

## Signs and Wonders: Writing Trauma in twelfth-century England

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An interesting article by Jonathan Jones in *The Guardian* newspaper, published in January 2007, discusses the interplays and tensions between art, memory and public memorials. In particular, Jones considers the many recent monuments to the Holocaust produced by high-profile artists and architects, and the ethical problems inherent when a memorial to past trauma becomes aesthetically rewarding or pleasurable. He recalls a visit to Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin.

Libeskind's architecture seduces the visitor into the self-delusion of somehow being there, then. The first time I went I was devastated by its coup de grace, a tall, dark, ice-cold tower whose heavy door is closed behind you. You're supposed to feel as if you've gone to Auschwitz and – it becomes hideously vulgar as soon as you put this into words – the doors of the shower block have shut behind you. But when I went again recently, I had to admit it was sublimely pleasurable, like visiting the dungeons of a medieval castle.<sup>1</sup>

Jones's experience raises the moral dilemma of memorials as tourist destinations or urban art. Yet, whilst he implies that a visit to a Holocaust monument should involve sensitivity and deference to the suffering it memorializes, the assumption that a visit to a medieval castle can be an unproblematically pleasurable experience remains unexamined. Jones calls attention here both to the problems of representing and reproducing traumatic experience without slipping into 'vulgar' spectacle or sensation, and also, perhaps unconsciously, to the question of how far back into history our recognition of individual trauma and suffering can extend. Texts produced in England during the 'Anarchy' of 1135 to 1154 refer to an historical context of extreme social disorder, violence, atrocity and suffering.<sup>2</sup> Yet do these texts inscribe experiences of individual or collective trauma? Is it valid to speak of 'trauma writing' before the twentieth century, before Freud, and before the distinct canon of 'trauma literature' designated by critics such as Kalí Tal?<sup>3</sup>

And, if so, can evidence of traumatic experience be recovered empirically through the analysis of extant medieval texts?

This paper will argue that texts produced (or produced in part) during the twelfth-century Anarchy or within living memory of it, including the Peterborough Chronicle continuations, William of Newburgh's *History of English Affairs* and John of Worcester's Chronicle, do indeed inscribe responses to traumatic experience. As twentieth-century commentators have noted, trauma resists direct representation or articulation: it exceeds human reason and understanding, goes beyond language and defies conventional models of experience and reference.<sup>4</sup> Direct accounts of traumatic experience can transform and reduce it, like Daniel Libeskind's museum for Jonathan Jones, into spectacle, monstrosity or performance. Instead, these twelfth-century texts present the more fundamental impacts of trauma on language and narrative, displaying features which resonate with twentieth-century examples. Across the texts examined in this paper we find characteristic elements of trauma writing, nuanced by medieval cultural and literary contexts, including disrupted chronologies, insistent repetitions of narrative fragments or models, and allusions to experience beyond reason, comprehension or language. In particular, this paper will argue that the prominence in these texts of supernatural signs, wonders and marvels provides a mode for articulating the dislocating and bewildering experience of trauma. This new reading of the Peterborough Chronicle, William of Newburgh and John of Worcester deliberately positions itself differently from the most influential recent criticism on twelfth-century English historiography. In *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing*, Monika Otter focuses on the intertextuality and learned playfulness of texts in this period, and Nancy Partner's *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* similarly emphasises their inventive uses and subversions of historiographical traditions.<sup>5</sup> Whilst Otter and Partner regard these as texts largely *about* historical writing, playing with concepts of tradition, authority and invention, I argue that another key referent, at least as central as historiography itself, is the unwritable experience of trauma.

The Peterborough Chronicle entry for the year 1137 offers a vivid account of the chaos and violence of Stephen's reign. Upon Stephen's succession, the Chronicle tells us, his enemies recognised his weakness and inefficacy as king, and 'þa diden hi alle wunder' ('then they committed all kinds of horrors').<sup>6</sup> The use of the term 'wunder' here immediately figures the atrocities committed by Stephen's opponents as grotesque marvels, demanding both the reader's revulsion and awe. The entry goes on to catalogue the terrors and tortures inflicted on the population of England during this period.

Pa namen hi þa men þe hi wenden ðat ani god hefden, bathe be nihtes  
7 be daies, carlmen 7 wimmen, 7 diden heom in prisun 7 pined heom

after gold 7 syluer untellendlice pining; for ne uuæren næure nan martyrs swa pined alse hie wæron. Me hanged up bi the fet 7 smoked heom mid ful smoke. Me hanged bi the þumbes other bi the hefed 7 hengen bryniges on her fet. Me dide contted strenges abuton here hæued 7 uurythen it ðat it gæde to þe hærnæs. Hi diden heom in quarterne þar nadres 7 snakes 7 pades wæron inne, 7 drapen heom swa. Sume hi diden in crucethur – ðat is, in an ceste þat was scort 7 nareu 7 undep – 7 dide scærpe stanes þerinne 7 þrengde þe man þærinne ðat him bræcon alle þe limes.<sup>7</sup>

*Then they took men who had any wealth, both by night and by day, churls and women, and put them in prison and tortured them for gold and silver with unspeakable torture; for no martyrs were ever tortured as they were. They hung them up by the feet and smoked them with foul smoke. They hung them by the thumbs or by the head and hung mailcoats on their feet. They knotted ropes around their heads and twisted it until it went into their brains. They put them into a dungeon in which there were adders and snakes and toads, and killed them in this way. Some they put into a crucet-house – that is, a certain chest that was short and narrow and shallow, and put sharp stones in there and crushed the man inside so that all his limbs were broken.*

The list continues. Yet clearly this passage does not present anything approaching an authentic account of personal trauma or responses to traumatic experience. Instead, the private suffering of individuals is generalised and re-worked into public spectacle and horror, eliciting emotions of awe, terror and compassion from the Chronicle's audience. The text's use of the term 'wunder' to classify these violent phenomena is a deliberate engagement with the vocabulary of hagiography and miracle narrative (as well as the supernatural spectacles of romance), and the passage here makes the explicit claim that 'ne uuæren næure nan martyrs swa pined alse hie wæron'. Contemporary religious discourses of *compunctio*, saintly passion and related devotional practices evidently influence the depiction of human suffering here and condition the audience's affective responses. As with contemporary martyrdom narratives or crucifixion imagery, the Chronicle places intense focus on physical torment and anguish, exploiting vivid, grotesque detail to heighten readers' empathy, pity and, potentially, remorse. Yet despite these powerful affective strategies, the text here fails to communicate the realities of traumatic experience.

Indeed, the Chronicle itself acknowledges that such extremes of suffering lie beyond the reach of language and defy representation through words or direct narrative. The entry for 1137 goes on to declare, in a first-person interjection which hints at personal experience of the horrors recounted:

I ne can ne I ne mai tellen alle þe wunder ne alle þe pines ðat hi diden  
wrecce men on þis land; 7 ðat lastede þa xix wintre wile Stephne was  
king, 7 æure it was uuerse 7 uuerse.<sup>8</sup>

*I am neither able, nor wish, to tell all the horrors nor all the tortures that  
they did to the wretched men in this land; and that lasted nineteen  
winters while Stephen was king, and it always became worse and worse.*

This passage recalls the entry's earlier reference to 'untellendlice pining' (unspeakable torture), but here makes even more emphatic the impossibility of fully chronicling the events of these years. The text almost disintegrates around the initial cluster of negations, and the scale of suffering remains beyond quantification or definition, imaginable only through the ongoing comparatives of 'uuerse 7 uuerse'. Recognised here in the Chronicle are the limitations of language and narrative in the articulation of traumatic experience. The entry for 1137 may include a list of appalling tortures and atrocities, but the true trauma of the Anarchy exceeds and resists literary representation. The catalogued horrors may elicit powerful affective responses, yet they transform unthinkable, unwriteable experience into accessible images and familiar idioms: trauma is re-written as *wunder*. We find a similar mediation of the unimaginable experience of trauma in the *Gesta Stephani*, which refers to 'things so lamentable and wretched to look upon and such an utterly shameful tragedy of woe... being openly performed all over England' ('hæc quidem lacrymosæ miseræ facies, hic questuosæ tragœdiæ inhonestissimus modus, sicut ubique per Angliam publice committebantur'), again replacing trauma with the discourse of public spectacle, wonder and show.<sup>9</sup> As the Peterborough Chronicle looked to the conventions of hagiography and passion narrative to situate its account of the Anarchy, so the *Gesta Stephani* draws on the language of performance and display, re-figuring individual, private suffering in the terms of monstrous pageantry. The language of both these texts reflects the presence of an experience too extreme and problematic to be adequately articulated in words, and both texts, I would argue, reflect sensitivity to the challenges of locating an appropriate metaphorical vocabulary.

Recent surveys of trauma theory and its applications have commented on its 'meteoric rise' and the rapid 'transformation of "trauma" from clinical concept to model for the interpretation of culture'.<sup>10</sup> Whilst the definition of 'trauma' itself is complex and presents variations and challenges, Cathy Caruth offers a concise summary which focuses on the essential ir retrievability of traumatic experience and repetitive patterns of partial recollection or re-enactment.

In its general definition, trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully

grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena... The repetitions of the traumatic event – which remain unavailable to consciousness but intrude repeatedly on sight – thus suggest a larger relation to the event that extends beyond what can simply be seen or what can be known, and is inextricably tied up with the belatedness and incomprehensibility that remain at the heart of this repetitive seeing.<sup>11</sup>

Christine Van Boheemen-Saaf adds to this a useful summary of trauma as an experience beyond language or narrative and which fragments memory and subjectivity.

I use the term 'trauma'... to denote a presence which exceeds narrative discourse as traditionally understood. Though the term may, perhaps, carry a negative connotation of pathology, in trauma studies, as the theoretical field is now called, the concept of trauma is used to denote a structure of subjectivity split by the inaccessibility of part of its experience which cannot be remembered.<sup>12</sup>

Though these definitions may not be directly mappable onto medieval experiences and texts, they do set out central characteristics of trauma writing which we might look for in texts of the twelfth-century Anarchy. Theories of trauma writing place emphasis on the use of metaphor or coded discourse to articulate extreme experience. Kali Tal notes that 'As it is spoken by survivors, the traumatic experience is reinscribed as metaphor', whilst Slavoj Žižek reminds us that 'precisely what defines the notion of traumatic event [is] a point of failure of symbolization'.<sup>13</sup> Traumatic experience is unreachable both through direct narrative, which relies on a conventional 'representational - spectatorial economy' and stable 'subject-object' distinctions,<sup>14</sup> and is not even fully communicable via the signifying power of metaphor.

Recently, intersections between trauma theory and the growing field of collective memory studies have been explored fruitfully by scholars such as Michael G. Kenny and Wulf Kansteiner, who have shown the ways in which trauma may in some cases be understood as a collective experience shared by a particular community.<sup>15</sup> In their influential edited collection, *Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma*, Antonius C. G. M. Robben and Marcelo M. Suárez-Orozco argue that 'the understanding of trauma cannot be restricted to the intra-psychic processes of the individual sufferer because it involves highly relevant social and cultural processes'.<sup>16</sup> They explore the responses of whole communities and generations to traumatic experience or memory, and examine the ways in which different modes of cultural production participate in its recollection. They ask questions including: 'How are collective violence and mourning encoded into

cultural narratives and how are such narratives psychologically implicated in the transgenerational workings of trauma? ... How are cultural formations, including symbols, folk models, and rituals mobilized to inscribe, resist and heal trauma?<sup>17</sup> Such discussions have successfully widened definitions of 'trauma' to engage with the experiences of communities, concepts of collective memory and the formation of cultural identity, and will inform this discussion of the twelfth-century Anarchy as a period of collective or shared traumatic experience in England. The key features which this study will investigate in twelfth-century texts include the use of metaphor to represent traumatic experience (and its ultimate failure), the disrupted chronologies of memory, recollection and unconscious repetition, and the differences between trauma writing and the conventions of spectacle or directly representational narrative.

Psychoanalytic theory is of course now well established as a potentially productive approach to medieval literature, and has nuanced our understanding of a range of texts.<sup>18</sup> Some very few medievalists have drawn specifically on trauma theory, notably Michelle Warren in her study *History on the Edge*, in which she explores the 'cultural trauma' of colonization and engages with notions of collective memory.<sup>19</sup> Elisabeth van Houts has also interpreted the silence of sources in the immediate aftermath of the Norman Conquest as evidence of the 'trauma of 1066', commenting on the surprising scholarly neglect of the study of trauma in relation to this period.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the use of trauma theory in relation to medieval texts has not been widespread, perhaps due to concerns over anachronism and the translation of this post-Freudian, post-Holocaust template into the medieval past. Yet, as this paper aims to demonstrate, the metaphorical discourse of medieval texts in relation to disturbing events and experience does legitimise use of the term *trauma*. For example, long before its account of the Anarchy and the late twelfth century, Chapter One of William of Newburgh's *History of English Affairs* recounts the conquest of 1066 and the first years of Norman rule. William describes the splendid monastery built by King William I at Battle, Hastings, as atonement (*propitiatio*) for spilling so much English Christian blood, and mentions a continuing supernatural wonder at the site.

[E]odem monasterio locus ille ubi Anglorum pro patria dimicantium maxima strages facta est, si forte modico imbre maduerit, verum sanguinem et quasi recentem exsudat, acsi aperte per ipsam rei evidentiam dicatur quod adhuc vox tanti sanguinis Christiani clamet ad Deum de terra, quae aperuit os suum et suscepit eundem sanguinem de manibus fratrum, id est Christianorum.

[I]n that same monastery, the spot at which occurred the greatest slaughter of the English fighting for the fatherland sweats real and seemingly fresh blood whenever there is a slight shower of rain, as if it

*were being opening proclaimed on the very evidence of this event that the voice of all that Christian blood is still crying out to God from the earth, which opened its mouth and received that blood at the hands of brother-Christians.<sup>21</sup>*

Here William uses the metaphor of the unhealed, bleeding wound to represent the ongoing effects of Hastings on late twelfth-century memory and popular consciousness. Our critical term *trauma*, of course, derives from the Greek for *wound*: we use it as a metaphor to concretize the notion of psychological damage or distress, or the continuing impact of disturbing experience or memory on a wider community.<sup>22</sup> William's is a powerful image which immediately calls attention to the problem of closure and of consigning traumatic experience to 'history'. The horrors of Hastings defy relegation to the past, but are replayed during every new rainfall as the ground at Battle Abbey sweats fresh blood. The Conquest of 1066 remains an open wound in twelfth-century memory, its trauma translated into metaphor and myth. William's image here calls attention to the problem of fully closing, ending or forgetting past trauma, and to the central role of the metaphor of the wound – in both medieval and modern discourse – in conceptualising inarticulable, disturbing experience. This passage also signals the role of the supernatural in imagining and representing traumatic experience – something which will be a particular focus of this paper.<sup>23</sup>

So, where in texts of the twelfth-century Anarchy might we find responses to traumatic experience? The Chronicle of John of Worcester provides a crucial source for the period, with the later annals written soon after events and the final entries (1135–40) reflecting the 'observations of a contemporary'.<sup>24</sup> The Chronicle offers fascinating clues about contemporary responses to trauma and the function of coded literary discourses in the articulation of traumatic experience. The manuscript history of the Chronicle is extremely complex, and is outlined in full by P. McGurk in his recent edition. Most crucial in relation to the argument of this paper, however, is that the evidence of the chief manuscript of the Chronicle (McGurk's 'manuscript C') shows that, during the period of the Anarchy, John of Worcester himself revised and re-wrote the annals for the years immediately preceding the accession of Stephen in 1135.<sup>25</sup> In producing this 'Revised Recension', John changes, adds and removes material for these years. The historian C. Warren Hollister, in an interpretation which resonates with Nancy Partner's focus on 'entertainment' in these twelfth-century chronicle texts, suggests that these later additions of "marvellous" events [reflect] the Worcester chronicler's aim of edifying, perhaps even amusing his readers'.<sup>26</sup> Yet I would argue that this process of revision instead reflects a troubled response to the traumatic current events of the Anarchy.

McGurk lists the additional material which John entered into the Revised Recension, together with the annal into which each episode is entered. Some of

these annal dates represent corrections by McGurk as John made errors with dating in the Revised Recension, both losing and confusing years. The new material in the reconstructed annals is:

- |      |  |
|------|--|
| 1128 | 1. Oath-taking for Matilda's succession.             |
|      | 2. Henry I's return to Normandy.                     |
|      | 3. Sun-spots.  |
| 1129 | 4. A trial by ordeal and miracle at Worcester.       |
| 1130 | 5. Aerial phenomena in Herefordshire.                |
|      | 6. Visions of Henry I.                               |
|      | 7. Storm at sea and promise to abolish the Danegeld. |
| 1131 | 8. The miracle of Odilia.                            |
| 1132 | 9. Death of Uhtred of Worcester.                     |
|      | 10. Comet. <sup>27</sup>                             |

Linking almost all of this additional material is an emphasis on signs, wonders and supernatural events. Whether in the form of divine miracles and interventions or more sinister visions and portents, almost all of these additional episodes include some form of disturbance to the natural order of the world. The sun-spots of 8 December, 1128 are described in terms which suggest a negative omen (III, pp.182, 183):

...ad mane usque ad uesperam apparuerunt quasi due nigre pile infra solis orbitam, una in superiori parte et erat maior, alter in inferiori et fuit minor; eratque utraque directa contra alteram...

*...there appeared from the morning right up to the evening two black spheres against the sun. The first was in the upper part and large, the second in the lower and small, and each was directly opposite the other...*

Following on, in the annal for 1128, from the account of the oath-taking for Matilda's succession, the image of the twin opposed, black spheres blocking the sunlight gains resonance as a potential prefiguration of the rival claims of Matilda and Stephen to the English throne. Though this is not explicitly glossed in the text, John's decision to add the sun-spots episode at this point in the Chronicle (especially given that he is producing the revised annals during the Anarchy itself)



might strengthen such a possible reading. But John does not gloss or explicate this phenomenon, and I would argue that it functions as a far more vague and elusive suggestion of some general impending doom. Other supernatural signs in these annals include the bizarre aerial phenomena in Herefordshire, recorded in great detail and involving bright light, cloud, a floating pyramid shape and two lines across the sky (III, pp.198, 199). The comet of 1132 is recorded more briefly: it 'appeared on 8 October for almost five days'.

As well as unidentifiable natural phenomena, John also includes more conventional miracle narratives in these revised annals. Two laypeople burned by the hot iron in a trial by ordeal at Worcester have their hands healed by St Wulfstan's tomb (1129)(III, pp.109-92). Whilst en route to England by ship, Henry I is threatened by a terrible storm which only calms when he vows to abolish the Danegeld tax for seven years (1130)(III, pp.202, 203). The miracle of the German princess Odilia (1131) places the story in the reign of Henry I (though McGurk notes that her earliest Life in fact dates to the tenth century) and includes the very strange account of her father coming back from the dead with a miraculously stinking shirt (III, pp.202-07). The visions of Henry I (1130) are particularly interesting, and again resist categorisation within the medieval systems of exegesis or dream theory. In this series of three visions, accompanied in the manuscript by detailed illustrations, the sleeping Henry is terrified and awoken in turn by a group of men representing each of the Three Estates: first peasants wielding 'agricultural implements' (*rusticanis instrumentis*), then knights in armour 'bearing helmets on their heads, and each of them holding lances, a sword, spears and arrows' ('galeas capitibus ferentem, lanceas, maceram, tela, sagittas minibus tenentem'), and finally ecclesiastical figures 'holding their pastoral staffs' ('cum baculis pastoralibus astare')(III, pp.202, 203). After these visions Henry is advised to give alms as penance, but their meaning is never explicitly glossed. The historian C. Warren Hollister is dismissive of this account of Henry's dreams and their value to a modern medievalist. He remarks: 'This is not to say that Henry did not suffer a nightmare. But to search for deep subconscious causes is to stray from history into psychology.'<sup>28</sup>

However, remaining within the capabilities of textual criticism, Henry's dreams do perhaps reveal an interesting psychological element – though more usefully in relation to their author and the circumstances of their writing. The visions seem to have a dual valency, both as comments on the recent past and the possible failings of Henry I's rule, and as prefigurations of the future and the social revolt and turmoil of the Anarchy. John's addition of these visions into his Chronicle during the period of the Anarchy itself offers a compelling case for reading them as responses to later unease and anxiety.

Another significant characteristic linking many of John of Worcester's additions in the Revised Recension of the Chronicle is their lack of attestation in other contemporary sources. The sun-spots of 1128, for example, are unrecorded

elsewhere, as are the aerial phenomena in Herefordshire (1130) and the comet of 1132. The dream-visions of Henry I are also unique to John's revised version of the Chronicle.<sup>29</sup> Celestial signs and portents are certainly not rare in medieval historiographical writing: the phenomena which John of Worcester includes in his annal for 1133, for example, are attested in a range of other English sources,<sup>30</sup> and famous uses of supernatural omens in the English chronicle tradition include the 'fiery dragons flying in the air' recorded by the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year of the sacking of Lindisfarne.<sup>31</sup> John of Worcester is clearly responding to this established historiographical tradition and working additional signs and omens into his revised annals for the years preceding Stephen's accession. Removing the original annals and working back from his vantage-point during the Anarchy, John is able to modify history to better anticipate and prefigure the horrors of the coming civil conflict and violence. The added portents and disturbances to natural order in the years before Henry I's death create a sense of impending doom and provide, for John, a more fitting typology for the catastrophic events of the Anarchy. Through the formulae and conventions of medieval historiographical tradition, John has at his disposal a series of established metaphors to represent, indirectly, human experiences of horror and dislocation through celestial signs.

Where John does refer to the miseries of the Anarchy explicitly, the extremes of contemporary suffering resonate even through the restrained, annalistic accounts:

Que oritur discordia in uastando omnia nobelium et ignobilium, alta, magna, ac diuersa subintrat moenia. Quisque alium rebus spoliatur. Potens impotentem uel opprimit. Questum super hoc agentem minis terreat. Neci traditur qui resistit. Opulenti regni optimates diuitiis affluentes minime procurant quam impie tractentur miseri. Sibi suisque dumtaxat consulunt. Vite necessariis castella et oppida muniunt; manu militari cum armis instruunt...<sup>32</sup>

*Conflict arose, infiltrating the tall, massive, and diverse fortifications of both greater and lesser alike, and devastating everything. Each man plundered the goods of others. The strong violently oppressed the weak. They deter with threats and criticism of their actions. They kill those who resist. The rich nobles of the kingdom, in their affluence and wealth, are not in the least bothered by the way the poor are unjustly treated. They care only for themselves and theirs. They store castles and towns with necessary provisions. They garrison them with armed followers...*

John also makes brief references to the intensifying conflicts between Norman England and Wales during the period of the Anarchy, in which we glimpse

unimaginable horror and suffering. After a battle in the Gower, the bodies of Welsh warriors are 'scattered horribly among the fields and eaten up by wolves' ('a lupis horribiliter per agros discerpta et deuorata sunt') (III, pp.218, 219), and after the Battle of Crug Mawr near Cardigan, John refers to 'crowds passing backwards and forwards across a bridge formed by a horrible mass of human corpses and horses drowned in the river' ('fieret huc illucque discursantibus pons humanorum corporum siue equorum inibi dimersorum horrenda congeries') (III, pp.220, 221). Yet despite the graphic content of these accounts, they slip, like the Peterborough Chronicle, into spectacle, sensation and the familiar affective strategies of pity and *compunctio*. On the other hand, John of Worcester's detailed, vivid and often lengthy accounts of supernatural phenomena and portents gesture towards an experience beyond the reach of narrative. These signs and wonders elicit (both in the recorded observers and the Chronicle's audience) uneasily-defined feelings of disturbance, dislocation, alienation: the sense of experience beyond reason or interpretation. Resolutely unglossed in the Chronicle, these strange signs exceed the bounds of language and narrative.

Through the supernatural signs and wonders added into the Revised Recension of the Chronicle, John of Worcester reaches towards the unknowable experience of trauma via metaphor – an imperfect mediation of traumatic experience, yet still more authentic than the spectacle of direct narrative. Yet, as a medieval historical writer, John is able to draw on a formulaic, consensus stock of metaphors – comets, visions, supernatural phenomena – which signal disturbing events and allow instant recognition. The very familiarity and recognisability of these signifiers limits their capacity to alienate and unsettle, despite John's disturbingly detached and dispassionate accounts of every last supernatural detail. The Revised Recension of the Chronicle also offers some other points of resonance, and difference, with twentieth-century trauma theory. In the most basic terms, the Revised Recension *is* a text fragmented and fissured by disrupted chronology – the collapsed linearity described by trauma theorists in terms of repetition, replay, repression, recollection. John returns to re-work earlier events during the period of the Anarchy, and then confuses dates, resulting in mis-placed entries.<sup>33</sup> His re-writing of earlier entries with the perspective of hindsight leads him to break the rules of the annals format with anachronistic references such as 'King Stephen, who now reigns' ('rex Stephanus qui nunc imperat') in the entry for 1130 (III, pp.202, 203): the present here spills over into the past across the annalistic boundaries. The problematic chronology of the Revised Recension is clearly, in psycho-analytic terms, a product of John of Worcester's own experience and psychology: his need to work through and replay; his re-visiting of the past and his confused conflation of memory with present experience. McGurk professes astonishment at what persuaded John to transform 'a fair copy into a working one' in manuscript C of the Chronicle.<sup>34</sup> For the last annals (to 1140) in particular, McGurk remarks that:

He is clearly blending... written sources with oral accounts, and the hurried and careless lay-out and script, the frequent changes and erasures making an untidy text messier give the impression of a draft rather than a final or corrected text, though one wonders why John chose to append it to such a fair working copy as C.<sup>35</sup>

Rather than just lamentable scruffiness, however, the existence of a 'working draft' of John's revision and extension of the Chronicle offers a fascinating insight into his negotiations of recent history, memory and the ongoing horrors of the Anarchy. Interestingly, the Peterborough Chronicle shows a similar collapse of the conventional, linearly chronological annals structure over the period of the Anarchy. The long entry for 1137, for example, surveys the entire nineteen years of Stephen's reign, presenting disconnected glimpses of different moments across the period, connected only loosely by a general theme of violence and terror.

John of Worcester's Chronicle and the Peterborough Chronicle continuations do resonate, then, with some of the key features of trauma writing identified by twentieth-century theorists, including the use of metaphor to represent traumatic experience (together with its inevitable limitations and failure), the disruption of linear chronology, and the fundamental sense of the presence of experience beyond the reach of words or narrative. Yet both John of Worcester and the Peterborough Chronicle rely to a large extent on tropes and idioms which re-form traumatic experience within recognisable and de-codable literary conventions (whether the affective discourse of passion and *compunctio*, or the established chronicle tradition of supernatural signs and portents) reducing its essential unknowability and irretrievability. By contrast, I would argue that William of Newburgh's *History of English Affairs* (*Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, written at the end of the twelfth century) reflects a much deeper engagement with the traumatic events of the Anarchy, and represents more authentically the disturbing, dislocating experience of trauma. I will focus in particular on William's accounts of supernatural events during the reign of Stephen and 'our day' ('nostris temporibus'), examining how their repeated narratives of disturbed normality, together with failed attempts at containment, closure and circumscription, suggest both the alienating and dislocating effects of trauma and its unconscious replay. Once again, these stories represent an articulation of traumatic experience through symbolisation, yet in William's *History* the relationship between signifier and signified is more complex and disrupted than in John of Worcester or the Peterborough Chronicle, and the ultimate referent remains less easily identifiable or measurable. I do not argue that these narratives in William's *History* represent a deliberate attempt or intention to write trauma, but rather that they reflect an unconscious, troubled engagement with the difficulties of recent memory and history.

As we have already seen, William's image of the bleeding battlefield at Hastings, early in the *History*, demonstrates his ability to use powerful and disturbing metaphor to represent traumatic experience, and his awareness of the impossibility of closing down traumatic events and consigning them to 'history'. Yet when William reports the events of the Anarchy, in Chapter 22 of the *History*, his account is reserved and understated: it elides and suppresses individual suffering and trauma into a detached discussion of politics and ethics.

[N]am quia tunc impotens erat rex, et per regis impotentiam languida lex, quibusdam quod rectum sibi videbatur agentibus, multi quod insita ratione malum esse sciebant, sublato regis et legis metu, proclivius faciebant.<sup>36</sup>

*Because the king at that time was powerless, and the law too was feeble through the king's powerlessness, some people did what they thought right, but many did what they knew by native reason to be wrong, all the more readily since fear of the king and of the law was banished.*

William also describes in general terms the fragmentation of the kingdom into warring factions (Book I, pp.98, 99):

[C]astella quippe per singulas provincias studio partium crebra surrexerant; erantque in Anglia quodammodo tot reges vel potius tyranni quot domini castellorum... [C]umque ita singuli excellere quaerent, ut quidam superiorem, quidam vel parem sustinere non possent, feralibus inter se odiis disceptantes rapinis atque incendiis regiones clarissimas corruperunt, et in fertilissima olim patria fere mone robur panis absumpserunt.

*Numerous castles had been raised in individual areas through the eager action of factions, and in England there were in a sense as many kings, or rather tyrants, as there were lords of castles... As each of them sought predominance in this way, so that some could not stomach a higher authority and some not even an equal, they disputed with each other in deadly hatreds, they despoiled the most famous regions with plunderings and burnings, and in a country once most fertile they virtually wiped out the bread which is the staff of life.*

Like John of Worcester and the Peterborough Chronicle continuator, William also relies on an established metaphorical trope to support his account here. Using the familiar body politic metaphor, he writes that England 'was drained [literally 'bled out'] and crippled, and was wasting away through internal evils' ('intestinis

malis exsanguis et et saucia tabescebat')(Book I, pp.98, 99). Here, William of Newburgh's *History* suppresses detail of the Anarchy's horrors, exploiting instead the received biblical image of the basic 'daily bread' of survival destroyed through futile conflict.

However, embedded within William's restrained, succinct account of the Anarchy and its politics are a series of narratives which have caused modern scholars a mixture of puzzlement and fascination. Chapter 27 of the *History* is devoted to the story of the mysterious 'Green Children of Woolpit', while Chapter 28 gives a succession of strange narratives under the heading 'Some unnatural events' ('De quibusdam prodigiis'). These stories have often been regarded as odd folkloric digressions or interruptions to William's main historical focus, and present the problem that, as Nancy Partner summarises, 'implacably seated in the middle of everything that makes William a sober and high-minded Christian historian in modern eyes is the fact that he does give so much space and obvious effort to very peculiar things.'<sup>37</sup> Nancy Partner and Monika Otter, in their influential studies, have both interpreted William's inclusion and treatment of these narratives in the context of his concerns with truth, testimony and the processes of historiography: they regard William's supernatural stories as self-conscious explorations of the categories - and potential slippages - between history and fantasy, fact and fiction. Nancy Partner suggests that William's treatment of his supernatural stories (not just in Chapters 27 and 28, but elsewhere in the *History*, too) indicates the rigour and integrity of an objective historical approach, arguing that:

William's numerous, painstaking descriptions of supernatural events - if studied with the same seriousness with which they were composed - reveal more about rational analysis and realistic observation in the twelfth century than even his own careful discussions of mundane 'reality'.<sup>38</sup>

Monika Otter, on the other hand, argues that the inclusion of these stories deliberately de-stabilises the authority of the historical account, and invites readers to question concepts of testimony, reliability and authenticity. She writes that 'the chief objective seems to be to raise and discuss, but ultimately leave open, the questions about reality that come with such "marvels"',<sup>39</sup> and remarks that:

Writers like... William of Newburgh offer individual episodes, teasing glimpses of the complexities of historical reference, which leave the surrounding narrative largely intact but certainly colour a reader's attitude toward the entire historical account.<sup>40</sup>

I agree with Otter that William's supernatural episodes are not merely asides or digressions but are central to his *History* as a whole. The complete *History of English Affairs* includes numerous mentions of ghosts, revenants and other marvels, each in some way resonating with the surrounding historical narrative. For example, accounts of transgressive social behaviour, such as law-breaking or heresy, are often juxtaposed with stories of the monstrous return of the corpse from the dead.<sup>4</sup> The supernatural stories of Chapters 27 and 28 of the *History*, embedded within William's sober account of the Anarchy, inevitably influence and alter our attitude to the events of this period. Whilst I agree with Otter and Partner that these stories call attention to issues of fact, fiction and authority, I would argue that they represent more specifically a response to the traumatic experiences of the Anarchy itself.

The first, and longest, of William's supernatural stories in Chapters 27 and 28 is the account of the 'Green Children of Woolpit'. William includes this 'prodigy unprecedented since the world began' ('inauditum a seculis prodigium') because he has testimony from 'so many reliable people' ('tantorum et talium pondere testium')(Book I, pp.114, 115). At harvest-time, near the village of Woolpit in East Anglia, two children, a boy and a girl, climb out of a ditch. They are entirely green in colour, cannot speak English, and refuse to eat anything except for fresh, green beans in their pods. Eventually, the children are introduced to other foods, and lose their original green colour. They are taught to speak, and give this account of their origin (Book I, pp.116, 117):

'Homines de terra sancti Martini, qui scilicet in terra nativitatis nostrae praecipuae venerationi habetur.' consequenter interrogati ubinam esset terra illa et quomodo exinde huc advenissent, 'utrumque' inquit 'nescimus. hoc tantum meminimus, quia cum quodam die pecora patris nostril in agro pascereamus, sonitum quondam magnum audivimus, qualem nunc apud sanctum Edmundum cum signa concrepare dicuntur audire solemus. cumque in sonitum illum quem admirabamur animo intenderemus, repente, tanquam in quodam mentis excessu positi, invenimus nos inter vos in agro ubi metebatis.' interrogati utrum ibidem vel in Christum crederetur vel sol oriretur, terram illam Christianam esse et ecclesias habere dixerunt. 'Sed sol' inquit 'apud nostrates non oritur; cujus radiis terra nostra minime illustratur, illius claritatis sequitur occidentem. porro terra quaedam lucida non longe a terra nostra aspicitur, anne largissimo utramque dirimente.'

*'We are people from St Martin's land; he is accorded special reverence in the country of our birth.' When they were next asked where that land was, and how they had come from there to Woolpit, they said: 'We do not know either of those things. All we remember is that one day we*



*were pasturing our father's flocks in the fields, when we heard a mighty din such as we often hear at St Edmund's when they say the bells are ringing out. When we turned our attention to the sound which caused us surprise, it was as though we were out of our minds, for we suddenly found ourselves among you in the fields where you were harvesting.' When they were asked whether people believed in Christ there, or whether the sun rose, they said that it was a Christian country and had churches. 'But the sun does not rise among the natives of our land', they said 'and it obtains very little light from the sun's rays, but is satisfied with that measure of its brightness which in your country precedes its rising or follows its setting. Moreover a shining land is visible not far from our own, but a very broad river divides the two.'*

William tells us that, although the younger male child dies shortly after baptism, the older girl 'continued unaffected, differing not even in the slightest way from the women of our own kind. She certainly took a husband later at Lynn, according to the story, and was said to be still living a few years ago' ('sorore incolumi permanente et nec in modico a nostril generis feminis discrepante. quae nimirum postea apud Lennam, ut dicitur, duxit maritum, et ante annos paucos superstes esse dicebatur')(Book I, pp.116, 117). The story is not unique to William of Newburgh, but is also attested, in a slightly different form, in the Chronicle of Ralph of Coggeshall.<sup>42</sup>

The collection of 'unnatural events' in Chapter 28 of the *History* includes three stories. First, William tells us about a rock split open in a quarry and found to contain two animals like greyhounds, but fierce, smelly and hairless. They had survived despite the absence of any air-holes. One animal dies, but the other is 'kept as a pet for very many days by Henry bishop of Winchester' ('Henricus Wintoniensis episcopus diebus plurimis in deliciis habuit')(Book I, pp.118, 119). The second story takes place in 'a different quarry' (in alia lapidicina'), where a double-stone is split open to reveal a toad sitting inside, with 'a small chain of gold around its neck' ('catenulam auream circa collum habens'). The sight causes general astonishment, but 'the bishop ordered the stone to be sealed up again, returned to the depths of the quarry, and buried with rubble for ever' ('praecepit episcopus iterum signari lapidem et lapidicinae altitudini redditum ruderibus in perpetuum operiri'). Finally, William tells us the story of a drunken reveller who, returning home, stumbles on a doorway in a hillside and glimpses a magnificent underground feast. He steals a cup and escapes (Book I, pp.120, 121).

[D]enique hoc vasculum materiae incognitae, coloris insoliti, et formae inusitatae Henrico seniori Anglorum regi pro mango munere oblatum contraditum annis plurimis in thesauris Scotiae servatum est; et ante



annos aliquot, sicut veraci relatione cognovimus, Henrico secundo illud aspicere cupienti a rege Scottorum Willelmo resignatum est.

*Eventually this cup of unknown material, unusual colour, and strange shape was offered as a splendid gift to the elder Henry, king of England. Subsequently it was passed on to the queen's brother, David king of Scots, and was kept for very many years among the treasures of Scotland. Some years ago, as I learned from a reliable account, Henry II wished to see it, and it was surrendered to him by William, King of Scots.*

Although William is unable to offer any explanation for the Green Children incident, he does suggest possible causes for the stories in Chapter 28, including the malicious deceptions of magicians ('magi') and wicked angels ('mali angeli') (Book 1, pp.120, 121).

William's supernatural stories in Chapters 27 and 28 of the *History* have often received attention for their apparently anti-climactic or bathetic endings: whilst weird and wonderful creatures or objects are encountered in the narratives, they are seemingly straightforwardly dealt with or dismissed. The green girl grows up and is assimilated effortlessly into the norms of wifehood and domesticity. The surviving greyhound-like creature is kept as a pet, the strange toad is simply re-buried, and the stolen cup seems to have no particular magical qualities and becomes a conventional commodity or heirloom. Yet Monika Otter spots a problem here.

This sounds more comfortable, more at home with the miraculous than it really is; in fact, William is rather perturbed by the ability of such found objects to survive and adapt themselves to their new, everyday contexts.<sup>43</sup>

Certainly, the easy transition of these creatures and objects from strange and fearful other worlds into ordinary life and normal social practice suggests an unsteady, permeable boundary between safe, known reality and unknown spheres or levels of experience beyond.<sup>44</sup> These narratives do not inspire confidence that such marvels can be comfortably incorporated into everyday reality – instead they result in an uncanny continuation of the strange or otherworldly alongside the domestic and familiar, or, as in the case of the re-buried toad, a disturbing awareness of a continuing 'otherness' suppressed beneath the ground. Nancy Partner is dismissive of the potential of these stories to reveal anything useful about William of Newburgh's own experience, or that of his contemporaries. She writes that:

I... want to admit quite fully and frankly that I consider the process of worrying over the suggestive details of these wonderfully pointless miracles in an effort to find natural or psychological explanations of what 'really', if anything, happened, to be useless to the study of William of Newburgh or, for that matter, of the Middle Ages.<sup>45</sup>

However, an interpretation informed by trauma theory suggests that William's wonder tales can indeed tell us valid stories about contemporary twelfth-century experience.

As with William's other marvellous tales of vampires and revenants juxtaposed elsewhere in the *History* with accounts of transgressive social or religious behaviour, the supernatural narratives of Chapters 27 and 28 gain specific resonance through their particular placing within the text. Embedded within William's account of the Anarchy, with its restrained discussion of politics and ethics and its elision of the horrific realities of violent conflict, these strange stories gather a new relevance and value. What most clearly unites the supernatural narratives of Chapters 27 and 28 is their recurrent theme of normal experience disturbed by something which cannot be fully reached or grasped through reason and detached analysis. More specifically, each narrative includes the motif of an eruption from underground – the intrusion into daylight reality of something strange and disturbing which has been hidden or buried in the earth. Clearly, these images have the metaphorical potential to suggest to us, as post-Freudian readers, the intrusion of the buried 'unconscious' and suppressed or repressed experience. Within the context of Stephen's account of the Anarchy, this recurrent imagery of ripped or fractured earth gains further metaphorical resonance as the trauma inflicted on the nation by civil conflict – the wounding and rupturing of the land itself through civil war and division.<sup>46</sup> William's wonder narratives also offer a classic example of repetition or replay – here the same story is essentially told in four different ways, with each version retaining the same key elements of a supernatural disturbance or intrusion into normal reality, its attempted containment or circumscription, and then the ultimate failure of that attempted closure. Again, this narrative patterning resonates with the typical features of trauma writing. As Kali Tal remarks, 'Traumatic events are written and rewritten until they become codified and narrative form gradually replaces content as the focus of attention'.<sup>47</sup> In William of Newburgh's supernatural stories, this replayed narrative shape – and these motifs of intrusion and failed containment or closure – become the focus of attention. The specifics of each supernatural tale become less important, and instead this insistent structural pattern of disruption and failed interpretation of circumscription is the dominating element. These stories, I would argue, function as a powerful and deeply authentic response to trauma. Beyond the reach of narrative, language, even memory, trauma resists direct representation: it is instead a dislocating, bewildering experience which subverts

normal reality and categories of interpretation and which defies closure, returning later as Caruth has noted in 'repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena'. Trauma disrupts linear chronology, and once again we see this in William's *History* as the text snags around these strange supernatural stories, leaving the discipline of a progressive chronicle account and replaying this uncanny, disturbing narrative pattern.

Of course, William's supernatural stories are situated firmly within medieval literary traditions and conventions. The image of the sumptuous feast in the chamber beneath the mound recalls the underworld of the Middle English romance *Sir Orfeo*, or the subterranean 'faery' hall in the Welsh Gower described by Gerald of Wales.<sup>48</sup> In the story of the Green Children, the image of a 'shining land' far away across a river recalls the depiction of the heavenly paradise in the Middle English dream poem *Pearl* and many other mystical or visionary texts.<sup>49</sup> We would certainly expect to see the medieval writing of trauma fitting within current literary conventions and genres. As Kali Tal notes of twentieth century contexts, 'survivors' stories [are] adapted to fit and then contained<sup>50</sup> within the dominant structure of social, cultural and political discourse'.<sup>50</sup> These conventional romance, folkloric and mystical elements allow William's stories to be told: they provide a reachable metaphorical vocabulary for traumatic experience and offer an example of the 'mobilization' of 'cultural formations' in response to trauma which is discussed by Robben and Suárez-Orozco. Yet, in some ways, they have done *too* successful a job of containing William's material within recognisable idioms. The supernatural stories have been regarded, simply and reductively, as odd folkloric diversions, and have often been extracted as curiosities out of their context in the *History* as a whole, concealing their relation to the surrounding account of the Anarchy and inhibiting a full critical interpretation. Similarly, the repetition and replay of William's supernatural narratives fits within the patterns of mnemonic repetition and patterning which we have learned to identify as rhetorical tropes in medieval texts. Whilst not denying that medieval rhetorical conventions inevitably form a significant part of the literary resources available to William, I would argue that in this case (and perhaps in others), the repetitions which we are quick to identify as purely formal or mnemonic may be doing other, more complex or context-specific work.<sup>51</sup>

This paper has aimed to read canonical historical texts associated with the twelfth-century Anarchy in new ways, asking questions about their responses to traumatic experience, and the possibility of recovering that historical trauma and its representation through scholarly methods of close textual analysis. Where twelfth-century texts do represent events of the Anarchy directly, as in the Peterborough Chronicle or John of Worcester, these descriptions slip into horrific spectacle or wonder: the accounts elicit pity or terror, but do not manage to communicate the truly disturbing, bewildering nature of traumatic experience. John of Worcester writes supernatural signs and marvels into his Chronicle which

communicate more metaphorically the sense of a dislocating experience beyond reason or understanding. John's supernatural phenomena are never glossed or explicated – they resist such easy interpretation – but instead they suggest a disturbing disruption of normal reality. John adds these supernatural events into his Chronicle during the period of the Anarchy, revising recent history and entangling memory with current anxiety and horror. The supernatural stories embedded within William of Newburgh's account of the Anarchy similarly displace traumatic experience into metaphorical narrative and symbolisation. The four narratives in Chapters 27 and 28 each include supernatural intrusions which defy reasoned understanding and which disrupt safe, normal experience. Despite attempts at closure or assimilation in each narrative, these stories all generate a sense of disturbing, bewildering experience suppressed or imperfectly contained. The elements of symbolisation, narrative replay and disrupted linear chronology in all of these twelfth-century texts resonate profoundly with twentieth-century trauma theory.

I want to conclude by returning to Jonathan Jones' comments on the Jewish Museum in Berlin, and his assumption that, unlike a visit to Auschwitz, a trip to a medieval dungeon can be uncomplicatedly pleasurable and entertaining. There are questions here, I think, about the relationships between history, memory and empathy: about how far back our willingness to acknowledge suffering and trauma can extend, and about the expectations we bring to medieval texts. Whilst these twelfth-century chronicle texts are canonical material for students of medieval history – and the Peterborough Chronicle is a familiar and much-anthologised text for students of early Middle English language – readers have not traditionally been alert to the complex and troubled psychological responses to contemporary experience inscribed within them. Similarly, the critical discourses of Nancy Partner and Monika Otter centre on concepts of pleasure, entertainment and recreation: their influential and valuable studies foreground the creative exuberance of these texts and their innovative playfulness with genre and authority, but leave little room for discussion of anxiety and trauma. Trauma theory can allow us to come closer to the unwritten and unwritable experiences which haunt these works, providing new interpretations of texts and passages which have sometimes puzzled or embarrassed historians and literary critics. Chronicles of the twelfth-century Anarchy offer us fascinating and challenging examples of the interactions between trauma and literary production in one specific historical moment.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> J. Jones, 'Too many Memories?' *The Guardian* 2, 26 January 2007, 4-7, p. 4.

<sup>1</sup> Some modern historians including David Crouch (see for example his *The Reign of King Stephen 1135-1154* (Harlow, Longman, 2000), pp. 1-7), dispute that the Anarchy ever occurred in the form represented by texts such as those examined in this article. Yet whatever the current debates about the level of breakdown of social order or extent of violence in the period, the Anarchy is perceived as such by contemporary medieval writers and is undoubtedly remembered as a period of extreme chaos and conflict.

<sup>2</sup> 'The writings of trauma survivors comprise a distinct 'literature of trauma'. K. Tal, *Worlds of Hurt. Reading the Literatures of Trauma*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> See below for discussion of specific trauma theories.

<sup>4</sup> M. Otter, *Inventiones: Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing*, Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1996; N. Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England*, Chicago and London, University of Chicago Press, 1977.

<sup>5</sup> *The Peterborough Chronicle: 1070-1154*, ed. C. Clark, second edition, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> *Peterborough Chronicle*, p. 55.

<sup>7</sup> *Peterborough Chronicle*, p. 56.

<sup>8</sup> *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and trans. K.R. Potter, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1955, pp. 103, 104.

<sup>9</sup> S. Weigel and G. Paul, 'The Symptomatology of a Universalized Concept of Trauma: On the Failing of Freud's Reading of Tasso in the Trauma of History', *New German Critique* 90 (2003), 85-94, p. 85. See also, for example, James Berger's review article 'Trauma and Literary Theory', *Contemporary Literature* 38 (1997), 569-582, which surveys several landmark works in the field.

<sup>10</sup> C. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative, and History*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1996, p. 91.

<sup>11</sup> C. Van Boheemen-Saaf, *Joyce, Derrida, Lacan, and the Trauma of History*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 19.

<sup>12</sup> Tal, p. 16; Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, New York, Verso, 1992, p. 169.

<sup>13</sup> R. Leys, 'Traumatic Cures' in *Critical Inquiry* 20 (1994), 623-63, p. 624.

<sup>14</sup> See M. G. Kenny, 'A Place for Memory: The Interface between Personal and Collective History', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 41 (1999), 420-436 (420, 421) and W. Kansteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies', *History and Theory* 41 (2002), 179-197.

<sup>15</sup> A. C. G. M. Robben and M. M. Suárez-Orozco, 'Interdisciplinary perspectives on violence and trauma', in their edited volume, *Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 1-42 (p. 1).

<sup>16</sup> Robben and Suárez-Orozco, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> For an interesting discussion of Freudian theory and the medieval, see L. Patterson, 'Chaucer's Pardoner on the Couch: Psyche and Clio in Medieval Literary Studies', *Speculum* 76 (2001), 638-680.

<sup>18</sup> M. Warren, *History on the Edge: Excalibur and the Borders of Britain, 1100-1300*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2000, p. 1 and further discussion throughout, especially pp. xi and 15. Warren draws on trauma theory in general, but works less closely with the notion of 'trauma writing' as a mode with identifiable features and formal patterns. The work of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen is also informed to an extent by related theoretical concepts, though he engages with 'trauma' less explicitly. See for example J. J. Cohen, *Hybridity, Identity and Monstrosity in Medieval Britain*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, especially pp. 5-13.

<sup>19</sup> See E. van Houts, 'The Memory of 1066 in Written and Oral Tradition', *Anglo Norman Studies* XIX (1996), 167-79, and her 'The Trauma of 1066', *History Today* 46 (1996), 9-15.

<sup>31</sup> William of Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs*, Book I, ed. and trans. P.G. Walsh and M.J. Kennedy, Warminster, Aris, 1994, pp.40, 41.

<sup>32</sup> For example, Cathy Caruth investigates the etymology of *trauma* and its use as a metaphor for 'a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind'. See Caruth, 'Introduction: The Wound and the Voice', in *Unclaimed Experience*, pp. 1-9, especially p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> William's description of the ongoing horrors at Hastings might also prefigure is account of the Anarchy in other subtle ways: for example, the particular unnaturalness of the slaughter at Hastings (Christians killing 'brother' Christians) parallels the unnatural civil conflict and violence of the Anarchy.

<sup>34</sup> *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. and trans. P. McGurk, 8 vols, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1998, III, p. xix.

<sup>35</sup> *John of Worcester*, III, pp. xxxii-xxxiv.

<sup>36</sup> C. Warren Hollister, *Henry I*, Yale, Yale University Press, 2001, p. 468.

<sup>37</sup> After *John of Worcester*, III, p. xxxiv.

<sup>38</sup> Hollister, p. 469.

<sup>39</sup> See *John of Worcester*, III, p. 183, n. 8; p. 199, n. 7; p. 209, n. 2. Also Hollister, p. 468.

<sup>40</sup> *John of Worcester*, III, pp. 210-211, n. 3.

<sup>41</sup> See for example *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. and trans. M. J. Swanton, London, J. M. Dent, 1997, p. 55.

<sup>42</sup> *John of Worcester*, III, pp. 216, 217.

<sup>43</sup> *John of Worcester*, III, pp. xlv-xlvii.

<sup>44</sup> *John of Worcester*, III, p. xvi.

<sup>45</sup> *John of Worcester*, III, p. xl.

<sup>46</sup> *History of English Affairs*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett, Rolls Series no. 82, London, Longman and Co., 1884-9, II, Book I, pp. 98, 99.

<sup>47</sup> Partner, p. 114.

<sup>48</sup> Partner, p. 114.

<sup>49</sup> Otter, p. 102.

<sup>50</sup> Otter, p. 160-1.

<sup>51</sup> See for example *History of English Affairs*, Book V, Chapters 22 to 24.

<sup>52</sup> *Radulphi de Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Stevenson, Rolls Series no.66, London, Longman and Co., 1875, pp. 117-120.

<sup>53</sup> Otter, p. 105.

<sup>54</sup> These troubling stories might recall the work of David Williams on the monstrous as 'threshold and conductor between inside and outside' or Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's use of the Lacanian term *extimité* to express the 'strange familiarity' of the monstrous or supernatural. See D. Williams, *Deformed Discourse: The Function of the Monster in Medieval Thought and Literature*, Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 1996, p. 17, and J. J. Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters and the Middle Ages*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1999, p. xii.

<sup>55</sup> Partner, p. 122.

<sup>56</sup> The imagery of the earth ripped open occurs elsewhere in texts of the Anarchy. See Henry of Huntingdon's poem in the *Historia Anglorum*, which imagines the earth torn apart and the river Styx and Underworld showing through. Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. D. Greenway, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996, pp. 724, 725.

<sup>57</sup> Tal, p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> See *Sir Orfeo*, ed. A.J. Bliss, Oxford, Oxford UP, 1954, pp. 31-37; Giraldus Cambrensis, *The Journey Through Wales and the Description of Wales*, trans. L. Thorpe, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1978, pp. 133-5.

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<sup>40</sup> See *The Poems of the Pearl Manuscript*, ed. M. Andrew and R. Waldron, Exeter, Exeter University Press, 1987, for example pp. 108-9.

<sup>50</sup> Tal, p. 3.

<sup>51</sup> For example, the repetitions in *Canu Heledd* (a series of verses lamenting the Saxon conquest of Wales and the death of kin), whilst characteristic of medieval Welsh poetry, might also reflect the formalised literary replay of trauma and loss. See J. Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry: A Study and Edition of the Englynion*, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 1990, pp. 429-447 and translation pp. 483-496.