Aesthetics

In an age of ideological criticism, aesthetics has become a code word for appreciation, for analysis that strives to be apolitical. Aesthetics, art, and ideology are among the "whole body of activities" that Raymond Williams, in *Marxism and Literature*, described as "alienated" from "ordinary cultural practices." In the modern world, this alienation has meant that "none of these things can then be grasped for what they are: as real practice, elements of a whole material social process" (1977: 94). In some respects, Anglo-Saxon studies has also isolated the aesthetic from other cultural practices. Until recently, few scholars sought to situate the aesthetic in the history of Anglo-Saxon culture or in the culture itself.

We know that the Anglo-Saxons produced and prized beautiful things, but our knowledge of their aesthetic standards is incomplete. We assume that the ideas and objects that the culture valued most highly, including books, their illustrations and gold covers, were also those thought of as beautiful (see **Book**). Things declared to be beautiful in OE sources are often assessed spiritually rather than visually or in terms of another sense, such as sound or touch. The noun *ansyn*, for example, can refer to physical beauty but can also

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simply mean outward appearance. *Fægernes* means physical, moral, or spiritual beauty (*DOE*). Beautiful things in OE are often shining and bright. Thus *torht*, meaning "bright," is often translated as "beautiful." The most common noun for beauty is *wlite*; the adjective, *wlitig*, beautiful, is also common. Both refer to form or appearance but can also mean beautiful in appearance (Bosworth–Toller).

More difficult to trace, given the elite sources of so much of the evidence, is the aesthetic in the sense of a shared standard that could be known as "cultural common sense" or Kantian *sensus communis* or standard of general taste (Kant 1987: 160–6). In this latter category we might think of simple objects such as drinking-cups that are not ordinarily included in the world of the beautiful, beautiful though such things might be. We value artistic qualities in Anglo-Saxon high-status objects and texts, but we have few means of determining how the aesthetic might reveal communal rather than individual preferences. Communal in an Anglo-Saxon context usually refers to a small group of the literate. However, palaeography, codicology, and vocabulary show that among the educated elite standards were by no means uniform. The aesthetic of a particular center might be well known. In the visual arts, for example, that of the "Winchester School," with its explicit connections to monastic reform in the late tenth century, is well known (Gameson 1999). But how widely those aesthetics are shared is not clear.

Aesthetics has had a largely negative role in Anglo-Saxon studies up to the present, a condition only now beginning to be reversed. The collection of work *On the Aesthetics of* Beowulf *and Other Old English Poems* interrogates the processes by which quality and beauty have been and are determined in the assessment of OE poetry (Hill 2010). John M. Hill explores the larger philosophical context for aesthetics in the twentieth century, using aesthetics to pose "the question of *quality* in art." Hill notes that "quality always entails a standard of beauty, that standard related to a standard of truth as well" (2010: 5). But aesthetics, he adds, has seldom been confined to what he calls the "truth–beauty" relation. The philosophers whose work Hill emphasizes include Stephen C. Pepper and Charles Sanders Peirce. Peirce's work is central to Gillian Overing's reading of swords in *Beowulf* in "the domain of the artistic," which she extends to artifacts (1990: 37–43, 57–9). But, in Anglo-Saxon scholarship, Peirce and Pepper have yet to acquire the importance of Hans Robert Jauss, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and others who focus on the phenomenology of art, reception, and the co-creation of art by its audience

(see **Orality**, **Drama**). The essays in Hill's collection explore OE poetry, but this is not to say that aesthetics does not matter for prose and its repertory of literary effects and devices. In Hill's collection, Peggy Knapp offers a Kantian discussion of beauty, Michael D. C. Drout discusses a "meme-based approach" to aesthetic selection (see **Tradition**), and Yvette Kisor explores reader-response and indeterminacy, making use of Jauss's and Wolfgang Iser's work.

"Aesthetics" usually refers not to the standards of taste of the Anglo-Saxons but to the standards of the modern figures who write about them. By limiting aesthetics to inquiries into the beautiful, however useful those inquiries are, critics alienate aesthetic practices – which Williams shows to be cultural practices – from their material dimensions. Aesthetics in the sense of "appreciation of the beautiful" has been criticized in cultural analysis for decades. It might be true that "A poem should not mean / But be," to quote Archibald MacLeish (1972: 141–2). But to isolate poems or artefacts from context more easily renders them as objects of appreciation than of analysis.

Although few scholars of Anglo-Saxon poetry have hewed to this modernist dictum, many have felt compelled to apologize for the perceived aesthetic defects of OE verse. Indeed, a remarkable feature of Anglo-Saxon studies in the twentieth century was the degree to which certain kinds of poetry were elevated above other texts on the basis of "literary merit," one of the profession's many code words for aesthetic judgments. It was always the case that the heroic and the elegiac outranked the didactic or the historical on the basis of such merit. *Beowulf*, "The Wanderer," "The Seafarer," and "The Dream of the Rood" would always be placed above the riddles, the poems of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, "Soul and Body," "An Exhortation to Christian Living," and some others with roots in contemporary events (e.g., the coronation of Edgar; see **Charters**) or ideology (religious reform; see **Reform**). The poem known as *Juliana*, the tale of a virgin who prefers martyrdom to the pagan future proposed by her father and a rich suitor, is a case in point. Kenneth Sisam commented that, "To a modern taste the subject is a poor one" (1953: 7–8). Rosemary Woolf criticized a "uniformity" in the poem "verging on monotony" (1966: 17). Two decades later Joseph Wittig wrote that *Juliana* was no longer seen as "the worst of a bad lot" but added, "acknowledging that *Juliana* is consistently shaped by a figural and rhetorical design will not promote the poem to the ranks of the greatest Old English poetry" (1974: 39).

Such assessments diminish the cultural work of *Juliana* and other religious or historical texts by replacing assumed standards of the Anglo-Saxons with

the undefined standards of the modern age. Such criticism also ignores its own cultural work and begs the question of what the Anglo-Saxons thought of as beautiful. Things that were well ordered were chief among them. The OE word describing that kind of order, *endebrydnes*, also suggests the ideological implications of aesthetic principles, since what is well or properly ordered is a hierarchy that establishes power relationships and rank within an organized body. Perhaps the most important conflation of aesthetics and ideology in OE poetry occurs in the account of the poet Cædmon in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. Cædmon was able to turn sacred history into verse. Bede recounts the short poem that resulted from the poet's first inspiration in Latin prose, not OE verse. Cædmon's gift allowed him to versify narratives that had already been translated into the vernacular. The OE version of the hymn gives the *endebyrdnes* or "word order" of the hymn, while the Latin offers only the sense, and not the order of the words: *sensus, non autem ordo ipse uerborum* (Bede 1969: 416, book 4, ch. 24; see **Translation**). However, by turning poetry into prose, Bede reverses the process that made Cædmon famous and seems to turn against his own creation. It would seem that Bede admired the meaning of the hymn, not its form. Indeed, the latter might have struck Bede as anything but beautiful if it represented an unlearned (however highly wrought) compositional process associated with secular rather than sacred meaning.

A century and a half later, an OE translator of Bede's *History* omitted the statement about the aesthetics of translation and gave the hymn in the form of vernacular verse (Bede 1890–8: 344, book 4, ch. 24). We are tempted to read this reversal of Bede's reversal as a pragmatic or functional rather than as an aesthetic choice. However, it is impossible to know if the OE translator made such a separation, or even if such a separation could be made. The translator might have disagreed with the statement in the source or found it irrelevant. Not every statement with aesthetic consequences is intended as a statement about aesthetics, and in the OE period it is safe to say that most such statements were not.

ART, CHARTERS, BOOK, DRAMA, ORALITY, REFORM, TRADITION, TRANSLATION

Agriculture

"Agriculture" and "animal husbandry" are two of the most important keywords linking modern to medieval cultures, and also two of the least likely to appear in scholarship outside of the disciplines of archaeology and environmental science.

One will not find farming, animals, or agriculture in the index to Sir Frank Stenton's *Anglo-Saxon England* (1971). References in even excellent sources for general readers, of which there is no finer example still than Dorothy Whitelock's *The Beginnings of English Society*, are sporadic. We might attribute this seeming neglect to the invisibility of the mundane material world, a well-known phenomenon in medieval studies (Olsen 2003; Frantzen 2007a). But agriculture means land, and land is no ordinary object. Peter J. Fowler has argued that by Bede's lifetime land had not only material or financial value but also had what he calls "worth" or "iconographic" value as something owned. As a component of identity, land was "currency as well as capital" (1997: 247). Agriculture, therefore, must be seen not only as the economic basis for the entire culture but also as cultural capital subject to manipulation by the powerful. The former sense draws attention to the land and its uses, the latter to those who inhabited it. We can think of land as the point at which "agriculture" meets "rural life."

Textual sources viewing agriculture in both senses are abundant. Documents and texts referring both to landscape and to life in the countryside include laws, charters, place names, and some hagiographic texts, as John Hines (2004), Grenville Astill (1997), Della Hooke (1997b, 2009), James Rackham (1994b), and others have shown. The archaeological evidence is itself incomparably rich and, as a result, difficult to synthesize, yielding different impressions of farming techniques such as plowing in different parts of the country. But as Astill shows, texts and archaeological evidence are not readily integrated. Archaeological evidence focuses on "long-term and major changes," including changes in the sizes of animals, crop types, and field systems. Textual evidence is generally later and tends to focus on smaller-scale changes (1997: 194–5). Laws and charters, for example, are specific to time and place, a given reign, shire, and so on (see **Charters**).

Historians once believed that farming had come to Britain with the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. But it is now recognized not only that the Romans established extensive field systems but that those systems were preserved when the immigrants settled. The systems were not altered until the early eighth century, when the Church began to organize agriculture for its own ends. The Church's control of extensive lands marks a key point in Fowler's distinction between land as currency and as cultural capital. When land could be donated to the Church as a means of ensuring prayer for one's soul, for example, the kind of currency that land constituted was no longer purely commercial. The Church's land came to be seen as an extension of the Church itself and those grounds became holy.

This effect was not exclusive to Christianity, since sacred places are common in other religions. What was newly important was the monastery as the center of agricultural production.

Ecclesiastical and aristocratic management is usually credited with changes in agricultural methods, tools, and technology. What Astill calls "peasant innovation" is discussed less often, an emphasis, he thinks, that is due in part to the archaeological data that survive the kinds of intensive capital investment that wealthy landowners and the Church were able to sustain (1997: 215–17). Historians have discussed the reorganization of the countryside in the middle Saxon period (i.e., 600–900), finding "nucleated" villages already in the eighth century, in contrast to "dispersed" settlements of the earlier period (Hooke 1997a: 80; see **Settlements**). The "nucleated" settlements are usually associated with aristocratic leadership. Prominent examples include Goltho and Cheddar, the former equipped with large weaving sheds, the latter with ironworks (Astill 1997: 203). Smaller settlements, such as Raunds, have also been connected to centralized models of agriculture. These kinds of settlement change were spurred by small numbers of aristocratic personages whose social and economic conditions were improving. Robin Fleming describes these people as "rural elites," thegns (See **Thegn**) "who dominated the hinterlands" and who were connected by trading to centers where manufacturing took place (Fleming 1993: 19). Ann Williams notes that "On such estates [as Woolstone (Berkshire)] the king's thegns built their residences, sometimes encouraging or compelling their dependent peasants to settle around the manor-house, and re-organizing the layout of their tenements in the surrounding fields," showing that management of agriculture inevitably included management of the peasants who worked the fields (1992: 233).

Georges Duby has written that "in the history of the world no civilization appeared to be more completely rural than that of the Middle Ages." Although peasants were the largest element of the population, Duby notes, "the medieval peasant had no history" (1968: ix). Historians of the later Middle Ages, including Christopher Dyer and R. H. Hilton, have drawn sustained attention to the peasantry and country life in the later Middle Ages (Dyer 1989, 2002; Hilton, R. 1985). In reference to the early medieval period, Chris Wickham has observed that peasant life and the countryside were generally written about by outsiders, clerics especially, who extrapolated social aspects of life from law codes that were never intended as descriptions of life at any social level, urban or rural (2005: 383–7). Absent accounts from sympathetic sources, it might

seem that we are must assemble images of country life from fragmentary textual sources, even though they are not the best (or only) way to learn about agriculture.

In the Anglo-Saxon world it is probable that no workers were more oppressed or less free than agricultural workers. The representation of agriculture and country life most often cited is the tenth-century OE work called *The Colloquy*, which consists of short dialogues between a master and workers, who are impersonated by schoolboys (Garmonsway 1966; Ælfric 1993: 169–77). The plowboy decries the harshness of his labor and his master. "*Quid dicis tu, arator?*" the Master asks. "*Quomodo exerces opus tuum?*" (What say you, plowman? How do you perform your work?) The student playing the plowboy replies, "*O, mi domine, nimium laboro*" (O, my lord, I work very hard) (Garmonsway 1966: 20, l. 22–3). He is perhaps the lowest level of labor we find in an OE text. Yet, at the end of the dialogue, when a councilor is asked to decide "which trade among these seems to you to be superior," he answers that "the service of God" holds first place and that, among secular crafts, the honor belongs to agriculture, "because the plowman feeds us all." His claim sets off a competition among workers that illuminates the plowman's dependence on others' labor. The smith insists that without his iron the plowman could not do his work. The carpenter adds that his work is equally indispensable, only to be reminded that, like the plowman, his labor depends on iron as well. The councilor ends the dispute by reserving the first place for the plowman, through whom everyone finds "food for ourselves and fodder for our horses" (Ælfric 1993: 174–5).

Various discourses explain the choice of the plowman, among them the place of the plow in scriptural symbolism. Also at work, however, is what Derek Pearsall has described as the "idealization" of poverty in the Middle Ages (1988: 168). It might be true, as Duby asserts, that the peasant did not have a history in the way his lord did – that is, individual rather than collective – but such a history can be constructed by imagining, as *The Colloquy* helps us to do, plowmen, oxherds, bakers, and ironworkers in villages scattered across estates or perhaps recently relocated in newly centralized communities. The history of the lord cannot be separated from that of his peasants, for without their labor his fields and animals would not have supported his household.

Rural workers and the clerical elites who wrote about them sometimes met and spoke to each other in monasteries, which were surrounded by agricultural communities. Few monks would have been engaged in animal husbandry or

field work, but Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* often reminds us that monks were never far from gardens, forests, fens, and fields, and hence never far from workers. Bede's descriptions include the lay cowherd Cædmon and, among skilled laborers, the monk Owine, who is never separated from his axe and his adze (Frantzen 2007a: 132–5). Both men interact with their superiors, the abbess Hild and the bishop Chad, respectively. Cædmon drank with his friends and Hild with hers. Around one table the men and women ate from simple vessels and drank beer. Those around Hild's table enjoyed food and drink removed by many stages from the land on which they were cultivated, and their table wares, some of which no doubt were imported, were distanced from their place of manufacture. The plainest marker of their remove from agriculture, however, was that, unlike their workers, they did not reek of animals.

ANIMALS, CHARTERS, LABOR, LAW, SETTLEMENTS, THEGN

Alcohol

Alcoholic drinks formed a regular part of the diet in Anglo-Saxon England, and not only for adults. In *The Colloquy*, a dialogue for classroom use in teaching schoolboys Latin, a boy, asked about what he drinks, replies: "Ale, if I have it, or water if I don't have ale." Asked if he also drinks wine, the boy says that he cannot afford it and that wine is a drink "for the old and wise," not for children or the foolish (Ælfric 1993: 176). Commenting on this exchange, Debby Banham notes that wine was appropriate to great feasts such as one seen in *Beowulf*: "That was the best of feasts; the men drank wine" (Banham 2004: 71). Later, when the men bed down for the night, they are described not as wine-drinkers but as *beor-scealc*, literally "beer-soldiers" or "beer-men," a word translated as "one who imbibes (alcoholic) drink, feaster, reveler" (*DOE*; Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 43, ll. 1232–3, 1240).

The names of alcoholic drinks in OE sometimes matter less than the circumstances in which drinking takes place. Beer and ale do not correspond to the drinks we know by those names. Wine is different, since most wine comes from grapes. Wine in the earlier Middle Ages, like wines the Romans preferred, was much sweeter than most wines drunk now. Other fermented drinks in Anglo-Saxon England are more difficult to differentiate. Banham regards alcoholic beverages, beer (*beor*) especially, as a major element of the diet, safer than water and less expensive than wine or mead (2004: 25). But wine and mead also depended on crops. Wine was an expensive import. Mead was made domestically

but it too was a feasting drink, costly because it was sweetened with honey. Beer was also sweetened, and different from ale. Ann Hagen suggests that the Anglo-Saxons categorized several kinds of beverage as "mead" in ceremonial or celebratory contexts (1995: 206).

The best indication of the role of alcoholic beverages in the social and cultural life of Anglo-Saxon England is the presence of drinks in compounds, some of them widely distributed. *Ealu*, either "ale" or "some other kind of intoxicating drink, apparently brewed" (*DOE*), is found often. Compounds include: *ealu-benc*, ale-bench (found only in *Beowulf*); *ealu-drincende*, ale-drinker (again, only in *Beowulf*); *ealu-gafol*, a tribute paid in ale; *ealu-gal*, a lecher; *ealu-galnes*, a word for drunkenness; *ealu-hus*, an alehouse, a term found in the laws; *ealu-scop*, a reciter of poetry in the presence of drinkers, a term found in the *Northumbrian Priests' Law*; *ealu-sele*, ale-hall, used by Wulfstan; *ealu-wæge* (only in *Beowulf*), meaning ale-cup; and *ealu-wosa*, a drunkard. Terms associated with the process of producing ale include: *æfter-ealu*, thought to be reduced ale, or perhaps second run; *bryd-ealu*, bride-ale; *ealu-cleofa*, a store-room for ale; *ealu-fæt*, a vessel for drinking ale; *ealu-mealt*, brewing malt (also *mealt-ealu*); and *ealu-geweorc*, ale-brewing (*DOE*). Ale figures into one notoriously obscure compound, *ealu-scerwen*, found only in *Beowulf* and thought to mean "distress, terror" (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 368).

Beor is an even more common compound. *Beor-byden* is a vessel for holding drink, found just once, in a list of similar containers in the quasi-legal text known as *Gerefa*; *beor-dræste* refers to dregs of alcoholic drink in medicinal texts, and *beor-hyrde* refers to the keeper of the beer-cup in "The Gifts of Men." *Beor-scealc*, as we have seen, means one who imbibes drink, feaster. *Beor-scipe* and *gebeorscipe* refer to feasts at which beer is served, and *beor-sele* to the hall where (alcoholic) drink is served. *Beor-þegu* means carousal or beer-drinking, and *beor-setl* a beer-seat or bench where (alcoholic) drink is served. *Gebeorscipe* is the most common of these compounds; it often means feast but, in a few cases, refers to the Last Supper and even Heaven and the feast of holy teaching (see *DOE* for all beer- and ale-compounds).

The compounds associated with alcoholic beverages and used to designate buildings, implements, ceremonies, and ceremonial roles show that drinking was deeply woven into the culture. What the Anglo-Saxons drank was less important than how they drank it. The epitome of drinking culture, seen in *Beowulf* and referred to even in religious works such as "The Dream of the Rood," was the *symbel*, often unhelpfully translated as "feast," although food

is never mentioned. The *symbel* involved ritual drinking, speeches, and gift-giving (Pollington 2003: 19–65; see **Hall**). The early Kentish laws of Hlothhere and Eadric fine the man who disturbed the ritual by taking the drinking-cup away from another (he had to pay the householder, the man he offended, and the king). Further underscoring the importance of such ceremonies was the prohibition against drinking while armed; the same code fines the one who draws a sword during a drinking ceremony, even if he does no harm, and fines him heavily if blood is shed (Hlothhere and Eadric 1963: 21, c. 12–13).

From a modern perspective, alcohol is of interest in a much more limited realm, chiefly as a substance that confers status and alters behavior, and so is subject to regulation. The Anglo-Saxons were far less interested in the effects of alcohol consumption than modern people are, although they too observed the effects of intoxication. In *Beowulf*, for example, the integrity of the Geatish hero is challenged by a Danish warrior named Unferth, whose taunt Beowulf quickly dismisses by describing the warrior as *beore druncen*, "drunk with beer" (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 20, l. 531). Unferth lends his sword, Hrunting, to Beowulf, and again the poet uses the opportunity to comment on Unferth's intoxication and his damning reluctance to use the sword himself (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 50, ll. 1463–72). In the riddles, drunkenness is always associated with carelessness and comedy, as in the riddle about Lot, whose daughters made him drunk in order to seduce him (Riddle 46, Krapp and Dobbie 1936: 205), and the mead riddle (Riddle 27), in which the drink claims to force to the ground those who grapple with it – i.e., drink too much (Krapp and Dobbie 1936: 194). The satirical poem called "The Seasons for Fasting" mocks a priest who cannot resist the wine shop (Dobbie 1942: 104, ll. 208–20). The OE translation of the *Capitula of Theodulf* (d. 821; the translation is tenth-century) warns priests from the *ceap-ealeðel* or ale-stall, translating the Latin *taberna* (Theodulf of Orleans 1978: 319). Many poems, including the Hebrew Testament narrative known as *Judith*, demonstrate the dangers of being drunk (Dobbie 1953: 99–109).

Yet inebriation itself was not a social ill that concerned the Church as much as we might expect. The penitentials describe a variety of sins resulting from drunkenness. One who killed a man because of drunkenness did penance for three years (*OEC* S76.03.04; see **Penance**). Most references to alcohol are found in the *OE Penitential*, in material translated from a Latin penitential written in the early ninth century on the Continent. There drunkenness appears in a list of sins along with anger, theft, and fornication (*OEP* Y41.08.02).

Clergy who vomited because of inebriation did penances for thirty or forty days, as did those who caused others to become drunk (*OEP* Y44.29.01–31.01) or who vomited up the Eucharist because of drunkenness (*OEP* Y44.42.01; compare *OES* X22.04.01–05.01). In the *OE Handbook* one who suffocated an infant because of drunkenness (rolling over on the child) received a penance of three years or greater. Alcohol was forbidden to those substituting shorter, more intense periods of penance for longer penance (i.e., commuting the penance), and to those who began penance by laying down their arms (*OEH* D55.10.01). Drunkenness was cited as a cause of nocturnal emissions for the clergy (*OEP* Y43.14.02–04).

The Church's attempts to control drunkenness were surprisingly limited, given the assumption that drunkenness was always considered a sin. The legal corpus is likewise reserved about offenses involving alcohol. The early Kentish laws of Wihtred suspended a priest who was too drunk to perform baptism (Wihtred 1963: 27). The laws of Ine fined a man who quarreled with another *on gebeorscipe*, "in his cups" or "while drinking" (Ine 1963: 39, c. 6.5). Two secular codes from the eleventh century refer to the *drynce-lean*, "drink-reward," which designated the purchase of a drink to close a contract, customary entertainment offered by a lord to his tenants, or possibly a land grant made as recompense for hospitality (*DOE*); the same word occurs in the *Northumbrian Priests' Law* (*DOE*; Liebermann 1903–16: vol. 3, 380–5, c. 67.1). Outside the corpus of secular and ecclesiastical law, the vocabulary for drinking in excess is limited. *Drincere*, meaning "drunkard," occurs just three times (*DOE*). Other relevant terms such as *druncen*, an adjective meaning drunken, intoxicated, are fairly common, along with *druncen-georn* and *druncen-willan* (both meaning intoxicated). More often the kind of drink is less important than its power to intoxicate. In this matter the Anglo-Saxons, like many peoples until very recently, tolerated intoxication so long as social order was preserved.

AGRICULTURE, HALL, DIET, LAW, PENANCE

Anglo-Saxonism

Anglo-Saxonism is the study of how Anglo-Saxon culture has been used to promote social, intellectual, and political objectives in post-Anglo-Saxon periods, and of how the Anglo-Saxons have been represented in popular genres, including film and new media. The term has also been understood to refer to the

Anglo-Saxons' own understanding of themselves. That understanding was part of "the process through which a self-conscious national and racial identity first came into being among the early people of the region" and how that identity was "transformed into an originary myth available to a wide variety of political and social interests" (Frantzen and Niles 1997: 1). Anglo-Saxonism, R. D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain believe, emerged soon after the Conquest (2003: 225–6). Among the first scholars to see Old English in a historical light was the thirteenth-century writer known as the "Tremulous Hand," a scribe at Worcester who glossed Old English texts (Franzen 1991).

Simon Keynes's account of Anglo-Saxonism stresses the role of popular culture, including illustrated histories, poems, and paintings, in shaping "the received view of Anglo-Saxon England." Keynes sees those representations as an influence that Anglo-Saxon historians must struggle to escape (1999a: 37). Present-day representations of the Anglo-Saxons include film adaptations of *Beowulf* (Gaiman and Avary 2008) and *The Lord of the Rings* (Walsh, Jackson, Sinclair, and Boyens 2001–3). These works far exceed the reach of the plays, paintings, popular histories, and other forms that Keynes discusses, and they pose an even more formidable challenge to custodians of the textual and material record of Anglo-Saxon England. Keynes acknowledges that Anglo-Saxon England supplied material for political movements in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. His focus, however, is popular representations after the eighteenth century, for which he sees Anglo-Saxon England providing a "more harmless inspiration" than it provided for earlier religious and political thought (1999a: 36).

Anglo-Saxonism encompasses both popular and scholarly endeavors, ranging from cartoons, tourist attractions, and adaptations in performance media to multi-volume historical novels, as well as histories of the OE period and political polemics. From the scholarly perspective, histories and cartoons once seemed fundamentally different. In a study of nineteenth-century controversies about the Norman Conquest, for example, Clare A. Simmons observes that "Few nineteenth-century historiographers questioned the assumption that history and fiction are diametrically opposed" (1990: 8; see **Norman Conquest**). But many scholars would challenge that assumption today and claim that one form cannot be regarded as having more truth than the other, since both are interpretive constructions. The difference between them might be said to be that one bases its truth claims on a belief in facts (not on facts themselves, since the very existence of historical facts might be in doubt) and the other does not.

Simmons identifies a more useful point of difference. "History," she writes, "must place some constraint upon the imagination." She gives an example in a discussion of Sir Walter Scott, in whose novels "a historical setting does not provide an escape into the imagination but rather a constraint upon it" (1990: 9; see **History**). Scholars frequently dismiss popularizations of Anglo-Saxon and other medieval ideas and events because they are not historically accurate. Those who popularize Anglo-Saxon works and ideas operate under few if any constraints. Writers for a film based on *Beowulf* chose to portray Grendel's mother as a glamorous figure in heels and body paint and Beowulf as an action figure without a thought in his head (Gaiman and Avary 2008). However, when Thomas Jefferson wished to organize school districts in Virginia along the pattern of the "hundreds" of King Alfred, he first had to know something about Alfred's laws and the "hundred" (Frantzen 1990: 215). Jefferson's constraints were external, those of the screenwriters internal; the former can be measured (we know what Jefferson's errors were because we have independent knowledge of OE laws), the latter cannot (we can only guess why they did what they did).

"Anglo-Saxonism" as a term for an unquestioned belief in Anglo-Saxon "genius" came into use in L. P. Curtis's study of Celts and Anglo-Saxons published in 1968 (6–8). The subject was broadly contextualized by Reginald Horsman, whose work on "racial Anglo-Saxonism" laid the foundation for theoretical investigation of uses of Anglo-Saxon culture in the later Middle Ages and after. Studies of Anglo-Saxonism have usually focused on political and ideological movements, especially the recovery of Anglo-Saxon texts during the English Renaissance (Berkhout and Gatch 1982). Anglo-Saxonism today, and medievalism more generally, emerge in popular works and various media (Clark and Perkins 2010). The political uses of Anglo-Saxon culture have been studied in English, Scandinavian, and American contexts (Horsman 1981; Hauer 1983; Frantzen 1990; Bjork 1997; Frantzen and Niles 1997; Scragg and Weinberg 2000). Writers claimed the culture to support causes they saw as related to it, in Jefferson's case state-based education. Jefferson provides a potent combination of scholarship and political purpose, his arguments grounded in Anglo-Saxon grammar and law (Hauer 1983; Frantzen 1990: 15–19, 203–7). Anglo-Saxonism often involves the history of the English language. Anglo-Saxonism in Scandinavia, as Robert E. Bjork shows, was rich in philological scholarship (1997), and in Germany perhaps richer than anywhere else (Aarsleff 1983: 179–81). Language also mattered in the

American South, where, after the Civil War, the Norman Conquest supplied a narrative of a defeated nation "whose language and culture were threatened by multiple invading forces," in the South's case northern urbanism and newly freed slaves (see **Slavery**). The juxtaposition of Northerners and Normans (Northmen) was appropriate to concerns about cultural purity. However, Southerners interpreted the Norman Conquest in various ways. Some argued for the triumph of Anglo-Saxon resistance to the Normans and the ultimate triumph of Saxon culture; others saw the Conquest leading to the "amalgamation" of two cultures and the birth of a new one from them (van Hoosier-Carey 1997: 166–7).

Anglo-Saxonism is closely connected to the scholarly activity called "antiquarianism," the name given to the work of those who search for documentary evidence of the Anglo-Saxons, including collecting ballads and other historical remains of the Middle Ages. The "antiquaries," as they were called, spurred the recovery of ancient texts. Because they printed few copies of works they recovered, and made them expensive, they also stimulated the formation of other, more democratic historical societies (Simmons 1990: 44–50). Antiquarian scholars worked in both Old and Middle English, languages the antiquaries were at some pains to distinguish. Their goal was to retrieve texts to document forgotten parts of their heritage; their motivations have been described by David Matthews as "nationalist" (Matthews 1999: xxvi–xxxii). Elizabeth Elstob's grammar of 1715, a study of the "Mother-tongue" reaching back to "Saxon" roots, was in part a rebuttal of Jonathan Swift's proposal for "correcting" and "improving" the English tongue (Frantzen 1990: 52–3).

The binaries of Anglo-Saxonism (Saxon and Norman chief among them) are, obviously, untenable constructs that reduce these populations to a unity neither possessed. An especially powerful construct is the "theory of the Norman Yoke," a seventeenth-century hypothesis proposing the Anglo-Saxons as "free and equal citizens, governing themselves through representative institutions." Their freedom was thought to have been destroyed by the Normans, who "established the tyranny of an alien King and landlords" (Hill, C. 1958: 57). Likewise, when Anglo-Saxon culture was used to justify religious reform, as during the reign of Elizabeth I, it was necessary to authenticate Anglo-Saxon identity prior to the advent of Roman Catholic Christianity and to portray the Christianity of late Anglo-Saxon England as a corruption of the true, early Church. John Bale and John Foxe proved adept at creating evidence of the "primitive English church" (Simmons 1990 14–16; Frantzen 1990: 35–45).

Many expressions of Anglo-Saxon culture, including art that accompanies translations of *Beowulf* (Heaney 2008), straddle the divide between elite and popular culture. What were once considered popular forms, such as comic books and films, have migrated into academic disciplines, where the elite study popular culture with the same seriousness they once reserved for Dryden or Pope. Yet studies of Anglo-Saxonism in popular culture endorse the same criteria as those applied to more learned endeavors. For example, if an illustration features a helmet, a scholar will search for the model on which it is based and will judge the accuracy of the representation. It is ironic that those who study *Beowulf* complain about the liberties illustrators and filmmakers take with the poem's plot and its representations of material objects. The poem is not a historical record, and even if it were, we would have no way of testing its claims. *Beowulf* might be taken as a plausible rendering of a Danish landscape and Heorot for a specific kind of mead-hall (Niles and Osborn 2007; see **Hall**), but no one has suggested that the Danish world was beset by water monsters because such creatures are described in the poem. Claims about ahistorical representations of *Beowulf* are contradictory: how can a work outside modern ideas of representational realism be judged by their criteria? Similar claims about Jane Austen's world might not be. Austen was not an exponent of narrative realism, but her characters inhabit a well-defined and recognizable world of space, time, and objects. We have a good idea about how closely Austen's writing corresponds to the material in the world around her (Spacks 2010). The wish to apply similar constraints to films of *Beowulf* is understandable but futile.

HISTORY, NORMAN CONQUEST, RACE, SLAVERY

Animals

Animals from the Middle Ages are more familiar to modern readers as exotic designs on manuscript carpet pages than as creatures who walked, crawled, flew, or swam through the world. Then as now, however, the practical rather than the symbolic aspects of animal life were foremost in daily life and lived experience. Animals were valued, managed, and exploited through a wide array of economic and legal strategies far removed from the world of mythic beasts. Those strategies depended, as Joyce E. Salisbury has shown, on how humans measured their differences from animals (1994: 1–11). As a practical concern, it can be seen that the more closely animals approximate human behavior, the

more likely they are to appear in texts and visual arts. Because the boar is aggressive, the Anglo-Saxons put boar figures on their helmets and banners. Hrothgar, the aged king in *Beowulf*, describes battle as a time when "boars clashed" (*eoferas cnysedan*; Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 46, l. 1328). Alternatively, the closer animals are to human bodies, the less visible they become. When animals are eaten, worn, or in other ways made use of, animal identity is transformed and concealed. Animals are removed from their natural state even more radically through processes of signification that value animal nature as an expression of human or divine attributes.

Animals in Anglo-Saxon culture are most visible through the symbolic registers of art, sculpture, and metalwork. Animals are more difficult to find in the textual record, but there too, as the example from *Beowulf* shows, their secondary, cultural meaning rather than their material existence predominates. Without archaeology, we would know a great deal about what animals meant to elite Anglo-Saxons but little about the animals themselves, their place in the economy, or their impact on the environment. The tradition of the bestiary, richly visual, has inspired work on the meaning of animals and their connections to myth and ritual (Hicks 1993; Houwen 1997; Speake 1980). Work on the practical aspects of animal life, although it is less accessible, concentrates on diet, animal husbandry, and the environment (Salisbury 1994: 43–76; see **Agriculture**, **Diet**, **Environment**). Such research has benefited from new technologies such as isotope analysis of human bone that reveals the composition of the diet. As a result, a vast body of knowledge has accumulated around animal life in the early Middle Ages.

Even in the world of language, animals make a distinctive contribution to the Anglo-Saxon landscape. Some English place names developed from associations with animals in Anglo-Saxon times. Animal elements in place names help to recover OE vocabulary that has not been preserved in written sources. Such words as **bagga*, "badger," **ean*, "lamb," and **pigga*, "young pig," are names for animals that are not attested in written sources but are known as elements of English place names (Hough 2001: 1). The animal element of a place name might suggest a creature known throughout a district or an animal associated with a particular feature of the landscape. For example, *hart*, "deer," is associated with *ford*, "stream crossing," and *feld*, "open field" (as in Hartford, Hartfield; Hough 2001: 10).

Animals figured into many aspects of daily life that escaped written notice. Hence archaeology provides the best evidence of animal life in the Middle Ages.

The chief importance of animals was as a food source. Equally essential was the use of animal products and parts: wool for clothing; hides for shoes, pouches, and straps; and bone for combs and similar implements. Animals supplied labor for agriculture and transportation and fertilizer for crops. In addition, animals were a form of wealth. *Feoh*, which means wealth, riches, or possessions, also refers to "livestock, cattle, beasts of the field" (*DOE*). Animals imported or obtained by hunting or deep-sea fishing were marks of a high-status diet. Lowlier folk, most experts believe, rarely if ever ate meat but consumed milk and cheese (from goats and sheep as well as cows), eggs, cereals, and vegetables (Banham 2004: 13–16, 58–61; see **Fishing**, **Hunting**).

The most common domestic beasts were sheep, pigs, and cattle. Evidence from settlement structures shows that animals were enclosed near to or even within the structures inhabited by humans (see **Settlements**). Animals were brought to market areas when they were ready to be slaughtered. Towns were supplied by both home-grown animals and those brought in from catchment areas in the surrounding countryside. Bone finds enable archaeologists to determine if animals were butchered and consumed at the same site or butchered in one location and delivered to another (the more uniform the bones the more likely that animals were selected for butchering on the basis of age elsewhere and brought to the site). Bone finds are used to determine the status of settlements. A high proportion of bones from rare species of bird or fish indicates an elite diet that made use of game. At Flixborough, for example, a site continuously occupied from *c.* 600–*c.* 1000, there was a marked decline in consumption of both cattle and wild game in the ninth century. This might suggest a shift to ecclesiastical use, with humbler provisioning, or perhaps continued secular habitation but at a less ostentatious level (Loveluck 2007: 151–5).

Modern people associate animals with rural life, but those who lived in urban settlements, including London and York, also kept geese, pigs, and some fowl. Comparison of two sites within York shows that parts of a city were supplied with different provisions. The site known as 16–22 Coppergate yielded a high proportion of bone assemblies, including geese, pigs, fowl, fish, and livestock, over which the town would have had direct control. The animals were raised by residents, and fish were readily available from York's rivers. Housing areas at Coppergate were large enough to accommodate the raising of small numbers of pigs, which were kept in towns in some areas until recently (O'Connor 1989: 183). However, evidence from contemporary levels at another site in York

known as 46–54 Fishergate shows less diverse bone assemblies and "a narrower subsistence base" for the period in which comparison can be made, approximately 975–1050 AD (O'Connor 1991: 278–82). Fishergate is acknowledged to have been a trading site in the eighth century, and evidence from that period also shows a lack of resources of home production. Fishergate and other market sites, sometimes known as *emporia*, would have been supplied by external sources. Consumption patterns at Fishergate suggest points of similarity with Ipswich and other *emporia* (O'Connor 1994: 136–9; see **Trade**). These locations (also known as *wics* in some studies) tended to be provided with older animals that arrived on the hoof rather than younger animals raised there (Crabtree 1996).

The archaeological evidence is supplemented by administrative texts that illuminate domestic conditions. For example, penitentials show that small animals infested foodstuffs and liquids, which had to be guarded against contamination and purified if they were contaminated, a process which relied chiefly on spiritual rather than material remedies. The Church's dietary prohibitions were based on the Book of Leviticus and are, again, found in Latin penitentials that drew on monastic customs from the seventh and eighth centuries. These texts forbade eating carrion or consuming animals that had eaten human flesh or drunk human blood (see, e.g., *OES* X23.05.01; **Penance**). Later vernacular penitentials excluded such provisions. Animals were also put to medicinal uses. One of the penitentials advises, "One is allowed to eat hares and they are good for dysentery and diarrhea, and one can mix their bile with pepper to cure mouth sores" (*OES* X25.04.01). The *Medicina de Quadrupedibus* describes various medical uses of animal products, including the otter, which could cure a headache. "Simmer his brain in three measures of oil in a new crock until a third part is boiled away, put it into a vessel and keep it" (de Vriend 1984: 236, para. 6; see **Medicine**).

We tend to think of medieval farming as a family endeavor, but food production and hence animal husbandry were closely regulated. Land was organized through the system known as the *feorm*, which required food to be rendered to a central authority, whether an aristocratic household or a monastery. Landowners extracted animals or food products derived from them; ecclesiastical establishments were likewise dependent on the countryside to furnish regular deliveries of food and foodstuffs. These laws suggest high levels of production rather than the kind of meager subsistence commonly associated with peasant life in the early medieval countryside (Faith 1999: 181–2). To be

sure, the Anglo-Saxons also valued animals as pets and sources of physical and spiritual comfort. Bede's *Life of St. Cuthbert* tells how, after a night of praying as he stood in the sea, the saint was warmed and dried by two otters (Bede 1985: 191). Given the mythical origins of tales that show how animals connected supernatural and natural realms, Anglo-Saxons at all social levels would have known many such stories.

AGRICULTURE, DIET, HUNTING, MEDICINE, PENANCE, SETTLEMENTS, TRADE

Apocalypse

"Apocalypse," writes Frank Kermode, "can be disconfirmed without being discredited. This is part of its extraordinary resilience" (2000: 8). Modern readers associate apocalypticism with the Middle Ages because they think of the Apocalypse as religious superstition. Kermode argues that the Apocalypse creates an ending not to make sense of the beginning but to make sense of the middle. Apocalypticism evokes impending doom that only forceful intervention can prevent. For the Middle Ages this view might be summed up in the command "Repent!" In the modern era the imperative, less succinct but no less dire, would address political or social reform related to protecting the environment, for example, or the proliferation of nuclear weapons. But the sentiments are similar, and modern apocalypticism is no less resilient when its various crises fail to materialize. The twenty-first century arrived without its anticipated technological nightmare, known as Y2K, sending the world into chaos. So too the eleventh century, and various supposedly significant dates since, arrived and departed without setting off anticipated catastrophes. As Kermode suggested, it is not the ending that matters but rather the pattern it shapes.

Beginning in the early Christian period, scholars accepted the Jewish idea of the so-called sabbatical millennium, which held that the world would last six thousand years. The first date projected for the end of the world was not 1000 AD but 500 AD, chosen because Christ was thought to have come when the world was 5,500 years old (Lerner 1992). As the date neared, however, Church officials looked for ways to recalculate and chose 801 AD as the new date. In his book called *On the Reckoning of Time* (*De temporum ratione*), Bede pushed the date back and was cautious in his attempts to set the Apocalypse within a broad pattern of Church history (Matter 1992: 47). At about this time, led in the matter by Bede, the Church began calculating years as *anno domini*, "in the

year of our Lord." This change shifted the Apocalypse to 1000 AD (Duncan 1999: 16–17; see **Christianity**). Elsewhere, many writers supported the belief that the world would end at this point. The Irish poem on the signs of doomsday called *Saltair na-Rann* elaborated on the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas. The Norwegian King Olaf evangelized Iceland, which accepted Christianity in 1000 AD, perhaps in connection with the view that the Apocalypse was pending. The German king Otto III went to Rome to await the event (Duncan 1999: 17–18). A rich tradition grew up around the Apocalypse in art. Common millennial images, Rachel Fulton shows, included the weeping, suffering Christ (Fulton 2002: 69–72).

Fulton also emphasizes the relationship of apocalyptic thinking to the need for plot and pattern, either linear or cyclical. In the Anglo-Saxon period the Apocalypse pointed not to the sudden end of time but rather to the orderly end of the Christian, linear time of revealed history (see **History**). All references to the Apocalypse in OE pertain to John's narrative in the Book of Revelations: *unwreon* means to reveal, and the OE gloss for *de Apocalipsi* is *of unwrigedness* (Bosworth–Toller 1898). No reference to *Apocalypse* in OE is connected to the words *domesday* or *endedæg* or *endetyme*, the expressions the Anglo-Saxons used to warn of impending doom, its arrival uncertain but possible at any time. Warnings of Doomsday appear in English writing well before the millennial year. The most famous anonymous work related to this theme is the Blickling homily "The end of this world is near" (Homily 10, Morris, R. 1967: 107–15). Wulfstan, archbishop of York and London, preached on the theme of the Antichrist several times, and so did Ælfric, the scholarly and orthodox abbot who was one of Wulfstan's most reliable sources (Gatch 1977: 77–84, 105–16). Some have suggested that this writing accumulated near to the millennium, but nearly all OE manuscripts are dated to the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, and attempts to coordinate texts with the millennium are not persuasive. It is, however, significant that Wulfstan's homilies of 1014 and later continue to preach about the Antichrist and to warn of the end of the world, proof that the year 1000 AD did not itself hold the key beliefs about Doomsday.

Other medieval people thought of apocalypse differently. Convinced that they were the Chosen People, Jews "tended to react to peril, oppression and hardship by phantasies of the total triumph and boundless prosperity which Yahweh, out of his omnipotence, would bestow upon his Elect in the fulness of time." A Day of Wrath would punish disbelievers, but Yaweh would reign among the

chosen in the new age (Cohn 1970: 19–20). The "central phantasy of revolutionary eschatology" was that a massively oppressive evil would be struck down and the holy people held captive would be released into a new kingdom (21). Anglo-Saxons did not embrace such an eschatology but were well versed in some elements of it. In *De Excidio Britanniae et Conquesta* (The ruin and conquest of Britain), the sixth-century writer Gildas described a cycle in which the Chosen People fell from God's favor and were chastised when they were conquered by foreign powers.

Bede repeated this idea in the *Ecclesiastical History* (Bede 1969: 46–9, book 1, ch. 14). In the late OE period it found its most powerful voice in Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos* (Sermon of the Wolf to the English; Wulfstan 1957). Missing from the trope of the Apocalypse in OE is the idea of a new terrestrial kingdom to be enjoyed by the faithful who did not lapse. Thus we cannot describe apocalypticism as an element of the Anglo-Saxon thought world. The Anglo-Saxons understood the idea of a chosen people that falls from favor but understood repentance as the means to restore religion to a place of honor, redeem the faithful, and hence save the kingdom of the present (see **Penance**). A sudden transformation (Doomsday) was not part of Wulfstan's argument, nor was the notion of a transformed world from which evil would be removed.

Anglo-Saxon eschatology was reformative rather than revolutionary. Eschatology did not advance an argument for a radical change in the way people lived. Instead, it served the fundamentally conservative purpose of restoring social discipline to all ranks and ways of life. Millennial sects such as those described by Cohn were also often interested in social reform, but there is a difference between reform and restoration, and in the Anglo-Saxon accounts the authors advocate a return to a formerly high standard rather than the introduction of a new standard (see **Reform**). The Apocalypse, moreover, is not seen as a world-shaking event of fantastic proportion but is figured instead as decay and corruption that have already taken hold.

The Apocalypse occurs in OE outside religious contexts. Civilization seems on the verge of extinction in *Beowulf*, for example, when the dragon burns the hall of the aged king Beowulf and presages the hero's death (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 80, ll. 2324–7). In "The Wanderer," the world comes to nothing, but the Wanderer's life continues (Krapp and Dobbie 1936: 137, l. 110). We separate such visions from apocalyptic religious literature because scholars regard poetry as one kind of teaching and exegesis as another. But

the poems, in their selectivity and indirection, might have the upper hand here – and perhaps, in the case of *Beowulf*, an affinity with biblical style. James W. Earl has suggested that apocalyptic time emphasizes repeated patterns. He compares the notoriously disjointed account of the Swedish–Geatish wars in *Beowulf* to the linear account of Beowulf's death, noting that thirteen deaths occur in the war narrative and showing that they are used to counterpoint the death of the hero. The style is "conspicuously repetitive and unchronological," Earl writes, "hammering at the deep patterns that repeat themselves, getting to the heart of the issues" as do the prophetic books of the Bible (1999a: 33–5).

All manner of OE texts, ranging from the "Soul and Body" poems to charters, homilies, and a scientific computus, refer to the end of the world (*ende worolde*, *worolde endunge*, and similar constructions) without specifying when or how that catastrophe will unfold (Bremmer 2003). The signs of Doomsday were not systematic, and even in such elegantly worked poems as "The Dream of the Rood" they are ambiguous and not chronological (Earl 1999a: 26–7). The Apocalypse might have been envisioned by the Anglo-Saxons as "the apocalypse" instead – the condition Edgar foresees in *King Lear* when, disguised as a Bedlam beggar, says that he is "worse than e'er I was," and adds, in an aside, "And worse I may be yet: the worst is not / So long as we can say 'This is the worst'" (Shakespeare 2004: 2417, act 4, scene 1). In Anglo-Saxon literature, the sentiment is expressed less directly. Through the most dire warnings shines the hope that those who repent and reform will not know the terrors that lie behind "the worst." For some the end can be seen as an opportunity and its own beginning.

CHRISTIANITY, HISTORY, PENANCE, REFORM

Art

We know that the Anglo-Saxons had illustrations, paintings, decorative arts, and ornamented architecture, so to ask if they had means of representation would be absurd. But to ask if they had art is, however unconventional, not absurd, for that is to ask if they valued images and objects independently of their moral or religious content. The answer seems to be that they did not. Christian objects were iconographic; they represented sacred ideas and events. The modern question asked of an image or object, "Is it art?," is not one the Anglo-Saxons asked. As Raymond Williams and W. J. T. Mitchell have noted,

art with a capital A does not seem to be an operable concept before the eighteenth century (Williams 1985: 41; Mitchell 2005: 6).

Yet it seems unnecessary to believe that because surviving OE illustrations and objects are Christian, they were, whether in three or two dimensions, valued only for their doctrinal content. Perhaps no Christian ever made an object to have a thing to look at or display rather than to express a theological or ideological precept. Artists in the period were ingenious at expressing abstract concepts in material form, as David Pratt's minute dissection of the iconography of the Alfred Jewel and the Fuller Brooch shows (2007: 189–2). But not everyone in Anglo-Saxon England was Christian, and not every Christian could decode finely wrought precious objects (see **Christianity**, **Paganism**). Thus it seems reasonable to propose that craftworkers might have seen the objects they made as a form of art, which is to say an object or image intended to affect the beholder independently of any perception of its ideational content. Many objects surviving from the period, even cups and dishes, whether simple or elaborate, are arresting. These things fulfilled routine functions and did not express abstract ideas. Were they then distinguished from ordinary objects only by the materials from which they were made? We may suppose that the Anglo-Saxons knew the difference between an ugly container and one that was well shaped, even if they used these two objects to do the same thing. Some objects were valued because they expressed an ideology or certified the status of the owner, others because they were, simply, good to look at or to use (see **Aesthetics**). We should try to imagine a viewer who was aware that a jeweled cup was both precious and pleasing to behold and that he or she might have also taken pleasure in regarding and using a wooden cup, well proportioned and incised with a single horizontal line. Art with a capital A does not need to be limited to what *New Keywords* calls the "fine arts" (Williams 1976: 41; compare Mitchell 2005: 6) or what, in the Anglo-Saxon world, we might think of as high art – an ivory casket, a jeweled cross, a painted wooden panel.

In the OE period it is difficult to separate works of art from treasure. The chief word for art is *cræft*, which refers to a skill. Skillfully made things or ornaments were by definition artful treasure, objects sometimes classified as *wrætt* in poetry. The word is used three times in *Beowulf* to describe beautiful objects found in the dragon's treasure hoard (Fulk, Bjork, and Niles 2008: 83, l. 2413; 94, l. 2771; 104, l. 3060) and once for the weapon the hero finds in the cave of Grendel's mother (52, l. 1531; see **Hoard**). In those cases the OE word underscores the gap between skillfully made objects and the caves and

barrows that house them. Other words for treasure, including *gestreon*, *maðm*, *sincfæt*, and *hord*, occur in both poetry and prose (Bosworth–Toller). They refer to works of art such as jewels but also to coins, which have an exchange value that might not be attached to a jeweled cross, for example.

The theory of representation in early Christian cultures was less about objects than about images. Gregory the Great wrote that paintings were a better way to teach pagans than texts because uneducated people, if they were perceptive, could read a painting even if they did not understand writing (Dodwell 1982: 84). Gregory reproved Bishop Serenus of Marseille for destroying images in a church because Serenus thought they were being worshipped. "For to adore a picture is one thing, but to learn through the story of a picture what is to be adored is another," Gregory wrote (1898: 53). There was no controversy about icons or images in the Anglo-Saxon church, in part because Gregory's position found an early and influential advocate in Bede, himself an authority on representation. Bede's *History of the Abbots* and his homily on Benedict Biscop, founder of the monastery at Monkwearmouth–Jarrow, are the only witnesses to the painted panels Benedict Biscop brought from Rome (Bede 1896: 368–9; Meyvaert 1979; see **Rome**). Bede defended the use of images in *De templo*, "On the temple," asking why, if in Solomon's temple it was possible to make "historiated sculptures," it would be "considered contrary to the law to sculpture or to paint on panels" (Meyvaert 1979: 69). The answer, obviously, was that it could not. The translator of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* used the rare word *afægan*, "to depict, represent pictorially" (*DOE*), to describe the painted panels Augustine and his missionaries brought in 597 to Æthelberht's court in Kent. These panels showed the cross and the "likeness of the Lord Savior depicted and written on wood" (*anlicnesse Drihtnes Hælendes on brede afægde & awritene*; Bede 1890–8: 58, book 1, ch. 14).

Gregory's position was that images were important for their power to convey instructive truths. Gregory thought that images were easy to decipher, apparently assuming that a guide would direct the eyes of viewers and explicate the narrative contexts encoded in images. Some images were self-explanatory. Benedict Biscop displayed thirteen panels at Monkwearmouth–Jarrow. The church was about nineteen feet wide, so that the panels, individual portraits of Mary and the apostles, were each probably less than eighteen inches wide. Although quite small, the panels no doubt made a spectacular effect as a group stretched across the central arch at the entrance to the sanctuary (Meyvaert

1979: 74). Biblical narratives might also be easy to decode, since they would have concerned well-known examples such as Abraham and Isaac and the Nativity.

Episodes from the Apocalypse and other scenes would have been more difficult to interpret, however, given their symbolism and narrative density, and even an image of Christ or the Virgin might require explication. Mary Clayton describes the carving of Mary on St. Cuthbert's coffin as a "complex iconographical scheme" based on several models (1990: 147). According to E. Kitzinger, the design was made "in accordance with the requirements of literary texts" and accommodated invocations made in prayers (1956: 277–9). Texts were responsible for generating complicated images such as this one that condense many ideas and intentions. Images so complex would hardly be useful to the uneducated without the clarification of one who understood both their textual basis and the rites to which such texts were related.

Standard introductions to Anglo-Saxon art refer to manuscript illustrations, church paintings, carved crosses, fabrics, and other forms, and divide production of these objects into two periods. The first was influenced by Celtic models and is easily recognized by its abstract ornamentation, zoomorphic decoration, and other complex decorative motifs, with very little attention to what we would consider naturalism. Art from this period pre-dates the late eighth-century Viking invasions, during which much of this work was plundered or destroyed (Dodwell 1982: 1–10). The second period is distinguished by the use of naturalistic forms adapted from Carolingian and Frankish models and is associated with Winchester and the renewal of Benedictine monasticism in the late tenth century. Widely disseminated, this style is often called that of the "Winchester school" (Gameson 1999: 482–4), and it too is easily recognizable from its flowing robes and acanthus-leaf borders.

These materials, along with jeweled crosses, cups, and others, all belong to the category of high art. They are without question the signature objects of the OE period, but most assuredly they are not its only art, for there is a larger meaning of art in the OE period, that of skilled work or *cræft*, a term that applies to both physical and mental creation. In the *Rule* of St. Benedict, *cræftige men* are *artifices*, or artists (Benedict 1964: 95, ch. 57). In Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Nechtan, the Pictish king, asked the abbot Ceolfrith, Benedict Biscop's successor, to send him *architectos*, "builders" (Bede 1969: 532, book 5, ch. 21). The OE translation calls them *heahcræftigan stangeworces*, "very skilled stoneworkers" (Bede 1890: 468, ch. 19, l. 23). Everything that

such workers built was intended either for the church or for an aristocracy guided by religious motives. Thus there seems to be only a fine line between skilled craftwork and art in the period, none of it comprising what modern viewers would consider, after Williams, "Art."

AESTHETICS, CHRISTIANITY, HOARD, PAGANISM, ROME

Author

Authorship is a phenomenon that seems to have survived in relatively pure form until the post-modern era, when, like textuality, it lost its clarity along with its innocence. When Michel Foucault asked "What is an Author?", humanists (including Foucault himself, it turned out), took up the task of separating the author as a historical being, an individual (to use Foucault's term), from the "author-function." The "author-function" designates the ways in which a culture and its rules of discourse constitute and regulate the statements of those who write. In "What is an Author?", Foucault refers to the "individual" in the same uncomplicated way that, as he himself pointed out, he refers to the "author" in the *Order of Things* (Foucault 1977: 114–15; 1971).

Every writer is in some way shaped and limited by the conditions of possibility made available to speech and writing in the writer's culture. Long before Foucault, medieval authorship was a complex phenomenon intricately entwined with institutional discourse that limited what writers were able to say. Medieval writers were extraordinarily concerned with *auctores*, i.e., the authors of classical and, later, of Christian texts, and with the concept of *auctoritas*. The author or *auctor* was not simply someone who wrote but someone who had become an authority. The writings of the *auctor* had veracity and wisdom that informed them with *auctoritas*, a word for the canon of accepted models that gave credibility – that is, authority – to those who reproduced them. The most authoritative text was the Bible; works with the least authority were called fables (see **Bible**). Writers in the Middle Ages could not be considered as *auctores*, the older and wiser writers whose works had acquired the respect of generations of readers. Medieval education consisted of the elucidation of the works of *auctores* according to strict principles of exposition; *auctoritas* also meant extracts from the works of these learned figures (Minnis 1984: 1–2, 10–15).

Medieval writers, working within the framework of what had already been said and had acquired authority by virtue of age and precedent, practiced

what they called *compilatio*. The compiler (*compilator*) selected material from a vast, ancient library of texts, excerpting and rearranging those materials according to the needs and tastes of his own textual community or group of potential readers (Irvine 1994: 74–6). The biggest difference between what we understand as authorship in the modern period and what Anglo-Saxons thought of as an *auctor* is the concept of originality. Modern readers expect authors to be original thinkers, creative and imaginative intellects. However highly we value those concepts, they were foreign to medieval writers and thinkers. The Anglo-Saxon abbot Ælfric, writing at the end of the tenth century, stressed that his work interpreted and translated the work of older authorities. "We do not add anything new in these compositions," he wrote, "because it stood written before in Latin books" (Wilcox 1994: 23). Ælfric was reluctant to become an *auctor* whose text might inadvertently become severed from the *auctoritas* of his Latin source. This undesirable outcome might transpire through no fault of the writer but rather through the ignorance of his readers. The *auctor* was always guided by his knowledge of his source materials and their *auctoritas*. But that same *auctoritas* might not be known to his readers, who, for example, might learn about the multiple wives of men mentioned in the Pentateuch and then be scandalized or, worse, perhaps be inclined to follow suit.

The concept of the author is transformed by the process of translation, which both adds meaning to the text and leaves some original content behind, creating a new text that is a hybridization of the original and the statements of the translator (see **Translation**). As Ælfric's anxiety about translating suggests, Anglo-Saxon writers were concerned about the spiritual dangers of writing, an act that necessitated their intervention into *auctoritas* as *auctores*. When at the end of the *Ecclesiastical History* Bede listed his works, he wrote that "it has always been my delight to learn or to teach or to write." He had given himself "entirely to the study of the Scriptures." He thus established that the source of his *auctoritas* was a book written by God himself, from whom all wisdom flowed (Bede 1969: 566–71, book 5, ch. 24).

The concepts of *auctor* and *auctores* define a tradition in which innovation and originality were to be avoided. But as Martin Irvine points out, learned Anglo-Saxons of the ninth and tenth centuries could scarcely have thought of their literary culture as an uninterrupted chain of transmission reaching back to the time of Gregory, Augustine, and classical authors of an ancient past. The Viking invasions of the eighth century had effectively destroyed the learned

culture of much of Bede's world, and although many texts survived, many were lost and had to be replaced. After that, Irvine observed, literary culture became bilingual. Works in the vernacular existed in the eighth century, before the devastation of monastic culture, as Bede's story of Cædmon shows (see **Literacy**). Beginning with King Alfred (d. 899) bilingualism becomes a matter of royal concern. Alfred imagined a vernacular literary culture taking shape on the foundation of Latin works that reached to the Psalms and to texts by Augustine, Boethius, and Gregory. The new culture also included books as close to his own time as Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. A century later, the ambition seems to have been more conservative. Ælfric imagined a vernacular literary culture paralleling Latin culture but eventually being replaced by Latin (Irvine 1994: 413). Ælfric's contemporaries also seem to have regarded the use of English as a stepping stone. The famous interlinear OE gloss to the Latin *Colloquy*, for example, was intended to help schoolboys learn Latin through the vernacular: the object was to master the learned language, not the one the boys already spoke (Garmonsway 1966).

Yet it can be argued that with Alfred the idea of the author in English had changed in ways Ælfric did not embrace and could not alter. Alfred's *auctoritas* is indisputable, but he was hardly a learned figure. M. R. Godden's recent studies of the translations attributed to Alfred and his helpers draw a more pessimistic and skeptical portrait of Alfred's achievement than that to which the king's admirers have become accustomed (Godden 2007). Yet Alfred, whatever the state of his own learning, did not simply follow Charlemagne's example in promoting learned institutions and textual production. Rather, he went far beyond his model in becoming "an active contributor" to literary culture in a way Charlemagne never attempted (Irvine 1994: 416). Alfred's learned bilingual milieu was described in detail by his biographer, Asser. Alfred was the first to make vernacular texts part of *auctoritas* and to present the *auctores* in the vernacular. Alfred did not have to translate laws from Latin to his own language; the tradition of law cooperated with the Church but was older than Christianity in Britain. The great *auctores*, however, were known only in Latin up to Alfred's own reign. After Alfred, authorship could no longer be understood as part of Latin culture only but instead had to be seen as part of a hybrid textual culture. *Auctores* and *auctoritas* would exist in both languages, just as monastic libraries would hold books in both languages and schoolboys would study both.

It is easy to see how this radical departure – the very kind of thing we do not anticipate in the conservative tradition of Anglo-Saxon textual culture – could

quickly come to seem traditional. Alfred's concern with textual culture extended to outlining, in the preface to *Pastoral Care*, the OE translation of Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis*, the educational requirements for the children of his thegns (Alfred 1983: 124–7; see **Literacy**, **Thegn**). Alfred creates the expectation – embraced by many of his most successful followers – that kings should be associated with the textual apparatus of the Church. Alfred's *auctoritas* was grounded in his public role as king, not in his mastery of the Latin tradition. But it is unthinkable that he was not regarded as an *auctor*, a figure "not merely to be read but also to be respected and believed" (Minnis 1984: 10). His works were not studied according to the rigid systems of grammatical culture, but one can easily see that he permanently altered the systems used to describe language and learning.

As one measure of Alfred's achievement in changing Anglo-Saxon ideas of authority, we can note Irvine's five categories of scholarship, called "macrogenres," ranging from gloss and commentary to the idea of a library (see **Genre**). In each of them, by the tenth century, vernacular evidence stands alongside Latin evidence, and that important expansion of the concepts of author and authority must be traced to Alfred's decision to create a vernacular literary culture. Thereafter, English inhabited the genres of the learned tradition and changed the world of its custodians.

BIBLE, BOOK, GENRE, LITERACY, ORALITY, THEGN, TRANSLATION