in the *völva*'s voice during prophecy of the future can be called another form of topological strangeness relative to location of voice.

4.4 Visionary Time: the Ambiguous Grammatical Future

The grammatical representation of future time also contributes to the nature of prophecy in *Völuspá*. During the *völva*'s topologically strange foray into the mythological future (st. 44- 63), the Old Norse language itself allows for potential ambiguity of tenses. The move to future tense first occurs in st. 44 (“Brœðr munu berjask,” “Brothers will fight”), but subsequent stanzas lack the modal verb can be read ambiguously in either present or future tenses;³⁰ however, due to their contextualization by future events these verbs would be otherwise read in the future tense (e.g. “Surtr ferr sunnan,” “Surtr moves from the south” (st. 51). Nevertheless, without an included modal verb to contextualize individual stanzas with future tense, one might interpret the ambiguity of tense throughout these passages a conflation of time itself due to the narrator's cognitive ability to perceive a displaced future time as if it were occurring during the real-time narratological present. This is to say that the cognitive semiotic characteristics of these stanzas reinforces an interpretation of their grammatical conflation of present and future tenses in both *Völuspá* texts. The *völva* thus inflects the future tense using the (modal-less) ambiguous present and future tense verb form—thus allowing the visionary experience to be related as if it were unfolding in the

²⁹In the words of Johnson, “once this initial orientation of stationary observer and moving time is established, the conceptual mapping of structure from source domain to target domain allows us to use our knowledge of moving objects to construct a metaphorical understanding of the ‘passage’ of time” (Johnson, 2007, 29-30).

³⁰Indeed, most translations, such as the provided Dronke text, render them in the present tense in lieu of a modal verb. This is especially obvious in Dronke's st. 44, line 1 in which “munu” present in “munu berjask” and “Mun engi maðr” in line 11 depict the future tense, while “Hart er í heimi” in line 5 (encapsulated by future tenses) she interprets in the present tense.

narratological present, immediated and observed by a reflector-type narrator. Some scholars simply read the modal-less verbs as the present tense; yet this reading also corroborates the topologically strange voice during the visionary passages, for Ragnarøkr is seen clearly to unfold temporal-metaphorically “ahead”(“fram”) of the narrator situated in the narratological present. Thus the conflation of visionary future time itself becomes a hallmark of prophecy in *Völuspá* and the direct, meaningful correlate to the cognitive semiotic structure of the poem’s visionary sequence.

Spatial-metaphor theory also reveals the *völva*’s embodiment in the “Garmr” refrain, where the previous chapter marks the initial stanza as the beginning of the prophecy. The *völva* says “Fjölð veit hon fræða,/ fram sé ek lengra/ um ragna røk/ röm sigtíva” (“Much she knows of old knowledge, ahead I see further, over the fate of the powers”(43).³¹ I interpret the line quite literally, for it displays the moment at which the *völva* changes cognitive modes of “knowing” and “seeing” and refers to the displaced future at a relative distance “fram” and “lengra,” at a spatio-temporal position “ahead” of the narrator. The grammatical temporal distancing between present and future, as well as the innate temporal-spatial metaphor built into the narrator’s conceptualization of her vantage point during the vision produce a strangeness of voice characterized by the physical impossibility of one’s experiencing future space-time.

4.5 Visionary Space: Visuality and Refrains

Yet for this strangeness to occur relative to voice, such a narrating instance must have a prior relative spatio-temporal anchorage in the text. To this extent, that position can be ascertained on the lexical level. Throughout the poem adverbs of concession and time,

³¹The *H* text reads: “Fram sé ek lengra, fjölð kan ek segja um ragna røk” “Further I see, much can I say about the fate of the powers [my translation]” (*H* 31). The same temporal-spatial conception is clearly at work here, however *H* uses of first-person in both halves of the sentence, though it lacks the third-person and reference to the “knowing” cognition of *K*, which I interpret as evidence for the dissociative split (*H*’s last use of sapiential verbs occurs in st. 26).

“though” (*þó*) and “before, until” (*áðr*), and of space, “there” (*þar*), reflect the motions of characters and events from the spatial (and temporal) periphery into view (Quinn, 1990); the poem begins narratologically centered on the *völva* but becomes re-focalized and expands to include a center narratologically encompassing the gods, i.e. rooted in the spatiotemporal, all-important mythological present: for the *völva* demands “silence from all [holy] kinds” to an audience equidistant from her in all directions. To describe this position Quinn states that the narrator witnesses her visions as if watching from a perspective analogous to a panorama-like center stage on which visionary characters enter and exit like stage players (Quinn, 1990, 312-317).³²

However, even without her mediation of thought, during the extroverted mode of prophecy the narrator still shows that she cognitively processes her experience: significant for the presumed situation between her and Óðinn, for the *völva* consistently demonstrates her agency with the claim “much she knows, ahead I [can] see further” and her active capacity to transition between visionary events by the use of the direct address refrain “*vituð ér enn—eða hvat?*” (st. 49, 59, 69). Narratologically speaking, this refrain partitions the vision into individual vignettes and enables the narrator to transition across future time and space. Such agency supports that her dissociative trance state does not dismiss her cognitive faculties, but in fact expands her epistemic horizons.

Based on the narrative variation in scope, i.e. the level of detail at which the narrator effectively can observe, directions at will: e.g. “*Hrymr ekr austan*”(48); “*Kjóll ferr austan*” (49); “*Surtr ferr sunnan*” (51); “*er Óðinn ferr við úlf vega*” (52); “*Þá kómr inn mikli...Vidar*”(53). Scope alternates throughout these passages from relatively micro to macr-levels of detail, from “*skínn af sverði sól valtíva*”(51) to the scale of “*upp koma qðru sinni jörð*”(57). Therefore, perhaps a “panorama” is not the best comparison, for her

³²For more on the spatiotemporal coordinates of speech see Elam (1980), 136-144. In terms of poetic space, see also Brandt (2008).

experiential scope changes rapidly from micro to macro levels throughout the vision, yet does not extend to relative temporal movement. That she manifests agency suggests a mental state more analogous to a lucid-dream-like progression, in which she retains experiential control beyond normal physical and psychological boundaries, but in which she can “choose” what and to what extent via scope she is able to “see.” The prophetess is able to move freely between vision and the engaged position of narrator and narratee. Therefore, the refrain is employed by the prophetess to reset the current scene’s spatial parameters between these two locales.

The narrator’s agency remains a feature of the dissociative experience until the final line. Here the narrator represents the disengagement of vision without a return to the opening teller narrative frame; the poem simply concludes: “Nú mun hon søkkvask” (st. 63). Based on the recognition that the prophetess’ cognitive faculties are still operable during the extroverted consciousness, it is possible to conclude that despite the changes in first and third person perspective the prophetess does not undergo a disembodied experience.³³ The extroverted online experience is also not exemplary of “static perception” (for her vision is to be understood as both exploratory and interactional) (Talmy, 2000), a position reinforced by variations in scope. Such a conclusion directly contradicts the established claim that the *völur* figures are subordinated by Óðinn, from whom he extracts knowledge, and who then experience “hypnotically activated subjects” (Clunies Ross, 1990, 224); in fact, this understanding at last allows us to qualify the relationship between narrator and narratee as perhaps more under the narrator’s illocutionary control than previously speculated, and less due to the narratee’s (Óðinn’s) force of magic. Magic, as has been shown, appears to be potentially linked instead to the narrative properties of the prophetess’s speech.

³³ See also Violi (2009).

4.6 *Conclusions on Features of the Prophetic Voice*

There is not merely that a degree of psychological realism in *Völuspá* as Clunies Ross asserts has perplexed editors, rather that scholars continue to misunderstand the nature of the prophetess narrator without complete recognition of the role that consciousness plays for the poem. Perhaps the most potent semiotic property of the poem, topological strangeness of the narrating instance is the means for affective meaning-making for a presumed reader or listener audience. This property of voice simulates a mimetic feeling of disembodiment for the reader that also, in a highly artistic manner, parallels the engagement of the prophetic mode; alongside increased intensity, it produces the feeling of disembodiment as a meaning effect for the prophetic portion of the poem. The feeling of disembodiment while being embodied is a basic human cognitive reality. These features of voice during prophetic visions, or as I will call it the mode the prophetic voice, involve a causal relationship to affect for the readerly experience, which becomes arguably mimetic in nature during oral performance (as will be further explored in Chapter V).

Based on the representation of the narrator's consciousness, are we able to understand her visions into future space via "seeing" as an apparently embodied experience but to be understood as effectively disembodied for reader experience. The prophetess's trance state is reflected in the semiotic structure of the text, accessible through study of the modes of consciousness and narration, moving from a telling narrating to a reflecting narrator. At this, we must understand that she has finally slipped into extroverted experience. Nevertheless, the prophetess defies expectations of her passivity and instead displays her agency in shaping, or at least focusing her vision. Thus, her efforts to depict the mythological story of the Old Norse cosmos ought to be regarded as illustrative of a powerful, versatile, magical character and narrator whose relationship to the story world becomes more intrinsic to the narrative than otherwise presumed.

Chapter V. Voice, Affect, and Performance: A Framework for Interpretation

5.1 Cognitivist Approach to Affect and Literary Response

This chapter explores from both a narratological and performative perspective how the text engenders readerly affect³⁴. Cognitive studies suggest that stylistic variations, that is the *foregrounded*³⁵ aspects of literature such as at the semantic (e.g. metaphor), phonetic (e.g. assonance, alliteration), and grammatical levels (e.g. ellipsis), require “cognitive work on part of the reader” are likely “initiated and assisted by feeling” (Miall, et. al. 2008, 391).³⁶ As such the result of foregrounded artistic features’ highly structured and hierarchical textual usage can be to prompt affect, to stimulate feelings in the reader.

The study of how a text prompts affect, and whether the resulting emotions in the reader are indeed ‘real,’ has been the subject of extensive debate.³⁷ Derek Matravers (2001) theorizes that there exists a causal relationship between the expressiveness of a work of art and a complex of emotional responses that it generates for a receiver. For example, Matravers explains how a musical work through its artistic arrangement of foregrounded compositional elements expresses an emotion; for as Matravers writes:

³⁴ The study of emotion is a relatively new field in Old Norse scholarship, examples of which include: Sif Ríkharðsdóttir (forthcoming)

³⁵ Jan Mukarovsky developed the term “foregrounding” to cover the extent of stylistic effects which are necessarily defined by their apparent systematic design in literary texts.

³⁶ Miall argues that foregrounding in literature instills the phenomenon of defamiliarization and evokes feeling (see Miall 1994, 392-393). Defamiliarization is the proposed process by which a reader recognizes a break or change in style and must adjust his reading to accommodate this new information. For more on the relationship between foregrounding and affect, see also (1990) and (1992). It should also be mentioned that Miall’s study proposes the “defamiliarization-feeling-refamiliarization” process, by which foregrounded features disengage the reader from normal reading before becoming readjusted to (and emotionally influenced by) new stylistic conditions; he also proposes that this process remains “distinctive to literary response,” as opposed to standard everyday language, and “likely to prove a key aspect of the literary domain” (Miall 1994, 403); I am aware that an oral/aural art form, such as that of *Völuspá*, may be less amenable to this relationship. However, as with the extension of poetic experience of the visual beyond the oral-literate boundary, I would argue that again here the oral composition of literature, like written forms, is no less subject to cognitive “capacities that are intrinsic to our linguistic endowment” (Miall 1994, 403).

³⁷ For a useful summary, see Houen (2011). See also Attridge (2011), and Matravers (1998). Robinson’s book *Deeper than Reason: Emotion and its Role in Music, Literature, and Art* (2007) convincingly argues that physiological cognitive and emotional responses in a reader occur regardless of whether the matter is seen as fiction.

a piece of music, then, [like a literary narrative] is a structure, the identity and value of which will not reside in any particular part, but rather in the relations between its part. The truistic consequence of this is that the value of a piece of music emerges over time, as it takes time, when listening to a piece music, for these relations to emerge (178).

The expressive act generates a response in the listener in the form of affect, which in this case then triggers a largely subjective, but likely closely related, complex of emotions in the listener. If we are willing to accept that perceivable artistic structures foster the ability of artwork to achieve affect, these subsequent feelings expressed and then aroused are, of course, real and to a degree variable. Importantly, it is the presence of these subsequent feelings at all for which Matravers argues that one can call the music emotionally expressive. This relationship leads Matravers to argue for a qualified version of the once-dismissed “arousal theory” of emotional expression (Matravers 2001, 177, 188).

However, the expressiveness of the artistic piece remains bound to the stylistic arrangement of the artwork and crucially relates not to individually separate patterns but instead to their relativity to the position of other elements.³⁸ Further, the cognitivist approach requires that active recognition be a precondition to the affective result. As Matravers explains:

The experience of expressive music is the experience of an organized structure of sound and the corresponding feelings it arouses. The feelings are aroused by paying attention to the sound, and sustained by continued attention. The feeling being those usually aroused by the expression of a certain emotion in the central case is (for a qualified listener) sufficient to cause the belief that the music is expressive of that emotion (177).

³⁸ Chapter 9 of Matravers highlights preconditions for affect to occur. He further explains: “The claim is that attention must be paid to music in order to keep it “in front of the mind” so that the listener notices the dynamic properties of the music [it must be *tracked*]; properties which unfold over time. In order to perceive these properties, therefore, the listener’s attention must be *sustained*. This distinguishes the arousal of a feeling relevant to expression from those cases in which the listener’s initial attention to the music wanes: the music is used as springboard for indulging in feelings which it does not directly cause. The intimate connection between the music and the aroused feeling needs to be sustained as it is only feelings caused by the music that are relevant to expression, not feelings released by the music but which have some other source” (Matravers 2001, 181). Matraver’s theory does not outright dismiss claims about the mimetic nature of feelings; in fact mimesis, as an evolutionary expression of empathy, may play a role in the causal relationship.

If combined with Miall's empirical cognitive study, a clearer picture emerges of this causal relationship to specific foregrounding. As a result, we come nearer to interpreting what specific aesthetic qualities might induce affect in a presumed audience.

A causal theory of affect also applies to literary or visual arts (see Bundgaard, 2011 and Matravers, 2001, 57-101). Matravers further argues that "the accounts of the relation between the music and the aroused feeling parallels the account of the relation between the reader's experience of a [text] and his aroused emotion towards a fictional character [or event]" (177). Thus, the semiotic attributes of *Völuspá* discussed throughout Chapter II and III, and their immersive effects on the reader experience, also can be perceived as foregrounded features of narrative style and of voice. In this sense they are implicitly the consequence of a poet's decisions to increase immersion by making the text more reflective and the narrator's experience more extroverted over time. Increased immersion for a reader engages readerly attention and makes affect more potent due to decreasing mediation of reader experience by a narrator: the immersive experience of future time in *Völuspá* arrives at the affective climax of the poem. This is not coincidence. Other aesthetic characteristics of *Völuspá* combine with the aforementioned semiotic structure and contribute to the poem's overall affective quality.

This chapter thus merges cognitive theory with narratological and performative theories to delve into *Völuspá K* and *H* for foregrounded stylistic features that illuminate the relationship between the text and affect; in essence it will expose the difference between textual and extratextual address in the *völva*'s speech. While it may not be apparent due to the presence of many identical stanzas, subtle difference in the address of audiences demonstrates the extent to which their respective performances are differently conceived.

5.2 Foregrounded Auditory Elements and the Purpose of Refrains

Due the movability of performance and mutability of memorized oral verse (as well as the oral nature of scribal culture in reading texts aloud), the aural quality of the poem becomes increasingly important, especially when considering that individual performative demands would have shaped compositional variation in the oral tradition.³⁹ As mentioned in the beginning of Chapter II, stanza rearrangement does not lead to different interpretations of the mythological *fabula* (story) common to both *Völuspá* works. Mundal (2008) states that stanza order in *K* and *H* “must either be the result of conscious rewriting... or of oral variation” (Mundal, 2008, 216-217). Rather, I would argue that *syuzhet* (narrative) bestows discrete affective valences. Affect differs considerably between the text. The desired affective aspects of a given performance, including to whom various particular information is addressed, therefore, more likely dictates form and stanza order.

Although stanza grouping and order is significant for variation, the distribution of the poetic refrains, “Geyr [nú][sic] garmr miok” and “vituð [“vit þér enn” in *H*] ér enn—eða hvat?” is equally noteworthy: the former highlights the auditory aesthetic of the poem and has potential ramifications for reader/listener experience, while the latter is a direct speech-act that explicitly engages with the audience and creates a visual ‘cinematic’ effect for scene transitions. So as not to reiterate Quinn’s (2001) and Mundal’s (2008) noteworthy presentation of common stanza material in *K* and *H*, I will contribute to their observations by addressing the function of refrains in both texts and propose their role in prompting affect: for in fact *Völuspá*’s refrains offer the greatest insight of all stanzas (and have been given the least scholarly attention) towards establishing an explanation for variant stanza order in light of performativity.

³⁹ Mundal (2008) discusses oral and scribal variation as explanations of textual divergence and notes that the majority of scholars attribute variation to oral origins. Quinn (2001) does not factor the aural quality into consideration of composition.

Additionally, the frequency and narrative context of these refrains generate unique mood in each text produced by the deviation from initial affective states. Foregrounding in the form of sound effects precipitates mood fluctuation. Here variation becomes particularly revealing when addressing the specific function and frequency of the two refrains and how their positions alters our interpretation of two unique soundscapes that set the mood during Ragnarøkr.⁴⁰

Importantly, the initial sound-state is “silence” (hljóð, “silence” or “hearing”). Deviations from this state display auditory dynamics, with which the poet increases or decreases tension. These include not merely textual noises, i.e. verbs semantically related to sound, but also poetic diction and the natural aural aesthetic of language. Aside from direct speech (discussed in the third segment of this chapter), this initial sound level remains largely constant until the first sign of Ragnarøkr and the first refrain, whereafter their respective sound levels consistent to both *K* and *H* diverge.

The first appearance of the “Geyr [nú] garmr miðk” (“[Now] Garmr bays much”)⁴¹ refrain exhibits considerable difference in tone and sequential sounds between the two poems due to relative position to other stanzas. Both poems situate this refrain in the context of the “glaðr Eggþér” figure: in *K* (st. 43), Garmr bays *after* Eggþér strikes the harp, in *H* (st. 50), immediately before the act. Both cases involve the first use of the refrain. That both texts position this refrain in context with the Eggþér figure suggests the herdsman’s importance in heralding Ragnarøkr’s approach, and leads one to suspect that the refrains function is linked contextually to the Eggþér sequence and his role as harbinger of end times.

⁴⁰ Quinn (2001) argues that the situation of Ragnarøkr is central to interpreting narrative variation and the most significant point of ideological departure between the texts. On this point, I certainly agree.

⁴¹ In the first instance of the refrain in either text the refrain lacks the adverbially present tense “nú,” and suggests an awareness of the primary relationship between the initial causal moment and a consistency in the baying sounds drawn out through subsequent refrains. Eclectic editions have cast out or inserted the syllable inconsistently, seemingly on a whim.

In *K* the refrain appears three times. The first appearance follows the sequence in which “glaðr Eggþér” plucks his harp: the momentous cacophony of doom is announced with a single symbolic note. And so begins a chord playing to a crescendo across worlds: above Eggþér, the cock Fialarr crows in unison along with the Æsir’s cock, Gullinkambi, and beneath the earth (“iqrð neðan”) the rust-red cock at the halls of Hel (st.42). As Ragnarøkr unfolds these sounds are succeeded by “inu galla Gjallarhorni” (the sound of the clear-ringing Clarion Horn”) of Heimdallr high in the air (st. 45), the groaning of the World Tree, Yggdrasill (st. 46), the repeated baying of Garmr (st. 47), the moaning of dverggar (st. 50), and the final baying of Garmr (st. 56) coming immediately after the earth sinks into the sea and all is ruined. Notice how Garmr initiates and finalizes the presentation of sound effects at Ragnarøkr.⁴² It is no coincidence that these unified polyphonic aspects depict the disturbance of sky, ground, and below-earth, along with the atmospheric connotation of dwarves with elements and winds, and the very framework of the cosmos itself—all of which reverberate. Hence the polyphonic effect parallels the imagery of the rifting of the heavens, the totality of destruction encompassing all things.

In *H*, this refrain occurs five times. It begins at stanza 31 and continues, with four recurrences at regular intervals every fifth stanza in stanzas 36, 41, 46, and the fifth occurrence after four more stanzas at stanza 50. Such an arrangement draws out the immediate present-tense⁴³ baying of Garmr into a pulsating, regular rhythm that echoes throughout the vision of the apocalypse, as opposed to the briefer (yet perhaps more successfully sublime) climax present in *K*. Notably, both texts present the final reprise in the stanza preceding the emergence of the new world. However, by contrast with *K*, the *H* texts

⁴²These comprise exclusively the verbs of sound present during Ragnarøkr. Of course, the actions in the final stanzas produce imagery that no doubt lends itself to the imagining of their sounds, these words do not strictly speaking possess formal poetic aural aspects.

⁴³As mentioned in Chapter III, in *H* the first and last refrain lack the present tense temporal adverb “nú”; those retaining the adverb seem to simulate echoes of the first, as if the total vision of the future apocalypse comes to the narrator instantaneously and all at once, extended as if only by the labor of speech.

displays different cumulative sounds: Garmr first bays (st.31), *Eggþér* strikes the harp and crows call (st.32-33), Garmr bays (st.36), the ground echoes (a sound unique to *H* in st. 37), Heimdallr's horn resounds (st.38), *Yggdrasil* groans (st.39), the dvergar groan (st.40), Garmr bays a third time (st.41), an eagle screeches (st.42), and Garmr bays twice more (in st. 46 and 50). However, for *H*, the sounds of Ragnarøkkr are further diminished, interrupted by the relatively silent (yet horrific) vision of Náströnd (st.34-35). By this stanza ordering, the *H* text therefore lacks *K*'s grand symphonic build with its steady amplification and polyphony of elemental voices coming *between* refrains, and instead lingers in the rhythmic present tense pattern of the refrain; such distinctions are not without import. This aesthetic difference perhaps also explains why the *K* text, at the intuitive level, finds greater preference as a superstructure for eclectic editions.

The end-line refrain (to which I will also later return), “vituð [“vito þér einn” in *H*] ér enn, eða hvað?”, allows the narrator to transition between consecutive scenes and thereby attend to the visuality of each poem alongside the auditory. This refrain appears more frequently in *K* (9 times) than in *H* (7 times), but seems not to conform to any particular pattern or order in either text. Perhaps, then, its function is simply to display the narrator's control in moving through time and space, which comes across as sneering taunt or chastisement of Óðinn's request for knowledge. Yet the refrain, coming at the end of various strophes, manipulates (perhaps to a greater degree in *K* due to greater frequency) levels of suspense by suddenly altering the narrative's focalization,⁴⁴ i.e. “the point of view from which things are seen”(Bundgaard, 6). This does not imply that the perspective shifts away from the narrator entirely, but when she engages the audience directly it results in the movement of the narratee's focal point briefly away from scenes set in the past or future and back to the initial narrative present. This effectively holds the audience at constant attention, allowing the

⁴⁴ Bundgaard (2008) discusses focalization as one of many semiotic means of generating literary meaning effects.

narrator to reiterate her presence and perhaps color the situation with the reminder of her superiority before moving to another scene. In combination, the two refrains simulate a kind of push-pull effect by which the narrator builds suspense towards the climax in each text. The *völva* uses the refrain of direct address to suspend the course of action while the constancy of Garmr's baying serves as an echoing reminder of the ongoing heightened sound level.

These narrative variations in refrain positions cause entirely different affective tensions for the reader: *H*'s mood delivers a somewhat flatter climax for lacking the building crescendo of *K*. As a result, *K* benefits from a more successful catharsis in st. 57 ("Sér hon upp koma/qðru sinni/jqrð," "She sees come up another earth..."), as opposed to *H*'s sudden, uproarious, and sustained note for twenty stanzas until its eventual resolution. The order of refrains, and by extension perhaps the entire narrative arrangement, relates therefore more to aesthetic decisions and the poet's implicit intentionality rather than the manipulation of the cosmological scheme and *fabula*. We can conclude then that *syuzhet* is the implicit result of the poet's desired affective agenda and the intentional demands of individual performances.

5.3 Poetic Diction, Musicality, and Performance

The importance of the sound quality of language, its musicality, also contributes to the mood of reader experience. For example, during the Ragnarøkkr sequence the poetic diction of both texts mimics the deafening atmosphere. The alliteration becomes more guttural and harshly consonantal, (e.g Bræðr munu berjask/ok að bǫnum verðask... (st. 44)), the diction suddenly hacked, hammered, and drumming (skeggöld skálmöld, skildir ro klofnir,/ vindöld vargöld,/ áðr veröld steypisk... (44)), and exemplifies the poet's intuitive artistic ear (see also Lönnroth, 1985; Gunnell, 2013, 72).⁴⁵ Further, after the earth sinks into

⁴⁵Necessarily, the pronunciation and length and of vowels would vary chronologically, but as Terry

the sea in stanza 55 and Garmr's baying fades away, the diction resumes with a softer, more sonorous tone (Sér hon upp koma/ qðru sinni/ jorð ór ægi, iðjagrœna; falla forsar, flýgr örn yfir, sá er á fjalli/ fiska veiðir (st. 57) reminiscent of the opening stanzas:

...sól þat né vissi
hvar hon sali átti,
stjörnur það né vissu
hvar þær staði áttu
máni þaðan né vissi
hvað hann megins átti
(st. 5)

(see also Gunnell, 2013). The pre- and post-Ragnarøkkr placid mood derives from the softer tonality of language, while during Ragnarøkkr the mood suddenly grows frantic. Terry Gunnell (2013) also associates the similarity between the “soft consonant sounds... and the alliterating vowels, short lines...and slow beating rhythm... [that] walk hand in hand with images of fertile nature”(70) and are meant to contrast the heaviness of diction and destruction imagery during Ragnarøkkr passages. Such poetic qualities connect the literary aesthetic to foregrounded auditory conditions throughout *Völuspá*'s climax and resolution, thereby aiding affectivity here via formed associations between respectively calm or tense destructive imagery and relatively euphonic or cacophonous poetic diction.

Gunnell (2013) also writes extensively about the musicality of language and explains relationships between sounds and images contributing to performative interpretations of *Völuspá* (see Gunnell, 1995; 2013, 69-73). From a performative angle he presumes

a strong awareness of the musical quality of words on the part of the ‘original’ performers from whom the work was recorded, the sound of the chosen language serving as an aural background texture for the textual meaning. In other words, the words are clearly not chosen merely for their meaning, but also for their (near untranslatable) sound qualities. (Gunnell 2013, 69).

Gunnell and others remind us, variation makes little difference in the relative inflections and relationships between images and sounds: “the written letters remain a recording of sounds as much as any musical notation does” (Gunnell, 2013, 69-73).

A cognitivist approach only corroborates Gunnell's arguments about performativity by equipping the tools with which to anchor affect to specific textual moments that when imagined as staged recitations become dramatic events.

So how does foregrounding bestow affect for *Völuspá*? For example, the break in static auditory levels simultaneous with the movement into relatively sharper diction throughout the Ragnarøkkr passage instills a defamiliarizing effect, as Miall surmises. During this stylistic change, the explicit emotional scene of Óðinn's death (and his dearness to Frigg as "angan týr"⁴⁶) at the mouth of the úlfr (in st.52 *K*/st. 45 *H*) implicitly guides the audience's emotional response. This occurs during the affective climax of the poem. Thus passages of greater affective significance for the audience aid in the causal relationship to potentially-intended emotions (whatever subjective emotional complex they may involve, but likely a combination of excitement, sadness, and empathy) that the poet implies should be felt at Óðinn's death. The moment presumably would be emotionally relevant to both intradiegetic narratee Óðinn and extradiegetic audience.

Concerning the dramatic experience of *Völuspá*, Gunnell reminds us that, based on the *völva*'s opening invocation,

the implication is that Óðinn is also present somewhere in the surroundings... [and] that if [the presumed extratextual audience] dare[s] to suspend disbelief for a moment and [that if we consider] the performance, then during the liminal time of this performance, [they] either feel that [they] have been transported into the past, or that the *völva* has joined [them] in the present. As this happens, worlds start to bend and a form of 'sacred time' is introduced to the surroundings, as occurs in any effective theatrical performance (Gunnell, 2013, 73).

There is no reason why the affective nature of performance could not unfold exactly as Gunnell rightly attempts to construct; and further, the cognitive assumptions presented in this chapter only enhance performative interpretations by affording potential evidence for how affect might occur in this setting.

⁴⁶ The Kristjánsson edition unfortunately omits the unique "týr" from the *K* text, though mentions it in a footnote; *H* retains only "angan" (Eddukvæði I, 304).

Not to dismiss Gunnell's observation, but in light of previous chapters pertaining to the phenomenology of time and space, additional refinements can be made. At issue is the notion that the dramatic performative setting creates a "sacred time" by merging past and present. As already discussed, the *völva*'s conscious representation of the past tense in the poem revolves around the demonstration of (probably sacred) lore in the first third of the poem, but this does not preclude that the past tense is brought into the present. After all, the poem is a *spá*, not a dramatic historical rendering—so its emphasis is firmly on the future. It is therefore no coincidence that the *völva*'s future tense, visionary mode involves reader-oriented cognitive effects (such as estrangement, heightened immersion, etc.), which translates to the performative level.

At this level a performer of the text, speaking through the *völva*'s voice can invoke the effect of "topological strangeness of voice" that indeed lends itself to the visual and aural experience for the audience. As the presumed performer progresses through the narrative, he or she would thus begin to speak using the *völva*'s extroverted mode of consciousness: wherein the discernible separation between the voice's, performer's, *and* audience's experience of the prophetic visions would vanish. Therefore, the illusion of "sacred time" stems more accurately from the strange properties of voice which conflate present and future tenses simultaneous to reflective and extroverted narration, spoken aloud. It is due to these cognitively-linked features of style, affect, and voice that afford the theorized Coleridgean literary phenomenon to the audience: i.e. the combined artistic 'package' of the poem enables the audience to "feel" that they have been transported into "another time and place" during performance.

To this end, I agree that *Völuspá* has the potential to invoke very dramatic scenes that would be all the more meaningful on a ritualized stage (Dronke 1997, Gunnell, 2004). With the separation of the ecstatic experience between speaker and extratextual receiver removed,

the poem enables the reader, listener, or onlooker to “suspend disbelief” and to experience alongside a performer (who perhaps would be in a state of induced ecstasy)⁴⁷ the complete visual and auditory field of prophetic visions. Nevertheless, narratological theory reveals a much more complex dramatic experience than previous arguments have provided, especially when both *K* and *H* are acknowledged as two unique poems (a matter which Gunnell (2013) does not address). To see these differences, I will turn to the issue of audience.

5.4 Direct Speech and Audience

Accounting for performance, the *spá* can be viewed as not simply a single speech-act (as Quinn (1990) does), but a sum of many speech acts directed at both intratextual audience (a notably plural “*allar kinder*,” importantly inclusive of the singular narratee Óðinn, whom the narrator occasionally addresses solely) and extratextual audience.⁴⁸ Direct speech is the most accessible means by which we can interpret individual speech acts where voice engages with each audience distinctively in either texts: the difference in grammatical singular and plural determines which audiences can be included as receiver of a given address. The refrain “*vituð ér enn [vitu þér enn [H]]—eða hvat?*” maintains a plural number, yet particular stanzas single out the exclusive narratee Óðinn. Variation then alters how we must interpret the direct expression of speech as it relates to an inconsistent presumed personal situation between Óðinn and the *vǫlva*, who at times appears to include Óðinn in an ambiguous audience within the plural address, but who elsewhere addresses him in the singular (Quinn, 1990, 314).

Each text indicates a dual audience in the first stanza where both mortal and immortal audience are invoked: “*Hlióðs bið ek allar/ (helgar) [H] kinder/meiri ok minni... vildu at ek, Valfǫðr, vel fram telja forn spjöll fira*”(st. 1). The word “*fira*” can be taken to mean men or

⁴⁷ See Eliade (1972) for the shamanic techniques of ecstasy which certain scholars connect to historical *vǫlur*.

⁴⁸ For a background in speech-act theory see Austin (1962) and Searle (1969; 1985). For the use of these theories in Old Norse scholarship, refer to Clunies Ross (2005).

gods depending on context, adding to the ambiguous dual audience. (Quinn, 1990, 314). For example, throughout K's entirety the *völva* directly addresses Óðinn among a plural audience via the refrain ("vitoð ér") (and again announces his presence during the passages recounting their past meeting (st. 31-33), but the *völva* crucially speaks to Óðinn individually in stanza 28, saying, "Alt veit ek, Óðinn..." Yet there remains an odd, and I think revealing, element here in the *völva*'s speech:

Ein sat hon úti,
þá er inn aldni kom,
yggjungur ása
ok í augu leit:
"Hvers fregnið mik?
Hví freistið mín?
Allt veit ek, Óðinn,
hvar þú auga falt:
í inum mæra
Mímisbrunni."
Drekkr mjöð Mímir
morgin hverjan
af veði Valföðrs.
Vituð ér enn—eða hvat?
(st. 28)⁴⁹

Importantly and apparently unnoticed in previous studies, there is an instance of plurality within the direct address in this stanza. Scholars overlook the fact that before the *völva* names Óðinn as the singular addressee ("Allt veit ek, Óðinn"(st.28)) she asks in the preceding lines, "Hvers fregnið mik? Hví freistið mín?" At the grammatical level it becomes apparent that the *völva* speaks to a plural audience during these lines as well, though from the scene's context only the individual Óðinn is identified in the encounter. This fact creates an interesting moment, one in which either the plural audience (and with them the reader) is let

⁴⁹ *Eddukvæði I* uses quotation marks to represent the lines "*Hvers fregnið mik? Hví freistið mín?*" as direct speech; elsewhere direct speech is not distinguished from the level of the narrative frame. This means that the edition regards st.28 as a different, recalled speech act deeper than the frame. It is important to note that I interpret the *völva* figure of this stanza as identical to narrator on the basis of the interchangeability of person (the general scholarly opinion). Another interpretation being that the narrator and the *völva* are not the same figure would follow that stanza 28 relates the words of a character whose pluralized direct address could not possibly register on the same level of the refrains.

in on the secrecy of the past meeting and the nature of Óðinn's pledge; alternatively Óðinn is simply addressed in a kind of "majestic plural," a way of speaking to individual member of royalty with distinguishment.

In the latter case, the plurality of the entire "vituð ér" refrain may, therefore, align with a plurality characteristic of some formalized addressing of Óðinn. This case would alter our understanding of *Völuspá*'s entire narrator-narratee relationship: the "vituð ér" refrain potentially privileging certain prophetic wisdom to targeted recipients (perhaps exclusively Óðinn) rather than strictly "allar kinder" in observance (in this way, hlióð, "silence or hearing" comes to be merely a requirement for recitation).

In the former case, the *völva* indiscriminately gives the extratextual audience knowledge of Óðinn's sacrifice, and as with the remainder of the poem, grants everyone full knowledge of the course of fate, which in turn becomes holy and poetic wisdom for not only Óðinn but also the mortal audience—the attendant audience of a performance. This is an equally likely scenario, as one's real-world mythological and poetic wisdom was highly valued in the pagan Norse world (see Larrington, 1993). Considering the importance of retaining and passing down sacred knowledge of myth, *völva*'s contributions to the extratextual dimension make her a valuable mythological figure and storyteller. The text allows for both interpretations.

5.5 Óðinn and the *Völva* in *Hauksbók*

Variation also sheds light on Óðinn's connection to the *völva*.⁵⁰ In the *H* text, the "vitu þér [sic]" refrain also maintains a constant plural number.⁵¹ In fact, it is possible to

⁵⁰Quinn (1995) convincingly describes, in yet another article, the relationship based on representations of the mythological Óðinn in eddic poetry (as opposed to other literary portrayals, e.g. in sagas) and his thematic desire for knowledge about the course of fate (250; 258-260).

⁵¹Quinn (1990) argues for an exception to this rule, perceiving one occurrence given in the singular of *H*'s st.25 (*Eddukvæði I*) [st. 41 in Neckel]. But I believe this is a misreading or mistake on the part of editions she is using. Using Neckel, in her (1990) article Quinn states that "In the *H* text of the poem the usual form of

generate a reading of the *H* text that does not require Óðinn's presence whatsoever. While the *K* poem confirms Óðinn as narratee in opening invocation, the plurality of refrains aligned with other instances of a plural audience, and the direct address "Alt veit ek, Óðinn" (st. 28) to confirm Óðinn as narratee implies, *H* meets none of these conditions. The *völva* of the *H* text never gives Óðinn explicit priority in address and never outright invokes him. There is no direct evidence of his involvement. This may be yet another crucial observation of the poem ignored by editorial oversight.

The opening stanza of *H* does not even formally include Óðinn, mentioning only of his deeds and him indirectly in the genitive: "viltu at ek Valfðörs vel fram telja forn spjöll fira" (st.1).⁵² Here the *völva* seems to speak as if straight to the extradiegetic audience. The sentence might even demonstrate that the poet considers this a mundane recitation, despite obviously overlapping material. Additionally *H* lacks all the content depicting a past encounter between the narrator and Óðinn, the so-called personalized "subordinate frame" of *Völuspá K* (Quinn, 1990). This fact starkly contrasts with the *H* text's narrative. By extension perhaps the *H* text is intended for audience in a different, compensatory way: lacking Óðinn's attendance makes *H*'s affective design all the more focused on the extradiegetic frame. In this case, the plurality of the refrain (though semantically identical in

the refrain is 'vito þér enn eða hvat?'[sic] but at st.41 [Neckel, 1983, 9-10] (only the second occurrence of the refrain in *H*) the line reads 'vitu þér einn eða hvat?'[sic]"(314). Quinn immediately continues, "Óðinn is presumably singled out here since the prophetic vision preceding the refrain describes the awful consequences of the rearing of Fenrir's kin, a matter close to Óðinn's heart"(314). The word "einn" here has clearly led Quinn to read the line "Do you *alone* want to know and what?", despite the presence of the same plural verb and pronoun ("vitu þér"[sic]). Neckel himself footnotes variation to his stanza 41: "v. einn oc h. (abgek.) for Upp; nach ér] einn H" (Neckel, 1962, 10). But as far as I have seen the *H* manuscript does not vary between this moment in st. 25 (*Eddukvæði I*)[Neckel's st. 41]. and any other instance of the refrain: cf. Finnur Jónsson (1900) whose text quotes the line "uitu þer einn enn eðr huat [sic]" (190-191); however, the Medieval Nordic Text Archive (Menota) shows at the facsimile level "uitu þ eñ eð □ huat", and "uitu þer enn eð □ huat" at the diplomatic (Menota, 2). On the representation of the stanza in *Codex Uppsaliensis*, Quinn (2001) further elaborates on her reading of a singular addressee Óðinn, writing that "Interestingly the refrain in this stanzas of the poem also preserves a unique reading-- 'do you alone know, and what' ('v. einn ok h'" Grape et al. 1977 II: 8). Clearly the addressee at this point is Óðinn alone, and not the assembled audience we are introduced to in the first stanza of the *Codex Regius* and *Hauksbók* versions of the poem" (85). I believe this is the same logic Quinn (1990) uses in her reading of st. 25 *H* (Íslensk fornrit *Eddukvæði I*) based on her acknowledged use of Neckel (who likely used Jónsson) and the similar quotes he provides about *Uppsaliensis* and *Hauksbók*; it would therefore seem to be Jónsson and Neckel's mistake about the *H* text.

⁵²Confer again with *K*'s "vildu at ek, Valfðör, vel fram telja forn spjöll fira" (st. 1).

each text) can be interpreted as a direct address of a pluralized ‘real’ audience. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that *K* emphasizes the divine pagan element of the poem, *H* by contrast the mortal human sphere.⁵³ Given the Christian material of *Hauksbók* that gives it a distinctly Christian context, as well as *H*’s unique penultimate stanza about the approach of the mighty one” (“inn riki) (st.57) often interpreted as a Christ-like image, it is reasonable to view that de-emphasis of the Óðinnic presence (by complete omission), occurs directly proportional to emphasis on the human audience.

Moreover, from the point of view of mythological discourse, another mythological figure with knowledge of *seiðr*, such as Freyja who summons the *völva*/giantess, Hyndla, to deliver a similar prophecy in *Hyndluljóð*, might instead fulfill this role.⁵⁴ By equal measure, the likely divergent oral tradition that devised these variant poems might always have traditionally understood Óðinn to be counted among the plural audience, though the *H* text may only imply it.

Stripped of its connection to the wording of the *K* text and liberated from the prescriptive editorial need to read it in the same dialectic disposition as *K*, the *Hauksbók* *Völuspá* indeed presents not only an entirely unique stanza arrangement but also an idiosyncratic performative setup evident in a perfectly viable interpretation of voice and address, speaker and recipient: the entirety of *H* becomes aimed at the extratextual audience. Yet despite the potential to read the poem with its own unique address, the affective features of the poem are not diminished. Nevertheless, the *H* and *K* texts are inarguably distinct at the level of performative variation.⁵⁵

⁵³Quinn (2002) and Clunies Ross (1990) draw similar conclusions about *H*’s human-level outlook; but neither go so far as to interpret *H* without Óðinn’s attendance.

⁵⁴Nässtrom (2003) summarizes Freyja’s mythological attributes, discussing *Hyndluljóð* at great length.

⁵⁵Perhaps this was the poet’s intention to de-emphasize *H*’s ritualistic performativity in its scribal record. This of course might infringe on the thesis that *H* is capable of inducing “sacred time” during a speculated ritual context; this could have been intentional on the part of a scribe in order to render the text impotent for pagan-derived performance We will never know.

5.6 Conclusion on Performance of *H* and *K*

Völuspá *K* and *H* are artistic pieces whose orally-derived expressive forms heavily rely on aurality. While oral tradition may have played a part in shaping each composition, the poet of each work may have composed them with intentional affect in mind. Cognitive study reveals how foregrounded stylistic devices operate relative to an overall aesthetic. Inclusive in this aural aesthetic, auditory effects and the musicality of language combine to produce affect during performance. Through an awareness of voice and address, we can also see that the act of expression extends to both intratextual and extratextual dimensions. There is also evidence that the *vǫlva* of each poem establishes different levels of communication to various audiences via direct speech. Based on comparison it becomes evident that the throughout the *H* text voice maintains an ambiguous pluralized address, one which does not specify Óðinn among the intratextual audience. In contrast and given the additional layer of address, the poet of the *K* text manipulates audience and plays with the notion of whom should receive access to certain kinds of knowledge, whether personalized Óðinnic or universal. Although the *H* text aims more at the extratextual audience, it is not necessarily more successful than *K* in prompting affect: for it may very well be *K*'s complexity in its multilayered address that makes it somehow artistically and aesthetically preferable for editorial composites of *Völuspá*.

Chapter IV: Conclusions

6.1 *The Cognitive Semiotic Structure of Völuspá*

The cognitive semiotic analysis of the *Codex Regius* and *Hauksbók Völuspá* texts unearths a definitive narratological structure with semiotic functions for each poem in addition previously proposed levels of manuscript variation (e.g. in Quinn, 1990). These structures manifest at the level of voice (or “speaker” in the Genettian sense), examined in relation to the narratological attributes of each text: a common *fabula* (narrative content) but distinguishable *syuzhets* (narrative form) which become discernible in each text through the narrator, the mythological *völva*. The ontological traits of her voice, those especially germane to her embodied consciousness and phenomenal experience of time and space, contribute to the apparent cognitive semiotic configuration of the texts. These semiotic features of *syuzhet* and voice include: the text’s mode of narration, variable on a spectrum between relative immediacy and displacement; voice’s mode of consciousness, concerning how voice represents the figural experience; narrative mode with regard to consciousness, which qualifies voice moment-to-moment as delivering teller or reflector-type forms of narration; focalization and scope, which specify perspective; and the density of narrative. Verb tense, cognitive relationship to verb usage, and grammatical perspective also carry significance for a reading of *Völuspá*. The cognitive assessment of all of these contributive features relative to one another and to deviations in and of themselves generates interpretive meaning for the text.

Significantly, the analysis reveals that in both *Völuspá H* and *K* the *völva*’s experience of visions can be read as correlating with modes of consciousness. The change from an introverted mode of consciousness, coinciding with past-tense verbs of “knowing,” to an extroverted mode of consciousness expressed with present-tense experiential verbs of

“seeing” signals the difference between stanza content interpreted as recollection versus prophecy. That both texts contain virtually identical introductory sequences from st. 1-20 (including the *dvergatal*) only further reinforces a reading that these strophes perform a necessary (perhaps ritualistically-inspired) pre-ecstatic invocation. Subsequent perspective switches from first to third-person can be seen as a textual representation of an ecstatic cognitive state, simulating these effects for the reader. Both texts engage in the movement from introverted to extroverted voice, as the texts simultaneously shift from teller to reflector-type narrative modes, an effect that increases immersion. This produces a form of topological strangeness relative narrative mode. Significantly for mythological discourse, changes in scope during prophetic stanzas show that the narrator remain in control of her perceptions during extroverted experience despite our lack of access to her thoughts. These semiotic observations redefine the image of the *völva* figure within her perceived relationship to the figure of Óðinn.

Völuspá preserves a formalized depiction of the cognitive mode required for “seeing” prophetic visions, or at least a literary representation of that act. The conflation of future and present time as well as the various topologically strange instances of voice achieve this result. Further, the auditory and visual phenomenological fields represented during the vision of the future each contain both inherent spatial and temporal qualities (Idhe, 2007, 185-202). The function of poetic refrains during the visionary experience is to preserve the synaesthetic (auditory and visual) unity of the vision, using the baying of Garmr to express the constancy of the initial auditory effects, building to polyphony. Elsewhere direct address indicates the consistent presence of an ambiguous audience. The highly affective semiotic arrangement of *Völuspá* could very well be the reason for its preservation due to its ability to simulate the visionary as well as its affective and immersive powers, if not its ritualized performativity. Most important is that the aforementioned structure reinforces the necessity to view *K* and *H*

as two independent poems with more significant narratological variation than previously suspected.

6.2 Knowledge Acquisition and the Union of Narratology and Performance Theory

Völuspá is ultimately an artistic work built on the Óðinnic theme of knowledge acquisition. As she relates different types of knowledge from one stanza to the next, the poet creatively makes use of the situation's inherently complex audiences. At last observations made based on narratology in Chapter III and performance theory in Chapter IV can now be integrated in order to expound on how exactly the established consciousness, modes of voice, and play on address in *Völuspá* convey mythological knowledge.

As previously mentioned, according to semiotic breakdowns of narrative modes both *Völuspá* texts comprise three movements that each convey individual types of knowledge: general mythological lore (st. 3 onwards), memory and knowledge personalized by the *völva*,⁵⁶ and lastly experiential knowledge of the future. Modes of narration correlate with these epistemic categories: strict narratorial teller-type in the first passages, teller-as-reflector-type throughout recalled scenes, and pure reflector-type narration, respectively.

Now I turn to the matter of qualifying which audience acquires each type of knowledge and how. The manner in which one can gain knowledge is divided into two epistemological terms: in a manner *a priori* (meaning one has knowledge of something independent of experience) and *a posteriori* (meaning that one acquires knowledge with and through experience). Using this convenient division we can now derive an interpretation of the mythological encounter. As a conscious component of voice, *Völuspá*'s section about the mythological past and lore is related to both an intratextual and extratextual audience who learn of creation in a manner *a priori*; this should come as no surprise, for even the *völva*

⁵⁶A reminder that *K*'s personal subordinate frame involving a past prophecy for Óðinn does not alter its classification as simply remembered experience.

herself did not live through this time. However, Óðinn did (after a point) play a role in creation; so his position justifies that he knows at least some of this information a posteriori.

For the middle portion, the *vǫlva*'s personalized knowledge and memory told through teller-type narration with the illusion of reflectivity precludes that the intratextual and extratextual audience nearly come to experience these scenes in an a priori manner, but not definitively. However as also mention in Chapter IV, in the *K* the audience is granted voyeuristic-like access to *vǫlva* and Óðinn past encounter. This contrasts with the arrangement of *H*, which has been shown to grant more privilege to the extratextual audience than to Óðinn, if not denying his presence entirely.

Of course the *vǫlva* relates knowledge of the future during pure reflector narration. Taking textual and performative levels into account (points from Chapter III and IV), this shift induces the vivid quality of readerly experience of the vision while denying the reader access to the mediation of the narrator, which effectively reduces the *vǫlva*'s speech to raw voice and allows the entire audience to experience the future a posteriori through the eyes of the *vǫlva*. For all intents and purposes, Óðinn acquires knowledge of the world's end as if he had lived beyond his own death to see Baldr's return in the new world. But this is not simple a priori knowledge; the conflated audience has also, in effect, directly experienced the future (insofar as this is possible; but it may have been a very real belief, as the role of fate weighs heavily throughout Old Icelandic literature). Thus the manner in which knowledge is acquired becomes paramount to interpretation of *Vǫluspá*.

It is a paradox that knowledge of the future is attainable a posteriori, i.e. through direct experience of the events. This fact is what makes the *vǫlva*'s ability to deliver *spá* so unique even in the mythological world of gods and giants, and so clearly valuable to Óðinn, as the *spá* ultimately redefines conditions of possible experience, which must be his implicit need for the otherworldly encounter.

Finally, affect plays an important cognitive role in knowledge acquisition, and may help to explain why the highest relative level of affect (during the vision) coincides with a posteriori knowledge. Cognitive studies (Cahill, 1995; Kensinger, 2003) indeed suggest that affect and emotion play a crucial role in aiding memory. Not only would a poet implicitly want to create a successfully artistic work, but intuitively to make her verse as memorable as possible. So it also probably not coincidental that musicality and the auditory achieve their maximum states during the vision, which allows affect to color the emphasized portion of the *spá*, perhaps in turn rendering the paradoxically-known fate of the cosmos all the more memorable.

Regarding the interpretation of *Völuspá*, there is no reason to presume that the cognitive semiotic structure proposed in the work would not function in both a Christian or pagan cultural context. Indeed, as poetry their artistic design would find, as it does today, constant reinterpretation and maintain both its literary effectiveness and affectivity, despite the obviously greater emotional resonance the texts would have in a pagan context. Further, the cognitive semiotic structure of the prophetic voice in each unique *Völuspá* text would have probably retained literary significance in a Christian context (if the extant manuscripts are not proof enough) due to the awareness and acceptance of other forms of visionary texts by the Christian medieval scribal culture.⁵⁷

This fact allows for the function of *Völuspá* to be transcribed from a presumed oral background to the scribal medium, all the while retaining its “original” cognitive functionality. It may have even been recognizable for divine or otherwise magical qualities. Therefore, I see no conflict between the implication this paper carries as a background for the future reading of *Völuspá* and the ongoing debate among scholars with Christian or pagan

⁵⁷ Jonas Wellendorf (2006) argues that the acceptability in medieval Christian culture of other sources of visionary texts provides evidence for their understood literary function, comparable to hagiographic texts and their depictions of holy visions. He describes the development of the medieval visionary genre from 8th to 13th century (1300 being the year most visions in Old Norse were translated). McCreesh (2005) also reflects on the widespread *spá* and fate motifs in saga literature.

interpretive leanings. Yet, the *Hauksbók Völuspá* poet's leaving out any direct address towards Óðinn raises undeniable questions due to its manuscript juxtaposition with other Christian works.

The conscious experience of the *völva* as voice discloses how the Old Norse mythological timeline is conceptualized and actively constructed by the narrator; it also reveals her spatial and temporal positioning relative to the narrative present. This has implications for our reading of Old Norse mythology as a whole and the figure of the *völva* as its sole futuristic narrative artificer. For in any cultural context, the *völva* becomes a cosmic voice: although Óðinn is a co-progenitor of the cosmos out of its raw materials, even he does not know how it all will end. Only that which defies the laws of cosmological spatio-temporality can observe its the cosmological terminus. The prophetess is more than simply an augur of fortunes, for at least her mythological figure seems to be the only voice capable of foretelling the silence of fate, of divining the assured verisimilitude of forces beyond appropriation by the divine itself; her voice is the timeless sole explication of a cosmology otherwise left voiceless and inexpressible.

As two of the very few sources of pre-Christian Scandinavian myth, *Völuspá K* and *H* are often only the focus of scholars who seek out its minutiae of allusions to compare with other sources and who, in so doing, may overlook the virtue of their composition. But by exploring *Völuspá* for elements of voice one might redefine how believers in this worldview conceived of their own place in the universe, able to hear the same cosmic enunciation as their perceived creator. Thus, the once enigmatic figure of the mythological *völva* becomes less opaque, exercising a power beyond Óðinn's to utter unknown secrets. *Völuspá* records not simply a story but also how it is spoken (accessed via narratology) and to whom (imagined via performance). These techniques could be particularly revealing in their application to other visionary literature in general but are especially relevant to the study of

other eddic poetry, where they would disclose further nuances of voice. Therefore, this understanding of voice restores perhaps some degree of sense of how both *Völuspá* poems once functioned, again made more accessible via the contributions of cognitive semiotic research.

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