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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

IMITATING FATHERS:
TRADITION, INHERITANCE
AND THE REPRODUCTION OF CULTURE
IN ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

MAY 1997
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation and the degree to which it leads would not have been possible without the assistance of a great number of individuals who have selflessly given their time and expertise to assist me in my education. I would first like to thank my dissertation committee, Allen J. Frantzen, Karma Lochrie, and Barbara H. Rosenwein, for their direction, encouragement, and good advice throughout this very long project. They are the culmination of a tradition of exceptional English teachers with whose instruction I have been blessed. The rest of that line is made up of John Miles Foley and Martin Camargo of the University of Missouri-Columbia, Peggy Knapp and Margot Livesey at Carnegie Mellon University, and Ronald A. Ryner, Louis Madonna, and Eleanor Hamer of the public school system of Ocean Township, New Jersey. That I was ready to learn from my remarkable teachers is entirely to the credit (and due to the examples) of my parents, grandparents, and my aunts and uncles in New Jersey.

I am also grateful for the support I have received from Loyola University of Chicago, and wish to give special thanks to Timothy Austin, Micael Clark, and Suzanne Gossett of the English Department for their successful efforts to help me secure work and funding. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the Arthur J. Schmitt Foundation, which has supported the writing of this dissertation.

For research support I would like to thank the Interlibrary Loan staff at Loyola's Cudahy Library and the librarians at Northwestern University Library, The Deering Special Collections Library at Northwestern, and Chicago's Newberry Library. William R. Massa, Jr. of Manuscripts and Archives at Yale University Library assisted me with the

I would also like to thank Yale University Library for giving me permission to publish excerpts from Albert S. Cook's papers and the Tolkien Estate for permission to publish in this dissertation selections from Professor Tolkien's unpublished work.

George Hardin Brown of Stanford University, Michelle Brown of the British Library, Geoffrey Russom of Brown University, and Joseph Harris of Harvard University all provided valuable suggestions and even more valuable encouragement at different stages of this project.

I would especially like to thank my many student colleagues for their help and encouragement. In an environment that was not always psychologically supportive, their friendship and assistance was invaluable. Sean Miller of Cambridge gave advice on technical aspects of wills and charters, Stephen Harris here at Loyola helped me with paleography, and Elizabeth McNulty read portions of the dissertation and made useful suggestions. Bryon Grigsby, Martin Foys and Kim Bovee gave me friendship and support, as did Mary Warnement. I cannot thank Mary Dockray-Miller enough for the example she has set both personally and professionally and, more importantly, for her good advice and friendship.

Finally, and most importantly, I must thank my wife, Raquel D'Oyen, for the support, encouragement, friendship, and love that she gave to me during every minute of my work at Loyola. She has listened to innumerable disquisitions on Anglo-Saxon matters, tolerated mountains of papers and library books, made trip after trip to retrieve books from Northwestern, suffered being dragged to Oxford and abandoned to entertain herself while I disappeared into the bowels of the Bodleian, and through it all continued not only to work towards her own doctorate, but to rescue me from many stumbles in the pursuit of mine. I could not ask for, nor could I imagine, having a better friend with whom to share my life.
DEDICATION

I have imitated many "fathers" throughout my life. This dissertation is dedicated to these men, most importantly my father, David I. Drout, my grandfather, David N. Drout, and two of my uncles, Scott Howard Stryker and Thomas Dorsett. I can never express how grateful I am for the love, kindness and guidance that they all have given me and the innumerable good examples they have offered for my imitation.
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A PREFATORY NOTE ON THE STYLE

Festinauimus hunc sequentem librum uisum nobis est interpretari, non garrula uerbositate aut ignotis sermonibus, sed puris et apertis uerbis linguae huius gentis, cupientes plus prodesse auditoribus simplici locutione quam laudari artificiosi sermonis compositione—quam nequaquam didicit nostra simplicitas.

—Ælfric (slightly modified)

I hastened to write the following book as it best seemed to me, not in garrulous verbosity or unfamiliar diction, but in the clear and unambiguous words of this people's language, seeking rather to be of benefit to my audience through my straightforward expression than to be praised for the elaboration of an artificial style—which my simple self has in no way mastered.

In attempting to live up to Ælfric's standard of clarity, I have followed two practices in writing this dissertation. First, with the exception of Latin, French, or German terms that have made their way into the English language, I have translated every ancient or foreign word or expression in the dissertation. At times these translations may impede the flow of the text, and for this I apologize, but I believe works of scholarship should be comprehensible even to those intelligent people who have not yet mastered many languages. Second, I have done my best to avoid the jargon and specialized style that over the past fifteen years have crept into academic writing about literature, and I have tried to avoid using quotations from the authorities that are written in this form. When such quotation has been unavoidable, I have at times committed the indignity of restating in my own words what I perceive to be the ideas of the authorities. If I have misapprehended their prose, I apologize, but I have only ventured such effrontery for the sake of the understanding of non-specialized readers to whom, I fervently believe, all scholarly work in English literature should be accessible.
ABSTRACT

Processes of inheritance and tradition shape Anglo-Saxon culture through their influence upon the reproduction of identities and institutions. Tradition is the recognition of continuities across generational boundaries, and such continuities can be accessed or manufactured by social and cultural institutions.

The most important institution that shaped tradition and inheritance in the Anglo-Saxon period was the monastery, particularly monasteries after the tenth-century Benedictine reform. Reformed monasteries controlled the production of wills, poetry, and other texts. Their reproduction was text-based, relying upon documents, most importantly the Benedictine Rule and the Regularis Concordia. To text-based reproduction monasteries linked same-sex reproduction of individual identities. Same-sex reproduction was constructed as a masculine process (located in the father-figure of the abbot) that inculcated identities in a younger generation through discipline and exhortation.

Same-sex reproduction and its disciplines are evident in the "wisdom poems" of the Exeter Book. Here monastic poets attempt to understand how the reproduction of the monastery was related to but different from the aristocratic culture from which most monks came. In these poems children imitate their "fathers," whether these be genetic relations or father-figures in the monastery.

Aristocratic culture is the matrix in which is set Beowulf, which illustrates two competing modes of inheritance, inheritance by blood and inheritance by deeds. Blood inheritance is genetic and linked with aristocratic society. Deed inheritance is behaviorally based and linked with the monastery. Both forms are necessary for the successful passage of
kingly power in *Beowulf*, blending institutional interests and shedding new light on the uncle-nephew bond in the poem.

I conclude my analysis of tradition in Anglo-Saxon with the tradition of Anglo-Saxon, examining the work of two influential Anglo-Saxonist scholars of the twentieth century, Albert S. Cook and J.R.R. Tolkien. Both Cook and Tolkien attempted to resurrect long-dead Anglo-Saxon identities, and both believed that such resurrection could improve their own societies. Their work illustrates the created continuities and recognitions of affinity that drive the processes of tradition and inheritance, both in the Anglo-Saxon age and in our own time.
INTRODUCTION

*Beowulf*, the most famous and most studied relic of Anglo-Saxon England, begins with a celebration of the successful passage of kingly power and authority across the generations. The poem ends with a lamentation over a lack of heirs: Beowulf himself rue his childlessness, and his people, the Geats, know to their sorrow that Beowulf's failure to produce an heir will lead to the destruction of the kingdom after the hero's death.

Tradition, the successful transmission of an inheritance across multiple generational boundaries, was not merely a concept to the Anglo-Saxons. It was not an abstract force operating without conscious control. When Anglo-Saxons talked about tradition, they talked about ancestors and fathers. Tradition was concrete, a repeated cultural practice, a lineage, a practical social force.

Tradition was also personal in Anglo-Saxon society. In the West Saxon Gospels "traditio" ("tradition") is glossed six times by the Old English "lagu," ("law") (Harris 124), Norse loan-word with strong legalistic connotations. It translates *ius* in Ælfric's *Grammar* and its other appearances in the Old English corpus are nearly all in laws or homilies. The penumbra of meaning that surrounds *tradicio* in Latin and "lagu" in Old English to some degree overlapped; tradition was a kind of law, a code of behavior that had to be followed. In the written law codes law and tradition are bound up with the individual and personal authority of the king, his thanes and ealdormen, and—most significantly for the purposes of this study—his ancestors. In the introduction to his law code, King Alfred is careful to state that he is gathering together laws "þara þe ure foregengan heoldon," "that our ancestors held" (Attenborough 12). In his will the king also considers his ancestors, being concerned
"ymbe minre sawle þearfe 7 ymbe min yrfe þæt me God 7 mine yldran forgeafon" ("about my soul's needs and about the inheritance which God and my ancestors gave me") (Harmer 15-16). Law, property and kingship came from the authority of ancestors, "foregengan" or "yldran," but they were instantiated in the persona of the king. This personal figure, in turn, was influenced and given authority by the memory of his ancestors.

Alfred is not alone among Anglo-Saxons in his concern for his ancestors. Ancestors, "yldran" or "elderan," are mentioned many times in the Anglo-Saxon wills and charters, in the works of the Venerable Bede, and throughout the poetic corpus. These ancestors who were of such concern to the Anglo-Saxons are also not impersonal, shadowy forces; on many occasions they are specific, named individuals. Even when not named, ancestors are given personal attributes. When "ealdor" in one form or another translates or glosses a Latin word, that word is almost always pater, "father," and in cases where we have more than one gloss for "pater" (for example, in the two versions of Wærferth's translation of Gregory's Dialogues), the paired Anglo-Saxon terms are "ealdor" and "fæder" (Yerkes 10, 38, 40-41, 49). The Anglo-Saxons saw their ancestors as fathers, as a group of powerful men. Tradition included the customs and institutions developed by these fathers, and individuals who worked to perpetuate institutions or traditions acted like the fathers who had gone before them.

In order to reproduce themselves culturally, individuals had to act like fathers. There are, I argue, two main ways by which Anglo-Saxons did this. They could reproduce themselves biologically, fathering children through sexual reproduction, a process which I label inheritance by blood. Or they could reproduce culturally, shaping children through processes of education or initiation. I call this process inheritance by deeds. As do many people today, most Anglo-Saxons reproduced themselves through a combination of the two methods. They fathered children and trained them to be like their parents. Both forms of reproduction, however, can fail: the father can produce no sons or the sons may not be able
or worthy to succeed. Each form of reproduction can also succeed in hybrid form: a father may have no sons, or his sons may die before they can succeed, but (as does Hygelac, Beowulf's uncle) the father may have a worthy nephew who can inherit from him.

Because Anglo-Saxons could inherit by deeds as well as by blood, and because women produced heirs, individuals did not have to *be* fathers in order to enter into the production and reproduction of Anglo-Saxon traditions. Women like the abbess Hild, could "father" traditions of poetry or politics. Others, like Queen Ælfthryth, could influence political inheritance. Men who did not reproduce biologically—celibate monks—could likewise "father" their replacements in the monastic order. Sonless kings like Beowulf could "father" nations and legends. To use the terminology developed by Judith Butler, fatherhood in Anglo-Saxon culture is "performative;" being a father is something one *does*, not something one *is*. Hence this study of the reproduction of traditions, inheritances, and culture is entitled *Imitating Fathers*. For in order to reproduce themselves socially and culturally, Anglo-Saxons had to imitate the behavior of fathers as this behavior was constructed by the institutions of their society. These institutions struggled among themselves for the power to control, validate, shape and reproduce traditions. The signs of this struggle are found throughout Anglo-Saxon culture in wills, laws, penitentials, monastic regulations, and poetry.

In my first chapter, "The Tradition of Tradition," I examine the ways tradition has been used in and has shaped Anglo-Saxon studies over the past fifty years, giving particular attention to New Criticism, Exegetics, and Oral Tradition. I extend my analysis of tradition from Anglo-Saxon studies to the wider arena of critical theory. Using in particular the work of Michel Foucault, I show how contemporary critics have explained the cultural phenomena connected to tradition. Unfortunately contemporary theory offers no extensive commentary on the nature of tradition. I therefore expand upon Foucault's work
in order to develop a model of the workings of tradition in and of itself that I use in later chapters to examine various institutions and processes of Anglo-Saxon culture.

The Anglo-Saxon documents most closely concerned with inheritance by blood are the Old English wills. In chapter two, "The Will to Endure," I show how the wills interact with and help to create tradition in a specific historical and institutional context—the monasteries modified by the Benedictine reform in the tenth century. The changes in monastic life brought about by the reform, particularly the elimination of saeculum prioritas and marriage for monks, caused monks and monasteries to seek other means by which they might reproduce themselves. Most important among these was the textualization of knowledge and social practice. Wills, many of them written by monks for members of the aristocracy, facilitate monastic reproduction by moving the social memorialization of the dead, the participation of individuals in the lineage and traditions of their ancestors, into a text-based culture controlled by the monastery. In the wills relationships of blood become relationships of documents; recorded agreements replace personal interaction. The monastery creates for itself a useful and powerful niche within Anglo-Saxon culture.

The monastery itself, particularly after the Benedictine reform, was not supposed to operate on the principle of inheritance by blood. Instead, deeds—obedience, humility, learning—were to be the criteria by which monks passed on their identities for subsequent generations. Therefore in my third chapter, "In Imitation of Fathers," I examine the ways monasteries reproduced themselves under the aegis of textualized rules. Paying most attention to the Benedictine Rule (in Latin and in the Old English prose translation and glosses) and the Regularis Concordia, but also examining penitentials and additional monastic regulations, I show that inheritance by deeds in the monastery was a process that relied upon the control of time, the instillation of discipline, the reproduction of identities according to written rules, and the localization of both power and interpretation in the person of one father-figure—the abbot.
In my fourth chapter, "The Gift of Wisdom," I illustrate how the attributes of fatherhood constructed by monastic texts are construed as the behavior of "real" fathers in Anglo-Saxon poetry. Taking a group of poems with a specific manuscript context—the so-called "wisdom poems" of the sExeter Book—I examine the ways poetry forms a bridge between the monastic environment and the wider Anglo-Saxon culture. *The Gifts of Men, Precepts, The Fortunes of Men, and Maxims I* have previously been discounted by critics as either boring, didactic, and obvious or hopelessly opaque. But by reading them against my analysis of wills and monastic texts, I show that the wisdom poems reveal how monastic authors attempted to understand their place in Anglo-Saxon culture in the wake of the Benedictine reform. Monastic ideals of fatherhood, tradition, and inheritance are applied to the concerns of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy from which was drawn a substantial portion of the population of monasteries during the reform. The resulting wisdom poems link the monastic to the aristocratic ethos, demonstrating ways in which aristocratic and monastic concerns were linked.

This link between the monastery and the aristocracy also informs my analysis of *Beowulf*, the subject of chapter five, "By Blood and Deeds." *Beowulf* is the most significant poetic statement on the problem of inheritance in Anglo-Saxon culture. Approaching the poem with the models I have developed in the previous four chapters, and examining it in the context of tenth-century monastic and aristocratic culture, I seek to understand more fully the poem's conflicts, many of which arise from competing modes of inheritance. Ideally, there is no conflict between inheritance by blood and inheritance by deeds: the successor is worthy in both categories. But not all situations in *Beowulf* are ideal: Hrothgar's sons are clear heirs by blood but too young to inherit by deeds. Hrothgar tries to "adopt" Beowulf on account of the hero's deeds, but Beowulf's lack of kingly Danish blood (and his duties to his own blood relations) prevent such an inheritance by deeds only. Wealththeow's resistance to Hrothgar's adoption demonstrates the differing stakes men and
women had in different blends of inheritance. Hybrid inheritance from uncle to nephew shapes the relationship between Beowulf and Hygelac and may influence Beowulf's bequest to Wiglaf at the end of the poem. In each case, the blending of blood and deeds in inheritance shapes the political and cultural world of the poem, a world important to aristocratic Anglo-Saxons even if it is not reflective of their specific situations.

In my final chapter, "Seeds, Soil, and Northern Sky," I extend my analysis of tradition in Anglo-Saxon culture to the tradition of Anglo-Saxon studies. Contemporary understanding of Anglo-Saxon culture is dependent (to a degree only recently and grudgingly noted by Anglo-Saxonists) upon the ideologies and biases of previous scholars. In particular, two Anglo-Saxonists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, A.S. Cook and J.R.R. Tolkien, have shaped our perceptions of Anglo-Saxon traditions and influenced the tradition of Anglo-Saxon studies. Cook saw his scholarship as the re-animation of long-lost Anglo-Saxon voices; Tolkien saw himself as participating in a fundamental continuity of Old English culture. Both critics encoded their desires in their critical work, and their scholarship has had the effect of perpetuating these desires in traditions of reading and interpretation still active in the contemporary study of Old English. Scrutinizing the effects of the traditions promulgated by Tolkien and Cook as well as the traditions of Anglo-Saxon culture can help us to examine what we—inheritors of both the Anglo-Saxons and their Anglo-Saxonist students—desire for ourselves and the generations who will inherit our traditions.

Without a specific examination of the ways inheritance worked in Anglo-Saxon England, and without connections between these cultural operations and the ideas of tradition evident in both pragmatic and literary texts, our understanding of Anglo-Saxon culture is incomplete. Because Anglo-Saxon society and our perceptions of it have significantly influenced our own culture, our lack of understanding about the ways inheritance and tradition work to perpetuate and reproduce culture is a significant
intellectual deficit not only for specialists in medieval studies but for anyone who wishes to understand why our own culture works the ways it does. If we are required to imitate fathers in order to reproduce ourselves and the institutions in which we exist, all of us, male and female, should undertake to understand the demands of this performance. Only when we understand the roles required can we determine if (and how) they might be changed and improved.
CHAPTER I
THE TRADITION OF TRADITION

What tradition is preserving is the very means of attaining life and happiness.
—Albert B. Lord, The Singer of Tales

This dissertation focuses on Anglo-Saxon culture in the years A.D. 900-1066, but I will begin in the twentieth century and far from England, with the inheritances and traditions of the monkeys of Koshima Islet.

Since 1950 biologists at the Japanese Monkey Center have studied several wild populations of Japanese macaque monkeys (Macaca fuscata). At Koshima Islet, researchers "provisioned" the macaques, leaving various foods on the beach and observing the monkeys' behavior when faced with, among other items, sweet potatoes and wheat grains. Imo', a young female, discovered that she could avoid the laborious process of separating individual grains of wheat from the sand by flinging a handful of wheat and sand into the sea. The sand sank, the wheat floated, and it was a simple matter for the clever macaque to skim the floating grains from the water. Imo's age-group peers learned the skill by observing her, and their mothers learned "wheat-washing behavior" from them (Kawai 11-15). Most importantly for the purposes of this study, macaque mothers taught wheat washing to their infants, and the children so educated in turn taught it to their offspring (Wilson 1975 170).

The floating grains of wheat, bread cast upon the waters by Imo', are the physical manifestation of what K. Imanishi designated "pre-cultural behavior" (cited in Kawai 1).
They are, in the broadest sense, a *traditum*, "anything which is transmitted or handed down from the past to the present" (Shils 12). Imo's children receive their knowledge of "wheat-washing" as an inheritance that they can in turn pass to their children. Cultural inheritance is, in its simplest form, behavior passed from parent to child. When an inheritance crosses more than one generational boundary—when the infants who have been taught teach their own children, and these children teach theirs, thus closing a cycle of reproduction—it becomes a tradition.

In order for this simplest approximation of the relation of inheritance and tradition to be of any use, it is necessary to differentiate between inheritances and traditions and other behaviors that are reproduced across generations. Many complex behaviors in nature—among others, the sophisticated social activities of leafcutter ants (*Atta* sp.) and the elaborate displays of birds of paradise—are replicated across generational boundaries without being taught. These behaviors are instinctual. Ants taken from a nest as eggs and raised without contact with adults will nevertheless reproduce a functioning colony (Hölldobler and Wilson 33, 111-12); male birds-of-paradise, raised only by their mothers, nevertheless perform mating displays at an appropriate lek without previously seeing a performance by another male (Wilson 1975 329, 332). The pre-cultural activity of the macaques however, is only performed while the tradition of teaching and learning is maintained. When researchers stopped feeding sweet potatoes to another macaque troop, potato washing, (a behavior similar to wheat washing), stopped and did not reappear upon the reintroduction of the food item due to a "lack of opportunity for learning" (Kitahara-Frisch 77). Cultural traditions, even at the level of macaques, are ephemeral, vulnerable to interruption at the crossing of any generational boundary.

I begin this study with a non-human, pre-cultural context because it is necessary to temporarily strip language, technology and complex social hierarchies away from the processes of inheritance and tradition in order to reduce these elements of culture to their
lowest common denominators. At this simplest level, then, I define my terms thus: an inheritance is some aspect of learned or taught culture that crosses at least one generational boundary; a tradition is an inheritance that is replicated from generation to generation. As witnessed by wills, charters, laws, poetry and devotional materials, inheritance and tradition were exceedingly important to the people who lived in England in the eighth through the late eleventh centuries. As witnessed by (among a multitude of other phenomena) our continued study of the culture of Anglo-Saxon England, our care of inheritances and participation in traditions remains a source of identity, pride and anxiety more than nine hundred years after the Norman conquest.

My project in this dissertation, therefore, is of necessity both theoretical and historical. While I do hope in the end to have demonstrated that traditions can be described theoretically, I do not wish to merely read historical documents through the lens of a critical theory (even one of my own making), for such a practice tends to generate proleptically readings that validate the theory applied rather than explaining the complexities and specifics of past cultures. Jonathan Dollimore suggests a more fruitful approach, which I hope to follow: Not only will I use theory to "recover" history, but I intend to use "the history recovered to read, question, and modify the theory itself" (24-25).

My goal is to explicate relations of cultural production and reproduction in Anglo-Saxon England while simultaneously developing a "theory" or model of the workings of inheritance and tradition. Such a model is necessary because existing ideas of tradition in literature and other forms of discourse are generally amorphous, thus leading to an inadequate discussion of the monumentally important cultural phenomenon of tradition. It is true—as I show in the next section—that there exist binary oppositions between "traditional" and "new," and these oppositions have been deconstructed, but there is no

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1 Edward Shils makes this same point slightly differently by asserting that a pattern of behavior "has to last over at least three generations—however long or short these are—to be a tradition" (15).
model of tradition as such, no extensive discussion of how and why tradition works the way it does.

In order to develop my model of tradition I will in the first section of this chapter examine the position of tradition and inheritance in contemporary Anglo-Saxon studies, demonstrating the importance of the issue of tradition in a number of ongoing critical debates. In the second section I expand my investigation from Anglo-Saxon studies to the broader field of contemporary literary and social theory. By examining tradition in the context of contemporary theory, I show that some of the unexamined effects of tradition in Anglo-Saxon studies can be explained in part by current theories of culture, particularly the work of Michel Foucault. Foucault's analyses of social processes do not, however, in themselves provide a satisfactory model of the ways tradition works both in and of itself and works to shape and influence culture. In the final section of this chapter, therefore, I develop an explanation of the general processes of inheritance and tradition, augmenting Foucault's work with insights on gender from Judith Butler and Luce Irigaray, political and economic theory from Karl Popper, F.A. Hayek and Thomas Sowell, biological analysis of traditions by Edward O. Wilson and Peter Medawar, and the scholarship of those few but distinguished philosophers and theologians—among them Edward Shils, Jaroslav Pelikan, Karl Morrison and Yves Congar—who have closely investigated the workings of tradition. By the end of the chapter I hope to have established a set of general paradigms which may then be checked against and modified by analysis of specific Anglo-Saxon (and, in chapter six, twentieth-century-) cultural practices.

Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Studies

While the proper care of inheritances and traditions has only recently become a topic of debate in Anglo-Saxon studies, Anglo-Saxonists have not ignored traditions in the
materials they have studied, and in the past twenty-five years have carefully explicated a number of traditions in Anglo-Saxon England. A few representative examples will suffice: Margaret Goldsmith entitles the third chapter of *The Mode and Meaning of Beowulf*: "The Marriage of Traditions in Beowulf: Secular Symbolism and Religious Allegory." As her title suggests, Goldsmith argues that *Beowulf* blends two traditions of literary practice, heroic poetry and Christian allegory (64). In *A New Critical History of Old English*, Stanley Greenfield and Daniel Calder likewise discuss the mixed strands of Germanic and Christian influences that blend to form the Old English tradition (3). Milton Gatch examines the Christian strand of that tradition in *Preaching and Theology in Anglo-Saxon England*, further subdividing the Christian content into "theological tradition and monastic reform" (4). C.L. Wrenn turns his gaze on the heroic strand in the chapter entitled "Germanic Heroic Tradition" in his *A Study of Old English Literature* (74). Fred C. Robinson focuses on traditions more narrowly defined when he invokes the "tradition of Bedan and Pseudo-Bedan colophons" in his essay "Old English Literature in its Most Immediate Context" (24), and in *Visible Song* Catherine O'Brien O'Keefe claims that the study of manuscript formulae "are crucial ... for the reception of a 'traditional' message" (191).

The scholars listed above, and many others, have been careful to delineate traditions in Anglo-Saxon. In recent years other critics have begun to examine the tradition of Anglo-Saxon studies. James Earl, for example, mentions the "great tradition running from W. Ker and R. W. Chambers to Tolkien, Dorothy Whitelock, C. L. Wren, and John Niles, elaborating the implications of an early provenance" for *Beowulf* (17). Of greater influence have been Allen J. Frantzen's invocations of tradition in two recent books: *Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English and Teaching the Tradition* and *Speaking Two Languages: Traditional Disciplines and Contemporary Theory in Medieval Studies*. In *Desire for Origins*, Frantzen examines the history and constitution of Anglo-Saxon studies and the political and institutional contexts in which the discipline was formed and has evolved (63-95). In his
prologue to *Speaking Two Languages* he defines tradition or traditional as one pole of a binary opposition (the other pole is the "contemporary"), only to call the opposition into question by demonstrating that the critical practice of philology, now traditional, was once as innovative and controversial as any contemporary theoretical development in Anglo-Saxon studies (1-4).

In *Allegories of War*, John P. Hermann constructs a similar opposition in which tradition is one pole of the diad: "for many of us the traditional is not always a source of consolation, nor is the strange always cause for discomfiture" (4). Hermann's "traditional" includes literary-critical practices such as "traditional philological negotiations ... New Criticism [and] Exegetics," but not the historically political operations discussed by Frantzen (*Allegories of War* was published before *Desire for Origins* and *Speaking Two Languages*). "New" or "contemporary" or "theoretical" versus "traditional" (or even Hermann's "strange") is the opposition that has shaped the debate that has raged over the past seven years over the proper place of literary theory in Anglo-Saxon studies. Like most oppositions, the traditional/new binary impels the debate towards polarizations. Depending upon a scholar's political viewpoint, positive cultural values accrue to one pole, negative values to the other. Thus Thomas Shippey worries about the persistence of a "tradition" of Pan-Germanicism in Anglo-Saxon studies (1993 10). Helen Bennett critiques the "patriarchal scholarly tradition" in the interpretation of *Beowulf* (55 n.2), and Karma Lochrie notes that *Judith* has resisted "Anglo-Saxonists applying the traditional methods of inquiry that would reduce [Judith] to the univocity of their methods" (2). Simultaneously Alexandra Hennessey Olsen attacks Gillian Overing's *Language, Sign and Gender in Beowulf* for not being situated "in the scholarly tradition" (102.6), Raymond Tripp calls for Anglo-Saxonists to "defend their cultural inheritance" (1990 86), and Fred C. Robinson worries that a movement from the traditional to the new in Anglo-Saxon studies might be
complicit with the work of "revisionists doing cultural studies" uninterested in studying "the western European tradition which has made us what we are" (1993 1120).

The words "tradition" and "traditional" have flown fast and furious in this debate. For example, both words appear no less than twenty-four times in the essay that most effectively sums up the argument over literary theory in Anglo-Saxon studies, Frantzen's provocatively titled "Who Do These Anglo-Saxon(ist)s Think They Are, Anyway?" in which Frantzen analyses a number of exceptionally hostile recent responses to the use of theory in Old English scholarship. Clearly the conception of tradition is important if not essential to contemporary Anglo-Saxon studies. Yet while invoked time and time again by scholars writing about Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Saxonists, inheritance and tradition have received very little systematic investigation. With few exceptions, tradition is a term against which others are defined, the ground rather than the figure of examination. This lack of critical engagement with such an important term is rather surprising. Anglo-Saxon studies—particularly that powerful and influential branch of scholarship characterized as philology—delights in (and some might say is defined by) the precise use of technical vocabulary. Robinson observes that a "typical philological article" is one that labors "to define with precision the denotations or connotations of a word or an allusion in a work of medieval literature" (1993 1121). This same precision has been applied to a meta-analysis "of traditional scholarly, critical and pedagogical practices in Anglo-Saxon studies" (Hermann 1994 18), yet somehow tradition itself has evaded the critical glance. This absence of a general apparatus for examining the workings of tradition (as opposed to the workings of specific traditions) suggests a conceptual blindness in need of redress.

So what do we talk about when we talk about tradition? There is a kernel of commonality in the many undefined, unexamined and un-self-conscious uses of tradition in Anglo-Saxon studies. That kernel is the notion of a continuity of repeated practice. Scholars who position themselves as resistant to traditions and scholars who want to be seen
as worthy inheritors of the practices of their forebears both assume that there exists some continuity with which they are interacting. These continuities, created by individuals and institutions in the past, shaped Anglo-Saxon culture and the scholarly community that studies it. Traditions have spread their spores widely. Scholars may view themselves as either seeders or weeders, but they nevertheless must deal with the traditions that cover the ground.

The wide-scale dissemination of traditions shapes both the forms and the uses of traditions within a discursive economy. These forms and uses in literary culture have been the focus of a number of critical schools in Anglo-Saxon studies, including patristics, the New Criticism and more recent, post-modern, feminist, or deconstructive approaches. Each school develops or (more commonly in Anglo-Saxon studies) assumes some form of "grand theory" to explicate the relationships between various traditions within Anglo-Saxon texts. An exhaustive survey of the various ways critical schools have used traditions is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but I will briefly explain the use of tradition in three approaches that have been influential in Anglo-Saxon studies during the past half-century: New Criticism, exegetic (or patristic) scholarship, and Oral Tradition.²

Although the New Criticism outside of medieval studies was characterized by a focus upon the artistic integrity and unity of texts, within Anglo-Saxon scholarship New Critics were forced to harness the tools of philology for their examination of the craftsmanship of Old English poems. Anglo-Saxon textual artifacts could never be discussed as completely autonomous because, as Frantzen observes, their "literary merits could not, apart from translations, be reached except through mastery of the language" (1990 82). That language was reconstructed through philology, which encoded generations of comparative Indo-

² In Negotiating the Past, Lee Patterson analyzes New Criticism and Exegetics in medieval studies. While the general contours of his analysis are the same as mine, Patterson's work focuses on Middle English literature and does not discuss the history of Anglo-Saxon criticism.
European linguistics and other historical materials into its supposedly neutral and objective critical practice. New Criticism in Anglo-Saxon studies looked not only at the individual integrity of Old English poems, but at the way this integrity was composed of blended strands of historical and linguistic traditions both Latin and Germanic. C. L. Wrenn, for example, argued that Old English poetry "is the carrying on and enlarging of a common Germanic tradition," telling old stories in ways that allowed the audience to find "aesthetic satisfaction in the repetition ... of obvious ethical matters" (12-13).

This blending of Germanic and Christian traditions was also the focus in the two of the most influential and accomplished examples of New Criticism in Anglo-Saxon studies, Stanley Greenfield's *A New Critical History of Old English* (the first published in 1965, revised in 1986) and Edward B. Irving's *A Reading of Beowulf* (1968). Greenfield and later collaborator Daniel Calder assert in the 1986 edition of *A New Critical History* that "Old English literature is a palimpsest" with Christian, Latin overlays on Germanic, pagan traditions (3). Irving analyzes story- and word-patterns and the alternation of such images as light and dark in *Beowulf*. While the literary object does indeed have formal integrity for these critics, one important element of that integrity is the artists' careful uses of multiple traditions.3 Traditions in New Criticism operate as continuous practices or bodies of knowledge known to the medieval audience and recoverable through philology by the critic who can then explicate the artistry of their combination.

Although exegetic critics often clashed with practitioners of the New Criticism, patristic exegesis relies on similar assumptions about tradition. Exegetic criticism began in the early 1950's with the work of D.W. Robertson, before the New Criticism had gained a strong foothold in Old English studies. Exegetic critical practice consisted of the

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3 Although more philological than New Critical in approach, Fred C. Robinson's *Beowulf and the Appositive Style* (1985) also suggests a parataxis or apposition of pagan and Christian as being the key to the artistry (and meaning) of *Beowulf* (3-25).
identification of "traditional meanings" in the works of the church fathers compiled in Migne's *Patrologia Latina*, and the use of these meanings to find correct interpretations for medieval literature and art. Robertson argued that medieval literature and art were "characteristically arranged with reference to an abstract hierarchy" (6), a "hierarchical arrangement described by St. Augustine, which prevailed during the Middle Ages except among ascetic extremists and heretics" (23). The writings of church fathers, wrote R. E. Kaske, were "a sort of massive index to the traditional meanings and associations of most medieval Christian imagery" (27-60). Exegetic critics—most of whom were superb Latinists and immensely learned in theology—were immensely successful in finding scriptural or patristic warrant for every plot, turn of phrase, and work of art they turned their attention towards.

The place of tradition in Exegetics is obvious. Latin tradition serves as a set of continuously valid references which may be called upon to explain the work of medieval poets "who deliberately clothe[d] the truth with a veil" (Robertson 16). Tradition encodes and transmits the theological truth across the many generations to modern readers who have prepared themselves to inherit it. Tradition is in this case not merely the ground upon which literature is the figure. Instead it is represents the forms, whose shadows on the walls of Plato's cave are medieval artworks. Exegetic criticism therefore, as Hermann notes, values texts "for their disclosure of a privileged and recherché theological system" (1989 200).

Exegetic critics take the tradition of theological commentary as a continuous practice of thought and analysis which could be tapped—first by medieval artists and writers, later by their twentieth-century exegetes. Thomas Hill, for example, explains how the enigmatic phrase "grene tacen" (green token) in the Old English *Exodus* references a tradition of a "punishment rod" or "virga" being taken a sign of authority in Patristic sources, including Gregory the Great's massive theological opus *Moralia in Job* (57-59). He
connects this reference to a reading of *Exodus* which emphasizes "hermeneutic" language connections between Latin and Old English that generate what he calls a "baroque" effect in the poem even as they transmit a theological message (63-64). Hill's student James Earl points out the presence of "traditional" images of conversion—baptism, the Harrowing of Hell, and the Last Judgment—in the Old English *Andreas*. He suggests that readers of the poem were aware of the traditional connotations of such images, that they must have been familiar with both the story of Saint Andrew and the traditional pattern of such Lives: "it is common for the hagiographer to point to the traditional nature of the Saint's legend" (67-69). Both critics assume audience knowledge of a set of stories and patterns that would be constant over time and able to be referenced by knowledgeable authors, and both assume that the audience members in possession of this knowledge are the ones whose experiences of the poem should be privileged.

Like the Germanic or Christian traditions artfully blended in New Criticism, tradition for the Exegetics consists of a body of knowledge (specifically theological knowledge) possessed by the authors and audiences of Anglo-Saxon texts and recoverable through study of patristic commentaries. In contrast to New Criticism's examination of the formal combinations of the information encoded in traditions, Exegetics subordinates or eliminates one tradition (the Germanic) in order to find meaning in the other (the Latinate). But in both cases traditions exist as a body of knowledge continuous across time and space and known to the intended audience (and the authors) of Anglo-Saxon texts.

Exegetics and New Criticism have been the dominant schools in Anglo-Saxon studies for the past fifty years (although, as both Frantzen and Hermann note, philology has never been far removed from either school). There are, however, other, less influential critical approaches to Old English and one of these, Oral Traditional Theory or Oral Theory, does explicitly discuss the internal workings of tradition. Founded by Milman Parry in 1930 with the publication of "Homer and the Homeric Style," expanded and
modified by Albert Lord in his 1949 Ph.D. thesis, *The Singer of Tales*, and brought to bear on Old English by Francis Magoun in his 1953 *Speculum* article, "The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry," Oral Traditional Theory has been a controversial school of Anglo-Saxon criticism.4

Oral Traditional Theory provides a technical vocabulary, a "descriptive poetics," to use a term as defined for post-modern theoretical contexts by Brian McHale. McHale, seeing that "grand theory" has not only won a place in literary studies but has perhaps established a hegemony over critical practice, calls for a redevelopment of descriptive poetics to occupy a "middle range" of generalization, between "'object-discourse' (the literary text) and a highly abstract 'theory of literature.'" Descriptive poetics is pitched at a level of abstraction between theory and textual interpretation, it aspires to give exhaustive accounts of objects of various kinds: a single text or group of texts; ... the practices of a "school" or "tradition of writing; a genre ... or the literary system at a particular period over time ... (58-59).

I find Oral Traditional Theory's vocabulary of descriptive poetics to be particularly useful for the investigation of traditional materials even though, as I detail below, I will avoid, bracket or simply disagree with some aspects of the theory as currently manifested.

The central tenet of Oral Traditional Theory is the notion of oral composition. As Parry and Lord noted in their fieldwork in the former Yugoslavia, traditional epic singers do not memorize songs; they are able to compose them while in the process of singing. In order to accomplish this feat, singers rely on stock metrical formulae and type scenes. Parry noted similar use of formulae in the Homeric poems, and suggested that the poems were therefore written records of traditional epic singers rather than literate compositions. Magoun applied Parry's formulaic analysis to the Anglo-Saxon poetic corpus, arguing that some seventy-percent of the 30,000 lines were oral-traditional in nature, and thus the

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4 For a summary of the genesis of the Parry Lord method and Oral Theory, see Foley 1988, 1-18. For the application of Oral Theory to Old English texts, 65-74.
majority of Anglo-Saxon poetry was the work of the epic singer (49). Larry Benson's subsequent demonstration that Old English poems with known literary sources, for example, *The Meters of Boethius*, or *The Phoenix*, have the same formulaic density as *Beowulf* (335-38) has been seen by critics of Oral Theory as proving Magoun wrong and returning Anglo-Saxon poetry to the comfortable realm of strictly literary criticism (Earl 1994 16).

I want to set aside this oral/literate debate, an argument which has been characterized (correctly, in my view) by John Miles Foley as "sterile" (1991 3). Foley himself attempts to salvage *Beowulf* and other Anglo-Saxon poems for Oral Theory by calling them "oral-derived texts" (1988 66). But such a category, though rigorously delimited by the classificatory principles of tradition- and genre-dependence in Foley's own work (1988 109-10), is too broad to make many useful distinctions. Before the advent of large-scale public literacy, nearly every text was, to a greater or lesser degree, oral-derived and orally received (Ong 94-95). Foley introduces the category of the oral-derived text to lessen the dependency of his analysis upon the postulated oral origins of many texts. I am willing to avoid this postulate entirely and bracket the question of oral origins. For the purposes of this study I assume that it is the *traditionality* of discourses, rather than their orality, that generates the features of stereotypy, prolepsis, metonymy and formulaic density that are so effectively accounted for and analyzed by Oral Theory (Foley 1991 6-7). Albert Lord suggested moving in this direction in *The Singer of Tales*: "Oral tells us 'how,' but traditional tells 'of what,' and even 'of what kind' and 'of what force.' ... For it is the necessary nature of tradition that it seek and maintain stability, that it preserve itself" (220).

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5 I understand that by attempting to articulate quasi-universal principles of tradition I am going against the grain of Foley's methodology and writing and against the most recent manifestations of Oral Theory. I recognize the need for specificity in identifying genres of both texts and traditions before making comparisons. Clearly not all traditions operate identically in their specifics. Nevertheless, as I hope this study demonstrates, it can be useful to understand the general epistemology of tradition even while keeping in mind the need for a working out of the internal logic of individual traditions. That specific logic will be the focus of future studies.
This notion of self-preservation is similar to the conception of tradition as continuous and stable (the view of tradition implicit in New Criticism and Exegetics) as well as the notion of tradition as self-replicating that I develop later in this chapter. The descriptive poetics supplied by Oral Theory, therefore, mediates between tradition as embodied in any one traditional text and my "grand theory" of tradition.

My key borrowing from Oral Theory is the notion of "traditional referentiality." Traditional referentiality "entails the invoking of a context that is enormously larger and more echoic than the text or the work itself." This invocatory process, which Foley calls "metonymy, designating a mode of signification wherein the part stands for the whole" (1991 6-8), allows the user of a traditional idiom to communicate more information than is explicitly encoded in the verbal expression. Such traditional encodings are not limited to poetic texts. The simple address on a postal envelope, for example, uses a traditional protocol to communicate more information than is actually inscribed: the word "Mockingbird," in the first line of an envelope most likely signifies a last name, in the second it indicates a street, and in the third, a town. In each case, the traditional protocol is not explicit on the envelope (with a few exceptions when field designations are listed, for example, a mailing label), but is immanent because it is traditional in the culture of those individuals using the encoding system.6 Traditional referentiality, therefore, allows for more efficient information transfer, reducing the "knowledge cost" — to borrow a term from economist Thomas Sowell — of each transfer of information. "Knowledge cost" is one of the primary "inherent constraints" of any given social situation (151), and reduced knowledge costs in information transactions of any kind, Sowell argues, lead to improved decision-making within a society or culture (24-26). Practices that create or utilize traditional

6 For a useful discussion of the relationship between protocols, information and communication, see Cohen and Stewart, 352-55.
referentiality, therefore, are exceedingly valuable to the cultures in which they are developed and can evolve under competitive selective pressure.

But, like every other reproductive or preservative process, "traditional referentiality" may not always work at an optimal level. Traditional referents can be retained for centuries, but the information they refer to may be lost or corrupted. In Anglo-Saxon studies the most striking example of the preservation of information without conscious knowledge of its content (an example certainly not discussed within Oral Traditional critical circles) is the historical or linguistic data derived by philologists from English place-names. Very few of the inhabitants of Oxfordshire were or are consciously aware that the village of Fawler contains in its name a reference to a nearby Roman villa "distinguished by the remains of fourth-century tessellated pavement in different colors." But Fawler comes from "Fauflor" (a spelling recorded in 1205) and before that from Old English "fāg flor" ("colored floor"). The Roman villa was lost to conscious knowledge (to "social memory") sometime in the Old English or early Middle English period and not excavated until 1865, but the information that the village was built near a decorated floor persisted in the traditional use of the name "Fawler" across the centuries (Shippey 1983 25). Names must be to some degree be traditional and persistent because they must transmit information to diverse individuals in diverse circumstances. Too much modification, and communication becomes impossible. Too much modification, and traditions are not recognizable as such.7

Arguments about the degree to which traditions have been modified are at the core of any investigation of tradition, whether that investigation be of medieval culture or contemporary criticism. One of the central problems for the analysis of tradition is the separation between a traditional referrent's ability to preserve itself and the information it refers to. A referent (like the name Fawler) may long be retained even when the attached

7 A friend from the town of Stowe, Vermont, was highly amused to learn that the name means simply "place" in Anglo-Saxon.
information has been lost. Investigators of traditional referentiality must therefore find some way of reconstructing a potentially defunct metonymic system. When New Criticism does not ignore the metonymic system outside of the text, it focuses on the way patterns of sound, image or idea may have universal reference, for example, Irving's discussion of rhetorical balance between positive and negative construction, what he calls "keeping two opposites simultaneously alive in the hearer's mind" (1968 4). Obviously the referential system accessed by Exegetics is the Christian theological system as expressed in scripture the writing of the church fathers. Oral Traditional criticism has tended to focus on repeated formulas and motifs that are throughout the Old English corpus, arguing that analysis of repeated elements allows for the recovery of lost traditional meanings within a poetic context. Donald K. Fry's analysis of "the hero on the beach," "the beasts of battle" and "the cliff of death" exemplify this approach.

All three approaches are bedeviled by the difficulty of determining to what exactly the traditional referent (be it image-pattern, biblical reference or type-scene) is referring. Because the preservative capacity of traditional referents does not invariably extend to the information originally referenced by them, the truth value of traditional referents and their interpretation (within any given system) is called into question. Just as a word (like "icge" in line 1107 of Beowulf) becomes uninterpretable due to lost linguistic context, so too a traditional referent is meaningless, or at the very least easily misapprehended, without the web of associations possessed by the original audience of the traditional utterance. Thus modification of traditions become necessary as language and culture change, but as traditions change so as to remain living, they risk losing their referent value. What might have been a clear and unambiguous reference at one time becomes garbled or mysterious at another.

These and other challenges posed by changes in tradition are the subject of Charles Radding's study of medieval cognition, A World Made by Men. Radding argues that
individuals in the Middle Ages were not unaware of the difficulties of shifting traditions, and that medieval cultures were forced to strike a balance between modification and preservation of traditions:

Humans must be seen as living in a dialectical relationship with their traditions, influenced by the values and ideals they are taught but also, and at the same time, bending those traditions to fit their minds. Culture, therefore, should be regarded not as an entity distinct from human intelligence but as the interaction of cognition and tradition (28).

Traditions, while perceived as continuous, change over time. In Tradition and Authority in the Western Church Karl Morrison writes of "the fundamental character of tradition: the duality of conservatism and change" (ix), and then proceeds to trace the interactions of these dialectically opposed forces through theological history from 300-1140. Morrison shows that a variety of social institutions and processes (including the Papacy, the ecclesiastical hierarchy and various methods of teaching theology) contribute to the persistent idea that "the cohesive element of the Church as a community lay outside any systems of laws and offices, and that the legitimacy of legal and administrative orders depended upon their consonance with that external element" (357). That is, although traditions change and are modified, there still remains some kernel of continuous practice against which current behavior can be compared.

Morrison and Yves Congar have explicated the contents of this kernel in the theological traditions of the Western Christian church. "Nam consuetudo sine veritate vetustas erroris est," wrote Cyprian, "custom without truth is the antiquity of error" (801f). The difficulty for theologians examining the traditions of the church is to separate mere antique errors from important and "true" ancient practices which, while preserved by tradition, had been separated from their rationales. Congar and Morrison show that the history of the theological tradition has been an effort to separate traditional "truth" from traditional "error." Congar observes that tradition is "primarily the problem of a chain of
witnesses down through history linked together and demonstrating the continuity to Catholic belief..." (88-89). The conception of a chain of witnesses linked by fundamental continuity of practice can be found both in the subjects of Morrison's and Congar's work and in Anglo-Saxon scholarship. Morrison traces the ways tradition has been modified and re-written to include some authorities and exclude others for political purposes (36-56). That is, the "truth" of a tradition is interpreted according to the political desires and needs of the interpreters.

In *Desire for Origins* Frantzen performs a similar analysis of the political content of the tradition of Anglo-Saxon studies. Frantzen show that Reformation polemicists like John Bale (and to a lesser extent John Foxe), although instrumental in the development of Anglo-Saxon scholarship in the sixteenth century, are generally not mentioned in surveys of early Old English studies. Their place is taken by those writers, like Laurence Nowell, who were part of what Frantzen calls the historical rather than polemical "tradition" of sixteenth-century Anglo-Saxonism (38-41). The types of discourse which Anglo-Saxon studies accepts as traditional are those, unlike the writings of Bale and Foxe, that remain unsoiled by a polemical or overtly political origin. Overtly, Anglo-Saxonists distinguish traditional and non-traditional statements through such actions as the inclusion of scholars' names in surveys of Anglo-Saxon studies and the citation of their work in publications. The traditions of Anglo-Saxon scholarship validate certain methodological approaches such as those, Frantzen notes, which are associated with philology, the history of the English language, and linguistics (41). Finally, like Archbishop Matthew Parker in the sixteenth-century and prominent members of the professoriate today, those who are able to determine what is and is not traditional occupy positions of political and social power from which they control the production and dissemination of texts and the shape and functioning of "high" culture and university studies.
The power to arbitrate tradition and traditional claims thus both arises from and generates social power. Because traditions are useful as well as wide-spread, efficient, preservative of knowledge, and locally adaptive, they possess great cultural authority. One need not accept conspiracy theories of hegemony to see that competing social interests will vie for control over efficient and powerful discourses that possesses authority. Control of tradition is therefore a site of social struggle and its appropriation (to borrow a term from Foucault) a "technology of power" (171). The struggle for control of the uses of tradition is obvious in the theory / tradition debate in Anglo-Saxon studies. Critics who resist or call into question the traditions of Anglo-Saxon studies (Frantzen, Clare A. Lees, Gillian R. Overing, Lochrie, Hermann, and Bennett) attempt to highlight the political content of these traditions. They thus self-consciously participate in the dialectical relationship between past and present that their "traditionalist" opponents (Tripp, Olsen and Joyce Hill, among others) would occlude. The two factions thus struggle for control of tradition in Anglo-Saxon studies in order to facilitate control of social machinery: publication in prestigious journals, agenda-setting at conferences, promotion in the university system, and employment for students. Perhaps more significantly, though less clearly material, the two factions work to promote different views of the Anglo-Saxon period and thus different views of our own culture.

A brief example of one of the approaches of non-traditionalist scholarship in the Anglo-Saxon period can serve to illustrate what is at stake in this struggle. In "Birthing Bishops and Fathering Poets: Bede, Hild, and the Relations of Cultural Production" Lees and Overing explicate a specific, historical appropriation of tradition. Examining the famous story of Caedmon in the Ecclesiastical History, they note that Bede appropriates "native (germanic) traditions of oral-song making" for Christianity: "Bede identifies ancient traditions with emerging institutions and his text produces a reordering, a re-membering in terms of his priorities and desires" (39, 41). Lees and Overing do not say so explicitly, but
their argument implies that Bede appropriates ancient tradition because this tradition possesses significant authority that would aid the church in its process of conversion and its establishment of social control. The appropriation of tradition is in this case particularly connected to the gender order the church finds necessary for its conversionary process. "This is also a classically patriarchal moment," they assert, "where poetry is exchanged between men and the Father (God) via the human father (Bede). The myth of origins turns out to be an ideological myth of masculinism" (41).

Lees and Overing thus point out that the control of traditions is connected to the designation and interpretation of origins, an arena of social contest particularly important to the church. Social theorist Maurice Halbwachs notes: "the religious society must persuade itself that it has not changed, even when everything about it is in transformation. It succeeds only by recovering places or by reconstructing about itself an image (at least a symbolic one) of those places in which it originated" (155-56). Thus the importance of the continuous tradition of Germanic poetry transformed to the service of the church and the importance of the place of Whitby, site of this transformation and of a key event for Bede, the synod that selected the Romano-English rather than Celtic method of determining the date of Easter. A similar quest for authority through the control and modification of traditions is, as Stephanie Hollis argues, a key component of the "conversionary dynamic" that underlies the early history of the church in England (15-16). That tradition possessed tremendous authority in early Anglo-Saxon culture is evident from Hollis' reading of the Boniface correspondence. Boniface's need to ask Rome for guidance in matters of the acceptable degrees of kinship in marriage, Hollis argues, "suggests an uneasy awareness that the traditions of the church in England that [Boniface] was accustomed to accept as authoritative were in conflict with those of the church in Rome" (27). This awareness would be uneasy, because, as Karl Morrison notes in regard to theological traditions throughout the early Middle Ages, "tradition demanded an unbroken continuity ... it
required a complete chain of teachers, a steady transmission of authoritative doctrine from one generation to another" (77). Halbwachs writes, the church's authority relies on such continuity: "... whereas other groups are satisfied to persuade members that rules and arrangements remain the same during some limited period, the religious group cannot acknowledge that it is different now that what it was in the beginning or that it will change in the future" (153)

The creation, recognition and maintenance of continuities is most visible in the church, and religious traditions will be an important focus in my second and third chapters. For the time being it is important to note that social institutions that rely upon the perception that they enact certain cultural truths (whatever they may be) are required to at least maintain the appearance of stability. The truth after all—at least before the modern/post-modern period—is not generally looked upon as mutable. The power of the perception of a continuous tradition is therefore not confined to the purely religious sphere. Tradition's prestige and power spills over in non-ecclesiastical politics. To give another example from the Anglo-Saxon period, the Welsh monk Asser, in his hagiographically styled Life of King Alfred, attempts to appropriate the authority of the traditional pagan genealogy of the house of Wessex, the learned Latin tradition represented by the poet Sedulius, and the traditional Christian genealogy reaching back to Adam (Keynes and Lapidge 67-68). As John Hill notes, by connecting to this universal history, "the community of monks and religious becomes as West Saxon as the community of lords and retainers, in spite of the actual social relationships among the families descending from Æthelwulf" (47-48). While interesting in its own right, and a point to which I will return in chapter five, the use of genealogies points up an aspect of tradition that bears directly on its relationship to a society's kinship systems and gender order. Like most genealogical lists, Asser's genealogies list Alfred's ancestors father to son. The kingship, a position of
authority enabled and made more powerful by tradition, is transmitted through the line of male descent.

This model of cultural transmission along the male line has shaped and continues to shape the field of Anglo-Saxon studies. One need only examine the acknowledgment pages to the great critical works on Old English in the twentieth century to note the lines of descent from teacher to student (both of whom are almost invariably male). Each scholarly generation is seen to advance the study of Anglo-Saxon studies, but yet is somehow continuous—through the synthetic kinship of student teacher relationships—with the traditions of the field as a whole. But again, at this point the key conception is the idea that the perception of continuity underlies the entire construction of the social institution. Critical and cultural descent constructed on a male model of inheritance causes critics to interpolate themselves into the genealogical tradition, interpreting themselves as both sons and fathers. Because this practice operates largely unconsciously and is so closely interwoven with the wider cultural practices of the academy (from the relationships of dissertation directors to their advisees through the whole hierarchical structure of the English department and the university), it is difficult to examine with the scholarly methodologies familiar to Anglo-Saxonists. Contemporary critical theory, when coupled to an analysis of the workings of tradition, provides tools that may be used to see more clearly operations of tradition in both Anglo-Saxon culture and Anglo-Saxon studies that have too long been veiled by the very power of tradition to create the impression of continuity.

Tradition in Contemporary Theory

Surprisingly, analysis of tradition as tradition is scarce in contemporary critical theory. While there runs a stream of thought about tradition from the New Critics through Harold Bloom and into the work of post-structuralist critics who have engaged Bloom’s work,
engagement with tradition by post-structuralist or postmodern critics tends to re-inscribe
Hannah Arendt's equation of tradition with authoritarianism. Tradition, Arendt writes:
"preserved the past by handing down from one generation to the next the testimony of the
ancestors, who first had witnessed and created the sacred founding [of the culture] and then
augmented it by their authority throughout the centuries" (124). Thus the ideology of
authority depends on tradition, and tradition simultaneously enables the production of
authority. Louis Renza is perhaps representative of critics who take Arendt's thought to
heart; he suggests that an "entrenched traditionalist view of literary influence" has
"authoritarian implications" (199), and that the influence of tradition must therefore be
resisted. Tradition seems to have become equated with a set of undesirable ideologies and
thus discounted, denigrated or ignored. For example, Roger Webster locates concern with
tradition in the criticism of T.S. Eliot, F.R. Leavis and I.A. Richards and asserts that these
critics' view of tradition is emphatically "untheorized." Webster draws upon Terry
Eagleton's work to argue that the critical practice of New Critical "traditionalists" leads to
"mystification" of the "ways in which judgments are reached and literary texts 'placed' in a
certain order," thus "naturalizing... the cultural and historical implications of such criticism"
(11-15). Given the fierce political struggle between post-structuralists and "traditionalists"
during the 1980s, it is not surprising that post-structuralist and postmodern critics would
denigrate the use or value of tradition and its study. What is surprising is that given the
victory of post-structuralism in the theory wars and the establishment of a literary-critical
hegemony (albeit a fractured and fractious one) in literary study, critical theorists have not
turned their array of useful epistemological technologies to the task of determining the ways
in which traditions operate. Rather, they have tended to avert their critical gazes from "the

8 The work of A.J. Minnis examines the connection of authorship, authority, authoritarianism and
tradition in medieval contexts. See, for example, Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary
Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages.
tradition they have conveniently totalized so that it can be dismissed and denounced" (Frantzén 1990 216).

This is not to say, however, that post-structuralist or postmodern critical tools and technologies can not be used to examine tradition. Michel Foucault, one of the theorists most influential in contemporary literary studies, provides various epistemological methods for examining, questioning and complicating an analysis of the workings of tradition. Foucault provides a framework for analyzing the functions of validation and promulgation necessary for an individual, culture or institution to recognize traditions. When augmented with the gender theory of Judith Butler (particularly her notion of constrained performativity), and selections from the work of Foucault's and Butler's strong influences, Claude Lévi-Strauss and Luce Irigaray, Foucault's conceptions of the creation of truth through power can guide an analysis of the workings of tradition as seen in both Anglo-Saxon culture and Anglo-Saxon studies.

As is clear from my discussion in the previous section, tradition takes on many of the attributes of both truth and power as these two problematic terms are discussed by Foucault. Every society, Foucault writes:

has its own regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (72-73).

Substitute "tradition" and "traditional" for Foucault's "truth" and "true" and the above passage describes the operation, persistence and creation of tradition. The persistence of tradition is bound up with recognition mechanisms that determine whether or not any given custom, behavior or institution is traditional. This mechanism (or "regime") must police the boundaries of what is and is not traditional, just as on a more general level there must exist, Foucault argues, "mechanisms and instances which enable one to
distinguish true and false statements." These mechanisms are productive of tradition; not only do they police its boundaries; they are in fact essential for its creation. Although traditions may exist when they are not recognized, they cannot operate the same ways as they do when they appear to be chosen.

This view of traditions suggests that continuities of behavior across time are socially- and politically-manufactured perceptions (unconscious as they may be) rather than genetic lineages. Foucault says as much in "Nietzche, Genealogy, History," asserting that a "genealogist" of history will discover "not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that [things] have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms" (78). In other word, the perception of continuity so important to the authority of tradition is only that, a perception. Rather than being continuous and unchanged, things that appear to be traditional are in fact cobbled together from disparate sources.

Here Foucault (perhaps unconsciously) replicates some of the ideas of Martin Luther, another significant heretic who doubted the unchangeable and continuous nature of traditions. In a recognition analogous to Foucault's, Luther saw the "chain of witnesses" of church teaching as having deviated from the true teachings of Christ. That is, the perception of continuity of Christian practice was only a perception, the actuality of practice having deviated significantly from the point of origin. Luther thus rejected the notion of the supernatural authority of the papacy because he recognized that church practices had changed markedly over time, and therefore denigrated these changed customs and the doctrine that intellectually justified them as mere "Menschensatzungen" ("human traditions"), which could never possess the true authority of God's timeless and unchanging truth (Headley 51). Unlike Luther, Foucault does not see the source of traditional practice in God's truth. He calls into question the continuous nature of traditional practices while being relatively unconcerned that such practices may have deviated from a pure origin.
Foucault also extends his analysis beyond the traditions of the church. Both he and Luther read tradition as produced by social interaction and the use of power by individuals and institutions, and both were less than enthusiastic about its value. The recognition, validation, and preservation of traditions is a profoundly socio-political process, and the political nature of this process is often obscured by a lack of historical knowledge. To give a brief example from contemporary literary study, conflict over the content of the "canon" of great literary works has been at heart a discussion over the proper authority of past critical practice in determining current pedagogy. The historical fact that the canon has changed in the past has served as potent rhetorical ammunition for those who would allow the canon to evolve rather than remaining static (Guillory 1990 239-40). Additionally, analysis of the political purposes of individual works in the canon, the ways they are placed there or removed, and the political underpinnings of the very existence of the canon itself all serve to indicate that the appearance of timeless continuity is in fact a rhetorical and authoritative device adopted for the purpose of pursuing political ends (Guillory 1993 3-83). But for all the genealogical work showing specific historical lineages for cultural practices, for all the "accidents, minute deviations—or conversely, the complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and to have value for us" (Foucault 81), some essential perception of continuity of behavior across the generations nevertheless seems to remain.

"Those things that continue to exist and to have value for us"—"ce qui existe et vaut pour nous" (1971 152)—is a good first-approximation definition of tradition viewed synchronically. But Foucault's use of the pronoun "us" in this sentence is surprising, for in the midst of the relentless diachronic analysis that characterizes this phase of Foucault's work he constructs—with one pronoun—a synchronic community with shared perceptions and values. Foucault thus replicates the effect of the truth claims of traditions to established an assumed continuous community. This strange shift in perspective may be an example of
a submission to temptation in what Geoffrey Harpham identifies as Foucault's "ascetic" struggle with the "unities, continuities, syntheses and idealizations" that "haunt" his philosophical projects (221). Certainly the construction of a community that values "things that continue to exist" goes against the grain of nearly all the overt political efforts of Foucault throughout his lifetime (Halperin 1995 156-62). That Foucault succumbs to this temptation suggests not only the power of traditions to make themselves valued, but also the impossibility of performing a purely diachronic analysis of living tradition. This is not to say that diachronic analysis is impossible (it is in fact essential), only that it cannot be divorced from an understanding of what tradition means and does in any given moment as well as what it has done and has meant in the past.

The critical practice of identifying and then questioning unstated or unexamined binary oppositions has perhaps become a scholarly cliché. Yet my brief examination of tradition's ability to confuse the diachronic / synchronic distinction shows that tradition manages to straddle, or at least complicate, some significant divides. Claude Lévi-Strauss identified nature / culture, "the raw and the cooked" (1964 28), as the most fundamental structural opposition in human cultural life. Traditions would seem to be entirely on the cultural end of this binary opposition: they are clearly behaviors although (pace orthodox postmodernists) some may have instinctual roots. Yet traditions often operate unconsciously; they seem beyond the control of human actors; they seem absolutely necessary for civilization in any form. Strangely, then, tradition is akin in operation to the incest taboo which, Lévi-Strauss noted with consternation, is clearly not natural (a taboo is by definition cultural, and the incest taboo works to inhibit "natural" drives or desires) and yet seems a universal of human civilizations (1963 50-51 and 1985 142). So too traditions, though wholly or mostly cultural, seem to tend towards the natural, the permanent, the fecund, self-generating pole of the nature/culture binary. Traditions align themselves this way because they are able to reproduce or be reproduced. While fully embedded in the
social world, while obviously products and producers of culture, traditions nevertheless are able to reproduce themselves. How this reproduction is accomplished is one of the central question of this study.

This ability for traditions to reproduce themselves explains, I believe, the responses of Foucault and Butler, another important theorist whose ideas may shed more light on the operations of tradition. For Butler, traditions of social relations form "the compulsory order of sex/gender/desire," an order that includes the incest taboo and works to structure all other perceptions and behaviors within a culture (6). A society's gender order is something always-already present and (to use my earlier terms) transmitted through the repetition of social behaviors across multiple generational boundaries. This transmission is continued, according to Butler, through "constant repetition" of the logic, metaphysics and naturalized ontologies of the "power regimes of heterosexism and phallogocentrism." Repetition is "the mechanism of the cultural reproduction of identities" (32). I interpret the gist of this quotation to be very close to my bare-bones definition of tradition: behavior that is replicated across generational boundaries; behavior that is reproduced. This behavior includes "compulsory heterosexuality," which is "the instrument of reproduction" (32). Butler, here interpreting Monique Wittig, does not separate biological from cultural reproduction, or, more accurately, she moves all reproduction into the cultural category, thus eliminating or at least blurring the nature / culture opposition.

Butler is of course interested in very specific traditions, those relating to a culture's gender order. She views these traditions as central to culture; bound up with the incest taboo and taboos against homosexuality, they "produce identity along grids of an idealized heterosexuality" (135). That is, the sorts of identities that are possible within a given order

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9 In this case the obnoxious typographical practice of highlighting the dual nature of a word through parentheses might perhaps be justified. "(Re)production" points out the cultural process that Butler describes here, though she does not in this case use the typographical convention.
of gender and sexuality work to reproduce themselves by reproducing the socio-cultural matrix in which they exist and which give them meaning. Later in *Gender Trouble*, Butler goes so far as to link the perpetuation of the gender order with the continued existence of a culture: "gender is a project which has cultural survival as its end" (135). If we view the gender order as one (crucially important) traditional social structure, we see the importance of the persistence of tradition for cultural survival. That is, if a society's gender order is modified, the society as a whole—the entire network of social relations—is changed. Similarly, a change in or loss of a society's traditions creates a different society. Tradition is not the same as culture; it exists within the larger cultural field. But traditions are so integral to culture that their modification lead through expanding ripples of interconnected effects to changes in the whole cultural system.

Even in the pre-cultural world of the macaques, in a process that I see as analogous to the introduction of a new technology or system of social relations into a human society, the adoption of new individual behaviors, or the loss of old ones, often leads to changes in the social hierarchy of the troop (Kawai 16-19). Gender order, the reproduction of traditions, social hierarchies and (in its broadest sense) technology interpenetrate in the web of power relations that we recognize as a specific culture. Butler notes that the "disciplinary production of gender produces a false stabilization of gender in the interest of heterosexual construction and regulation of sexuality within the reproductive domain" (135). That is, against the constant pressure of change, a (traditional and replicated) gender order works to preserve certain power relations that are essential to the continued influence of specific social interests and the creation and re-creation of certain identities.

The step from gender theory and psychology to politics is, therefore, not a large one. Given the intimate, dependent relationship of culture upon tradition, modifications and adaptations of traditions will be attempted by some interests and resisted by others. One need be neither scholar nor feminist to be familiar with the idea of "traditional gender
roles," a phrase that in its current political context dramatizes the nexus of tradition, culture and politics. Some feminist theorists, among them Luce Irigaray, set their figures of a utopian future against this ground of tradition (195-97). Butler herself uses the language of political struggle to express her frustration with tradition's persistence: she argues that although the repetitions that reproduce identities cannot be "stopped," some form of "subversive repetition might call into question the regulatory practice of identity itself" (32). Here I find Butler to be aligned with both Foucault and Luther in that she hopes that the recognition of even minute changes in the apparatus of replication ("subversive repetition") may call into question the authority of the perception of traditional continuity.

Butler's language points out the same aspects of tradition that Ralph Waldo Emerson and the amateur Anglo-Saxonist Thomas Jefferson so cordially disliked: its ability to regulate and reproduce identities, including political identities, across time and despite the best efforts of reformers. Thus even though they may be a site of struggle between differing institutional and individual interests, traditions are unlikely to be too grossly modified. The same may be said for the gender order. If the very fabric of identity and society rests upon such a set of relationships, change to these relationships will not be easily effected.

The social inertia that preserves traditions and the social structures they engender is a sticking point with many cultural theorists, particularly those who would reform society in the image of their political ideals. Frustrated reformers come to view this social inertia as the production of a "dominant" that suppresses or contains argument for radical change, and at times express their irritation with the persistence of tradition in terms that suggest a vast conspiracy of "repressive" interests (Kavanagh 309-11) exercising "hegemony" over culture (Webster 61-62). Jonathan Dollimore, a particularly apt example of such a frustrated radical, writes: "dissidence may not only be repressed by the dominant (coercively and ideologically), but in a sense actually produced by it, hence consolidating the powers which
it ostensibly challenges" (26).\textsuperscript{10} I think Dollimore intuits design or conspiracy where there is none. First of all, if the processes of suppression or containment are seen as attempts to ensure the reproduction of institutions and traditions, then it seems reasonable to suppose that social interests would indeed exercise their power to ensure this replication. Additionally, the key to the persistence of tradition is its ability to reproduce itself without the conscious intervention (though this intervention does, of course, occur) of specific individuals.

If tradition is able to reproduce itself, however, it does not do so in the same way humans reproduce themselves. In "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault genders inheritance masculine and comments upon its workings. Descent, he writes, is inscribed "in the debilitated and prostrate bodies of those whose ancestors committed errors. Fathers have only to mistake effects for causes and the bodies of their children will suffer" (82). As Asser's use of genealogies demonstrates, the process Foucault describes can also transmit positive social and physical conditions from ancestors to their descendants. In both cases, the social structure and the individual's place within it—structures and places that are traditional in the sense I have been using the word in this essay—are assumed to have been replicated across generational boundaries. Foucault's project is to show that while in retrospect the process of inheritance and descent is figured as smooth, evolutionary and flawless, it is in fact characterized by "accidents," "minute deviations," and even "complete reversals—the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exists and have value for us" (81). This project is necessary because genealogies are represented within culture as if their replication, like that of traditions themselves, is seen as continuous and proceeding from a pure origin.

\textsuperscript{10} Karl Popper effectively critiques the "conspiracy theory of society" in "Towards a Rational Theory of Tradition" (123-26).
This genealogical replication is figured as a masculine activity in Anglo-Saxon
textual culture, where, as I discuss more fully in chapter five, lineage is traced father to son.
Of course genealogy cannot operate without the assistance of women and, as I discuss in
chapter two, inheritance of land and moveable goods was not a wholly masculine
phenomenon in Anglo-Saxon England. Physical reproduction is at some stage a necessary
condition for any sort of cultural persistence or replication, and this obviously requires the
participation of both sexes. Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wempel suggest that women
were able to access social power through their role in physical reproduction throughout the
early Middle Ages: "a woman's opportunities to achieve a position of power through
marriage were increasingly enhanced as time went on" (131), thus complicating the
masculinist ideology of pure, linear replication so important to both lineage and tradition.
But, as should surprise no one, the reproductive power of women was harnessed and
controlled in the Anglo-Saxon period by masculine institutions that viewed their own
reproduction in ways similar to the model of traditional reproduction I have outlined above.
As Irigaray notes, such an appropriation of women's reproductive power is still required by
masculine institutions. Although mothers are necessary for patrilineal succession they
nevertheless are excluded from its relationships at a fundamental level:

Consider the exemplary case of father-son relationships, which guarantee the
transmission of patriarchal power and its laws, its discourse, its social structures.
These relations, which are in effect everywhere, cannot be eradicated through the
abolition of the family or of monogamous reproduction, nor can they openly display
the pederastic love in which they are grounded. They cannot be put into practice at
all, except in language, without provoking a general crisis, without bringing one sort
of symbolic system to an end (193).

Obviously there exist traditions that are passed mother to daughter or mother to
son, even in "patriarchal" societies. But Irigaray's analysis points out the ways dominant
discourse conventions work to either suppress these relationships, to assimilate them to the
father-to-son model, or to differentially value them. In *The Reproduction of Mothering*
Nancy Chodorow argues that in fact the replication of mother/daughter relationships across generational boundaries serves to reinforce the asymmetrical gender roles (173-211). To use Gayle Rubin's terms, the "sex/gender system" systematizes a set of feminine behaviors that are passed from mother to daughter and serve to organize the production of children as well as the production of economic and cultural relationships (168). Thus it seems reasonable to suggest that even while women do reproduce themselves traditionally, such reproduction is configured as masculine. That is, in order to reproduce within the discursive economy of tradition, individuals must imitate fathers, performing certain masculinely-gendered acts. In the remaining chapters of this dissertation I will show the ways in which this "masculine" mode of reproduction shapes both Anglo-Saxon culture and our interpretations of it, providing specific instances to flesh out the general model I have proposed.

Irigaray's highlighting of father-to-son transmissions and their unconscious cultural context can help illuminate the workings of traditions, for the arbiters of tradition find themselves fulfilling the cultural roles of both sons (when they receive a tradition) and fathers (when they pass it on). This action is, to use a term from Butler, a performative gesture, and its accomplishment takes place within a society's gender order. Because the replication of tradition, while certainly not a purely male accomplishment, is configured as if it were masculine, in order to accomplish cultural transmission and replication of and by traditions, individuals must imitate fathers and sons. In the following chapters of this dissertation I will demonstrate some of the ways Anglo-Saxons and their inheritors have performed these imitations.
Tradition as Tradition

What exactly are tradition and inheritance, then? Both can be seen as social processes, actions carried out by individuals in a culture as they pass behaviors across generational boundaries. While it seems inheritance is straightforwardly such a process, tradition's position is more complicated. Etymologically, tradition comes from the Latin traditio, a handing over, which in turn is from tradi, a variant of tradere (trans+dare), to give over. Edward Shils points out that "traditio was a mode of transferring the ownership of private property in Roman law" (16). Tradition is a gift that crosses generational boundaries, and as a gift, it is entwined with power relations, property rights, social custom and obligation. As Shils points out in one of the few philosophical works that discuss tradition qua tradition, "traditionality is compatible with almost any substantive content. ... Tradition is whatever is persistent or recurrent through transmission, regardless of the substance or institutional setting" (16).

Although tradition is not itself an institution, in any given manifestation it requires an institutional context. As an identifiable body of knowledge or code of behavior resistant to modification and possessed of social power, a tradition can be located in the actions of specific individuals. But while it is possible to locate the guardians or interpreters of tradition in time and space, tradition itself remains a product of the power relations between individuals and institutions even while it shapes those relationships. As Karl Popper argues in "Towards a Rational Theory of Tradition," traditions "take, as it were, an intermediate place in social theory, between persons and institutions" (133). Traditions mediate between individuals and institutions, but they require both for their existence. And tradition is not only produced by social operations; it also seems to have the ability, through its own operations within society, to produce truth and exercise power without seeming to be wholly under the control of any individual or individuals and (again, seemingly) according to
the perpetuation of a logic of its own. That is, tradition, or at least some traditions, appear to be motile phenomena not localized in any one particular political institution. In his analysis of the general operations of tradition, Pelikan discusses a particularly striking example of tradition's apparent freedom from any single institutional context:

It is, I think, a "self-evident truth" ... that, for more than nineteen centuries and in a great variety of cultures, Christians have been blessing bread and wine and celebrating the sacrament of the Eucharist nearly every day. If that is a self-evident truth, it is also a massive instance of continuity amid change, and a prime instance of the reality of tradition (48).

Pelikan's example serves to highlight two important aspects of tradition. First, due to tradition's generation as a productive relationship between individuals and institutions, it is difficult to pin down even the most narrowly circumscribed tradition to one specific institution or group of individuals. The natural objection to Pelikan's statement would be to argue that the institution of "the church" controls the blessing of bread and wine. "The church" is a sufficiently amorphous concept to make its invocation (in the vast expanse of time and space that Pelikan is discussing) at best a metaphorical usage similar to the more common expedient of treating "society" as a decision-maker. Thomas Sowell thoroughly demolishes this logical fallacy by pointing out the necessity of identifying specific decision-making units when examining social processes. "There is no one named 'society' who decides anything," Sowell writes, and the use of this metaphor occludes analysis of the "incentive structure" of various actual decision-making units (11-12). Likewise there is no institution or individual called "the church" that throughout the world and time completely controls the expression of the tradition of blessing bread and wine. There are, of course, many individual institutions and individuals who determine how exactly the Eucharist is celebrated and who is permitted to partake of it within the contexts that they control. These institutions strive to control the practice of the tradition of the Eucharist, but the very fact that they must so strive (by, for example, determining the proper age of a
communicant or setting up an educational program that must be completed before an individual may receive communion) indicates that the tradition of the Eucharist does not inhere in any one institution. If any one of the individual institutions struggling to control the Eucharist were to cease to exist, we would not consider the tradition of the Eucharist to have been substantially affected. It seems, therefore, that traditions (like individuals) are able to move from institution to institution. This freedom of movement suggests that traditions may be imminent even when not expressed. For example, were a religious sect that had eschewed the Eucharist to begin celebrating the sacrament, we would view the members of that sect as participating in the tradition of celebrating the Eucharist even if no members of the sect had previously been a part of Eucharistic celebrations in other institutional contexts. In other words, traditional patterns have the ability to be transmitted from institution to institution even if they are not transmitted directly through the exchange of individuals.

Pelikan's example of the Eucharist also points out the single most important aspect of tradition: its continuity. The fundamental conceit or mythology of tradition is that a specific cultural practice remains constant over time. A tradition is what it was and was what it is. Theorists (Foucault and Butler among them) and historians (Congar, Hobsbawm, Morrison) have attempted to puncture this conceit through close examinations of the ways traditions have changed over time, but there remains the perception even in the face of the accumulated evidence of change that some fundamental core of traditional practice remains consistent and continuous through time.

A less Foucaultian approach to the perception of traditional continuity would be to label this perception false consciousness, noting that "traditional" practices have varied widely over time, that traditions by no means have always been what they are now. But such an interpretation would demonstrate the synchronic importance of tradition even as it relied upon it. For traditions cannot be studied, examined, questioned or consciously
overturned if they are not recognized as being traditions, and in order for this recognition to occur there must exist something in a culture, some set of relations, some order of power and knowledge, that persists through history and has the ability to identify them as such. Or, to put the above in Foucaultian terms, the power of the perception of traditions (their apparent persistence across expanses of time) serves to construct them as true.

Popper suggests that traditions are passed along with a "silent accompanying text of a second-order character." In the case of the "scientific" tradition, Popper argues, this "second-order tradition was the critical or argumentative attitude" towards explanations for various phenomena (127). In non-scientific processes the second-order, silent tradition transmits the imperative to recognize traditions. That is, traditions must somehow be packaged in such a way that they are identified as such. If I may indulge in an unlovely computer-science metaphor: if a tradition may be represented as a data packet, the imperative to recognize it as a tradition is the identifying code that specifies to which application program the data belongs. The code and its reception by the program (which translates to the perception by a society that a practice is traditional and thus continuous) may be false-consciousness. It is certainly both Platonic and anti-nominalist. But the perception of traditional continuity nevertheless exists and propagates itself; it shapes cultures, institutions and individuals. In other words, the recognition process cannot be separated from the tradition, and this process is as relentlessly synchronic and as firmly situated in the present as the genealogical archeology of traditions is set in the past.

The ability to reproduce themselves gives traditions immense cultural power. Shils asserts that "traditions are not independently self-reproductive or self-elaborating. Only living, knowing, desiring human beings can enact them and reenact them and modify them" (14). But this statement confuses the simple fact of self-replication with the idea of an automatic, "natural" reproduction. Of course human beings enact the process of tradition. But, as Butler, Rubin, and Chodorow (among many others) have argued, the perpetuation
of the behaviors that traditions enact and the social relationships that engender those relationships can be reproduced without the conscious control or even the knowledge of any individual. F. A. Hayek's more nuanced examination of traditional replication more accurately explains the process:

The structures formed by traditional human practices are neither natural in the sense of being genetically determined nor artificial in the sense of being the product of intelligent design, but the result of a process of winnowing or sifting, directed by differential advantage gained by groups from practices adopted for some unknown and perhaps purely accidental reasons (156).

In the current humanistic scholarship, analogies to biological processes are suspect, and for good reasons. Yet Hayek's analysis of the process of replication suggests some connections to biological theories that I have found useful in developing my own explanations for and metaphors of tradition. I take the metaphorical basis of my explanation from the field of evolutionary biology with full knowledge that such a borrowing is suspect both to biologists themselves and to critics ostentatious in their displays of "progressive" ideology —although Michael Greenberg has used the Sociobiology of Edward O. Wilson (9-10). Postmodern criticism has not hesitated to borrow from contemporary mathematics and physics, though this borrowing has often led to significant errors. I hope my use of

11 For particularly telling examples of the use of scientific metaphors for the apparent purpose of avoiding any real thinking about their scientific content see the chapter entitled "The Realm of Idle Phrases" in Higher Superstition by Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt (78-106). For a careful and reasoned use of a mathematical metaphor applied to Anglo-Saxon studies see James Earl, Thinking about Beowulf (1-27).

12 For a candid description of the hysteria—including distortions of Sociobiology and ad hominem and even physical attacks on Edward O. Wilson and his co-authors—generated by Sociobiology among some hard-core Marxists in the 1970's, see Wilson's autobiography Naturalist (330-53). David G. Campbell provides useful historical background and a different view on the controversy in his review in Natural History (82-83).

13 For a thorough review of the failure of much of postmodern theory to understand, much less utilize contemporary science, see Gross and Levitt. To give one particularly egregious example, Steven Best, author of Postmodern Theory: Critical interrogations, begins an explanation of difference between "linear" and "nonlinear" mathematics thus: "Unlike the linear equations used in Newtonian and even quantum mechanics" (Best and Kellner 225 n. 5). As Gross and Levitt note:
biology will be less a caricature of scientific thinking. More importantly, I intend this metaphorical usage as strictly analogy, not as a manifestation (to borrow an arch phrase from Levitt and Gross) of the behind-the-scenes machinations of some mysterious "Zeitgeist Fairy" (55).

The first concept I wish to borrow from Evolutionary Biology is the key idea of differential reproduction through selection. This is a familiar (if often misapplied) concept often associated with "Darwinism," but was in fact borrowed by Darwin from nineteenth-century economics. Differential reproduction through selection is the idea that in an unequal or random distribution of various traits, those individuals or institutions which are possessed of traits which in their local context produce a better chance of survival will over time reproduce more frequently (and thus spread these locally valuable traits) than those not fortunate enough to possess them. In "Tradition: The Evidence of Biology" Peter Medawar argues for an analysis of tradition in terms of selection pressure. "Ordinary evolution is mediated by the process of heredity, [but] exosomatic "evolution" (we can call it systematic secular change) is mediated not by heredity but by tradition, by which I mean that the transfer of information through non-genetic channels from one generation to the next" (141).

In On Human Nature Edward O. Wilson suggests that the evolution of tradition and culture has in fact largely supplanted hereditary evolution in humans. "Cultural evolution is Lamarckian and very fast, whereas biological evolution is Darwinian and usually

"... whereas the fundamental equation of quantum mechanics (the Schrödinger equation) is what is technically known as a linear partial differential equation, the Newtonian laws of celestial mechanics are expressed by a decidedly nonlinear system of ordinary differential equations... " (Gross and Levitt 97-98).

Hayek notes: "a nineteenth century social theorist who needed Darwin to teach him the idea" of differential reproduction through selection "was not worth his sale" (1982 23).

It is important to recognize that the fact of survival and reproduction conveys no moral or metaphysical value upon an organism, culture or individual. Selection chooses those individuals that are best adapted for their local conditions, not those approaching some Platonic or moral ideal.
very slow" (78). Because behavioral characteristics acquired in one generation can be passed on to children in toto, the information encoded in human behavior evolves at a much faster rate than the information encoded in DNA. Medawar argues that it is the development of cultural traditions that can be passed on to offspring that has allowed the human race to become as astonishingly successful (in survival and biological terms) as it has become since the time of Homo Erectus: "Tradition is, in the narrowest technical sense, a biological instrument by means of which human beings conserve, propagate and enlarge upon those properties to which they owe their present biological fitness and their hope of becoming fitter still" (142).

But cultural evolution by means of differential reproduction due to selection is merely a Panglossian cliché without an examination of the specific conditions in which "fittest" is determined. That is, the only criteria for determining if a tradition is "fit" is that tradition's survival. Therefore what survived must have been fit. The circularity of the argument is obvious. To avoid Panglossism, therefore my second borrowing from evolutionary biology is that of the "adaptive landscape," a concept introduced by the neo-Darwinist Sewall Wright in 1932 (Weiner 152). The physical and behavioral morphology of animal populations is continuously changing through the mechanism of differential reproduction due to natural selection, these changes lead through the depths of geological time to continuous improvements in structure, eventually approaching some optimum for local conditions. If that point of optimality (i.e., superiority to other designs) is imagined as the summit of a mountain, "the slopes around the summit represent designs that are slightly inferior to the design right at the peak. The valleys far below represent designs that are fatally inferior to the design at the peak" (Weiner 151-52). But the "geography" of the adaptive landscape is continuously changing, "certain of the high places are gradually being depressed and certain of the low places are becoming higher" (Wright 362). A species
whose peak rises will begin adapting to the changed environment; in metaphorical terms, it will begin moving up the mountain until it reaches the peak.

Species have a simple heuristic by which they seek the mountaintops: only move up. Each step, no matter how small, must be higher than the position in which the species is "standing." This heuristic, called "hill-climbing" by cognitive psychologists, is very safe: a species evolves in a direction less adaptive for its local condition because less-favorable changes will be eliminated from the population by differential reproductive success. Changes for the worse are generated when a species is moved from its own peak, or the geography may be changed underneath it, through outside forces. But the hill-climbing heuristic has one fatal drawback: a far higher peak may exist on the species' mountain, but if the particular spot on which the species is standing is the highest local area (if the species would have to step down a few feet before going up many), the species never moves and fails to take advantage of the higher peak.16

Traditions, of course, are not super-organisms and thus do not literally evolve and compete in the same terms as flesh and blood creatures, but they do change and adapt in reaction to competitive pressure. I propose that the evolution of traditional structures in a society follows (in a metaphorical process) a hill-climbing pattern. Whatever traditions are in place at any given time are, by definition, satisfactorily adaptive for that society. Were they not, the society would collapse and the traditions disappear. But while these traditions may be satisfactory, they are not necessarily optimal. A brief excursus into natural history can illustrate (metaphorically) why.

Fortunately for humans (else housecats might rule the earth) animals of the order Carnivora lack opposable thumbs. Pandas (Ailuropoda melanoleuca), however, those attractive black and white "bears," appear to have thumbs with which they strip the leaves

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16 For a cognitivist analysis of the hill-climbing heuristic see Hayes 31-35.
away from bamboo stalks. Despite their herbivorous habits, Pandas are unquestionably members of Carnivora—although they are as closely related to raccoons as they are to bears. Where did they get their thumbs? As Stephen Jay Gould notes, the panda's "thumb" is not a finger at all but a modified protrusion of the radial sesmoid (wrist) bone. Although pandas "needed" thumbs after adopting an all-bamboo diet, they (and the process of evolution) had to make due with the structures already present in the ancestral bodyplan. Thus a protrusion in the wrist evolved into a rather clumsy "thumb" even though a true thumb, like that possessed by primates, would be more effective for the panda's needs (1980 21-26). The panda's "thumb" sits at the highest point of its local peak; a true thumb occupies much loftier altitudes, but the panda cannot get from one place to the other. Evolution is a hill-climbing process contingent upon the history of an organism.17

Tradition also operates within historical contingency, and its hill-climbing mode of change likewise produces structures that are only locally optimal (taking local to mean both geographic and temporal) and often clearly inferior to other possible configurations. Given any number of criteria for determining optimality, a reconfiguration of social structure, entailing as it would the wholesale replacement and modification of traditions, might well generate a society closer to some optimum. But if these changes necessitate a move away from the current adaptive peak they will be at least resisted if not prevented. This fundamental heuristic leads to the frustration of those who would remake society, individual (to use Gross and Levitt's sympathetic summarization) possessed of "a commitment to the idea that fundamental political change is urgently needed and can be achieved only through revolutionary processes rooted in a wholesale revision of cultural categories" (3).

17 For an even more radical view of contingency in evolutionary change and human history, see Gould's Wonderful Life. One of Gould's exempla, the famous "replay" scene in Frank Capra's It's a Wonderful Life, which illustrates the ripple effects of historical contingency, should be familiar to most readers (285-292).
That traditions remain stable in the face of such pressures testifies to the power of the perception of continuity as well as the apparent social utility of tradition. That is, the desire to reform traditions that are perceived as maladaptive or unjust has a long pedigree and a tradition of its own. Gerhard Ladner notes that in the history of Christianity, for instance, from which arises the historical teleology of twentieth-century social reformers, even those violently opposed to Christianity itself, the idea of reform ... contains an essential element [of] multiplicity involving prolongation and repetition ... (Ladner 32, his emphasis).

Why are traditions so persistent? Alfred Whitehead wrote that "civilization advances by extending the number of important operations which we can perform without thinking about them" (50). "Important operations which we can perform without thinking about them" is also a good description of tradition situated in a social context. Hayek extends Whitehead's aphorism thus:

We make constant use of formulas, symbols and rules whose meaning we do not understand and through the use of which we avail ourselves of the assistance of knowledge which individually we do not possess. We have developed these practices and institutions by building upon habits and institutions which have proved successful in their own sphere and which have in turn become the foundation of the civilization we have built up (520).

It should thus be no surprise that it is difficult to change traditions: they perform valuable functions within a given social order. Inbuilt mechanisms of replication, which I examine more closely in chapters three and six, are transmitted with traditions and inextricably built into them. The mechanisms ensure that traditions and much of the social matrix surrounding and supporting them are reproduced. The sentiments behind Pelikan's call not to make an "idol" of tradition by making its "preservation and repetition of the past

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18 For an examination of the descent—from Judeo-Christian tradition, through Hegel to Marx—of the dialectical movement of history, as well as the ways in which Marxism was admixed with messianic thought, see Berdyaev.
an end in itself" (55), must exist in dialectical tension with the essential nature of tradition: persistence. Repetition as an end in itself is at the very heart of the continued existence of tradition. Therefore, when traditions are changed, the impetus for modification often comes from outside the traditional structures of the society. Famine, war, pestilence, climactic change, and the introduction of new technologies all change traditions, although many traditions are, as Albert Lord noted in regard to South Slavic epic song, remarkably persistent even through catastrophic social and political upheaval (14-17). To return to the metaphor of the adaptive landscape, external pressures can in special circumstances allow traditions established on one peak to leap to another. Such peak-jumping occurs when a culture imports specific traditions or technologies that have been developed in other circumstances—for instance the importation of Carolingian administrative techniques into Anglo-Saxon England. But such cross-peak importation of tradition is the exception rather than the rule.

Tradition is persistent because it encodes essential social practices, preserving them with a minimum amount of information. The fundamental command for the reproduction of tradition can be schematized thus: "You must do X because we have always done X." Note that for nearly every tradition only one piece of information needs to be retained. For a hypothetical example, assume a pre-scientific society without sophisticated textual record-keeping and preservation. In this society, efficient agricultural practices are necessary for physical (and hence cultural) survival. The most effective agricultural practices have been discovered by trial and error: for example, one farmer noticed that crops growing in the vicinity of chrysanthemums were less frequently damaged by pests. That farmer then planted chrysanthemums throughout his fields, reducing his crop losses. Other farmers in the community learned of this successful practice and copied it, thus increasing their own

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19 According to John Miles Foley, traditional oral epic persists in Bosnia-Herzegovina even in the midst of the Balkans war (Foley, personal communication).
yields. They then transmitted to their descendants this information necessary for successful crop production, probably by simply telling them of their discovery: "individual memory is made social by talking about it" (Fentress and Wickham ix-x). The practice of pest-damage control through the use of chrysanthemums can be encoded as a two-part statement, an imperative coupled to an explanation: (1) "plant chrysanthemums amongst your crops" (2) "because they keep pests away."

In order for the cultural practice of chrysanthemum planting to replicate itself across generational boundaries, these two pieces of information must be effectively transmitted across those same boundaries; chrysanthemum-planting must be encoded in what James Fentress and Chris Wickham call "social memory." But, as anyone who has ever played a game of "telephone" knows, upon each transmission there is some finite chance that information will be degraded. Given enough transmissions the information becomes corrupted beyond usefulness. The greater the number of bits of information in the message, the greater the chance for corruption. The two-part chrysanthemum instruction is thus more likely to be corrupted than part one by itself. Such a corruption might be in the form of a deletion of part one of the instruction, in which case the behavior would disappear. It could also come in the form of an addition to the second part of the statement: "plant chrysanthemums amongst your crops because flowers keep pests away." It seems no great stretch to imagine a person receiving this instruction and deciding to plant roses instead of chrysanthemums. When the roses (lacking the pyrethroids that make chrysanthemums noxious to pests) failed to protect the crops, the entire behavior might be subsequently abandoned. As Fentress and Wickham note, "information that is context dependent ... will tend to be lost whenever that context changes;" whereas "what can be freed from surrounding context and remembered on its own will tend to pass intact from one social context to another" (72). Thus if the imperative is constructed: "plant chrysanthemums amongst your crops because we have always done this," (the fundamental command for the
reproduction of tradition), the instruction is only subject to degradation in part one. Part
two remains the same for all traditional behaviors in the culture, and is thus safe from
degradation. Given a great number of transmissions, behaviors encoded in the traditional
form are more likely to persist than those encoded as an explanation.

I want to resist, however, the temptation to view all traditionally-encoded behaviors
as socially valuable.20 Recall again the metaphor of the adaptive landscape. What was
adaptive for one peak at one time may not be optimal for other conditions, yet organisms
are "stuck" with their adaptations. Likewise many traditions that were once valuable or
essential at time \( T_0 \) may be useless or even mal-adaptive at time \( T_{[x]} \), yet they are still
conserved. The important distinction is between information that is "true" and that which
is "mnemonically stable" (Fentress and Wickham 81). Though traditions may be constantly
tested for their adaptive value in local contexts, they cannot necessarily be un-encoded from
the other important cultural information with which they are mixed. Why do traditions,
then, encode potentially unnecessary behavioral practices in addition to those absolutely
essential for cultural survival? Why are some non-essentials "mnemonically stable"? It seems
reasonable to suspect that preservation mechanisms in a culture will conserve more than
merely the "essential" traditions (however these may be defined) in order to assure that what
is essential is preserved. By casting a wide net, and by the inability of observers within the
culture to prospectively determine which traditions are essential and which are not, many
behaviors not essential for survival will nevertheless be preserved (here I interpret
remembering as a behavior). Yet these behaviors may be, as Maurice Halbwachs has
argued, and as I shall demonstrate in chapters four and five, essential for the preservation of
group (and individual) identity (80).

20 Whatever definition of "socially valuable" a scholar subscribes to will of course determine his or her valuation of traditions.
One might argue that in societies with efficient record-keeping, degradation of information encoded in tradition is less likely to occur and that these societies should possess weaker mechanisms for the preservation of tradition. "What the memory of man lets slip, the circumscription in letters preserves," wrote Æthelred I (cited by Lerner 10). A manuscript can be read many, many times before it needs to be replaced, and the information encoded therein does not change with each reading. But, as Fentress and Wickham note, even in the later Middle Ages "the set of legal and social customs, rights and duties by which a community lives were normally held in that community's collective memory. As important as it was, writing was envisioned as an adjunct to memory" (8-9). And even in a fully-literate society, the accessing of traditional materials via written records generates a new set of problems. Written records need to be read and, more importantly, interpreted in order for the behaviors they encode to be enacted within a culture. Yet it is far from a "natural" behavior for a person to look up information in the textual archive. In order for traditions of behavior to be preserved through written records, then, a parallel tradition of accessing those records on a regular basis must persist within the culture. But of course this tradition of behavior is qualitatively no different from that of planting chrysanthemums amongst the crops, and it is thus subject to all the same difficulties in transmission and retention. Written records do not eliminate the value of socially-encoded traditions, and even our own highly-literate (or even post-literate) society is significantly dependent upon traditions and their replication. Written and non-written traditions are dependent upon each other, as Saint Paul suggests when he does not privilege one over the other in his second letter to the Thessalonians: "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by letter" (2:15).

In summary, traditions persist because are valuable to a social order (and are thus preserved by that order) because they are efficient means of preserving and ensuring access to important information. They resist change because they incorporate a "hill-climbing"
heuristic in their conceptual geography of adaptive peaks. They encode information or behaviors that may not be essential to survival because their replicative mechanisms cast a wide net. Because traditions are able to encode and preserve so much culturally valuable information, they are widely known within a culture and possess great social authority.

Conclusion and Questions

I have come far in time and place from the behavior of macaques on a tiny islet. The simple rules of tradition and inheritance that were so clearly illustrated by Imo' and her troop have become complicated and tangled as human language, society, technology, politics, culture and history have been brought into the picture. From a vantage point in modern or post-modern culture, it is difficult to theorize tradition. "Modernity is often characterized in terms of consciousness of the discontinuity of time: a break with tradition, a feeling of novelty, of vertigo in the face of the passing moment" writes Foucault (39). But tradition is not merely a backdrop against which modern society moves, nor is it the ground against which figures of innovation are distinguished. If the conceit of tradition is the imagination of continuities where there are none, then the conceit of modernism (and postmodernism) is an overemphasis in the degree of rupture between the present and the past. Despite our modernity, traditions still shape our lives. In the subsequent chapters of this dissertation I propose to answer five questions about the way traditions work that I will attempt to answer in each of the subsequent five chapters. First, what are the technological, administrative, legal, social and cultural mechanisms by which tradition is maintained? Second, what is the institutional context of traditional replication? Third, how do institutional imperatives for the reproduction of tradition influence human thought and behavior in the wider culture outside of specific, tradition-dependent institutions? Fourth, what underlying attitudes towards tradition and its reproduction shape the imaginative life
of a culture and pave the way for traditional reproduction? Finally, what is it about tradition (politically, socially, culturally, theologically or personally) that causes people, ourselves included, work to reproduce it?
CHAPTER II
THE WILL TO ENDURE

Et omnis qui reliquit domum vel fratres aut sorores aut patrem aut matrem aut uxorem aut filios aut agros propter nomen meum centuplum accipiet et vitam aeternam possidebit.

And every one who one has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wives or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.

—Matthew 19: 29

A tradition, I have argued, is made up of a series of inheritances. The maintenance of traditions, therefore, is bound up with a culture's mechanisms of inheritance, the rules by which identity, power and property are passed from generation to generation. In this chapter I examine the most obvious example of inheritance in Anglo-Saxon culture: the transactions recorded by the corpus of written wills.

Wills were not ubiquitous in Anglo-Saxon England. They record the doings of a small subset of aristocratic individuals who had the power and desire to use the technology of writing to record and transmit their wishes for the disposal of their property. Undoubtedly the great majority of individual Anglo-Saxons never had the opportunity to prepare a written will; folk customs now irretrievably lost governed matters of inheritance. But the documentary record of those Anglo-Saxons who did rely on wills illustrates much about the culture's methods of perpetuating its structure of social relationships and the identities of the individuals who inhabited them. The church offered eternal life to believers, but for some aristocratic Anglo-Saxons this promise was not enough, or at least

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required augmentation. The written will allowed an Anglo-Saxon a form of persistence after death that could be confirmed (unlike the heavenly afterlife) in social relationships on this earth. This desire for influence and the persistence of identity after death is the foundation of the reproduction of traditions.

Michael Sheehan's *The Will in Medieval England* (1963) is the first sustained argument of the notion that in Anglo-Saxon England the will marks a nexus of various institutions, the most important of which is the Church:

In many ways the history of the will in England is a supreme example of the part played by Christianity in the growth of western civilization; it illustrates how the injection of a religious notion into society was able to enrich and develop several secular institutions, while at the same time involving religious leaders in the secular affairs until their activity was out of all proportion to the original purpose of their intervention (3).

If Sheehan's claim is more than rhetorical, if the wills are indeed a "supreme example" of Christian influence in the manufacture of culture, then an examination of the wills in their social, political and institutional contexts should shed light on the way the Church made culture in the Anglo-Saxon period. The wills do demonstrate a confluence of institutional interests and the ways these interests interacted in the development of a cultural practice (the making of written wills) that still exists today. These traditions are also bound up with the processes of dying, inheritance, and post-mortem commemoration that are central to the operations of wills in the Anglo-Saxon period. That is, they illustrate a desire to confirm social identity in life and retain it after death.

Previous to Sheehan scholars had viewed the corpus of wills as a lode of information from which might be quarried facts, and they therefore have (generally) failed to examine them as examples of a coherent discursive practice. But when so viewed the wills shed light on various Anglo-Saxon cultural institutions, most important among them the monastery during and after the Benedictine reform. Placing the production of wills in a monastic context illuminates some of the important social and gender relations of Anglo-Saxon
society, a set of relations that are in part explained by the model of tradition I presented in chapter one. The wills thus illustrate some of the ways the monastic culture of the tenth-century Benedictine reform worked to generate and control cultural reproduction.

The close observance of the Rule of St. Benedict engendered by the reform led to changes in the ways monks could reproduce themselves. These changes were bound up with the practice of inheritance—both inside and outside the monastery. Wills show how the masculine, same-sex reproduction of culture that is at the heart of reformed monastic life worked to situate the monastery in its social and cultural matrix and to influence the beliefs and behavior of Anglo-Saxons who were not monks. In their production of wills individual Anglo-Saxons, in order to preserve their desires after their deaths, had to imitate fathers by entering into the traditions of father-figures in the monastery. This chapter examines the benefits, the costs, and the eventual results of these imitations.

The Anglo-Saxon Will: Definitions and Critical History

Scholars are in general agreement as to the differences between a will and the two other major forms of property documentation in Anglo-Saxon England, the diploma and the writ. According to Simon Keynes, a diploma is "a solemn document by which an immunity was created and the possession of which was tantamount to possession of the land: its value was permanent." The transfer of the diploma from one individual to another marked the transfer of the actual land. A writ, on the other hand, simply indicated a change in land: "a writ is purely evidentiary: it announces that the conveyance of a privileged estate has been authorized, but its publication does not appear to represent the act of conveyance itself. A dispositive counterpart is required, and is supplied by the diploma" (1980 141-42). The will, in contrast, has both elements of dispositive and evidentiary power. While it was not a substitute for the diploma or landbook, a written will could be used in litigation as
evidence for an actual change of ownership (Sheehan 4-16). Even more significant, while
diplomas and writs were issued by the royal court, each will was created by a single person
or married couple. Although their implementation often required the permission of the
king, wills do record, in some measure, the desires of individual Anglo-Saxons (albeit as
these desires are mediated through legal and social conventions) rather than the dictates of
the court.

We are fortunate in possessing a substantial yet manageable corpus of testaments
from the Anglo-Saxon period. Depending upon which scholars are counting, there are
between fifty-five and sixty-two wills extant from Anglo-Saxon England.1 The majority of
these wills were first printed 1839-49 by J. M. Kemble in his Codex Diplomaticus Ævi
Saxonici. Benjamin Thorpe published with some additions Kemble's wills in 1865 in his
Diplomatarium Anglicum Ævi Saxonici, although, according to Whitelock, he included
"several documents which are technically not wills" (xlii). In 1866 E. Edwards published an
additional four wills in Liber Monasterii de Hyda, and W. de Gray Birch printed several wills
in his 1885-93 collection of charters, Cartularium Saxonnicum. In 1895 A.S. Napier and
W.H. Stevenson edited two more in The Crawford Collection of Early Charters, and F.E.
Harmer edited and translated twelve of the earliest wills in her 1914 Select Historical
Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries. Finally, in 1930, Dorothy Whitelock published
Anglo-Saxon Wills, the texts and translations of thirty-nine wills. After Whitelock's edition
a few additional wills were edited by A.J. Robertson in Anglo-Saxon Charters, and
Whitelock herself edited a second (and longer) manuscript of the Will of Æthelfgifu for the
Roxburghe Club in 1968.

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1 Sheehan (21 n. 11) and P. H. Sawyer (414-31) both enumerate fifty-nine documents in their lists of
wills. The most recent scholars to examine the wills, Brenda Danet and Bryna Bogoch claim a
corpus of sixty-two (100, 133). Because they do not list Sawyer numbers or make citations of all the
specific documents they consider, I have been unable to reconstruct with certainty their corpus.
Kathryn Lowe's unpublished 1990 dissertation (Cambridge) also lists a corpus of sixty-two wills that
is substantially the same as the one I use.
Surprisingly, in light of the monumental work done in editing the wills, non-editorial scholarship has been in the main limited to diplomatic, paleographic, or linguistic discussions. H. D. Hazeltine's *General Preface* to Whitelock's edition seems to have set the agenda for future critical studies.\(^2\) Hazeltine focuses on the place of wills in the development of later English legal history and is particularly concerned to establish that "while these present writings, by the accepted terminology of scholars, bear the name of 'wills,' they are not wills in the later juridical meaning of the term" (vii). Anglo-Saxon wills were the source or "germ" of later wills and are therefore "of great interest to the student of legal history" (vii). Hazeltine goes on to delineate the legal customs, both Latin and Germanic, from which the will arose. He also pronounces the dictum that "the will itself, in contrast with the writing which enshrines it, is a will declared orally in the presence of witnesses: the writing is merely the documentation of the oral will" (xv).

Sheehan's *The Will in Medieval England*, previously noted, is the only book-length critical treatment of the Anglo-Saxon wills (although nearly two thirds of the book treats post-Conquest material). Sheehan follows Hazeltine in tracing the juridical history of the will, although he is more careful to set this history in its ecclesiastical context. Sheehan's project is to show through the history of the will the influence of Christianity in the development of English civilization. He thus complicates the strictly legal history given by Hazeltine, showing the connections between wills, alms and notions of the afterlife (17). He also explains the relationship between wills and other sorts of gifts (28-30), making important distinctions between *post-obit* gifts (any transaction in which the transfer did not take place until the testator's death even though the gift may have been arranged long before), and gifts made *verba novissima*, that is, on the death-bed (31). He does not, however, expand his analysis of the effects of wills into the social, psychological or cultural

\(^2\) Hazeltine's remarks as to the evidentiary quality of wills are quoted or paraphrased without dissent in a number of influential general studies, including Greenfield and Calder's *New Critical History of Old English* (114) and Stock's *The Implications of Literacy* (48-49).
lives of Anglo-Saxons, instead focusing strictly on the historical development of the wills. Sheehan also does not inquire into specific political contexts for the wills. Although he makes the very large claim I have quoted on the first page of this chapter (that the wills exemplify Christianity's role in the growth of western civilization), his discussion of the will is constructed as an illustration of the evolution of a legal procedure rather than as a series of responses to political or social situations.

The scholars and textual critics who have edited wills, established their authenticity, and determined their manuscript contexts have tended to ignore the wills' social content. Three recent historians of Anglo-Saxon who examine the wills—Christine Fell and David Peltere—focus on the social and economic contexts of wills, using the documents to illuminate Anglo-Saxon social relations, but they do not discuss the structure of the wills themselves. Brenda Danet and Bryna Bogoch, who have investigated the Old English testaments most recently, perform a linguistic analysis of the corpus and document changes in the language of the wills over time. These two approaches, historical and linguistic, however, have yet to be satisfactorily combined.

In Women in Anglo-Saxon England, Fell combs the corpus of wills for information on the lives of female Anglo-Saxons. By examining the goods that women bequeathed to their inheritors, Fell is able to reconstruct something of the material culture of Anglo-Saxon women, including the types of household goods women might have possessed and the extent of the lands they controlled (44-45). She also uses the testimony of the wills to investigate the legal and social positions of women, arguing that the wills indicate that in matters of inheritance no "exclusive preference" was given to male children (61-97). Fell puts the evidence of the wills to the service of her argument that "the real evidence from

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3 Of course historians of Anglo-Saxon England have utilized the evidence of the wills in making larger historical claims. Such investigations, however, have not focused upon the wills as a corpus. In "Women and the Norman Conquest," for example, Pauline Stafford uses some Anglo-Saxon wills in her project of debunking the notion of a "Golden Age" for Anglo-Saxon women (23ff).
Anglo-Saxon England presents a more attractive and indeed assertive picture than previous views of women as oppressed and exploited in this time period (21). Fell is one of the few scholars to use the wills outside of a purely legal context. But because she views the wills as only a repository of information as to the specific social interaction and material property of Anglo-Saxons (that is, as a textual archive), she does not inquire into systematic relationships among the wills, or examine them as an inter-related community of documents.

In *Slavery in Early Medieval England*, Pelteret investigates social relationships revealed by the wills. Tabulating the numbers of slaves freed in various wills, Pelteret highlights the "use of the will as a means of manumission, thereby revealing the importance of testamentary acts in the decline of slavery" (110). He traces a steady increase in manumissions over time and in his analysis of the will of Æthelgifu (A.D. 980-990) argues that "the effect of testamentary manumission in the century and a half before the battle of Hastings... was immense" (119). Due to a concern for their own souls, upon their deaths Anglo-Saxon masters freed their slaves, and this resulting manumission led to "nothing less than the creation of a new socio-economic class which today we might call 'serfs'" (125). Pelteret's breakdown of manumitted or inherited slaves into occupation-groups also sheds light on social stratifications and the specific means of agricultural production. But like Fell, Pelteret does not address wills as evidence of a discursive practice, as a body of texts shaped to some degree by social and linguistic conventions.

Linguists Danet and Bogoch ignore the social contexts developed by Fell and Pelteret, focusing instead on the linguistic structures of the wills. Using the interpretive filter of speech-act theory, they search the corpus for evidence of what Walter Ong calls "oral residue," written evidence of past oral practice (Ong 115). They note that the wills contain many "meta-comments" about their own writing, thus indicating that (unlike modern documents) writing is not taken for granted as a mode of production for testaments
In addition, three out of five wills are cast in the voice of the testator, indicating that "testators and scribes were attempting to invest the written document with performative power" (112). The inclusion of curses in a number of wills also gives evidence for a performative aspect of the wills that contradicts the traditional view (espoused by Hazeltine, Sheehan and others) that the wills were only evidentiary, that is, that they only represented a record of the actual binding oral ceremony. Danet and Bogoch argue that—in speech-act theory terms—"the extra-linguistic arrangements for a fully-successful written performative act of bequeathing were not yet in place" (109-110). That is, the speech-act of bequeathing was not in and of itself powerful enough to enforce the testator's desires without the assistance of other social technologies. However, the linguistic construction of the wills indicates an attempt to give documents performative power. The inclusion of textual mechanisms to generate this power are more common in wills written towards the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, thus indicating a chronological development in the cultural practice of bequeathing (130).

Danet and Bogoch's work is particularly important in pointing out that wills are more than simple lists of land and possessions. By demonstrating that wills gain performative power over the course of the Anglo-Saxon period Danet and Bogoch make it possible to connect wills not only to legal codes and common law but to the institutions that controlled and produced textual culture—the monasteries. Previous scholarship has failed to examine the political and social influence of the monasteries on the written wills because monastic scribes have been viewed (in the context of the production of legal documents) as recorders rather than as producers of culture—except, perhaps, when monastic scribes in the later Middle Ages are seen as producing ersatz culture in the form of forged charters (Clanchy 249). But monks were not merely neutral stenographers of

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4 The remaining forty percent of the wills are cast in an impersonal voice, generally in the form of "X leaves the estate at Y to Z."

5 Danet and Bogoch's use of the term is not related to Butler's.
bequeathing ceremonies. As A. Campbell argued in his 1938 edition of the will of Badanoth Beotting, scribes did not simply write down what they heard; "they provided a framework" for the testator (134-35). In supplying such a framework (which included the sorts of gifts to be given, the potential recipients, and the legal structure of the bequest), in shaping the potentially inchoate desires of testators, monastic scribes were employing technologies of textual power—for example, curses, contingency plans and links to powerful secular institutions. That is, monastic scribes used their control over the practice of writing for the good of their own institutions at the same time that they attempted to gratify the desires of testators whose wishes they recorded, shaped, and attempted to fulfill.

The Institutional Context of Wills

Although evidence is exceedingly sparse—consisting only of a line or two in the always-questionable source of Tacitus—written wills do not appear to have been a pre-migration custom among the Anglo-Saxons. "Heredes tamen successoresque sui cuique liberi, et nullum testamentum" ("nevertheless each person's own children are his heirs and successors, and there is no testament") writes Tacitus in chapter 20 of Germania. Because of the wealth and social position of those individuals who caused the surviving documents to be written and the social and political interests of the scribes who wrote them—wills were more likely to record extraordinary rather than common circumstances ven centuries after the migration. Sheehan argues that "it seems certain that among the Anglo-Saxons recently settled in Britain the family succeeded to the possessions of a deceased householder. The manner of succession [to the possessions of the deceased] was regulated by custom ..." (23). Written charters and wills were "introduced into England in order to give security of possession to such bodies" as un-related families or religious communities who desired
written evidence in order to preserve the titles to their lands (Stenton 304; see also Greenfield and Calder 111).

Dorothy Whitelock notes that the existing Anglo-Saxon wills are in fact nearly all later (thirteenth- and fourteenth-century) copies by monastic scribes of earlier (and now lost) documents: only fifteen are preserved in contemporary form, and these are also nearly all of monastic provenance (1930 xli). Written wills could, of course, only be produced by literate individuals with access to writing supplies, operating in an institutional context.

Such a context could be found in two institutions in the Anglo-Saxon period—monastic scriptoria or a royal writing office. In 1935 Richard Drögereit demonstrated the existence of a secretariat attached to the royal court during the years 931-963, identifying the work of royal scribes from the reigns of Æthelstan, Edmund, Eadred, and Edgar (340-413). T.A.M. Bishop noted an additional royal scribe active in 956-57, during the reign of Eadwig, and Simon Keynes demonstrated that the royal secretariat endured throughout the reign of Æthelred, the years 978-1016 (17-55). It does not seem, however, that the wills were produced by such a chancery. George Brown suggests that "spurred on by the ecclesiastical reform, other non-monastic centers, such as cathedrals with secular canons, produced texts both in Latin and Old English" (1995 121), but these scribes were the exception rather than the rule and there is no specific evidence that they were associated with the wills. As far as our limited evidence can demonstrate, therefore, the wills are the products of monastic

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6 Lowe identifies twenty-three wills as pre-conquest (12-24).
7 The existence of this latter institution has been controversial—M. T. Clanchy, for example, sees the production of texts as purely monastic (17)—but is now generally accepted. In 1982 Eric John acknowledged that the evidence is complicated and unclear, but was willing to accept a chancery as possible (1982 167). More recently, in *English Caroline Script and Monastic History*, David Dumville accepts the presence of a chancery; he also views such an office as intimately connected with the monasteries (1-7).
8 The presence of most wills as copies in monastic cartularies makes impossible the identification of the scribes of the original documents. So while it is at least theoretically possible that some wills were written by chancery scribes, confirmation or refutation of this position is not currently possible.
scriptoria, which were, Seth Lerer argues, the only institutions "that could foster a culture of textuality" in Anglo-Saxon England (8).

Upon the fortunes of the monastery, therefore, depended the fortunes of wills, a link borne out by the distribution of Anglo-Saxon testaments which, as Sheehan observes, is "most uneven as to time and place" (23). Nearly all the wills come from between the middle of the tenth century and the Conquest, and nearly all owe their preservation to their containing bequests to the abbeys of Abingdon, Bury St. Edmunds, Christchurch and Winchester (Whitelock 1930 xli). Whitelock argues that written wills were more common than the existing manuscript distribution would indicate: "that great numbers of wills from Anglo-Saxon times have perished is shown not only by fairly frequent references in Anglo-Saxon documents from the ninth century onwards to wills no longer extant, but also by the distribution of those wills which have survived" (1930 xli).

No wills exist from the early period of monastic strength in the eighth century, but in the ninth and tenth centuries the number of extant wills tracks rather closely the power and influence of the monastic orders. Only four wills, those of Æthelnoth, the reeve Abba, Badanoth Beotting, and Dunn (S 1500, 1482, 1510, and 1514)9 can definitely be dated before King Alfred’s successful defense and rebuilding of his kingdom and the revival of textual production and learning that the king began (A.D. 878-892), and the vast majority of the wills (83%) come from between the middle of the tenth century and the Norman conquest—after the beginning of that revival of monastic power and prestige known as the Benedictine reform (A.D. 943-c.1020).10

In order to avoid the confusion that plagues other studies of the wills, I will refer to each document in multiple forms. Within the body of the dissertation I will use the name of the primary testator, and I will cite parenthetically any edition from which I draw Old English text as well as the appropriate number (preceded by a capital S) from Sawyer's Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography. A complete list of the Anglo-Saxon wills arranged in order of their probable dates of composition may be found in the Appendix.

Because we do not have single-year dates for a majority of the Anglo-Saxon wills it is impossible to construct a true stack histogram to represent them. Figure 1 attempts to represent the number of wills plotted against time, giving each will as a range of potential dates. It is important when
Wills are thus represent a distribution similar to the set of all Anglo-Saxon manuscripts. But their increased production—or increased likelihood of preservation—during and after the Benedictine reform is not merely the result of coincidence. The circumstances of the manuscript preservation of the wills as well as several specific political events link will-writing and preservation to the influence of monastic institutions. As Whitelock recognized, the great majority of Anglo-Saxon wills owe their preservation to their presence in cartularies of a few great monastic houses. Several of these cartularies are large codices, some containing as many as ninety folios. They include copies of charters, wills and grants dating, in the case of the Codex Wintoniensis, the cartulary for St. Swithin's at Winchester, as far back as 688. Most of the copies were made after the Anglo-Saxon period and before the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. The Winchester cartulary, for example, dates from 1130-1150 and the Sacrist's Register of Bury St. Edmunds from the late thirteenth to early fourteenth century (Davis 16, 120). It is reasonable to suppose that these cartularies preserve a good portion, if not all, of the wills which grant bequests to these abbeys. So while the corpus of wills is not in any way a scientific survey and cannot provide much information about bequests that did not go to the specific abbeys for which wills have been preserved, it can be used to examine materials diachronically and to determine if there are trends in the structure and content of bequests through time.

12 Cambridge, University Library, Ff 2. 33.
13 The cartularies may, of course, represent only a subset of a larger number of earlier wills that have been destroyed. In other words, rather than representing a continuously updated archive, the cartularies may have been produced in burst of scribal activity. They may therefore only record those texts which had fortuitously survived the depredations of the Viking invasions of the ninth century.
Key

Each box represents the range of possible dates for each will.
Numbers refer to the list of wills given in Appendix 1.

Figure 1. Anglo-Saxon wills arranged by approximate date of composition.
The most obvious of these trends is, as previously noted, that the number of wills extant from Anglo-Saxon England increases dramatically after 943—the year when King Edmund made Dunstan Abbot of Glastonbury (Knowles 31)—and remains relatively constant throughout the Benedictine reform. This increase in the use of wills of course corresponds with the production of all written materials during the reform, and a simple increase in manuscript production tells us little about the ways in which political events may have shaped the processes of inheritance. But a closer examination of the possible connections between reformed Anglo-Saxon monasticism and the production of texts strongly suggests linkage between the Anglo-Saxon wills and the specific monastic practices that became prevalent in England of the late tenth and early eleventh century.

The Benedictine reform (also known as the Benedictine revival) has been extensively documented by historians of Anglo-Saxon England. The reform arises out of the ashes of the Viking raids and general disorder of the ninth century. According to David Knowles, "Anglo-Saxon monasticism, whether considered as an institution or as a body of tradition with local habitation, had ceased to live by the time of Alfred" (24). According to Alfred’s revival of learning and education led to his founding two monastic houses, one of men at Athelney and one of women at Shaftesbury (Keynes and Lapidge 102-3). The monasteries of Athelney and the New Minster at Winchester—whose founding was actually carried out by Alfred’s son Edward the Elder—were staffed in part by monks from the continent. These

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14 There is no clear consensus as to the end of the Benedictine reform. Most scholars note two waves of reform, the first led by Dunstan, Æthelwold and Oswald and lasting from 943 to the death of Oswald in 992, the second led by Ælfric and Wulfsstan and ending in approximately 1020 (Knowles 70).

15 Eric John agrees that English monasticism was extinct by the mid tenth-century, but he discounts the influence of the Viking raids on its collapse (1966 154). The "collapse" of both monasticism and Anglo-Saxon culture in the ninth century is a subject of much debate among historians. While there is no agreement as to the degree of social disruption generated by the Viking attacks, or even if this disruption was caused by warfare, there seems to be general agreement that the institutions that could produce textual culture (the monasteries) were in a period of decline—in terms of social influence and manuscript production—in the ninth century. See, for example, Keynes and Lapidge 23-41.
two foundations, however, "had ceased to have any monastic character many years before the
revival" (Knowles 33). Despite Alfred's efforts, therefore, monasticism in England was not
truly rebuilt until the middle of the tenth century. English rebuilders took as their model
the continental reform movement of Berno and Odo of Cluny, which was transmitted to
England via the monastic house at Fleury (Duckett 59). However, as Clare Lees notes,
tenth-century reform in England was strongly influenced by "an earlier, native and
Alfredian, reform tradition" (1991 174).

Reform in England began at Glastonbury under the Abbott—later Saint—Dunstan
(Robinson 84-85). Dunstan's reconstruction of the community at Glastonbury according
to the Benedictine Rule "brought into being the first organized community of monks which
had existed in England for at least two generations" (Stenton 440-41). Eleanor Shipley
Duckett documents the spread of reformed monasticism from Glastonbury to Winchester
(where Æthelwold became bishop) and thence throughout England (79-111). Subsequent
historians have not disputed the general outline of her depiction, particularly the position of
Glastonbury as the source of the first movements of the reform (see John 1982 184-89).
According to Duckett, monastic reform was imposed with the active assistance of secular
powers, and it was often imposed upon communities against the will of the clerks of whom
they were composed. Lees notes that "however we might interpret the effects of the
Reform, its central preoccupation was to extend the control of the monasteries over the
observance of the faith in the tenth and eleventh centuries" (1991 175). Lees' view of the
reform period is similar to that of Eric John, who as early as 1966 argued that English
monastic institutions in the tenth century were involved in a political struggle to extend
their powers with the aid of central, secular authorities and at the expense of local magnates
Although John's views were originally controversial, his interpretations have in recent years become accepted (see Dumville, 7 n. 3).

Reformed monasticism spread throughout England due in large part to the assistance and encouragement of the royal court: "at every point it has been apparent that the course of the revival hung on the king's word, and its progress was entirely dependent on influence at court" (John 1966 162). The court was connected to the monastery through kinship ties and through mutual interests. Benedictine reformers carved out social niches for their foundations; they made themselves useful, even indispensable to the court (Loyn 95-98). "Royal power to command depended in part on a crude but powerful bureaucracy" in which the textual skills of monks were often utilized (John 1966 176). The appointment of Dunstan as Archbishop of Canterbury in 943, for example, was "...destined to influence affairs of church and state for the rest of [Edgar's] reign." The association of court and monastery had a political, as well as religious significance. The monastic bishops and abbots, in practice nominated by the king, came to hold large estates in peripheral areas, and exercised much local government, including judicial and military elements. In fact they displaced, to some extent and in some areas, local thegns and ealdormen and became the heads of local hundreds (Farmer 12).

The linking of secular and monastic power allowed the monks most closely connected to the court—the reformers—to impose the Benedictine Rule upon any community that claimed monastic lands. After the Easter assembly of 964, John argues, "observation of the Rule was a sine qua non for a title to monastic endowments" (1966 264). Strict observance of the Rule influenced the ways in which monks were able to reproduce themselves and thus ensure their institutions' continued existence.

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16 Lees does not cite John, but she does use Antonia Gransden's revisionist study "Traditionalism and Continuity during the last Century of Anglo-Saxon Monasticism." Gransden relies on a number of John's arguments.
Monks before the Benedictine reform may well have produced their own replacements in the form of the children whom they fathered. Before the reform "... all available evidence goes to show that between c. 830 and 880, all the monasteries of Wessex and south Mercia either had become extinct during the war or had become houses where a number of priests or clerics lived together without any regular life" (Knowles 24).

Presumptive monks in these houses took wives and raised children, controlling to some degree—via the culturally widespread masculine dominance of women—their own reproduction. The ability to reproduce in this form was eliminated by the Benedictine reform. For example, in 963 Wulfstan of Dalham expelled from the cathedral at Winchester clerics not following the Rule who, according to Wulfstan Cantor's Vita S. Æthelwoldi, "divorced wives whom they had illicitly married and took others" ("repudiantes uxorès quas inlicite duxerant et alias accipientes") (Lapidge and Winterbottom 30). Although the Vita claims that these cathedral canons were engaged in lascivious behavior, as John points out, they "were not profligates, but married men... respectable enough after the fashion of their day" (1966 164). Of course some aspect of the condemnation of married monks comes from the reformers' interpretation of the Benedictine Rule as requiring the strictest celibacy. An insistence upon monastic celibacy was also a feature of Cluniac reformed monasticism, which, Noreen Hunt shows, was unforgiving of a lack of celibacy in monks (33-41). But as John suggests, there was more to the condemnation of the married clerks than mere moral outrage—although moral outrage certainly contributed to reforming fervor in the tenth century.

John argues that reformed monasticism required a different set of economic relations than those operating in monastic contexts in England before 943: "Obviously communities composed of married men would require rather different economic arrangements from a community of celibates with no wives and children to provide for" (1966 164). And just as obviously (and a point to which I will return in chapter three), the social and psychological
structure of celibate, all-male monasteries would be significantly different than the more informal arrangements in operation from the time of Alfred up to the reign of Edgar.

If, as John argues, monks in irregular monasteries held property quasi propria, then aristocratic monks who had children would be inclined to bequeath parts of the monastic endowment to them, over time dissolving large holdings and weakening the power of the monastery (1966 164). In other words, in matters of inheritance pre-reform monasteries tended to work similarly to other Anglo-Saxon institutions made up of families: land could be distributed among a number of kin, and this distribution served over time to fragment estates. Fell has shown that no system of primogeniture had been established in the Anglo-Saxon period, nor was "any exclusive preference" given to men (i.e., sons) as sole heirs (74-76). Familial inheritance of monastic property is linked with the custom of saeculum prioritas which the Benedictine reformers found so pernicious that in the introduction to the Regularis Concordia they blamed it for leading "to great ruin and harm as it had in the past" ("ad magni ruinam detrimenti uti olim") (Symons 1953 7). The reformers tried to eliminate such dissolution by forbidding monks to marry and produce children or to hold property individually. More significantly for the purposes of this study, abbots and abbesses were absolutely forbidden to pay a heriot, a payment made to the king upon the death of any powerful person to ensure that the deceased's will would be respected (Whitelock 1930 100). Monastic leaders were also not permitted to arrange for distribution of any of the monastery's goods after their own deaths (Symons 1953 69). In other words, they could not make wills.

All social institutions rely to one degree or the other upon the recruitment of new members. Reformed monasteries, however, were dependent on recruitment to a far greater
degree than other Anglo-Saxon institutions. Other institutions (a warrior band, or a given aristocratic family, for instance) could reproduce themselves by means of internally-produced children. But recruitment was the only method by which reformed monasteries could reproduce themselves and ensure that they would continue across generational boundaries. This method of reproduction made monasteries particularly vulnerable to reproductive failure—a fate the monks were well aware of. The monastery at Athelney, founded by Alfred late in the ninth century, "had quickly died through lack of novices" (Duckett 87).

But the institutional structure that made monasteries vulnerable to reproductive failure had benefits that might offset its weaknesses. Reformed monasteries were structured around the ideal of continuity, the conception that monasteries and monastic practices should endure essentially unchanged long after the members of any given monastic generation had died. This continuity, which I will discuss more fully in chapter three, is built into the Benedictine Rule with its continuous cycles of readings and Psalms to be repeated year after year after year until the Day of Judgment. Such continuity, coupled with monastic control of literacy, allowed monasteries to accrue to themselves powers of social memory that reinforced their institutional power. One of the more important of these instruments of this power of commemoration was the written will.

The Structure and Operation of the Will

The earliest Anglo-Saxon will, that of Æthelnoth, the reeve at Eastry, and Gænberg his wife (S 1500), illustrates the workings of post obit social influence. Dating from between A.D. 805 and 832 (at the nadir of monastic power in Anglo-Saxon England) and
found in two manuscripts, B.M., Stowe Ch. 8 and B.M., Stowe 853, fos 12v-13,\(^\text{18}\) this will demonstrates in simple form many of the general characteristics of Anglo-Saxon wills. I therefore reproduce it in full:

\[\text{Æðelnoth} \ se \ gerefa \ to \ Eastorege} 7 \text{Gænburg} \ his \ wife \æредdan \ hiora \ erse \ beforan \ Wulfre'de' \ arcebiscop 7 \text{Æðelhune} \ his \ massprioste} 7 \text{Esne} \ cyninges \ ðegne \ suæ \ hueðer \ hiora \ suæ \ leng \ lifes \ were \ foe \ to \ londe} 7 \ to \ alre \ æhtes \ gife \ hio \ bearn \ hæbbe \ ðonne \ foe \ ðæt \ ofer \ hiora \ boega \ dagas \ to \ londe} 7 \ to \ æhte} . \text{gif} \ hio \ ðonne \ bearn \ næbbe} 7 \text{Wulfred} \ archbishop \ lifes \ sie \ ðonne \ foe \ he \ to \ ðæm \ londe} 7 \ hit \ forgelde} 7 \text{ðæt} \ wiorð \ gedæle \ for \ hiora \ gasatas \ suæ \ ælmeslice} 7 \text{suæ \ rehtlice} \ suæ \ he \ him \ seolfa \ on \ his \ wisdome \ geleornie} . \ 7 \ ða \ sprece \ næning \ mon \ uferran \ dogor \ on \ nænge \ ðære \ halfe \ onceærende \ sie \ nynne \ suæ} : dice \ gewrit \ hafa: --- \text{Pisses} \ londes \ earan \ ðrie \ sulong \ at \ Hægyðe} ðonne} . \ 7 \text{gif} \ hiora \ ðorunm \ ðæðe} \ bæm \ suð \ fo'r' \ gelimpe \ biscop \ æt \ lond \ gebycge \ suæ} \ hie \ ðonne \ geworðe} (Robertson 4-7).

\[\text{Æthelnoth, the reeve as Eastry, and Gænburg his wife have prepared their} \ inheritance \ before \ Archbishop \ Wulfred \ and \ Æthelhune \ his \ masspriest \ and \ Esne \ the \ king's} \ thegn. \ Whoever \ of \ them \ is \ longer \ of \ life \ will \ receive \ the \ land \ and \ all \ property. \ If \ they \ have \ a \ child \ then \ it \ will \ receive, \ after \ both \ their \ days, \ the \ land \ and \ property. \ If \ they \ do \ not \ have \ a \ child \ and \ Archbishop \ Wulfred \ is \ alive \ then \ he \ will \ receive \ the \ land \ and \ completely \ pay \ for \ it \ and \ deal \ it \ out \ for \ their \ souls \ as \ charitably \ and \ as \ rightly \ as \ he \ himself \ in \ his \ wisdom \ thinks. \ And \ then \ [we] \ say \ that \ no \ man \ on \ any \ later \ day \ shall \ in \ no \ part \ alter \ in \ any \ way \ what \ is \ contained \ in \ this \ document. \ This \ is \ three \ plowlands \ at \ High \ Thorne \ and \ if \ it \ occurs \ that \ one \ or \ both \ of \ them \ [Æthelnoth} \ and \ Gænburg] \ goes \ south} \ [on \ a \ pilgrimage]} ,\(^\text{19}\) \ the \ bishop \ shall \ buy \ that \ land, \ as \ they \ have \ agreed.

This document exhibits four important general characteristics of Anglo-Saxon testaments. First, it fulfills the primary purpose of the will, the influence of human behavior after the death of the testator. Æthelnoth} \ and \ Gænburg \ determine \ the \ distribution \ of \ property-rights that \ they \ have \ possessed, \ transferring \ them \ to \ individuals \ or \ institutions \ of \ their \ choice. Second, \ the \ will \ attempts \ to \ provide \ for \ contingencies \ foreseen \ by \ the \ testators, \ in \ this \ case \ the \ birth \ of \ a \ child \ or \ the \ death \ of \ an \ executor. Third, through the

\(^{18}\) Because many of the wills appear in multiple manuscripts and a full listing of these would unnecessarily clutter the dissertation, I will hereafter avoid citing manuscripts and refer readers to Sawyer's listings unless manuscript information is necessary for the discussion.

\(^{19}\) Robertson glosses "suð fo'r'," "goes south" as "goes south [on a pilgrimage]" (7).
institution of alms, the testament arranges provision for the souls of the testators after their deaths. Fourth, the will attempts to prevent the alteration of the document in which it is recorded, often (although not in the case of Æthelnoth and Gænburg) this forbidding is often put in the form of a contingent curse. In all four actions the will extends the power of the individual from beyond the grave, presupposing through the value of alms the continued influence of a social environment upon individuals after their deaths and the reciprocal ability of individuals to influence that environment.

As I previously noted, it is a commonplace in scholarly discussion of the wills to describe them as "evidential rather than dispositive" (Hazeltine xxvii). That is, unlike modern wills, Anglo-Saxon testaments have been thought to record an event in which the true social force, the actual transfer of ownership, occurred in an oral context. The gift was a promise, enforceable like any other oral agreement. In fact this promise seems to have required a certain ceremonial context. Witnesses at least were necessary, particularly if the gift were given *verba novissima*, as a death-bed statement (Sheehan 37-38). The need for a written record arose because alienating land might go against the wishes of the family, therefore "the means employed had to be capable of defending the gift against their opposition, should it occur" (Sheehan 24). This ability of a document to "defend," albeit in the hands of specific interested parties, suggests that wills, although perhaps still primarily evidential, were in the process of gaining the social power to become dispositive. Like a modern will (though to a lesser degree) they possessed and enacted power separately from the ceremony they recorded. As we have seen, Danet and Bogoch argue that Anglo-Saxon wills provide evidence for the development of such an extra-linguistic context and thus a shift from merely evidentiary power to the full dispositive force that wills begin to possess in the later Middle Ages. By casting wills in the voice of the testator and by including curses against those who might modify a will "testators and scribes were attempting to invest the written document with performative power" (109-15). Although the wills are documents
"saturated with oral residue," they illustrate "a symbiotic relationship between the document and the oral ceremony that preceded it." Therefore "it is simplistic to characterize [these] documents as merely evidentiary" (127).

Danet and Bogoch seem correct in arguing that there is an element of performativity to the wills and that testators probably believed that the written document was an important part of the ceremony, possessed of some power beyond that of a simple record. Lerer argues that Anglo-Saxon writers were aware of "textual power: the control that writings exercise over their readers and their world" (62). Such textual power is implicit in the wills, not only from the many curses that Danet and Bogoch cite (twenty-five in all), but more importantly from the assumption embedded in the curses that the document of the will will be permanent. The will of Wulfgyth (S 1535) is representative:

and se þe mine quyde beryaui þe ic nu biqueþen habbe a godes ywithnesse beriaued he worþe þises erthliche meryþes godes and ashreyi hine se almiytì dryþen þe alle sheþþe shop and ywroyte uram alre haleyene ymenness on domesday... (Whitelock 1930 86).

and he who takes away from my will which I now bequeath in God's witness, may he be riven of all earthly joy and may the almighty Lord who shaped and wrought all creatures exclude him from the company of all saints on Judgment Day.

The curse never expires: it operates across all ages until the end of time. Thus the testator hopes to gain a form of eternal power—the ability to influence the fates of others and to constrain their behavior from beyond the grave. The omni-temporality of the curses bolsters Danet and Bogoch's conclusion that the documentary manifestation of the *post obit* gift, the will, was believed to be possessed of social power, albeit less than that of the oral ceremony. This social power—the ability to influence the actions of individuals in society even after the death of the testator—is manifested throughout the corpus of wills.

The ability of a will to influence behavior after the death of the testator is intimately bound up with the testator's political power and the overall political context within which he or she lived. However, individual power during life may not be a completely accurate
predictor of post-mortem influence. Æthelnoth and Gænburg appear to wield more influence in death than they may have had in life.\textsuperscript{20} The couple do not appear to have been particularly powerful or rich;\textsuperscript{21} they distribute only three plowlands in Kent in their will, in sharp contrast to, for example, the most prolific giver, Wulfric Spott (S 1536), who in 1002 to 1004 bequeathed "more than seventy estates spread over eleven counties" (Sheehan 99). Yet their bequest enables them to influence the behavior of high-ranking individuals—an Archbishop and a king's thane—after their deaths. Wills throughout the Anglo-Saxon period name powerful secular and ecclesiastical individuals as guarantors or assistants, and by the mid-tenth century nearly all name monastic foundations.\textsuperscript{22} In other words, monastic foundations appear to have usurped (although not completely) the place of other father-like ecclesiastical figures. Testators call upon politically powerful individuals or monastic foundations because such executors are more likely to possess the social power necessary for the enforcement of the testators' desires. The power of a will is its ability to mobilize social power trans-temporally, and successful wills access those elements of the social system that remain stable over time, for if a social institution invoked by a will becomes extinct, the will no longer can access that institution's influence to bring about the wishes of the testator.

Long-lasting power is not important when wills merely transfer property across one generational boundary, in other words, when the will is a simple inheritance. Thus many wills invoke the power of the king to enforce their gifts. This section from the will of Ælfhelm (S 1487) is representative:

\begin{quote}
Nu bydde Ælfhelm be leof hlafoed. þ min cwyde standan mote. 7 þu ne gepauige. þ him man mid wuo wend ... se man se þe minne cwyde wende. buton þu hyt sy leof. 7 ic hæbbe geleauan þu nelle. god asyrre hine of his rice. buton he þe hraþor ongen
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{20} Assuming, of course, that their wishes were carried out.
\textsuperscript{21} Although they did receive their small holding as a grant from Cuthred, king of Kent (Robertson 262).
\textsuperscript{22} Obviously wills which name foundations were more likely to be preserved, since it was the monastic foundations that were doing the preserving.
wende. 7 god 7 ealle his halgan gehealde æcne þare þe þæerto gefyrþryge þ he standan mote (Whitelock 1930 32).

Now I bid you dear lord that my will be allowed to stand and that you do not allow it to be wrongly changed ... The man who alters my will, unless it is you, dear lord (and I believe that you will not) may God drive him out of his kingdom unless he quickly changes it [my will] back again. And God and all his Saints support each of those who thereto give support that it [my will] might stand.

The Lord addressed is either Edward the Martyr or, more likely, Æthelred—Ælfhelm's will dates from any time between 975 and 1016 (Whitelock 1930 133). Because of Ælfhelm's lifetime of obedience to the king and to his father—and because Ælfhelm pays the king one hundred mancuses of gold, two swords, four shields, four spears, and four horses—Edward or Æthelred is asked to guarantee the will against the depredations of other individuals. Ælfhelm accesses this secular power because nearly all of the distributions in his complicated will will take place immediately upon the testator's death: there are no long contingency plans in this will, no series of "if ... then" clauses that would have to be enforced many years Ælfhelm's death. But while the king is asked to enforce Ælfhelm's desired distribution of goods, the testator entrusts the monasteries at St. Etheldreda's, St. Peter's at Westminster and the monastery at Ramsey with the duty of caring "for minre soul" ("for my soul") (Whitelock 1930 32). For one king may come and another may pass away, but the monastery is supposed to abide forever. Ælfhelm does not put his faith in the king's lineage. That is, he does not ask the king and the king's son and the king's grandson to guarantee the eternal care of his soul, for Ælfhelm surely knew that in Anglo-Saxon England genealogical descent to kingship and power was no sure thing.

But while kings could not eternally protect the desires and souls of testators, monasteries could (or at least they seemed to have a better chance than unpredictable secular powers). As noted above, wills that pass property to monastic foundations clearly intend the gift to be perpetuated until Judgment Day. That is, the foundation is assumed to be permanent and able to carry out the instructions of the testators until the end of time,
preserving the memory and something of the identity of deceased benefactors. Benefactors' names were inscribed in a Liber Vitae ("Book of Life") and placed on the altar. Names were read from the book during the mass, thus ensuring a perpetuation of the memory of the deceased.23

Patrick Geary notes that "in the ninth through eleventh centuries [monastic] cartularies protected not simply property rights both vis-a-vis tenant and royal authorities, but they also protected the memory of benefactors ... " (86). The permanent preservation of memory and identity is perhaps the most important social (as opposed to religious) function of bequests. Barbara H. Rosenwein has shown that bequests to reformed monasteries were a way for individuals in unstable times to associate themselves with stable and reliable communities (1982 32-50), and that transfers of property between monasteries and secular communities were a method of forging strong social links. They were ways (in the case of relations of individuals with Cluny) for individuals and communities to become "neighbors" of St. Peter (1989 141-43).

Megan McLaughlin has convincingly argued that such bequests were not merely for the purpose of "acquiring more and more prayer" for the testators but were instead ways for individuals and families to form close ties with the monastic community: "the point of all these lists [of the names of benefactors], then, was not simply to preserve the names of certain individuals; it was, rather, to record them among other names" (101).24 In other

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23 For a complete list of Anglo-Saxon libri vitae see Jan Gerchow, Die Gedenkübleriefung der Angelsächsen: Mit einem Katalog der libri vitae und Necrologien. The Durham Liber Vitae (most of which dates from the ninth century and was written in Lindisfarne) was printed in facsimile by the Surtees Society in 1923: Liber Vitae Eccliae Dunelmensis: A Collotype Facsmile of the Original Manuscript. More recently, Simon Keynes has edited The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester, British Library Stowe 944, Together with Leaves from British Library Cotton Vespasian A. VII and British Library Cotton Titus D. XXVII.

24 Both Rosenwein and McLaughlin focus on continental monasticism, but because the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine reform had roots in reformed Cluniac monasticism via Fleury (Duckett 57-59), I find their conclusions applicable to English materials, based in part on George Brown's examination of the continental connections of Dunstan, Æthelwold and Oswald (1995 121 see also 1995 109). For a somewhat different opinion see Stenton (441-42).
words, by giving their bequests to monasteries for the purposes of eternal prayer, individuals joined the ongoing tradition of the monastery in medias res, gaining a past before their births in addition to a future beyond their deaths, placing themselves as part of a continuum. It is this idea of continuum that was so important to the Benedictine reformers, who saw themselves as reasserting a continual practice of monasticism that had reached its apogee in England during the age of Bede but had been interrupted by the events of the ninth century. Continuity was created by linking distant ancestors to current individuals.

Before the Benedictine reform only one will, that of King Alfred (S 1507), mentions ancestors. We cannot take this will as typical, however, since Alfred may have had unique reasons for mentioning his forefathers. Youngest of five brothers, Alfred was not—despite Asser's suggestion that he was anointed by the Pope as such—expected to become king, and he faced some political opposition at home in addition to his struggles with Viking invaders (Keynes and Lapidge 69, 72-75). Alfred may have wanted to remind readers (and hearers at any oral ceremony) of his legitimate claim to the throne. Alfred also does not mention his ancestors' souls, the standard formula for the post-reform wills that do place themselves within a tradition of inheritances. Only one other will from before the Benedictine reform mentions ancestors, that of Wulfgar (S 1533), who in his will (composed 931-939) bequeaths his land "for mine sawle 7 for mines sæder 7 for mines ieldran sæder" ("for my soul and for [that] of my father and for [those of] my older fathers") (Kemble 175-76). But this too is an anomalous will, inserted in the middle of a charter of King Æthelstan (no other Anglo-Saxon will has such a manuscript context).

The first mention of ancestors and their souls in a standard testament appears in the will of Ælfgar (S 1483), who some time between 946 and 951 bequeathed estates in Suffolk and Essex to the monastic community which in the time of Cnut became Bury St. Edmunds, to the community at Stoke (probably Stoke-by-Nayland, Suffolk), to St. Mary's in Barking, to Christ Church Canterbury and to St. Paul's London. Ælfgar instructs his
daughter Æthelflæd that he wishes her to grant an estate to a "halegan stowe" ("holy place", i.e., church foundation) of her choice "for yre aldre soule" ("for our ancestors' souls"). If Æthelflæd has no children then she is to grant an additional estate to Stoke "for yre aldre soule" ("for our ancestors' souls"), and she is in addition to do "so wel heo best may into Stoke for mine soule and for ure aldre" ("do good the best she may unto Stoke for my soul and our ancestors"). Ælfgar also grants an estate to his son (?) Ælfwold, provided that he pay a food-rent every year to the community at St. Paul’s "for vre aldre soule" ("our ancestors' souls") (Whitelock 6-9).

The wills of Ælfgar’s two daughters, Æthelflæd (S 1494) and Ælflæd (S 1486) indicate, as Kathryn Lowe has argued, that "Ælfgar's wishes seem to have been upheld" although each daughter had some latitude in the timing of her donations (188-96). At least one of Ælfgar’s daughters recognizes herself as participating in a continuity of practice that was in fact set by their ancestors. Ælflæd describes her donations thus: "þonne synd þis þa land þæ minæ ylðran þæt to þæ cwædon ofer minre swystor ðæg. 7 ofer minne" ("then these are the lands which my ancestors bequeathed to it [the community at Stoke] after my sister’s days and after mine") (Whitelock 1930 38). In fact, Ælflæd mentions "ylðran" ("ancestors") eight times in her will. More importantly, she distinguishes them from her father, whom she names specifically as granting lands in Totham (Whitelock 1930 38). Ælflæd also attempts to mobilize the living to care for the desires of the dead, calling upon ealdorman Æthelmær to secure her will and her ancestors' wills.

Ælfgar’s, Æthelflæd’s and Ælflæd’s wills are three of the thirteen reform and post-reform wills that mention ancestors. Æthelric (S 1501), Ælfgifu (S 1484), Æltheah (S 1485), Brihtric and Ælfswith (S 1511), Æthelgifu (S 1497), Wulfound (S 1538), Wulfric (S 1536), Æthelstan Ætheling (S 1503), Leosgifu (S 1521), and Ketel (S 1519) all mention their ancestors' souls (either in general or by naming specific individuals; often both). This
group of thirteen represents twenty-seven percent of all the wills that survive from the beginning of the reform to the Conquest.

Table 1. Reform and post-reform wills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Reform and Post-Reform Wills</th>
<th>48</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Reform and Post-Reform Wills</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentioning Ancestors' Souls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Anglo-Saxon Wills

27% Mention Ancestors' Souls

Figure 2. All Anglo-Saxon wills
Figure 3. Mentions of ancestors' souls in Anglo-Saxon wills.
Figure 3 illustrates the chronology of these wills in relation to the corpus as a whole. Interestingly, while the number of wills produced from 950 on remains relatively constant until the Conquest, wills that mention ancestors are clustered in those years which are generally considered to be the height of the Benedictine Reform, A.D. 960-1000 (Knowles 48). Thirty-eight percent of the wills (ten of twenty-six) written during the sixty years between 940 and 1000 mention ancestors while only fourteen percent (three of twenty-two) of those written between 1000 and 1066 do, even though the number of wills written in the two periods is quite similar.

Table 2. Wills mentioning ancestors' souls, 960-1010, 1010-1066.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wills Written 960-1010</th>
<th>26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wills Mentioning Ancestors' Souls, 960-1005</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wills Written 1000-1066</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wills Mentioning Ancestors' Souls, 1010-1066</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Basing his remarks upon his ongoing dissertation research, Sean Taylor of Cambridge University informs me that the wills of Alfred Thane and Æthelgeard (S 1496 and S 1509), are likely post-Conquest concoctions. The land transfers documented by the wills apparently did take place, but the documents themselves are likely forgeries. Recognizing these wills as forgeries actually strengthens my statistical argument. If S 1496 and S 1509 are removed from the corpus, the portion of reform and post-reform wills mentioning ancestors' souls rises to 28% (from 27%), and the portion of wills written 960-1010 mentioning ancestors' souls rises to 41% (from 38%).

Obviously there is some overlap across the periods due to the wide range in possible dates for some of the wills. My statistics, therefore, could be adjusted by one or two wills in either direction. But the clustering of ancestor-mentioning wills during the height of the Benedictine Reform is clear from simple inspection of figure 3.
This clustering of references to ancestors seems to indicate a particular concern among individuals granting gifts to monasteries during the Benedictine reform and was, I believe, influenced by the concerns of the monastic foundations that were receiving the gifts and recording them in their cartularies.

The various contingencies accounted for by wills, coupled with assumption that the instructions given in them were to be permanent, demonstrates the desire (and assumed ability) to continue to shape social events after death, albeit with the assistance of the king or the monastery. For instance Ælfgar (S 1483) provides contingency plans for the disposition of property in case his children have children. King Eadred's will (S 1515),
written between 951 and 955, provides for numerous contingencies; among others, if
beneficiaries should die with or without children or if Abbot Dunstan should die before
being able to receive his two hundred pounds. In addition, Eadred arranges a secular, legal
penalty: those failing to carry out his wishes will lose their estates, which will "ponne gane
þæt land in þær min lic rest" ("then go to that land [i.e., the monastic foundation] in which
my body will rest") (Harmer 34–35). He extends his authority beyond the grave by
bequeathing it to a powerful and presumably stable institution that will exist long after he
has died: the monastery.

Eadred's trust in the ability of the monastery to endure demonstrates that the
conception of monastic permanence had reached the upper reaches of the political culture
even at the very beginning of the Benedictine reform. Eadred, after all, became king upon
the death of his brother Edmund in 946 (Stenton 355–59), and the rebuilding of English
monasticism cannot have progressed so far that the decay of monastic power in the ninth
century would have been completely forgotten. In fact, Eadred actively assisted the
reformers and was probably well aware of the current and immediate past circumstances of
English monasticism. Perhaps the king knew that there existed on the continent monastic
houses that had endured for several centuries. There were also, as Knowles has noted, signs
of continuity across the gap of the monastic collapse: "sites of the monasteries, muniments
for the sites, memory of the conversion and the writings of Bede" (24). The Ecclesiastical
History, translated into Old English under the auspices of Alfred's translation program,
provided tenth-century monks, ecclesiastics and laymen with examples of monastic practices
on English soil. But these continuities were far more obvious, immediate, and visible to
monks like Dunstan—who were attempting to link their current practices to past examples,
to recover lost traditions—than they would be to the king. Yet Eadred still entrusted the
monasteries with the perpetuation of his memory and social influence. Or rather, like
Ælfflæd, he hedges his bets, hoping that both the monastery and the secular social structure
will preserve his memory and care for his sole. Also like Ælflæd, Eadred appears to put more trust in the monastery than in secular institutions.

While Eadred may have been influenced by the continuing physical presence of monasteries, this presence does not completely account for his trusting a monastic foundation with perpetuation of his identity. The social influence of the idea of monastic institutional persistence seems part of the "framework" that A. Campbell saw monastic scribes as providing to the testator in their production of the will (134-35). Because monasteries were the only centers of textual production and possessed the only significant textual archives, they were very quickly (in terms of their return to power and influence after their ruin in the ninth century) able to insert themselves at the highest levels of political power.

I will more fully develop this argument in chapter three, where I examine the Benedictine Rule, Regularis Concordia, and various Anglo-Saxon penitentials, but here I would like to suggest that an important consequence of the Benedictine reform was the development, by the monasteries, of the ability to preserve individual memory and influence after death, and that the reformed monks made a concerted effort to emphasize their abilities in this regard. The increase in the number of written documents from the period of reform shows monks demonstrating their usefulness to secular powers. The number of wills that mention ancestors, that consciously place the testator in a continuing tradition, and the correlation of the production of these particular wills with the height of the reform suggests that not only did monks make themselves useful to the court in the preservation of records, but that they also influenced testators to see themselves as part of a tradition, one whose continuation relied heavily on the endurance of monastic houses. I believe that the
foundations of this tradition—the notion that the monastery will become guardian to the testator's desires after his death—are evident in Eadred's will. 27

However, the positioning of individuals as part of a continuity with their ancestors through the instrument of the will (facilitated by the monastery) was still developing early in the reform period. Reformed monks were representatives of a different sort of continuity than that available through the secular system of father to son genealogy: while thirteen wills mention ancestors' souls, only two testators in the entire corpus identify themselves as "the son of": Leofwine (S1522), who notes that he is "wulfstanes sunu" ("son of Wulfstan") (Napier and Stevenson 22), and Thurstan (S 1531) "Wine sune" ("Wine's son") (Whitelock 80). Leofwine's 998 will comes just after the brief era that Keynes calls Æthelred's "period of youthful indiscretions," 984-993, in which the king greatly reduced the power and freedom of the monasteries (1980 176-86). Perhaps this "anti-monastic reaction," which D.J.V. Fisher finds also in the brief reign of Æthelred's predecessor, Edward the Martyr, suggested to Leofwine that genealogical methods of the perpetuation of inheritance provided a useful hedge against the vicissitudes of monastic fortune. Thurstan son of Wine, whose will dates from 1043-45, had significant contacts in the Danelaw: he notes a "felageschipe" ("partnership") with one "Ulfketel" ("Ulfketel"), and his will is witnessed by several other individuals with Danish names (Whitelock 1930 82). Thus Thurstan may have been influenced by an Anglo-Danish practice of recognizing continuity not in ancestors who, while unnamed, were accessed through monastic prayers, but by the simple continuity of fathers to sons. 28

27 Eadred was quite sympathetic to the early reform movement and gave Dunstan and Æthelwold the estates of a deserted monastery at Abingdon (John 181).

28 I recognize that there are elements of special pleading in this portion of the argument. However, it does seem unusual that in the entire corpus of wills only these two individuals identify themselves as "son of." Such appellations were common in other Anglo-Saxon contexts, a point which I discuss more fully in chapter five.
In any event, the majority of testators who refer to their ancestors seemed to believe in the efficacy of the monastery to save the souls of these individuals even when they were not explicitly named. In their attempts to make connections to "yldran" rather than, say, simply mothers and fathers (whom we could reasonably expect to be directly connected with their progeny), testators linked themselves with traditions or continuities of identity that were to some degree an invention of the monastic reformers. Every individual is of course descended from innumerable ancestors, but no one (except perhaps those kings whose genealogies, as I shall discuss in chapter five, are constructed as reaching back to Germanic gods or biblical figures) knows who all of them are. By suggesting to testators that monks could pray for generic ancestors rather than specific individuals, the monastery invents a continuity of tradition not substantiated by human memory. In *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm defines such traditions thus:

"Invented tradition" is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past (1).

As the other contributors to Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's essay-collection demonstrate, "invented traditions" establish themselves quite rapidly and can, within mere decades, be remembered collectively as being of great antiquity (see, for example, Cannadine 160). While it is difficult to believe that Eadred would not have remembered a time in which the monastery was not a custodian of the past, other, later wills may in fact be witnesses to the power of the invented tradition. It may even be reasonable to speculate that specific mentions of ancestors become rare after the height of the Benedictine reform because the social apparatus for the preservation of social identity after death had become so concentrated in the hands of the church, particularly the monastery, that explicit reference to ancestors' souls in a will was no longer necessary.
Geary argues for a similar effect in the transfer of commemoration of the dead on the continent to monastic houses: "when commemoration was removed from the family to the monastery, ... the memory of the dead was continued but on monastic terms, terms that transformed and truncated the access of lay families to their past" (80). First of all, this memory became textualized, encoded in a form that reformed monasteries, with their strong emphasis on reading and the textual tradition, were easily able to control. Not only could monastic scribes easily alter or emend a textualized chain of memory—as Asser does in his creation of genealogy for King Alfred that reaches back through Germanic legend to Adam (Keynes and Lapidge 67)—but textual memory was accessed through the institution of the monastery. This transformation and truncation of the memories of individuals and communities is bound up with the production of a past by the present, an invention of tradition:

A society that explicitly found its identity, its norms, and its values in the inheritance from the past, that venerated tradition and drew its religious and political ideologies from precedent, was nevertheless actively engaged in producing that tradition through a complex process of transmission, suppression and re-creation (Geary 8).

The past so produced "corresponded to the mental, social and political structures of the present" (Geary 115-16). This phenomenon, as Frantzen has noted, is hardly limited to the medieval or Anglo-Saxon periods: societies and social subgroups (American academia, among others) continue to produce the pasts their presents need (1991 8-11). In the tenth century, Dunstan, Æthelwold, Oswald and their followers can be seen constructing such a past in the language of the wills they caused to be written and copied and the social formations represented by this language. They were creating a past that served their ends in the present as part of a general project to strengthen the position of monasteries and ensure their reproduction. That is, the monasteries were casting themselves as the controllers of eternal traditions.
Of course as part of the church monasteries were party to the mechanisms by which individuals could achieve eternal life. But after the Benedictine reform the monasteries position themselves as a significant link between the present and the past and thus, in the minds of testators, between the future and the present. Reformed monasteries could offer to testators the ability to aid their ancestors years after they had left the earth. By extension they offered the capability of providing for the souls of the living long after their deaths. In both cases the continuities and traditions so important to individual identity in the Anglo-Saxon period were accessed through the textual culture of the monastery. Such access brought with it power, which monasteries had need of. Reformed monasteries, for all their social utility, all the ways in which they were intertwined in the political power-structure and culture of Anglo-Saxon England, were vulnerable to extinction due to their lack of control over their own reproduction. At the heart of the monastic control and preservation of tradition is a great contradiction: what made monasteries potentially eternal, their method of perpetuating identities, was their greatest weakness and their most significant cause of anxiety.

**Masculine Same-Sex Reproduction**

As previously noted, reformed monasteries reproduced solely through their recruitment of new members, a process shared to greater or lesser degrees by other Anglo-Saxon institutions. But monasteries not only had to recruit and acculturate new members; they had to do so under very rigid strictures that their shaped institutional structure, their relationship with the wider culture, and the lives and psyches of individual monks. Reformed monasteries were different from the warrior band, the royal court, or the non-monastic ecclesiastical hierarchy, however, in their insistence upon celibacy and same-sex reproduction.
In simplest terms, same-sex reproduction is the transmission of identities across a generational boundary from one individual to another individual of the same sex. Same-sex reproduction should obviously be distinguished from both biological reproduction (i.e., the physical creation of children), and the sorts of heterosexual, social reproduction that is at the heart of the reproduction of the family. Obviously both men and women—and both male and female monasteries—may participate in same-sex reproduction. However, in Anglo-Saxon England this practice is, as I shall show, configured as masculine. This masculine, same-sex reproduction influences the construction of wills after the reform period both in the wills' assumption of an eternal monastic presence and in their invocation of an unending tradition of ancestors.

Monasteries, whether male or female, rely on biological reproduction for their continued existence. As David Herlihy notes: "every human group, of whatever composition, is subject to the attrition of death and must seek to replace its losses through recruiting new members. Ultimately, that recruitment will be dependent on births" (247). Thus in order for a monastery or monastic order to continue to exist, it must recruit and acculturate new members: children who are initiated as novices. But unlike other all-male or all-female institutions (the warrior band or, perhaps, the female kin-group), which can control their reproduction through the direct sexual, reproductive acts of their members (fathering or mothering children), monasteries are entirely dependent upon recruitment. The physical reproduction of bodies was a cultural necessity beyond direct monastic control. In contrast, the "Men's Hall," postulated by James Earl as a social center of Anglo-Saxon village culture (114-24), was able to control its reproduction because members could produce children outside the all-male environment, traveling back from the ceremonial "hall" to the "hut," where they could father children. These children, or rather the boys, could then be initiated into the masculine social group.
In secular society women were of course deeply involved in the reproduction of both individuals and power relations. As regards the latter, and the instrument of inheritances which has been the focus of this chapter, Fell has explicated the ways law codes from Æthelberht to Cnut are concerned with protecting the inheritances of women, and argued that there is no evidence that men were given "exclusive preference as heirs" (75-76). In the early eleventh century we have evidence of a mother having the power to disinherit her own son after a quarrel (Fell 78), and even the most cursory glance through the corpus of wills indicates that women both received and bequeathed valuable durable goods and land. But even though some particular women did possess extensive authority, the power of women in Anglo-Saxon society was limited. Stephanie Hollis has effectively critiqued Fell's view of the Anglo-Saxon age as a particularly favorable period for women (5-9), and Lees argues that even the most careful critical discussions of Anglo-Saxon women "are based on a conception of binarisms as equal and opposite rather than asymmetric... ," and thus tend to overstate the power of women (138).

Butler sees as gender asymmetric any culture predicated on "compulsory heterosexuality" (32). That is, a gender order that enforces heterosexuality will bifurcate the cultural roles performed by men and women, and these roles can never be both separate and equal. The existence of an underlying gender order of compulsory heterosexuality in Anglo-Saxon England is hardly a point of dispute among the few Anglo-Saxonists who have considered the issue (see, for example, Frantzen 1996a and 1996b and Meens). Thus compulsory heterosexuality and its concomitant gender asymmetry underlay both heterosexual and same-sex institutions in Anglo-Saxon England.

The presence of an asymmetrical gender order in Anglo-Saxon culture is borne out by Fell's analysis of wills and charters, which distinguish between the male or the female line

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29 Pauline Stafford, however, disputes the freedom of action for women argued for by Fell, Whitelock (1979 601), and D. Stenton (26-7), and argues that this particular example was more of a result of a specific political situation than of the general power of women (241-42).
by use of the words "wæpnedhand, sperehand, wæpnedhealf or sperehealf, and wifhand, wifhealf, and spinelhealf" (39). Men and women are distinguished by social behavior: men are identified as warriors—"wæpen" ("weapon") and "spere" ("spear")—women as domestic workers—"spinel" ("spindle"). Social functions are specific to genders, and are separate and unequal. Lees and Overing see this inequality at work in the story of Cædmon: "the gender asymmetry suggested by the events of Hild's 'Life' and Cædmon's miracle is a familiar binary of patriarchy: women reproduce, men produce" (36). While linguistically felicitous, this epigram needs further explication. What women reproduce under the ideology at work in Hild's "Life" are children. What men produce is culture. The latter cannot occur without the former: without the bodies and minds of children within which it can be implanted, culture will fail to be replicated across generational boundaries.

This separation between biological and cultural reproduction reinforces the asymmetry expressed by Lees and Overing's epigram. Lees and Overing want to show that "patriarchal" societies construct the purely feminine contribution (certainly in terms of energy expended) to the reproduction of culture—that is, biological reproduction—as inferior to the cultural contributions of men (37-38). Thus while male and female monasteries operated under identical regimes of text-based, same-sex reproduction, this reproduction (for reasons which I shall show in more detail in the following chapter) is configured as a masculine, cultural activity rather than a feminine, natural behavior. Male monasteries reinforced this ideological impression in order to ensure their continued existence. They suborned women's roles in the reproduction of culture in order to increase their influence in Anglo-Saxon society. By localizing in the monastery the means both for preservation of and connection to old traditions, monastic foundations valorized their form
of reproduction, a reproduction, which passes from male to male without the visible intervention of women.30

David Halperin discusses the theoretical significance of this cultural form of reproduction in "Why is Diotima a Woman?" Halperin examines the famous scene in Plato's *Symposium* wherein Socrates explains how his own views of eros were refuted by Diotima, a prophetess. Although Athenian and Anglo-Saxon culture are centuries and thousands of miles distant from each other, Halperin's explanation for Diotima's gender provides a useful explication of the operations of, to borrow a term from Lees, "masculinist" culture (138).

According to Halperin, Plato restructures erotic desire from a model of pursuit and capture to one "whose central terms are fecundity, gestation, and giving birth." He thus turns pregnancy into a "mere image of (male) spiritual labor" (138-139, Halperin's emphasis). Halperin notes that such strategies of appropriation are common cross-culturally and may represent an attempt to associate masculine acculturation with female reproductive capacity: "It seems that when men go about reproducing themselves socially, socializing and acculturating a new generation of youthful males, they tend to claim for themselves a reproductive capacity analogous to that of women" (143-44).31

Anglo-Saxon reformed monastic culture claims this reproductive power, though there are differences from the Athenian model Halperin describes. The reproduction of culture via the replication of traditions across generational boundaries is a process that permeates the Anglo-Saxon literary corpus. "Father, teach your son" commands Ælfric

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30 Of course we know that women must have contributed to Anglo-Saxon culture a great deal more than the physical production of the child. As far as we can tell, though the evidence is scant (Whitelock 1954 94), young children were probably raised by their mothers in the small huts that were the dwelling places in Anglo-Saxon villages (Earl 116-117). This pattern of behavior ensures that a child's language acquisition depends in greater part upon its mother, with whom the young child spends the large part of his or her time (Goodluck 3). Language acquisition is a (perhaps the) fundamental requirement for human culture, and it occurs before the age in which children would enter monasteries or men's halls.

31 Gerald Creed has recently argued that masculine attempts to control female reproductive power also underlie ritualized/institutionalized homosexuality in New Guinea (88-92).
(one of the great figures of the second wave of reform) in his *Grammar*. The poem known as either "Precepts" or "A Father's Advice to his Son" dramatizes the process of acculturation from male to male; the *Exeter Book* poem "Maxims I" suggests that while "sceal wif ond wer, in woruld cennan / bearn mid gebyrdum" ("woman and man shall bring forth children into the world by means of birth"); "læræn sceal mon geongne monnan, / trymman ond tyhtan þæt he teala cuenne, ofþæt hine mon atemdene hæbbe" ("a young man must be taught and strengthened and trained so that he may be thoroughly ready, until he has been tamed") (Krapp and Dobbie 157-58). There are no valorizations of the physical reproductive process of pregnancy and childbirth, no exalted metaphors equating the generation of male thought with birth. Male reproductive behavior is not elevated and equated to feminine reproductive power; rather, the feminine contribution to the reproduction of culture is simply not mentioned. Cultural reproduction is represented as if it were a completely male process, *as if women were not necessary*. The wills, of course, mention wives, daughters and sisters. Mothers, however, are absent. Thus it seems while men may have taken care to pass power or identity to their female relatives, they did not seem to recognize themselves as receiving culture from their female ancestors.

The effects of this model of reproduction extend far beyond the monastery walls, influencing the ideology and behavior of non-monastic individuals. Thus testators rarely label themselves as "son of" or "daughter of" even as they acknowledge their participation in a continuum of ancestors. Likewise, a monk's father and mother are not supposed to be important to him once he had entered the monastery. Chapter 54 of the *Rule* of St. Benedict, for example, forbids a monk to receive any gifts or letters whatsoever, whether from his parents or anyone else. The monk is supposed to give his obedience and allegiance to the abbot and the senior monks who have come before him into the order, rather than to
his biological family. The practice of keeping a necrology (to which is linked the eternal prayers called for by the wills) extends the respect for the seniority of monks back into time and preserves and order or ranking past the deaths of individual monks.

By keeping this record, monks place themselves in a tradition (a number of inheritances repeated across generational boundaries). Likewise the generally secular dictators of the wills place themselves in a tradition by mentioning their ancestors. In fact women mention their ancestors' souls (as mediated through the traditionally-referent formulae controlled by monks) more frequently than men. Of the thirteen wills that mention ancestors' souls, six—Æthelflæd (S 1494), Ælfgifu (S 1484), Ælfheah (S 1485), Æthelgifu (S 1497), Ælflæd (S 1486), and Leofgifu (S 1521)—are by women. Wills by women thus account for forty-six percent of the testaments that mention ancestors' souls even though women only account for nineteen percent of the wills in the corpus.

It seems that when faced with the need to perpetuate their identities and desires after death, women had to make even fuller use of technologies of power which were not always deemed essential by their more powerful male counterparts, since men were able to be fathers as well as to imitate them. Thus women placed themselves in the continuity of the tradition of ancestors even as the monastic method of male same-sex reproduction configured that tradition as one that had passed from father to son rather than from (heterosexual) familial generation to familial generation.

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32 The Rule twice mentions the duty of monks to reverence their seniors and love their juniors, first in the list of the instruments of good works that makes up chapter four (canons 68 and 69), and again in chapter sixty-three (16, 69).

33 For Anglo-Saxon necrologies, see Gerchow. Ælfwine's Prayerbook, which dates from between 1023-1031 (Keynes 1996 111), contains both a necrologic list and calendar (see Günzel). The Regularis Concordia commands that a letter in a certain form shall be sent to neighboring monasteries informing them of the death of a monk. The other monasteries are to sing various psalms and prayers for the deceased "et nomen eius notetur in anniversariis" ("his name is to be set among the anniversaries"), suggesting that records of the deaths of brothers were preserved (Symons 1953 67).

34 Fell claims that one quarter of the surviving wills are by women, but one can only reach this figure if wills from couples are counted as wills by women (95).
Figure 5. Women's wills that mention ancestors' souls

Table 3. Wills compared by gender of testator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Wills</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wills Written by Women</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Wills Written by Women</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Wills that Mention Ancestors' Souls</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Wills by Women that Mention Ancestors' Souls</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Wills Mentioning Ancestors' Souls Written by Women</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 6. Wills mentioning ancestors' souls written by women.

The masculine, same-sex model of reproduction that influences the construction of the vernacular wills also influences gender relations in the wider Anglo-Saxon culture, further promoting an ideology of masculinism. McNamara and Wemple argue that in the ninth and tenth centuries women were able to exercise power through their families (133-38). Yet the contributions of women to culture, particularly examples of women acculturating their children, are strangely absent from the Anglo-Saxon textual corpus. The only depiction I have been able to find of a mother acculturating her son is that of Osburh, King Alfred's mother. Asser recounts Osburh's offer of a book of English poetry to whichever of her children could learn it the fastest. Alfred, "attracted by the beauty of the
initial letter," in a characteristic display of enthusiasm and aptitude, took the book to his teacher, learned it, and returned to recite it to his mother. Alfred did not learn to read at this time because, Asser claims, "there were no good scholars in the entire kingdom of the West Saxons," but this early experience is the first hint of the king's "craving" for the liberal arts as they are mediated through literacy (Keynes and Lapidge 75. Although Osburh inspires her son to learn the book, she does not in fact teach him to read: years later Alfred becomes literate through the tutelage of the monk Asser, who was, needless to say, male (Keynes and Lapidge 99-100).

Osburh is one of only three fortunate Anglo-Saxon women—Hild and Leofgyth (Leoba) are the others—whose cultural contributions are recorded at all (even if their full extent may have been elided). But Hild and Leofgyth are both from the Age of Bede, before the Benedictine reform and its emphasis on celibacy, tradition and masculine, same-sex reproduction. In any event, as Hollis has argued, although Hild's role in the development of both mixed and female monasticism was "seminal," Bede reduces her contribution to primarily that of a facilitator for the actions of men (255-60). One need not agree with Lees and Overing's highly questionable assertion that Hild must have been physically and verbally forceful because she was politically prominent (this in an age of hereditary titles) to recognize that "what we witness in Bede's account of Hild's role is an appropriation and a rewriting of mothering" (60). That is, Hild's major contributions are to provide a site for men to argue the proper date of Easter and to cause Cædmon to be brought into the monastery. Leofgyth's "Life" also focuses entirely on her ability to teach her own female novices, not to influence the wider culture.

Lerer's analysis of the Osburh episode provides a link between monastic interests and the masculinization of culture. According to Lerer, Asser's rephrasing of Alfred's and other words in the Life grows "from an association between Latin learning and parental control and from ... his fundamental understanding of literary auctoritas as a kind of fatherhood."
Asser's interests are in paternity, kinship and genealogy, and the "engagement of the future king with the mother tongue is an inheritance of vernacular learning which Alfred learns to translate for Asser" (63). The king may be engaged with the mother tongue, but the actual mother is treated rather peremptorily by Asser because monastic interests needed to re-cast heterosexual, social reproduction in terms of masculine traditions (i.e., as masculine, same-sex reproduction). What Lerer's analysis points out, and what my analysis of the corpus of wills substantiates, is that masculine inheritance and tradition as constructed in monastic discourse is to a great degree textual. The circumscription in letters is the monastery's trump card in the struggle for cultural replication. Monastic reproduction can of course work without literacy, but it is much more powerful when it controls this technology and uses it for social and ideological influence and, eventually, reproduction of identities. After all, one way in which monastic reformers and rebuilders shaped their communities was through a written idea of that past as preserved in, for example, the works of the Venerable Bede, translated into Old English in approximately 890 (Farmer 16).

The elision of female contributions to culture suggests that the male monastery (and to a lesser but related extent the "men's hall") was anxious about its reproduction. Because hall and monastery are masculine and represent (to their inhabitants) culture, the feminine outside this realm becomes identified with the natural. This reproduces the familiar pair of binary oppositions: male/female mapped onto cultural/natural. In this (traditional) framework, the feminine and natural terms of the binary are seen as dangerous and disruptive; in Lévi-Strauss' terms, "raw" rather than "cooked" (1964 28). They are also viewed as inferior and subordinate to the masculine and cultural terms (Ortner 75). There are a variety of possible rationales for this hierarchy, but one in particular is significant for the purposes of this study. Biological reproduction, that associated with the feminine, due to the very combinatoric nature of biological characteristics, can never reproduce perfectly an individual. Additionally, as Herlihy notes,
rates of reproduction may differ across a society; different subsets of the population may reproduce or increase their numbers more successfully than others. Over time, the most successful subsets in reproducing will gain a numerical preponderance. Differential replacement over time will therefore alter profoundly the internal composition of communities and groups. No group of human beings is likely to be an exact image or replica of its parents (247).

Cultural replication (understood here as an exact duplication of a culture across generational boundaries), therefore, is jeopardized if not made impossible by heterosexual reproduction, both in terms of individuals and the cultural matrix (made up of other individuals) in which they find themselves. The replication of traditional social structures apart from genetic reproduction attempts to overcome this fundamental condition, but is always at risk. Thus the feminine, associated with biological reproduction that operates beyond the control of culture, becomes that which is feared, the "other" of masculine culture as represented by tradition. Masculine traditions, for all their social utility, preservative capabilities, authority, and inertia, are radically dependent upon the feminine and its reproduction of the body. Those traditions that exclude the feminine or subordinate it (as do many traditions in Anglo-Saxon England) are at constant risk for reproductive failure. Yet, as I noted at the beginning of the chapter, traditions are also aligned with the natural; they are things that are always-already present in any given cultural moment. Thus the "other" of feminine reproduction is intertwined with the "self" of masculine tradition at the very level of the cultural persistence of tradition. Lees and Overing might call this intermixing and interdependence a contradiction of masculinism, and, as I argue below, it is this aspect of masculinist culture is highlighted in *Beowulf*. But regardless of one's ideological approach, it is clear that fear of this admixture and its contribution to the failure of masculine reproduction informs the processes of tradition and inheritance in Anglo-Saxon culture and was a significant anxiety for those Anglo-Saxons living as a part of masculine institutions.
This fear, I believe, is inherent and inescapable for all exclusively masculine institutions, and particularly strong for the monastery. Yet it is not the only anxiety to beset Anglo-Saxon masculine culture. For not only does the masculine, celibate group of monks not control the biological reproduction necessary for its perpetuation, but the traditions upon which it depends themselves depend upon inheritances, which require the death of an older generation for the present and death of the present generation for the future. Death is etymologically encoded in inheritance, which comes from Latin *inhereditare*, to make heir. Heir is from Latin *heredem*, the accusative of *heres*, cognate with the Greek *cheros*: bereaved. Loss, sorrow and anxiety over death (both individual and institutional) are not only generated by the structures of masculine institutional culture; they are inherent in this culture and essential for its reproduction, for they are part of the cultural mechanisms that ensure the conservation of past behaviors, that cast the wide net of traditional reproduction to ensure that essential traditions are preserved.

Earl has argued for a significant presence of anxiety and mourning in the masculine culture of the monastery and the men's hall. This culture relies on traditions, he writes, "and they, alas, are all too perishable" (125, 134-35). Tolkien believed as much when he described the theme of *Beowulf* (according to Earl a poem of the men's hall) as "man, each man and all men, and all their works shall die" (27). Wills are works that attempt not to forestall death, but to control it, to limit the contingencies that may occur *post-mortem* and perpetuate the memory and influence of the deceased. But, as history shows us, wills too fail, and long lost have been the memories and influences of many who trusted to their wills. Anglo-Saxon monks and the testators whose wishes they recorded were not unaware of the always-precarious situation of their continued reproduction. I believe that tenth-century monks would agree with Albert Lord that "what tradition is preserving is the very means of attaining life and happiness" (220). It is important to note, however, that the lives and happiness that tradition was preserving were those of Anglo-Saxon monks, not (necessarily)
anyone else's, and that this monopolistic control of tradition helped put tradition's very persistence in doubt. As I shall show in the next chapter, the monastic producers of Anglo-Saxon culture took steps to ensure the reproduction of tradition even as they reflected upon its potential impermanence, and the steps they took shaped cultural institutions far beyond the monastery and far later than the Anglo-Saxon period.

In this chapter I have demonstrated the ways in which inheritance and tradition combine to reproduce culture, both theoretically and practically. While I do not believe that the corpus of wills is at the center of the reproduction of all Anglo-Saxon culture, the wills do clearly illustrate the operations of a masculine model of reproduction that is evidenced in more complex forms in other Anglo-Saxon institutions, processes and cultural artifacts. Benjamin Withers notes that the language of wills appears in the rubrics of the Old English Prose Genesis, and that this language works to "portray 'sacred history' as an unbroken, legally sanctioned inheritance" (1).35 He also finds this language spilling over to church decoration in, for example, the carved chancel arch of the Anglo-Saxon church at Breamore in Hampshire (11). In both cases, the language of the wills "stress[es] the accurate and valid presentation of past events"(25). Thus the language of the wills serves as a traditional referent to the values of the stable preservation of memory and social relations that is part of their social function. The presence of will-language in other contexts suggests that the power relations evidenced by the wills are also evident in other aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture. In the next chapter I will illustrate ways in which these power relations are expressed in the institutions and processes represented by pragmatic texts that governed the internal affairs and the self-reproduction of the Anglo-Saxon monastery.

35 I am indebted to Ben Withers for allowing me to read his article before its publication.
CHAPTER III

IN IMITATION OF FATHERS:

MONASTIC REGULATIONS AND CULTURAL REPRODUCTION

Omnia quae usu regulari et sanctorum patrum imitatione, spiritualia siue corporalia.

In every action, spiritual and bodily, we are bound by the rule and by the imitation of holy fathers.

-Regularis Concordia

The Anglo-Saxon vernacular wills offered testators the opportunity to link their memories and identities to an institution, the monastery, that was intended to endure until the Day of Judgment. Yet all institutions change over time, sometimes evolving into radically different forms, sometimes becoming extinct. This change puts the maintenance of identity at perpetual risk: if an institution changes too much, it will not be able to provide a stable environment in which identity can be recognized and perpetuated. The re-builders of Anglo-Saxon monastic life in the tenth century knew enough of the history of their institution to recognize the constant pressure for change that had caused English monasticism to evolve into forms that its founders would not have recognized. In their project of reforming monastic life, Dunstan, Æthelwold, Oswald and their followers sought to prevent these changes from ever happening again. Reformed monasticism attempted to ensure the stability, continuity, uniformity and persistence of monastic life of a certain form.

To accomplish these goals, the monastic reformers adopted two complementary strategies: textual control of monastic life and the same-sex reproduction of culture.
Monastic culture was conceptualized as arising from the seemingly unchanging sources of written texts, the most important of which was the Rule of St. Benedict. Texts controlled the lives of monks on a day-to-day basis and facilitated the second cultural strategy for replication, the same-sex reproduction of identities that I discussed in chapter two. Because texts such as the Rule appeared to be eternally consistent, monastic behavior could be seen as persisting unchanged through time. Because same-sex reproduction attempted to bypass the complex mixing of identities that arises from biological reproduction, monastic identity could likewise be seen as stably transmitted across generational boundaries.

In this chapter I will examine the strategies pursued by the Benedictine reformers in establishing an Anglo-Saxon monasticism that would resist change, preserve identity and endure until the end of the world. I begin with an investigation of the way the Benedictine Rule's requirements of stability were interpreted and implemented during the tenth-century reform. Stability came first from the fixed text of the Rule and the methods by which monks ensured the continued repetitions of the behaviors it required. This repetition is assisted by the development and enforcement of a conception of cyclic time, which the reformers adopted from earlier English monasticism.

Managing the complex cycles of monastic life was the abbot, whom the Rule conceptualizes as the "father" of the monastery. The abbot interprets the Rule, and it is upon this interpretation that the stability of the monastic community rests. The abbot is also responsible for implementing the procedures by which new members are brought into the monastic community, and therefore controls to a large degree the same-sex reproduction of upon which a monastic order relies. As the designation of the abbot as a "father" illustrates, and as I have argued in chapter two, the same-sex reproduction of monasteries after the Benedictine reform was conceptualized as a masculine process. Combined with the rebuilding of monastic life in terms of the writings of the Venerable Bede—which led, as Stephanie Hollis argues, to stricter rules of segregation and enclosure
for nuns (298)—the masculinization of monastic reproduction required, among other things, control over the sexual behavior of young monks. This control is maintained through a regime of surveillance and serves to further consolidate power in the hands of the father-figure of the abbot.

The abbot is also responsible for relations between the monastery and the secular world. In the tenth century these relationships were codified in the *Regularis Concordia*, a document which outlined the specific rights and duties of the English monasteries vis-a-vis the royal court. The relationships codified in the *Regularis Concordia* further emphasize masculine, same-sex reproduction, give additional power to abbots as father-figures, and conceptualize the king as the father of all the monastic houses in England.

In attempting to understand the father-figure of the abbot, scholars have examined the role of the real father (i.e., the father who reproduces himself heterosexually as part of a family) in the society of the late Roman empire in which St. Benedict lived (see, for example, C. Butler, and J. Chapman). Such comparisons of the abbot with the Roman *paterfamilias* are faulty, Timothy Fry argues, because the *Rule* relies on a "tradition of spiritual fatherhood" that supersedes the particulars of the sixth century "profane culture." Fry contends that the biblical and patristic tradition of spiritual fatherhood tells us more about fatherhood in the Benedictine *Rule* than would anthropological or legal investigations of Roman fatherhood (353-54).

While not necessarily agreeing with Fry's argument, I want to suggest an inversion of the methodology he condemns: rather than using "real" fatherhood in the Anglo-Saxon period to shed light on the role of father in Old English texts, I want to use the construction of fatherhood in the *Rule* and other related texts, including the *Regularis Concordia* and the penitentials to examine the depiction of "real" fathers in Anglo-Saxon texts. In chapter four I will show that the attributes of fatherhood constructed by monastic, pragmatic texts—control of repetition and time, absolute command, moral judgment, discipline, and the
regulation and facilitation of same-sex reproduction—are constructed as the behavior of "real" fathers in Anglo-Saxon literature. In this chapter I demonstrate how these "fatherly" behaviors are focused upon one goal: the perpetuation of the institution of the monastery.

Time's Arrow and Time's Cycle: Replication and The Rule of St. Benedict

Drawing on experiences in Eastern monasticism as well as cenobitic ideals of community life, St. Benedict of Nursia authored his Rule in the early part of the sixth century. Relying heavily on the anonymous Regula Magistri (Fry 72), the Rule simplifies and condenses directives for monastic practice developed by numerous ancient and patristic writers, and blends these guidelines with ideas original to Benedict (de Vogüé 13-14). The Benedictine Rule was influential throughout the early Middle Ages but only became the primary textual instrument of Western monasticism after the Carolingian period, when Louis the Pious legislated its application to the monasteries in the Carolingian empire. The Rule was influential not because it was novel or inventive, but because of "its value as a representative of the whole tradition and the relatively extensive and organized exposition of common doctrine and institutions it furnished" (de Vogüé 18). Examination of the practices of Anglo-Saxon monasticism must therefore begin with an investigation of the Rule, particularly (for the purposes of this study) the conception of time it creates and the methods of social reproduction it promotes.

The history of the Benedictine Rule in England is nearly as long and complex as the insular history of Christianity itself. Although the Rule was probably not brought to England with St. Augustine of Canterbury in 597 (Knowles 21), it was, according to Eddius, imposed upon the monasteries of Northumbria by Wilfrid in 658 (Oetgen 40). The Rule was the primary textual determinant of monastic conduct during the so-called Golden Age of Northumbrian monasticism, and was brought from Anglo-Saxon England to the
continent by English missionaries (Fry 7). During this time the Benedictine Rule was not the only guiding text followed by monasteries; the Regula Magistri, the Rule of St. Augustine, and other treatments of monastic life, including the Rule of Columbanus, were also consulted in the construction and regulation of monastic communities (Oetgen 40-41; Fry 120).

On the continent, however, monastic practice was focused more narrowly on the Benedictine Rule. Carolingian reorganizations of social institutions spread the Rule through monastic foundations; during the reign of Louis the Pious, Benedict of Aniane was particularly successful in implementing the Rule in monasteries throughout the empire (Fry 121). Carolingian reform did not reach England before English monasticism had been nearly destroyed by the Danish invasions and the subsequent political collapse in the ninth century, and King Alfred’s attempt to establish a community of continental Carolingian monks at Athelney failed, but during the Benedictine reform in the tenth century the Rule was reintroduced as the pre-eminent guide for monastic communities. According to Oetgen, while English monasticism before the Danish invasions of the ninth century "was not necessarily formulated strictly along the lines set down by the Benedictine Rule, ... after the reestablishment of the communities at Glastonbury, Abingdon, Westbury-on-Trym, Winchester, Worcester" the Rule became the preeminent guide of Anglo-Saxon monasteries (Oetgen 42).

The Benedictine reformers of the tenth century were characterized by their insistence on the Rule as the only acceptable organizational principle for monastic life. The imposition of the Rule upon a monastic house is synonymous (in both the minds of the tenth-century reformers and the work of twentieth-century historians) with that house's "reform" see (Dumville 46-47; Knowles 50-51 440-49). By the end of the tenth century the leaders of the Benedictine reform had
established a unified observance of the Rule in the almost forty monasteries and nunneries which had been revived or instituted during the Renaissance. Paralleling the Cluniac Reform on the continent and certainly influenced by it, the Benedictine Revival in England channeled once-divergent monastic streams into a single river of observance whose main current was the Rule of St. Benedict (Oetgen 43).

The universality of the Benedictine Rule was not due solely to a desire for political hegemony on the part of the reformers (although the increase in the institutional political power of thus-unified monasteries must have been desirable). The Rule was also seen as embodying a higher morality than the previous heterogeneous monastic customs, particularly in the areas of monastic celibacy and the freedom of monastic houses from the control of local secular magnates (John 1966 155). The universality of the Rule (and the Regularis Concordia) attempted to amend these perceived flaws and to institutionalize sets of social practices into each monastic house in England.

David Knowles, the foremost twentieth-century historian of medieval English monastic life, argues that the key concern of Benedictine monks in the tenth-century was "stability" (12). Fry notes that "it has often been said that the introduction of stability was one of Benedict's major contributions to the development of Western monasticism" (464). In the first chapter of the Rule, "De generibus monachorum" ("about the kinds of monks") both monks who wander from place to place and monks who do not keep a specific rule are seen as lacking in stability and thus condemned (1.6-11). The Prologue to the

1 Because monastic practice in Anglo-Saxon England appears to have been governed by the Latin text of the Rule (Gretsch 1973 50-61), I will quote from Fry's 1981 dual-language (Latin and English) edition, citing by chapter and sentence number. I will use the Old English translations of the Rule to examine the ways Anglo-Saxon translators and readers may have understood the Latin source material. Old English quotations are taken from Schröer's edition in volume two of the Bibliothek der angelsächsichen Prosa. Schröer's text is a redaction of several Old English prose translations of the rule, but relies primarily upon London, British Museum MS Cotton Faustina A. x., a complete prose translation of the Rule into Old English generally considered to have been made by Æthelwold. Where useful, I have made comparisons with the inter-linearly glossed version of the Rule in London, British Museum MS Cotton Tiberius A. iii. using the microfilm version of this manuscript and H. Logeman's 1888 Early English Text Society edition, The Rule of S. Benet. Latin and Anglo-Saxon Interlinear Version.
Benedictine *Rule* states that by entering into monastic life, monks agree to serve God "never swerving from his instructions, then, but faithfully observing his teaching in the monastery until death" ("ut ab ipsius numquam magisterio discedentes, in eius doctrinam usque ad mortem in monasterio perseverantes..." Prol. 50). This permanence of service, a service determined by the text of the *Rule* as interpreted by the abbot, is supposed to be characterized by "stabilitas" ("stability"), a word which in various grammatical forms appears six times in the Latin text.2 "Gyrovagues," monks who wander from place to place, come in for serious criticism because "they are never stable" ("et numquam stabilis" 1.11). In chapter four, entitled "Quae sunt instrumenta bonorum operum" ("the tools for good works"), St. Benedict states "the workshop where we are to toil faithfully at all these tasks is the enclosure of the monastery and stability in the community" ("officina vero ubi haec omnia diligenter operemur claustra sunt monasterii et stabilitas in congregatione" 4.78).

Stability for potential novices or travelers who may wish to join the community is also a great concern of the monastery. Benedict requires would-be novices who come to the monastery as adults to persist through a long period of waiting before they are permitted to take irrevocable vows. After two months of waiting and examination the novice is to be told of the many hardships involved in the monastic commitment. He is then read the *Rule* "si promiserit de stabilitate sua perseverantia" ("if he promises perseverance in his stability" 58.9). Likewise, when the novice is finally ready to be fully received into the community he must promise "de stabilitate sua et conversatione morum suorum et obedientia" ("stability, fidelity to monastic life, and obedience" 58.17). Visiting clerics who wish to join the community must promise "de observatione regulae vel propria stabilitate" ("to keep the rule and observe stability" 60.9). And a visiting monk may also join the monastery as a brother "si vero postea voluerit stabilitatem suam firmare" ("if after a while he wishes to remain and bind himself to stability" 61.5).

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2 1.11; 4.78; 58.9; 58.17; 60.9; 61.5.
Commentators on the Benedictine Rule have long been of the opinion that "the basic meaning of stability is perseverance" (Fry). "Stabilitas" and "stabilis" appear seven times in the Regula Magistri, which uses "firmitas" as a synonym. The Anglo-Saxon translations of the Rule gloss "stabilitas" as a morph of "stapholfæstness" in five of six appearances ("stabilis" is glossed by "stapholfæst"). The sixth time, the phrase "voluerit stabilitatem suam firmare" ("he wishes to bind himself to stability") is translated as "hine sylfne to mynstres wununge gefæstnian will" ("he wishes to fasten himself to the dwelling of the monastery") (Schröer 109). The Anglo-Saxon translation highlights the permanence of the monk's commitment to the specific dwelling-place of the monastery. "Stapholfæst" in various grammatical forms is relatively common in the Old English corpus (Venezky and Healey 20-26). In glossing contexts the word always translates a form of "stabilis," (in one case "petrus" is translated as "stapholfæst stan"). Elsewhere the meaning of the word appears to closely track the definitions given in Bosworth-Toller: "steadfast, stable, firm." The verb "gefæstnian," denoting "fasten, secure, confirm, or betroth," which in addition to "firmare" can gloss "figere, confirmare, infigere, and despondere," is closely related to the noun "stapholfæstness." The use of "gefæstnian," and "stapholfæstness" in both the translations of Rule and in other contexts strongly connote the idea of lack of change, of permanence "usque ad mortem" ("continuously until death" Prol. 50).

But how, in the face of a constantly changing world, was stability maintained for monastic foundations? How were their traditions of behavior preserved intact and passed on to future generations of monks? Stability was engendered in monastic houses by three means: the textualization of behavior patterns, the enforced (or encouraged) perception of cyclic time, and the development of a simple but infinitely-repeating power

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3 For a bibliographical summary see Fry 463 n. 58.
4 For a complete discussion of the manuscript context and textual history of the Old English Rule see Gretsch 1973, 125-162 at 126.
structure. Using these three techniques, monastic institutions attempted to reproduce themselves in a fundamentally unchanged form across an unlimited number of generations.

In chapter one I argued that even a highly text-based society still has need of non-textual, behavioral traditions if for no other reason than to assure that the textual basis of traditions are regularly consulted. Even if traditions were contained in a manuscript and thus preserved as textually unchanging, a monastic community would still have to find some way to ensure that the manuscript was accessed regularly. In his commentary on the Benedictine Rule, Adalbert de Vogüé recognizes this difficulty, arguing that a "tradition of coenobia" was not sufficient for a monastic community without "a written document to stabilize it" (47). This recursive return to the text was built into monastic customs from the time of Cassian, and was particularly evident in the Rule of St. Augustine, which "presented itself as an authoritative text to be read weekly to the community" (de Vogüé 47).

The recursive use of the text of the Rule was a powerful tool to preserve monastic customs and retard change. Human customs are subject to slow and often unnoticeable drift through time. Such drift allows institutions to adapt rapidly to changing social and physical circumstances, providing needed flexibility to patterns of behavior. But, as a charter of Æthelred I notes, "what the memory of man lets slip the circumscription in letter preserves" (Whitelock 1979 530). Although errors might, of course, be entered into the text while copying, and the interpretation of any text is never fixed and unchanging, for the most part (and certainly in the minds of tenth-century monks) the Benedictine Rule provided a detailed plan for behavior that could be referred to again and again throughout vast expanses of time. The Rule tells monks how to behave day to day, season to season, year to year, and generation to generation. There are only two possible endings for the pattern of behavior delineated by the Rule: the death of the individual monk or the end of the world. Otherwise the monastery and its monks are to continue repeating their sanctified actions.
This repetition, which relies upon the textualized basis of monastic life, both gives rise to and relies upon a certain perception of time by monks in the monastery. In Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England, Charles W. Jones argues that the "Benedictines, when they began to write, thought of time as a daily round, an ever-turning wheel" (5). I will borrow a phrase from Stephen Jay Gould and call this conception of time, "time's cycle," contrasting it with "time's arrow" wherein "history is an irreversible sequence of unrepeatable events. Each moment occupies its own distinct position in a temporal series, and all movements, considered in proper sequence, tell a story of linked events moving in a direction" (Gould 1987 10-11). Under the rubric of "time's cycle," Gould summarizes, "events have no meaning as distinct episodes with causal impact upon a contingent history. Fundamental states are immanent in time, always present and never changing. Apparent motions are parts of repeating cycles, and differences of the past will be realities of the future. 'Time has no direction' (11).

Under the interpretive framework of time's arrow, sacred history progresses in one direction, from creation to Judgment. While earlier events may echo latter ones (the sacrifice of Isaac, for example, prefiguring the crucifixion), each is unique and unrepeatable. In Anglo-Saxon culture this view of history is most famously dramatized in Book II, Chapter 13 of Bede's Ecclesiastical History. When King Edwin is considering whether or not to convert to Christianity, his chief priest, Coifi, argues that the king should accept the new religion because the old gods have been "valueless and powerless." Another of the king's advisors agrees, and provides this view of temporal history:

... when we compare the present life of man or earth with that time of which we have no knowledge, it seems to me like the swift flight of a single sparrow through the banqueting-hall where you are sitting at dinner on a winter's day with your thegns and counselors. In the midst there is a comforting fire to warm the hall; outside, the storms of winter rain or snow are raging. This sparrow flies swiftly in through one door of the hall, and out through another. While he is inside, he is safe from the winter storms; but after a few moments of comfort, he vanishes from sight into the
wintry world from which he came. Even so, man appears on earth for a little while; but of what went before this life or of what follows, we know nothing (129-30).

The sparrow's flight represents time's arrow. Against the swirling background of the dark winter storm man's life is linear, unrepeated, and short. This is the view of English church history that Bede promulgates: the *Ecclesiastical History* moves along a teleological path, from heterodoxy to orthodox acceptance, from competing potentates to one Ceolwulf, king of Northumbria, from five tribes to one English people.

Yet time's cycle, the other pole of the chrono-interpretive dichotomy, is also present in Bede. For example, in Book I of the *Ecclesiastical History* the Britons and their successors are repeatedly brought to desperation by barbarian attacks. They rally themselves to defeat the invaders, but the subsequent abundance of prosperity leads to "an increase in luxury, followed by every kind of crime, especially cruelty, hatred of truth, and love of falsehood," and this moral weakness in turn leads to invasion and repression (Bede 60-61). This pattern is reproduced at different levels (the national, the local and the institutional) throughout the *History* and in other Bedan texts. Jones notes that in his "Life" of St. Cuthbert, "which is based on the solar calendar or martyrology, Bede mentions seasons but never years. The work is as timeless as the solar calendar, which recurs year in, year out, like the rising and setting of the sun" (74). Hagiography for Bede is handled in terms of time's cycle: events repeat endlessly in the multitudes of Saints' lives, expressing a fundamental truth of God's universe (82).

In *The Myth of Eternal Return*, his study of time's cycle in "traditional" (and generally, but not always, pre-literate) societies, Mircea Eliade argues that "historical" and "irreversible" time is a modern discovery and that "conscious repetition of given paradigmatic gestures reveals an original ontology" based on cyclic time (5). Cyclical time remains a psychological and religious force in Western culture even as competing notions of history begin to become more influential. Eliade suggests that Christianity is characterized
by an uneasy blend of time's arrow and time's cycle, and that time's cycle is far more prominent on a day-to-day basis:

... the Christian liturgical year is based upon a periodic and real repetition of the Nativity, Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus, with all that this mystical drama implies for a Christian; that is, personal and cosmic regeneration through reactualization in concreto of the birth, death, and resurrection of the Savior (130).

Eliade recognizes that Christian cyclic time is more complicated than the purer cycles followed by "traditional" societies, and that this complexity is most evident in the medieval period: "the Middle Ages are dominated by the eschatological conception (in its two essential moments: the creation and the end of the world) complemented by the theory of cyclic undulation that explains the periodic return of events" (144). The complementing theory of cyclic undulation is expressed through the reactualization of the mysteries of the church that is accomplished during the liturgical year. This repetition is homologous to the control of time evidenced in the Benedictine Rule. Both the Rule and the liturgy from which so much of it grows emphasize the participation of individuals in yearly cycles. As Jones notes, the Julian calendar, upon which the Anglo-Saxon church based the liturgical year, "was eternal. Year after year, century after century, it recurred without change." Thus any individual who participated in the liturgical year joined an ongoing and eternal process of Christian history (8-12 his emphasis)

In chapter one I argued that there is no effective difference between a traditional behavior itself and the traditional (i.e., repeated across generations) recognition that the behavior must be reproduced or reenacted. That is, the consciousness or idea of tradition is tradition. Likewise the impression that time is cyclic, the recognition of a cycle, creates the cycle in the minds of those who participate in it. Although cycles are enacted through physical behaviors, they are recognized through the mediation of records; otherwise repeated events might not be recognized. While in traditional pre-literate societies the records may be monumental, oral-traditional, biological or natural (for example, the recurrent floods of
the Nile), in medieval Christianity the records are textual. Eliade does not discuss the relationship of sacred texts to Christian repetition, but texts and, as Bede recognized, some method of correctly calculating time, are essential if repetitions of the Christian liturgical cycle are to be carried out (see Jones 8-17). By providing a textual basis for ritual performance the liturgical calendar structures the church year in terms of time's cycle.

The structured repetition of the liturgical year and its significant expansion (from delineation of the proper activities to be performed on given days of the year to pre-planning of every hour of each day) promulgated by monastic customaries is a powerful mechanism for instilling in monks time's cycle as the primary mode of temporal comprehension. As I have argued, the same-sex reproduction utilized by monastic institutions attempts to retard the behavioral changes introduced by biological reproduction. A shift of time from historical to cyclic, from time's arrow to time's cycle, and the linkage of the cycle to a (supposedly) unchanging textual basis, therefore assist in the reduction of change and the continuance of monastic reproduction.

The Benedictine Rule itself suggests a continual, cyclic return to the text. Chapter 66 commands: "hanc autem regulam saepius volumus in congregatione legi, ne quis fratrum se de ignorantia excuset" ("moreover, we wish this Rule to be read frequently in the community, that none of the brethren may excuse himself on the plea of ignorance" 66.8). Such a command of course only defers the problem of requiring a non-textual mediation between command and text; a monk or group of monks could, conceivably, forget to examine Chapter 66 and thus stop reading the Rule. Later in the Middle Ages monastic foundations solved the problem of non-textual mediation by requiring that the Rule be read on a cyclical basis with each section repeated at regular intervals three times per year. To facilitate this reception many copies of the Rule include elaborate rubrics listing the appropriate days on which a given section of the text is to be read. The division of the Rule into small sections to be read each day thus fulfills two important functions—it incorporates
into physical actions the textual referent of monastic behavior, and it establishes set of cycles (regularly repeated readings from the Rule) unique to monastic institutions and thus separate from the liturgical year shared with other Christians.5

The establishment of monastic life according to text-based cycles of behavior goes some way towards creating a community that can reproduce itself with the absolute minimum of change. But while the behaviors practiced by the monks may be the same from year to year, the people carrying out these practices change. For all cycles in human existence, each individual progresses through stages of growth and change in a fashion that can only be described by time's arrow. Monastic life had a teleology—each monk was to progress from oblate to novice to brother to name copied into the house necrology.6 And even if a period of time passed in which no new monks entered the house and no monks died, the monk reciting Lauds on one May third was not in every way the same person the following year. While spiritual growth was an important goal of monastic life, and while personal growth and change are unavoidable in human beings, these changes had the potential to disrupt the replication that was the ideal of the monastic tradition.

The authors of monastic rules were well aware of the changes that took place in monks over time. For Cassian and the author of the Regula Magistri, anchoritism is a possible destination beyond cenobitic society for some monks (de Vogüé 51-53). Chapter one of the Benedictine Rule also allows for the possibility of monks eventually becoming anchorites or hermits after they have lived in a monastery for a long time as a probationary period for beginning a solitary life (Fry 168-69). But the progression to anchoritism was not the desired outcome of every monastic profession, and in any case would have done little to reduce change in the community. The monk who became an anchorite would, after all,

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5 Date-rubrics are not included in the Anglo-Saxon translations of the Rule, and it is not clear that regular readings had become part of Anglo-Saxon monastic practice in the tenth century.

6 Of course monks who only took vows as adults would skip the oblate stage. The teleological progression was nevertheless the same.
have to be replaced the same way a monk who died would have to be replaced. The vector of time's arrow that is inherent in human growth, aging and death could be harnessed for cyclical repetition however, simply by the understanding, inculcated in monks by the Rule, that even the linear progressions of individual lives was part of a great, repeated cycle of the larger life of the monastery itself. Thus the notion of individual progress is built into the Rule—"processu vero conversationis et fidei" ("as we progress in this way of life and in faith" Prol. 49)—even as "stabilitas" is so often required of the monk. By making certain kinds of unavoidable change regular and expected, change is transformed into the appearance of stasis. The textualization of the Rule eliminates some of these forces of change, but the monastery must react to and adapt to others. Although the ideal of the monastery is stasis, the actuality must preserve some flexibility or risk extinction. The Benedictine Rule allows for flexibility while working to contain it. That is, a certain degree of change, the ability to adapt the processes of monastic life to meet new environmental constraints, is provided for not by the text of the Rule itself, but by the text's interpretation. This interpretation is the purview of one individual in each monastery: the father-figure of the abbot.

The Abbot as Father and the Loss of the Monastic Mother

Within certain limits, the abbot has the power to modify the behaviors of the monastery. Theoretically he cannot contravene the Rule itself with his commands, but because the text of the Rule must always be interpreted, and because the monks are bound to the abbot by vows of obedience, the abbot ends up having de facto power over the life of the community. He is, in fact, as de Vogüé recognized, the key to the preservations of the entire monastic order (119-50). In his commentary on the Benedictine Rule, Fry agrees that the abbot possesses enormous power but argues that to view this power in political terms misses the point:
Envisaged in political terms, it is true that the abbatial office looks like an unlimited monarchy in which one man holds sway ... but the whole issue is precisely that this point of view is incapable of penetrating to the reality: the abbot cannot be understood in purely political terms, for his function transcends the political sphere (354).

The abbot's function may transcend the political, but the political and social exercise of his power is absolutely essential to the continued operation of the monastery. De Vogüé argues that the abbot "is not just a solution, even the best possible solution, to the problem of monastic government; he is the raison d'être of this society." Without an abbot, a monastery has no government, no flexibility, and, more importantly, no intermediary between the monks and Christ (102). The political actions taken by the abbot allow the monks to truly renounce temporal cares and be dead to the world. Although the Rule provides a blueprint, it is the abbot who interprets, enforces, and actualizes the textual instructions. The monastic Rule cannot reproduce itself without the person of the abbot who translates the text into human behavior.

According to de Vogüé, the true function of the abbot is "spiritual fatherhood," a custodianship of the bodies and souls of monks which implies "a total authority of father over his sons" but—passing beyond the models of paterfamilias or monarch—carries with it reciprocal responsibilities of good stewardship (122). "The coenobium is in its essence an attempt at organizing spiritual fatherhood. Its purpose is to confer a social dimension upon it and prolong it in time beyond the generation of the first disciples of the first father" in any given monastery (de Vogüé 136). In other words, one of the responsibilities of the spiritual father is the reproduction of the monastic institution. The abbot must ensure that his house is able to cross generational boundaries with its social structure (determined by the unchanging text of the Rule) intact.

Up to this point there has been no need to distinguish between the abbot and the abbess, and I have only used the masculine term because this is the word ("abbas") used in the standard texts of the Rule. Female monasticism, of course, could operate along the
same lines as male monasticism, with the abbess performing all the duties of the abbot. In fact, as Hollis has shown, female monasticism was as important, influential and powerful as male monasticism in the early Anglo-Saxon period. St. Boniface's correspondence with the abbesses Eangyth and Heaburg (also known as Bugge), for example, shows the saint treating these women as equals in the struggle to convert heathens and maintain monastic foundations intact in the face of secular depredations (57-67). Likewise Lul, whom Boniface designated (much to the displeasure of Rome) as his successor as bishop, in his private correspondence praised monastic women for their teaching and learning (Talbot 98, 49). Boniface in fact requested that he and after his death the bones of the abbess Leoba, "should be placed next to his in the tomb, so that they who had served God during their lifetime with equal sincerity and zeal should await together the day of resurrection" (Talbot 222).

Boniface's instructions were not carried out, and as Hollis notes, years later Hrabanus Maurus in fact moved Leoba's bones further from Boniface's tomb, an action which "signals the imminent fulfillment of Hrabanus's intention to decree monastic segregation absolute" (288). In England such segregation was already beginning to be enforced towards the end of the age of Bede, and in fact Hollis sees it as an inevitable once Theodore had arrived in England (273). In the time of the English missions to the continent, "as the power of bishops gained ascendancy, abbesses lost to them the autonomous control of their houses; formally precluded from dealing with the world at large, their sphere of influence diminished radically and the status of women's communities with it" (275). Complete separation of male and female monasticism and the essential elimination of the double monastery did not take place, however, until the Benedictine reform. Hollis argues that double monasteries "were not so much regulated out of existence as allowed to perish in the [Viking] invasion" (273). Thus when Æthelwold, Oswald, Dunstan, and their followers set out to rebuild English monasticism there was little in the
way of an organized constituency by which communities of female monastics might be brought back to their former power and influence.

The works of the Venerable Bede also influenced the reformers to exclude female communities from their efforts to rebuild English monasticism. Knowles argues that Bede's writings were a major influence on the reformers, who received many of their ideas about how a monastic community should operate and be structured not only from their continental sojourns, but from Bede's descriptions of English monastic life (22-30). Hollis shows that Bede systematically undervalued the contributions of female monastics to English religious life:

The depiction of monastic women in [Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*] is not a representation of their actual role in the conversion period; it approximates to the invisibility that it was thought proper for them to assume in accordance with canon law, once the resurgence of the church under Theodore had rendered their assistance in converting the laity less critically necessary (246).

Clare Lees and Gillian Overing also note that Bede appropriates for masculine ends the cultural work of the abbess Hild, depicting her as a mere facilitator of male monastic achievement (33-39). The writings of Bede, therefore, severed to make invisible the very real actions of monastic women in the seventh and early eighth centuries. For twentieth-century readers of Bede, this invisibility is a historical problem that may be solved by resistant readings such as those promulgated by Lees, Overing and Hollis. But in the tenth century Bede's writings were used as a foundation upon which to build a new monasticism. The invisibility of women that had been merely a textual artifact became a historical fact in the hands of Dunstan, Æthelwold and Oswald. That is, the rebuilding of monasticism in the tenth century enforces the silence and lack of influence upon real women and real female monastic communities that had only been an ideal for Bede.

Hollis and Lees and Overing arrived independently at their similar conclusions.
Thus in tenth-century textual culture the abbot eclipses the figure of the abbess. The paternal abbot is not paired with a maternal figure; he takes upon himself full responsibility for control over and reproduction of the monastic community. The same-sex reproduction that in chapter two I showed to be configured as a masculine process is directed by the abbot. The abbot achieves this goal of same-sex reproduction through the continuing attraction of novices to monastic life: he can hope "verum in augmentatione boni gregis gaudeat" ("to rejoice in the increase of a good flock" 2.32).

The increase in the flock of professed monastic brothers comes from adult or adolescent novices who have voluntarily joined the monastery, and oblates, children attached to the monastery by their parents. Chapter 58 of the Rule specifies the procedures for receiving new brothers. Adult novices are not actively recruited. In fact, entry to the monastery is to be made as difficult as possible: "noviter veniens quis ad conversationem, non ei facilis tribuatur ingressus" ("do not grant newcomers to the monastic life an easy entry" 58.1). A prospective brother is forced to persist in waiting outside the gate for four or five days before he is admitted to the monastery (58.3-4). He is then taken to live in the novitiate where he remains for two months before the Rule is read through to him (58.9). He then waits an additional six months in the novitiate and is read the Rule again (58.12). If he still wishes to become a brother he waits four more months before being permitted to make his profession (58.15). Adult novices, therefore, must show that they accept the authority of the Rule and of the abbot before they are admitted into the organization. Individuals who might be disruptive of monastic life are thus screened and prevented from taking vows.

But the difficulty of entrance that is so visible in the profession of new adult brothers is entirely absent from the oblation of children. "Si ipse puer minor aetate est" ("if the boy himself is too young" 59.1) to make a profession his parents may have a document of oblation written. "Ipsam petitionem et manum pueri involvant in palla altaris, et sic eum
offerant" ("they wrap the document itself and the boy's hand in the altar cloth; that is how they offer him" 59.2). The boy is not asked whether or not he desires to make an eternal profession, and the *Rule* makes no specific provision for him to leave the monastery when he is grown and would presumably be able to determine his desires for himself. This treatment of the child suggests that Anglo-Saxon monastic culture viewed children as malleable enough to be converted to monks by the rigors of monastic education directed by the father-figure of the abbot.

The *Rule* itself places greater emphasis on the profession of adult novices who have willingly joined the monastery than on the oblation of children. But, according to Mayke de Jong, "it is generally assumed that the majority of new entrants into monastic life in the Carolingian Empire were *pueri nutriti*. These were young children whose parents gave them as oblates to a monastic community where they were brought up and educated" (99). This Carolingian practice seems to have been standard in Anglo-Saxon England and throughout western Europe in the tenth and eleventh centuries (Boswell 20-23). That Anglo-Saxons viewed oblation as appropriate for children and as permanent is evidenced by the Old English words chosen by Æthelwold to translate this important section of chapter 59:

Gif hwylc rice mon and æpelbore his bearn Gode on mynstre geoffrian wile, gif þet cild þæs andgites næbbe, þæt he sylf mæge oðre cunne hine sylfne, gefæstnian hine þa magas mid ofrunge, þæt is, bewinde þæs cildes hand and þæt gewrit his fæstnunge on þæs altares weofodsceate and hine swa Gode geoffrien mid ofrunge hlaes and wines (Schröer 103).

If a rich and noble-born man wishes to offer his child to God in the monastery, if the child is not able to understand, so that he himself may understand himself, his kin may then bind him with the offering; that is, they wind the child's hand and the

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8 The preceding chapter of the *Rule*, however, suggests that monks who had voluntarily joined the monastery might leave it if they "suadenci diabolo consenserit" ("agreed to the devil's suggestion" 58.28) to break their vows. It is not clear if oblated monks were permitted to make the same choices, and it seems clear that in the early Middle Ages oblation was regarded as an irrevocable condition, regardless of the desires of the oblate (Boswell 25-27).
document of his binding in the altarcloth and so offer him to God with an offering of bread and wine.

This is one of the few instances in the Anglo-Saxon prose translation of the *Rule* in which Æthelwold departs from the literal Latin text to render the sense of the passage in more descriptive terms. Although the general thrust of the instruction is the same, the Old English emphasizes the lack of volition in the child, replacing "si ipse puer minor aetate est" ("if the boy himself is too young" 59.1) with "gif þæt cild þæs andgites næbbe" ("if the child is not able to understand"). More importantly, while the first use of the Latin "offerit" ("offers") is translated by "geoffrían" ("to offer"), "offerant" ("they offer") in the second verse is translated by "gefæstnian" ("bind" or "fasten"). Rather than being offered, the child is fastened, promised or bound. Æthelwold takes great care to emphasize the permanence of the child's offering.

He also is sure to make permanent the offering of property that is supposed to come to the monastery with the oblation of a nobly-born child. Although Mechthild Gretsch originally considered the translation of chapter 59, verses four through five to be a simple mistake (1973 281-83), she no longer classifies the section "among the extremely small number of translation errors made by Æthelwold" (1992 131). Rather, she argues that Æthelwold intentionally shifted the meaning of the Latin passage. The Latin text of the *Rule* states that when a child is oblated, parents "faciant ex rebus quas dare volunt monasterio donationem, reservato sibi, si ita voluerint, usufructu" ("make a formal donation of the property that they want to give to the monastery, keeping the usufruct for themselves should they so desire" 59.5). Æthelwold translates the section as follows: "Gif hy þonne hwæt syllan willan, sellan hi þæt þære haligan stowe to rihtum gemænscipe, him to ecum edleane; and him sīþan sy wegnestes getiðæþ, and swa mid wegneste ham cyrren, gif hi þæs

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9 Gretsch notes that the *receptus* tradition to which the Old English translation belongs had "usu fructurario" in place of "usufructu" in the *textus purus*, upon which Fry's edition (quoted above) is based (1973 281-83).
wilnien" ("if they then wish to give something, they [must] give it to the holy place for right custodianship, for their eternal reward; and they afterwards may be given food, and with the food they may journey home, if they wish") (Schröer 103-4). Gretsch shows that Æthelwold’s alteration of the meaning of the passage (a passage correctly interpreted in a commentary by Smaragdus which Æthelwold knew) falls in line with the Saint’s "repeated emphasis of the principle that monastic property was sacrosanct and that the laity should not have any influence on the affairs of the monastery" (1992 132-36). Through this reinterpretation (via translation) of the Rule, Æthelwold re-emphasizes the permanence of every part of the process of oblation: the gift of land and the child may never be separated from the monastery and the parents have no control over either’s fate once it has been offered.

The permanence of the monastery’s control over the donation is also emphasized by another use of the word "gefæstnian" in chapter 59. In verse three of the Latin Rule the oblate’s kinsman must agree never to give the boy any property or other possessions. Æthelwold translates the Latin "in praesenti petitione promittant" ("they make a sworn promise in this document" 59.3) with the Old English "behaten þa magas and mid æhe gefæstnian" ("the kin then promises and with an oath fastens...") (Schröer 103). Again, "gefæstnian" is used to emphasize the permanence of the oath. The entire procedure from the offering of the boy to the donation of property to the parents’ agreement that they will not try to give their son gifts (of property or otherwise) after he enters the monastery serves to dramatize the final nature of the act of oblation for all parties concerned. And it is the abbot—the monk solely responsible for dealings with the world outside the monastery—who controls the procedure and brings the child (and the property that comes with him) into the monastery’s orbit. Control of the child passes from the biological parents to the spiritual father. This role of fatherhood includes control over all property and enforcement of an eternal binding promise made without the child’s consent.
Oblation, however, is only the beginning of the process by which children were transformed into monks under the watchful eye of the father-figure of the abbot. The Rule itself, true to its emphasis on adult novices, has little to say about the acculturation and education of oblates. Chapter 30, one of the briefest in the Rule, discusses "De pueris minore aetate, qualiter corripiantur" ("about boys of minor status, how they are to be corrected"):

Omnis aetas vel intellectus proprias debet habere mensuras. Ideoque, quotiens pueri vel adulescentiores aetate, aut qui minus intellegere possunt quanta poena sit excommunicationis, hi tales dum delinquunt, aut ieiuniis nimiis affiigantur aut acris verberibus coerceantur, ut sanentur.

Every age and level of understanding should receive appropriate treatment. Therefore, as often as boys and the young, or those who cannot understand the seriousness of the penalty of excommunication, are guilty of misdeeds, they should be subjected to severe fasts or checked with sharp strokes so that they may be healed (30.1-3).

Chapter two, sentence 28 allows for corporal punishment for any member of the monastery. Severe fasts were not limited to boys, and boys in fact might be less likely to undergo such punishments: chapter 37 suggests that regarding the elderly and the young:
"consideretur semper in eis imbecillitas et ullamtenus eis districtio regulae teneatur in aliments" ("since their lack of strength must always be taken into account, they should certainly not be required to follow the strictness of the rule with regard to food" 37.2). With the exception of sentence seven in chapter 21, in which Benedict commands that "adulescentiores fratres iuxta se no habeant lectos, sed permixti cum senioribus" ("the younger brothers should not have their beds next to each other, but interspersed among those of the seniors" 22.7), there is very little else in the Rule that applies specifically to boys. To understand how these individuals—who were children in a very literal sense as well as spiritual children of the abbot—lived it is necessary to consult medieval documents outside the Rule.
The Abbot's Children and the Royal Parents: *Regularis Concordia*

The final chapter of the *Rule* of St. Benedict is entitled "De hoc quod non omnis iustitiae observatio in hac sit regula constituta" ("that the observance of all justice is not laid down in this rule" 73). The *Rule* is far less exhaustive in its treatment of specific monastic customs than related documents such as the *Regula Magistri* or the *Regula Augustini*, and this built-in flexibility undoubtedly contributed to the adoption of Benedict's *Rule* in so many diverse monastic environments. "Destined to provide practical guidance of a rather timeless sort, the *Regula* was, however, not always explicit enough to procure desired uniformity in detail" writes Lucia Kornexl; to fill in some of the gaps left by the *Rule*, monasteries developed adjunct documents called "consuetudinaries" or customaries (1995 97). Consuetudinaries clarified (and textualized) relationships between the monastery and the outside world and fixed in greater detail behaviors treated briefly by Benedict.

The most significant consuetudinary for the study of Anglo-Saxon England is the *Regularis Concordiae Anglicae Nationis Monachorum Sanctimonialiumque* (the Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation), known by the short title of *Regularis Concordia*. The *Regularis Concordia* was produced at a synod at Winchester held under the aegis of King Edgar sometime between 965 and 970 (Symons 1953 xxiv). The synod and the document "can be seen as part of a carefully organized scheme to effect and secure the re-establishment of monasticism in England on a common spiritual and equally firm material basis" (Kornexl 1995 96). At the time of the synod, English monasteries "were

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10 Quotations from the *Regularis Concordia* will be taken from Thomas Symons' 1953 dual-language (Latin and English) edition and cited by page number. The *Regularis Concordia* is also printed in the *Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum*, vol. 7, pt. 3 (ed. K. Hallinger), but Symons' edition is more frequently cited in the work of Anglo-Saxonists. Where it has been useful to consult the Old English gloss of this text I will use Lucia Kornexl's *Die Regularis Concordia und ihre altenenglische Interlinearversion*. While W.S. Logeman's version of the text is relatively easy to find (it was published in *Anglia* 13), it is, as Kornexl notes, not entirely accurate (1995 95).
united in faith, but not in one manner of their observance of the Rule of St. Benedict" (Symons 1975 39-40). The three leaders of the Benedictine reform, Dunstan, Æthelwold, and Oswald, used their influence with King Edgar and Queen Ælfthryth to affect a unification of monastic custom and a transfer of power to monastic foundations organized or re-organized between 943 and the writing of the Regularis Concordia.

Eric John has argued that the monastic revival of the tenth century from its inception in 943 "hung on the king's nod, and its progress was entirely dependent on influence at court" (162). Æthelwold, the prime mover of the reform, thought that the ruin of monasticism in the previous century was due to the depredations of "English magnates who had used their power to get control over ecclesiastical endowments" (John 162 155).

The tenth paragraph of the foreword to the Regularis Concordia states:

Saecularium uero prioratum, ne ad magni ruinam detrimenti uti olim acciderat miserabiliter deueniret, magna animaduersione atque anathemate suscipi coenobiis sacris sapienter prohibentes, regis tantummodo ac reginae dominium ad sacri loci munimen et ad ecclesiasticae possessionis augmentum uoto semper efflagitare optabili prudentissime iusserunt.

The assembly wisely, and under severe censure and anathema, forbade the holy monasteries to acknowledge the overlordship of secular persons, a thing which might lead to utter loss and ruin as it did in past times. On the other hand, they commanded that the sovereign King and Queen—and they only—should ever be besought with confident petition, both for the safeguarding of holy places and for the increase of goods of the Church (7).

The practice of *saeculan·um prioratus* which led to such "ruin" had at its heart the traditional power of local nobles to control or influence abbatial appointments (John 162 172). By linking monasteries directly to the power of the king, the reformers were able to

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11 The Regularis Concordia is found in two manuscripts: London, British Museum MS. Cotton Faustina B. iii., a manuscript of the late tenth century; and London, British Museum MS. Cotton Tiberius A. iii. The text in Tiberius A. iii. has an old English gloss that "was modeled on a Latin text that basically corresponded to the one surviving in Tiberius A. iii.; ... text and gloss were copied from one exemplar" (Kornexl 1995 118).
break free of local control of these local powers. That is, by submitting to the distant authority of the king the monasteries gained freedom from the near authority of ealdormen and other magnates. In return, the king received the benefits of friendly monastic influence upon estates that were often located far from court and direct royal influence. As the textual instrument by which this linking of the monastery and court was carried out, the *Regularis Concordia* is as much a national, political document as it is an attempt to develop uniform codes of spiritual behavior (Dales 50), but before turning to the larger political issues in the document, I want to explore the ways in which the *Regularis Concordia* expands upon the Benedictine *Rule*’s bare-bones regulations which relate to children.

The first mention of children in the *Regularis Concordia* comes in the eleventh paragraph of the foreword, which discusses the proper behavior of monastic brethren when they are on a journey: "iternates uero non iuuenculos sed adultos quorum admonitione meliorentur secum in comitatu ducant" ("again, let the brethren take with them as companions on a journey not youths but grown-up persons from whose conversation they may take profit" 7). The text then shifts abruptly (a common stylistic tendency in the *Regularis Concordia*) to delineate what appear to be regulations related to the sexuality of oblates:

Domi uero degentes, non solum fratres sed etiam abbates, adolescentes uel puerulos non brachis amplexando uel labris leuiter deosculando, sed caritatiuo animi affectu sine uerbis adulatoriis reuerenter cum magna cautela diligant. Nec ad obsequium priuatum quempiam illorum nec saltem sub spiritualis rei obtentu solum deducere praesumant, sed uti regula praecipit sub sui custodis uigilantia iugiter maneat; nec ipse custos cum singulo aliquo puerulo sine tertio qui testis assistat migrandi licentiam habeat, sed solito cum tota schola, si res rationabilis exigerit.

According to Komexl, the "general structural incoherence and scarcity of detail" of the *Regularis Concordia* arises because "the consuetudinary was primarily intended to consolidate the achievements of the monastic revival"; thus the document formalizes already-established ideas rather than clearly communicating new information (1995 103).
In the monastery moreover let neither monks nor abbots embrace or kiss, as it were, youths or children; let their affection for them be spiritual, let them keep from words of flattery, and let them love the children reverently and with the greatest circumspection. Not even on the excuse of some spiritual matter shall any monk presume to take with him a young boy alone for any private purpose but, as the Rule commands, let the children always remain under the care of their master. Nor shall the master himself be allowed to be in company with a boy without a third person as witness; but let master and schola go together in the accustomed manner wherever reason and necessity demand (7-8).

Previous scholars have not discussed the implications of this paragraph of the Regularis Concordia for our understanding of the control of childhood sexual behavior in monastery. Symons' translation, in fact, glosses over the potential erotic content of the passage. He translates "non brachiis amplexando uel labris leuiter deosculando" as "embrace or kiss, as it were," an interpretation that partially occludes the apparent sexual nature of the embrace and kiss. A more accurate translation emphasizes the physicality of the acts described: "nor embrace with arms or lightly kiss with lips." The specific details of embrace and kiss are also found in the Old English gloss, which reads "mid earmum clyppende oððe mid lippum leothlíc cyssende" (Kornexl 1993 15). When the physical nature of the embrace and kiss are noted, the subsequent instruction "nee ad obsequium priuatum illorum nee saltem sub spiritualis rei obtentu solum decducere praseumant" ("not even on the excuse of some spiritual matter shall any monk presume to take with him a young boy alone for any private purpose") takes on a new light and indicates, I believe, the institution of a regime of surveillance to prevent homosexual acts between monks and oblates.

According to de Jong, commentaries on the Benedictine Rule such as the one written by Hildemar, a monk of Corbie, develop similar programs of surveillance. In a commentary dictated to his pupils in 845, Hildemar

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13 Hildemar's commentary itself (last edited in 1880) has been unavailable to me.
14 Gretsch suggests that "it is not impossible" that Hildemar's commentary (mis-attributed to Paul the Deacon) may have influenced Æthelwold's translation of the Benedictine Rule, but this influence "is not very likely" (1974 146). If Hildemar did influence Æthelwold's translation of the Rule, it stands
gives us the impression that he believed the vigilance should be centered solely on younger monks. If one of the children wanted to visit the latrine, or wanted to cleanse himself after a nocturnal emission, he had to inform a senior, who accompanied him. They were not to leave the dormitory for any other reason, not even for private prayer in the oratory (de Jong 112).

Constant supervision of the oblates, what Foucault would call a "panoptic modality of power" (211), and what Hildemar called custodia and disciplina (de Jong 106) was intended to enforce the sexual asceticism required by the Rule and prevent boys from experiencing physical, sexual intimacy with each other or with older monks.¹⁵ In Hildemar's commentary the focus of discipline seems to be on the boys, who Hildemar viewed as "neutral and kneadable material" who "if brought up correctly in a monastic community would have no homosexual tendencies. The abbot could trust them implicitly on this point, while those who had grown up in the world were always suspect" (de Jong 106).

The regime of surveillance developed by Hildemar is designed to prevent boys from engaging in sexual acts with each other. The other Anglo-Saxon texts that discuss in detail the sexual behavior of children, the penitentials, focus upon the temptations boys pose to older members of the monastic community. Regulation of the sexual behavior of boys comes to Anglo-Saxon England from Irish sources, most importantly the Penitential of Cummean (section x, McNeill and Gamer 112-14) and the Rule of Columbanus (McNeill to reason that the commentary would also have influenced the Regularis Concordia. And even if Æthelwold was not specifically aware of Hildemar's commentary itself, the other continental monastic customaries that influenced the Benedictine reform would likely have been influenced by the Carolingian monk. Finally, even if the no direct literary evidence linking Hildemar's commentary to the Benedictine reform, Hildemar's commentary can still shed light on Anglo-Saxon customs in that it is thought to accurately describe conditions in a monastery in the early Middle Ages.

¹⁵ Foucault places the development of panopticism in the eighteenth century and contrasts it with other forms of power ("traditional, ritual, costly violent forms of power") that he believes were more common in the Middle Ages (210). But as is so often the case in Foucault's work, his impression of the Middle Ages is mistaken and regimes or modalities of power that Foucault believes to be unique to the early modern period or later are in fact found in medieval contexts. See, for example, Frantzen 1996b (258, 280-84).
and Gamer 257-65). Frantzen has examined the regulation of childhood of sexuality in the Anglo-Saxon penitentials, demonstrating that penitential canons governing childhood sexuality work to locate children "in the spectrum of sexual behavior that defined medieval ideas of the masculine and feminine" (1996b 2). The penitentials were not solely monastic documents, but the canons regarding childhood sexuality are probably directed at oblates. These regulations are not primarily intended to protect boys from the sexual attention of older men (some are intended to keep boys from engaging in sexual activity with each other), but to protect older men from "seduction" by oblates. Boys who were sexually exploited received significant penances; the men who were their partners did not. Frantzen argues that this asymmetrical regime of discipline worked to "instill in the young a fear of all sexual acts. Whether they lived inside or outside the monastery boys had to acquire habits of sexual purity, abstinence, and self-control, the ideals of adult sexual conduct" (1996 16).

Undoubtedly these ideals are also promulgated by the Regularis Concordia. But this document does not focus on the behavior of the boy, but of the monk, and it tries to eliminate potential situations in which homosexual contact might occur rather than punishing sexual activity after the fact. In the Regularis Concordia the regime of surveillance thatÆEthelwold imposes upon boys is propagated up and down the monastic ranks; "non solum fratres sed etiam abbates" ("not only monks but also abbots") are commanded never to be alone with a boy. Even the particular magister in charge of the boy's education is never to be alone with him. The end result of this regime of surveillance is the further consolidation of power in the abbot who, as the father whom all monks must obey, is the final arbiter of behavior and the dispenser of punishment. But the disciplinary loop is in a sense closed, in that the abbot himself ("sed etiam abbates") is also commanded never to be alone with an oblate. Thus as constructed by the Regularis Concordia, one of the duties of the abbot as father is the prevention of homosexual activity between monks and oblates, or, more broadly, the spiritual father is responsible for the sexual development of his "children."
As is evident from the opening lines of the document, the *Regularis Concordia* was written under the influence of King Edgar and intended not only for internal use in the monastery but also for dissemination to ecclesiastics attached to the court and perhaps even for the king himself (Symons 1953 4–5). The presence of fragments of an Old English prose translation of the *Regularis Concordia* found on folios 174–77 of London, British Museum, MS. Cotton Tiberius A. iii. suggests that the text may even have been distributed to certain laypeople. The Old English text known as *Edgar Establishes the Monasteries* found in London, British Museum MS Cotton Faustina A. x. states that Edgar "purh þises wisdomes lust he het þisne regul of læden gereorde on englisc geþeoden" ("from a desire for wisdom he commanded this Rule [i.e., of St. Benedict] to be translated from Latin into English") (Cockayne vol. 3 441). The king may have likewise desired a translation of the *Regularis Concordia*.

In any case, the *Regularis Concordia* is not a private document intended solely for monastic consumption. Thus the emphasis on prevention of homosexual behavior by brothers directed to children in the monastery's care may have something to do with the perceptions of monasteries in the court and among the aristocracy (this discussion is, after all, found in the foreword to the document). Recall that Dunstan, Æthelwold and Oswald had spent considerable time and energy convincing the king and court that un-reformed monastics and cathedral canons were "nefandis scelerum moribus implicati" ("involved in wicked and scandalous behavior") (Lapidge and Winterbottom 30). In order to continue their reform they apparently needed to demonstrate to Edgar, queen Ælthryth and other members of the aristocracy that reformed monasteries had not returned to the behavior of their predecessors. The emphasis on regulatory measures to *prevent* rather than *punish* homosexual activity between adults and children in the monastery may also have been intended to reassure outsiders that monasteries were appropriate institutions for the placement of aristocratic children.
The abbot as father of the monastery therefore takes on still another role: not only does he observe and punish, but he also polices the sexual behavior (and thus presumably the masculine development along approved channels) of the children in his care. Children whose sexuality developed in ways differently from those prescribed by the Rule would add an element of unpredictability into the replication of the monastery. More importantly, male homosexual desire had the capability of interfering with (or at least calling into question) the masculine same-sex reproduction used by the monastery. The abbot, therefore, by strictly controlling the development of childhood sexuality, attempts to restrict the ways his "sons" will relate to each other, thus channeling desire into certain pre-selected modes of behavior.

The stability sought after by monastic institutions could only take place in the social, political and economic matrix in which the monastery existed. Anglo-Saxon Benedictines were not the wandering Irish ascetics of the fifth and sixth centuries; they did not remove themselves from commerce with their fellow men but were closely involved politically with other Anglo-Saxon institutions. The Regularis Concordia shapes the relationship between monastery and outside world in a fashion unique among monastic customaries of the time (John 288); in the document the king (obviously a layman) is adopted as a father-figure and arbiter for all the monasteries of the English nation.

The Regularis Concordia opens with a paean to Edgar's "fidei scintilla" ("spark of faith") 1), which grows to brilliance with the help of God and which guides him to restore monasteries and drive out "neglegentium clericorum spurcitiis" ("negligent clerks with their abominations") 2). Edgar is likened to the "Pastorum Pastor" (the Shepherd of Shepherds") 2), who rescues the monasteries from the wicked. With Queen Ælffthryth he protects communities of both monks and nuns throughout the nation. Edgar is also given credit for

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16 Jonathan Dollimore discusses the implications of such a "perversion" of masculine behavior in Sexual Dissidence: Augustine to Wilde, Freud to Foucault, 26-58.
commanding the Synodal Council that developed the *Regularis Concordia* (2). In return for this wisdom, monks are instructed not to chant the prayers of intercession for the King "nimia uelocitate" ("with excessive speed") (5). In chapter one of this document, in which the liturgical order is developed for the entire year, monks are instructed to sing two psalms after noonturns (Ps. vi and xix), "unum uidelicet pro rege specialiter, alterum uero pro rege et regina ac familiaribus" ("the first especially for the king, the other for the king, queen and benefactors") (13). Three specific collect prayers which name the king and queen follow the psalms. At Lauds monks are to sing the *Miserere* (Ps. 1) and two additional psalms for the king, queen and benefactors (Ps. xxxi and lxxxv). After Tierce they are to sing two additional psalms (Ps. xii and lvi), and the Morrow Mass "pro rege uel quacumque imminente necessitate celebretur" ("shall be said for the king or for any pressing need") (16). Additional psalms and prayers are sung on feast days, and there are variations based on the days of the week and year. In any event, the amount of prayer given to the king and queen is, as scholars have remarked, enormous and strikingly different from any other monastic arrangements of the time period (Knowles 42-56).

The many thousands of prayers granted to the king and queen were not given simply in gratitude for Edgar's "establishment" of the monasteries. The king had an active and continuing role in the maintenance of monastic power and stability. In the ninth paragraph of the foreword the king is given power to resolve disputes about the succession of abbots: If any given community cannot find within its walls an individual to be abbot, then a monk may be chosen from another community "concordi regis et fratrum quibus dedicari debet consilio eligatur" ("with the consent of the king and the counsel of the brethren to whom he is to be presented") (6). The monasteries also gain power from the king and at the expense of the non-monastic ecclesiastical hierarchy: bishops are to be chosen from among monks as long as a suitable monk may be found (6). While in paragraph ten the monasteries are forbidden to accept the rule of secular persons (*saecularium prioratus*),
"regis tantummodo ac reginae dominium ad sacri loci munimen et ad ecclesiasticae possessionis augmentum uoto semper effigitare optabili prudentissime" ("on the other hand ... the sovereign power of the king and queen—and that only—should ever be besought with confident petition, both for the safeguarding of the holy places and for the increase of the goods of the church" 7).

The king and queen are thus put into a position at the summit of a hierarchy parallel to but separate from the hierarchy of rank of both secular and ecclesiastical Anglo-Saxon society. By sidestepping already-established hierarchies the monasteries reconstruct their social matrix in their own image. Just as the abbot is the only figure to whom monks may go to resolve a dispute, so too is the king (rather than lower-ranking, local nobles) the arbiter of monastic affairs. Before the Benedictine reform the abbatial office was generally hereditary, passed on within the family that had founded the house (Whitelock 1979 77). John argues that "the Benedictine reformers were mortally afraid of the grip of the hereditary principle on abbatial appointments;" to break this grip Æthelwold and the other reformers sought to harness the power of the king against local magnates. John cites an authenticated tenth-century royal charter for Abingdon in which, upon the death of the abbot Wulfgar, the community is to elect a new abbot from among the brethren without the influence of outsiders. "The scanty evidence does point rather decisively to a deep-rooted principle of hereditary, local control over abbatial elections, which the tenth-century reformers intended to abolish with royal help" (171-72).

As I discussed in the previous chapter, hereditary inheritance reinforces the power of heterosexual reproduction. But by placing the king as the arbiter of abbatial succession and

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17 The Regularis Concordia positions the queen as the figure to whom abbesses may call upon. But as Hollis notes, "restrictions of the abbesses' dealings with the world at large produced an enhancement in the role of the queen at the expense of the abbesses' autonomous rule." Thus, the Regularis Concordia passes to the queen the role of "paramount abbess of all England," further enforcing the segregation of male and female monastic life. This segregation led inexorably to the reduction in power and influence of female monastic communities (290-98).

18 Kemble, number 684.
by requiring (for the most part) that the new abbot be chosen from among the monks in a
given monastery, masculine, same-sex reproduction—the transmission of power and identity
from one man to another without the influence of members of the opposite sex—is given
primacy over the heterosexual reproduction required for familial inheritance. The king, who
throughout the Anglo-Saxon period was a father who produced biological heirs, becomes in
the *Regularis Concordia* a type of father, like the abbot, who exercises powers of command
and influence to determine social and institutional reproduction.

**The Monastery as Conscience**

As a father figure with the power to manage time, interpret the texts upon which
monastic life was based, control the education and training of children, and link the
monastic institution to the highest secular authorities, the abbot occupies a site of great
material importance in Anglo-Saxon culture. But culture is not only material, and the
imaginary or psychological life of Anglo-Saxons was also shaped by the father-figure of the
abbot in his location of the monastery. While the Freudian or Lacanian implications of the
construction of the abbot as father are not a concern of this study, I will conclude this
chapter with a discussion of the place the monastery and the abbot held in the minds—more
specifically the consciences—of Anglo-Saxons. This place was carved out for the monastic
orders through the operations of the system of penance and confession.

This link between the monastery and the practices of penance and confession is less
obvious in the tenth-century than it was in the early Anglo-Saxon period. In the eighth
and ninth centuries, as Frantzen has shown, there was much inter-relation between the Irish
and the Anglo-Saxon penitentials: tariff penitentials ultimately derive from Irish documents
which have their ultimate source in Irish monasteries (1983 25-60). But penitentials and the
practice of penance were reintroduced to England from the continent in the tenth century
after having been brought there from England in the eighth (Frantzen 1983 122). At this time penitential practice was firmly in the hands of the non-monastic ecclesiastical hierarchy. Priests administered the sacraments of penance and confession, not monks (Frantzen 1983 143). And while some priests were monks, the majority were not; nor were the majority of monks, priests, although during the second phase of the Benedictine reform more monks were ordained than had previously been the practice and, as previously noted, the upper echelons of the ecclesiastical hierarchy were drawn from the monasteries (Knowles 65-66).

Nevertheless in the tenth century the monastery cast a long shadow over both the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the practices of penance and confession. Monasteries were the centers of education and learning, and they almost certainly produced the written handbooks of penance. Frantzen notes:

> the literacy and learning of the monastery could not be imparted to the clergy, but the clergy could be taught what the monks themselves had learned. The monks' own rules, which prescribed their habits of confession and their modes of penance, were less to the point than continental literature of the previous century aimed at clerical reform. In the tenth century, as in the eleventh and the twelfth, "it was from the monasteries that the countryside learnt its religion." But that transmission required men like Ælfric to translate monastic experiences into models for the laity (Frantzen 1983 143).

The monastery thus stood at the head of the system of penance and confession, as its origin although perhaps not its animating force. A passage from the Handbook fragments found in Tiberius A. iii., the only passage from Fowler's part IV, the section of the Handbook containing the penitential tariffs, illustrates the relationship:

> Gyf hwa hine sifne swiðe forwyerce on manifealdan synnan, and he æfter þam wille geswican and geornlice betan, gebuge to mynstre and þeowige þar æfre Gode and mannun swa swa him man þæce, oððe of earde weallige wide and dædbote æfre þa

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19 Here Frantzen quotes R. W. Southern (153).
Monastic life is here constructed as the ultimate level of penance: the most effective way for a man to save his soul is to leave the world and join the monastic community. Such penances are also found in the *Penitential of Theodore*, where a man who "carries off a monk from a monastery by stealth" shall enter the monastery and serve God. A woman who has committed adultery may atone by entering a monastery (McNeill and Gamer 186, 209). These penances serve to set the monastery as the capstone on the moral system of penance and confession. One of the goals of the system of penance and confession was the inculcation of Christian morality in the consciences of believers. They were not only to scrutinize their souls when in confession, but to constantly watch themselves so as not to sin. The position of the moral preeminence of the monasteries, therefore, was not merely expressed by penitential documents; it was established as part of a believer's own conscience. For Anglo-Saxon believers, then, the monastery became a place of superior morality, a place to be deferred to in such matters. John Eastburn Boswell speculates that parents of oblates expected to receive eternal rewards for their gift to the monastery, and that the monastery was viewed by these parents as providing a place for their children that was morally superior to the outside world (22–24).

The assumption that taking monastic vows had the capability of cleansing the most severe sins could not but help to recruit adults into monastic orders. True believers who

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20 Fowler prints an emended text collated from the various manuscripts of the *Handbook*. Above I give the actual text of Tiberius A. iii. as described by Fowler's notes.
had committed crimes could still hope to receive eternal life by entering the monastery walls, and even lesser sinners would be more assured of a heavenly reward if they took vows. By placing themselves or their children in the monastery, Anglo-Saxons could hope more certainly to achieve eternal life. Thus the position of the monastery itself is made analogous to that of the abbot in the monastic house as constructed by the Benedictine Rule, or that of the king for the monasteries of the nation as constructed by the Regularis Concordia. The highest position in the hierarchy is held by a father-figure (or in this case a fatherly institution) who judges, commands, provides a superior life by the discipline he imposes, and reproduces himself by recruitment and education (same-sex reproduction) rather than biologically.

Yet even with monastery and the abbot in their position of fathers, Anglo-Saxon culture did not flow in one direction only, from the monastery to other institutions. As the Regularis Concordia shows, the interplay of institutional interests shaped the ways monasteries and abbots acted to reproduce themselves and maintain their identities. In the next chapter I examine a genre of Anglo-Saxon poetry, the so-called "wisdom poems" of the Exeter Book, in which monastic culture attempts to come to grips with the wider culture of the aristocracy and the warrior band. Anglo-Saxon abbots were required to imitate fathers in order to reproduce themselves and their contexts of their institutions. Other Anglo-Saxons also performed this imitation, but as the wisdom poems and the subject of chapter five, Beowulf, demonstrate, their imitations were of a sort not accounted for by monastic rules.
CHAPTER IV
THE GIFT OF WISDOM
MONASTIC REPRODUCTION IN THE EXETER BOOK

Utilior est sapientia cum divitiis et magis prodest videntibus solem; sicut enim protegit sapientia sic protegit pecunia; hoc autem plus habet eruditio et sapientia quod vitam tribuunt possessori suo.

Wisdom is good with an inheritance, an advantage to those who see the sun. For the protection of wisdom is like the protection of money; and the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it.

—Ecclesiastes 7:12-13

My objective in this chapter is to correlate the internal monastic environment with the wider Anglo-Saxon secular culture, to demonstrate how the monastic father influenced other fathers and their depiction. To this end I examine a number of texts known collectively as wisdom poems. Wisdom poetry links the sacred and the secular worlds, treating in terms the wider culture could understand the ideas of tradition, inheritance and the role of fathers so important to monks. The poems, which I argue are products of the Benedictine reform, illustrate the efforts of monastic writers to understand their and their institution's place in the aristocratic Anglo-Saxon culture from whence many of them came to the monastery.
The texts I examine illustrate otherwise unarticulated social practices of tenth-century England. Wisdom poems provide little in the way of specialized, technical information: no one could use Precepts, Maxims or The Gifts of Men to learn how to harvest a crop, raise a hall or forge a sword. And unlike such Exeter Book poems as Christ, The Wanderer and The Seafarer, the wisdom poems are not regarded among the great masterpieces of Anglo-Saxon poetic art. But wisdom poems encode essential knowledge of social life. They illustrate and evaluate potential human behaviors and transmit information about cultural norms and expectations. "Knowledge of the world is knowledge of what one must do or not do in certain kinds of circumstances," writes F. A. Hayek, arguing that this knowledge arises from experience and is often transmitted without textual mediation (18). Poems that transmit knowledge of what must be done in certain circumstances make culture; they, like the frameworks provided by the wills and the daily regimentation of behavior constructed by monastic regulations, make concrete inchoate desires. They thus serve the end of replication by making clear in the minds of many different readers the same views of social life.

Wisdom poems have in the past been viewed as storehouses of traditional knowledge. Rather than illustrating the ways Anglo-Saxons encountered and understood their social world, the poems were discounted as simply the repository of accumulated tidbits perhaps out-of-date information ("catalogues," for example). I propose instead that a particular group of wisdom poems in the Exeter Book illustrates the attempts of Anglo-Saxon poets to understand their contemporary culture. The poems therefore do not so much look back on traditional materials but out into the wider culture in which the monastery found itself enmeshed as a result of the reform. They did not tote up past accomplishments and set them in order, but attempted (albeit at times unsuccessfully) to synthesize a new cultural alloy that blended a monastic view of life with social practice outside the monastery walls.
This blending was more successful in some poems than in others. In *The Gifts of Men*, a monastic figure is shown at home among the Anglo-Saxon warrior aristocracy, suggesting an easy social mixing of the members of institutions, uniting individuals with potentially disparate backgrounds and desires in one community. In *Precepts*, the monk's *Weltanschaung* is extended to the family itself, but here the blending is less successful, the father too much a part of the monastery and not closely enough connected to the behaviors of the biological family. Nevertheless, *Precepts*’ depiction of the father/son relationship helps shape language and culture in ways desired by and necessary for the reproduction of the monastery. *The Fortunes of Men* and a section of *Maxims I* more effectively applies monastic principles to the biological (and aristocratic) family, treating in monastic terms—and perhaps harmonizing with secular, aristocratic practice—the education and socialization of the young. This process is conceived as one of discipline, in which a child is tamed and taught to be like the father. The older generation reproduces itself in the younger.

When the monastic father speaks, his words are wisdom. Wisdom appears to be a gift from an older generation to a younger, and many aspects of wisdom poetry are undoubtedly useful to and sought after by the young. But the true gift of wisdom is received by the older, more powerful generation or by the influential institution that uses discipline to pass on its identity as an inheritance—whether or not inheritors desire their bequests.

**Wisdom Poems in Context: The Exeter Book and the Benedictine Reform**

Wisdom poetry has not generally been understood as a creation of the Anglo-Saxon monastery. Morton Bloomfield, who first applied the term "wisdom literature" to Anglo-Saxon poetry in 1968, did not specify an institutional context in which wisdom poems might have been written or used (24-25). Thomas Shippey recognizes potential monastic sources
for a few lines in his extensive wisdom corpus, but in general does not discuss the social contexts of the poems and in fact suggests that wisdom literature is a genre found in many cultures. Elaine Hansen expands this notion of wisdom poems as a cross-cultural but, again, does not examine the Anglo-Saxon social context of wisdom poems. Carolyne Larrington’s most recently (1993), and to my mind the most successfully investigates wisdom literature in Anglo-Saxon. She compares Havamål, the poems of Sigurðr’s youth and Hugsvinsmál with a number of Old English poems, concluding that the wisdom poems give us glimpses "of a real, functioning society, behind the text" (224). But Larrington only discusses the society in the text, not the components of society that might have caused the text to be written or, once they were written, may have used them. By establishing a canon of wisdom poems and delineating their characteristics, Shippey, Hansen and Larrington have performed valuable cross-cultural comparisons, and their readings of individual poems—to which I will return—are productively informed by their interpretation of the wisdom genre. But these major studies of wisdom poetry are not concerned with the manuscript or social context of the wisdom poems.

The wisdom genre is constructed entirely from the analysis of formal, stylistic features. None of the major studies of wisdom poetry argues that Anglo-Saxon poets or audiences (rather than critics of Old English) recognized affiliation between, say, The Rune Poem and The Fortunes of Men. I do not intend to take up here the vexed question of genre in Old English poetry, but it seems reasonable to examine the context of wisdom literature to see which "wisdom" poems Anglo-Saxon scribes believed belonged together. Shippey, citing J. K. Bollard’s examination of Maxims II (186-87), hints at such an approach by noting that The Menologium immediately precedes Maxims II and the C-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in London, British Museum MS Cotton Tiberius B. i. All three items are written by the same scribe, leading to the conclusion "that at least one Anglo-Saxon took the genre 'gnomic poem' rather seriously," linking gnomic wisdom to an interpretation of
the history delineated by the *Chronicle* (13). But in their own studies Shippey, Hansen and Larrington group together poems from disparate manuscripts and thus from different times and places in Anglo-Saxon England. Hansen, for example, compares *Precepts* with Hrothgar's "sermon" in *Beowulf*, texts from two manuscripts whose connections with each other (if any exist) are not at all obvious.

Although the major critics of wisdom poetry agree that wisdom literature was used for teaching and learning, none develops a specific cultural context in which such poems would have been used to teach or learn. Too eager to defend wisdom poems as artful and aesthetically pleasing, Shippey and Hansen never attempt to explain their social use. Larrington is less defensive, but she too is primarily concerned with the poems' "aesthetic value and continuing validity in the societies which preserved them" (i). No critic proffers an explanation as to why Anglo-Saxon scribes copied these poems or for what purpose they might have been employed.

In order to answer these questions I will read the wisdom poems in the one manuscript context that contains the greatest concentration of wisdom poems: the second codicological "booklet" of the Exeter Book. This manuscript was produced in a specific institutional and social environment, the monastery of Exeter at the height of the Benedictine reform in the late tenth century. By reading *The Gifts of Men, Precepts, The Fates of Men* and a section of *Maxims I* against this social background, I will investigate the ways the monastery attempted to understand and influence its place in the wider Anglo-Saxon secular culture, and I will explain the blending of the sacred and the secular that characterizes the wisdom poems.

In 1993 Patrick Conner elaborated arguments first presented in his unpublished dissertation of 1975 about the codicology, paleography, and history of Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS. 3501, known familiarly as "The Exeter Book." Conner uses historical, manuscript and archaeological evidence to argue for the existence of a "flourishing
community at Exeter dating from the first half of the tenth century until the raid in 1003" by King Swegn in which the churches were burned (27). He suggests that "from the time of Æthelstan's alleged re-foundation of the monastery of St Peter and St Mary in 932, there was most probably a continuously active house at Exeter for over a century, possibly even until 1050. From 932 to 968, it was a minster of unknown internal organization" (31).

Then, according to the *Chronicle* of John of Worcester, in 968 King Edgar sent a colony of reformed monks from Glastonbury to Exeter for the purpose of reforming the community there. The reformed monks were led by Sidemann, who later became abbot at Exeter and, in 973, Bishop of Crediton (29). Sidemann died in 977, but Exeter remained "a productive, flourishing institution" until the Viking raid and burning in 1003 (31).

Having established that Exeter was an active reformed monastery in the tenth century, Conner then traces two groups of manuscripts to a presumed scriptorium there. There are three codices written in the same hand as the Exeter Book: the book itself; London, Lambeth Palace, MS. 149; and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 319 (S.C. 2226). Conner argues that three additional manuscripts in a second hand—Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS. 3507; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 718 (S.C. 2632); and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS. Latin 943—may be linked to Exeter. Furthermore, London, Lambeth Palace, MS. 149 "has been extensively corrected by the scribe of the 'Sherborne Pontifical' [Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS. Latin 943]," thus connecting the two groups of manuscripts and strongly suggesting the presence of a significant scriptorium in the monastery at Exeter (33-45).

The content of the manuscripts linked to the Exeter Book also indicates connections between the Book and the tenth-century Benedictine reform, and between the reform and continental monastic sources. Bodley 718 and the "Sherborne Pontifical," for instance, both include the prologue to Egbert's penitential and a number of Frankish statutes. The Oxford manuscript also contains the remainder of the Egbert penitential, two
orders for confession, and a collection of canons (Frantzen 1983 131). All of these texts (with the possible exception of Egbert's penitential) are monastic in provenance and closely associated with the Benedictine reform.

Moving from provenance to date, Conner performs an exhaustive paleographic analysis of the letter-forms of the six Exeter manuscripts. Based on his analysis of the script of the Exeter Book, he revises Flower's dating of the manuscript at 970-990, arguing that "solely on the basis of the letter forms" the text can be assigned to 950-970. The Exeter Book "began to be written probably after 950 and before 968," and later texts by the same hand—Lambeth Palace MS. 149 and MS. Bodley 319" were copied "in the context of a learned, monastic community" like the one that existed at Exeter after 968 (49-94 at 94).

Expanding the conclusions first developed in his 1986 *Scriptorium* article, "The Structure of the Exeter Book," Conner then argues that the Exeter Book codex is constructed of three distinct booklets written by the same scribe at three different times. Booklet I includes the three *Christ* and two *Guthlac* poems, Booklet II runs from *Azarias* to the first lines of the *Partridge*, and Booklet III is bounded by the fragment known as the second half of the *Partridge* to the end of *Riddle* 95. Conner believes that Booklet II was written first, then Booklet III and finally Booklet I (118).²

Booklet II would therefore have the earliest date in Conner's range of 950-970 for the construction of the Exeter Book, suggesting that its contents could have been chosen and copied before the arrival of the reforming Glastonbury monks in 968. Conner argues

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¹ Conner bases his conclusions on six major pieces of evidence: the scribe's use of ligatures with long-s, his mastery of initial D, his treatment of dry-point designs, the soiled condition of the putative outer leaves, the distribution of identifiable membrane, and the technique for augmenting rulings (1993 110-28).

² Bernard Muir has "expressed reservations" about Conner's booklet theory but does not attempt to refute Conner's thesis on paleographical, codicological or historical grounds, preferring to argue for unity in the Exeter Book based primarily on literary evidence (6-9). Absent specific refutations of Conner's observations of paleography and codicology (refutations which I have not found in Muir's two-volume edition of the Exeter Book), it seems to me reasonable in this instance to prefer the evidence of membrane, letter forms and wear over the literary judgments of twentieth-century scholars.
The Booklet II poems represent a collection "derived from Continental models and composed in a monastic environment before the Benedictine revolution" and that they are "an English response to an overwhelming influence of Carolingian culture during Æthelstan's reign" (148-52). While Conner is undoubtedly correct in noting continental influence on the poems of the second booklet, such influence does not necessarily, I believe, link the poems to specifically Carolingian influence and a date between 950 and 960.

Conner suggests that the catalogue poems "are dependent upon the device of the catalogue which was, like many other conventions of Classical poets, also practiced by the Carolingian poets" (154). But Nicholas Howe has shown that the Old English catalogue poems are connected to a Latin tradition of catalogue and encyclopedia which includes such diverse authors as Pliny, Isidore, and Cassiodorus, and which was widespread throughout the Middle Ages (14). Thus the presence of catalogues in Carolingian poetry and in the Exeter Book does not prove a direct link between the two.

Even if the presence of Carolingian source material were to be proven, such an inclusion in the Exeter Book does not necessarily indicate a direct Carolingian source or an early date for the composition of the second booklet. The continental roots of the Benedictine reform were extensive and included adaptations of much Carolingian material, including in particular the commentaries on the Benedictine Rule by Benedict of Aniane which were written during the reign of Louis the Pious. Thus poems with Carolingian sources could just as easily be transmitted during the Benedictine reform as during the reign of Æthelstan. The production of a large manuscript such as the Exeter Book3—named in Bishop Leofric's inventory "i. mycle englisc boc be gehwilcum þingum on leoðwisan geworht" ("one large English book in which everything is wrought in verse")—would be, as

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3 Conner argues that "the codex in its ideal state would have contained twenty gatherings, all in eights, giving 160 folios in all. If that is correct, the present poetic volume of 123 folios ... represents about 77 percent of the original number of leaves" (109-110). At either 160 or the present 123 folios the manuscript represents a large investment by its producers.
Conner notes, consistent with the practices of reformed monasteries which fostered the development of "of a learned, monastic community" (49-94 at 94). We know nothing of the practices of the monastic community at Exeter before 968, and it is of course possible that the monastic community before the reform was sufficiently learned. It is certain, however (given the production of such texts as the Sherborne Pontifical) that the reforming monks who arrived from Glastonbury in 968 were both learned and skilled the production of manuscript. I would suggest, therefore, placing the composition of the second booklet in the context of a newly reformed monastic community after 968. Such a date for the second booklet can even fall within Conner's range of paleographically established dates if the manuscript was written in the years 968-970.4

Furthermore, it seems reasonable to suggest that the poems of particular interest to me—The Gifts of Men, Precepts, The Fortunes of Men, and Maxims I—were composed very near to the time in which they were copied into the Exeter Book. Although Krapp and Dobbie do state that the "meter and language indicate an early date for [Precepts], say the eighth or early ninth century" (xliii), they do not explain this interpretation, which is not supported by other scholars. Krapp and Dobbie also note that there is no reason to support an early date for Maxims I (xlvii), and they do not suggest dates for Gifts and Fortunes. The scribe's relatively few errors also bespeak a familiarity with the language of the poems, supporting a theory of composition close in time to the codex's creation. As John Niles has argued, the major metrical and linguistic tests by which Anglo-Saxon poems are generally dated, and which have used to argue for the composition of most Old English verse in the late seventh and early eighth centuries, do not provide reliable evidence without external corroboration of some sort (1983 98-101). In any event, these test are exceptionally difficult (if not impossible) to apply to short poems like Precepts, Gifts, and Fortunes. The only Exeter Book poem that appears in Thomas Cable's 1981 chronology is Juliana, which Cable  

4 A date of 970 would also fit Flower's proposed dating of 970-990.
dates to the ninth century (80), the other Exeter Book poems being presumably too short to
effectively date on metrical grounds. In his monumental study *A History of Old English
Meter*, R.D. Fulk likewise avoids dating the short Exeter Book poems and does not
propose dates for *Precepts, Gifts, Fortunes* or *Maxims I* (61, 348-51).

I therefore assume for the purposes of this argument that the wisdom poems date
from a time very close to the copying of Booklet II. This assumption of date and
provenance for Booklet II, coupled with the examination of reformed monasteries that I
have developed in chapters two and three, allows us to locate the wisdom poems of the
Exeter Book in the specific social context of a reformed Anglo-Saxon monastery. In the
remainder of this chapter I will demonstrate that the wisdom poems of the second booklet
illustrate the efforts of reformed monks to understand their place in Anglo-Saxon culture,
efforts made necessary by the social changes brought about by the Benedictine reform.

What is a Wisdom Poem and How does it Work?

There are sixteen poems in the second booklet of the Exeter Book, but only four,
*The Gifts of Men, Precepts, The Fortunes of Men*, and *Maxims I*, are by consensus "wisdom"
poems. These poems are characterized by certain formal and structural features that
previous critics have identified as markers of the wisdom genre. The poems depict scenes of
teaching and learning and cast the relationship of teacher and student in terms of the father­
son relationship so important to both the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy and (as transformed
through the conception of spiritual fatherhood) the monastery after the Benedictine reform.

Wisdom poems are most obviously characterized by their inclusion of "gnomic"
material: without exception, every critic who has discussed Anglo-Saxon wisdom poems
follows Blanche Williams in recognizing gnomic passages. Williams' definition of the
gnomic comes from Aristotle's *Rhetoric*. She argues that a gnome—synonymous with the German "Denkspruch"—is "a sententious saying; in particular it may be proverbial, figurative, moral" (3). While the broad category "sententious saying" has not been closely interrogated (critics apparently can recognize sententious sayings when they see them), types of sententious sayings have been classified, and the formal characteristics of gnomoi in Anglo-Saxon have been delineated.

These formal characteristics can be divided into two classes: grammatical markers and formal rhetorical style. P. L. Henry combines both approaches in one particularly useful definition: Old English gnomic verses are "characterized by the occurrence of the distributive *sum* in connection with the homiletic theme of God apportioning different dispositions, gifts or destinies to different people." In addition to the distributive "*sum*" ("a certain one"), Henry argues that the modal "*seal*" ("must") often indicates gnomic discourse (93-96). By augmenting Henry's definition with Marie Nelson's more detailed taxonomy of the presumed meanings of "*sceal*" and "*bið*" it is possible to delineate part of the relationship between formal characteristics and social context. "The combined and separate meanings of 'sceal' and 'bið' constitute a full scale of choices for expressing varying degrees of obligation." The two words convey a spectrum of meanings from "is" to "ought" (Nelson 109-110). Translations of "*sceal*" or "*bið*" will depend upon the social context of the situation in which they are used.

To "*sceal*," "*bið*" and distributive "*sum*," Larrington adds additional grammatical markers of the gnomic: adverbs of time, characteristic verbs such as "*gerisan*" ("to be fitting or proper"), and the present-future tense. Larrington also argues that the use of the imperative mood identifies a precept (5-8). The use of the imperative implies that a

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5 Old English "*sceal*," he argues, occupies a place between "*must*," "*shall*," and "*will*" and in gnomic contexts should be translated as the modern contracted form "'ll" (as in the colloquial phrases "that'll happen soon" or "he'll be here") (93-96).

6 She notes that Old English and Old Norse gnomes are "given universality and emphasis by time markers" including "*nefre*" ("never"), "*a*" ("always"), and "*oft*" ("often") (5-8).
speaker has power to command, arguing for a social context for wisdom poems in which the speaker or writer occupies a position in a hierarchy above that of the hearer or listener.

At a level of greater complexity than simple grammatical form but still well within the realm of the structural and formal lies the features of Anglo-Saxon gnomic poetry most fully investigated in Nicholas Howe's *The Old English Catalogue Poems*. Howe's recognition that the list or catalogue can work as a rhetorical as well as a structuring device also contextualizes the wisdom poems in a particular social situation. Because the literary catalogue "is not simply a glorified form of list," but participates in an encyclopedic tradition whose most notable members are Pliny, Cassiodorus and Isidore (21, 14), the use of this form by the poet invokes a revered and authoritative tradition. While it is not possible to prove that Isidore or other Latin encyclopedic writers directly influenced the writers of the catalogue poems, it stands to reason, given the texts used in monastic education, that the writers were influenced by the organizational principles of the Latin works. "A young reader who learned his grammar from Isidore and his natural science from Pliny would be likely to retain not simply facts and terms of these disciplines, but also the patterns by which they were ordered" (15). That young reader would also find other poems arranged in these patterns to be authoritative, reinforcing the impression of a hierarchical structure implied by the use of the imperative mood in wisdom poetry.

Howe locates this hierarchy in a specific relationship, that of teacher and student. The poets' uses of the list order the universe in an "efficient didactic form" (23). The catalogue is "accretive and discontinuous." It relies not on obviously formal or external principles of order (like the modern encyclopedia organized by alphabetized entries) but on a logic viewed by the writer to be intrinsic to the subject matter (27). R. MacGregor Dawson describes the structure of the catalogue in *Maxims I* and *II* as "similar to the

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7 Howe's argument is in fact strengthened by an examination of manuscript context of the Exeter Book wisdom poems. One of the manuscripts linked by Conner to the Exeter Book, Exeter, Cathedral Library, MS. 3507, contains a copy of Isidore's *De natura rerum*. 
'stream-of-consciousness' employed so effectively by certain modern novelists. The poems are not simply lists but mnemonic arrangements in sequences built up by multiple association of ideas, either through meaning or through sound" (15). Gnomic catalogues thus indicate both something of the mental processes of their writers and something of the ways these writers perceived knowledge to be ordered. This order of knowledge was the same as the order of knowledge found in Latin encyclopedic texts, a structure that is a far cry from the presumably primitive Germanic content of poems such as Widsith.

But the combination of a Latinate, textualized catalogue form with a content derived from a putative oral-traditional, Germanic culture is not necessarily a contradiction. Howe notes that wisdom literature "is a deeply conservative and self-perpetuating genre, especially as it concerns knowledge of the natural world. For in the absence of experimental science, such knowledge can be derived only from the accumulated and inherited matter of tradition" (20). The catalogues are a store of such wisdom. Their contents are both culturally valuable and culturally authoritative in Anglo-Saxon culture because they were copied and written in an institution that was Latinate in form and Anglo-Saxon in content—the English monastery in the tenth century.

Grammatical and structural characteristics mark wisdom poems on a formal level. In addition to these indicators, a number of critics have argued that the illustration of certain social dynamics in a poem marks it as belonging to the wisdom genre. The key relationship is that between parent and child, which is extended to subsume the relationship between teacher and student. Shippey claims that the author of Precepts speaks as father and so the reader must obey as son. Larrington argues that certain sorts of wisdom poems imply a speaker with the power to command and an audience with the duty to obey: precepts are normally expressed by an imperative. But she also suggests that the use of "sceal" "sets up an ideal standard of conduct, independent of the audience addressed" (8). While these two types of gnomic phrasings (imperative and "sceal"/"bið") do construct their audiences in
slightly different ways, in the end both forms of the gnome possess equivalent epistemic status (albeit applied to different sorts of situations): both the imperative and the "seal"/"bið" phrasings construct the speaker or writer as possessing knowledge about the way things ought to be. They assume truth and thus are marked as having power.

As Nigel Barley has noted, two types of gnomic statements may be included in Anglo-Saxon wisdom poems: the maxim and the proverb. According to Barley, "the maxim is already expressed in general terms that are to [be] interpreted quite literally. The proverb, on the other hand, is metaphorical and is expressed low on the axis of particularization. It remains a general statement however" (738). In other words, a maxim makes a general metaphoric statement about life or nature that is assumed to be true. For example, "good things come to those who wait" describes a belief about the way the world works: to interpret the maxim readers need only understand themselves as the "those" to whom the good things will come. A proverb, on the other hand, requires two layers of interpretation. To understand "the early bird catches the worm," readers must interpret themselves as the bird and the "good things" that they will receive as the worm. Barley calls the extra interpretive step necessitated by the form of the proverb a "sideways transformation" (739). To interpret a proverb, a reader must map one set of categories onto another (the early bird as a person, the worm as some reward). Maxims and proverbs are also governed by "relevance restrictions," and proverbs are relatively more restricted than maxims. Thus "once a thief, always a thief" is more restricted than "the leopard cannot change his spots," although both gnomes might be applied to the same person in the same situation (740).

Barley applies the terminology of structural linguistics to the problem of maxim or proverb relevance: "a maxim carries its relevance restrictions with it, a proverb's are listed in its lexical entry" (740). In other words, a maxim applies only to those situations it directly describes (i.e., "once a thief, always a thief" only applies to thieves), while a proverb can
apply to whatever situations are deemed appropriate by a participant in the culture in which the proverb is spoken. For example, in some contemporary cultural contexts "the leopard can't change his spots" might not be deemed appropriate if applied to children. Barley credits M. McLeod for the notion that maxims and proverbs function as "portable paradigms" (740). As such, a proverb or maxim is "a standard statement of moral or categorical imperatives in fixed metaphorical paradigmatic forms. It deals with fundamental logical relationships" (741). Or, to use the terms with which I began this dissertation, proverbs and maxims are traditional: they encode complex information in a simplified form and the information that they encode can be accessed by participants in the tradition through traditional referentiality. The "reduced syntactic form" Barley finds in proverbs and maxims is equivalent to formulaic phrasings in oral traditional poetry. From the part that is the proverbial phrase may be recovered pars pro toto the whole that is the complex of cultural information known to a participant in the tradition.

Thus at least part of our difficulty in interpreting Anglo-Saxon wisdom poems comes from our inability to participate in the traditions through which they access meaning. When faced with a proverbial statement, we do not know the relevancy restrictions encoded in each proverb or maxim's (to use the Chomskian term borrowed by Barley) "lexical entry" (744). We simply cannot tell whether many Old English gnomic statements are proverbs or maxims. As Barley notes, "the wolf shall live in the wood," from Maxims II, is a statement about the behavior of wolves if it is a maxim, but might be paraphrased "there is a place for everything" if it is a proverb (740).

Barley's structural observations of maxims and proverbs dovetail nicely with what is known of the workings of the formulaic system that lies behind Old English poetry. The encoding of complex "immanent" (to use John Foley's term) meanings into formulaic phrases has long been recognized. The presence of traditional referents (patterns of vocabulary, syntax, meter or even discursive situation) allows for "the invoking of a context that is
enormously larger and more echoic than the text or the work itself..." (Foley 1991 6-8). The immanent meaning encoded in a gnomic statement, the larger and more echoic context, is referenced through the metonymic formula. The presence of this formula is signaled by the genre markers delineated above. In other words, when a reader encounters certain poetic elements—the distributive use of "sum," the use of the impersonal imperative, the presence of a significant number of occurrences of "sceal" or "bið," the structure of a poem as a catalogue, or the depiction of a teaching and learning situation—he or she will recognize that the poem or subsection of a poem falls into a particular category. That category, which for convenience I shall continue to call "wisdom," possesses a particular epistemological status: because it serves, to use Barley's terminology, as a "portable paradigm," the gnomic statement is construed as always being true.

The gnomic thus becomes an authorized discourse even when the actual contents of the gnomes may not be in the slightest bit traditional, when in fact they may have been invented for a particular use. By casting a statement into a gnomic syntax a speaker marks it as authorized, powerful and true. Thus the formal markers of gnomic discourse are also those features which serve by convention to authorize it. It is important to note that gnomic statements are not authorized because these formal features are intrinsically authoritative—a position similar to that taken by some early practitioners of literary stylistics (see Fowler 1975; Freeman 1975, 1978; Keyser 1976) and rebutted with some heat by Barbara Herrnstein Smith (though see also Freeman 1980)—but because within Old English (and indeed, Modern English in some corners of twentieth-century America) certain formal characteristics mark a statement as being conventionally authorized.

Of course linguistic conventions cannot in and of themselves exercise power—behind each gnomic statement is a speaker or writer. But the social power of the speaker or writer may clash with the linguistic power of the gnomic statement. For example, the sententious sayings of lower-status women may use the linguistic markers of gnomic
discourse. The uneasy epistemological status of such "old wives' tales" indicates the power of gnomic markers: "old wives' tales" are frequently ridiculed, discounted and even scientifically refuted. Yet, cast as they are in the form of the gnomic statement, they persist in contemporary American culture. In the hands or mouths of old wives gnomic phraseology is limited in power. But when spoken by fathers, that is, when authorized both on a social and a linguistic level, such statements can be exceedingly influential. The Old English gnomic poems I investigate below were, in both form and content, the words of monastic fathers.

The Gifts of Men and the Unspoken Hierarchy

The Gifts of Men, Precepts, The Fates of Men and Maxims I meet the formal and structural criteria of the wisdom genre. All of these poems are considered "wisdom poetry" in at least two of the three major studies of the genre. Shippey, Hansen and Larrington all agree that Precepts, The Fates of Men, and Maxims I are wisdom poems; Larrington omits discussing The Gifts of Men, but her study does not purport to develop a complete canon of wisdom literature. All four poems possess many of the characteristics of wisdom poems as delineated above: they are all catenulate in form and characterized by the use of the imperative mood, "sceal" and "bið" or distributive "sum" constructions, and many adverbs of time. In these poems gnomic statements come from fathers, from men in positions of authority.

8 And of course some "old wives' tales" may be "proven" true by science: the value of chicken soup as a palliative for the symptoms of rhinoviruses, for instance, has been empirically demonstrated. While Hansen and Shippey both include in their discussions Vainglory, which is found in the second booklet of the Exeter Book, I agree with Larrington in omitting this poem from my particular study of wisdom literature: Vainglory is a work of instruction in doctrine rather than a exhortation to specific forms of conduct in light of Christian teachings (120). In addition, Vainglory is not constructed in catalogue form like the other four poems in my list. It seems to me less a wisdom poem than, to use Conner's description, a "satire" (156). For these reasons I exclude Vainglory from my list of Booklet II wisdom poems. I likewise omit The Order of the World
The first of these Booklet II wisdom poems is *The Gifts of Men*, found on folios 78 to 80 of the Exeter Book. The poem can be roughly divided into three parts: an introductory passage that describes the Lord giving gifts to all men in lines 1-29, a long catalogue of various gifts characterized by the repetition of the word "sum" ("a certain one") in lines 30-109, and a conclusion in lines 110-113 which praises the Lord who "swa weorðlice / wide tosaweð" (so worthily, widely sows) his various gifts to men.

First entitled "Bi monna cæftum" ("about the skills of men") by Grein in the 1857-58 *Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Poesie*, *Gifts* has been the subject of somewhat less criticism than its immediate predecessor in the manuscript, *The Wanderer*. Before Geoffrey Russom's 1978 study, "A Germanic Concept of Nobility in *The Gifts of Men* and *Beowulf*," criticism of *Gifts* had focused almost entirely on the identification of possible Latin sources for the poem. Krapp notes that 1 Corinthians xii.4-11 or the summary of this Biblical passage by Gregory the Great in his twenty-ninth homily on the Gospels seems a likely, if not immediate source for *Gifts* and the similar catalogue passage, *Christ* 659ff (xl). J. E. Cross suggests that the parable of the talents is the ultimate source for *Gifts*, while Gregory's *Homilia IX in Evangelia* (a text used by Ælfric) influenced the poem's form (Cross 66-70). Douglas Short argues that the *Gifts* poet drew on several of the Pauline epistles in addition to 1 Corinthians for an analogy between the "unity of divine gifts and the members of the body," (1975 464-65). He also proposes Gregory's *Pastoral Care* as a source.

Russom's argument, however, seems to have shifted the terms of discussion of *The Gifts of Men*. In contrast to the various Latin analogues of the catalogue, which list "ways of earning a living and emphasize the return owed to God" for his gifts, many of the "gifts" or "talents" in the Anglo-Saxon poem are "items such as swimming skill and patience, which

(although not all the major critics believe it to be a wisdom poem anyway) because this poem does not possess many of the formal characteristics of wisdom poetry and, as suggested by Huppe (34-35), appears to be closer to being a praise poem.
do not provide earnings. There is no mention of any return owed God" (1). Because the poem does not mirror the content or doctrine of its supposed sources, Russom suggests that "despite its Christian content, Gifts might after all be Germanic in form" (2). Marshaling an array of analogues from Old Norse and considering a number of scenes in Beowulf, he demonstrates "the fundamentally aristocratic character of the list." The catalogue "contains a coherent set of items which are unordered because from a poetic point of view they are all of comparable interest" (14-15). Russom also argues that the use of the syntactic marker of coordinating "sum" ("a certain one") "suggests a strong tie between theme and syntactic structure, a tradition of poetic organization that might well have been the common inheritance of England and Scandinavia" (4).

Howe attempts to blend Russom's view of the Germanic with the traditional interpretation of Gifts as derived from Latin source material. Rather than viewing the poem as deriving "entire from a single tradition," Howe thinks Gifts is the work of a Christian poet arranging Germanic material according to a Latin model because the poet "recognized attributes drawn from Latin culture would be of less didactic value than would be those drawn from the native tradition. Gregory offered the poet a particular model by which to view and thus classify the world, but the images he chose for his catalogue derived from his own culture" (108-109). Howe believes that the poet's didactic purpose is the instruction of readers or hearers in the doctrinal point that "God distributes His gifts variously among men so as to create and then preserve order." The audience for this instruction is the "comitatus culture" of which the poet is a "product." The didactic purpose serves to shape the form of the poem: "for if repetition is an aesthetic weakness, it is rarely, as most teachers know, a didactic one" (115). Hansen asserts that the all the catalogue poems, Gifts among them, "imitate formally the thematic principle that a single origin and purposive order underlies the observed varieties of human experience," a commonplace of medieval (and Old Testament) creation theology. Poets who produced catalogue poems "presume to imitate
the deity, as they organize another set of allegedly meaningful signs (that is, their own words) in order to control the significance of experience" (97-98).

By combining the implications of Hansen’s reading with those of Howe’s it is possible, I think, to more fully develop a conception of the potential audience that the poet of *The Gifts of Men* hopes to influence with his poem. Hansen points out the power of the catalogue to order experience. This ordering is textual; it is done by a poet (whether or not he is using oral formulae) on parchment and its form, if not its meaning, will persist unchanged as long as the parchment endures. The parchment on which *Gifts* is preserved was produced in the monastery at Exeter and, as best we can tell, the manuscript remained in this institution. It is reasonable to assume a monastic audience for the poem unless internal poetic evidences points in other directions. And a monastic audience would certainly be amenable to instruction in creation theology. But Howe’s positioning of the poet in a comitatus culture and Russom’s identification of the gifts as Germanic appears to contradict a reading of the poem as a being produced for a monastic audience.

Even if the poem is intended to teach a monastic audience, what exactly is it teaching? "Creation theology," the teaching that God made the world and everything in it, including the talents of men, while theologically sound, is a concept sufficiently amorphous to justify nearly any poem, and should therefore only be relied on as a last resort when attempting to determine the moral or theological teachings of Old English poetry. God did, of course, make the world and everything in it; the question is, why does the poet concentrate on specific talents of men and not on other subjects? And why are some particular gifts enumerated and not others? Howe reads the poem as celebrating order and harmony in the world and the comitatus. Because the poet was aware that the greatest danger to the comitatus was "that of extreme power wielded by one exceptional man," he

10 There are, of course, other Old English poems that more clearly explicate creation theology, *Cedmon’s Hymn* and the "creation hymn" in *Beowulf* being the most obvious.
was careful to teach a "single-minded lesson: that no man enjoys God’s bounty so absolutely that he might justly consider himself above all others"(114-15). Howe’s reading explains more of the content of the poem than the invocation of creation theology, but he does not identify whom the poem was intended to teach and in what setting.

It seems to me that the purpose of *The Gifts of Men* is not so much direct instruction as it is the establishment of a social climate in which monastic life is integrated into the aristocratic comitatus culture (from which Howe and Russom believe the contents of the catalogue to be drawn). *Gifts* begins with what Howe calls an "extensive and perhaps tediously explicit introduction" (109), setting out a framework in which God gives gifts to men. There is no one so unhappy that God does not give him some gift (8-16); likewise no one man has been given all possible gifts (17-26). Therefore no man should be too wretched or too prideful:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ac he gedæleð,} & \quad \text{se þe ah domes geweald,} \\
\text{missenlice} & \quad \text{geond þisne middangeard} \\
\text{leoda leopocræftas} & \quad \text{londbuendum (27-31a).}
\end{align*}
\]

But he deals out, he who has the power of judgment, diversely, around this middle earth, skills in people, in land-dwellers.

This is indeed a didactic message informed by a least some form of creation theology, but it does not teach only theological material. By speaking to all members of its potential audience—those who have the most gifts to those with the fewest—the poem invokes the complete community of individuals. It suggests an interdependence and a social inclusiveness: even though there is a hierarchy of skills and gifts, all are given by God and all are needed by the society. But unlike the more well-known passage in *The Seafarer* (39-43)

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11 Although Muir’s edition of the Exeter Book is more recent, I quote poems from *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, volume 3. The ASPR is a more convenient source for the vast majority of Old English scholars, and Muir’s edition includes few emendations not proposed by Krapp and Dobbie. Poems will be referenced by line number in parentheses. Translations are my own.
in which all men are made alike by their fear of fear of God, the introductory section of *The Gifts of Men* recognizes human individuality even as it attempts to bind the community together before the powers of individuals are enumerated.

The skills, gifts or talents which God doles out are the subject of the long catalogue passage characterized by the use of the distributive "sum" (30-96) that makes up the middle two-thirds of the poem. But with the exception of Russom critics have tended to ignore the actual content of the catalogue, preferring to concentrate on interpreting the form. A closer reading, however, indicates an order to the catalogue that shapes the putative Germanic material in ways beneficial to the ideological well-being of the monastery.

John Ruffing's investigation of the labor structure of Ælfric's *Colloquy* demonstrates that a monastically produced text that is on the surface simply an exercise in grammar not only teaches Latin to monastic novices, but also provides them with a set of rhetorical strategies by which they may manipulate social relations around the monastery. Ruffing shows that the monastery is constructed at the center of the social world of the text, and that the grammatical exercise creates a hierarchy of labors in which activities performed by the monks rank highest, work done for the monastery ranks next, and work performed by individuals relatively free of monastic control is challenged and criticized by the monastic speaker (67-68). *The Gifts of Men* establishes a similar, if more subtle, hierarchy. While the monastery is not named, monkish attributes hold pride of place throughout out the poem. In the introductory passage, for example, we learn that God will not completely deprive the unfortunate man of

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       modes cæfta
       wis on gewitte
       oþþe nægendæda,  oþþe on wordcwidum (12-13).
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the power of the heart, or the deeds of strength, wisdom in wits, or in wordspeakings.
Wisdom and speaking get the pride of place at the end of the list rather than physical strength or courage (a reasonable interpretation of "modes cræfta" in this context). God will not fail to give all these things: even (or particularly) wisdom and cleverness with words. Taken by itself this positioning is not convincing in promoting the attributes of monks. But the fortunate man also advances in the world "þurh snyttrucraþt" ("through wisdom-power" 18b). While "snyttru" and "craþt" are both exceedingly common in Old English, the compound "snyttrucraþt" only appears four times in the corpus, in Guthlac A, Guthlac B, The Phoenix and The Gifts of Men, all Exeter Book poems. In each case "snyttrucraþt" is an attribute distinct from physical power. In Guthlac A (184) the word describes the power given by God to Guthlac so that the saint is able to withstand the assaults of devils. In Guthlac B (1128) the saint receives "snyttrucraþt" from God in a vision that comes to him while afflicted with his fatal disease. In The Phoenix, angels sing to God "Sib si þe, soþ god, ond snyttrucraþt" ("peace be to you, true God, and wisdom-power" 622). Given the clear spiritual context for the three other appearances of "snyttrucraþt," it seems reasonable to interpret the term in Gifts as existing in opposition to the physical and social powers described in the passage. That "snyttrucraþt," meaning spiritual wisdom rounds out the list of attributes that God will not fail to give to even the most unfortunate man suggests that monkish attributes of wisdom are elevated above the more prosaic concerns of the comitatus identified by Russom in lines 30-85. It is no surprise, therefore, that at the end of the catalogue of Germanic, aristocratic talents we find the following lines:

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Sum her geornlice
mode bewindep,
ofer eowelwan
Sum bið deormod
bið a wið firenum
Sum cræft hafað
mæg on lofsongum
hlude hergan,
beorhte stefne.
gestes þearfe
ond him metudes est
ealne geceoseð.
deofles gewinnes,
in gefeoh t gearo.
circnytta fela,
lifes waldend
hafað healice
Sum bið boca gleaw,
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larum leóþufæst.
to awritanne
Sum bɪp listhendig
wordgeryno (86-96).

One eagerly embraces the spirit's needs in his mind here, and for himself chooses over all earthly wealth the love of God. One is brave-minded in struggles with the devil, is always ready to fight against sins. One has strength in many church-duties, is able to loudly praise the ruler of life with praise songs, he has an elevated, bright voice. One is book-wise, skillful in lore. One is skillful at writing word sayings.

Howe greatly understates the case when he writes of this section of the poem: "it would not be inaccurate to describe the last series of gifts as monastic, or if that seems too limited, as characteristic of Christian culture at its highest" (114). "Circnytta" ("church duties") is a hapax legomenon, but easily understood as a compound between "circ" ("church") and "nyt" (according to Bosworth-Toller, "duty or service"). According to the Microfiche Concordance to Old English "nyt" most frequently glosses "ministerium" or "officium," suggesting that the church duties performed are not those of a secular person regularly going to mass but are construed as being with the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Praise of individuals who choose the love of God over all earthly wealth is also hardly the stuff from which a warrior comitatus is made. But such a thought would be praised in the tenth century monastery of Exeter just after the arrival of reformed monks from Glastonbury. Monks as individuals were supposed to sacrifice all earthly wealth for God; they struggled with the devil and fought against sins.

But the most important links between these final lines in the catalogue of putative Germanic gifts and the monastic community are the poet's use of "lofsongum" ("with praise songs" 92a) and "boc gleaw" ("book wise" 94b). There are in the Anglo-Saxon corpus over 185 appearances of "lofsang" and "lofsong" in various inflected forms. Not once is the word used in anything resembling a secular, heroic, or elegaic context. "Lofsang" always refers to a religious song of praise. For example in the gloss to the Benedictine Rule in Tiberius A. iii. the phrase "post quartum autem responsorium incipiatur abbas hymnum, te deum laudamus"
"after the fourth responsory, the abbot begins the hymn 'We praise you, God'" 11.8) is glossed simply as "onginne lofsang" ("begin the praise-song"). And various hymns and psalms are identified as praise-songs throughout the translations and the gloss of the Benedictine Rule. As I noted in chapter three, reformed Benedictine monks in the tenth century spent an enormous amount of time and energy "lofsongum" ("in praise-songs"). The Regularis Concordia adds additional hours of singing to those already prescribed by the Rule, further increasing the amount of time spent by reformed monks in songs of praise. Ælfric's Colloquy also suggests that the singing of praise-songs was recognized as a significant duty of monks. In the Colloquy, "lofsangas" glosses "laudes" and is one of the sorts of songs sung by the pupil after he arises from his bed at night and proceeds to church (Garmonsway 44). The ability to praise "lofsongum" should therefore be seen as being distinct from the skill of the "woðbora" ("poet" 35b) or the ability of the man who "mid hondum mæg, hearpan gretan" ("may play the harp with hands" 95). Singing songs of praise was a religious activity whose locus of production was the monastery; that this skill is included in final section of the catalogue indicates the value placed upon it in the world of the poem.

The singing of religious praise-songs is in Anglo-Saxon England a monastic skill. Wisdom, of course, is not itself solely monastic. But in the tenth century possession of textualized wisdom was. While a royal chancery may indeed have created official documents during the Benedictine reform, it is exceedingly unlikely that such a writing office produced texts like The Gifts of Men. Rather, such materials, and the catalogues upon which they were based, including the works of Pliny, Cassiodorus and Isidore, were the province of the monastery. The man who is "boca gleaw / larum leóþufaste" ("book-wise, skillful in lore" 94b-95a) would be unlikely to be found outside of the monastery. King Alfred is, of course,
an exception, but the king was unusual among the aristocracy in his devotion to textual
culture, a point made repeatedly by Asser.

Thus pride of place in the catalogue section of *The Gifts of Men* goes to the monk:
a man who has renounced earthly wealth, can sing songs of praise to God, and whose
wisdom comes from books. Like the *Colloquy*, *The Gifts of Men* constructs a world in
which the monastic vocation is the highest call. But because *Gifts* was not written as a
school text for novices, the poem does not overtly place the monastery itself upon the
summit of a social order. Monastic life is but one idea (albeit the final ideal) in the
catalogue of aristocratic behaviors. Aristocratic culture, in which *de facto* power in Anglo-
Saxon England resided (church offices were nearly always filled by scions of aristocratic
families), is the predominant emphasis of the poem.

This emphasis strongly suggests one of two audiences for *The Gifts of Men*: either
the poem was intended to reinforce the ideological commitments of newly made monks
drawn from the ranks of the aristocracy, or it was intended to influence a secular, aristocratic
audience to think well of the monastery. The first possibility does much to explain the
presence of the poem in manuscript form: as I have argued, monks are the most likely
readers of the Exeter Book manuscript. If, however, the manuscript records a poem
delivered orally in an aristocratic setting and not intended solely for private reading, then a
secular audience is possible. Both possibilities may be harmonized if we envision *The Gifts
of Men* being delivered to a mixed audience of monks, novices of noble birth, aristocrats
being educated—as was King Edgar—in a monastic setting, and visiting nobility. If these
sorts of individuals composed the audience that the poet had in mind, then the various
ideological commitments outlined above are eminently rational. In working out its new
position in Anglo-Saxon culture, the reformed monastery confidently placed itself atop a
moral hierarchy. But in tenth-century England the moral hierarchy was not (except,
perhaps in the minds of committed reformers like Dunstan and Æthelwold) the only
hierarchy upon which the society depended. By creating a place for monks in aristocratic terms *Gifts* performs an essential task for monastic institutions, elevating the figure of the monk or at least the man with monkish attributes to a position of cultural authority and the monastery to a position of cultural importance, explaining to monks of aristocratic birth how they and their institution fit into their society.

**The Monastic Father beyond the Walls: *Precepts***

What a monastic figure might do with cultural authority is illustrated by the poem that immediately follows *The Gifts of Men* in the Exeter Book. *Precepts* (also known as *A Father's Instruction*), has the distinction of being one of the least-studied poems in the Anglo-Saxon corpus. Before 1976 the only lengthy article or book-section that addresses *Precepts* was printed in 1935 in Russian, and this long and tortuous argument only suggests a possible parallel between *Precepts* and a twelfth-century Russian poem (Alekseev). Those critics who have touched upon *Precepts* have not had much good to say about it. In a much-quoted line Stanley Greenfield dismisses the poem as an "uninspired admonition" in which "a father ten times delivers himself of platitudinous advice" to his son (202).

Platitudinous the advice may be, but *Precepts* represents a significant experiment by a monastic poet intent on interpreting important social and cultural relationships in monastic terms. As Hansen notes, the construction of the father-son framing device "reveals that the poem is not as intrinsically interested in any given father's specific advice as in the process of the parental instruction, a traditional institution for transmitting the accumulated records of human wisdom in words from one mind to another" (1981 7). The poem provides to the hearer or reader who is to assume the position of the son "a system of categories and relationships" rather than any "specific counsel" (13). It celebrates "a system of

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13 I am grateful for Leo Dokshutsky's assistance with my translation of this article.
understanding that establishes with wise words those distinctive relationships into which the 'total order' of experience can be structured" (15).

Larrington would modify slightly Hansen's interpretive framework, viewing the poem not merely as a depiction of a situation of instruction, but as an instruction itself:

the poet of Precepts identifies himself with the father, just as we, the audience, are to assume the role of the son. The monologue address to a fictive listener is an attractive device for the presentation of wisdom material, since it enables the poet to instruct his audience indirectly and tactfully. The learning process takes place at one remove, and so the audience can assimilate the instruction without feeling that they are being criticized or lectured (147).

Thus Precepts, unlike the gnomic passages of Beowulf (which impart wisdom for the epic hero), "imparts wisdom for every day, for the ordinary youth" (148).

The difficulty with Larrington's reading is shared to a lesser extent by Hansen's and Howe's interpretations of the poem. Larrington unconsciously constructs an audience for Precepts that includes "the ordinary youth." Logically flawed when applied to twentieth-century culture (who exactly is the generic "man in the street"?), the argument is even more problematic when applied to the Anglo-Saxon age. Who was the "ordinary youth" in Anglo-Saxon England: a peasant farmer? a low-ranking thegn in the comitatus? a novice monk?

Perhaps the latter. As Sandra McEntire argues, there were two basic models for instructions in conduct in the Anglo-Saxon world: the political and the monastic. Precepts contains little in the way of the political world: the relationship between lord and retainer, for example, is absent, as are any admonitions about proper conduct in battle. "Thus in light of such omissions, we must look elsewhere than the secular, albeit Christian world in order to understand this poem. A monastic context seems to solve some of the ambiguities" (244). McEntire demonstrates that what she sees as three particularly obscure sections of the poem (lines 9-10, 37-39, and 67-75) are clarified if read in a monastic context. The emphasis on the father-son relationship as a vehicle for teaching can be linked to both the
Benedictine Rule and Basil's "Admonitio ad Filium Spiritualem" ("Admonition to the Spiritual Father"), which was known to Ælfric and thus likely available to monks during the early years of the Benedictine reform (244). She compares the section of the poem in which the father warns the son of the dangers of "fremde meowlan" ("foreign or strange women") to the Rule of Chrodegang and interprets the warning as a spiritual admonition to avoid "chatter and irresponsible behavior, particularly with regard to women who are outside his own immediate family" (247). Finally, McEntire suggests that the word "þeodscyple" ("discipline") refers to "the whole of monastic discipline" (248). She concludes with the assertion that "although there is little final proof to establish beyond a doubt the monastic content and context of this poem, there are persuasive arguments which suggest that 'Precepts' is a wisdom poem written for monastic instructional purposes" (248).

McEntire's suggestion of an audience in the monastery gives the act of dispensing wisdom an institutional context, and while I believe that McEntire is incorrect seeing the lesson as directed only at monks, she has identified the correct institutional context of the poem. The recognition of Precepts as a text strongly influenced by monastic practices and ideals is supported not only by McEntire's identification of monastic sources or parallels for particularly troublesome lines, but also from the manuscript context discussed above. In addition, the suggestion of textually mediated wisdom in the dramatized act of instruction, the presence of additional admonitions that may be harmonized with monastic customs, and the way the father-son relationship is depicted, all suggest a monastic author for the poem. Based on these attributes, which I discuss in detail below, it is reasonable to read Precepts, like The Gifts of Men, as a poem directed at a mixed audience of monks and members of the aristocracy. But unlike Gifts, Precepts does not so much promote the ideology of monastic superiority as re-cast an important non-monastic relationship, that between a father and his son, in monastic terms. The poem is not an instrument of propaganda; rather, it represents an attempt at assimilation (at least in the mind of the poet) of an ideal of masculine, same-
sex reproduction. The father passes on not land, weapons or dynastic power but knowledge. The poet depicts inheritance based on blood (biological inheritance) in terms of an inheritance based on deeds (same-sex social reproduction).

The advice of Precepts is arranged in ten numbered sections. The father speaks, speaks again, speaks "driddan syþe" ("a third time" 21) continuing up through "teþan syþe" ("a tenth time" 76). While this structure does not represent the most sophisticated possible hypotaxis, it is not arranged in the paratactic form that might be associated with an oral- traditional or oral-derived composition. The practice of numbering links Precepts to such texts as the decalog, or the twelve remissions of sin in the penitentials. Although Precepts does not appear to be shaped by a complex numerical pattern (the lengths of the sections vary randomly in length) the numbering of the sections of the poem as an organizational strategy strongly suggests an author steeped in textual culture. Hansen's interpretation of the structure of Precepts as a celebration of the "human capacity ... to structure reality and organize experience" (1981 2) is a useful starting point. But the ordering accomplished by the poem operates not only in the dramatized interaction between the father and son but also outside the world of the poem: just as the written text of the Benedictine Rule imposes uniformity of repetition upon the behavior of monks, the written text of Precepts imposes order upon the recitation or repeated reading of the poem.

Writing also holds a privileged position in the poem. The father's criticism of the many peoples who fail to observe "fyrngewritu" ("ancient writings" 67b) and his subsequent admonition to the son to obey these texts (73a) is an indication of the authority of written texts for the poet and, as McEntire points out (248), strongly suggests monastic beliefs at work in the poem. Shippey's conjecture that "fyrngewritu" may refer to the Benedictine Rule itself is not confirmed by the few appearances of the word in other contexts where it refers to ancient writings known to the wisest men among the Romans (Elene 153), the ancient writings of the Jews (Elene 372, 426, 558), and wisdom preserved in books and
accessible to Saturn in *Solomon and Saturn I* (8). Of course from the point of view of the Anglo-Saxons the Benedictine *Rule* is certainly an ancient writing and could be what the poet is suggesting by his use of the word, but McEntire's argument that "fyrngewritu" "may well be a general term which includes not only the Sacred Scriptures but also all the ancient books central to the monastic life, especially the ascetic texts and biblical commentaries of the Fathers, as well as some classical works," is supported by her readings from Basil and the *Rule* of Chrodegang in addition to the Benedictine *Rule* (247).

But regardless of the specific sources he intended to include among the "fyrngewritu," the poet's concern for ancient writings indicates his belief in the power and value of textualized wisdom and knowledge. What is important in this case is not the specific identity of the writings, but the very fact that proper conduct is to be found in a text. That this point is made in a dramatized scene of oral instruction (albeit within a written text) even further emphasizes the overarching importance of the written word for the poet of *Precepts* and, given my previous discussion of the uses of texts by monasteries, strongly suggests that the poet is a monk.

*Precepts* also shows affinity to the monastery in a number of passages in which the father exhorts the son to avoid or practice certain behaviors. Most significant are the admonitions in the fifth section of the poem:

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fifstan siþe
breost-þeþoncum
drunceþ borg þe
man on mode
yrræ and æfeste
forðon sceal æwisc-mod
se þe gewiteþ
fremdre meowlan
laðlice scome
geotende gielp
wær wið willan

fæder eft ongon
his bearn læran
and dollic word
and in muþe lyge
and idese lufan
oft sibian
in wifes lufan
þær bið a firena wen
long nið wið god
wes þu a giedda wis.
worda hyrde (32-42).
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A fifth time the father began to teach his son with heart-thoughts. Guard yourself from drunkenness and foolish words, crimes in the spirit and lying in the mouth, from anger and malice, and the love of women; because he must often journey away shame-minded who succumbs to the love of a woman, a foreign maiden; there may always be expectation of crimes, loathsome shames, long enmity against God, excessive pride. May you always be wise in sayings, wary against desires; guard [your] words.

Commentary has emphasized the interpretation of the "fremdre meowlan" ("foreign maiden) in 39a. Bernhard ten Brink believed the passage to refer to Proverbs 5:20 and 6:24, in which a son is warned against associating with a promiscuous woman or an adulteress (77), and Krapp agrees that the association is possible (xliv). Hansen hedges as to the possibility of Proverbs as a source: she notes that the Vulgate "enjoin[s] avoidance of the 'strange' woman (Vulgate muliere aliena or extranea)" and suggests Proverbs 2:16-19; 5:3-8; 6:25-32; 7:5, 25-7 as possible sources in addition to the verses noted by Ten Brink. But she also asserts that the Anglo-Saxon passage's "misogyny" is a convention of "the instruction genre," and in a lengthy footnote argues that "the patriarchal, intrinsically antifeminist view of Precepts—inherent in a genre that hands the advice of fathers to sons—is part and parcel of its structuralism and its concern for binary oppositions" (1981 4). Such an interpretation obviously weakens the case for taking various verses of the book of Proverbs as an immediate source and supports my position that the poem is composed for its own purposes, not merely as a recapitulation of received knowledge.

McEntire suggests that "fremdre" in the passage does not mean literally "foreign" or "strange," but "unrelated." She notes that "fremde" translates "extranearum" in Chapter 54 of the Rule of Chrodegang, and the Latin word means not only "foreign" and "strange," but also "not related." Therefore it seems likely that the "Precepts" poet is referring not to a father's concern for a young man's involvement with non-Anglo-Saxon women, but to a wise spiritual guide's word of warning to a young monk about chatter and irresponsible behavior, particularly with regard to women who are outside his immediate family (246-47).
McEntire's reading of this section of the poem as particularly monastic in tone is supported by the other admonishments in the passage that have perhaps been overshadowed by the "fremdre meowlan." In addition to the love of women, the son is warned against drunkenness, foolish speech, sins of thought, lying, anger, excessive pride, and desires in general. While this list could be perceived as general good advice, applicable to any young man, it dovetails rather closely with monastic interests, as does the syntax of the passage before the "fremdre meowlan" is mentioned, a point not taken up by McEntire. The son is first commanded to avoid "ides lufan" ("the love of women" 36b), a phrase that is not grammatically linked to "fremdre meowlan" three lines later. I would place a period or at the very least a semi-colon after "lufan," translating the passage (as I did above): "Guard yourself from drunkenness and foolish words, crimes in the spirit and lying in the mouth, from anger and malice, and the love of women; because he must often journey away shame-minded who succumbs to the love of a woman, a foreign maiden."

"Fremdre meowlan" can be read as set in apposition to "wifes lufan," and the parallel structure of this half-line with "ides lufan" in 36b obviously links the three terms in some form of apposition, but in a literal reading of the passage the father first commands the son to guard himself from the love of women, any women. It is only in the second, explanatory sentence that he explains why the son should follow the first admonition. It is therefore difficult to read the passage, as McEntire does, as warning only against women outside the young monk's immediate family. The warning against all women, which is a commonplace in the penitentials, suggests that on this topic monastic concerns have taken over the depiction of what is ostensibly the relationship between any father and any son. The warning to avoid the love of all women in general ("ides lufan") would hardly be reasonable advice from an aristocratic father to his son, because the production of strong heirs was one

14 Compare this passage with lines 42-51a of The Wife's Lament.
of such a son's more important duties. In a tenth-century monastery, however, such advice would seem perfectly natural. In this instance, I believe, the poet's ideological background has caused him to put words in the fathers' mouth that would only be spoken by a monastic father.\footnote{Of course there is a long tradition in Christian polemic inveighing against the love of women. The use of this tradition, however, is far more appropriate for a monastic context than for a depiction of the relationship between any father and any son.}

The warning against drunkenness (34a) also suggests, albeit less strongly than the warning against women, that the advice in the poem is intended for a monk. That drunkenness was a potential concern in monasteries is indicated by Ælfric Bata's\footnote{Bata may also have been the assembler of Tiberius A. iii.} Latin Colloquy 11, which depicts drunken revelry inside a monastery (Stevenson 35-36); by a Latin riddle found on a flyleaf in the eleventh-century manuscript Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum M 16.2 which may also be the work of Bata (Porter 1-9); various penitential canons; and, perhaps, the Exeter Book riddles 11, 27, 28, 59, and 63, which depict drink or containers of drink. Chapter 40 of the Benedictine Rule itself warns that the abbot should determine the amount of wine monks are to receive, and "considerans in omnibus ne surrepat satietas aut ebrietatis" ("take great care lest excess or drunkenness creep in" 40.5).\footnote{"Ebrietatis" is glossed by "druncennesse" in the Tiberius A. iii. gloss to the Rule (Logeman 72), but we should not put much weight on this evidence: according to the Microfiche Concordance, when "druncennesse" appears in a gloss it invariably translates "ebrietas."}

Monks are warned against murmuring if they do not receive enough, or any, wine (40. 8-9).

While the standard Anglo-Saxon gloss for "murmurent" ("cyrian") does not appear in Precepts, the admonitions in the above-discussed passage and throughout the poem suggest a connection with the Benedictine Rule's condemnation of idle words. Three times the father instructs the son not to speak too much: twice in the fifth section of the poem (34b and 42b) and once in the seventh (57-58). Chapter six of the Benedictine Rule, "De Taciturnitate" ("about the restraint of speech"), commands monks to avoid speaking as much as possible and sets up a hierarchy analogous to that of the speaking father and the
silent son: "Nam loqui et docere magistrum condecet, tacere et audire discipulum convenit" ("speaking and teaching are the master's task; the disciple is to be silent and listen" 6.6).

This passage is translated literally in both the gloss in Tiberius A. iii. and the Old English version of the Rule. The father in Precepts does not enjoin perfect silence, however. The son is to guard his words and not speak foolishly; he is not commanded to be absolutely silent. This lack of complete silence (which was at least an ideal, if not always a practice in reformed monasteries) contraverts to some degree the notion that the son in Precepts is intended to be a monk.

The ninth section of the poem, which Shippey saw as providing evidence of link to a reformed monastery, also calls into question the monastic identity of the father and son. Shippey focuses on the appearance of the word "þeodscype" in the passage in which the father criticizes other peoples who have ignored "fyrngewritu" ("ancient writings"). At such times "idlaþ þeodscype" ("discipline becomes idle" 69b). According to Shippey

"þeodscipe" is a word with a strong monastic flavour, "a disciplinary regulation" or "regular custom" — a form of community life bound by strict rules. The least one can say of English monasteries during the 9th and early 10th centuries is that laxness was endemic, up to the Benedictine reform of 940 and after. The author might be a member of a reformed house after that date, objecting to the continuance of poor discipline in other places. In that case the 'fyrngewritu' might conceivably be the Benedictine Rule (129 n.8).

It is difficult to argue against an interpretation of the "flavour" of a word, but upon examining the many uses of "þeodscype" in the Anglo-Saxon corpus it seems to me more likely that the word is applied to monastic discipline in an extended sense and that its primary meaning is that of "people," or perhaps "fellowship," respectively the first and second definitions provided by Bosworth-Toller. It is difficult to pin down a word that appears so

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18 Perfect silence was apparently not as common in monasteries as the Rule and various commentaries would lead us to believe; the idea of a "spirit of silence" in place of actual silence seems to have been an appealing idea for many monks throughout the ages. For a discussion of silence in monastic life see Wathen.
many times in the corpus, but "heodscype" seems to mean "the discipline required of a people, particularly a military order or regime of service," thus by extension "a discipline, like that required for membership in a people, entered into voluntarily, perhaps for the purpose of learning." In Wulfstan's *Institutes of Polity*, "heodscype" appears to refer to the entire social structure: "Laboratores sindon weorcmen, þe tilian sculon, þæs þe eal þeodscipe big sceal libban" ("Those who labor are workmen, who must strive, by which all in the polity may live") (Jost 56). It is tempting to read "heodscype" as possessing the modern connotations of "discipline," including self-discipline and discipline for the point of punishment. In any case, I think the model for "heodscype" comes not from the monastery but from the more powerful and long-established institutions of secular, aristocratic culture. This conception of membership is then applied to monastic life: the submission of a monk to the discipline of the *Rule* makes him a member of a new "heodscype."

"Idlaþ heodscype" can therefore be interpreted in a double sense: for a monk it implies the regulations of monastic life, for any other individual the disciplinary practices of the institution to which he belongs. In either case the passage as a whole suggests a collapse of social structure in those institutions which have failed to maintain a disciplinary order based on the ancient writings. And while the passage does not explicitly advocate the moral superiority of the monastery, it serves—like the final entries in the catalogue of *The Gifts of Men*—to elevate monastic values. For while many institutions create "heodscype" for their members, the disciplinary practices of the monastery are much more closely determined by ancient writings. Thus even while the passage suggests that the intended audience of the poem was not necessarily purely monastic, this section of *Precepts* nevertheless serves to augment the social status of this institution.

The monastery is present throughout *Precepts* even though it is not explicitly mentioned. At no point in the poem does the father command the son in the spirit of the Old English *Handbook*: "gebuge to mynstre and þeowige þar æfre Gode and mannum..."
("submit to the monastery and ever serve there for God and His servants") (Fowler 1965 26).

Yet the desires and disciplinary practices of the monastery, as I have shown, shape the advice given from the father to the son. A cynical modern critic might therefore view Precepts as a piece of cunning propaganda, in which the monastery subtly encodes its disciplinary practices and passes them off as advice appropriate for non-monastic situation. Such may indeed be the case, but a simpler explanation is that the poet of Precepts casts a father-son interaction in monastic terms of "spiritual fatherhood" because these are the terms with which the poet is familiar.

The case for the father in Precepts as representing spiritual fatherhood rather than biological fatherhood is not quite as straightforward as McEntire suggests (248). The father commands the son:

father and modor
maga gehwylcne,
wes þu þinum yldrum
fæger-wyrde
þine laereowas
þa þec geornast

freo þu mid heortan
gif him sy meotud on lufan.
arfæst symle
and þe in ferðe læt
leofe in mode
to gode trymmen (9-12).

Love [your] father and mother with all your heart, each one of your kin if they are in the love of God. To your elders be always dutiful, fair-worded, in your mind think kind thoughts of your teachers, those who are eager to encourage you to goodness.

The father does not say "love your mother and me," but "love your father and mother." While I do not want to make too much of the grammatical construction of a passage that must have been to some degree shaped by metrical and alliterative constraints, it is important to note that the father never uses a first person pronoun in the poem although he does address the son in the second person. Of course the father and mother pairing in 9a may simply be a reflex of the presumed source of the instruction in the Fifth Commandment, and the lack of a first person pronoun could be the effect of the poet's being, as Howe argues, primarily interested in stringing together a series of pre-formed
gnomic statements (144-45). But the lack of first person reference for the father does work to suggest the presence of two father-figures or paternal roles: the biological father who, paired with the mother, should receive love from the son, and the father who instructs the son but receives from him only, it seems, obedience.

Such a bifurcation of paternal roles is a good argument for reading Precepts as representing a instruction from spiritual rather than biological fatherhood. Monks had both spiritual fathers (their abbots) and biological fathers. But again the reading cannot be unequivocal, although most lay Christians had only biological fathers. The appearance of father and mother, while not necessarily contradicting the all-male spiritual fatherhood constructed by the Benedictine Rule, points to ties of kinship that could at times be problematic for monasteries—see for example chapter 54 of the Rule. On the other hand, the admonition for the son to love his kin "gif him sy meotud on lufan" ("if they are in the love of God" 10b) seems to suggest the severing of kin-ties to individuals who were not good Christians—an ideal more monastic than secular. Likewise the instruction to be always dutiful "pinum yldrum" ("to your elders" 11a) could be a reference to the Rule's establishment of a hierarchy based upon date of admission into the monastery (63.1). Given the popularity of childhood oblation on the continent during the time of the Benedictine reform, this hierarchy would be largely based upon age, although the Rule does state "et in omnibus omnino locis aetas non discernat ordines nec praeiudicet" ("absolutely nowhere shall age automatically determine rank" 63.5). As I have shown in chapter two, the fate of and reverence due to ancestors or elders ("yldran") was a concern for both secular and monastic individuals, and in the ninth section of the poem the father "sægde eaforan worn" ("said a great many things to his heir" 66). But as I also noted in chapter two, the Regularis Concordia absolutely forbids abbots, and by extension the monks who serve under them, to

19 Of course there were exceptions. Asser seems to act as spiritual father to Alfred, and either Dunstan or Æthelwold probably attempted to be spiritual father to Edgar. Nevertheless, all monks had spiritual fathers while only some lay Christians did.
leave any inheritance, thus eliminating heirs from monastic life (Symons 1953:69). Again, it is possible that the poet calls the son an heir out of force of habit or use of poetic commonplace, but given the insistence of the *Regularis Concordia* it seems unusual, to say the least, that the son would be so labeled if he were intended to be a monk.

Given the many conflicting signals I have discussed above, it is impossible to definitively state that the interaction of father and son is intended to take place inside or outside a monastery. But the shifting implications of the various sections make sense if the poem is read as an attempt by a poet thoroughly saturated in monastic thought and tradition to depict a non-monastic situation. I would read the disparate elements of the treatment of fatherhood in *Precepts* in the following way: when faced with a desire or a requirement to depict a father-son interaction, the poet of *Precepts* could not or was unwilling to separate the sorts of interactions that might occur between laypeople from those that represent monastic practices. The father in the poem becomes an abbot and the son a novice monk even when he is not necessarily intended to represent these specific Anglo-Saxon identities. *Precepts* thus communicates the idea that relationships in the world between biological fathers and their sons are supposed to be like those between monastic fathers and their and spiritual sons.

One of the attributes of this monastic ideology is its valorization of same-sex reproduction at the expense of the sorts of mixed, heterosexual reproduction of identities that takes place in families. Children, of course, learn wisdom from both their fathers and their mothers (and from assorted other relatives and neighbors of both genders). But the *Precepts* poet occludes all other transmissions of social identity to concentrate on one, same-sex interaction. Needless to say this interaction is depicted as occurring between two men. The son is told to love his mother, but he is assumed to obey the father. This father figure is given custodianship of this information. In the eyes of the *Precepts* poet the transmission of culture is a relentlessly masculine process.
Let me conclude my discussion of *Precepts* with a final conjecture that may perhaps explain the ideological content of the poem. I believe that the poems of Booklet II were compiled by a scribe who had wholeheartedly adopted the beliefs and traditions of the Benedictine reform. The poems were intended for the entertainment and education of a mixed audience of novices and young aristocratic men being educated at Exeter. The poems thus transmit monastic ideas and traditions while at the same time avoiding any direct mention of the monastery, a discretion unusual in monastic texts. The monastery occupies a privileged position in the mind of the *Precepts* poet. But unlike *The Gifts of Men*, which is an attempt to understand the position of the monastery in the culture and establish it at the top of a hierarchy, *Precepts* is a genuine attempt to depict a "universal" human activity. But this depiction is nevertheless profoundly shaped by monastic beliefs, and illustrates that ways monastic concerns could, through poetic and other texts, reproduce themselves in the community beyond the monastery walls.

The Means of Correct Training: *The Fortunes of Men* and *Maxims I* (45b-49)

Monastic beliefs and ideals also influence the next wisdom poem I will consider, *The Fortunes of Men*. This poem, which in many ways closely resembles *The Gifts of Men*, is separated from *Precepts* in the Exeter Book manuscript by *The Seafarer*, *Vainglory*, and *Widsith*. Unlike *Precepts*, *The Fortunes of Men* depicts many activities that by no stretch of the imagination may be called monastic. Unlike *The Gifts of Men*, no particularly monkish figure is concealed in the catalogue of possible fates or blessings, although there are, for example, short descriptions of individuals who become wise in book-learning (71b-72a).

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20 Critics appear to be evenly divided as to whether the poem should be called *The Fortunes of Men* or *The Fates of Men*. As with the other poems I discuss, I will retain the ASPR nomenclature. Although there is little difference in meaning between Fortunes and Fates in the title of the poem, *Fortunes* as an abbreviation is less apt than *Fates* to be confused with *The Fates of the Apostles*. 
The structure of *Fortunes* is similar to that of *Gifts*: introductory and concluding sections (respectively nine and six lines long) bracket an eighty-three line catalogue passage that describes a number of potential fortunes. Karen Swenson would divide the catalogue passage into two sections (10-57 and 58-92), arguing that the first set of fortunes are primarily representative of Germanic or non-Christian culture while the second are Christian (125). While the most obviously Christian and exhortive passages (64-66, for example) are found in Swenson’s second section of the poem, it is not clear why glory in battle (69), skill in dice and board-games (70b-71a), the ability to be a goldsmith (73) or the power to tame a hawk (85-92) are Christian rather than Germanic fates. In fact the catalogue as a whole seems quite similar to the aristocratic catalogue in *The Gifts of Men*, and should, like that poem, probably be seen as unified even though lacking complex hypotactic structure.

In any event there are clear divisions between the introductory and concluding passages and the catalogue itself, and it is these passages I will concentrate on in my investigation of the depiction of fatherhood in the poem. In my analysis I will work under the assumption that the combined arguments of Isaacs (374), Howe (125-26), Hansen (96), Swenson (125) and Larrington (141-42) have established that the poem preserves some measure of Germanic occupations and fates, albeit admixed with Christian theology or ideology. I am not particularly concerned with determining which fortunes are traditional or Germanic: for my purposes it is sufficient that the poet chose to compile each of these fates into his poem and that the Booklet II compiler saw fit to include *The Fortunes of Men* in his anthology.

The poem begins with one of the only depictions of birth and parenting in the Anglo-Saxon poetic corpus:

Ful oft ðæt gegonged,  mid godes meahtum,
þætte wer ond wif   in woruld cennað
bearn mid gebyrdum   ond mid bleom gyrwað,
Very often it happens that man and woman, through God's power, bring into the world a child by means of birth, and clothe him with color, tame him and teach him until the years pass and the time comes that the young limbs, the quickened limbs, have become grown. Thus the father and mother carry and lead their children. God alone knows what the winters will bring to them as they grow.

The key difficulty in interpreting the passage are the two hapax legomena, "tennap" and "tætap" in line 4a. Grein read "tennan" as German "locken" ("to entice"), suggesting that the word indicated the parents' attempts to encourage the child to take its first steps. He interpreted "tætan as "delectare, blandiri, liebkosen" ("to delight," "to coax," "to caress") (671). Benjamin Thorpe emends the half-line to "temiaþ ond tæcap," ("discipline and teach it," 327). While it has recently become unfashionable to accept many emendations of Old English texts, I believe that Thorpe's emendation is in fact correct. On paleographical grounds it is quite possible to take "nn" in the scribe's pointed minuscule as an error for "mi." It is easily visible in the Exeter Book facsimile that the two n's in "tennap" are written differently than other double-n combinations on the same page (for example, "monnes" in line 14b). The first n is not made like the second; the anchor point is not turned. It seems reasonable to suppose a scribal error in this place, particularly if one notices how difficult it can be to distinguish the letter forms of "m" and "n" in other places on the same page.

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21 Bosworth-Toller suggests that the "tenap" be taken as "tendap," to tend or to kindle in the figurative sense, and that "tætan" would mean "to gladden, make cheerful.

22 Ettmüller (24) and Sedgefield (45) follow his lead. Mackie retains the manuscript reading and interprets the words to mean "cheer and cherish him" (26-27). Muir suggests that "in the end, the sense has to be construed from the context, and Mackie's translations fits well enough" (527).

23 I am grateful to Stephen Harris for his assistance with the paleography of this section of the manuscript.
The argument for "ta:tap" being an error for "ta:cap" is even simpler. In the Exeter Book hand the difference between "c" and "t" is relatively slight: "t" has an additional horizontal bar or often a hairline added to the two-stroke "c" (Conner 74-75), suggesting that the "c" base could have been accidentally augmented by the scribe, thus "ta:cap" ("teach") could have been modified to the hapax legomenon "ta:tap" (?) via the accidental addition of only one line.

Accepting Thorpe's emendation provides two benefits. First, it transforms the unusual circumstance of two unattested and unknowable words occurring in the same half-line into a simple scribal error that can be corrected. More importantly "temiap" suggests a link between the beginning and the end of *The Fortunes of Men* and between *Fortunes* and another Anglo-Saxon poem, *Maxims I*. The final section in the catalogue of *The Fortunes of Man* is a depiction of a man who tames a hawk:

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Sum sceal wildne fugel  wloncne atemian,
heafoc on honda,       oþhæt seo heoroswealwe
wynsum weorþeð;        deþ he wyrplas on,
feðeþ swa on feterum  sþrum dealne,
leþþyftswiftna         lýtum gieflum,
oþhæt se wælisca       wæðum ond dæðum
his ætgiefan           eaðmod weorþeð
ond to hagostealdes    honda gelæred (85-92).
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One shall tame the proud, wild bird, the hawk in the hands, until the savage-swan becomes a joy. He does on the jesses, and so feeds it in fetters, weakens the air-swift one by means of small gifts of food, by means of dressings and deeds, until the slaughterer becomes subservient to his feeder; it is taught to return to the hands of the young warrior.

If the first word in 4a is "temiap" ("tames") then there is an obvious parallel established between the child who must be tamed at the opening of the poem and the hawk that is tamed at the end ("atemian" is simply the intensive form of "temian"). The case for this link between the beginning and end of the poem is strengthened by an additional
parallel between lines 3b and 9ob. After the child is tamed, he is "mid bleom gyrwað" ("clothed with colors"); after the hawk is tamed he is set "wædum" ("in dressings"), presumably the jesses, varvels or hood by which the bird is restrained. The parallel passages suggest that the transformation of a child into an adult is seen as analogous to the transformation of a wild hawk to a tamed bird: both states of being are marked by the possession of clothing which, as it did after the Fall, separates the civilized from the uncivilized, the human from the animal.

It is also possible that this passage is influenced by monastic practices. Chapter 58 of the Benedictine Rule states that upon making his final profession to monastic life a novice must give up the clothing he wore in his secular life:

Mox ergo in oratorio exuatur rebus propriis quibus vestitus est et induatur rebus monasterii. Ila autem vestimenta quibus exutus est reponantur in vestiario conservanda, ut si aliquando suadenti diabolo consenserit ut egrediatur de monasterio—quod absit—tunc exutus rebus monasterii proiciatur.

Then and there in the oratory, he is to be stripped of everything of his own that he is wearing and clothed in what belongs to the monastery. The clothing taken from him is to be put away and kept safely in the wardrobe, so that, should he ever agree to the devil's suggestions and leave the monastery—which God forbid—he can be stripped of the clothing of the monastery before he is cast out (58: 26-28).²⁴

The monk is then, obviously, given new clothing, which is distinctive to the monastery. If the clothing of the child in Fortunes is seen by the poet as an precursor of monastic practice then Fortunes, like Precepts, illustrates the efforts of a monastic poet to interpret secular Anglo-Saxon culture in monastic terms. Insistence upon taming as an appropriate means of civilizing a child and the connection of this practice to the clothing of the child as a marker of domestication links The Fortunes of Men to a small section of

²⁴ The Old English translation and gloss of the Rule do not use any forms of the verb "gyrwan" ("to clothe") or of the noun "wæd" ("clothing"). Instead they use forms of the verb "gescrydan" ("to clothe") and the nouns "hraegl" ("clothing") and "reaf" ("garment") (Logeman 98-99; Schröer 101-103).
another Anglo-Saxon wisdom poem, *Maxims I*. Also known as the *Exeter Maxims* (to distinguish it from a similar poem found in London, British Museum MS. Cotton Tiberius B. i) the poem has not suffered the scholarly neglect visited upon the other wisdom poems. Occurring immediately after *The Fortunes of Men* in Booklet II, it is one of the few wisdom poems to be analyzed in depth by every major critic of wisdom literature in Anglo-Saxon. But unlike *The Gifts of Men, Precepts* or *The Fortunes of Men*, *Maxims I* has developed a substantial literature in addition to the work of Shippey, Howe, Hansen and Larrington. Because I will not be discussing all of *Maxims I* or interpreting the poem as a whole, I will avoid rehearsing this extensive bibliography here and will only cite authors who have either examined the particular portion of the poem in question or whose more extended interpretations are applicable to my reading.

The passage in question appears in the first major section of the poem (or, if *Maxims I* is taken to be three poems, in *Maxims A*). It is thematically and philologically related to the opening and closing passages of *The Fortunes of Men*:

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trymman ond tyhtan þæt he teala cunne,
sylle him wist ond wædo,
Ne sceal hine mon cildgeongne forcwþan,
þy sceal on þeode geþeon,

Læran sceal mon geongne monnan,
ôþet hine mon atemedne hæbbe,
ôþet hine mon on gewitte alæde.
ær he hine acþan mote;
þæt he wese þristhycgende (45b-49).
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A young man must be taught, brought into line and encouraged so that he knows fully, until he may have been completely tamed. Give him food and clothing, until he may be led into wisdom. Nor must he be called childish before he is able to make himself well known. Thus must it be achieved among the people that he may become courage-minded.

The most obvious link to *Fortunes* is thematic: here we have another description of the raising of children in an Old English poem. Also significant, a form of the word "temian" ("to tame") occurs in the passage (as "atemedne" 46b), indicating that one or more Anglo-Saxon poets thought that children needed to be tamed in order to be properly
initiated into society. And just as the child in *Fortunes* is given clothes and the hawk in that poem is clad when tamed, so too the child in *Maxims I* is given "wædo" ("clothes") as part of the process that civilizes him. The similarities between the two passages indicate the presence of an idea-complex surrounding conceptions of child socialization in Anglo-Saxon culture: teaching a child his social role requires him to be domesticated in a way analogous to the means by which a wild animal is tamed—through the use of carefully controlled discipline.

This view of child-rearing in keeping with monastic practices and beliefs. "Temian" ("to tame") and its intensive form "atemian" appear to have two related meanings in Old English. The first is equivalent to modern English "to tame." In addition to the use of "atemian" in *Fortunes*, the word is applied to the taming of wild hawks in Ælfric's *Colloquy*, where the fowler states that he knows how to tame such a bird (Garmonsway 31-32), and in various glosses and in Ælfric's *Grammar" temige"* glosses Latin "domo" ("to tame"). The second meaning of the word is an extension of the first, the idea of taming an animal applied metaphorically to the human spirit. A passage in Chapter 56 of Alfred's translation of the *Pastoral Care* illustrates this sense of the "temian": "ðonne mon temed his unaliefde lustas mid ðam wordum ðære halgan lære" ("When someone tames his unlawful desires with the words of the holy teachings"). "Temian" is also used in this sense in chapters 41, 46 and 49 of King Alfred's translation of the *Pastoral Care* and in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great translated by Wærferth under the aegis of Alfred. Internal desires must be tamed through discipline, through the imposition of an order upon these desires and their denial when they conflict with that order.
The general idea of taming a child by the same means by which animals are trained is found in chapter 30 of the *Rule*, "De Pueris Minori Aetate, Qualiter Corripiantur" ("About Boys of Minor Estate, How They May Be Corrected") 25:

Omins aetas vel intellectus proprias debet habere mensuras. Ideoque, quotiens pueri vel adulescentiores aetate, aut qui minus intellegere possunt quanta poena sit excommunicationis, hi tales dum delinquunt, aut ieiuniis nimiis affligantur aut acris verberibus coerceantur, ut sanentur.

Every age and level of understanding should receive appropriate treatment. Therefore, as often as boys and the young or those who cannot understand the seriousness of the penalty of excommunication, are guilty of misdeeds, they should be subjected to severe fasts or checked with sharp strokes so that they may be healed (30.1-3).

Ælfric's *Colloquy* shows that corporal punishment was a prominent feature of monastic discipline in the Anglo-Saxon period. The second question the teacher asks the students is, "Wille beswungen on leornunge?" ("Do you wish to be flogged in your learning?") and at the end of the *Colloquy*, after the student has described his day, the teacher asks "Wære þu todæg beswuncgen?" ("Were you flogged today?") (Garmonsway 18, 45). 26 The apparently casual tone of these passages—the pupil does reply as if he is surprised or frightened—indicates the prevalence of physical punishment as an aspect of school discipline.

The *Sciftiboc* also requires corporal punishment as a means of correct training for boys, who are to be punished physically for sexual contact with other boys: "Cnihtas gyf hi heom betweonan hæmed fremman, swinge hi man." ("if boys fornicate among themselves, they are to be beaten") (Spindler 178-79). Although the *Sciftiboc* is not itself a monastic

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25 This is not to suggest that the boys are thought of as animals. But animals may only be trained through their bodies (i.e., corporal punishment) while humans may be trained using other methods of discipline in addition to the corporal, forms of discipline absent from the depictions in the Booklet II wisdom poems.

26 The Old English glosses the Latin "Uultis flagellari in discendo?" and "Fuisti hodie uerberatus?"
document, it is descended from monastic penitentials (Frantzen 1983 133-40), strongly supporting the conclusion that the practice of "taming" children was, if not monastic in source, at least congruent with monastic practice. In fact, attempts to heal the soul through the imposition of discipline upon the body are more common in the Irish penitentials that were the original sources of Anglo-Saxon penitential practice (see, for example, MacNeill and Gamer 75-168 and Binchy). That corporal punishment is linked with the care of the soul that is the concern of the penitentials indicates that discipline was to implanted in the consciences of the individuals whose desires need to be controlled.

The belief that children must be tamed as they "weax" ("grow") suggests that Anglo-Saxon monks were possessed of what Thomas Sowell calls the constrained vision of society, an understanding of human nature in which it is perceived that:

each new generation born is in effect an invasion of civilization by little barbarians, who must be civilized before it is too late. Their prospects of growing up as decent, productive people depends on the whole elaborate set of largely unarticulated practices which engender moral values, self-discipline, and consideration for others (150).

But as Foucault notes, the civilizing of tiny barbarians is not merely a repressive function of society. Rather, the imposition of discipline upon children creates their identities, both social and personal (170). That the creation of identities was a result of the disciplinary function is evident from the passage in Maxims I: the child is trained "by sceal on þeode geþeon, þæt he wese þristhycgende" ("Thus must it be achieved among the people that he may become courage-minded" 49). That is, the trained child assumes a social identity within a politically-constituted group, a "þeod." The son in Precepts may achieve "þeodscype" in either the monastery of the comitatus. The child in Maxims I and Fortunes is disciplined and rewarded with clothing, a mark of social status. Although we do not know what status the child has, it seems unlikely that he is a serf or slave: he is described by the word "þristhycgende" ("courage-minded"), which elsewhere in the corpus is reserved
for warriors or saints. For the child to successfully enter the social group, he must submit to discipline. In other words, he must imitate the behavior promulgated by his "fathers," he must reproduce in himself their actions and thus, to some degree their identity. The child received this identity as an inheritance, but it is one he is given little choice to reject or modify.

The Anglo-Saxons' method for civilizing their little barbarians and instilling in them an identity appears to be to some degree through corporal punishment (not an unusual practice in the Middle Ages). But so little is known of Anglo-Saxon childhood that it is not possible to say if the disciplinary regime of the monastery was practiced outside its walls. The set of practices necessary for civilizing a new generation are clearly a concern for monasteries and are depicted in the secular context of *The Fortunes of Men*. The emphasis on taming in the poem may be simply a reflexive description of secular Anglo-Saxon life. But the acceptability of this description to the monastic compiler of the Exeter Book shows that monastic values were, at the very least, able to be harmonized with secular behavior with regard to the education and training of children. Monks could understand their monastic culture in terms of the secular culture from which they came. They could describe that secular culture in monastic terms.

The means and description of discipline and the formation of identity in the wisdom poems support the blending of monastic and aristocratic roles. The discipline of a young man is carried out by his father and this discipline operates in terms of traditional wisdom: sayings that are validated by the form in which they are cast as well as by who is speaking them. *The Fortunes of Men* and the passage from *Maxims I* indicate a belief on the part of at least some Anglo-Saxons that in order to society to be reproduced, in order for men to meet their fates in accordance with the will of God, children must be tamed. According to

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27 For an analysis of what little we do know of certain aspects of Anglo-Saxon childhood see Frantzen 1996.
Precepts, the person who does this training is a father and, if my analysis is correct, a monastic, spiritual father. The Gifts of Men subtly hints that the monastic father belongs at the top of the social hierarchy, the best of all fathers for the implantation of identities (and even humanity) into children.

The formal characteristics of the passage from Maxims I and the general tone of authority in the wisdom poems show the potential power of these ideas. While nearly all of Maxims I is cast in terms of "sceal" or "bið," in line 47 the poet slips into the imperative: "sylle him wist ond wædo, օhæt hine mon on gewitte alæde" ("give him food and clothing until he may be led into wisdom"). The imperative mood in this case presupposes the power and the necessity (if you will, the imperative) to command. The raising of children in a proper manner, in such a way that they are marked as human and marked by social status through clothing, is of such paramount importance that, to use Barley's terminology the "portable paradigm," of the gnomic is utilized. The power of this portable paradigm and the power possessed by gnomic speech answers in part the most difficult question posed by an analysis of the wisdom poem: why put essential information into the form of poem? It may be that in order to possess the maximum cultural authority certain sorts of wisdom must be encoded in traditional forms, linguistically ossified in a traditional idiom. Because that idiom might possibly be accessed by any person conversant in its conventions, it is paired with a standard or stereotyped social image of its use: that of the father speaking words of wisdom, as does the father in Precepts. By speaking in the idiom of wisdom literature, the poet invokes the power of the father to command not only because he has power, but because he is assumed (through the formal characteristics of the gnomic) to have knowledge. It is clear why such a potent combination would be valued by any institution, monastic or otherwise.

The gift of wisdom is the gift of power, a gift bequeathed across generations by fathers who speak a certain language. The power of wisdom is used for the preservation and
shaping of a social order and the identities of the individuals within it. Atop the social order in the Anglo-Saxon period stands one figure: the father who possesses power and wisdom. A father in Anglo-Saxon England was defined by what he did rather than by who he was, and the Anglo-Saxon father is a man characterized by his ability to use the language of power, a man whose identity was shaped, and who in turn shapes others’ identities, through the power of language.

By being cast in the idiom of poetry rather than in the form of a rule or treatise, the wisdom poems of the second Exeter Book booklet suggest that the reformed monastery had not yet fully internalized its new position of power and importance in Anglo-Saxon culture. The ambiguity of the poetic form, its dialectic between tradition and novelty, shows the monastery coming to terms with a new cultural order, one in which the aristocracy was brought into the monastery and the power of the monastery extended into the world. In such a time of cultural readjustment, the wisdom of poetry is its ability to make sense, through the poetry of wisdom, of the various roles required by the new order. It is able to create, in its inheritors, whether they like it or not, something of the thoughts, desires and identities of their fathers.
CHAPTER V

BY BLOOD AND DEEDS

Nu ic suna minum
guðgewædu,
ænig yrfewead
lice gelenge.
syllan wolde
þær me gifeðe swa
æfter wurde

Now I would have wished to give my battle-dress to my son, if it had been granted that any inheritor, related by body, had come after me.

–Beowulf, 2729-2732a

The wisdom poems of the second Exeter Book booklet form a bridge between the secular and sacred worlds, treating in terms the wider culture could understand the ideas of tradition, inheritance, and the role of fathers so important to monks. They provide an arena in which the monastery’s concerns with tradition encountered the ethos of politically powerful aristocratic culture. The Benedictine reform applied monastic beliefs and practices to aristocratic political life and aristocratic concerns to the monastery. In the wake of the reform monks struggled to understand their new place and the place of their institution in Anglo-Saxon culture, asking themselves how they, in the wake of many social changes instituted by the reform, could remain linked to their individual and institutional ancestors. In a sense, tenth-century monks were taking stock of the new cultural situation and asking which of the old ways they should conserve, which existing traditions could be
harmonized with their newly-revised beliefs. In the wisdom poems we see brief forays into the creation of new identities and social roles as the monastery reinterpreted the wider Anglo-Saxon cultural in its own terms.

The monastery is not a concern of Beowulf, the subject of this chapter. Not even the closest reading will find a monastic figure lurking unnoticed (as in The Gifts of Men) within the aristocratic warrior culture, and significant amounts of special pleading would be required to identify overt monastic sentiments anywhere in the poem. But Beowulf is a concern of the monastery. The poem is the single most significant poetic statement about inheritance in Old English, and as such is linked to the problems of tradition and the reproduction of culture that were such important concerns for monasteries after the Benedictine reform. It is also likely that Beowulf is a product of the tenth century, and its concern with tradition and inheritance can therefore shed light on the important concerns of the culture in that time period. Finally, Beowulf incorporates gnomic statements and elements of wisdom poetry into its narrative structure. While a relatively minor portion of the poem, these statements link Beowulf to the wisdom poems: both genres utilize the gnomic to authorize their statements about the way the world works, and both thus invoke a tradition of past practice even if that tradition is not historically substantiated.

In this chapter I examine the problems of tradition, inheritance and the reproduction of culture in relation to what John Hill has called "the cultural world in Beowulf," the way the poem constructs an internally-consistent picture of a society. Hill pursues an anthropological reading that is "analogical, comparative, cross-temporal, and opportunistic" (5), in an attempt to discover what the terms of social interaction were in the world of the poem. In this chapter I draw heavily on Hill's analysis of political and kinship relations in Beowulf, particularly his discussions of succession and gift giving. But Hill does not link the cultural world in Beowulf to the cultural world of the poem, that is, to a particular social context in Anglo-Saxon history. My project is to make such a link, connecting the cultural
concerns evinced in *Beowulf* to Anglo-Saxon England in the tenth century where, I will argue, *Beowulf* was composed, written, and valued.

In the previous chapter I argued that father figures in the wisdom poems command, judge and impose discipline. The father-figures in *Beowulf* perform all these actions, but they also enact two other essential performances of the role of father: they fight, and they die. In depicting these masculine performances, *Beowulf* vividly illustrates some of the cultural problems generated by a reliance upon same-sex reproduction. The poem dramatizes the conflict between the biological reproduction by which dynastic family succession is managed, which I will call inheritance by blood, and the same-sex reproduction of identities by which trans-generational cohesion is maintained in the warrior band, which I will call inheritance by deeds. Masculine, same-sex reproduction in *Beowulf* requires a blending of these two forms of inheritance, but the drive for such hybridization, a drive that require *both* inheritance by blood and *inheritance by deeds*, necessarily and inevitably leads to the demise of the very culture it strives to reproduce. What brings Hrothgar's and Beowulf's lines of inheritance and tradition to an end, what causes the various tragedies of the poem, then, is the masculinity required for same-sex reproduction of identity in *Beowulf*. Thus the crisis in and the tragedy of *Beowulf* is that the very forms of reproduction required to perpetuate across the generations the poem's warrior culture are the root causes of that culture's eventual destruction.

*Beowulf in the Tenth Century*

No question has so exercised Anglo-Saxonists in the past fifteen years as the dating of *Beowulf*. From the nineteenth century through the late 1970's, the critical consensus was essentially in agreement with this brief summary by Frederick Klaeber:
obviously the latest possible date is indicated by the time when the MS. was written, i.e. about 1000 A.D. It is furthermore to be taken for granted that a poem so thoroughly Scandinavian in subject-matter and evincing the most sympathetic interest in Danish affairs cannot well have been composed after the beginning of the Danish invasions toward the end of the 8th century (cvii).

Some scholars might push the date slightly later, and many argued as to which part of the seventh century the poem belonged, but in 1972 Thomas Shippey was comfortable enough with the consensus to write that, "virtually no one now thinks of Beowulf as post 825" (210). Then came what James Earl calls "the unexpected and unwished-for gift of Kevin Kiernan" (1994 16). In *Beowulf and the Beowulf Manuscript*, Kiernan argues that "paleographically and codicologically, at least, all of the facts converge to support the theory that Beowulf is an eleventh-century composite poem, and that the Beowulf MS is the archetype of the epic as we now know it" (277-78). Paleographically, the manuscript dates from between 975 and 1025 (Ker xvii, 281), and this dating has not been in dispute.

Kiernan's radical suggestion, based on his interpretation of the corrections made by the second scribe and the palimpsest that is folio 179, is that "two distinct poems were combined for the first time in our extant MS, and that many years after the MS was copied, the second scribe was still working with it" (171). Thus the poem would have been composed near the time of its copying, which Kiernan argues was in the early eleventh century "during the realm of Cnut the Great" (278).

Kiernan's claims were, needless to say, controversial. Earl's assessment that "the jury is still out on his theory of the poem's composition, and it may remain out indefinitely" sums up contemporary critical opinion (1994 16). But even if most scholars do not accept an eleventh-century date for the poem,¹ or the idea that the Beowulf manuscript is an autograph of the poet, Kiernan's work has served to shatter the comfortable assumptions of several generations of critics. The most important changed assumption is the notion that Beowulf

¹ E.G. Stanley, in his *In the Foreground: Beowulf*, says of Kiernan: "one lonely voice even dates the composition of the poem eleventh century" (76 and see also 67-68).
had to have been composed before the beginning of the Viking raids in the late eighth and early ninth century. Kiernan suggests that the poem was composed in Mercia along the Danelaw boundary, or perhaps in the Danelaw itself during the reign of Cnut, arguing that the poem emerged "as an aesthetic aftermath of the Danish conquest" (62-63, 277-78).

At the same time that Kiernan presented his argument, a number of other scholars independent proposed that Beowulf was not an eighth-century poem. In 1981 W.G. Busse and R. Holtei argued for a tenth-century date, as did Patricia Poussa. Alexander Callander Murray also argued convincingly that there was little to no "historical, literary, or archaeological evidence" for an early date (101-111 at 111). These arguments, combined with Kiernan's work, showed an apparent general willingness to revisit notions of the poem's political viability in an England after the Viking raids, and the critical climate became so amenable to the idea of late rather than an early Beowulf that in 1983 John Niles could write confidently that "the notion of a post-Viking Beowulf is clearly an idea whose time has come" (1983 290 n.1).

Niles' argument about the possible tenth-century date of Beowulf is the most developed and has been the most influential among those scholars who accept the idea that poem could have been written after the Viking raids of the ninth century. Relying in part upon the work of Ashley Crandell Amos, Niles argues that "the linguistic evidence that has seemed to support an early date is not convincing," noting that the major linguistic and metrical dating tests are difficult to apply to poetry, cannot be applied consistently and unambiguously, and are too often based on uncertain manuscript readings (1983 97-101).²

After demonstrating that the foundations of the linguistic and metrical evidence for an early date rest on sand, Niles turns to the historical and political arguments that placed the poem before the Viking invasions in the ninth century. He argues that "within a generation or two after the Danish leader Guthrum had been baptized by Alfred [878]...

² However, see Fulk 368-92 and Cable 77-83.
Christian Danes and Englishmen were worshipping side by side" (104). Political relations between the Danes and the kings of Wessex were very strong, with Æthelstan labeling himself "Angelsaxonum Denorumque glorioissimus rex" ("most glorious king of the Anglo-Saxons and Danes"). Anglo-Danish relations reached their high point during the reign of Edgar (959-975) before collapsing during the reign of Æthelred (106). Due to the good relations between the Danes in the Danelaw and the kingdom of Wessex during the years 934 through 978, there is no reason to think that the composition of Beowulf by an Englishman could not have occurred during this period (108-110). Furthermore,

in the poet's depiction of the Danes one thus finds support for the idea that Beowulf reflects interests and attitudes that would have been prevalent among aristocratic Englishmen of the early or middle years of the tenth century, but not earlier (111).

Niles would place the composition of the poem in a "secularized" (i.e., pre-Benedictine reform) monastery during the reign of Æthelstan(924-970). He finds most probable a date near or after 931, the date of the Wiltshire charter that lists "Grendeles mere" ("Grendel's mere") and "Beowan hamm" ("Beowa's home") as place names, and suggests that 971 would provide a good late date for the composition of the poem, since the seventeenth Blickling homily appears to use the Beowulf poet's description of Grendel's mere as a source (115-116).

Niles' suggested range of dates for the composition of Beowulf (931-971) overlaps with the first phase of the Benedictine reform (940-975), but he does not place the composition of the poem during the Benedictine reform because sections 10 and 11 of the Regularis Concordia forbade monks from feasting with laymen: "if this prohibition was observed, secular song most likely continued to be heard only outside the customary homes of scribes." On the other hand, during period of time immediately before the reform, "well-born ecclesiastics" might have been responsible for preserving heroic poetry in secularized

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3 See also Brown 1938 905-16, and Healy 52.
monasteries: "if some pre-reform clerics squandered money on their wives, one can imagine them also patronizing secular literature" (114-15).

Niles' arguments are not unreasonable, but I think we need not exclude the years 943-971 as possible dates for the composition of Beowulf. First of all (although it is a minor point that I would not press too far) the Regularis Concordia's prohibitions on feasting with laymen do not mention song or verse of any kind, so it is possible that various sorts of poetry were recited in monasteries when secular aristocrats visited. More significantly, the Regularis Concordia was produced at a synod at Winchester held under the aegis of King Edgar sometime between 965 and 970 (Symons 1953 xxiv). Thus it is quite possible that the conditions Niles finds necessary for the composition of the poem could been present in a reformed monastery that had adopted the Rule but had not yet implemented the more stringent regulations promulgated by the Winchester synod. If the Regularis Concordia is viewed as a terminus ad quem for Beowulf, the poem nevertheless could have been composed during the first years of Edgar's monastery-friendly reign.

Even if the Regularis Concordia did eliminate secular verse in monasteries, there is no reason to assume that monks never heard such verses after the regulations were adopted. It is probable that monastic leaders and their companions could hear secular poetry when at court or at the dwellings of local magnates. We know that Æthelwold, Oswald, and Dunstan were all in regular attendance at the court of Edgar (Stenton 440-51). It seems improbable that the leaders of the reform traveled to the court without the attendance of other monks from their foundations. At the court these monks would have ample opportunity to hear secular songs. The place-names in the Wiltshire charter suggest that stories or songs about Grendel or Beowulf were at least in circulation some time previous to the Benedictine reform. There is no evidence that such songs were sung at the court (there is no Anglo-Saxon evidence from the reform period that any secular or heroic songs were sung at court), but if we postulate, as does Niles, a secular origin for Beowulf, then the court
or the hall of a local magnate seems like the most likely place for a monk to hear songs about Beowulf and Grendel.

A monk chosen to travel with his abbot to the court or to the local ealdorman's hall would likely be one with family ties to the magnate being visited. As Patrick Wormald notes, the Benedictine reform was accomplished with the active participation and support of the aristocracy, particularly the royal court (1988 37). A monk with kinship ties to the court, particularly if he had entered the monastery as an adult, would have been exposed to the Old English vernacular verse tradition.4 Later, back at the monastery, he could have composed Beowulf, using his monastically-trained writing skills to preserve something of the culture of his aristocratic origins.

Such is my guess as to the identity of the Beowulf poet. In itself it is no more than speculation, but when combined with my previous analysis of the wisdom poetry and the general cultural situation in the monastery during the Benedictine reform, it suggests ways of reading the poem and a historical context in which Beowulf may be set. In particular, the concerns of the poem for problems of tradition, inheritance, succession, and masculine same-sex reproduction take on a new light when compared to the analogous concerns of the Benedictine reformers and the authors of the Exeter Book wisdom poems. As my analysis of The Gifts of Men and The Fortunes of Men shows, aristocratic concerns were still being contemplated in reformed monasteries, and the presence of a traditional Germanic poem like Widsith in the same booklet as these poems suggests that monks even after the reform had significant interest in and sympathy for the trappings, activities, and stories of their aristocratic past.

4 Of course it is possible to bracket the entire idea of a monk visiting the court to learn the tradition if we postulate an individual who took (or was required to take) vows after his childhood and early adult years and so came to the monastery with a hoard of old tales (and more importantly, an idea of the verse tradition) in his memory.
Reading *Beowulf* as a composition by an monk of aristocratic origin who knew the verse tradition and had heard stories of *Beowulf* also provides a possible solution to the Gordian knot of the oral-traditional/written debate that I discussed in chapter one. As John Foley has repeatedly stated, *Beowulf* is not, as Francis Magoun argued, the transcript of the oral performance of an Anglo-Saxon "singer" (Magoun 56). Rather, the poem is an "oral derived" text (Foley 1988 66). But "oral derived" is a rather nebulous category that could, if pushed to its limits, include nearly every type of text. Reading *Beowulf* as the creation of an individual who was obviously literate in the vernacular but was also knowledgeable in the Anglo-Saxon oral verse tradition (although neither a "singer," nor the stenographer for someone who was) provides an explanation of how specifically the poem might be derived from its suspected oral traditional roots.

In the end all arguments for the date and authorship of *Beowulf* are in large measure guesswork. The measure of such speculation, it seems to me, is not how plausible it is, but what the postulated context can do to expand analysis from the internal "cultural world" of the poem to the wider world of culture in which it was produced. Readers should therefore judge my placing of *Beowulf* in the tenth-century during the Benedictine reform not by how convincingly I have argued for the date of the poem. My suggestions are, after all, hardly revolutionary: they depend in large measure upon the far more significant work of previous scholars, and in any case are squarely in the mainstream of contemporary ideas about the date of the poem. But as I shall demonstrate below, reading *Beowulf* as a production of the Benedictine reform can shed light on the way the poem works within a specific historical and cultural world.
The Dynamics of Inheritance

*Beowulf* begins with a depiction of the successful operation of inheritance. Arriving in Denmark from across the sea, Scyld Scefing, the "god cyning" ("good king") builds up the Danish kingdom and bequeaths it to his son and "eafera" ("heir"), Beowulf the First. Beowulf works to build up his father's kingdom, and when Scyld dies the power and wealth of his people are so great that the Scyldings are able to provide their old king with a glorious ship funeral that ends his reign and inaugurates that of his son.

Then was in the castle, Beow of the Scyldings, the beloved king of the people, ruling a long time, known to the folk—his father turned elsewhere, the lord from the land—until to him afterwards was born great Healfdane. He ruled the glad Scyldings as long as he lived, old and battle-fierce. To him four children were born in succession into the world: Heorogar and Hroðgar and Halga the Good; I have heard that the fourth child was Onela's queen...

In this passage kingly power and identity passes smoothly from Scyld to Beowulf I to Healfdane. Although we are not specifically told that Beowulf I and Healfdane are both

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5 Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from *Beowulf* are taken from Fr. Klaeber's third edition of *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, cited by line numbers in parentheses. I have not reproduced Klaeber's macrons or his punctuation.

6 Here I accept James Earl's argument that the emendation of "Beowulf" in lines 18a and 53b to "Beow" in order to make the name correspond to the West Saxon genealogies is not supported on philological grounds (23-26).
the eldest or only sons of their respective fathers, we have no reason to assume otherwise—there are no additional brothers in *Beowulf* or in the various supposed Scandinavian analogues (Chambers xvii). At each step of the genealogical progression as given to us the father reproduces himself only once, in the person of his son and worthy successor. But then "heah" ("great" 57a) Healfdane has four children: Heorogar, Hrothgar, Halga and a daughter whose name has been lost in a textual lacuna.7 The straightforward progression from father to son is complicated. Heorogar, Healfdane's oldest son, dies (466b-68), leaving Hrothgar, the second brother, to be king (64-67b).

Hrothgar's assumption of the throne in the place of his brother illustrates a problem with the processes of inheritance and succession that to this point in the poem has been obscured by the easy passage of power from one father to one son. Beowulf I and Healfdane are the optimal inheritors of their respective fathers because each is his father's only heir. But Heorogar should have succeeded Healfdane not only because he was the elder son but also because he would have been a superior king. Or so Hrothgar says: "se wæs betera ðonne ic" ("he was a better man than I" 469b). It is possible, of course, that this statement is a modesty topos, and of course the rule "de mortuis nil nisi bonum" ("about the dead, nothing but good") may well have applied in Anglo-Saxon England. However the lack of modesty topoi anywhere else in the Old English poetic corpus suggests that Hrothgar is being sincere when he states his belief that his brother would have been a better king.8 In 469b, then, Hrothgar, the eventual inheritor, states that he is not the optimal ruler. Of course even if Heorogar was a better man, Hrothgar is hardly a bad king. Through his reign he augments the power and prestige of the Scyldings, and he builds the great hall of Heorot, the most famous of their works. Any social fissure that might have opened due to a

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7 There is no break in or damage to the manuscript at this point, but the metrical inconsistency suggests a lacuna in the text (Klaeber 128).

8 Hrothgar could have, after all, said something to the effect of "hæt wæs god cyning" ("that was a good king" 11b) in the subjunctive mode, and left it at that.
less-than-optimal succession seems quickly sealed until, perhaps, Grendel's first attack on Heorot.

But while Hrothgar has proven to be a worthy inheritor of his line, his own sons do not get the chance to inherit from him. At the time of Grendel's death Hrothgar is an old king but his sons Hrethric and Hrothmund are still seated among the "giogoð" ("youths" 1189-1190b), where Beowulf, presumably because he is a visitor, is placed at the feast. It seems they will not be strong or old enough for either of them to assume the mantle of kingship when Hrothgar dies. Wealhtheow the queen suggests just this possibility when she proposes that Hrothulf, Hrothgar's nephew, will protect the young boys if Hrothgar dies before Hrethric (presumably the older of the two sons) is able to assume the kingship (1180-87). Hrothgar's sons, while heirs of the king's body, are at the time of Grendel's death not fit to assume the throne—apparently the warrior troop recognized that they cannot do those things that are necessary for kings to do.

Beowulf, on the other hand, while not a blood heir of Hrothgar, is fully equal to the demands of leadership, or so the old king believes. In another controversial scene, Hrothgar appears to "adopt" Beowulf as his son. After Beowulf has killed Grendel, Hrothgar offers a prayer of thanksgiving. He then addresses the hero: "nu ic, Beowulf, þec, / secg betsta, me to sunu wylle / þreogan on þerhþe; heald forð tela / niwe sibbe" ("now I wish you, Beowulf, the best of warriors, to be as a son to me, to love in spirit; to hold forth properly this new kinship" 946b-949a). While critics have been divided as to whether or not Hrothgar's gesture is a true adoption into the lineage or merely a spiritual and social embrace, Wealhtheow, at least, seems to recognize Hrothgar's action as possessing dynastic implications. After the court scop has sung the tale of Ælfdane and Hengest, Wealhtheow offers a cup to Hrothgar and says:

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Me man sægde, þæt þu ðe for sunu wolde
hereri[n]c habban. Heorot is gefælsod,
beahsele beorhta; bruc þenden þu mote
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Men tell me that you wish to have this battle-warrior for a son. Heorot is cleansed, the bright ring-hall. Enjoy, while you are able to be permitted, its many rewards, and leave to your kin the people and the kingdom when you shall go forth to the decree of fate (1175-80a).

Wealhtheow sees the adoption of Beowulf as an action which could damage her sons' chances of succession, and she does not believe that Hrothgar's offer of synthetic kinship is at all appropriate. According to Hill, she therefore attempts to remind Hrothgar that he had duties to his kin and that the victory feast is not the time or place for the determination of a successor (101-102). In place of Hrothgar's adoption of the unrelated (or distantly related) Beowulf she offers a man of closer kinship, Hrothulf, Hrothgar's nephew, as protector for the sons.

This potential conflict over succession to the Danish throne after Hrothgar's death makes apparent dynamics of inheritance that are obscured by the smooth passage of power and identity from Scyld to Beowulf I to Healfdane. The difficulties with the succession of Hrethric or Hrothmund and the various solutions proposed in the poem show that what seems to be a seamless process of inheritance in fact operates along two tracks. In Beowulf we see dramatized two systems by which men may inherit: by means of blood, or by means of deeds. Inheritance by blood is a familiar idea; under this system power and identity passes along the line of genetic descent, from father to son. Inheritance by deeds is a more nebulous concept, but is epitomized by Hrothgar's attempt to nominate Beowulf as successor: the hero's deeds rather than his lineage allow him to be identified as a potential heir.

In ideal situations the two systems are complementary and congruent, so the two separate processes appear to be one. Beowulf I is not only his father's son but also a worthy
warrior and king who "earns" his title through his conquests and his contributions to the welfare of the Danish folk; Healfdane is likewise legitimate in both categories. Hrothgar, too, is a king by deeds as well as by blood, although it is possible that his replacement of his brother (the eldest son) in the kingship is meant to explain his failure to prepare the ground for the successful continuation of the Danish dynasty. That is, Hrothgar, while legitimately king in every sense, is not the best possible king by blood. In any event, the failure of Hrothgar's sons to succeed him illustrates that not all successions are ideal. Not all heirs are fully legitimated by both blood and deeds.

In fact, less-than-ideal successions are more the norm than the exception in *Beowulf*. Most inheritors are legitimated to different degrees in each category, some more by blood, some more by deeds. But the cultural politics of blood are not always the cultural politics of deeds. Both systems are necessary for inheritance, and both reinforce each other in the ideal cases of Beowulf I and Healfcane, but in many other cases inheritance by blood competes with inheritance by deeds. Like any competing social process, each form of inheritance differentially rewards individuals. Different people, therefore, have different stakes in social systems incorporating various proportions of each form of inheritance. Inheritance by blood is the province of the kin group. Inheritance by deeds is most prominent in the warrior comitatus (individual membership in these institutions, does, of course, overlap). Blood inheritance happens through the direct agency of women via biological reproduction. Inheritance by deeds is constructed in *Beowulf* as a solely masculine activity. By comparing the operations of inheritance in the poem to the processes of inheritance in the wider Anglo-Saxon culture, by examining who has a greater stake in which systems in what contexts, I hope to provide a better understanding of both the cultural world in *Beowulf* and the culture that valued the poem enough to preserve it.
Blood inheritance is the more obvious of the two systems, and to a certain degree it is still practiced in most contemporary western cultures. In the simplest form of inheritance by blood, children receive the names and possessions of their parents. Social offices, rights or titles are still passed on to children selected simply by means of birth. In other systems (including contemporary American society) inheritance, although customarily determined along blood lines, is not automatic but requires the consent of the older individual. Parents may disinherit children, and they may designate as heirs individuals who are not biological relatives.

Although the roots of contemporary American practice may be found in Anglo-Saxon custom, blood inheritance in the Anglo-Saxon age was, as I discussed in chapter two, different in significant ways from the social processes with which we are familiar. The practice of inheritance in the cultural world of Beowulf is different still. Any practice of inheritance by blood depends upon a given culture's kinship system; it requires a set of rules for determining blood relations. Lorraine Lancaster's study of kinship in Anglo-Saxon society is therefore a necessary starting point for any discussion of inheritance. Lancaster argues that "Anglo-Saxon kinship systems, like those of modern England, belong to a class of non-unilineal kinships, in which every individual has, in general, the option of tracing affiliation to a set of persons through both his parents (and their descendants) and his parents' parents (and their descendants) and so on" (232).

Thus any given individual (designated in anthropological discussions as "Ego") has a slightly different set of kinship relations. Networks of affinity subsume and overlap with networks of kinship, but in general "the complete lack of specificity in [Old English] terms for cousins of various degrees ... suggests that these kin and the distinctions between them was not regularly of major significance" (Lancaster 237). The kin-group that most closely
surrounds Ego in Anglo-Saxon culture is the nuclear family that includes parents, siblings, children, grandparents, uncles and aunts. More distant relatives do not appear to have been particularly important.

Direct lineal relations were, however, very significant; lineal ascendants could be traced back to the "sixth forefather" ("sixth forefather" i.e., great-great-great-great-great-grandfather). Collateral kin were also recognized. Ego's father's brother was "fædera"; the mother's brother was "eam." Brother's sons are referred to as "suhterga" and "geswiria," while a sister's son is, logically, "swustorsunu." "Nefā" and "genefa" are more general terms having the modern equivalence of "nephew," while "nīft" and "nefēna" can be translated as "niece." As the above terminology shows, major distinctions are made between "kin of the same genealogical position but different sex" (Lancaster 237). The presence of this kinship terminology in Old English indicates the underlying gender asymmetry of Anglo-Saxon culture. Just as a monastic system that takes such a social order as its matrix will always be gender-asymmetrical, so too a poem that is the product of such a culture will illustrate gender asymmetry.

Of course inheritance in Anglo-Saxon England was not purely patrilineal or completely male-dominated. As Christine Fell notes, Anglo-Saxon marriage customs appear to reserve to women some legal powers regarding inheritance. A woman's "morgengifu" ("morning-gift") for example, did not become the property of the husband after the marriage but was retained by the wife. "She then has personal control over it, to give away, to sell or bequeath as she chooses" (67). Inheritance did not automatically pass to the eldest son or the eldest child, and it appears that large holdings were often broken up to benefit all of a family's children. With regard to the various rights granted and duties imposed by kinship, Lancaster shows that "there was interchangeability rather than strict rigidity in the formal modes of behavior outside the nuclear family" (237). However, as
Pauline Stafford has argued, and as I discussed in chapter two, women were rather more constrained in actions of inheritance than Fell allows (Stafford 1994 238-48).

As Lancaster notes, the Kentish laws of Hlothhere and Eadric imply "that the child should regularly receive property from his father"(360). Other Anglo-Saxon laws, including those of Alfred, limit inheritance to a given kin-range, "mægburge," but do not give preference to certain heirs. The laws of Cnut also suggest that a man who had fulfilled his obligations during his lifetime could leave his estate to "whomever he pleased after his death." In general, then, and throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, it appears that "wife, children and close kin were expected to be the chief heirs of a man's property, but that considerable freedom in disposal existed" (Lancaster 361).

The inheritance of political power and social position was likewise a rather flexible process, although there were obviously some constraints. The various royal genealogies seem to show a number of unbroken paths of descent, but Anglo-Saxon genealogies are not necessarily, as David Dumville has argued, "straightforward" documents. Instead, the genealogies and pedigrees serve an ideological purpose: they are used to legitimate the power of current rulers and bind together disparate kin-groups. Genealogies, Dumville argues, are constructed "retrospectively." Rather than reflecting biological fact, they indicate political circumstances and necessities at the time of their production (1977 73-104). Thus the man chosen to rule an Anglo-Saxon kingdom "from c. 850 to c. 975 appears to have been the most credible candidate for power and responsibility among the eligible members of the royal house" (1979 2).

While the actual practice of kingly succession may have been somewhat more messy than a simple father-to-son passage of power, the Anglo-Saxon ideal seems to be that of straightforward patrilineal inheritance. The genealogical passages in Bede and William of Malmesbury identify ancestors as "filius" ("son of") or "cuius pater" ("who is the father of...") (Ecclesiastical History i. 15 and see Sisam 1953 288-89). In documents written in Old English
(for example, the version of the *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* in London, British Museum MS. Cotton Tiberius B. iv.) a surname is constructed by adding the suffix "ing" to a father's name. Thus we see Beaw Scealding as the father of Tætwa Beawing who is the father of Geat Tætwæng (Chambers 202-203). Craig Davis argues that

> it is important to remember that the pedigrees' assertion of direct patrilineal succession from the ancient *Stammvater* [literally "stem-father," the ancestor at the trunk of the family tree] is a convenient political fiction. In fact, succession was governed by a system of aetheling competition in which any son or grandson of the king could become a candidate for the throne (32).

The appearance of linearity and continuity was both a political fiction useful to the West Saxon dynasty in the ninth and tenth centuries (Murray, 103-105) and, as Beowulf illustrates, an important cultural ideal. Succession in Beowulf operates no more predictably than it did in tenth-century Anglo-Saxon society. Fathers do not always pass title and power to their sons. Yet the ideal of patrilineal genealogy is present in the culture created within the poem and, scholars have argued, in a culture that valued Beowulf (Sisam 1953 322-23). The West-Saxon royal genealogy (in various forms) includes the names of Beow, Heremod, Scyld and Scyf, suggesting a link between the heroic, literary culture of Beowulf and the concrete political reality of the West Saxon kingdom (Chambers 200-203). Davis suggests that "royal genealogy became the very spine of the authorized West Saxon worldview, the linear matrix along which could be coordinated the disparate traditions important to the culture" (35).

One of these important traditions (although perhaps more or less important at different times and places in Anglo-Saxon England) appears to have been the stories of the Danes and the Geats. Murray's analysis of the links between the West Saxon royal genealogy and the genealogies in Beowulf suggests strongly that the fiction of continuity with the imaginative tradition accessed by the poem was useful to the Anglo-Saxon kings of
the ninth and tenth century. In the poem itself the line of the Danes is the most obvious series of successions. As I have already noted, succession passes smoothly from Scyld, to Beowulf I, to Healfdane, to Hrothgar, and after each passage the Danes are stronger. Finally, during Hrothgar's kingship, they are able to reach the high water mark of their power and build the great hall of Heorot. But for unknown reasons, Hrothgar's children are born late in the king's life. When Beowulf visits Heorot, Hrethric and Hrothmund are, as previously noted, among the youths, and they apparently do not grow up in time to assume the kingship after Hrothgar's death. It seems reasonable to suppose that easy successions from father to son are thought to lead to prosperity and power while awkward transitions can bring about weakness and eventual dissolution. Each difficult transition, each collapse of a dynasty due to a flawed succession, is seen against the backdrop of the ideal succession represented by the unbroken father to son line of the genealogies and the opening passages of the poem.

In contrast to the rather complex relationships of kin and inheritance described by Lancaster, *Beowulf* presents linear succession as the ideal form of the transmission of power according to blood. Blood succession could, of course, never be that simple. It would be only a matter of time before a father failed to have a son or had multiple sons willing to struggle for their inheritance. But in the world of old Danish kings and invented genealogies, such successions are quietly avoided.

That linear, father to son succession in also an implied ideal for the warrior band is evident from the Danish coastguard's interrogation of Beowulf and his retainers. "Nu ic eower sceal / frumcyn witan," ("now I must know your kin-lineage" 251b-252a), the coastguard asks. "Frumcyn" is a hapax legomenon, a compound of "frum" ("primal, original, first") and "cyn" ("kin"). The poet's use of the word as part of his inquiry of the disembarking Geats shows that a significant part of a warrior's identity was bound up with his ancestry. The coastguard can tell with his eyes that the Geats are doughty warriors,
well-armed, and that Beowulf is the greatest of them (237-51). The sentry at Heorot
guesses that the Geats are not coming to Hrothgar's hall due to misfortune or exile, but on
account of pride (338-39). Outward manifestations of a warrior's prowess, his identity as
constructed by his deeds, are apparent to those individuals, like the sentry and the
costguard, fluent in the language of honor. But equally important to a warrior's identity is
his blood line, and the marks of this are not to be found (in the cultural world of Beowulf)
upon his face. The responses of the sentry and coastguard indicate that deeds are not
enough. Identity, which in many cases is conveyed through inheritance, requires blood.
However, in Beowulf inheritance by blood is never pure. There are components of affinity
and achievement, of deeds as well as blood in each of the primarily blood-based inheritances
depicted in the poem. Healfdane does not appear from across the sea claiming to be the son
of Beowulf I. He is presumably part of Beowulf I's Danish warrior comitatus. It is
reasonable to assume that he proved himself to be a worthy king.

While inheritance purely by blood may have been an Anglo-Saxon ideal, it appears
not to have been a possibility in the political world of ninth- and tenth-century England.
The closest approximation of inheritance purely by blood is the succession of King Alfred to
the throne in 871. Alfred's father Æthelwulf ruled the kingdom of the West Saxons from
839 to 858. He had made Æthelstan, his oldest son, king of Kent, Essex, Surrey and Sussex
in 839, but Æthelstan appears to have died around 851. Æthelwulf then divided his kingdom
between the two oldest of his remaining sons, Æthelbald and Æthelberht, and traveled to
Rome. Æthelbald received Wessex and Æthelberht, Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Essex. Upon
Æthelwulf's return from Rome in 856, Æthelberht apparently relinquished control of his
kingdom to his father until Æthelwulf's death in 858, when he again became king over Kent,
Surrey, Sussex and Essex. Æthelbald, however, continued to rule Wessex until his death in
860, at which time Æthelberht assumed control over the entire West Saxon kingdom until
his own death in 866. At this time Æthelred assumed control of the kingdom. He ruled until his death in 871, when Alfred assumed the throne (Keynes and Lapidge 67-80, 227-43).

The West Saxon succession in the second half of the ninth century certainly appears to be strongly—perhaps even primarily—influenced by blood. The kingship passes from father to oldest son and then from brother to brother according to their ages. However, Alfred's succession in particular cannot be viewed entirely as motivated purely by blood ties. Asser notes that Alfred was a military commander well before his accession, leading armies separate from those of his older brother (Keynes and Lapidge, 78-79). Alfred's apparent competence in these endeavors indicates that his succession to the throne was aided by his deeds as well as his blood, even if his blood ties were the primary determinant of his inheritance. A tenth-century poet looking back on Alfred would have seen, perhaps, in the king's succession to the throne an example of an optimal inheritance by blood.

Pure inheritance by blood exists, then, only in the realm of folklore or mythology. Although it is not necessarily a realistic documentation of the life of any given historical period, the cultural world in Beowulf does not exist purely in the world of myth. Processes of inheritance in this world have much in common with the messy, complicated actions of real-life kings and princes. But the rule of blood, which may be seen as a holdover from more primitive, clan-based cultures, constrains political and cultural flexibility. Like tradition itself, inheritance by blood retards social change. It preserves a given social order that has been at least somewhat adaptive for a culture. Blood inheritance is linked, in Anglo-Saxon culture, with the rule of law and of custom. Certain identities can only be reproduced in individuals of certain bloodlines. Continuing social relationships depend upon these rules remaining in force across the generations.
Deeds and Continuity

Inheritance by deeds is less familiar than inheritance by blood. There is no explicit, definitive pattern for inheritance by deeds, no culturally authorized practice of the transmission of identities in this manner. While inheritance by blood is organized around a set of kinship relations, inheritance by deeds has the ability to cut across familial, ethnic, racial, gender and national boundaries. Its ability to bring together individuals of differing genetic backgrounds makes it more complicated and flexible than rigid lineal inheritance.

In its simplest form, inheritance by deeds is the transfer of goods, power or identity across generational boundaries in which the transfer is based not on the genetic relationship of two individuals but upon the performance of certain culturally valued behaviors. Any situation in which a person may choose his or her successor in some office represents an inheritance by deeds. Behaviors performed by an individual caused him or her to be selected to receive a social station. In *Beowulf* such a form of inheritance is most obvious in the "adoption" scene. Beowulf is clearly not a lineal descendant of Hrothgar; he is not even among the potential Danish successors, the aethelings who constituted the young, upper-echelon of Hrothgar's comitatus. But Hrothgar nevertheless offers to make Beowulf his son on account of the hero's deeds. Upon seeing Grendel's arm hanging above the hall, Hrothgar exclaims:

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þurh Drihtnes miht
de we ealle
snyttrum besyrwan.
efræ swa hwylc mægða
æfter gumcynnnum,
þæt hyre Ealdmetod
bearngebyrdo.
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Nu scealc hæfð
dæd gesremede,
ær ne meahton
Hwæt, þæt secgan mæg
saw þone magan cende
gyf heo gyf lýfð,
este wäre
(939b-946a).
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Now a warrior has, through the might of the Lord, accomplished a deed which before we all had been unable to accomplish with skills. Lo! that woman who bore this son into humankind may say, if she yet lives, that the Old-Measurer was gracious to her in child-bearing.

Hrothgar continues with the "adoption" quoted above, asking Beowulf to be his son. Here we see most clearly the operation of inheritance by deeds. Hrothgar recognizes no kinship with Beowulf. While he praises without naming the woman who gave the hero birth, he does not link her or her son to any extant lineage. The namelessness of Beowulf's mother is no accident. She is not named because the poet is dramatizing the unusual nature of the act that is about to take place. Kin relations and lineages, so important to the world of Beowulf, are deliberately excluded from the scene of Hrothgar's adoption in order to accentuate how truly rare Hrothgar's action is. Beowulf is praised for accomplishing a deed ("dæd gefremede"). His reward is to be brought into the system of inheritance.

Hrothgar's adoption of Beowulf suggests that inheritance by deeds is a variation or special case of what John Hill calls "the economy of honour." Hill's summary of the workings of this economy is particularly useful for an understanding of inheritance by deeds. In the cultural world of Beowulf:

The Lord gives rings, weapons and armour in anticipation of promised services; he then rewards or repays service by gifts, through which he again, while honouring his retainers, places them in temporary debt and affirms the heroic contract between himself and them. More than a bond, that affirmation underlines an entire system of reciprocal relationships between equals and unequals, with some relationships being more stable than others (89).

The "gifts" given by the lord are therefore "earned" by the retainer for good service, for deeds. The vertical relationships between lord and retainer are isomorphic to those between the person who bequeaths an inheritance and the person who receives it. In both cases the power to make the determination of which deeds are acceptable and which are not appears to lie completely within the hands of the higher-ranking individual. But the
relationships are in fact more balanced or reciprocal because they are created and constrained by social custom. As Edward Irving notes, "gift giving is—must be—entirely public. Gifts must not only change hands but must be seen to change hands" (131). The public nature of gift giving and reward for service constrains the freedom of the higher-ranking individual to reward his followers or dispose of his bequest. This constraint arises because such actions take place in a social and political arena in which individuals must take into account the opinions and reactions of others. Hill's adoption of Bronislaw Malinowski's label "economy" is thus particularly apt.

The boundary between inheritance by deeds and other transactions of the gift giving economy is somewhat indistinct. The key distinction is between a "traditum" ("gift") that is transferred across such boundaries only once and the one that has a history of inheritances, a lineage. To use the terms with which I began this dissertation, a simple way to distinguish an inheritance by deeds from a mere gift is that in the former the "traditum" is part of a tradition; it has been passed across generational boundaries this way before. Thus Hrothgar's action to reward Beowulf's followers with treasure is probably not a true inheritance even though the poet calls each gift an "yrfelaf" ("heirloom" 1053). It is improbable that Hrothgar received every one of these treasures as part of an inheritance from Healfdane. More likely he acquired much of the wealth in tribute or in raiding, or perhaps as gifts from his retainers. The gifts he passes to Beowulf's men do not come with a history.

On the other hand, the gifts Hrothgar gives to Beowulf himself do seem to be objects inherited by deeds. Hrothgar gives Beowulf a battle-standard, a helm, a corslet, a sword, eight horses, and a saddle (1020-43). It is possible that all the items (with the exception of the horses) are what Hill calls "dynastic treasures" (99). Certainly the corslet

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9 A word, by the way, not commonly used in the corpus of wills even when items such as swords are bequeathed.
and the saddle have a lineage. The corslet, Beowulf tells Hygelac, belonged to king
Heorogar (Hrothgar's older brother): "no by ær suna sinum, syllan wolde / hwatum
Heorowearde, þeah he him hold wäre / breostgewædu" ("but he did not want to give it, the
breast-armor, to his older son, valiant Heoroward, although he was loyal to him" (2160-
2162a). When Hrothgar gives Beowulf the saddle the poet notes that it had been the
preferred battle-seat of the king of the Danes himself (1039-42).

In the initial gift-giving scene and in its recapitulation in Beowulf's report to
Hygelac the poet calls more attention to Hrothgar's participation in a lineage than he does
elsewhere in the poem. Twelve times in Beowulf Hrothgar is identified as the son, child or
kin of Healfdane. These references are scattered fairly evenly through the scenes in which
Hrothgar is prominent. There are, however, two notable clusters of references to Hrothgar
as the son of Healfdane. In the first gift-giving scene Hrothgar is called by the poet
"Healfdenes sunu" ("Healfdane's son" 1009, 1040) twice and "bearn Healfdenes"
("Healfdane's child" 1020) once, all within thirty-one lines. Likewise when Beowulf
reports to Hygelac he identifies the gifts as coming from "maga Healfdenes" ("Healfdane's
kin" 2143) and "sunu Healfdenes" ("the son of Healfdane" 2147). Nowhere else in the poem
is Hrothgar appositively identified so frequently within so few lines; all other occurrences are
a minimum of forty-seven lines apart, and in general are separated by several hundred lines.
The clusters of references emphasize forcefully Hrothgar's blood-line authority and thus
serve to throw into relief the remarkable gesture of passing dynastic objects and attempting
to pass dynastic power to a hero related only by deeds.

10 Lines 189, 268, 344, 645, 1009, 1020, 1040, 1474, 1652, 1699, 2143, and 2147.
11 At this point the manuscript reads "brand" ("weapon" or "fire"), but "weapon of Healfdane" is an
awkward reading and Gruntvig's emendation seems to be universally accepted (268).
12 Irving has noted that in this section of the poem formulas which invoke the lineage of Hrothgar
and his troop are "rather noticeably bunched," but he attributes this clumping of formulaic
references to the poet's putting "particular stress on dynastic pride and order, and on the national
community as a close-knit family" (130-31).
The gift of "dynastic treasures," that is, objects possessed of their own history and lineage, invokes an expression of the lineage of the giver. Beowulf's mention of Hrothgar's lineage in his report to Hygelac indicates that the lineage of the giver is bound up with the lineage of the gifts. In other words, these gifts are heirlooms and by passing them to Beowulf Hrothgar has created an unusual situation of inheritance, a situation Beowulf does not take advantage of. Instead, Beowulf, after reciting the lineage of the gift and the giver, proceeds to pass Hrothgar's gifts to Hygelac. Beowulf tells his uncle:

ọa ic ọe, beorncyning, bringan wylle
estum geywan. Gen is eall æt ọe
lissa gelong; ic lýt hafó
heafodmaga nefne, Hygelac, ọec (2148-51)

these, warrior-king, I wish to bring to you, to show with love. Still all kindness is at hand from you. I have no close kin except you, Hygelac.

Hill notes that in this scene Beowulf acts to reassure Hygelac that his allegiance remains Geatish. By giving Hrothgar's dynastic gifts to Hygelac, Beowulf voids Hrothgar's potential inclusion of Beowulf in the Danish succession. Beowulf "transfers the place of honor thereby conferred to Hygelac," refusing any ties beyond those of friendship (99-100). By emphasizing the lineage of the gifts given by Hrothgar, Beowulf emphasizes the extraordinary nature of Hrothgar's offer; his refusal of the offer emphasizes his extraordinary devotion to Hygelac. Beowulf's reaction to both the dynastic gifts and the offer of a place in the Danish succession suggests that an inheritance established purely by deeds is not, in the cultural world of Beowulf, a desired state of affairs, although perhaps a warrior less loyal than Beowulf might have accepted Hrothgar's treasures for himself.

Beowulf's extraordinary resistance to the temptation to succeed out of the order established by birth is dramatized a second time in the poem. After Hygelac's disastrous raid into Frisia, the newly-widowed queen, Hygd, suggests that Beowulf might take over the kingdom from his uncle:
There to him Hygd offered treasure and kingdom, rings and the princely seat. She did not trust that her child could hold the native seat against foreign armies now that Hygelac was dead.

But Beowulf does not take the throne as a full king. Instead he acts as a protector to Heardred "œðæt he yldra wear, / Weder-Geatum weold" ("until he became older to rule the Weder-Geats" 2378b-79a). Hygd's action is extraordinary, particularly when compared to Wealhtheow's objections to Hrothgar's attempted adoption. No less extraordinary is Beowulf's refusal to supplant Heardred. Only after the young son of Hygelac is killed by Ongentheow's son Onela—only when the last living man with a superior blood-claim is dead—does Beowulf take the office of king. Hill sees Beowulf's choice to champion Hygelac's son as an example of the hero's insisting on the "continuing, uncompromised integrity" of his relationship with Hygelac (106). This is undoubtedly true, but it seems to me that blood inheritance is one of the fundamental—although unstated—rules that Beowulf insists upon enforcing.

In both situations in which he has an opportunity to become king, Beowulf demonstrates that inheritance by deeds is not, as far as he is concerned, enough to allow for a succession out of the traditional blood-line order of kinship passing from father to son.

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13 F.B. Gummere suggests that Hygd may be in fact proposing marriage to Beowulf, but Beowulf does not take her up on this offer because he "...belongs to the new order; he holds to the sentiments of nephew-right, but rejects its privileges" (138). Gummere shows that "nephew-right" is found throughout Germanic and Scandinavian history and myth. But if Beowulf rejects the right of the nephew to marry his uncle's wife (and I suspect that it was less a legal right than a commonly-taken route to power), then so does the poet, who does not hint that such a practice is part of the cultural world of Beowulf. Just as Hygd seems to make no overt suggestion that she will be queen with Beowulf when he takes the throne, so too does Wealhtheow avoid mentioning herself as marrying Hrothulf if Hrothgar dies before his sons' majority.
But the poet does cause Beowulf to be rewarded for his forbearance. In return for passing Hrothgar's treasure to Hygelac, Beowulf is rewarded with land and an heirloom. In return for his support of Heardred he becomes the greatest king of the Geats, his rule, it appears, untroubled by succession struggles because his inheritance is justified by both blood and by deeds.

Membership in the Anglo-Saxon warrior comitatus was determined by birth; rank within the group, however, could be changed by deeds (Davis 32). A cowardly eorl would presumably rank low in the lord's favor; a hero would be esteemed. The conflicting demands of the warrior comitatus for stability and accurate reproduction on the one hand, and semi-egalitarian rewards for prowess on the other creates a tension between inheritance by blood and inheritance by deeds. For ideal figures (like Healfdane or Beowulf) these two forms of inheritance are so completely blended, and the ideal individuals are so outstanding on both counts, that they appear to be part of one process. But most individuals are not ideal, and the relative proportions of blood and deeds in their hybrid inheritances shapes the culture they strive to reproduce.

The Major Hybrid: Uncle and Nephew

Inheritance purely by blood is theoretically possible, but to my knowledge it is unrecorded in Anglo-Saxon literature—even Alfred's succession possesses an element of inheritance by deeds. Inheritance purely by deeds obviously may happen but seems problematic in Beowulf. The most desirable situation of inheritance, it seems clear, is one in which blood and deeds are both a factor, a hybridization between inheritance by blood and inheritance by deeds. As noted above, in ideal cases the two sorts of inheritance cannot be separated. Beowulf I and Healfdane are examples of inheritances of blood and deeds so fully blended that the relative proportions of each system cannot be disentangled. But many
other inheritances throughout the poem and throughout Anglo-Saxon culture are obvious hybrids. In fact, all inheritances that are characterized by some degree of kinship between the person giving the bequest and the heir but are not examples of father-son inheritance are hybrid inheritances. Only a son could presume to inherit fully by blood with no component of deeds. Any other inheritor from within the kin group, any winning participant in the "ætheling competition" (Davis 32-33) by which successions were determined would have inherited due to deeds in some degree. Nearly all inheritors in Beowulf qualify for bequests in hybrid terms.

The most obvious example of hybrid inheritance, and perhaps the most important in the poem, is the passage of objects, power and identity from uncle to nephew. Rolf Bremmer has made the most thorough study of this kinship relationship in Anglo-Saxon literature, particularly in Beowulf. According to Bremmer, uncle and nephew "form an ideal pair in the eyes of the poet" (28-29). The uncle-nephew bond is in some ways superior to that of father and son. The uncle, while part of the kinship group, is not affected by the "patria potestas" ("the power of the father") and thus can develop a relationship of affection with the nephew (Goody 1985), because in Indo-European cultures the uncle does not discipline the nephew (unlike the father, who must discipline his son). The nephew, therefore, does not resent or rebel against the uncle, making him, as Jan Bremmer notes "everywhere the godfather par excellence" (69).

Sociobiologists have attempted to explain the care uncles have for the upbringing of their nephews in terms of genetic connections. In a social situation in which paternity of a child is uncertain, it may be in an uncle's best interest to provide for both his son and his nephew. While the son may not be the genetic descendant of the father, the mother's brother will always carry 12.5% of the uncle's genes (Alexander). However, as Greene notes, such a strategy is only effective if a father has less than 27% chance of being the father of his wife's children. The difficulty with this explanation of social behavior (the uncle-nephew
bond) in terms of genetic relationships, however, is that sociobiologists have not been able to put forth a credible "proximate mechanism" to explain how the apparent genetic selection could be transmitted to individual behavior. John Maynard Smith's call to take arguments of genetic "inclusive fitness" into account while allowing that cultural mechanisms are likely to be more influential (143-45), seems to me a reasonable approach to take when examining the uncle-nephew bond.

While I would keep their arguments in mind, I would restate the problem in a slightly different manner than either the sociobiologists or the anthropologists. To use the terms developed in this chapter: the uncle-nephew bond is visibly and obviously influenced by both blood (genetic connections) and deeds (individual personal relationships). For the purposes of this study it does not matter if the behavior of individuals with respect to the uncle-nephew bond is in fact shaped by genetic relations or if the behaviors are purely cultural. What matters is that the Anglo-Saxons recognized a system of inheritance by blood, which they believed was linked to genetic relationships. Because individuals' identities were to some degree bound up with their blood, their method of cultural reproduction took such blood relationships into account—although even the most accomplished Anglo-Saxon "lacce" ("physician") could not calculate the percentage of chromosomes held in common by any two relatives.

The importance of blood connections can be seen as arising from an imperative to pass one's genes across a generational boundary, with the uncle-nephew bond as an effective hedging strategy in a culture of uncertain paternity; or it may be the result of a culture that was not purely patrilineal. At least in terms of kingly succession, inheritance was not

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14 I cite the sociobiological theories of the uncle-nephew bond because of my personal preference for any theory that disrupts the current orthodoxy of "social construction" that hangs heavy over contemporary critical discourse. However I must agree with the general tone of Smith's discussion of another controversial topic, the human incest taboo: "It seems to me entirely plausible to suppose that our animal ancestors evolved barriers against incest, because other primates are known to have done so. It also seems likely that when our ancestors became self-conscious, they invented reasons, myths and social sanctions to reinforce what they were already doing" (143).
guaranteed to the son but passed into one of a number of potential successors (including the nephew) in the kin-group. The uncle-nephew bond may be a manifestation of this relative looseness in inheritance practices. While the father knew that his son qualified for inheritance in terms of blood, he could not be certain that the son would achieve his inheritance through deeds. By working to shape both his nephew and his son (by means of his deeds in the social world), the uncle increases his chances that the successor to his position will be connected to him by blood as well as by deeds.

The prime example of this sort of teaching and training relationship, in which the uncle cares for the nephew as if he were a son, is that of Hygelac and Beowulf. While critics have long noted the relationship between Beowulf and his uncle (Gummere 137-38), few, as Rolf Bremmer argues, have done more than state that the depiction of such relationships is common in Germanic literature (26-27). Beowulf is related to Hygelac through Beowulf’s mother, the unnamed woman who is, like Hygelac, a child of Hrethel. Beowulf apparently had a close, loving relationship with his maternal grandfather:

Ic wæs syfanwintre, ḫa mec sinca baldor,
freawine folca æt minum fæder genam;
heold mec ond hæfde Hreðel cyning,
egaf me sinc ond symbol, sibbe gemunde;
næs ic him to life laðra owithe,
beorn in burgum, þonne his bearna hwylc,
Herebeald ond Hæðcyn oððe Hygelac min (2328-2434).

I was seven winters old, when to me the lord of treasure, the friend-ruler of the folk, took me from my father; king Hrethel held me and kept me, gave me treasure and feasting, remembered our kinship. I was not at all less dear to him than any other warrior in the city, than each of his children, Herebald and Hathcyn or my Hygelac.

Kirby has stated that in the early Anglo-Saxon period male members of a royal family up to the seventh generation from a king could inherit a throne (165). Dumville, however, believes that while descent from the founder of a dynasty was a necessity for kingship, in general "at any period the throne was potentially available for whoever could seize it by force" (17-18). The membership of such a usurper in the descent group of a dynastic founder is more likely to be a result of the structure of a warrior class drawn from a restricted elite than it is evidence for a concern with the niceties of kin relationship and legal succession.
According to Goody, the same cultural formations that produce a strong uncle-nephew bond also tend to create strong ties between a grandson and his maternal grandfather (1985 66-67). Jan Bremmer points out that the mother's father "is just as much an outsider in the paternal family as the [mother's brother]," and therefore should be expected to develop some of the some affectionate relationships (72). Even without the various sociobiological and genetic arguments, it is possible to recognize a number of reasons for a grandfather to be particularly concerned with the well-being of his grandson (albeit not to the exclusion of his concern for the well-being of his sons). It seems a reasonable speculation that when Beowulf was seven years old and taken into the house of Hrethel for fostering, Hygelac and his brothers did not have any children. While Hrethel had successfully reproduced himself by blood in his male children, they had not yet carried his identity across the next generational boundary. But Hrethel's unknown daughter had propagated the old king's blood into a second generation and the young grandson could ensure the continuation of Hrethel's lineage into the future even if mischance took the lives of his sons.

Thus Hrethel provides cultural capital both to his sons and to his grandson, Beowulf. This cultural capital (the armor which aids Beowulf in making his way in the warrior culture) is understood as belonging to Beowulf as a representative of the lineage of Hrethel: Beowulf instructs Hrothgar to return the "beaduscrua betst" ("the best of battle-shirts" 453a) which is a "laf" ("heirloom" 454b) of Hrethel to Hygelac if Beowulf is killed in his battle against Grendel. Although Hrethel passed the corslet across two generational

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16 For an application to Anglo-Saxon kinship structures (though the idea is developed on less detail) see Goody 1983 267-70.

17 In so hedging his bets on reproduction Hrethel ran the serious risk, I believe, of alienating his own son as well as potentially turning him against Beowulf. "Sons" may reasonably be resentful if they discover their "fathers" are supporting for self-interested reasons other, synthetic sons who might one day compete with them for scarce resources. Beowulf's unpromising youth (surely a surprise after the favor shown to the young boy by Hrethel) may be a result of such resentment.
boundaries, Beowulf does not appear to have the same option to violate the established order of inheritance. He does not presume to leave the armor to his cousin Heardred, but arranges to pass it back up the generational ladder to Hygelac, restoring the heirloom to the control of the descendant of Hrethel most closely related to the old king by blood. This gesture of Beowulf’s suggests that while a king like Hrethel has the power to temporarily overturn the rule of inheritance by blood, he cannot eliminate the power of the system, established as it is in cultural expectations.

In fact the power of blood inheritance is such that the system is reasserted at nearly every opportunity. As noted above, Beowulf gives to Hygelac Hrothgar’s gifts of dynastic heirlooms, thus reasserting his continued allegiance to the Geatish house. Hygelac in turn rewards Beowulf for this gesture:

Het ða eorla hleo
heāðorof cyning
golde gegyrede;
sincmaðþum selra
ðæt he Biowulfes
ond him geselde
bold ond bregostol.
on ðam leodscipe
earl ðælriht,
side rice

in gefetian,
Hreðes læfe
næs mid Geatum ða
on sweordes had;
bearm alegde,
seofan þusendo,
Him wæs bam samod
lond gecynde,
ðorum swiðor
þam ðære selra wæs (2190-99).

The commander of earls, the famed battle-king, then ordered that a gold-adorned heirloom of Hrethel be brought in. There was not then a better treasure in the form of a sword among the Geats that he laid on Beowulf’s bosom. And he gave to him seven thousands [of land], a hall and a princely seat. To them both belonged together in that polity inherited land and ancestral rights, though more to the one who was better.

By giving Beowulf the sword that is an heirloom of Hrethel, Hygelac effectively equals Hrothgar’s attempted gift of dynastic heirlooms. He emphasizes Beowulf’s position as one of the descendants of the old king Hrethel, and he makes Beowulf a powerful prince
of the realm. Hygelac does not, however, alienate land from the Geatish dynasty, nor does he set Beowulf up as an independent king. Hygelac is still the overall ruler of the land, and the words "eðelriht" ("ancestral rights" 2198a) and "lond gecynde" ("inherited land" 2197b) both suggest that the land remains within the system of blood inheritance, even though it is passed from the son of Hrethel to the nephew. The rights of blood have passed to Beowulf because the hero is worthy in terms of both blood and deeds, his superiority in the second category making up for any lack in the first. And, we learn later in the poem, the land holdings of the Geats are eventually reunited in the person of Beowulf, who rules after both Hygelac and Hygelac's son Heærræd are dead.

The gifts Hygelac gives Beowulf, the hero's treatment of those gifts, and his actions in regard to Heærræd are foreshadowed by Beowulf's plan to restore Hrethel's corslet to Hygelac if he loses his life in the battle against Grendel. All of these actions support Hill's contention that throughout the poem the hero is a "juristic warrior" who works to reassert the primacy of law and custom (36-37). Beowulf's extraordinary accomplishments might allow him to supersede the system of genetic inheritance: both his potential for deeds in the mind of Hrethel and the quality of his deeds in the evaluation of Hrothgar allow him to potentially receive inheritances sooner than they are due to him according to the laws of blood. We might expect that early inheritance is a perquisite of surpassing strength and bravery, and in some epic traditions, the hero would seize his birthright early. But in Beowulf the hero in every case refuses to contest the customs of blood, instead supporting the juristic framework of a coupled inheritance justified by both blood and deeds.

It is reasonable to speculate that had a successor of the blood been truly unworthy in terms of deeds, Beowulf might have stepped in to ensure that the succession would pass to a man worthy in both categories. Beowulf does not accept the offer made by Hygd, the widowed queen of Hygelac, that the hero rule the Geats in place of her young son Heærræd, "hwæðre hine on folce, freondlarum heold/estum mid are" ("however he
supported him with his friendly counsel among the folk with favor and with honor" 2377-78a). As chief counselor it seems that Beowulf did protect Heardred until the latter offers hospitality to some kinsmen who had rebelled against Onela, becomes ensnared in feud, and is killed. Only then, when the last heir with a stronger blood claim to the throne is dead, does Beowulf become king of the Geats. Only then does this nephew of Hygelac, whose inheritance comes along both the tracks of blood and of deeds, turns out to be the greatest king of that people.

But all kings die and must pass their mantle of leadership to a successor. Beowulf has no sons who can inherit the kingdom of the Geats and, as far as the poet tells us, there are no other Æþelings of the royal house who would be legitimate in both blood and deeds. As Beowulf notes in the passage I have used for the epigraph to this chapter:

Nu ic suna minum
uguðgewædu,
ænig yrfeorð
lice geleng (2729-32a).

Now I would have wished to give my battle-dress to my son, if it had been granted that any inheritor, related by body, had come after me.

Yet Beowulf does appear to bequeath his heirlooms and his kingly role to Wiglaf after the warrior assists the hero in the dragon fight. With his dying words Beowulf instructs Wiglaf to command the Geats to build a high barrow upon an ocean bluff. Then

Dyde him of healse
þeoden þrishyðig,
geongum garwigan,
beah ond byrnan,
hring gyldenne
þegne gesealde,
goldfahne helm,
het hyne brucan well (2809-12).

the battle-spirited prince took from his neck the golden collar and gave it and his gold-adorned helm to his thegn, the young spear-warrior, commanded him to use them well.
Beowulf transfers his personal armor to Wiglaf, suggesting that the young warrior is to be the hero's inheritor. Beowulf then emphasizes a hitherto unmentioned tie of blood between him and Wiglaf:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{pu eart endela} & \text{f} \\
\text{Wægmundinga} & \text{g;}
\text{mme magas} \\
\text{eorlas on elne;}
\end{align*}
\]

usses cynnes, ealle wyrd forswęop
to meodsceafte, ic him eafter sceal (2813-16).

You are the last remnant of our kin, of the Wægmundings. Fate has completely swept away all of my kin, earls in valor to their destiny. I must follow after them.

Obviously Beowulf and Wiglaf are kinsmen, members of the Wægmund family, but there is substantial critical disagreement about the exact relationship of Beowulf and Wiglaf. Klaeber believed there to be two branches of the Wægmundings, one Geatish, one Swedish. Beowulf and his father Ecgtheow were part of the former, Wiglaf and his father Weohstan of the latter (xlv). The specific kinship relation between the hero and his most faithful retainer cannot be recovered from the text; there is no way to tell how closely the two Wægmunding branches are related. Friedrich Wild constructed genealogical trees that represent seven possible permutations of kinship between Wiglaf and Beowulf. Working from the reasonable assumption that Beowulf can only be related to Wiglaf through Ecgtheow, since it is apparent from the text that Beowulf's mother is a Geat, the daughter of Hrethel, Wild first suggests that Ecgtheow and Weohstan are brothers, making Wiglaf Beowulf's first cousin (17). R.W. Chambers follows this "Stammbaum" ("family tree") in the genealogical table in his critical discussion of Beowulf, but nowhere in his massive tome does he argue for or justify such a relationship (xvii).

Interpreting Ecgtheow and Weohstan as brothers adds new difficulties. Wiglaf (or his father, the sentence is syntactically ambiguous) is "leod Scylfinga" ("man or prince of the Scylfings" 2603b); that is, a Swede (Klaeber 493). If Weohstan was a Swede, then his brother Ecgtheow was also. If Ecgtheow were a Wægmunding, Norman Eliason writes,
"Beowulf would be half-Swedish—an unthinkable or even ridiculous state of affairs in a poem depicting him as the hero of the Geats and the Geats and Swedes as implacable enemies" (98). Eliason then argues that because the Wægmunding connection was not through Beowulf's father and could not have been through his mother, it must be sought through some other relative. These considerations lead us to expect that the connection was through Beowulf's sister, who we must accordingly suppose became the wife of Weohstan, the Wægmunding, and the mother of Weohstan's son Wiglaf. Wiglaf is therefore Beowulf's nephew... (101)

Eliason relegates his responses to the anticipated objections to his line of argument in a long footnote. While Beowulf does indeed tell Hygelac "ic lyt hafa / heafodmaga, nefne Hygelac, ðec" ("I have no close kin except you, Hygelac" 215ob-51), this statement though seeming to deny the existence of a sister or nephew, actually does not, for at that time Wiglaf would presumably not yet have been born, and the term used beafodmaga, signifying "royal relatives," I believe, rather than "close relatives," would properly exclude Beowulf's sister, who was not royal by birth or by marriage. Besides, it is doubtful that in such family reckonings a woman would have figured at all (101 n. 1).

Although the special pleading required for this argument seems to stretch the bounds of plausibility, a very similar reading was put forward independently by Rolf Bremmer, who shows that when nephews or sisters' sons are mentioned in Bede's Ecclesiastical History, The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, and The Battle of Maldon, the text is silent as to the name of their mothers. He thus argues that in this regard and in this way the uncle-nephew bond is dramatized, "Beowulf employs everyday notions, but also transfers them to a higher level" (23-28). According to Bremmer, the special relationship between the mother's brother and his nephew "functions in the poem as a mirror to the bond between the father's brother ... and the brother's son... the one is always positive, the other is troubled" (36). Hrothulf's relationship to Hrothgar's sons is that of the father's brother, and in some Scandinavian analogues he kills Hrethric and usurps the throne of the Danes.
Bremmer does not explain why the poet is not explicit about the relationship between Beowulf and Wiglaf; Eliason believes that the poet does tell his audience that Beowulf is Wiglaf’s uncle because “although the story called for Wiglaf to be Beowulf’s nephew, the poem did not.” That is, the mood of “unrelieved gloom” which is the poet’s intent would have been compromised if Wiglaf could have taken the Geatish throne (105). As Sisam notes, the possibility of Wiglaf’s succession is indeed absent from the text. The poet’s theme “is ‘King Beowulf is dead.’ Had there been occasion to go on to ‘Long live King Wiglaf,’” we might expect to hear of the confident hopes of the Geats for their future under so promising a leader” (1965 59). Thus, argues Eliason, the poet is forced into a “double paradox in fact: a nephew of Beowulf who is not his nephew and a sister of Beowulf who exists and does not exist” (104).

Bremmer and Eliason are correct that the uncle-nephew bond is an important part of the cultural world of Beowulf. But the postulation of an unnamed sister when Beowulf has specifically stated that he has no kin except for Hygelac is exceptionally problematic. Female kin are mentioned in the poem a number of times. Although the name of the most important has disappeared into the lacuna in line sixty-two, it seems reasonable to assume (on metrical and syntactic grounds if for no other reasons) that the poet did not intend to leave it out. In addition to this daughter of Healfdane, Hrothgar’s daughter Freawaru is mentioned; Hygelac’s daughter who marries Eofor is not named but she appears in the

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18 Both Bremmer and Eliason suggest that the uncle-nephew bond of Sigemund and Fitela, mentioned as part of the song sung by one of Hrothgar’s retainers while the warriors return from viewing Grendel’s last tracks, is analogous to that of Beowulf and Wiglaf (Bremmer 28-29; Eliason 96-97). In fact this connection is less explanatory than either critic notes. It is unclear how much of the Norse story of Sigemund was known by the Anglo-Saxon poet, but in the Norse legend Sinfjotli (Fitela) is, due to Sigemund’s incestuous relationship with his sister Signy, both son and nephew to Sigemund (Klaeber 158-61). Such a blood relationship, if known to the Beowulf poet, thoroughly complicates the suggested parallel between the two pairs of warriors. And even if the poet was not aware of Fitela’s incestuous parentage in the Norse legend, the fact that Fitela does not accompany Sigemund in his battle with a dragon, and, as far as the Beowulf poet tells us, does not inherit Sigemund’s treasure or social position seems to argue against our reading too much into the uncle/nephew bond in the brief lay.
poem. Likewise Beowulf's mother, while not named, is discussed. While it seems quite possible that the poet may not have given us the name of Beowulf's sister, had she existed in the story I can see no reason for him not to mention her.

As for the poet's refusing to tell his audience that Beowulf and Wiglaf are uncle and nephew for fear of lessening the mood of dread and gloom at the end of the poem, it seems to me a simpler explanation that Beowulf and Wiglaf were not uncle and nephew even though they (and their countrymen) might desperately have wanted them to be. The same evidence that Eliason reads as supporting a suppressed uncle-nephew bond indicates, I believe, an essential conflict between systems of inheritance, a conflict Beowulf has been careful to heal throughout the poem but at the time of his death is unable to resolve. At every opportunity Beowulf refuses to inherit merely by deeds; blood too is necessary.

Just as Hrothgar attempts to make Beowulf a synthetic son, so too Beowulf makes Wiglaf a synthetic nephew. The tragedy and perhaps irony of the situation is that while Beowulf did not accept Hrothgar's offer and in return received glory, wealth and power for his forbearance, Wiglaf must accept Beowulf's gift and the bequest of doom that comes with it. Sisam is likely correct in suggesting that for any number of reasons (most obviously his Swedish identity) Wiglaf cannot take over the Geatish throne from Beowulf. This kingdom will be destroyed by the Swedes, Wiglaf prophesies (2999-3007a), the very people to whom the young retainer belongs. Wiglaf therefore can not be as closely related by blood to Beowulf as a nephew. Wild's final reconstruction of the Wægmunding family tree seems the most likely given the inability of Wiglaf to succeed to Beowulf's throne.

Lehnt man die Annahme einer Schwester oder Gatting Beowulf's ab, so bleibt immerhin die Möglichkeit, mit einer Schwester Ecgtheows zu rechnen und die Geschwister als Kinder Aelfheres zu betrachten:

If we give up the supposition of a sister or spouse of Beowulf there is still the possibility of counting a sister of Ecgtheow and of considering the brothers and sisters to be the children of Ælfhere (20).
Ælfhere is mentioned as a kinsman of Wiglaf and Weohstan in line 2604a. We know nothing else about him. If Wild's genealogical table is correct, Wiglaf would be Beowulf's second cousin. According to Lancaster, second cousins and relatives further removed were not considered part of an individual's immediate kin group (236-38). These remote kin did not generally inherit either title or position. It was possible for there to be relationships of friendship between distant cousins, but these relationships were based on proximity and affinity, not blood (362-63). Wiglaf does not possess the requisite bloodline to inherit Beowulf's throne. When it comes to kingly inheritance, as far as Beowulf himself is concerned, deeds are not enough. Through deeds, a nephew can become like a son. Through deeds, a second cousin can become like a nephew. But the transitive property does not apply to succession politics in the cultural world of Beowulf. A second cousin, no matter how valorous, cannot overcome his weakness in blood through superior performance in deeds. He cannot advance as far as the position of son to successfully inherit. When Wiglaf, the second cousin of the great king, is the only surviving family member, Hrethel's dynasty and the Geatish kingdom ends.
Above I have argued that inheritance runs along the tracks of blood and deeds. Some measure of each form of inheritance is necessary for an individual to successfully inherit a social position across a generational boundary, and the most common form of inheritance depicted in *Beowulf* is indeed a hybrid. But if inheritance by both blood and deeds is essential in the cultural world of *Beowulf*, the relative proportions of each form are hardly fixed. Rather, the proportion of blood or deeds necessary to inherit is contested within *Beowulf*’s culture; different institutions and different social positions benefit from different ratios of blood and deeds. The most important major division of inheritance interests in *Beowulf* is between men and women. A character’s gender as constructed within the poem’s system of gender ideology determines to a great extent the types of inheritances he or she may influence or participate in. As is most clearly demonstrated by Wealhtheow’s reactions to Hrothgar’s attempted adoption of *Beowulf*, women in Beowulf have a much greater stake in inheritance by blood than they do in inheritance by deeds.

Wealhtheow’s reaction to the adoption has been called "astonishing" and "unsettling" by Helen Damico (127). After the queen counsels Hrothgar to leave the kingdom to his kinsmen (quoted above), she proposes a protector for the kingdom if Hrothgar has the misfortune to die before his oldest son can take the throne:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{glædne Hroþulf,} & \quad \text{Ic minne can} \\
\text{arum healdan,} & \quad \text{þæt he þa geogoðe wile} \\
\text{wine Scildinga,} & \quad \text{gyf þu æþ þonne he,} \\
\text{wene ic þæt he mid gode} & \quad \text{worold oflætest;} \\
\text{uncran eafteran,} & \quad \text{gyldan wille} \\
\text{hwæt wit to willan} & \quad \text{gif he þæt eal gemon,} \\
\text{umborwesendum æþ} & \quad \text{ond to worðmonyrdum} \\
\text{Hweaf þa bi bence,} & \quad \text{arna gesfredemon.} \\
\end{align*}
\]
I know that my kind Hrothulf will rule in kindness the younger troop, if you, friend of the Scyldings, relinquish the world before him. I expect that he wishes to pay with goodness our heirs, if he remembers all the honors that we two gave him for his desires and glory when he was a child. Then she turned back to the bench where their sons were, Hrethric and Hrothmund, and the children of the warriors, the youth all together. There the brave one, Beowulf of the Geats, sat by the two brothers.

Wealhtheow's apparent desire to put forth Hrothulf as an alternate heir or protector has provoked much controversy. Most historical critics of Beowulf have linked Hrothulf with the Scandinavian figure Roluo described by Saxo Grammaticus. Chambers sums up the argument thus: "Hrethric is ... almost certainly an actual historic prince who was thrust from the throne by Hrothulf," who was the nephew, rather than the son, of Hrothgar (26-27). Klaeber suggests that lines 1018, 1164, 1178, and 1228 all point to treachery by Hrothulf, and that it is "very likely" that Hrothulf usurped the throne. If this is the case, Hrothulf, unlike Beowulf, jumped his place in the line of succession and takes the throne after the death of his uncle, and Wealhtheow's insistence upon him as protector for her sons seems at the least ill-fated if not foolish.

Sisam, however, has pointed out the great many difficulties inherent in this interpretation, coming to the conclusion that everything hangs on the meaning of pa gyt wes hiera sib ætgedere. It can be explained as an allusion to a final breach between Hrothgar and Hrothulf. Yet nothing is known of such a quarrel: that it was about succession is a guess, not to be found in medieval sources. And there is a possible alternative. Suppose that, as the Widsith reference suggests, the names of Hrothgar and Hrothulf called to mind a long harmonious co-operation, strong enough to break Ingeld's attack on Heorot, rather than its dissolution. Then the clause could mean 'the good pair of kinsmen were still together (when Beowulf visited Heort)'. This supposition may seem relatively...
uninteresting; but it has the advantage of dispensing with a story built up in modern time on very slight foundations (1965 80-82).

Sisam's analysis suggests that Wealhtheow's insistence upon Hrothulf as a proper heir for Hrothgar is neither "ironical" or "pathetic" (Malone 269-71). It is still, however, surprising. Damico argues that it would be "understandable" for Wealhtheow to support her sons Hrethric or Hrothmund by preventing Beowulf from becoming a legitimate heir. But Wealhtheow promotes her nephew, Hrothulf, to whom she is related only by marriage. Other critics have read Wealhtheow as sponsoring Hrothmund as protector until Hrethric or Hrothmund is old enough to assume the throne, and in her speech is warning Hrothulf to respect the future rights of his cousins (Clark 87). But, Damico notes, "there is no substantive or formal indication in the speech to suggest that the queen regards the youngsters as future rulers or kings" (126-27). Indeed, within the world of the poem there is no suggestion that a king may relinquish the throne if a relative with a superior bloodline claim reaches majority. Beowulf himself refuses to take the throne of the Geats while Heardred is alive (2367-78). Damico argues that "rather than being an appeal, [Wealhtheow's] speech is closer to a proclamation of proper action." By supporting Hrothulf the queen casts herself in the role of not only aunt, but "aunt-mother," seeking to protect "her nephew-son's legal claim to the throne" from any challenge that might be justified by Hrothgar's adoption of Beowulf (129-31).

It is important, when reading this section of the poem, not to allow kinship to overshadow all other possible reasons for a character's actions. Wealhtheow may have preferred Hrothulf's succession for any number of reasons not directly related to his relationship to Hrothgar. If in fact the Anglo-Saxon audience would have recognized Hrothulf as possessing many of the same characteristics as the Scandinavian hero Rolf Kraki, then they might have seen Wealhtheow's preference as entirely reasonable and based (albeit anachronistically) upon the great deeds Hrothulf would later accomplish. If kinship
relations are to be invoked, however, I believe Wealhtheow's gender interests in the system of inheritance by blood overshadow any desire to protect the rights of her nephew by marriage.

It is hardly problematic to guess that Wealhtheow's first loyalty was probably to her sons. They are, as far as we can tell, by far her closest kin in Heorot, and the mother-son bond does not seem to have been absent from Anglo-Saxon culture. Wealhtheow, we may safely speculate, would support Hrethric and Hrothmund for the throne if there were any chance of them succeeding to and it surviving. But if the two boys are too young to succeed when Hrothgar dies, Wealhtheow, since she apparently could not take the throne herself, would, like Hygd, have to support someone to take Hrothgar's place. Her apparent choice of Hrothulf over Beowulf suggests that the system of inheritance by blood is more important to her than the system of inheritance by deeds. After all, the bonds created by deeds link Beowulf to Hrothgar, not to her.

At the time of the speech, Beowulf has proven himself by deeds. He has defeated Grendel, a feat previously beyond the powers of all of the Danes, including Hrothulf. Yet while Wealhtheow is pleased to welcome Beowulf to Heorot, she clearly does not want him to become an heir to Hrothgar, demonstrating "a loyalty to Hrothulf that supersedes the queen's profound indebtedness to Beowulf" (Damico 127). But Beowulf has only earned Wealhtheow's loyalty by deeds; Hrothulf is linked by blood, albeit indirectly. That is, while Hrothulf is not directly a blood relation of Wealhtheow, he is a blood relation (first cousin) to her sons and might be expected to care more than Beowulf for the interests of Hrethric and Hrothmund. As both Damico and Hill have noted, Wealhtheow is, like Beowulf, a strong supporter of law and custom. According to Damico, Wealhtheow's actions "have

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19 As evidenced most obviously by Hildeburh. When she consigns her sons to the funeral pyre, "ides gnornode, geomrode giddum" ("the woman mourned, lamented with song" 1117b-1118a).
20 Hill argues that Wealhtheow "vigorously remind[s] Hrothgar of his duties" to the two boys, and suggests that he actions work to bind the men in the warband together "in horizontal reciprocity" (101-103).
clearly indicated her full awareness of and adherence to the concepts of royal honor and generosity" (127). Or, as Hill puts it, Wealhtheow's speech and actions work to preserve the social bonds of the comitatus through her "strong-minded" support of the bonds of kinship (101-103). The law and custom that Wealhtheow is supporting is the law of inheritance by blood. Although this inheritance is messier and less prescribed than, say, the practice of primogeniture, it does have its limits, limits which Hrothgar has transgressed and which his queen works to re-establish.

Why does Wealhtheow attempt to restore the system of hybrid inheritance called into question by Hrothgar's attempt to make Beowulf an heir based solely on the hero's deeds? I would argue that a system of inheritance with a blood component is the only system in which a female character may exercise her will to power in the cultural world of Beowulf: Wealhtheow attempts to preserve such a system by supporting Hrothulf in preference to Beowulf not in a short-sighted attempt to hold on to her own political power in the Danish nation (she does not, after all, say that she expects Hrothulf to be kind to her, only to her sons), but as a defense of the cultural structures within which and by which her identity is constituted and her autonomy preserved.

In discussing the Finnesburh episode, Irving states that "men can at least draw up treaties, they can act in some way, however foolishly, but women can only see and suffer." He thus reads "a defeat of Wealhtheow's impassioned expectations" as inevitable (140-41). But, as Damico and Hill both note, Wealhtheow's political skills are not limited to the merely ceremonial or incantatory powers discussed by Irving. She is able to influence the behavior of the men in Heorot because she can exercise power, for example, giving the gift of the great necklace to Beowulf and attempting to change Hrothgar's mind through public statements. She can exercise this power because she possesses a certain social position, and that position is a result of her function as a mother, as a key component in the system of inheritance by blood.
In *This Sex Which is Not One*, Luce Irigaray claims that women receive their value in a society or culture only insofar as they are exchanged among men. This exchange of women creates both culture and identity through such rules as the incest taboo and its inculcation in the consciousness of the individual (170–76). Wealhtheow has obviously been exchanged—the family group of men to which she is related by blood has sent her in traffic to Hrothgar. But while Wealhtheow's very name (which can be translated as "foreign captive") suggests exchange or seizure, unlike Hildeburh or Freawaru she does not appear to weld together two disparate families. Her "peace weaving," as Overing notes, is directed at violence in general, rather than violence between any two warring family groups, and is accomplished through her use of language rather than the physical exchange of her body (88–90). Wealhtheow's identity in *Beowulf* arises from her actions to bind together individual men in a homosocial bond. By passing the cup from one warrior to another she links them to Hrothgar through herself (Overing 97).

But this social identity is predicated upon Wealhtheow's pairing with Hrothgar and her participation in the king's dynasty. She is called "cwen Hroðgares" (613a), and "ides Sycldinga" ("lady of the Scyldings" 1168b). When she speaks of her desire to have Hrothulf protect her sons she uses dual case pronouns, "uncran" ("of our two" 1185a) and "wit" ("we two" 1186a) binding her and Hrothgar together as one and emphasizing that Hrethric and Hrothmund are the product of them both. Wealhtheow has produced heirs of Hrothgar's body, and without her there would be no inheritance by blood. The conditions for successful peace weaving, it seems—both from Wealhtheow's successful performance of this role and the failures of Hildeburh and Hrothgar's daughter Freawaru—that before the queen can speak the language of weaving she must produce sons for the king. The power of

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21 Klaeber notes that "wealh" can mean either "Celtic" (i.e., "Welsh") or "foreign," and "þeow" may mean "captive" or "carried off in war" (440).

22 Of course the exchange of her body may have solved other crises of violence that are not a part of the poem, a point Overing makes when she notes that Wealhtheow "embodies" her function as peace weaver (96).
language can only be accessed through the body which is exchanged between men. Therefore, as Overing notes, in order to speak the queen must be "inscripted" into the "patriarchy" (91).

The queen's interest, therefore, lies in the maintenance of the system from which she derives her personal value, power and identity. A system of inheritance purely by deeds threatens Wealhtheow's identity not only because it eliminates the necessity for her specific and personal contribution to the Danish dynasty, but also because the bonds that would be created between Beowulf and Hrothgar are not homosocial (i.e., mediated through a woman), but same-sex. Just as an emphasis on masculine, same-sex reproduction in the tenth century served to reduce the power and influence of female monastics (see chapters two and three), so too would the creation of a system of inheritance by deeds serve to reduce the power of the queen in the royal warrior band. Women's reproductive capabilities were necessary for the reproduction of the monastery, and they would remain necessary for the warrior band even if the system of blood inheritance were not hybridized with inheritance by deeds. But in such a system no specific woman would be necessary. If a king need merely choose his successor from among a pool of heroes validated only by their deeds, he need not concern himself with the blood origin of each man. Blood lineage becomes unimportant, and as fares blood lineage, so fare mothers in the cultural world of Beowulf and the tenth-century world of the Anglo-Saxon monastery. By defending the system of blood inheritance, Wealhtheow defends the position of women in her society and the system by which her own identity is constructed.

Critics have not previously noted that in her efforts to prevent the inclusion of Beowulf in the line of succession, Wealhtheow is in fact aligned with the hero himself. Using considerable political and social skills she tries to convince Hrothgar to rescind his offer of synthetic kinship. Beowulf also, as Hill notes, must use considerable political dexterity in order to avoid offending Hrothgar while simultaneously refusing the offer of
adoption and thus maintaining his loyalty to his own blood-kin, Hygelac and the Geats (100). Hill's analysis of Beowulf as the juristic warrior, the ethically conscious figure who is always just and whose actions are always rightful, explains why Beowulf supports the already-existing of hybrid inheritance with a blood requirement (63). James Earl identifies Beowulf as an "ego-ideal," a representation of what the audience of the poem found to be lawful, valorous and excellent, but unattainable (181-82). The system of inheritance that Beowulf supports is therefore valued by the culture that produced Beowulf. Wealhtheow's support of this system suggests that she is fulfilling her role in the culture in the same ideal fashion as Beowulf. For all participants in the warrior band, hybridized inheritance is the way things ought to be. The identities of both men and women are jeopardized if the rules of inheritance are changed.

So why does Hrothgar attempt to break the rules of inheritance and adopt Beowulf? Mary Dockray-Miller argues that Hrothgar's masculinity has been seriously compromised by his aging and his inability to slay Grendel (or even die in the attempt). While Hrothgar ostentatiously retires to his bedchamber with Wealhtheow (622-665a), "the final irony in this scene is that Hroðgar's sexual activity has failed to produce a son of the correct age, old and strong enough to continue Hroðgar's line." Hrothgar's adoption of Beowulf "may be yet another way for Hroðgar to try to recoup some of his fading masculinity: by adopting a powerful, strong, intelligent, adult son who does make the absolutist, masculine statements that Hroðgar no longer can" (Dockray-Miller 205-11). Hrothgar attempts to over-ride the rules of blood inheritance to restore his masculinity, demonstrating that identity (which of course includes gender) is linked to an individual's ability to reproduce himself or herself by blood.

But, as Hrothgar's weakened masculinity and the future failure of his line indicates, inheritance by blood can never provide true security. As Lees notes, "the maintenance of patrilineal genealogy is no easy thing." A sterile father, or one who through sheer chance
does not produce sons (and whose sisters, if they exist, do not produce nephews) can bring a line to an end. While "patrilineal genealogy cannot guarantee the continuity of kingly life ... it is the only institution available" (141-42). But blood genealogy is not the only theoretically possible method of perpetuating identity. While kingly life did not reproduce itself purely by deeds in the Anglo-Saxon period, another important institution, the monastery after the Benedictine reform, did. Due to the renewed emphasis on monastic celibacy after the reform, monks had to reproduce their institutions without direct control of biological reproduction. Thus to maintain essential continuities in the monastery they relied upon a variety of methods, most importantly the shaping of behavior and identity through textual means. One became a monk not because his father was an initiate but because he behaved according to the Rule of St. Benedict. That is, monks inherited their positions in the monastery by means of deeds, not blood.23

Such reproduction is in fact quite similar to the ways the warrior comitatus as a whole reproduced itself. As Joseph Harris has shown, in Germanic cultures all-male groups whose major function was aggression nearly always excluded women, often required celibacy of some (generally younger) members, and at times interpret initiation into the group as a form of birth without female agency (89-92). Like the monastery, the Männerbund in idealized form reproduces itself entirely by deeds. Erotic heterosexual love itself, Harris notes, is suspect and must be paid for (102), and sexual reproduction, although necessary, is frowned upon in the context of the Männerbund. Reproduction by deeds, therefore, becomes an additional partial explanation for what Carol Clover calls the "frantic machismo of Norse males" (380); it is a struggle for individual masculinity within the strictly limited contexts of the all-male warrior group.

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23 A monk could, without violating his vow of celibacy, reproduce himself in his sister's son. Oswald of Worcester, for example, was sponsored by his uncle, abbot Oda the Good (Duckett 137). With Oda's financial support Oswald purchased a small "monastery" to live in at Winchester (Robinson 12ff).
The same-sex reproduction of the *Männerbund* thus competes with biological reproduction, and the great advantage of the former is that it need not be subject to the same vicissitudes of fortune as genetic lineage. Like the monastery, the warrior-band theoretically can reproduce itself even if its own members are not able to biologically reproduce. What is most interesting about the depiction of the *Männerbund* in *Beowulf*; then, is the value placed upon reproduction by blood as well as by deeds. We can imagine that in their secret rites the Danes and Geats behaved in the same fashion as the archetypal Norse *Männerbund*—like monks they reproduced their intra-group identities through solely masculine, same-sex, non-biological means. But the Danes and the Geats are not merely roving bands of northern warriors. They represent the founders of nations, the ancestors of social organizations more complex and powerful than any actual *Männerbund* (Niles 107). Hrothgar, Hygelac, and Beowulf represent an ancient bond of kinship restated in later times (Carsley 35). Additionally, not all social interactions for a *Männerbund* were internal; a warrior group had to interact with other bands and other nations. One of the primary means of interaction for such groups (outside of battle) was the exchange of women to cement alliances between rival social groupings. As Harry Berger and H. Marshall Leicester note, "kingroups and warbands have both an economic and a metabolic need of outsiders in order to guarantee the continuing supply or circulation of women, children, protective alliances, treasure, honor, risk, and potential corpses" (43).

Such exchange is facilitated by a reliance upon the system of inheritance by birth, a system which welds together aristocratic, genetically based kingroups and the meritocracy of the *Männerbund*. When Hrothgar therefore grasps at the straw of inheritance through deeds only, he obviates the necessity to produce strong sons and calls into question the hybridization so important to the culture. The strong reactions of both Wealhtheow and Beowulf (juristic characters who strongly support the poem's idealized ethical system) to Hrothgar's attempt to escape the constraints of hybrid inheritances illustrates that these
constraints are in some way essential to the society imagined by the Beowulf poet. That is, the constraints of heroic civilization are part and parcel of heroic identity.

Niles suggests that Beowulf "affirms without irony the value of heroic action in a world in which even heroes must die" (1983 vi). Lees writes that in the end Beowulf, while praiseworthy, is nevertheless dead, "the only good hero, after all, is a dead one" (145). The great limitation of heroic civilization is that heroes and their lineages and their children and their great halls and treasures will all pass from the earth. Why? Because the very constraints that create heroic society, the requirement that inheritance, the perpetuation of identities in the face of the dissolutions of time, be composed of both blood and deeds, leads inexorably, even mathematically, to the extinction of heroic cultures. When inheritance is required to be at least partially constituted by blood it is only a matter of time before the lineage breaks. But to reconstruct inheritance solely in the form of deeds, as Hrothgar's and Beowulf's failed attempts show, is in the cultural world of Beowulf for some reason impossible. The Männerbund is not, despite their many similarities, a reformed monastery. It cannot apparently reproduce itself solely by masculine, same-sex reproduction. A monastery can perhaps eliminate the homosocial exchanges so important to court life as depicted in Beowulf through the elimination of women from within the monastery walls. But the men of the Männerbund reproduced themselves biologically as well as socially. For them, masculine, same-sex reproduction would always be in competition with other systems of inheritance that also contributed to their identities.

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24 Assuming some (however small) finite chance of a blood lineage coming to an end at some generational boundary, it is literally only a matter of time until a biological lineage is broken. Mathematically, the proof may be expressed thus. \[ P(t_0) = 1 - e^{-\tau p} \quad p = \frac{1}{\tau} \lim_{t \to \infty} P(t) = 1 \]. Where \( P \) is equal to the probability of the event occurring, \( t \) is equal to a unit time, and \( \tau \) is equal to one divided by the probability per unit time. As time increases to infinity, the probability of the event occurring (the lineage ending) increases to one in an exponential manner. I am grateful to Andrew C.E. Reid for his assistance with this material.
J.R.R. Tolkien wrote that Beowulf "is a man, and that for him and many is sufficient tragedy." For Tolkien, the theme of the poem is "that man, each man and all men, and all their works shall die" (24, 27). Tolkien was undoubtedly using the word "man" in what Lees identifies as the "liberal humanist construct of the universal male" (133), but I would like to perform what Harold Bloom would call a "strong misreading" of Tolkien's essay at this point. I therefore take Tolkien's epigrammatic statement as focusing attention on the hero's masculine gender and the poem's grappling with the social implications of the gender roles required in the cultural world of Beowulf. In other words, what brings Hrothgar's and Beowulf's lines to an end, what causes the various tragedies of the poem, is masculinity as constructed by Beowulf. The necessity of inheritance by both blood and deeds is part and parcel of the absolute juristic character of the hero who serves as the ego-ideal throughout the poem. Inheritance in Beowulf cannot be either/or, it must be both/and, and in insisting upon both/and, the masculine culture of the poem ensures its own eventual destruction. 25

Tolkien understood the all-or-nothing ethos of Beowulf and incorporated it into his personal mythology expressed in The Lord of the Rings. Into the mouth of Denethor, the despairing steward of the kingdom of Gondor, he puts the following words:

I would have things as they were in all the days of my life ... and in the days of my long-fathers before me: to be the Lord of this City in peace, and leave my chair to a son after me ... But if doom denies this to me then I will have naught: neither life diminished, nor love halved, nor honour abated (1965 158).

One could not find a more succinct expression of the eventual results of the ideal ethos of inheritance in Beowulf: "naught," no compromise, no bending, no acceptance of a situation beyond certain pre-determined boundaries. In the end the essential and sufficient

Overing argues that the ultimate expression of the masculine ethos of Beowulf can be encapsulated in the statement "I will do this or I will die" (70). Such a statement is also a both/and rather than either/or construction: either the hero will accomplish the task and live, or he will fail and die. Beowulf's victory over the dragon, then, may be a transcendence of this oppositional structure, or it may be its ultimate fulfillment, since Beowulf's success and death leads to the failure of his people.
tragedy of *Beowulf* is the essential and sufficient tragedy of human life: in spite of all our systems of inheritance, our reckoning of lineage, our frenzied and careful reproduction of our identities, in the end, as Tolkien noted, the dragon comes.

But before the wyrm arrives, the reproduction of men fails:

\[
ærran mælum, \quad \text{Ealle hie dead fornam}
leoda duguðe, \quad \text{on se an ða gen}
weard winegeomor, \quad \text{se ðær lengest hwearf,}
þæt he lytel fæc \quad \text{wende ðæs ylcan,}
brucan moste (2236b-41a).
\]

Death took them all at previous times, and now the one who remained from the warrior-troop of the people, who who longest remained, the guard mourning for friends, expected the same thing—that he might enjoy only for a little time the ancient riches.

The last survivor of the ancient race, this lonely man who consigns the treasures of his people to the barrow where the dragon will find them, laments for the failure of human institutions to reproduce themselves. The sword and cup will not be lifted; the helmet and corslet will rust away unpolished; the harp will be silent; the hawk will not fly through the hall; the horse will not ride through the settlement (2252b-2265a). All the trappings of aristocratic, masculine, *Männerbund* culture are empty without the individuals who give life and value to them. The silent barrow evinces the failure of life and lineage.

But the last survivor and his culture are, to some small degree, given new life by the *Beowulf* poet, who resurrects their memory and transmits it to his readers across many, many generational boundaries. Memory, contained in language, can be passed to any hearer, regardless of that individual's gender or social position. Memetic reproduction is a reproduction purely by deeds, but this reproduction does not require a specific institutional context. The *Beowulf* poet may have never returned to the court in which he had heard the songs or stories from which he fashioned his great work. But from the memory of those
stories he crafted his poem, which has the ability to resurrect the last survivor when the
court, the Anglo-Saxon monastery, and the Männerbund itself have all become extinct.

I do not know if a more adaptive system, one that accepted either/or instead of
insisting upon both/and, could hold off the dragon forever. But while man, each man and
all men, and all their works shall die, they need not, as our own reading of Beowulf should
remind us, pass forever into oblivion. As Lees notes, the continued existence in some form
of a hero is ensured in two ways: "through the memory of his actions and through his sons—but
neither is reliable" (144). Memory provides a third path in the system, a way out of the
both/and dead end, and it is a consolation for the failure of life and lineage. When Beowulf
speaks to Hrothgar after the attack of Grendel's mother and the death of Æschere, he uses
the gnomic style of the wisdom poems:

Ure æghhwylc sceal
worolde lifes.
domes ær deæhe;
unlifsgendum
ende gebidan
Wyrce se ðe mote
þæt bið drihtguman
æfter selest (1386-89).

Each of us must live in the expectation of the end of the life of this world. Let him
who may achieve fame after death; that afterwards is the best thing for the unliving
warrior.

Here Beowulf speaks with what Stanley Greenfield calls the "authenticating voice."
Although the words come from a character's mouth, their tone suggests they are part of "the
body of things told" that have "been handed down from generation to generation."
According to Greenfield, this voice "authenticates men's moral behavior on a continuing
basis from past to present," making the saying relevant to both the poet's and the audience's
time (54-60). Like the speakers of the wisdom poems, Beowulf speaks to the father the
language of the father, and what he speaks is that in the end the father can only die and
hope to be remembered. Larrington notes that in this statement Beowulf expresses the idea
that as Hrothgar is now, so will Beowulf become (205). The gnomic language of the
wisdom poems presupposes an absolute order that is accessed by the speaker who can use
such language. But unlike the speakers in the wisdom poems, unlike the monks in the reformed monasteries, even in the prime of his manhood and at the height of his powers, Beowulf holds no hope for the persistence of peoples, institutions or lineages. All hope for the perpetuation of heroic identity is placed in memory, the fame for which Beowulf is most eager in the last word of the poem.

Through memory in all its forms (including oral traditional poetry and the textualization of knowledge) a hero’s actions and may be preserved across the ages. Even though lines may fail, memory, particularly written memory, like a long dormant seed, can resurrect the past in a new generation and begin again the process of cultural reproduction. As Wormald notes, Beowulf "encapsulated, and indeed identified, the social and cultural values" of the Anglo-Saxon warrior class (1977 67). If we see the Beowulf poet as a member of that class, cut off from the possible perpetuation of his identity by biological or even homosocial means, we can understand the immense value he places upon memory. Memory can reproduce and perpetuate identity when all other means fail, and (as I shall show in the following chapter) Beowulf has the power to reproduce its values in readers across vast gulfs of time. This perpetuation of inheritances is the cultural work of Beowulf, a work that continues long after the bones of Hrothgar and Beowulf, the poet and the scribe, the translator and the critic, have crumbled into dust and, like the smoke from the hero's funeral pyre, dispersed on the wind.

26 Here I take homosocial reproduction (as distinct from same-sex reproduction) to be the perpetuation of masculine identities mediated through the exchange of or desire for a woman (see, for example, Rubin 168-72 and Irigaray 193-94).
CHAPTER VI
SEEDS, SOIL, AND NORTHERN SKY

For it is said that, though the fruit of the Tree comes seldom to ripeness, yet the life within may then lie sleeping through many long years, and none can foretell the time in which it will awake.

—J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King*

Frederick Jameson argues that the past is perceived only "through the sedimentary layers ... of previous appropriations" (141). That is, it is impossible for a scholar to ignore all that has been deduced and argued about a past time and in some way directly apprehend the life of that period. All interpretations of previous events are unavoidably influenced by the present and the more immediate past. This influence cannot be avoided or mitigated through reliance on any particular methodology because all methodological systems cannot help but shape the things they attempt to describe or investigate. To apply this general statement to the specific topic of this dissertation: we approach Anglo-Saxon England not only through our own cultural, political and historical situation, but through the cultural, political and historical conditions of the scholars who have gone before us.

Although the recognition that the immediate past influences the interpretation of the distant past is not new, only in the past ten years have critics turned their attention to discovering the details of that influence in the academy, examining the institutional history
of American English studies in general and medieval and Anglo-Saxon studies in particular. At the greatest degree of generality, Gerald Graff in *Professing Literature* traces the historical constitution of American English studies from the early nineteenth century through the 1980's. More specific to medieval studies, Lee Patterson's *Negotiating the Past* investigates the history of medieval criticism from the Gothic revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries through the New Historicism of the 1980's. Allen J. Frantzen's *Desire for Origins* follows in detail the development of Anglo-Saxon studies from the Renaissance through contemporary source projects.

In this chapter I further narrow this focus, hoping to provide additional detail to augment the large-scale analyses provided by Graff, Patterson and Frantzen. To this end I examine the work of two scholars, Albert Stanburrough Cook and J.R.R. Tolkien. The work of these scholars, both inside and outside the field, has profoundly shaped Anglo-Saxon studies. From public perceptions of Old English texts and Anglo-Saxon culture to the methodologies and critical practices that in part determine the ways research is pursued, each scholar, in his own way, was the most influential Anglo-Saxonist of the twentieth century. Outside the field Cook exercised enormous academic political power, strongly influencing the development of the profession in America in the early twentieth century. Inside the profession Cook shaped a scholarly generation with his many editions. His work on the Exeter Book poem *Christ* has been so influential that contemporary work on the poem is still considered a gloss to his 1900 edition.

Tolkien is, of course, best known for his writings outside Anglo-Saxon studies, his epic fantasies *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Silmarillion*. These books have done as much to shape public perception of medieval and Anglo-Saxon literature as anything else published in the twentieth century. Within the field Tolkien is scarcely less influential. His 1936 British Academy lecture "*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics" is universally acknowledged as the *fons et origo* of modern *Beowulf* criticism, and the essay set
the agenda for nearly sixty years of scholarship on this, the most widely discussed poem in the Anglo-Saxon corpus.

Tolkien and Cook are inheritors and founders of scholarly traditions; they perform the roles of both sons and fathers. In this chapter I examine the ways each scholar grapples with the great problem of traditional replication: the inevitable decay of traditions and the subsequent extinction of traditional continuity and the identities that depend upon it. The accommodations Tolkien and Cook make with the death of tradition are shaped by their historical situations, their religious beliefs, and their personal experiences. Both approaches differ, yet they share a common core built around the idea of the possible resurrection of traditions and the ability of scholars to give new life to long-dormant seeds of knowledge, custom, and belief. Cook's and Tolkien's views of tradition are important because these scholars form a link between the traditions in Anglo-Saxon culture that have been the subject of the first five chapters of this dissertation, and the tradition of Anglo-Saxon studies in which this dissertation and its readers participate, and which it helps to reproduce.

Old Seeds in New Earth: Albert Stanburrough Cook

Cynewulf

Across the centuries we spell thy name,
Wrought deep within they verse by runic sign,
For though they soul was rapt with things divine,
Thou yet couldst not forego the dream of fame.
The virgin martyr's faith thou dost acclaim;
Dost sing the cross revealed by Heaven's design;
The Advent's hope, the Ascent of Christ benign,
The trump of Judgment, and its hurtling flame.

—A.S. Cook

1 from the flyleaf of *The Old English Elene*, Phoenix, and Physiologus.
Albert S. Cook was the single most powerful and widely influential American Anglo-Saxonist of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Organizer of the Johns Hopkins English department, Professor of English at Yale for thirty-two years, founder and for thirty years editor of the *Yale Studies in English* series, President of the Modern Language Association, co-editor of the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, and President of the Concordance Society for seventeen years, Cook had the levers of administrative power more firmly within his grasp than any American Anglo-Saxonist before or since. A bibliography, privately issued in 1923 (four years before his death) contains more than 300 entries on subjects ranging from Greek and Latin authors, Medieval and Renaissance texts and writers, to Romantic poets, Matthew Arnold and John Ruskin.

According to Greenfield and Robinson's bibliography, Cook published ninety-five articles and nine reviews on Old English topics, making him (after Kemp Malone, Ferdinand Holthausen and Friedrich Klaeber) the fourth most prolific scholar in the history of Anglo-Saxon studies. Nearly a century after its publication Cook's *The Christ of Cynewulf* remains the authoritative critical edition of this widely-discussed Exeter Book poem. C. R. Thompson, surveying the history of Anglo-Saxon scholarship in America in 1936, wrote that Albert S. Cook's "career as an Anglo-Saxon scholar is too well known to require elaboration" (252).

Cook's contemporary influence is particularly visible in work on the Exeter Book *Christ* poems. It is even fair to say that much work being done on this poem is considered even by its authors a gloss on his original edition. Frederick Biggs, for example, entitled his 1986 monograph on the poem *The sources of Christ III: A Revision of Cook's Notes*. Patricia Ward's unpublished 1991 dissertation similarly acknowledges the primacy of Cook's presence: *Christ I: A Revision of Cook's Edition*. Both Biggs and Ward note additional sources and revise some of Cook's conclusions, but they nevertheless feel compelled to acknowledge the name of the father of *Christ* studies.
Cook was born in Montville, New Jersey in 1853. His father was a farmer, "but a man of considerable education, and with a taste for public life." Cook was English on his father's side and partly German on his mother's.\(^2\) He was originally trained as a scientist at Rutgers College, New Brunswick, NJ, receiving an offer of the professorship of chemistry at Fukui, Japan, which he declined "for family reasons." Cook taught mathematics at Rutgers and at the Freehold Institute in Freehold, NJ before traveling to Germany to study philology at Göttingen and Leipzig. After organizing the English department at the newly established Johns Hopkins, he traveled to Europe for additional study in 1881, studying with Henry Sweet in England before proceeding to Jena, where he took his Ph.D. under the tutelage of Eduard Sievers, completing a dissertation on the Northumbrian vowel system "and passing the usual examination 'magna cum laude,' which [was] the highest note given by [Jena's] faculty."\(^3\) Cook returned to the United States to become professor and chairman of the department of English at the University of California from 1882-89. In 1889 he moved to Yale, where he remained until his retirement in 1921.

Cook is mentioned in Graff's *Professing Literature*, and his 1897 presidential address to the Modern Language Association is reprinted in Graff and Warner's anthology *The Origins of Literary Studies in America*. Graff takes Cook's career as illustrative of the ways "narrowly philological" study that "lagged behind the newly literary and cultural conception of the profession's goals" had become ingrained in the professional accreditation process in English studies at the end of the nineteenth century. He argues that while Cook recognized that the profession needed to return to an "older, comprehensive meaning of 'philology'"

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\(^2\) The *New Haven Palladium*'s biographical sketch of Cook published on June 25, 1889 lists his maternal ancestry as Dutch, but Cook added the emendation "partly German" to the printed copy held in the Albert Stanburrough Cook Papers, Humanities and Fine Arts Collection, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University Library. Cook's papers are quoted by permission of Yale University Library and will hereafter be cited by box and folder numbers. The *Palladium* article is contained in Box 6, Folder 147.

\(^3\) From a letter from Sievers to Professor Charles Larmman (?) Cambridge, dated August 6, 1882. Box 6, Folder 118.
which would include literature as well as purely linguistic study, he was unable to link his humanistic ideals and his philological practice: "Cook's scholarship and his larger cultural interests were apparently closely related in his mind, but he had no way of uniting them in his work" (79-80). While Graff may be correct in his larger argument about the growing tendency in the nineteenth and early twentieth century for philology to become more and more narrowly linguistic, Cook is not a particularly appropriate example.

Graff mis-characterizes Cook and his scholarship for two reasons: an over-reliance upon a single questionable source, and a tin ear for the sorts of philologically based (but not exclusively philological) arguments Cook presented in his scholarly work. Graff's assertion that Cook was unable to unite his broad humanistic goals in his scholarship is supported only by a memoir written by Henry Seidel Canby, a man Graff characterizes as "a former student" of Cook's (79). Canby's book, *Alma Mater: The Gothic Age of the American College*, is not what one would call a disinterested examination of scholarly practice, and it appears that Graff has adopted the partisan rhetoric of the "generalist" movement within English departments, a movement which explicitly set itself in opposition to the "narrow pedantry" of the German model of philological research (83-85).

Canby, in a passage quoted by Graff, characterizes Cook as "a finished product of the German philological mill, who had been brought to the university to introduce methodology—how he rolled the word on his tongue!—into our somewhat haphazard graduate school of language and literature" (Canby 182). This may be true, but some of Canby's statements not quoted by Graff suggest that significant quantities of salt need to be taken with the statements of the "former student," who appears to bear significant animus towards both Cook and philological study. Cook he describes as "a perfect example of the feminine male, in whom a masculine intellect operated with all the vanity, jealousy, pettiness, and infinite subtlety of a woman... his feeling for literature [was] that of an intuitive but inexperienced woman" (183). Canby also objects to Cook's attitude towards
students at Yale: "like the grind," he had an indifference amounting to contempt for the amenities of our academic living" (183-85). He also clearly disliked Anglo-Saxon, complaining that literary history was made drudgery because "It was Cynewulf not Shakespeare that we dug into, the romances of chivalry rather than Racine, and Goethe's borrowings from the Arabic instead of the interpretation of the second part of Faust" (Canby 202).

Upon the testimony of this one (in my view, rather contemptible) source Graff bases the claim that Cook's attempts to expand the definition of philology beyond pure linguistic study were "primarily ritualistic" (80). In fact, as anyone who has read The Christ of Cynewulf can attest, much of Cook's scholarship was a successful bridging of the gap between linguistic philology and the more holistic or humanistic study of literature. In the lengthy introduction to his edition of Christ, Cook does set out the manuscript context, liturgical roots, grammatical notes, and authorship of the poem, and if he had stopped there, the criticism made by Canby's faction in the debates of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century might well be valid. But Cook continues with a discussion of "Cynewulf as Man and as Poet," which not only sets the poem in a specific historical context, but also investigates the "literary" merits of the poem and of Cynewulf's body of work. According to Cook, Cynewulf knew and described "the magnificence and horror of war... he has the poet's love for beauty—the beauty of the world, the splendor of art, the loveliness of woman, the glory of manhood." Cynewulf's "notes of color, though so simple, are, it must be confessed, effective out of all proportion to their simplicity," and even this refined sense of color is

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4 A "grind," in Canby's terms, was a student who made the devastating social mistake of too devotedly pursuing the curriculum of studies, often "the quiet and bloodless member of a family," akin to the "undesirable" students such as "Polish Jews with anemic faces on which were set dirty spectacles, soft-eyed Italians too alien to mix with an Anglo-Saxon community, seam-faced Armenian boys, and now and then a Chinese" (127-29).

5 Speaking of the University of California's literary courses in the 1890's Graff states that "it is unfair to condemn a whole program on the basis of one piece of testimony" (104). Apparently the rules of the game are different when applied to individual scholars, at least if they are philologists.
overshadowed by the poet's "passion for light" (lxxviii-xcvii). None of these observations are
ground-breaking, but, being representative, they do serve to show that Cook was no mere
linguistic pedant, plodding away at the "chips of literary history, the date of a Northumbrian
cross, the classic parallels to a line in Milton" (Canby 184). An introduction to King Lear,
presumably delivered at Yale, also holds little dry philology and much in the vein of this
opening statement: "King Lear is the universal tragedy of human ingratitude, or, in the more
limited sense, of filial ingratitude ..."6

Nor did Cook confine himself to writing purely for professional philologists in
university circles. As a number of documents held in the Yale University Library indicate,
he aggressively promoted his scholarship in the more popular press, for example, writing
articles for the Atlantic Monthly and The Nation. A letter from one of Cook's publishers,
Henry Holt and Company, provides a list of periodicals that "are apt to pay attention to
such a special little booklet" as the one Cook wrote on Sir Eglamour. These include The
Nation, Publisher's Weekly, The Sun, The Springfield Republican, The Boston Transcript, and
The Dial in addition to technical journals such as Modern Language Notes and The Journal
of English and Germanic Philology.7 Cook also took part in the "Home Study Circle"
program distributed by the Chicago Record. His picture adorns the brochure for the 1899-
1900 term, wherein he is characterized as an expert on Shakespeare. "Shakespeare is for
everybody," reads the brochure copy, "the salesman, the mechanic, the farmer, the merchant,
the professional man, the young woman of the home or in the labor-field, the busy
housewife." Readings for the term included Love's Labors Lost, The Comedy of Errors,
Richard III, The Taming of the Shrew, As You Like It, Othello, King Lear, and Coriolanus, all
part of a course of home study that will "bring the beneficent influences of Shakespeare
study within the reach of the great masses of the people." One could not find a statement

6 Box 5, Folder 85.
7 Box 5, Folder 100.
more antithetical to Canby's indictments of Cook than: "Shakespeare study means culture, and culture is as much the right and privilege of one section of the community as of another," a statement which Cook most likely did not write, but which he agreed to have his photograph accompany, and which he saved as part of his personal records.8

Graff's errors with regard to Cook do not invalidate his general argument that philological studies had become so narrowly linguistic, so detailed and so divorced from literature that they spawned a backlash that eventually led to the decline of the institutional influence of philology. But Cook himself was not the cause of philology's narrowing; rather he stands out and remains influential because the thrust of his work is towards something very different from the circumscribed philological project.

Along with the poem quoted at the beginning of this chapter, one line in the bibliographic sketch published in the New Haven Palladium upon Cook's arrival at Yale in 1889 provides an important and overlooked key to understanding much of Cook's character and his subsequent intellectual development: "In his freshman year Professor Cook became a member of the Second Reformed Church of New Brunswick, N.J., of which Rev. Chester D. Hartrauft, D.D., now president of the Hartford Theological Seminary, was pastor." I have been unable to determine which Protestant denomination Cook belonged to as a child in Montville, so it is not possible to assay the degree of conversion he undertook in his adult adoption of the Reformed Church. But in any event the Reformed Church and its tenets seem to have influenced Cook's scholarship and Weltanschauung.

Reformed Churches in America "perceived themselves as restoring the church to the purity of life-style, worship, and belief found in the New Testament community of Christians."9 In America, members of the Dutch and German Reformed Churches were not

8 Box 6, Folder 147.
9 It is not clear if Cook was a member of the Dutch or the German Reformed Church. The former seems more likely, as the Dutch Reformed Church in American founded Rutgers College (then Queen's College) in 1766 in New Brunswick, and northern New Jersey remained the heartland of this denomination for many years (the New Brunswick Theological Seminary founded in 1784 was
content to merely reform the lives of individuals within the congregation, but "regarded the
state as an agent for bringing the kingdom of God on earth by enforcing divine law through
its civil code" (Coalter and Mulden 512). The Reformed Church believed strongly in the
morality of American democracy and saw in the rapidly expanding United States an
opportunity to spread reformed morality. Cook's view of the uses of Anglo-Saxon is
perfectly congruent with Reformed Church beliefs and practices. That is, he sees the study
of Anglo-Saxon as a way to strengthen democracy. Combined with the vigorous
Christianity Cook saw as promoted by Old English poetry, the influence of Anglo-Saxon
would move the American republic closer to the kingdom of God. In an address published
in the Atlantic Monthly in May 1901 he wrote:

As Old English literature was of and for the people, so English scholarship
originated in obedience to the democratic instinct, and was the creation of a popular
want. It was evoked to overthrow sacerdotalism and to undermine prescriptive rule
of every sort, and it is not surprising that its influence has been in the main, though
not without marked exceptions, to this effect.

Being thus democratic in origin, it is but natural that the systematic study and
teaching of English have had to contend with the indifference or opposition of the
Roman Church, the aristocracy, and the supporters of the ancient classics. Thus,
notwithstanding the fact that a great body of medieval English literature is monastic
or ecclesiastical in character, we do not find that many distinguished Roman
Catholic scholars have been engaged in editing or expounding it... The reason is
plain: these classes of persons have been the representatives of prescription and
authority, and have therefore felt in the advance of English the approaching triumph
of a natural foe (1906 39-41).

These sentiments are much akin to those expressed by Renaissance polemicists such
as John Bale, John Foxe, and Bishop John Jewel, who turned to Anglo-Saxon documents as
a means of justifying Reformation doctrines in sixteenth-century England (Frantzen 1990

the oldest Protestant seminary in the United States). The New Haven Palladium's incorrect assertion
that Cook's ancestry was Dutch (Cook emended his copy of the article to read "partly German") may
be due to the Professor's membership in the Dutch Reformed Church, which was strongly identified
with Dutch ethnicity and continued to hold services in Dutch well into the nineteenth century. In
any case, the central tenets of faith of both of these branches of Presbyterianism are nearly identical
(Coalter and Mulden 513)
In Cook's view Old English, a vernacular language, was aligned with the thought and interest of "the people" and against such illegitimate authorities as the aristocracy and the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The Reformed Church turned to the Biblical text itself, requiring a "positive scriptural warrant" for all church practices (*Harper Collins Dictionary of Religions* 523). Cook looked for textual evidence for his readings of Anglo-Saxon culture, evidence that was to be recognized not through the accumulated interpretations of the church fathers, or the long-established wisdom of classical interpretations, but through the new science of philology. In an address given to Vassar College in 1906, Cook writes that "the English language does not yield up its riches so easily; we must dig for them, as for hid treasures." Only through philology can readers unearth these treasures and use the knowledge thus gained to comprehend the full meaning of the text (1906 82).

The Reformed Church believed that the ordering of life on earth according to a strict reading of the Bible could bring the kingdom of God to the American nation. That kingdom would be presbyterian, controlled democratically by small institutions made up of educated and moral individuals who were inspired by their reading of the Christian text. Likewise Cook believed that true comprehension of English texts would bring about a better society in the American republic, a society characterized by democracy, individualism, and education:

... the allies of English have been democracy and individualism, the spirit of nationality, the methods of physical science, and the sensational and utilitarian philosophy, to which may be added the growing influence of woman, and, in part as the cause of this influence, the pervasive and vitalizing effect of essential Christianity (1906 39-41).

This essential Christianity would come not from the pulpit, but from the growing universities. In "Aims in the Graduate Study of English," a lecture delivered at Princeton University in 1906,¹⁰ Cook asserted that the State had delegated to the universities the task

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¹⁰ Graff is incorrect in stating that this speech was Cook's MLA presidential address of 1906 (79). Cook was president of the MLA only once, in 1897.
of answering the question "how shall the true leaders of humanity be selected, and disciplined for their mission?" (102). For this mission the teacher of literature was indispensable, because "the professional minister of religion has virtually abdicated his function of authoritative spiritual leadership," as have contemporary poets and writers (109). Therefore "circumstances have devolved upon [the English teacher] a task the more momentous" (117), that of re-creating "the great past in the imaginations of his hearers" (1906 104). Through this imaginative re-creation, Cook believed that American youth could be brought to an appreciation for leadership, democracy, and Christianity. The key to re-creation was a new understanding of the traditions of Anglo-Saxon culture that had been destroyed by the Norman Conquest, only to rise again in the Reformation.

Before the Norman Conquest, Cook wrote, Anglo-Saxon literature "was a literature of the people and for the people and at least to some extent in the case of Cædmon, by the people" (1906 38). After appropriating Cædmon as supporting an embryonic populism, Cook proceeds to re-write the history of his discipline: because of the less-corrupt nature of the literature of the pre-Norman period, "when the Reformers were reforming so much out of existence, it was precisely the Old English manuscripts which stood the best chance of preservation..." The impulse to study Old English also arises from the democratic masses: "as Old English literature was of and for the people, so English scholarship originated in obedience to the democratic instinct and was the creation of popular want" (1906 38-39). Of course this entire historical sketch is manifestly fallacious. As Frantzen has shown, the recovery of Anglo-Saxon in the Renaissance was pursued for antiquarian and polemical ends, not due to "popular want" for a language that almost no one could read. It is also difficult to see Archbishop Matthew Parker, John Joscelyn, or Laurence Nowell as men of

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11 These sentiments, obviously, are quite similar to those expressed in the Home Study Circle pamphlet.
the people recovering texts for a public clamoring for Old English (see Frantzen 1990 35-44).

Cook re-writes English history and the history of his discipline (a history generally unknown to most Anglo-Saxonists until recently) in order to make the past look like his present. He institutes a medieval revival in the Reformation because he was part of a medieval revival himself, a revival that included the construction of many "Gothic" buildings on American university campuses, including Cook's Yale. On May 14, 1902, Cook delivered an address to the Connecticut Library Association at the Young Men's Institute in New Haven. The address, entitled "Comparing the Modern Librarian to a Feudal Chief with an Armory of Weapons for All Occasions," is one of only three addresses that Cook chose to retain among his papers. In it he displays an exceptionally romantic view of the Middle Ages:

the rights and duties of the Middle Ages were reciprocal. Every right had a corresponding duty. As it was the right of the townsman to be fed, and armed, and sheltered, and led, so it was his duty to bring wood for firing, and grain for baking, and stone for building, and leather for arming. The castle represented the collective effort of the community. In it every man had a stake, because of the stores he had contributed.¹²

Cook displays a belief in a Middle Ages in which individual rights and duties in the service of a common good were recognized and willingly adopted. There is no overt coercion in Cook's Middle Ages, only the acceptance of work. Of course not even in Langland's idealized world of Piers' half-acre could such a conception of medieval social structure be maintained. The peasants of 1381, for instance, might have had more to say about the "right" of the townsman to be fed. Cook's grasp of the details of Anglo-Saxon political history was particularly strong (see, for example, 1922 281-346), but he was not a social historian, so perhaps he really did believe that medieval social structure was constituted mainly by voluntary and reciprocal behavior. Certainly Cook was led to such an

¹² Box 5, Folder 83.
interpretation by his desire to see in the Middle Ages (particularly the Anglo-Saxon age) a model for turn-of-the-century America. In his introduction to *Select Translations from Old English Poetry*, also dating from 1902, Cook describes the qualities of the Middle Ages in terms which indicate that he found these virtues timeless and applicable to his own society: "Here are pictured, or reflected, men bearing their part of life's burdens, doing the world's work in stoutness or humbleness of heart, not without consciousness of an infinite background for the performance and infinite rewards for high service..." (Cook and Tinker v).

Again, Cook invokes an image of men laboring quietly, content with their own place in the world and striving for the commonweal regardless of their position (or that of their superiors) in it. To be useful, palatable and, most importantly, influential, such a model could not be very different from ideologies of social relations already existing in Cook's society. In other words, Cook constructed his model of the Middle Ages in term of his own culture and then used that model to reflect his interpretation of his culture's values back to itself. The mirror had two faces, and they were, in effect, both Cook's. By exhorting America to be like the Anglo-Saxon age, he was telling it to be more like its existing ideal of what is should become.

Cook believed this ideal, which he projected on to the Middle Ages, could be revived in America through the agency of the universities, particularly the teachers of literature who were housed within them. The teacher of literature could bring back from the dead "the great past in the imaginations of his hearers" (1906 104), thus setting in motion a remaking of society along the lines of the great past. That great past was, of course, the creation of great men, and for Cook the most personally significant of these was Cynewulf.

Cook's very strong attachment to Cynewulf has not altogether escaped scholars of Anglo-Saxon studies. In his introduction to a recent anthology of Old English criticism,
Frantzen notes that contemporary critics are "so wary of falling into the traps of romantic criticism that held earlier scholars of Cynewulf—and A.S. Cook—in particular, that [they] shun the manuscript implications of common authorship" for Cynewulf's poems (1994:14). Cook's romantic view of Cynewulf is evidenced most visibly in the poem quoted at the beginning of this section and in Cook's remarks in *The Christ of Cynewulf*: The poem, which is printed on the flyleaf of Cook's *The Old English* Elene, Phoenix, and Physiologus, presents nothing more than the facts of Cynewulf's poetic career as generally agreed upon by critics of Cook's day. Cynewulf did indeed place his name within his works in runic form, and in the poems attributed to him he did expound upon the virgin martyr's faith (*Juliana*), the revelation of the cross (*Elene*), and Christ's advent, ascension and return on Judgment Day (*Christ*). More interesting is Cook's interpretation of the poet's impulse to create verse: although Cynewulf's soul must have been "rapt with things divine" he could not "forego the dream of fame," and so created his works. For Cook, it seems, the poetic impulse was linked to a desire to perpetuate one's name across space and time.

In *The Christ of Cynewulf*, Cook places Cynewulf with Dante and Milton (although he admits that Cynewulf is "hopelessly inferior" in "grasp, narrative skill, in the development of difficult thought, in architechtonic power") because the Anglo-Saxon poet is possessed of the same "sense of the sublime and the ability to convey it to his readers" (1900:xcv). Dante and Milton are poets both strongly concerned with the development of a national, vernacular ethos, and it is telling that after placing Cynewulf in their company Cook asks rhetorically: "In what relation did he [the Anglo-Saxon poet] stand to the men who surrounded him, and to the fatherland whose mighty career lay wrapped in embryo, conditioned by the religion of which he was a passionate devotee, nay in some sense by the very song he sung?" (Cook 1900:xcv).
Cynewulf's "song," his verse, then, led to the expansion of the political polity to which the poet belonged. It also led to the perpetuation of the memory of his own name. Cook was certainly familiar with the poet's epilogue to *Juliana*:

\[
\begin{align*}
gumena cynnes, & \quad \text{Bidde ic monna gehwone} \\
\text{æt he mec neodful} & \quad \text{be his gied wæce,} \\
gemyne modig, & \quad \text{bi noman minum} \\
\text{æt me heofona helm} & \quad \text{ond meotud bidde} \\
& \quad \text{helpe gefremme (718b-722).}
\end{align*}
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I bid each person of human kin who speaks out this poem that he, earnest and generous, remember me by my name and bid the Ruler that He, the protector of heaven, will give me help.

Philologists like Cook had decoded Cynewulf's runic signs and brought his name to light again after centuries in which it had lain forgotten. In the minds and on the lips of philologists, Cynewulf's name and memory could receive a new life. Likewise the political and religious ideals of the Anglo-Saxons, dormant for so long, if conveyed to the hearts of young men through the efforts of their teachers to inspire them with Old English poetry, could be brought to life in a new country at the beginning of a new, American century and could provide a future that arose out of the dim past.

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**In Land Beneath the Northern Sky: J.R.R. Tolkien**

A great part of the 'changes' in a man are no doubt unfoldings of the patterns hidden in the seed; though these are of course modified by the situation (geographical or climatic) into which it is thrown, and may be damaged by terrestrial accidents. But this comparison leaves out inevitably an important point. A man is not a seed, developing in a defined pattern, well or ill according to its situation or its defects as an example of its species; a man is both a seed and to some degree also a gardener, for good or ill.

—J.R.R. Tolkien

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Perhaps no Anglo-Saxonist in the twentieth century has done more than J.R.R. Tolkien to shape the critical contours of the field. A. S. Cook certainly wielded more administrative and political power than Tolkien, and the vast extent and range of Cook’s publications shows him having a hand in nearly every critical subdivision of Old English studies. Yet the shadow of Tolkien’s scholarship and his persona lies long and visible across Anglo-Saxon, partially because his most well-known work was on *Beowulf*, the most studied and discussed poem in Old English. Arguably Tolkien’s work, while quantitatively far less extensive than Cook’s—Tolkien merits only four entries in Greenfield and Robinson’s bibliography—is qualitatively superior. It is difficult to gauge the influence of "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth" or of Tolkien’s introduction to J.R. Clark-Hall’s translation of *Beowulf*, but "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" is universally acknowledged as the origin or turning point of the tradition of modern *Beowulf* criticism.

In 1968 Donald K. Fry felt compelled to remind readers that "*Beowulf* criticism did not begin in 1936," when Tolkien first read his British Academy lecture (ix). Fry’s comment is not facetious; a glance through *Beowulf* criticism shows that Tolkien’s essay is generally regarded as the most important contribution to the study of the poem. C. L. Wrenn called "The Monsters and the Critics" "exceptionally important: probably the most widely influential critical appreciation of the poem" (606). George Clark recognizes the essay as "a turning point in the history of *Beowulf* in the modern age" (7-8), and John Niles sees it as marking the admission of *Beowulf* "fully into the ranks of English literature" (1983 4).

2 Tolkien was Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, but both before and after receiving this position the bulk of his published work was on Middle English language and literature, including *A Middle English Vocabulary* (for use with Kenneth Sisam’s *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose*), his edition (with E.V. Gordon) of *Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight*, and studies of *Ancrene Wisse* and *Hall Meadbed*. 
Gillian Overing (33-35), James Earl (74), Clare Lees (130), Kevin Kiernan (251), and Edward Irving (1989 30) concur. E.G. Stanley writes that Tolkien's essay should be seen "not as the end of the first age of Beowulf scholarship, but the beginning of a new age (37-38).

Undoubtedly Tolkien's immense popular success has also served to increase his stature within medieval studies. While there are still some factions within Old English criticism that view Tolkien's fiction as a distraction to serious study, sufficient scholarly generations of students have been introduced to Old English through the names and language in The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings¹⁵ to develop a widespread, pro-Tolkien bias, and student predilections for Tolkienian fantasy are often used by teachers to generate enthusiasm for Old English language and literature. Thus Tolkien, unlike other significant critics of Anglo-Saxon studies, has shaped the field from both the top down and the bottom up, influencing popular as well as elite perceptions of Anglo-Saxon.

Like Cook, Tolkien was by training and predisposition a philologist. In much of his scholarly work Tolkien (in marked contrast to the extremely general approach he takes in "The Monsters and the Critics") traced the etymologies and derivations of specific words such as Old English "sigelwara" or Middle English "eaueres," (1932 183-96; 1934 95-11; 1925 331-36). Tolkien's work on the Middle English texts Ancrene Wisse and Hali Meiþhad, which Thomas Shippey describes as "the most perfect though not the best-known of [Tolkien's] academic pieces" (1983 31) is at heart a close examination of language forms in these texts, which Tolkien links philologically to Old English. Through examination of the language of these "Katherine Group" texts, Tolkien shows that a dialect form of Old English continued to be in use as a literary language in western England long after the Norman Conquest. From the persistence of several Old English verb forms Tolkien concluded "the existence in the West of a centre where English was at once more alive, and

¹⁵ This author among them.
more traditional and organized as a written form, than anywhere else" (1929 116). Through philology Tolkien was thus able to reconstruct a lost history of West Midlands, a history in which Old English has persisted not as a subaltern gutter tongue but as a language of learning and refinement even in the face of conquest by a foreign enemy:

It is not a language long relegated to the 'uplands' struggling once more for expression in an apologetic emulation of its betters or out of compassion for the lewd, but rather one that has never fallen back into 'lewdness,' and has contrived in troubled times to maintain the air of a gentleman, if a country gentleman. It has traditions and some acquaintance with books and the pen, but it is also in close touch with a good living speech—soil somewhere in England (Tolkien 1929 106).

It is difficult to exaggerate the influence on philology of Tolkien's discoveries about the language of the Katherine Group texts. Philology had not had such a success since Sievers' remarkable 1895 prediction that lines 235-851 of the Anglo-Saxon Genesis paraphrase poem was translated from and Old Saxon origin:l. The discovery in the Vatican library of a fragment of the Old Saxon poem proved Sievers' philological speculations correct and was hailed as "outstanding among the triumphs of Old English scholarship" Gollancz lii). Tolkien's demonstration—which once argued has never, to my knowledge, been seriously contested—that the Katherine Group texts preserved Old English word forms was an epochal discovery for philology. Long discussions of the "A" and "B" languages remain a staple of advanced English lectures at Oxford.16

Two of Tolkien's key ideas about language and literature are found in his discussion of the Katherine Group language. First, the importance of a continuous tradition of English language surviving (though affected by) the Norman Conquest; second, the connection of language and literature to "soil somewhere in England." These two themes are present in all of Tolkien's writing, from the earliest drafts of his fiction (written during his military service during World War I) to his first academic papers, to letters written just

16 Professor Christina Von Nolcken, personal communication.
before his death. Tolkien displays an amazing constancy of thought, an endurance of belief particularly significant because he was such a compulsive reviser. While any piece of writing might go through many drafts before reaching publication, Tolkien's core beliefs did not change or evolve over time.

Thus to understand what Tolkien believed about Old English literature and literary history (a necessary preamble to understanding his abiding influence) it is possible to turn to the one primary source where he lays out his beliefs and his justifications for them in extensive detail—even though this text was written at an early stage in Tolkien's career. I refer to Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Tolkien A 26/1-4, a collection of four exercise books with some additional leaves. Christopher Tolkien describes the collection thus:

This file contains two versions (an earlier, 'A', and a later, expanded, 'B') of a very substantial work of much interest entitled *Beowulf and the Critics*.

From it was directly derived the much shorter "The Monsters and the Critics," the famous lecture delivered to the British Academy in 1936. This original work is entirely unknown.

I do not know whether *Beowulf and the Critics* was composed with the British Academy lecture already in mind, or whether when the occasion arose to give such a lecture my father decided to draw on and reduce *Beowulf and the Critics* already in existence for another purpose. There are suggestions that *Beowulf and the Critics* was intended for oral delivery, but I do not know whether it was so delivered (as a series of Oxford lectures). 17

The inclusion of C.S. Lewis' poem about a dragon on folios 38 and 39 indicates that the manuscript could not have been written before January 1927, when Tolkien and Lewis first became friends. I would date the manuscript later, to no earlier than August 1932. Humphrey Carpenter reports that it was at this time that Lewis wrote *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity*, all in one two-week period (1979 47). The text of the
dragon poem in the Tolkien manuscript is identical to that of the published text (with the one exception of "have not" for "haven't" in line thirteen), and while this correspondence does not prove that Tolkien copied it from a printed version of The Pilgrim's Regress, it does at least strongly suggest that Beowulf and the Critics was written after the publication of Lewis' book in 1933. Tolkien's British Academy lecture "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" was delivered on November 25, 1936. The two handwritten drafts of Beowulf and the Critics, and at least one preliminary typescript version of "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" indicate that the first version must have been composed some time before the end of 1936. Tolkien published regularly throughout the 1930's, with the single exception of 1935. It is tempting, therefore, to place the composition of Beowulf and the Critics in that year, but in any event it seems very likely that the text was written between 1933 and early 1936.

All the elements of Tolkien's British Academy lecture are present in the first draft of Beowulf and the Critics, but the argument proceeds more slowly and methodically. The severe compression of this complex logical structure enables the rhetorical style of "Monsters": the impression of vast depth behind the essay is not an illusion. Compression was Tolkien's most significant task in modifying "Critics" for oral delivery and publication, but he also changed the content and style of the piece as he progressed. Many references to individual critics, for example are made less pointed. In both the A and B texts of "Critics," Tolkien says that Oswald Cockayne's disparaging remarks about Joseph Bosworth "may have been unfair" (fols. 1 and 92). In "Monsters" he is kinder, calling the remarks "doubtless unfair" (14). Tolkien greatly reduces his many scathing comments on the deficiencies of Sir Archibald Strong's treatment of Beowulf in A Short History of English Literature. He also reduces to the single sentence "it is the confused product of a committee of muddle-headed and probably beer-bemused Anglo-Saxons (this is a Gallic voice)" an eight-page, savage—

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18 I will hereafter refer to this text as "Critics" and the published British Academy lecture as "Monsters."
and wickedly funny—attack on Jean J. Jusserand’s commentary on Beowulf, which Tolkien shows to be linguistically inaccurate, illogical and, most enraging to the Gallophobic Tolkien (Carpenter 1977 67), condescending (fols. 25-32).

For the purposes of this study, however, the most telling changes Tolkien made to "Critics" as he modified it into "Monsters" can be found in the famous allegory of the tower. This is the most frequently cited passage of "Monsters," and is, as critics have recognized, essential for understanding Tolkien’s thoughts about Beowulf. The published version runs as follows:

A man inherited a field in which was an accumulation of old stone, part of an older hall. Of the old stone some had already been used in building the house in which he actually lived, not far from the old house of his fathers. Of the rest he took some and built a tower. But his friends coming perceived at once (without troubling to climb the steps) that these stones had formerly belonged to a more ancient building. So they pushed the tower over, with no little labour, in order to look for hidden carvings and inscriptions, or to discover whence the man's distant forefathers had obtained their building material. Some suspecting a deposit of coal under the soil began to dig for it, and forgot even the stones. They all said: "This tower is most interesting." But they also said (after pushing it over): "What a muddle it is in!" And even the man's own descendants, who might have been expected to consider what he had been about, were heard to murmur: 'He is such an odd fellow! Imagine his using these old stones just to build a nonsensical tower! Why did he not restore the old house? He had no sense of proportion.' But from the top of that tower the man had been able to look out upon the sea ("Monsters" 16).

Thomas Shippey’s is the clearest exegesis of this passage. The man is of course the Beowulf poet, Shippey writes. The friends are scholars of Beowulf. The tower is the poem itself. From the remaining elements of the allegory one can deduce that Tolkien thought that there had been older poems than Beowulf, pagan ones, in the time of the Christian past already abandoned; they are the 'older hall'. However debris from them remained available, poetic formulas and indeed stray pagan concepts like Sigelware; that is the 'accumulation of old stone'. Some indeed of this was used for Biblical poems like Exodus ... that is 'the house' in which the man 'actually lived' (Shippey 1983 36-37).
Shippey goes on: "the gist of all this is that no one, friends or descendants or maybe even contemporaries had understood Beowulf but Tolkien." This understanding depended on Tolkien's "being a descendant, on living in the same country and beneath the same sky, on speaking the same language, on being 'native to that tongue and land'" (1983 37, Shippey's emphasis).

Obviously Tolkien believed that his understanding of Beowulf (and of other medieval texts) came in large part from his philological studies. But in a letter to his son Christopher, who like his father became a philologist and teacher of English at Oxford, Tolkien hints at other connections. After reading Sir Frank Stenton's Anglo-Saxon England, Tolkien expressed the sentiment common to so many scholars of the distant past: "I'd give a bit for a time-machine." But he would not use it to fill in specifically historical gaps because "it is the things of racial and linguistic significance that attract me and stick in my memory." Tolkien hopes that his son will be able to read Anglo-Saxon England and so "delve into this intriguing story of our particular people. And indeed of us in particular. For barring the Tolkien (which must long ago have become a pretty thin strand) you are a Mercian or Hwiccian (of Wychwood) on both sides" (108). Tolkien thus identifies himself with a particular ethnic stock firmly rooted in the Anglo-Saxon period and in the West Midlands. In a letter to W.H. Auden, Tolkien wrote that he was "a West-midlander by blood (and took to early west-midland Middle English as a known tongue as soon as I set eyes on it)" (213).

This ethnic identity added to Tolkien's philological training provided self-justification for what Shippey calls Tolkien's "rather curious beliefs" expressed indirectly in "Monsters." Tolkien was convinced, Shippey argues, "that he knew exactly when and under what circumstances the poem was written" (1983 36). Despite this rhetorical stance, which I believe Shippey characterizes accurately, Tolkien treats date and provenance in one sentence in "Monsters," accepting the attribution of the poem "to the 'age of Bede'" (25).
Tolkien is less coy, however, in the two drafts of "Critics." After reviewing and agreeing with arguments made by Chambers (Tolkien does not quote them but merely writes "Cha. Introd. II. p 391-392" in the center of the page), he writes: "we are face to face with a poem by an Englishman c. 725-750!" (fol. 25). The poet's ethnus is significant to Tolkien. The poem is English, not Scandinavian; or as Tolkien puts it earlier in "Critics," "so Norse is Norse and English English" (fol. 10).

This strain of thought is evident in "Monsters," particularly in the final lines of the essay: Beowulf "is in fact written in a language that after many centuries has still essential kinship with our own. It was made in this land, and moves in our northern world beneath our northern sky, and for those who are native to that tongue and land, it must ever call with a profound appeal—until the dragon comes" (36). Most telling in this lyrical passage is Tolkien use of pronouns and determiners, the genitive plural "our" and the deictic marker "this." "Our" indicates possession; "this" indicated proximity. Beowulf becomes a possession of a people of a certain background ("native") that is both linguistic ("to that tongue") and mystically tied to the soil. The first proposition is rational, the second is not, but the idea informs all of Tolkien scholarly work. A concern with land, custom and ethnus is most clearly visible in Tolkien's first draft of the allegory of the tower. Here he writes:

I would present you with the following allegory, and would have it borne in mind. A man found a mass of old stone in an unused patch, and made of it a rock-garden; but his friends coming perceived that the stones had once been part of a more ancient building, and they turned them upside down to look for hidden inscriptions; some suspected a deposit of coal under the soil and proceeded to dig for it. They all said "this garden is most interesting," but they said also "what a jumble and confusion it is in!" — and even the gardener's best friend, who might have been expected to understand what he had been about, was heard to say: "he's such a tiresome fellow — fancy using these beautiful stones just to set off commonplace flowers that are found in every garden. He has no sense of proportion, poor man." And, of course, the less friendly, when they were told the gardener was an Anglosaxon and often attended to beer, understood at once: a love of freedom may go with beer and blue eyes, but that yellow hair unfortunately [crossed out: "does not grow on a head"] grows always on a muddled head ("Critics" A fol. 3)
Obviously the tower's genesis as a rock garden is the most striking element of the passage. A rock garden used to "set off commonplace flowers" immediately brings to mind the stereotyped and often caricatured (but containing some kernel of truth) image of the Englishman fanatically concerned over flowers and plants. This is an image that Tolkien did not necessarily disavow—as noted previously he thought the language of the Ancrene Wisse to retain "the air of a gentleman, if a country gentleman" (1929 106, my emphasis). In The Fellowship of the Ring, Frodo, deep in the Mines of Moria, thinks of his home in the Shire: "he wished with all his heart that he was back there ... mowing the lawn, or pottering among the flowers" (414). All three of these images suggest a class identification by Tolkien. Hobbits are decidedly rural middle-class, and Frodo, before his quest, could easily be described as a "country gentleman." After all, the very upper classes do not concern themselves with making rock gardens (that being the job of servants). Nor do the lowest classes go in for ornamental horticulture. Rather, the rock garden is a sign of the middle classes of the countryside, the classes to which Tolkien at his heart belonged.19

More significant than the potential class identification is the explicit racial categorization of the Beowulf poet in the final lines of the allegory. As an "Anglosaxon," he is possessed of "yellow" hair, blue eyes, and a fondness for beer. This last detail is clearly part of Tolkien's gut-level reaction to what he calls the "drink-complex"—Jusserand's tendency to read any reference to drink in Beowulf as indicating wide-spread inebriation among the Anglo-Saxons ("Critics" fol. 28-29). But even if these final lines of the allegory are a reaction to Gallic condescension, the identification of the Beowulf poet with stereotyped phenotypic racial features might be cause for concern (particularly in the mid 1930's) if we did not possess the following letter written by Tolkien to his son Michael in 1941:

19 Carpenter notes that while Tolkien spent most of his youth in the urban settings of Birmingham and Leeds, and in the suburbs of Oxford, his familial and psychological roots had been put down in Sarehole, in the Warwickshire countryside outside of Birmingham (1977 124-25).
I have spent most of my life, since I was your age, studying Germanic matters (in the general sense that includes England and Scandinavia). There is a great deal more force (and truth) than ignorant people imagine in the "Germanic" ideal. I was much attracted by it as an undergraduate (when Hitler was, I suppose, dabling in paint, and had not heard of it), in reaction against the "Classics"... But no one ever calls on me to "broadcast", or do a postscript! Yet I suppose I know better than most what is the truth about this "Nordic" nonsense. Anyway I have in this War a burning private grudge -- which would probably make me a better soldier at 49 than I was at 22: against that ruddy little ignoramus Adolf Hitler... Ruining, perverting, misapplying, and making for ever accursed, that noble northern spirit, a supreme contribution to Europe, which I have ever loved, and tried to present in its true light. Nowhere, incidentally, was it nobler than in England, nor more early sanctified and Christianized.... (54-55)

In 1938, Tolkien had written a razor-tongued reply to the German firm Rütten and Loening Verlag, who, upon negotiating the publication of a German translation of The Hobbit, dared to ask Tolkien if he was "arisch" [Aryan]. Tolkien replied with insulting philological precision that since he was not aware that any of his "ancestors spoke Hindustani, Persian, Gypsy, or any related dialects," he could not to claim to be Aryan. He adds, "but if I am to understand that you are enquiring whether I am of Jewish origin, I can only reply that I regret that I appear to have no ancestors of that gifted people." He then continues with an explanation of his German name (Tolkien's ancestors had immigrated to England in the eighteenth century), and closes with the following:

I have been accustomed ... to regard my German name with pride, and continued to do so throughout the period of the late regrettable war ... I cannot, however, forbear to comment that if impertinent and irrelevant inquiries of this sort are to become the rule in matters of literature, then the time is not far distant when a German name will no longer be a source of pride (37-38).

In a letter to his own publishers about the same issue Tolkien calls the German race laws "lunatic" and notes "I do not regard the (probable) absence of all Jewish blood as necessarily honourable ... and should regret giving any colour to the notion that I subscribed to the wholly pernicious and unscientific race-doctrine" (37). Tolkien's understanding of
the English "race" was not generally influenced by the "Nordic' nonsense" promulgated by the Nazi party. And if Tolkien did not accept the notion of a single, superior, "Nordic" race (and it is clear from his letters than he did not), how could he construct an "English" race characterized by blond hair, blue eyes, and a fondness for beer?

First, I think Tolkien was exaggerating the caricature of the Anglo-Saxons that he found in Jusserand and linking that insulting characterization to his strong personal animus against all things French (Carpenter 67, 235-36). This animus in scholarly matters dates back at least as far as 1923, when Tolkien wrote sarcastically in a review, "these remarks are tempered by regret that they do not reflect more plainly the cordiality with which we should wish to greet any mark of attention shown by French philology to English matters" (1923 36-37). As part of his long attack on Jusserand, Tolkien brutally critiques an "underlying assumption" that all English from the sixteenth century on is a more or less homogenous "modern" English, and the best is "polite" —and the Frencher the politer" ("Critics," fol. 27). Clearly Jusserand's assumption that Anglo-Saxon England was "primitive" (the characterization is Tolkien's on the same folio) continued to sting Tolkien although Jusserand had been dead for years when "Critics" was written. Thus the external view of the *Beowulf* poet in the allegory is the cartoon of the "Anglo-Saxon" (a term which is still a common descriptive term for English and Americans in contemporary chauvanist French political discourse, where it is un-historically set in opposition to "European") that Tolkien believed Jusserand and other critics saw. The man described as yellow-haired and blue-eyed is, after all, not meant to be truly muddle-headed—but those who fail to understand his purpose perceive him thus. More importantly, I do not think Tolkien's view of the English "race" was truly genetic. As a linguistic scholar he knew that this English "race" was a complex mixture, each of whose components was likewise mixed and blended through centuries of migrations and conquests. Nevertheless, Tolkien did believe that there was
something essentially "English" about Beowulf and about the allegorical man with the rock garden.

The only way to reconcile these two apparently opposing viewpoints is to take seriously and literally those final lines of "Monsters" and the related sentiments in "Ancrene Wisse and Hali Meidbad": Beowulf was "made in this land, and moves in our northern world beneath our northern sky, and for those who are native to that tongue and land, it must ever call with a profound appeal" (36, my emphasis). The language of the Katherine Group texts "is also in close touch with a good living speech—a soil somewhere in England" (106, my emphasis). A long discussion of The Lord of the Rings and The Silmarillion sent to the publisher Milton Waldman (probably in late 1951) shows that these sentiments persisted throughout Tolkien's lifetime:

Do not laugh! But once upon a time (my crest has long since fallen) I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of the romantic fairy-story — the larger founded on the lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing splendour from vast backcloths — which I would dedicate simply to: to England; to my country. It should possess the tone and quality that I desired, somewhat cool and clear, be redolent of our "air" (the clime and soil of the North West, meaning Britain and the hither parts of Europe: not Italy or the Aegean, still less the East), ... it should be "high", purged of the gross, and fit for the adult mind of a land long now steeped in poetry. I would draw some of the great tales in fullness, and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched. The cycles should be linked to a majestic whole, and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama. Absurd (144-45, my emphasis).

In each case English identity is based upon contact with the earth itself, with the physical land of the British Isles. Englishness derives from persistent presence in England, not from solely genetic connections, and not from purely cultural reasons, either. Being native to the English tongue is not enough, one must also be native to the land. In other words, an English racial identity is made through participation in two related traditions: physical occupation of England (preferably in close contact with the soil and growing things of the countryside) and participating in the English speech community. The traditions
could both be entered—the Tolkiens eventually become English after their arrival from Germany—but such an enlistment was slow and, most importantly, required participation in both traditions. English speakers in America, for example, were not part of the first; the Irish, whose tongue Tolkien found not only difficult but unpleasant, were not part of the second. Or, as Tolkien put it in a letter to his son Christopher, "I love England (not Great Britain and certainly not the British Commonwealth (grr!))" (65).

Understanding Tolkien's semi-mystical connection between English identity and the land itself sheds light on Tolkien's fiction and his personal beliefs. Discussing the beauty of the Golden Wood, Lothlórien, in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Sam Gamgee says "Whether they've made the land, or the land's made them [the Elves], it's hard to say" (467). In *The Two Towers*, the true horror of the land of Mordor, "the lasting monument to the dark labour of its slaves that would endure when all their purposes were made void," is the desecration of the earth itself and the creation of "a land defiled, diseased beyond all healing" (302). Likewise Tolkien's ambivalent feelings towards the United States can be seen as arising from Americans' usage of the same tongue as England on another continent. In unpublished notes dating, according to a small penciled note in the upper margin, from 1937 or before Tolkien writes that he has no use for "Big Business (on the transatlantic model)" (A28 B, fol. 160 v.). In a letter to Christopher Tolkien dated 9 December 1943, he writes that he finds "this Americo-cosmopolitanism very terrifying," and wonders if American victory in World War II, while certainly preferable to Nazi domination, "is going to be so much better for the world as a whole and in the long run" (1981 65). On the other hand, Tolkien was apparently fascinated by "tales of Kentucky folk ... family names like Barefoot and Boffin and Baggins and good country names like that" (Davenport). Shippey is likely

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20 Even *The Lord of the Rings*' harshest critics have praise for Tolkien's invention of this magical woodland of the Elves. Edmund Wilson, in one of the more vitriolic and, as Shippey shows, self-contradictory (1-3, 19-20, 218-19) reviews written of *The Lord of the Rings* has kind words for Lothlórien and the Ents (59).
correct in interpreting this interest to a belief by Tolkien that "in Kentucky and its neighbors ... there had for a time been a place where English people and English traditions could flourish by themselves free of the chronic imperialism of Latin, Celtic and French."

But Tolkien would not have agreed with Shippey's invocation of the idea that "Once upon a time all Americans were English: *caelum non animam mutant qui trans mare currunt*" ["the sky, not the spirit, changes for him who crosses the sea"] (1983 223). First of all, to briefly pursue an overly-literal reading of the Latin phrase, being "beneath our northern sky" was almost as important to Tolkien as being connected to the land; secondly, Americans were not directly connected to England's soil, but participated in the English tradition only in terms of language. A good start, perhaps, but not enough.

Tolkien believed that in some way English soil and northern sky had forged an important and valuable identity for the people of his country. This identity had been encapsulated in the speech, stories and traditions of Old English, and had been mostly shattered by the Norman Conquest and the subsequent imposition of French upon the common speech of England. Tolkien's work on the language of the Katherine Group showed that the Old English roots ran deep, and had persisted in spite of the onslaught of French. But even if an Old English culture had valiantly held on in the West Midlands, it had, long before Tolkien's time, succumbed. In unpublished lecture notes Tolkien suggests that Laȝamon's *Brut* illustrates a "breach" that had occurred in English cultural continuity:

The breach was precisely in kinship, dynasties and politics, largely in language, but not in religion. It is as if far off rumours of Celtic lore, the Roman invasions and conquest, the Roman imperial troubles and the abandonment of Britain, the invasions and conquests of the English and the Saxons, their resistance under Æthelwulfing kings to the Norse invaders, had all become jumbled in a vast haze of battle, in which the only constant is the land, Britain, without even an imaginative poetic sense of chronology of sequence (A28 B, fol. 171).

The land itself is the "only constant," and has the ability, abetted by the power of philological study, to help heal the breach in culture and continuity. Tolkien's work on such
words as "eaueres" and "sigelwara," whereby he recaptured scraps of the mythology of the Anglo-Saxon period, suggested, however, that at least some of the old Northern culture could be recaptured. As did Cook, Tolkien pursued the reconstruction of Anglo-Saxon through philology, and he (being an even greater philologist than Cook) had, perhaps, even more confidence in the science than his American counterpart. But only so much of the lost culture could be re-animated directly by philology. Much of what was important to Tolkien, like the connection between earth and identity, is mythical, and he would not have found it appropriate for the pages of *Medium Ævum* or *Essays and Studies*. He therefore tried to built a tower of the accumulation of old stone; that tower was the mythology of Middle Earth: *The Silmarillion, The Hobbit,* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

The genesis of the allegory of the tower in the allegory of the rock garden shows the linkage between Tolkien's ideas about identity and tradition and his own fiction (which he called "sub-creation"). Tolkien saw himself as a builder, using the old ruins to create something new that would allow readers (and himself as author) to achieve a transcendent purpose, to view the sea otherwise out of sight. The tower from which the *Beowulf* poet and Tolkien achieve this gaze is built up of old stone that has already been used in building the ancestral home of the builder. That is, it is composed of inherited material, and this inherited material is valued primarily because it is old. "Slowly with the rolling years, the obvious (so often the last revelation of analytic study) has been discovered: that [in *Beowulf*] we have to deal with a poem by an Englishman using afresh ancient and largely traditional material" ("Monsters" 17). At first glance this sentence appears to suggest a Miltonic value for tradition: it is validated by being used "afresh." Such an interpretation fits well with reading Tolkien as a proto- New Critic (a fallacy I shall discuss later), and is certainly defensible when applied in light of *The Lord of the Rings*. But I think Tolkien really wants

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21 Edward Irving suggested this metaphor in his response to my paper at the 1996 International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, MI.
to suggest something simpler; that, just as is the case in *Beowulf*, the material is valuable because it is "eald" ("old"). In the two hundred and twenty-two words of the published version of the allegory of the tower there are five occurrences of "old," and one each of "older," "more ancient," and "distant forefathers." Clearly the age of *Beowulf* and the antiquity of the materials of which it is constructed create much of the poem's value for Tolkien. I think this value is analogous to the value of inherited objects in *Beowulf* that I discussed in the previous chapter. That is, an object (in the case of Tolkien, a tale, story or word) is made particularly precious by its participation in a lineage, by its connection with a tradition.

In the lecture notes mentioned above, Tolkien suggests that a reverence for tales and objects possessed of a lineage was part of the English temperament: "The English of the earlier days had a marked 'historical mood' and interest not only in tales of the Past as tales of wonder, but in history as such: the history of their own country and people in particular. They had a wealth of traditions in their own tongue..." (A28 B fol. 170). These English are given their identity from their language and their lineage; they were "freemen who knew the names of their fathers and their fathers' fathers, who spoke undebased English in the manner of them, and knew and appreciated the literary (as we must call it) English of their long inherited tradition" (fol. 174).

Yet the language had changed and the lineage had been broken. Direct inheritance by blood was no longer possible. Englishmen had forgotten the names of their forefathers, or these names had changed beyond recognition. Inheritance by blood was no longer possible. So Tolkien created the inheritance anew in his mythology that he had originally wished to dedicate "to England; to my country." More importantly for the purposes of this study, however, he worked to weave together the loose strands of Anglo-Saxon culture into a comprehensible inheritance. Thus in other lecture notes (which, according to dates on

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22 If for no other reason than the contamination of the Anglo-Saxon lineage by French bloodlines.
some associated envelopes, seem to have been written or at least re-copied in 1962),
Tolkien suggests that the *Beowulf* poet should be called "Heorrenda rather than X" (A28 C, fol. 6v).23 Heorrenda is, of course, the "scop" ("poet" or "minstrel") who replaces the aging "scop" Deor in the poem of that name. Here we see the elements of the synthesizing practice that led directly to the Rohirrim in *The Lord of the Rings*.24

The Rohirrim speak Old English, lament their dead in alliterative verse and, with the exception of their extensive use of horses, are for all intents and purposes Anglo-Saxon (see Shippey 1983 93-98). In creating them Tolkien took an enormous number of disputed ideas about the Anglo-Saxons and synthesized them into a seamless whole. Thus he describes his idealized view of the Anglo-Saxons in *The Two Towers*: "They are proud and wilful, but they are true-hearted, generous in thought and deed; bold but not cruel; wise but unlearned, writing no books but singing many songs ..." (39-40). It is a far cry from the monkish Anglo-Saxons we have encountered elsewhere in this dissertation, but perhaps descriptive of aristocratic men as described in *The Gifts of Men* and *The Fortunes of Men*. Tolkien thought the some sort of warrior society lay behind the later culture documented by monastic scriptoria. In other words, the characterization of the Riders of Rohan as (it seems) pre-Christian Anglo-Saxons, perhaps the companions of Hengest and Horsa, works to fill in the gaps of Anglo-Saxon history.25 Likewise by bringing Heorrenda into the world of *Beowulf* and *Beowulf* into the world of *Deor*, Tolkien weaves a tapestry of Anglo-Saxon culture that while not controverted by the fragmentary evidence, is not substantiated, either.

23 "rather than X" is written interlinearly in pencil and marked for insertion with a caret.
24 Geoffrey Russom suggested this link between Tolkien's use of Heorrenda and the creation of the Rohirrim.
25 As Christopher Tolkien notes in *Unfinished Tales*, the names of the leaders of the Rohirrim (which in *The Lord of the Rings* are all Anglo-Saxon words for "king") before their migration into the known lands of Middle Earth are Gothic (311). Tolkien, it seems to me, is here suggesting that the Anglo-Saxons, before their migrations, were Goths (see also Shippey 1983 12).
In other words, Tolkien’s synthesis is very much an "invention" of the Middle Ages as discussed by Norman Cantor (31-47). 26

This invention is Tolkien's tower. But what was the sea he was able to view from its top? In her perceptive reading of "Monsters," Lees argues that seeing from the top of the tower allows "the poem, the poet and the critic to transcend time, conquering it as does the hero, Beowulf, at the moment of his death" (134). This transcendent gaze (and the very idea of such a view) is enmeshed in "masculinist" ideology; that is, it is inextricably linked with the gender role, politics and ideology of the poet and critic. I agree with Lees that Tolkien's reading of Beowulf and the poem itself promote an exceptionally "masculinist" viewpoint, but I believe she is incorrect in several particulars of her argument. These infelicities are cleared up, however, by reading "Monsters" in light of the forms of traditional and masculine, same-sex reproduction that I have discussed in the previous chapters of this dissertation.

"Tolkien's New Critical Readers" is Lees' title for the section of her essay "Men and Beowulf" that deals with "Monsters," and in this section she argues that Tolkien is a New Critic (130-31). This assertion is exceptionally problematic, and illustrative of a tendency widespread in post-structuralist criticism to make "New Criticism" the "other" of any favored contemporary critical approach. As I have discussed above, the two versions of "Critics" show that the ideas behind "Monsters" were present as early as 1927 (although the

26 Cantor recognizes that Tolkien and his close friend C.S. Lewis saw a continuity between their own culture and that of the Middle Ages, but the rest of his discussion of Tolkien is riddled with factual errors (the two most egregious examples: Tolkien had four children, not three; "Mordor," the evil Land of Shadow is misspelled as "Modor" — a rather amusing Freudian slip in Old English, since the final verse of The Lord of the Rings poem would then be: "One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them / In the land of Mother, where the shadows lie"). More damaging to his argument, Cantor completely misses the subtleties of Tolkien's scholarly work and his fiction and reads The Lord of the Rings as an allegorical interpretation of the Middle Ages. Thus the ridiculous suggestions that the trilogy "communicates the experience of endemic war and the fear of armed bands that was a frequent condition of the period from 400 to the middle of the eleventh century... " (231). Of course the protagonists and sympathetic heroes of the epic are themselves an "armed band," and we read little of the terror they inspire.
Although, as Graff shows, the elements of the New Criticism began to be developed in America as early as the late 1920's and early 1930's (144-47), it would be most anomalous for Tolkien, a man educated in the specific Oxford tradition of philological inquiry and generally antipathetic towards American life, to adopt so early the work of an originally American school of thought that was just beginning to coalesce at the time "Critics" was being drafted. In addition, C.S. Lewis (presumably with Tolkien's blessing; the two were exceptionally close at this time) as early as 1939 vigorously attacked both F.R. Leavis and I. A. Richards as being part of a "tradition of educated infidelity" overly influenced by the "personal heresy," and arguing that Leavis' positions were based only on subjective judgment and were therefore unsound (Carpenter 1979 64).27

Tolkien does criticize former historical scholars for producing very little criticism that is composed of "actual judgments of Beowulf, as a thing itself, as a poem, as a work of art, having structure and motive" ("Critics," fol. 2). In "Monsters" he writes that "Beowulfiana" is weak in "criticism that is directed to the understanding of a poem as a poem" (14). Both appear to be New Critical sentiments and both were enthusiastically supported by the great historical critic R.W. Chambers in letters to Tolkien. In a letter dated 14 December 1937 Chambers writes:

You will, I hope, long outlive me, and I do trust that you will go on impressing on Oxford that to give too serious attention to the 'literature' of Beowulf, Shakespeare, or any classic imposes an obligation which is not consistent with a free and untrammelled (or is it untrammeled?) study of the thing itself. I feel this at the moment very much about _Piers Plowman_ (MS. Tolkien 4 fol. 61-61).

But New Critical sentiments do not a New Critic make, and if an exhortation to discount the "literature" of a poem is New Critical, then nearly every scholarly practice can be so considered. It is only in the context of previous historical criticism that Tolkien's statements (and Chambers' response to them) can be understood. Tolkien was reacting

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27 "Zeitgeist" arguments—the idea that New Critical ideas leapt _ab initio_ from the brows of scholars between the years of, say 1925 and 1955—are unhistorical and unconvincing.
specifically to the tendency, exemplified in his view by Sir Archibald Strong, to interpret *Beowulf* as primarily a historical document ("Critics" fol. 5-6; "Monsters" 15).²⁸ Looking at the poem as a poem is a reaction to severely historical criticism of Strong’s kind, in which *Beowulf* is viewed as a window onto ancient Anglo-Saxon life and nothing more. This view of the poem was for Tolkien both frustratingly circular and emotionally empty. It is not, however, the somewhat accurately stereotyped practice of New Critics viewing the poem in a cultural, political and social vacuum. Tolkien’s essay, with its focus on etymology and philology (particularly in the little-read appendices), religious interpretation and historical speculation (particularly in "Critics") does not in fact fit into any particular school, though he is perhaps most closely aligned with A.S. Cook. That is, just as Cook did not fit into the stereotype of the dry-as-dust philologist, so too Tolkien does not fit into either this category or that of New Critic. Both scholars are anomalous in their blending of vast philological learning, literary sensitivity and Christian ethics.

Lees supports her assertion that "Monsters" is "an early and important example of New Criticism in Anglo-Saxon studies" (131) with a reference to Frantzen’s *Desire for Origins*. But Frantzen does not in fact state that Tolkien was New Critic, only that "Monsters" claimed that "historical analysis had swamped the poetic merits of the texts, and set about to reassert the balance between history and criticism" (1990 113). Tolkien did indeed open the door to New Critical readings of the poem, a door, as George Clark notes, that postwar critics were happy to walk to through (9). But the difference between unlocking the door and taking a seat in the parlor is an important distinction.

Lees' assumption that Tolkien was a New Critic causes her to assimilate Tolkien’s essay to a standard trope fast becoming a critical cliche: the misidentification as universal something that is in fact particular. In the case of "Monsters," it is the false perception that something gendered male necessarily can stand in for all humans of both genders. But, as

²⁸ George Clark argues a similar point in the analysis of "Monsters" in his 1990 *Beowulf* (8-11).
my argument above shows, Tolkien did not regard Beowulf as universal. Not everyone could climb the tower, which had been built for Englishmen who shared a tongue, a soil, and a life beneath a northern sky. Likewise I do not believe that Tolkien creates a reader who is the "liberal humanist construct of the universal male, 'we'" (Lees 133). Lees is undoubtedly correct in arguing that the "universal" reader constructed by "Monsters" is in fact male, but I think Tolkien intended this to be the case. Lees notes that in the allegory of the tower, "critic and author come perilously close to being the same" (132), a point analogous to Shippey's contention that Tolkien believed that he shared motive and technique with the Beowulf poet (1983 37). This identification across the centuries relies on the recognition (or, if you prefer, the illusion) of fundamental continuities between one time and another. These continuities, as constructed by the poem and its reader Tolkien, are those of masculine, same-sex, non-biological reproduction.

But as I have discussed in previous chapters (particularly in my examination of Beowulf) such reproduction carries as a concomitant and inescapable attribute the ultimate "tragedy" of its own failure. Lees notes that "the maintenance of patrilineal genealogy is no easy thing." "Patrilineal genealogy cannot guarantee the continuity of kingly life, she adds, "but it is the only institution available" (141-42). In fact, patrilineal genealogy, inheritance by blood, will always fail if construed in narrow terms. There is, however, another institution available, namely the reproduction of identities through culture, inheritance by deeds. But that sort of inheritance—as my analysis of Beowulf shows—is doomed without at least some component of blood.

29 Tolkien had particularly fierce ideas about the benefits of excluding women from the Inklings' literary activities, and in a 1941 letter to his son Michael suggested that in general women, while "sympathetic" and "understanding," did not have the ability to pursue study (or possibly literary art) without the guiding hand of a male teacher (49-50). On the practical—as opposed to the ideological—side, however, he did zealously promote the careers of a number of his female Oxford students.
Tolkien recognized the futility of exclusive masculine homosocial reproduction. He located civilization in the masculine institutions of the *Beowulf* poet (in particular the bright hall), outside of which the chaos-monsters ruled. The primary theme of *Beowulf*, Tolkien wrote, is "that man, each man and all men and all their works shall die." *Beowulf* is not subject to reproach for fighting with the dragon because he would have died anyway, albeit from a different sling or arrow of fortune. This fatalism is a logical and inevitable consequence of historical knowledge: "as the poet looks back into the past, surveying the history of kings and warriors in the old traditions, he sees that all glory (or as we might say 'culture' or 'civilization') ends in night" (27).

In an important 1993 paper, John Niles suggests a reorientation of scholarly attention to *Beowulf* from the question "What does [the poem] mean?" to "What work did the poem do?" (Niles 79). Gillian Overing proposes that critics ask the question "who wants what in Beowulf and who gets it?" (69). I would apply both sets of questions to "Monsters." First, the work of "*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics" is the work of masculine, same-sex reproduction. The institutions it reproduces are not the warrior comitatus or the Anglo-Saxon hall-retinue of kings, but rather the scholarly, religious and emotional matrix in which Tolkien's identity was constituted. As Shippey notes, in 1921 the British Board of Education had printed a report condemning philology because this "German-made" science had helped lead to the outbreak of the first world war by leading to "German arrogance" (1983 7). Tolkien felt such sentiments painfully, as is shown not only by the letter quoted above but also by remarks printed in 1924 issue of *The Year's Work in English Studies*:

'philology' itself, conceived as a purely German invention, is in some quarters treated as though it were one of the things that the late war was fought to end ... a thing whose absence does credit to an Englishman, especially when engaged in work where some philological training and competence are an essential piece of apparatus (1924 36-37).
In Tolkien's reaction to political events beyond his control we see the self-reproducing effects of the desire for continuity. Having constructed himself as *Beowulf*'s ideal reader, Tolkien is concerned that the specific cultural influences that shaped his life will no longer be in existence to shape others. The old traditions may have reproduced in him, but they may lose their ability to reproduce by means of him. While he had provided fertile earth for the seeds of Anglo-Saxon culture, his ability to be a gardener was called into question by an outside threat to the land. Rightly or wrongly, Tolkien saw as gendered masculine the courage and determination needed to fight a losing battle without surrender. The characters in *The Lord of the Rings* who fight an analogous fight are (with only two exceptions, one admittedly not minor) male. As Overing notes, an inevitable consequence of this masculine ideology is the difficulty women have in speaking within the symbolic economy of both the poem and its critical tradition (xxiii).

What *Beowulf* and Tolkien both want is to reproduce their identities. *Beowulf* does not, dying as he does without son. Tolkien did have sons, but during the war—when he composed much of *The Lord of the Rings* as a serial sent to his son Christopher stationed in South Africa with the R.A.F.—he feared for the lives and futures of his. Lees argues that the masculine symbolic economy of the *Beowulf* leads inevitably to blood and death. That she means this as a criticism shows just how far her assumptions (which I believe are rather representative of contemporary criticism) are from Tolkien's. The ethos of heroism in *Beowulf* leads logically to the inevitability of the hero's death: "the only good hero, after all, is a dead one" (145). Overing also notes that "death seems to be a pervasive value in *Beowulf*" (xxiii). Tolkien, I believe, would agree with this point, but he would not have found it a cause for blame. And this is where Tolkien's point of view does become universalist—not in terms of his critical reader, but in terms of his understanding of human nature and the place of humans in the world.
For Lees and many other contemporary critics of Anglo-Saxon—James Earl immediately comes to mind (1994 76)—conditioned as they are by their historical situation and political beliefs, any violence is cause for blame. Therefore the essential tragedy of masculinist culture is that it inevitably leads to violence. As Lees puts it, "the ethos of the heroic world demands it" (143). For masculinist culture then, in the words of Berger and Leicester, social structure is doom (77). But Tolkien did not believe in such points of ideology. For him the violence required by masculinist culture was an unavoidable reaction to human existence in a fallen world. That is Tolkien's religious convictions as a devout Roman Catholic set up the framework by which he interpreted human existence. It is no accident that the entire *Silmarillion*, Tolkien's first fictional work and the set of legends that underlies all the rest, is at heart a reworking of the story of the Fall of Man (Shippey 1983 179).\(^3\) The sufficient tragedy of *Beowulf* and the entire "northern" legendary world was for Tolkien not that the poem participated in a social structure that inevitably leads to violence and death, but that the social structures inherent in the literature are responses to a human fate that inevitably ends in violence and death. There is what Thomas Sowell calls "a conflict of visions" between Tolkien and his most perceptive critics (33). This gap cannot be bridged without determining which vision is "true," and any critic who believes that he or she can definitively make such a determination on anything but purely personal biases is deluded.

For the purposes of this argument, then, I will accept Tolkien's assumptions that the tragedy of *Beowulf* reflects something of the inherent truth and sorrow of the world rather than the constructed structures of human cultures. The tragedy of *Beowulf*, then, the tragedy to be faced with "northern courage," is not that the hero dies. In *The Silmarillion*, Tolkien calls the death of men "the gift of Ilúvatar [the Creator] to Men." The

\(^3\) Tolkien's theological and moral speculations on the Fall of Man and his adaptation of this material in his fictional creations was not published until 1993, in the section of *Morgoth's Ring* entitled "Athrabeth Finrod Ah Andreth" (303-66).
Númenóreans fall because they cannot accept this gift, which they call the Doom of Men, and attempt to wrest eternal life from the Valar and the Elves (187, 265). All humans must die, and Tolkien was too devout to interpret this fate as an evil. But Beowulf's overarching tragedy, the one that he does not necessarily share with all other humans, is that he fails to reproduce. The traditions of behavior and the inheritances of identity which he possesses are not passed on. At some point the chain is broken.

The Hope of Rebirth

Cook and Tolkien both wished for the revival of what they saw as the goodness of Anglo-Saxon culture. Cook took active steps to bring about this rebirth, Tolkien believed that it was something to be desired but unlikely to happen. But even in their desire to return to the perceived positive values of Old English culture, they did not pursue a strong form of what Reginald Horsman calls "Anglo-Saxonism" (18-19). The political and ideological uses both critics found for Anglo-Saxon culture were neither racialist nor expansionist. Neither seems, in marked contrast to, say Thomas Jefferson (Frantzen 15-19), to have had very specific imperialist goals that could be aided by Old English. Rather both men, and Tolkien in particular, found in Anglo-Saxon culture less the warrior virtues of conquest and domination than have other appropriators of the Anglo-Saxon legacy.

This is not to say that Tolkien and Cook somehow pierced veils of ideology or politics. Both men used Anglo-Saxon culture for explicitly political projects—Cook to civilize the wildness of a new century, Tolkien to resurrect a quiet communion between folk and land. But because Cook's and Tolkien's politics cannot be reduced to the familiar (and what seem in the current ideological climate more egregious) purposes of pan-Germanicism, racism, or imperialism, they have generally been ignored—notwithstanding John Hermann's epithet of "right-wing" applied to Tolkien (1989 202). Yet the politics of Tolkien and
Cook should in fact be interrogated, and interrogated directly and not through the straw men of the New Criticism or "old" philology. Their politics are in a sense the politics of tradition itself, representing desires for continuity at all costs. Cook believed that Anglo-Saxon could come forth in the fresh soil of a new continent; Tolkien saw Old English as representing the continuity of a people with the land they occupied. But both scholars believed that their work might help to reshape their societies and direct them to a course long-lost but all the most valuable for its antiquity.

Both Cook and Tolkien were, I am certain, familiar with the anonymous "Life" of Ceolfrith, the Abbot of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow in the late seventh and early eighth century. According to the "Life," some time in the 680's a pestilence struck the monastery, and all who could read or preach, or say the antiphons and responses, were carried off, except the abbot himself and one little boy, who had been brought up and taught by him, and who now at this day, being in priest's orders in the same monastery, duly commends the abbot's praiseworthy acts both by his writings and his discourse to all desiring to know them. He - the abbot that is - being very sorrowful by reason of the aforesaid pestilence, ordered that the former use should be suspended, and that they should conduct all the psalm singing without antiphons, except at vespers and matins. When this had been put into practice for the space of a week, with many tears and laments on his part, he could not bear it any longer, and resolved to restore again the course of the psalmody with the antiphons according to custom; and, all exerting themselves, he fulfilled what he had resolved, with no small labor, by himself and the boy whom I mentioned, until he could either himself train, or gather from elsewhere, sufficient associates in the divine work (Whitelock 1968 699-701).

Due to the pestilence, the monastic community had almost been reduced to the very edge of extinction, but by 716 the abbeys of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow housed 600 monks, and the little boy who had been Ceolfrith's only surviving companion had grown up (scholars believe) to become the Venerable Bede, the greatest English scholar of the Middle Ages (Shirley-Price 20). Through masculine, same-sex reproduction, the transmission of
identities through discipline and teaching, monastic life was restored, and the abbeys of Monkwearmouth and Jarrow waxed great in power and influence for many years.

The image of such a rebirth must have provided encouragement to Cook and solace to Tolkien. It had taken only two men, and father figure and his monastic "son" to restore a nearly extinct community. Likewise what Tolkien called the "the patient work of philologists for 150 years" had revived the language of men dead long before the Norman Conquest. If such resurrections can be accomplished after a thousand years of dormancy, Cook and Tolkien both recognized, then the winds of fate were less likely to be able to destroy their own handiwork. The tradition of Anglo-Saxon studies offered for them, and to those who participate in it now as Cook's and Tolkien's heirs, the chance that their words might be heard years after their deaths.

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31 MS. A28B, fol. 269.
In a sense this dissertation began fifteen years ago. My mother told a family friend that I re-read *The Lord of the Rings* every June, if not more often. "Why do you re-read the same books again and again?" he asked me. I did not have an answer, but I have continued to read Tolkien’s trilogy every year since. In 1986, when I began my university study of literature and literary theory, I assumed that one of the authorities would have proffered an explanation that I would find convincing. I have yet to come across one.

My re-reading *The Lord of the Rings* each year in the summer (or Susan Cooper's *The Dark is Rising* every Christmas) is at least a rudimentary form of tradition, and it seemed to me that an investigation of tradition held the most promise for answering the question that has troubled me for so long. So in this dissertation I decided to investigate the ways traditions are constituted and how they work. And because the traditional is always associated with the old, I focused my attention upon the oldest English texts, those written in Anglo-Saxon.

In my examination of the theoretical basis of tradition I determined that in order for a practice to be traditional it must be recognized as such, and that there is no difference between such recognition and tradition itself. Thus tradition is not so much the repeated practice of certain behaviors but the identification of continuities or lineages that link the past and the present. Such continuities are recognized as valuable because they help perpetuate social and individual identities across generational boundaries. My analysis of
the Anglo-Saxon wills shows that such continuities may be accessed or manufactured by institutions that wish to gain a past to go with their present. Continuities are also a valuable consolation for individuals faced with their deaths. By linking the perpetuation of their memories to an institution (the monastery), individuals hope to gain an extension of social influence and a measure of eternal life in addition to that promised them by the church.

But the monastery must itself endure in order to be the custodian of such memories, and it had to attempt to avoid change as it reproduced itself across the generations. To accomplish this goal the monastery relied upon two methods: a text-based social structure and same-sex reproduction. Texts can preserve information even while memories fade and customs gradually shift. By basing their social structure and their reproduction upon texts, monasteries attempted to forestall change within their walls. Texts do, of course, remain the same from one reading to another, but their interpretation changes with the interpreter. To limit these changes, the monastery localized all interpretation in the person of one individual, the abbot. He was responsible for applying the fixed text of the monastic Rule to the changing physical and cultural world. He was responsible for the reproduction of the monastery. The abbot, therefore becomes a father-figure, one who reproduces himself not through biological means (he is, after all, celibate), but through the same-sex inculcation of identity in members of a younger generation through discipline, exhortation, and example.

Same-sex reproduction could, of course, work among women as well as men and in nunneries as well as monasteries. But during the Benedictine reform feminine same-sex reproduction was excluded from the major institutions of the culture (and the texts they produced). Such exclusion occurred due to the underlying gender asymmetry of Anglo-Saxon society, and resulted in the configuration of same-sex reproduction as a solely masculine process. This configuration in turn created a general and pervasive anxiety in the
monastery because same-sex reproduction relies upon biological reproduction, and that in turn requires the very women who have been excluded.

Masculinized same-sex reproduction can work in a monastery, where heterosexual contact has been eliminated by the renunciation of the world. But biological reproduction is still a necessity for continued existence, and all men were not interested in becoming monks. Through its production of texts and its participation in the conscience-forming system of penance and confession, the monastery influenced the wider secular culture, and after the Benedictine reform, the monastery's ideological influence became such that there existed in Anglo-Saxon culture the idea that in order to reproduce themselves, individuals had to imitate the father who was the abbot, instilling in their "children" ideals of behavior and thought. Of course this same-sex reproduction was different from that pursued by the secular culture, and in the wisdom poems of the second booklet of the Exeter Book we see monks attempting to understand how the monastery and its reproduction could relate to the aristocratic culture from which its members came.

Inheritance and the same-sex reproduction of identities are important concerns of Beowulf, a text that also, I believe, comes from the intersection of the monastery and the aristocratic warrior culture of the tenth century. In the monastic regulations and the wisdom poems, father-figures discipline and train their "sons." In Beowulf we see another role that fathers must perform: they must die, and in so doing inspire their sons to imitate them. Beowulf, then, works to shape the imaginary life of Anglo-Saxon culture, showing not only what fathers must do, but illustrating what it is they struggle against.

Tradition and inheritance in Anglo-Saxon culture are, it seems to me, about the perpetuation of the self in the face of dissolution. They are instruments of the desire to retain influence and identity after death. With this desire comes a concomitant hope that through tradition, long-dead identities and cultures may be reborn. Such was the hope of the two most influential Anglo-Saxonists of the twentieth century, A.S. Cook and J.R.R.
Tolkien, and it is a hope they have bequeathed to their inheritors of the scholarly tradition of Anglo-Saxon studies.

It was upon my investigation of Cook and Tolkien that I recognized what tradition offers in exchange for our participation in its cycles. In working to recover the memory of the past, scholars implicitly bargain that the future will try to resurrect our own memories. This is the lure and promise of tradition, and the way it reproduces itself. Perpetuate the cycle of your fathers, tradition offers, and you in turn will be reproduced by your sons. By joining the cycle, by requiring for our own social, cultural and memetic reproduction the reproduction of already-existing social and cultural structure and practices, tradition plays upon our deepest desires: to endure, to escape death, to live forever.

However, as I have come to realize only at the very end of this investigation, tradition exacts a price for its tantalizing offer of eternal life. Because this price is paid not by "fathers," but by "sons," neither I nor other investigators of tradition have commented upon it. In order to reproduce himself traditionally, by masculine, same-sex cultural reproduction, a "father" must limit his "son's" individuality and freedom, shaping him as he in turn was shaped so as to reproduce the cycle of identities. This loss of individuality and freedom is a tremendous price to pay—even for the possibility of eternal life.

When I began this study I thought that I would end by defending tradition, by showing that what it was preserving was, as Albert Lord stated, "the very means of life and happiness." Now I am not so sure. Masculine, same-sex cultural reproduction seems to play a valuable part in the making of culture, and much that it produces and reproduces—like Beowulf or the wisdom poems of the Exeter Book—is both precious and fragile. I would not have it lost. But the traditions created by cultural reproduction exact a price for their utility, and I am certain that I do not know enough to compare these costs with the benefits of tradition.
I end, therefore, without a fully satisfying answer to my original question, although I now recognize that by re-reading certain books I am looking both backwards and forwards. I look back to my own father, who read *The Lord of the Rings* aloud to me when I was five years old, and also to the former me, that child, who is the father of the man who reads the books now. And I look forward to myself in the future, the father of the child to whom I hope to pass these books and their tradition. But having completed this dissertation as part of my initiation into a cultural practice in which I will have great opportunity to reproduce myself in individuals of a younger generation, I am beset with doubts. It seems wrong to coerce someone to reproduce my identity for me, and the line between making someone reproduce me, and simply allowing him or her to take on aspect of my identity seems very thin indeed. On the other hand, traditions and the continuities upon which they depend are fragile, and new, manufactured or invented traditions are not the same thing as those that have existed for long periods of time. Without the ability to perform a cost/benefit analysis of tradition, therefore, it seems incumbent to preserve traditions for future generations, not to squander the cultural inheritance previous generations have bequeathed.

A solution, if there is one, perhaps lies in freedom, in allowing "sons" and "daughters," biological and cultural, to choose to adopt the traditions bequeathed to them. Such freedom need not, after all, eliminate tradition if its custodians in the academy and the culture at large perform well their duties of husbandry. Throughout this project I have—often when I most needed it—been inspired by the Anglo-Saxon texts themselves, by their ability to speak to me across a thousand years of change. And I have been encouraged by the examples of my teachers who have offered to me my cultural inheritance without forcing me to accept it. It seems to me that this exchange is what is most valuable and essential about tradition: someone offering the gift of culture, and someone accepting and offering it in turn.
... all glory (or as we might say 'culture' or 'civilization') ends in night.

--J.R.R. Tolkien, "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics"

Throughout this dissertation I have argued for the necessity of the self-conscious examination of assumptions, methodologies and practices. I have also struggled to avoid solipsism, trying to justify my readings by logic and argument rather than appeals to authority (for I have little). But self-consciousness should apply at all levels, and so in this afterward I try to apply some scrutiny to the self that has written all that has gone before. I therefore will make a critical "move" the inverse of that of the New Criticism. Rather than taking one man's experience as universal, I want to show the effects the cultural work done by Anglo-Saxon literature and processes of masculine reproduction on one masculine reader of the poem for whom I can speak with great authority: myself. So to again answer John Niles' question, "What does the poem do?" on May 1, 1993, in Columbia, Missouri, it did this:

That evening five Anglo-Saxonists gathered at the home of Professor John Miles Foley to read Beowulf straight through in Old English. We followed a regular schedule, each reading between fifty and two hundred lines at a stretch, and just after Finnesburh we took a break for a "symbol" ("feast") of our own.¹ It was a convivial occasion, the end of a

¹ John Foley's description of the events can be found in the ANSAX-Net archive, http://www.mun.ca/Ansaxdat/. A keyword search using "Foley" and "Drout" will bring up the posting.
long semester, and the group was festive. With one exception. Just before the feast I had received word that my family expected my uncle to die that evening. This was sad news, but not at all a surprise. My uncle had been struggling with AIDS for nearly four years and he was very sick, so I thought I had well prepared myself. Yet the news struck me as I never imagined it would. My uncle, a gay man who had not reproduced biologically, had in no small way culturally reproduced himself in me. An English major in college and, for a while, a high school English teacher, he had hung a poster of the map of Middle Earth in the guest room at my grandmother's house when I was two years old. He read to me from the *Lord of the Rings* and, my mother claims, suggested that I be allowed to dress as a Black Rider for my Halloween costume when I was three. He was the first person to tell me that Tolkien had been inspired by a poem called *Beowulf*.

So that evening in Missouri I thought about him when I listened to my colleagues reading. And as the poem moved through the dragon-fight to the hero's death, I felt, gradually, the effect of *Beowulf* given aloud and all at once, a complex and layered emotional progression that, despite my very real grief, left me feeling stronger and stronger as the poem progressed. At that time I learned that one work that *Beowulf* can do is to give a clear shape to grief and to loss so that, while they remain painful, they can be controlled and, perhaps, understood. This is not to say, necessarily, that *Beowulf* or other Anglo-Saxon poems are elegies. I can not say that *Beowulf* is a comfort. I did not feel good after the reading, and I am sure I shed as many tears at my uncle's funeral as I would have had I done something else the night of the *Beowulf* reading. Yet *Beowulf* can, somehow, structure the inevitable fear and loss that comes with death, and this structuring encompasses and eventually surpasses both emptiness and finality. *Beowulf* is dead, but his memory lives on, intertwined with the human emotions of those who bring the poem to life in their own age. *Beowulf*, like my uncle, had no children of his own, but by means of the poem he is reproduced in his people and across the centuries whenever his poem is read.
Tolkien knew that *Beowulf* can do this sort of cultural work. I believe that, like the Parson in *Farmer Giles of Ham*, "he was a grammarian, and could doubtless see further into the future than others" (119). But Tolkien believed this aspect of the cultural work of *Beowulf* to be possible not for all or for "universal" readers, but only for those who shared in a certain fundamental continuity with the poet and the poem. He saw that continuity as being part of a nation beneath a northern sky; I see it made by the participation in the same-sex reproduction of culture, but I think we are talking about the same thing. John Hermann criticizes the tendency of critics of Old English literature to allow themselves to "becomes the ideal reader of the text as preparation for Eulogy" (13). Clare Lees wonders how to resist the "authoritarian patriarchy" that *Beowulf* "enforce[s]" upon its readers (137). Resistance to the rhetorical powers of texts, one of the responsibilities of a scholar, was to a degree neglected by critics who saw Tolkien as comrade rather than as object of study. This necessary resistance has a reward: breaking the continuities between text and reader, it interrupts the reproduction of institutions and ideologies, institutions like warrior culture and ideologies like masculinism whose persistence in the modern world bedevils critics possessed of utopian, unconstrained visions of societal reform. Few would argue that reforms which counter masculinism or violence are undesirable. Yet, as Tolkien recognized in regard to the struggle against violent German nationalism, reform has its price. Losing the continuities of masculine cultural reproduction, we as readers may lose the possibility of moments such as the one I experienced that night in Missouri when I read the words "manna mildust ond monðwærst." The possibility that such a sacrifice may be necessary to further critical inquiry or, more importantly, justice or equality is for me, and many, sufficient tragedy.
APPENDIX I

CORPUS OF WILLS USED IN THIS STUDY
APPENDIX I
CORPUS OF WILLS USED IN THIS STUDY

Legend:
Number in Figures 1 and 3 / date of will / name of testator / Sawyer number

1 / 805 to 832 / Æthelnoth / S 1500
2 / 833 to 839 / Abba, reeve / S 1482
3 / 845 to 853 / Badanoth Beotting / S 1510
4 / 855 / Dunn / S 1514
5 / 871 to 889 / Alfred ealdorman / S 1508
6 / 873 to 888 / King Alfred / S 1507
7 / 900 / Ceolwynn / S 1513
8 / 900 ? / Ordnoth / S 1524
9 / 931 to 939 / Wulfgar / S 1533
10 / 932 to 939 / Alfred thegn / S 1509
11 / 942 to 951 / Theodred / S 1526
12 / 946-947 / Earl Æthelwold / S 1504
13 / 946 to 951 / Ælfgar / S 1483
14 / 950 / Wynflæd / S 1539
15 / 950 to 1025 / Siflæd / S 1525
16 / 951 to 955 / Eadred / S 1515
17 / 955 to 958 / Ælfsige / S 1491
18 / 957 to 958 / Aethelgeard / S 1496
19 / 958 / Aethelwyrd / S 1506
20 / 961-995 / Aethelric / S 1501
21 / 962 to 991 / Aethelflaed / S 1494
22 / 964 to 980 / Brihtric Grim / S 1512
23 / 966 to 975 / Elfgifu / S 1484
24 / 968 to 971 / Elfheah / S 1485
25 / 971 to 983 / Aethelmar / S 1498
26 / 973 to 987 / Brihtric and Elfswith / S 1511
27 / 975 to 1016 / Elfhelm / S 1487
28 / 978-1016 / Ernketel and Wulfrun / S 1493
29 / 980-990 / Ethelgifu / S 1497
30 / 984 to 1016 / Wulfwaru / S 1538
31 / 987 / Ethelwold / S 1505
32 / 998 / Leofwine / S 1522
33 / 1000 / Wulfgeat / S 1534
34 / 1000 to 1002 / Elflaed / S 1486
35 / 1002 to 1004 / Wulfri / S 1536
36 / 1003 to 1004 / Alfric archbishop / S 1488
37 / 1004 to 1014 / Ethelflaed to St. Paul's / S 1495
38 / 1008 to 1012 / Elfwold / S 1492
39 / 1015 / Athelstan Ætheling / S 1503
40 / 1017 to 1035 / Leoflad / S 1520
41 / 1017 to 1035 / Manat the Anchorite / S 1523
42 / 1020 and after / Thurketel Heyng / S 1528
43 / 1022 to 1043 / Wulfsgie / S 1537
44 / 1035 to 1040 / Ælfric bishop / S 1489
45 / 1035 to 1044 / Leosgifu / S 1521
46 / 1038 or before / Thurketel / S 1527
47 / 1042 to 1043 / Ælfric Modercope / S 1490
48 / 1042 to 1043 / Thurstan / S 1530
49 / 1042 to 1053 / Wulfgyth / S 1535
50 / 1042-1066 / Ulf / S 1532
51 / 1043 to 1045 / Thurstan son of Wine / S 1531
52 / 1047 to 1070 / Æthelmar bishop / S 1499
53 / 1050 - / Eadwine / S 1516
54 / 1050 / Æthelric Bigga / S 1502
55 / 1050 - / Thurkil and Æthelgyth / S 1529
56 / 1052 to 1066 / Ketel / S 1519
57 / 1053 / Eadwine of Caddington / S 1517
58 / 1066 to 1068 / Ulf and Madselin / Sawyer does not list
xx / ?? / Godric / S 1518
APPENDIX II
COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS PERMISSIONS
Dear Mr Drout

CITATION FROM THE ACADEMIC PAPERS OF J R R TOLKIEN HELD BY THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD

Thank you for your letter dated 18 June 1996, on which I now have my clients' instructions.

They have asked me to confirm to you that they would have no objection to your quoting from your notes on the Tolkien manuscripts as described in the second paragraph of your letter. They are also prepared to grant you the permission for a microfilm copy to be made of the manuscript referred to in your third paragraph. They are grateful to you for the confirmation in your fourth paragraph of the basis upon which permissions are granted.

I have today written to Dr Judith Priestman at the Bodleian to inform her of the grant of these permissions.

May I also take this opportunity, on behalf of the Tolkien Estate, to wish you well in your doctoral work.

Yours sincerely

CATHLEEN BLACKBURN
June 18, 1996

Mrs. C. Blackburn
(on behalf of Tolkien family)
Morrell, Peel and Gamlen
(Solicitors)
1 St. Giles Street
Oxford
United Kingdom

Dear Mrs. Blackburn,

I am a doctoral candidate at Loyola University Chicago in the process of completing a dissertation in Anglo-Saxon studies. The final chapter of my dissertation discusses the influence of J.R.R. Tolkien's philological and critical work on the field of Anglo-Saxon studies in the twentieth century. In researching this chapter, I recently examined some of Professor Tolkien's academic manuscripts held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and found some materials that would greatly assist me in writing my dissertation.

The Bodleian informed me of the desires of the Tolkien Trustees to protect Professor Tolkien's intellectual property and the requirement that researchers apply to the Trustees for permission before reproducing, publishing or quoting any of the material archived in the Library. I am therefore taking this opportunity to request your permission to use in my dissertation the notes I have made on manuscripts Tolkien 1, Tolkien 4, Tolkien A26/1-4, and Tolkien A28/B,C&D. These notes consist of brief quotations (only one is as long as one double-spaced page; the rest much shorter) from Professor Tolkien's writings on *Beowulf*, and from several letters written to Professor Tolkien by eminent Anglo-Saxonists discussing his seminal "*Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*" essay.

The Bodleian also informed me that I might ask the Trustees permission to have manuscript Tolkien 26/1-4 photographed and microfilmed (for the purpose of my own study; not for publication). Though I really only need to examine a few specific pages here and there, Dr. Judith Priestman informed me that the Bodleian's policy requires the
entire manuscript to be photographed. Though such a procedure is expensive, I would be quite willing to pay for it. Microfilms would assist me in the arduous task of deciphering Professor Tolkien's handwriting, and they would also preserve the manuscript which, not having been written on acid-free paper, is in need of conservation.

I understand that if I do receive permission to reproduce some quoted material, such permission only extends to my dissertation itself and not to any subsequent use of this material. If a re-written version of my dissertation is ever accepted for publication I would, of course, re-apply to the Tolkien Trustees for permission to publish Professor Tolkien's words in that form.

I am most grateful for your assistance with this matter and would be delighted to provide you with any additional information you might need in making your decision. If you would like to examined my curriculum vitae, or if you need references as to my scholarly standing and qualifications (from professors in either the U.S. or Great Britain), I would be glad to supply them. Let me assure you that my work is by no means an attempt to sell, market or otherwise misuse Professor Tolkien's academic legacy but is a scholarly dissertation leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Thank you very much for your consideration and for your time spent on this matter.

Very truly yours,

Michael D.C. Drout
Loyola University Chicago
February 5, 1997

Michael D. C. Drout
Department of English
Loyola University Chicago
6525 North Sheridan Road
Chicago, IL 60626

Dear Mr. Drout:

In accordance with your request of January 28, 1997, the Yale University Library hereby authorizes you to publish the manuscript material in its collections identified and described as:

In the Albert Stanburrough Cook Papers, Humanities and Fine Arts Collection,
   “An Address:” Comparing the modern librarian...”, 1 paragraph; “Introduction to King Lear”, 1 sentence; Letter from Henry Holt and Company, 1 sentence; Receipt from The Nation, 1 sentence; Handcorrected article from the New Haven Palladium, 2 paragraphs; Brochure from Chicago Record's Home Study Circle, 2 sentences.

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Ann Okerson
Associate University Librarian

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Judith Ann Schiff
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WORKS CITED

“Yale’s New Professor.” New Haven Palladium June 25, 1889.


Michael David Craig Drout was born May 3, 1968 in Neptune, New Jersey. After attending public schools in New York, Massachusetts, and New Jersey, he attended Carnegie Mellon University, receiving in 1990 his Bachelor of Arts degree in Professional and Creative Writing. He then earned a Master of Arts in Communication (Journalism) from Stanford University in 1991.

In 1993 Mr. Drout received the Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Missouri-Columbia. His thesis, An Investigation into the Identity of the "Partridge" in the Old English "Physiologus," was directed by Professor John Miles Foley.

Mr. Drout spent the next four years (1993-96) at Loyola University Chicago, where he was a graduate assistant, the Director of the Writing Centers, and an Arthur J. Schmitt Dissertation Fellow. During this time he taught classes in Loyola's English department and writing workshops for the School of Law. In 1995 he completed his coursework and Ph.D. examinations, and in 1997 defended the dissertation, Imitating Fathers: Tradition, Inheritance and the Reproduction of Culture in Anglo-Saxon England, which was directed by Professor Allen J. Frantzen.

Beginning in the fall of 1997 Mr. Drout will be Assistant Professor of English at Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts.
The dissertation "Imitating Fathers: Tradition, Inheritance, and the Reproduction of Culture in Anglo-Saxon England" submitted by Michael David Craig Drout has been read and approved by the following committee:

Allen J. Frantzen, Ph.D., Director
Professor, English
Loyola University Chicago

Karma Lochrie, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, English
Loyola University Chicago

Barbara H. Rosenwein, Ph.D.
Professor, History
Loyola University Chicago

The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English

2 April 1997

date

Director's Signature