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REPRESENTATIONS OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND IN
CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

By

Kirsti Ann Bobo

A thesis submitted to the faculty of

Brigham Young University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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GRADUATE COMMITTEE APPROVAL

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This thesis has been read by each member of the following graduate committee and by majority vote has been found to be satisfactory.

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

As chair of the candidate's graduate committee, I have read the thesis of Kirsti A. Bobo in its final form and have found that (1) its format, citations, and bibliographical style are consistent and acceptable and fulfill university and department style requirements; (2) its illustrative materials including figures, tables, and charts are in place; and (3) the final manuscript is satisfactory to the graduate committee and is ready for submission to the university library.

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ABSTRACT

REPRESENTATIONS OF ANGLO-SAXON ENGLAND IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

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Master of Arts

This thesis surveys the children's literary accounts of Anglo-Saxon history and literature that have been written since the mid-nineteenth century. Authors of different ages emphasize different aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture as societal need for and interpretation of the past change. In studying these changes, I show not only why children's authors would choose to depict the Saxons in their writing, but why medievalists would want to study the resulting literature.

My second chapter looks at children's historical fiction and nonfiction, charting the trends which appear in the literature written between 1850 and the present day. I survey the changes made in authors' representations of Anglo-Saxon England as children's publication trends have changed. I show how these changes are closely related to the changes made in popular conceptions of the past. My third chapter discusses the way in which children's retellings of *Beowulf* have placed the poem into a less culturally-

dependent, more universal setting as they have separated the tale from its linguistic and cultural heritage. Children's authors have gradually removed the poem's poetic and linguistic devices and other cultural elements from their retellings, instead favoring a more courtly medieval setting, or even a generic universal one.

Children's literature is an important indicator of the societal values contemporary with its publication. Authors and publishers often write the literature to reflect their own ideologies and agendas more openly in children's literature than in other literature. As I show in this thesis, the attitudes toward Anglo-Saxon England which pervade children's literature of any age make it a particularly useful tool to those scholars interested in the study of popular reception of the Middle Ages.

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Chapter One: Introduction

For the juvenile reader, entertainment is obviously a primary reason to read any literature outside of school. Juvenile trade books (non-textbooks) of all genres are written and produced with this fact in mind, attempting to depict the change and conflict of a character or culture in such a way that the reader is able to make connections to his or her own life. Those authors writing about historical figures and events face a particular tension as they recreate a culture or time period which has past, and is therefore foreign to its reader, while still maintaining a sense of “immediate modern significance” (Trease 24). The themes in children’s historical literature, appealing to the interests of their targeted audience, are generally closely tied to the popular and subconscious issues and trends that permeate the culture surrounding the literature’s time of publication.

A more scholarly interest in children’s historical literature involves the study of how authors have interpreted past events and figures to make them appealing to modern audiences, and how these interpretations reflect their readers’ views of the past. Joan Blos writes that, in studying historical fiction, three time frames must be considered: “the story’s, the book’s, and ours. This is important because the facts of history are fixed, but the way in which those facts are understood will vary over time” (39). Anglo-Saxon England has been understood in particularly varied ways, being both connected to and different from the broader, more general medieval period that has generated and inspired so many perceptions and cultural uses since the time it came to a close. According to Paul Zumthor, authors who work with medieval texts and history have the ultimate goal of bringing “the ancient text into the present, that is, to integrate it into that historicity which is ours” (33). The way in which children’s authors have translated medieval

history into their own “historicity” has changed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as popular and scholarly attitudes toward the Middle Ages have changed. Looking at these changes, my purpose in this thesis will be to answer two questions: why would children’s authors draw upon Anglo-Saxon England for their subject matter? And, what relevance does children’s literature have for an audience of medievalists?

My Parameters

In writing a study of the connection between Anglo-Saxon and children’s literary studies, I feel a need to begin by defining what I mean by “children’s literature,” and explaining my reasons for including or excluding certain books. I will be discussing in my thesis fiction and nonfiction written about the Anglo-Saxon period of British history for children of approximately ages 8 to 14. I have divided the literature into three categories: “informational books,” which includes nonfiction works; “Anglo-Saxon literature,” which includes translations and retellings of Anglo-Saxon literary pieces such as *Beowulf* as they are written for children; and “historical fiction.” I include literature written about the period between approximately 449 and 1100 AD. Though the year 1066 is generally used as the mark-off point between Anglo-Saxon and Norman British history, I have extended my range slightly in order to include a few books written about the general reaction of the Anglo-Saxons to the changes made by William the Conqueror after the Battle of Hastings.

In deciding which books to include, I have faced various problems. Among these is what constitutes “children’s literature.” John Rowe Townsend claims that the only distinction between children’s and adult literature is that a children’s book appears on a

publisher's list of children's books, a sentiment which many consider "artificial" (McDowell 50). Literature intended for children, particularly the more recently published literature, can usually be identified by more characteristics than its inclusion in the "children's section" of a library or bookstore. Such characteristics often include the book's format and design, word choice, and other factors aimed at making the book appealing to a younger audience. However, these characteristics have caused many to think of children's literature as oversimplified or didactic in its purposes. Louis Sachar, a children's author, muses that though it is "hard to imagine anyone asking an author of an adult novel what morals or lessons he or she was trying to teach the reader [. . .] there is a perception that if you write for young people, then the book should be a lesson of some sort, a learning experience, a step toward something else" (416-17). Velma Bourgeois Richmond says of children's literature that while it "is the only [type of literature] defined by its audience [. . .] its definition is controlled by adults who write, select, buy, teach, and give to children the books that present views of history, character, and morals as adults wish these to be experienced" (176). The classification of children's literature has always been set by the adults who have overseen its writing and publication, and has understandably changed dramatically between the mid-nineteenth century and today. I have tried to include only those works which were written specifically for children, though my criteria for choosing "age appropriate" books have had to change as children's literary standards changed over the years. For example, many of the long and detailed informational books written for children during the nineteenth century, such as Edward A. Freeman's *Old English History for Children*, would not be considered suitable for children today.

Though assessing the quality of the literature is not the focus or purpose of this thesis, I have had to make some judgments regarding which books to include in my discussion, and which to eliminate. My decisions were based on different factors for each of the different categories stated above. For instance, in choosing informational books, I did not include those textbooks, such as the many children's historical encyclopedias, that are meant specifically for classroom use. Informational books of any sort, whether trade or textbook, are of course by their nature written with the intent of educating their audience. However, I feel that the books which target children, rather than their teachers, are more relevant to my argument. In sorting through literary accounts of *Beowulf*, I have included only those translations and retellings that target a specifically juvenile audience, or that are included in anthologies which do so.

I have had more difficulty in defining the category of "historical fiction," taking several factors into account. Many scholars disagree on what comprises historical fiction. Issues such as subject matter and intent play a role in deciding whether or not any book set in the past fits within the genre. Latrobe, Brodie and White's *Children's Literature Dictionary* defines children's historical fiction as "Realistic fiction with an integral setting that portrays significant historical events [. . .] or past social phenomena" (89). Yet despite this definition's seemingly solid grounding and its similarity to definitions given by other scholars, the lines between historical fiction and other literary genres often remain blurred. Adventure and domestic novels, particularly those written during the late 1800s and early 1900s, typify this blurring. Suzanne Rahn uses Stevenson's novel *Treasure Island* as an example of the unclear distinction between the genres, noting that while the book is set in the past, the adventures, characters, and events found in the book

do not necessarily rely on a specific historical setting, making it instead an adventure novel (3). However, she goes on to say that the two genres are still intertwined, because “Most of the late nineteenth-century historical novels for young people have their feet in the adventure story” (7). Jill Paton Walsh proposes a “new name for the nonhistorical books with a setting in the past;” suggesting that they be called “costume novels. To distinguish the historical from the costume novel we need only a simple test: Can we imagine the plot and characters set in any other time period?” (19). I have amended this test slightly for my thesis: though all the books I have considered can be placed within a general medieval setting, I have included only those with cultural or historical elements that place them within a specifically Anglo-Saxon setting. An example of a book I have removed for this reason is Henry Treece’s “The Black Longship,” which follows a band of Norse Vikings on their raid of an unnamed English coastal town in the early eleventh century. However, there is nothing about the circumstances of the townspeople, aside from an editorial note, that marks them as being different from any European town. With no real connection to Anglo-Saxon history or culture, such books do not make up a part of my bibliography. However, such exclusions have been rare. Though the children included in these novels are themselves occasionally anachronistic in their attitudes, the events in which they participate are generally grounded in Saxon history. I have included those adventure novels set in Saxon England that focus on actual historical figures and events, particularly King Alfred and the Battle of Hastings, despite their varying levels of accuracy.

Another popular genre with connections to medieval history is fantasy. In many fantasy books, Anglo-Saxon England becomes merely a convenient setting for

improbable events and situations. Historical facts are often twisted beyond recognition, or left out altogether, in order to provide an ideal “medieval” setting for fantastical elements. Instead of using the adventure novel as a means of creating anachronistic children and attitudes, authors begin turning to the time-travel novel, in which children travel back in time to see how the Anglo-Saxons lived (or the other way around, as in Rudyard Kipling’s *Puck of Pook’s Hill*). I have generally stayed away from fantasy, including time-travel books, as fantasy novels which claim to have Anglo-Saxon settings do so only as such a setting fits the author’s need, and accuracy is often sacrificed (at times quite brutally) for the sake of plot. Authors often change history in order to make their protagonists, with their historical knowledge, take an active role in the events taking place around them, resulting in a distractingly “ahistorical concept of past-present relations” (Krips 179). An example of a fantasy novel that I have retained, however, is Richard Parker’s *The Sword of Ganelon*, which creatively incorporates Anglo-Saxon charms and leech-craft into the life of Binna, a Saxon leech’s apprentice.

For similar reasons I have avoided books dealing with Arthurian legend. Though the majority of such books are placed in a chivalric setting, and are therefore not within the chronological parameters of my thesis, a few authors have placed Arthur in a more Anglo-Saxon setting. Where the Arthurian lore in such books does not upstage credible history, I have maintained the literature. Such is the case in Rosemary Sutcliff’s *The Lantern-Bearers*, which hints at an Arthurian figure in Arturios, the general of the Romano-British prince Ambrosius Aurelianus who fights against both Vortigern and the invading Jutes.

One more note on my selection of books: my focus in this thesis has been on

children's literary trends, particularly as they evolved in America. In general, I have discussed British literary trends only where those trends have affected, or are connected to, similar trends in America. This is the case most particularly in that literature written before the First World War, when much of the literature was published simultaneously in both countries. Therefore, though many of the books in my bibliography were written and published in Britain, they have all been, at some point, available to an American audience.

My Contribution to Scholarship

References to children's histories and historical fiction written during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries show up in the work of various medievalist scholars — as in Donald Scragg's footnote on nineteenth-century children's literature in his introduction to *Literary Appropriations of the Anglo-Saxons*, Tom Shippey's invocation of the prominent nineteenth-century children's writer George Albert Henty, and Velma Bourgeois Richmond's article on Edwardian juvenile fiction written about the Anglo-Saxons. However, as yet no study has been made of the literature and literary trends as a whole. Chapter two of my thesis will survey the trends in children's historical literature dealing with the Anglo-Saxons from the mid-nineteenth century through the present. I will focus on changes made in children's literature during the past two centuries, how these changes affected literature written specifically about the Anglo-Saxons, and how they have reflected shifts in popular attitudes regarding the Middle Ages. Specifically, I will discuss how popular children's fiction sprang from the nineteenth-century fascination with the Middle Ages, and how Romantic ideals of

chivalry permeated even the literature about the Anglo-Saxons through the early twentieth century. I will go on to discuss how the Anglo-Saxon past of Britain and America slowly came to be useful to twentieth-century children's authors for the opportunity it provided to create strong and appealing characters, interesting history, and a connection with the past, as opposed to providing nationalistic and didactic propaganda.

My third chapter will discuss the separation between reader and text that occurs when an Anglo-Saxon text, specifically *Beowulf*, is retold for a younger audience. In Paul Zumthor's words, "Any text coming from a former epoch must in a fundamental way be received as one coming from a universe in which we by no means participate" (29). Adaptations of *Beowulf* for juvenile readers consistently push their audience away from the original "universe" of the work in various ways. In early retellings, this distance resulted from the authors' drawing upon the archaic use of language and the artificial medieval ideals which were entrenched in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century culture. More recent retellers have distanced their readers through the oversimplification of the text's Germanic background in an equally artificial manner. This last act of distancing, the result of children's literary trends toward creating multicultural and universal settings, has slowly removed *Beowulf* from its Anglo-Saxon roots in favor of a more European, courtly setting. This chapter will examine the changes in the numerous publications of children's adaptations of *Beowulf* during the twentieth century as authors have used various means of translating its distant Anglo-Saxon language and culture for a culture contemporary with their audience.

I have included at the end of my thesis two appendices. The first appendix is my bibliography of primary sources. The sources are briefly annotated and organized

according to their genre (i.e., “historical fiction,” “informational books” and “Anglo-Saxon literature”). The second appendix places the books within their historical framework, discussing which works cover which historical periods and figures. This last appendix includes only historical fiction and informational books. I hope that these will provide useful supplements to the rest of the thesis. Though the brevity of my annotations and historical discussion leaves much to be desired, they should still provide the reader with a basic understanding of the subject matter covered by those children’s authors who have, for various reasons, written about the Anglo-Saxons.

**Chapter Two: The History and Trends of Children's Historical Literature
Written about Anglo-Saxon England**

19th Century Medievalism and the Rise of the Children's Novel

According to Donald Scragg, those living in the twentieth century, “perhaps in part because of an anti-imperialist reaction, [have] less sense of the Anglo-Saxons and their heritage than any other period of our history” (5-6). Allen J. Frantzen also notices a recent “decline of Anglo-Saxon studies in the registers of general culture” (11), and Tom Shippey goes further with his argument in “The Undeveloped Image,” stating that the image of Anglo-Saxon England among the general audience of Americans is “non-existent” (216). But this detachment from early English history was not always the case; until recently, the medieval roots of England and America were used to promote national religious and imperialistic unity. Scragg notes that a “new consciousness of an Anglo-Saxon heritage” surfaced in the sixteenth century (7), and by the nineteenth century popular opinion regarding the Middle Ages and the Anglo-Saxons in Britain and America was strongly associated with feelings of national pride. The British saw the Anglo-Saxons as the founders of the Great British Empire and even in America the Anglo-Saxons were seen as “a vital part of America’s cultural heritage” (Hall 133). In fact, by the end of the nineteenth century, Old English could be learned at any of three dozen American universities — making the subject more accessible in America than in any other country in the world (133). Sharon Turner’s *History of the Anglo-Saxons* (1799-1805) appeared at a time when “the subject of Anglo-Saxon antiquities had been nearly forgotten by the British public” (Turner, quoted in Shippey 226). However, by the time the *History* was published in its third edition in 1820, “*Beowulf* had been edited, James

Ingram's *Saxon Chronicles* were about to appear in 1823, and a wave of further text-editing was already being planned. [. . .] Anglo-Saxon history [was] assimilated to intense national pride, and made a part of continuing identity" (226). The Anglo-Saxons, particularly the figure of King Alfred the Great, received increased attention, "enjoying a standing and cultural significance higher than at any time before or since" (Scragg 21). Scholarly interest in the Anglo-Saxons was also thriving during this century; by 1830, British and North American scholars had taken over the bulk of Anglo-Saxon studies from Scandinavia and Germany (Bjork 123).

At the same time that Anglo-Saxon studies was gaining a following in England and America, another discipline was coming into its own. Children's literature became increasingly popular as writing styles became more mature and more focused on appealing to its audience. Though most children's literature written before the nineteenth century was written with the intention of "indoctrinating" its readers, some books, such as the cheaply-sold chapbooks of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, were often less didactic in their themes (Jacobs and Tunnell 50). The more mature, more appealing writing for children that began to appear in the nineteenth century came about in connection with the contemporary popularity of the Middle Ages. In 1819 Sir Walter Scott published *Ivanhoe*, a book which drew upon the contemporary fascination with medievalism, and immediately established historical fiction as a popular genre of writing in both Britain and America. "Few were able to match Scott's artistry," says Velma Bourgeois Richmond, "but all major Victorian novelists, as well as many lesser ones, wrote historical fiction" (181).

Suzanne Rahn's history of children's historical fiction and nonfiction states that

Ivanhoe was immediately popular among a younger audience; within thirty years of its publication, historical fiction had been written specifically for children (3). Rahn credits Charlotte Yonge, who wrote in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, with creating a “distinct genre with high literary and scholarly standards” (4) from children’s historical fiction, told from a child’s perspective with fictionalized children as protagonists. She was also the first to “cut loose the historical novel from the adventure story, and from the male audience traditionally associated with it” (5). Though the genre itself improved in terms of readability for its audience, it continued to place the “emphasis on national identity” evinced by *Ivanhoe* at the beginning of the century (Sanders 161), and the Anglo-Saxons continued to appear as popular subjects in the literature. Prolific writers such as George Albert Henty included Anglo-Saxon England in their repertoire of historical adventure stories for boys, while others such as Emma Leslie incorporated the setting into their domestic novels for an audience of girls.

The figure of Alfred was particularly appealing to Victorian audiences, as his life and accomplishments were often considered to be parallel to those of Queen Victoria. He became a particularly prominent character in historical novels as the one thousandth anniversary of his death approached; the death of the queen shortly after this anniversary strengthened the feeling of connection between their lives. James Baldwin included a couple of stories dealing with King Alfred in his *Fifty Famous Stories Retold*, written in 1896; in 1898 Eliza F. Pollard wrote *A Hero King: A Story of the Days of Alfred the Great*; Charles Whistler wrote *King Alfred’s Viking: A Story of the First English Fleet* in 1899; and Paul Creswick’s *In Ælfred’s Days: A Story of Saga the Dane* and Eva March Tappan’s *In the Days of Alfred the Great* were both published in 1900. Though most

early authors writing about the Anglo-Saxons were British, their work was enjoyed in America as well as children's historical fiction began to gain popularity among an international audience.

Not all nineteenth-century works targeting a younger audience were fiction. Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather* (1828-30) was the first work of historical nonfiction written specifically for children, and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Grandfather's Chair* (1841) was the first American work of juvenile historical nonfiction. Nationalist pride resulted in many juvenile histories of "Great Britain" and the Anglo Saxons, such as Charles Dickens' *A Child's History of England*, published serially between 1851 and 1853, which includes a section on the Anglo-Saxons. Edward A. Freeman wrote his *Old English History for Children* (1869) because of his desire to provide children with a comprehensive history of a culture seen at the time as an essential foundation of modern England and America. Wessex in particular, he notes in his preface, was viewed as the "state which in the end swallowed up the rest and which grew into the Kingdom of England" (ix).

Utilitarianism during the Golden Age of Children's Literature

Because of the advances made by authors in appealing to their juvenile audience, the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries are known as the "Golden Age" of children's literature. Yet despite the increase in appeal, many authors expressed through their writing the belief that children's literature should also serve a more utilitarian purpose. Children's books, particularly historical fiction, were often set in historical times in order to encourage "behavior rooted in the past but still present [such as] love of

reading, competition, courtesy, honesty, physical prowess, skill in music and story, a willingness to fight but always a desire to establish peace, and the missionary ideal of bringing Christianity to the heathen” (Richmond 187). Because Anglo-Saxon England provided ample opportunity to emphasize each of these behaviors, the setting maintained a stable presence in Victorian and Edwardian children’s literature. The figure of King Alfred the Great particularly invoked all of these virtues: anecdotal accounts of his learning to read appear in such volumes as James Baldwin’s *Fifty Famous People* (1912); Baldwin also tells the story of his “burning the cakes” in a peasant woman’s cottage, as well as his feeding a disguised St. Cuthbert at Athelney on the eve of his victory over Guthrum at Edington, in his *Fifty Famous Stories Retold* (1896). Alfred’s converting Guthrum to Christianity is another common story.

Children’s literature of the Victorian era maintained strongly moralistic tones toward its audience in addition to the highly adventurous plots that characterized it. James Frederick Hodgetts’ *Harold, the Boy Earl* (1888), for example, follows the young Saxon boy Harold and his friends as they venture across the Welsh border to rescue an imprisoned noble in the early seventh century, a setup that provided ample opportunity for adventure. However, throughout their escapades they encounter Domina, a Welsh noblewoman whose Christian kindness and common sense inevitably lead to the conversion of Harold’s household, culminating in their support of the conversion of the Northumbrian King Edwin to Christianity at the end of the novel. Though the protagonists are pagan warriors, their goodness makes them naturally receptive to the message of Christianity, and they are made all the more noble for accepting it.

The prevalence of Christian virtues in the heart of every truly noble Anglo-Saxon

is a trait identified by the Victorian author Charles Kingsley as “Muscular Christianity”:
“a chivalric ideal that exalted manliness found in physical health and strength, which were deemed crucial for pureness of heart” (Richmond 182). Militaristic bravery and the importance of Christianity are prominent in Henty’s *The Dragon and the Raven* (1886), as in the response of young Saxon Edmund to his father’s claim that the country may soon be overrun by Danes: “We know that the people conquered by our ancestors were unwarlike and cowardly; but it would be a shame indeed were we Saxons so to be overcome by the Danes, seeing moreover that we have the help of God, being Christians, while the Danes are pagans and heathens” (8). Edmund hints that superior military prowess gave his people the right to invade England, but that the inferior religion of the Danes denies them the right to invade England themselves. Women were not expected to show such prowess, as Edmund’s father suggests: “We men can take refuge in swamp and forest, but it would [be] hard for delicate women; and those men are best off who stand alone and are able to give every thought and energy to the defense of their country” (15). On the other hand, female characters could show their own form of “Muscular Christianity,” though their ideal manifested itself not in physical strength. Rather, a woman’s beauty was seen as an indicator of her spiritual character. The female protagonists of Emma Leslie’s *Gytha’s Message* (1885), for example, are beautiful specimens of the human race. The main character, Gytha, is a passionately religious girl who single-handedly converts a pagan Anglo-Saxon household during the time of the Norman Conquest. Her bed-ridden mistress, among the first to be converted, undergoes a miraculous change in appearance from cross and sickly to beautiful and healthy by the end of the book, and her Christian fervor eventually enables her to walk.

Victorian and Edwardian children's authors used their writing to emphasize the importance not only of religion, but of *English* religion. Books published in England and protestant America featured a number of Celtic, Welsh, and of course English missionaries. St. Augustine and other Roman missionaries, however, are notably absent in literature of the turn of the century. The Anglo-Saxons were attributed with having spread the seeds of an early, decidedly non-Roman Catholic, Church of England. The English monks in Henty's *Wulf the Saxon* (1895), written about the Norman Conquest, for example, "viewed with bitter hostility the elevation of [French] foreigners to the chief dignities of the church, not only because they were foreigners, but because they introduced innovations of all kinds, and sought to reduce the Church of England to subjection to Rome, whereas previously it had been wholly independent of Papal authority" (43). This emphasis shows up even in the nonfiction. H. E. Marshall, in *A Child's English Literature* (1909), for example, mentions that the monastery at "Whitby, we must remember, was founded by Celtic, and not by Roman monks" (73) in rewriting the story of Caedmon for children.

Victorian authors used their historical fiction to educate their audience about the more secular attributes of the Saxons as well. Though some of their minor explanations regarding the Saxons could be helpful, many writers of the time were *too* preoccupied with accuracy. For example, Tappan, in her book *In the Days of King Alfred*, creates believable yet moral characters — very important in 1900. However, her detailed explanatory notes regarding history can be very intrusive, as in her narrative of young Alfred's journey to Rome:

Part of the journey was made over the old Roman roads,

and here they could travel as rapidly as was possible for so large a number of people. The Romans used, first, to beat the soil, then to spread layers of flint or pebbles or sand, and then sometimes add a kind of masonry of stones or bricks fastened together with mortar. The roads were raised in the centre, and it seems as if it ought to have been easy to march over them; but there was one great disadvantage, they were as nearly straight as they could be made, and if a hill came in their way, they never went around it, but always directly over it. (62)

Victorian authors incorporated their exaggerated attention to historical detail in other ways as well. Chapter nine of Gertrude Hollis' *A Scholar of Lindisfarne* (1902), for example, begins with four pages describing the island of Lindisfarne, followed by five pages describing life in an Anglo-Saxon monastery. She returns to her story for the next page and a half, but then continues describing monastic life for the remaining two and a half pages. Her numerous parenthetical notes even occasionally make intrusions into the dialogue, as in the following sentence: "“Laughed I before till I was twisted like a longship's' (a viking's war vessel) 'beak,' he said" (222). Such exhaustive attention to detail would be more appropriate in a work of nonfiction, but in historical fiction it is more disruptive than helpful. At the time of this book's publication in the early 1900s, however, such descriptions were often seen as educational and conducive to creating a vivid sense of historical setting.

Authors of Victorian nonfiction could also be intrusive in their descriptions as

they utilized the figures in their histories to convey moral instruction. Dickens' *A Child's History of England* and Jacob Abbott's *The Story of English History* (1855) are both general histories of England which discuss the Anglo-Saxon period. Often didactic in their tone toward their audience, and occasionally condescending, these authors frequently offer commentary on the morality of the actions of the historical figures appearing within their texts, and gloss over unpleasant details. Dickens' retelling of the life of King Alfred focuses on the usual folkloric stories of his life, such as the story of his learning to read, his burning the cakes, his sneaking into the Danish camp dressed as a minstrel, etc., as well as a few battles. However, his descriptions are filled with didactic asides, as in Alfred's victory at Devonshire: "At length, the Devonshire men made head against a new host of Danes who landed on their coast; killed their chief, and captured their flag; on which was represented the likeness of a Raven — a very fit bird for a thievish army like that, I think" (22). Dickens never misses an opportunity to praise Alfred, stating that he was known for "being as merciful as he was good and brave" (23), and that, "As great and good in peace, as he was great and good in war, King Alfred never rested from his labors to improve his people" (24). Though Dickens' *History* was reprinted as a popular history for children numerous times after its original publication, by the end of the "Golden Age" editors such as Charles H. Sylvester were quick to note that "it is not at all probable that Dickens' picture is strictly true" (418).

Edwardian Children's Literature and the Courtly Ideal

Didacticism pervaded children's literature dealing with the Middle Ages during the nineteenth century, as writers drew upon the past "not so much to correct the present

as to educate and guide the future” (Rahn 8), not only in terms of religion and moral behavior, but also in terms of imperialistic sentiment. Henty’s numerous works of historical fiction dealing with the military engagements of England throughout its history were typical of the imperialistic feeling of the time. In fact, in his preface to *The Dragon and the Raven*, a fictionalized account of King Alfred’s campaigns against the invading Danes, Henty compares Alfred’s military efforts to those that England would take in the event of an uprising in India (iii). Though much of the adult trade fiction written during this time dealt with contemporary or futuristic settings, the fiction and nonfiction written for children continued to be set in the past, providing the patriotic ideals thought necessary for the young. Famous British kings and war leaders appeared in numerous works of juvenile nonfiction, such as Vortigern in Hubert M. Skinner’s *The Story of the Britons* (1903). King Alfred, the great English war leader, was another prominent figure, making appearances in H. W. Mabie’s *Heroes Every Child Should Know* (1908) and Marshall’s *The Child’s English Literature* (1909).

Another figure that began to appear on a larger scale during this time was Beowulf. Though the legend of *Beowulf* had appeared in books written for children during the Victorian era (as in Helene Guerber’s anthology of 1896), juvenile adaptations of the story began to appear more often in the early 1900s as part of anthologies of children’s stories and collections of British heroes. In 1905 Florence Holbrook includes it in a collection of Northern legends. Two years later it shows up in a collection of children’s stories compiled by John Gibb, and it is the first legend in M. I. Ebbutt’s *Myths and Legends: The British Race* (1910). Marshall published the story as one in a series of famous stories “Told to the Children” in 1908, because, she says, “it is a pity that there

should be any who do not know it” (About This Book). Beowulf, like Alfred, was an important, uniquely English superhero.

Children’s books at the turn of the century were particularly notable for their highly romanticized chivalric sentiments, such as honor, courtesy, and patriotic zeal. The chivalric code, as idealized by Victorian and Edwardian authors, permeated children’s literature of the years prior to World War I. Writers of the period made a serious “attempt to infuse the ideals of chivalry into Victorian culture — an attempt that met with some real-life degree of success” (Rahn 7). At the same time, Raymond Chapman notes that Victorian medieval ideals were becoming more “eclectic” and “decadent” — “emphasising the good and glossing over the awkward bits; appealing to language and images for automatic response without a firm contextual base” (51). A Boy Scout manual published in 1915, for example, calls for a type of “modern knighthood” among its members, beseeching young men to “be continually on a quest, on the lookout to help, and always to refuse any reward for the effort. This kind of courtesy and good manners is essential to success. It was this unselfish desire to protect and help that made these men of olden time such splendid fellows” (Alexander 821).

Edwardian children’s literature was particularly prone to portraying an idealized chivalric sense of honor. Even the literature which dealt with settings pre-dating chivalric England was infused with such ideals. Writers of historical fiction produced many Anglo-Saxon warriors that were polite, courteous, and chivalrous, such as Charles Whistler’s Oswald, the protagonist of *A Prince of Cornwall* (1904). Oswald interacts with the novel’s female characters in a very courtly manner, swearing oaths of fealty to them, and fighting on behalf of their honor. He also holds the distinction of being

uniquely English, unlike the Roman and Anglo-Norman heroic characters which also appeared at this time. Juvenile historical fiction of the pre-war years produced many English warriors that, like the historical king Alfred, were not only willing to fight on behalf of honor and country, but were consistently distinguishing themselves in doing so. Their military prowess was notable not only among their fellow countrymen, but overseas as well. Oswald, for example, is the disinherited son of an Essex thane whose noble demeanor and skill in battle mark him as heroic in Wessex, Wales, and Ireland. In *A King's Comrade* (1905), Whistler goes even further with the fictitious character of Wilfrid, a noble West Saxon whose fighting is helpful in deciding the outcome of battles in England, as well as in battles against the invading Vikings in France. Though Anglo-Saxon thanes come to the rescue of France from the Danes in children's literature as early as 1886 with Henty's *The Dragon and the Raven*, in which Edmund saves the French from certain defeat, historical fiction written after the turn of the century emphasized the military prowess of English soldiers overseas on a more consistent basis.

Such literary figures were perceived as necessary in instilling patriotic and chivalrous behavior and ideals in youth during this time; Anglo-Saxon warriors, epitomizing these ideals, were simply an early form of the Arthurian knight. Even female readers were targeted by authors who emphasized the importance of fighting for one's country. Richmond notes that literature of the Edwardian age is characterized by the "frequency with which girls play active roles" (183). In contrast to insipid female characters of earlier Victorian literature, such as Leslie's mentioned above, heroines found in novels by later novelists like Charles Whistler can be found rescuing warriors and kings, participating in horseback chases, and actively involving themselves in the

action of the book, while still maintaining an appropriately feminine demeanor.

Post-World War I and the Break from Victorianism

According to Rahn, the “effect of World War I on the historical novel was understandably devastating. No lessons from the past had prepared anyone for this” (10). In England and America, the Middle Ages and the historical novel became “hopelessly passé” as a result of the war (10). The writing of children’s historical fiction and nonfiction waned dramatically, and did not recover until the 1950s (Leeson 174). However, what literature was written represented the gradual but revolutionary changes made in children’s literature from many of the established practices of the Victorian and Edwardian eras. For example, even as late as the 1930s, juvenile historical fiction and nonfiction tended to use artificial and archaic speech in its dialogue, an attribute dating back to Scott, and still “unquestioned” well into the twentieth century (Rahn 7). Geoffrey Trease, a children’s book author, writes that children’s literature of the time was “in the doldrums. It was long-winded, its vocabulary unfamiliar and unreal. [. . .] Those of us who began to write it in the nineteen-thirties had to overcome plenty of prejudice among children” (22). For example, Olive Beaupré Miller’s *My Bookhouse from the Tower Window* (1921) retells the story of King Alfred’s burning the cakes while staying with a “cowherd’s wife.” The wife’s response to his absent-mindedness is typically archaic: “Now, now, idle dog, [. . .] couldst thou not even watch the cakes? Thou wouldst have been glad enough to *eat* them!” (84).

By 1950, such speech forms are no longer common in children’s literature. Eloise Lowmsbery says in a note to her biography of King Alfred, published in 1951, that in

including certain quotes within her text, some have “been shortened or adapted to the vocabulary of young readers, but the substance [. . .] and the meaning and style of the original have been carefully preserved” (36). However, some authors, while modernizing the dialogue found within their books, attempted to retain an Anglo-Saxon “style” of speech for quite a while before giving way completely to an anachronistic, more modern style. Cyril Walter Hodges, in his book *The Marsh King* (1967), provides his reader with dialogue reminiscent of an Anglo-Saxon poetic style in such speeches as the pre-battle speech of Odda, a thane of Wessex: “Now only sinew shall save us, the stark mood of the heart shall be battle’s buckler. Let every man prepare to render the grim gift of his life’s blood. Not more for our fault shall the King’s cause falter” (192). Writers of the 1930s and after also worked against the previous mores of children’s literature to create a style which “eschew[ed] the richly ornamented prose and frequent factual passages that typified earlier works” (Blos 38). The intrusive and unnecessary informational passages which abounded in Victorian and Edwardian literature disappeared in favor of establishing setting in less obtrusive ways.

Children’s nonfiction also underwent a renovation in its presentation. The tone employed by children’s authors became much less didactic, resulting in a heightened appeal to young readers. However, early post-war children’s nonfiction remains unreliable in its tendency to gloss over or twist seemingly unpleasant facts. Two informational books written during this time demonstrate this tendency rather well: *Everyday Life in Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Norman Times* (1926) by Marjorie Quennell and C. H. B. Quennell, and *The Story of Saxon and Norman Britain Told in Pictures* (1935) by Clement Wallace Airne. The Quennells’ book, though generally very detailed

and reliable, occasionally falls into the habit of censoring its material. While many pages are taken up in detailing the minute differences between Anglo-Saxon brooch-making in various kingdoms (130-33), the authors' discussion of the Saxon invasion of Britain is very short, as they "do not wish to stain these pages too deeply in blood" (124). Their account of the Battle of Hastings is summed up with the words "we shall not concern ourselves very much with the details of the fighting" (209). The result is a book steeped in details regarding Anglo-Saxon culture, craft, and architecture, but often weak in historical detail. Airne's book is also unreliable because of its tendency to change or omit details not considered appropriate for his younger audience. For example, at one point he claims that lower-class Anglo-Saxons ate poorly because they "preferred" simple, scant meals, as opposed to the richer and healthier diet of the ealdormen that lived in better circumstances.

Beginning in the 1930s, "a very few serious writers began the often thankless task of raising nonfiction for children to the stature of art. [. . .] Other writers appeared who really cared about their subject matter and wanted to pass their knowledge and feeling to children" (Bacon 4). The historical novel began to gain more prestige in America, and just prior to the Second World War, it again rose in popularity as authors attempted to "reaffirm and pass on their [Americans'] heritage" (Rahn 11). In the wake of the revived internationalism brought on by the Second World War, American children's literature began to separate itself with its previously close connection with British children's literature as American writers began once more to look to their past for inspiration (11-12). However, due to the paper shortages of the war and the economic devastation of the Depression, the number of children's books published declined, not rising again until the

1950s, at which point “the pace was fast and furious as writers and publishers filled the gap, making up for decades of lost time” (Leeson 174).

This point in the history of children’s publishing in America and England is often referred to as the “Second Golden Age,” which lasted for over twenty years. In America, many Newbery awards were given to historical novels, and dedicated writers such as Geoffrey Trease helped to “force the British historical novel into the twentieth century at last” (Rahn 13). Ironically, at a time when, according to Frantzen, knowledge of the Anglo-Saxons was declining “in the registers of general culture” (11), the trade book market became much more consumer-based, and Anglo-Saxon settings in children’s literature flourished in the midst of the renewed popularity of historical fiction. More and more books dealing with Anglo-Saxon England, and of better and better quality, began to appear from the late 1950s on. Rahn notes that children’s literature in general extended itself in range, beginning to target more and more specific age groups. For example, in contrast to the longer, more complex general histories of England written prior to this time, books such as L. Du Garde Peach’s *King Alfred the Great* (1956) provided readers with a detailed, nonfictional discussion of the life of King Alfred, without relying solely on the anecdotal folklore surrounding his life.

An interesting inaccuracy which surfaced during these years involved the portrayal of Anglo-Saxon childhood. Authors writing in the nineteenth century were not so concerned with portraying childhood accurately, as their characters were intended to provide models of behavior rather than realistic historical figures. However, many authors writing in the 1950s and 60s, attempting to create less anachronistic characters, were hindered by the lack of sources regarding Anglo-Saxon children. Because so little

information could be found, they often wrestled with how to portray the younger protagonists in their literature. Children in their stories were not often described participating in child-like activities. Rather, they were portrayed as participating, though on a minor scale, in the duties of their parents. In 1926, Margery and C. H. B. Quennell noted that not much was known regarding Anglo-Saxon children's games and practices. Rather condescendingly, they claim that this lack of information could be "because life was so interesting that it was more amusing to play at being grownup, with romps in between" (153). However, even in later decades authors produced condescending theories regarding Anglo-Saxon childhood. Margaret Stanley-Wrench, writing the fictionalized biography of King Edward the Confessor in 1966, declares that "in those days [. . .] children were looked on as small grown-ups, and had little time allowed them for playing and relaxing. They had to work hard, and their parents and masters were strict and unrelenting" (31). The children in her book generally reflect her thoughts, resulting in a very unbelievable depiction of the childhood of Edward, whose every activity is meant only for his own education. This sentiment can be found in children's literature even as late as 1980, in Brenda Ralph Lewis' *Growing Up in the Dark Ages*. Lewis writes that Anglo-Saxon children "were expected to do their share of the work as soon as possible, which meant that they had to grow up very quickly. There was no time to be 'wasted' on the fifteen or sixteen years of childhood which children can expect to enjoy nowadays" (25). These depictions of Anglo-Saxon childhood echo Philippe Ariès' statement in 1960 (though he was not the first to theorize that medieval children were considered sub-class citizens) that, until the twelfth century, "there was no place for childhood" (33). Not all writers subscribed to such a theory, however, and by the next

decade the portrayal of Anglo-Saxon children was much more believable.

Though most authors of historical fiction writing in the late 1950s and early 60s tried to avoid the anachronism of their Victorian counterparts, some still struggled to find an appropriate balance between historical accuracy and readability. For example, Erick Berry's *The King's Jewel* (1957) chronicles the battles of Alfred against the Danes during the ninth century. In defiance of history, however, Berry admits in his introduction to having not only "telescoped some fifteen years of battles, defeats, and victories into a year or so" (13), but also to having changed Alfred's age, eliminated all but one of his children, introduced Bishop Asser at the wrong period of Alfred's life, and added a few new incidents of his own into Alfred's war against the Danes. Many authors, however, began finding ways to be creative without jeopardizing history. Rosemary Sutcliff writes about the last Saxon resistance against the Normans in Northern England during the late eleventh century in her book *The Shield Ring* (1956). By writing about an event in history that is not so well documented as Alfred's life, Sutcliff gives herself more room to be inventive in portraying Anglo-Saxon history and culture without scandalizing the sensibilities of most historians that might encounter her work. Richard Parker, in his book *The Sword of Ganelon* (1958), also takes liberties with history by adding a few fantastical elements to his book, set in the mid-ninth century during the early Viking invasions on England. However, Parker's forays into the realm of fantasy are in themselves based on historical research, in that they apply Anglo-Saxon charms and folk beliefs. In this book, the young protagonist Binna learns not only of the healing magic of certain herbs, but of the healing properties of certain runic characters as well, and is able to put his semi-magical knowledge to use on behalf of those with whom he fights.

New Realism and the Rise of Children's Nonfiction

The 1960s and 70s marked a pivotal point in children's publishing. Increased prosperity and governmental grants to school libraries in the 1960s helped "make children's publishing big business" as the number of children's books sold increased annually (Jacobs and Tunnell 56). These factors, along with the advent of the "New Realism" movement of children's literature during this time, led to an increase in the range of subject matter in children's literature.

The New Realism movement rejected earlier practices of "dumbing down" information for children and glossing over unpleasant situations. Authors were able to write about topics and ideas previously considered taboo for children. For example, Henry Treece's *Man with a Sword* (1964) opens with a bloody fight between two Saxons, one of whom is a sort of medieval assassin. *The Namesake* (1964) and *The Marsh King* (1967) by Cyril Walter Hodges both see Alfred the Great through many of his battles against the Danes, with many references to "blood spouting" and soldiers "striking straight to the bone, red from head to foot with glittering blood" (*The Marsh King* 195). Battle scenes in books written a decade earlier, such as Treece's *Hounds of the King* (1955), while still descriptive, were often much less bloody: "Flights of arrows fell among them, buzzing like angry wasps. Men fell to left and to right, clutching at the feathered flights that stuck out from their bodies" (129).

As the number of books published annually increased, the amount of historical fiction dealing with Anglo-Saxon England grew as well. Understandably, these books included a number of novels about King Alfred and the Battle of Hastings. *Beowulf* also began to be published more often, with three published retellings in 1961 alone (retold by

Ragozin, Serrailier, and Sutcliff). However, historical novels of this time were for the most part marked by their tendency to focus on less prominent characters and events; some novels were set in general, non-specific Anglo-Saxon settings. For example, the collection of stories set in Anglo-Saxon England found in *Word Hoard* (1969), by Jill Paton Walsh and Kevin Crossley-Holland, deals with Kings Alfred and Harold, but also with Caedmon, a character from *The Battle of Maldon*, Bishops Wulfstan and Alfig, an early Saxon tribe, and a ninth-century scop. Furthermore, whereas the protagonists of novels written in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century tended to be thanes, earls, and warriors, protagonists of novels written after the late 1950s were more likely to be monks, thralls, and peasants. Writers of children's historical fiction took their eyes "from the prince in the oak tree and turned them to men and women at work in the fields underneath" (Leeson 175). In doing so, the majority of novels dealing with Anglo-Saxon England centered around one of two historical phenomena: the spread of Christianity in England, and the arrival of the Saxons in England. Sutcliff's *Dawn Wind* (1962) and Barbara Willard's *Augustine Came to Kent* (1963) are both set at the time of St. Augustine's arrival in Britain; Frederick Grice's *A Northumbrian Missionary* (1962) describes the efforts of St. Aidan and his missionaries to convert Northumbria; Kevin Crossley-Holland's trilogy *The Sea-Stranger* (1973), *The Fire-Brother* (1975) and *The Earth-Father* (1976) follow Bishop Cedd as he converts the East Anglians in the seventh century; and Peter Carter's *Madatan* (1974) describes the spread of Christianity during the early Viking raids on England. Interestingly, the burning of churches is a central aspect in more than one of these books; monasteries are burned in Maryhale Woolsey's *The Keys and the Candle* (1963), Crossley-Holland's *The Fire-Brother*, and Carter's

Madatan. As for the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain, Sutcliff's *A Saxon Settler* (1965) describes the settling of a tribe of Saxons in Britain; Gillian Paton Walsh, in *Hengest's Tale* (1966), combines the story of Hengest from the *Beowulf* manuscript and the figure of Hengest from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to form the basis of her description of the arrival of the Jutes in Kent; and Clive King's *Ninny's Boat* (1980) imagines the coming of an Anglian tribe to England.

Despite the increase in the publication of historical fiction, the overall popularity of the genre began to wane. The Anglo-Saxons fell out of favor as literature began to focus on America's unique history and culture. Anglo-Saxon England, once seen as a valuable setting for providing moral instruction to children, lost its value as both a utilitarian and a popular setting. Whereas in the 1950s "the genre had been valued for giving young people the security of tradition in a fast-changing world, [. . .] in the late sixties tradition was exactly what the young hoped to be liberated from. [. . .] By the early 1970s, the historical novel had already plummeted to the low point of popularity from which it has still not fully recovered" (Rahn 17). In the 1960s, large numbers of children's books set in Anglo-Saxon England were published. The 1970s produced less than half the amount published in the previous decade, and in the 1980s, almost none were published at all. The genre did not begin to reassert itself until the end of the twentieth century.

However, at the same time that historical fiction waned in popularity, another genre of children's literature fast became a staple: nonfiction. During the Victorian and Edwardian eras, children's nonfiction on Anglo-Saxon England had generally appeared only as part of historical surveys of Britain. By the mid-twentieth century historians

began writing books focusing on Saxon England itself, as in Eloise Lowmsbery's *Alfred the Great* (1951) and R. R. Sellman's book *The Anglo-Saxons* (1959). In 1964, John Hamilton wrote *Saxon England*, and in 1968 Bernice Grohskopf's *From Age to Age: Life and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England* provided its readers with an in-depth discussion of Anglo-Saxon history and literature. Beginning in the 1960s and 70s, nonfiction came to be the most popular genre for conveying information about the Anglo-Saxons.

According to Rahn, "historical nonfiction was thriving — enjoying exponential growth in quality, creativity, popularity, and prestige. Paradoxically, some of the same trends that had worked against historical fiction were working for nonfiction" (19). These trends included the ability to be original and still entirely accurate, the prominence of illustration, and the increased emphasis on "stimulat[ing] interest" (Norton and Norton 694). In the 1950s, very little nonfiction was available on Anglo-Saxon England, as opposed to the more readily available historical fiction on the topic. In the 1960s, informational books were much easier to find, though they still had to compete with the historical fiction published during the same time. For example, the description of a Saxon tumbler in Geoffrey Middleton's nonfictional *Saxons and Vikings* (1968) is interesting enough: "Some Saxons drank from coloured glasses [. . .] called tumblers because they would not stand upright on the table! So they were held in the hand until empty and then turned upside down on the table. A man was expected to drain his glass in one gulp" (30). Sutcliff's novel *A Saxon Settler* (1965) provides an equally well-detailed description of the same object: "the Chieftain had the most beautiful drinking-vessel of all. A cup of blue glass enriched with twisted ribbons of glass the colours of amber and mulberry-juice, and with a rounded base so that it would not stand, and every

time it was filled it must be emptied at one drought” (25).

However, authors of children’s nonfiction quickly learned to make their histories of Anglo-Saxon England appealing and competitive enough to retain a place in a market that had rejected historical fiction. Geoffrey Trease writes in 1977 that children’s nonfiction, “beautifully and lavishly illustrated, researched and written by a small team of editors and consultants, often produced and marketed as an international venture, is one of the most impressive phenomena of juvenile publishing in recent years” (27-28). Informational books of the time began to focus “in lively detail on a specific incident or sideline of history, instead of taking a broad overview[.] The results were not only more fun to read but better history” (Rahn 14). Books with a specific focus, such as Katherine East’s *A King’s Treasure: The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial* (1982), or the numerous books on the Battle of Hastings which appeared during this time, became more common. By the end of the decade, and in the decades that followed, the quantity of children’s nonfiction books published steadily escalated, with twice as many informational books dealing with Anglo-Saxon England appearing in the 1980s as in the previous decade.

Informational books of the 1960s, like historical fiction, began to break loose from the formal taboos of earlier literature as part of the New Realism movement. Evidence of this break can be found in the descriptions of King Harold’s death at the Battle of Hastings in such books as Hodges’ *The Norman Conquest* and *The Bayeux Tapestry* by Norman Denny and Josephine Filmer-Sankey, both published in 1966. In contrast to statements like the Quennells’ stated above, Hodges feels comfortable describing the death of King Harold: “it chanced that an arrow struck King Harold through the eye. He fell dead beside his flag” (29). Denny and Filmer-Sankey go into

much more detail, describing the problematic puzzle surrounding the manner of Harold's death; whether his eye was pierced by an arrow or whether he was struck down by William's knights.

Another trend which began near this time was the large-scale publication of books as part of historical series. English and American publishers began producing series of books, in which each book in the series explored a different historical event or time period. This trend is still flourishing. Examples include Geoffrey Middleton's *Saxons and Vikings* (1968) and Jane R. Osborn's *At the Time of King Alfred* (1977), both of which are from the *Focus on History* series. Some early series consisted of short works of historical fiction, such as Grice's *A Northumbrian Missionary* (1962) and Sutcliff's *A Saxon Settler* (1965), both of the *People of the Past* series, and Vera Cumberlege's *The Grey Apple Tree* (1965) in the *Time, Place and Action* series. Most historical series, however, were and are made up of nonfiction. Amanda Purves' *Growing up in a Saxon Village* (1978), Brenda Ralph Lewis' *Growing up in the Dark Ages* (1980), Tony D. Triggs' *Saxon Britain* (1989), and Margaret Sharman's *The Anglo-Saxons* (1995) are selections from just a few other informational series which contain books on Anglo-Saxon England. These books are for the most part united in their style of design and layout, consisting of multiple two-page spreads highlighting different aspects of Saxon history with titles such as "Anglo-Saxon Clothing," "The Viking Raids," or "The Battle of Hastings." They usually provide an index, glossary and other supplementary material, and are characterized by more and more brightly colored illustrations and less and less text as the decades pass. Not all series are so formulaic and brief in their presentation; Kevin Crossley-Holland's *Greenblades Rising: The Anglo-Saxons* (1975) and William

W. Lacey's *The Battle of Hastings* (1996) are both from series which give their readers longer, more profusely detailed discussions of the Saxon Age than do other historical series written for various audiences.

The Return of the Historical Novel and the Saxons

The 1980s and 90s continued the trend of producing mass quantities of informational books dealing with medieval England, often as part of the historical series that targeted school audiences. These series were particularly profuse in England, as British publishers produced numerous series in order to keep up with the growing market for such books during a time when “literature-based reading philosophies and methodologies” (Jacobs and Tunnell 59) encouraged teachers and schools to provide ample reading material, aside from textbooks and reference books, to young students studying history. Some of these books included not only glossaries and indices, but suggestions for classroom application, or lists of places students and teachers could visit to find more information about their topic, as in Peter Chrisp's *On the Trail of the Vikings in Britain* (1999).

Authors from the 1980s on progressively began to include more bibliographies, maps, and other useful supplementary material in their informational books in order to encourage and help readers to discover more about the Anglo-Saxons. For example, Robin May includes several pages of supplementary material in her book *Alfred the Great and the Saxons* (1985), including a timeline and a list of books for further reading. Writers of historical fiction also began to insert more supplementary material into their books. Though earlier writers, such as Margery Greenleaf in *Banner Over Me* (1968),

often included historical notes and maps in their books, later writers began including other relevant information. Elizabeth Alder, for example, included the usual historical note describing which events and characters in her fictional account of the Battle of Hastings are based on actual facts and personages, as well as translations of pertinent selections from *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which she found useful in writing her book.

Though informational books were commonly used in the classroom, publishers increasingly emphasized that books also be suitable for a more popular audience. Before 1970, retail sales had been responsible for less than ten percent of the children's book market. By the end of the century, they were responsible for half of the market — as much as seventy percent for some publishing companies (Jacobs and Tunnell 57). The amount of books produced for a consumer market increased dramatically as new technology enabled publishers to create books, particularly informational books, with more appealing pictures, layout, and text than had been previously available. Authors' treatment of the Saxons written around this time was less strictly utilitarian and educational as publishers produced popular nonfiction for consumer audiences. Tony McAleavy's *Life in a Medieval Abbey* (1998) is a good example of an interesting but still reliable work of popular nonfiction. This book's discussion of the origins of monastic life in Britain is fascinating in its inclusion of details, such as its chronicling of the differences between the Celtic and Roman missionaries, the lives and achievements of various abbots and abbesses, and its discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the church in Saxon England. These details are supplemented by an abundance of illustrations and photographs which goes beyond the usual range of graphics included in such books. Though suitable for use in a classroom setting, it provides the reader with a

compelling read on its own as well.

Though not as commonly evoked as it had been in Victorian children's literature, Anglo-Saxon England again became fairly prominent in the 1990s as a setting that provided readers with the adventure and excitement which had gradually come to be of paramount importance in popular children's literature. Paul Zumthor comments in his book *Speaking of the Middle Ages*, "I don't think I'm deluding myself in stating that in the 1980s the Middle Ages are, from the point of view of our social practices and ideologies, more actual than they were in the 1880s" (29). Though England's medieval past had again become an entertaining setting, the recent emphasis placed on historical accuracy often made it more difficult for authors to promote their agendas, which is not to suggest that many did not try. Not all informational books written for a popular audience were as generous to their subject as McAleavy's, and authors found ways to portray Anglo-Saxon England that were both accurate and skewed. Terry Deary's *Vicious Vikings* (1994) and *Smashing Saxons* (2000) and Bob Fowke's *What They Don't Tell about Anglo-Saxons* (1999) are examples of the many books published for a popular audience that attempted to make history as entertaining as possible by focusing on the nastiest aspects of Saxon life, culture, and literature. Compare, for example, Deary's description of Viking drinking vessels with those quoted above: "Beer and mead were drunk from the horns of cattle. This was an art in itself — a trickle could soon become a tidal wave if the horn was tipped too far! Another problem was the horn's shape — it couldn't be put down unless it was empty. The drink had to be drunk in one go, hence a drunken Viking was a common sight" (*Vicious Vikings* 85). In their attempts to enliven Anglo-Saxon history, authors of such books were often guilty of twisting facts and

separating their subject from its cultural context. One instance of this separation is Terry Deary's interpretation of *The Wife's Lament*, which has little of the poetic feel of its Anglo-Saxon original:

"I've never known such misery since I became his wife,
 Abandoned by a husband who sailed off to save his life.
 A victim of a vicious feud, he had to leave me here,
 And hide me deep within these woods where I must live in fear.
 I live beneath an ancient oak, within a deep earth cave,
 Alive, and yet it seems to me, I'm living in my grave.
 Each dawn I rise and leave the cave to walk through twisted trees,
 And moan when I remember how my lord is overseas.
 Sad grief is all there is for those who have to live apart.
 No friends, no parents and no love. Alone with aching heart." (74)

While Deary's rendition of the poem contains many of the same elements as its inspiration, it contains none of the same cultural depth. Rather than using the setting as an opportunity for providing moral instruction, as the Victorians did, authors writing a century later used the setting as a backdrop for entertainment. In such books, medieval England can be as falsely represented by children's authors as during the Victorian era.

Only a limited number of children's novels dealing with Anglo-Saxon England appeared between the late 1970s and early 1990s. However, in the late 1990s and after the turn of the century, they began to appear in larger numbers as authors utilized the setting for creating the necessary heightened sense of adventure that children expected in their literature. Retellings of *Beowulf* became popular as authors focused more and more

on the battle scenes, culminating in Welwyn Wilton Katz's retelling of the story, in which Laszlo Gal's illustrations are particularly bloody. Young protagonists also found themselves in increasingly adventurous and uncomfortable situations. In Walter Hodges' *The Namesake*, written in 1964, the boy Alfred walks with a crutch. However, in later decades, Eryn of Elizabeth Alder's *The King's Shadow* (1995) has his tongue cut out, and Michael Cadnum's *Raven of the Waves* (2001) follows a young Viking and his bawdy and violent companions on their journey of pillaging and plundering the English coast. The growing demand for the strong, independent female protagonists which permeated literature resulted in novels such as Patricia Malone's *The Legend of Lady Ilena* (2002), in which the young warrior princess Ilena fights against the invading Saxons in the early seventh century to protect her people. Rebecca Tingle's *The Edge on the Sword* (2001) follows Æthelflaed, a Saxon princess, through her training to become a warrior. Though these novels reflect many of the same historical events as literature of earlier decades, their focus has dramatically shifted: *The King's Shadow*, for example, is set at the time of the Battle of Hastings, but does not make that battle its focus. Though Æthelflaed of *The Edge on the Sword* is the daughter of the famous king Alfred, her father and his battles play a minor role in her story. Rather than using young protagonists as a means of reporting on history, authors use history as a means of providing interesting young protagonists.

Authors from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day have drawn upon Anglo-Saxon England in their literature for different reasons, varying from the didactic to the popular. Changing standards in children's publishing and changing societal uses for the past have both affected the way in which early medieval England is portrayed in the

literature. “[S]ociety itself changes over time,” write Jacobs and Tunnell, “and children’s books reflect those changes” (66). This statement is certainly true of the children’s literature that has made use of an Anglo-Saxon past to provide its audience with the education and entertainment deemed appropriate by the culture in which it is written.

Chapter Three: *Beowulf* and the Culturally-Fractured Tale

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the story of *Beowulf* has had a consistent audience among younger readers. It has maintained a stable presence in children's publications, published both as an individual tale and in collections of children's literature. In fact, at the time that H. E. Marshall published her retelling, *Stories of Beowulf*, in 1908, some of her contemporaries claimed that "Beowulf is known to every one" (About This Book). Children's writer Rosemary Sutcliff claimed that *Beowulf* was the story that she "demanded [to hear] most often and loved better than most" (36). As late as the 1930s, some even considered *Beowulf* to be specifically meant for an audience of children; little more than a "kindergarten fairy tale" (Finger v). However, a few concerns or dangers can arise when dealing with such a culturally-dependent story. When publishing *Beowulf* for an audience larger than the scholarly one already familiar with it, a separation from the tale can occur as authors become selective in their use of language, and in the choices they make regarding which details and episodes to include or to exclude. Authors who adapt the tale for an audience of children become more selective still.

Recreating any story set in a culture foreign to the writer results in a tension between the original work and the "translation." Michael M. Levy points out that "problems [. . .] can occur whenever writers attempt to deal with cultures not their own" (183). These problems are augmented when the culture is not only foreign, but extinct. Working with *Beowulf*, authors must translate the text and its culture from a foreign age to a modern one, deciding how much of the poem's inherent poetic and linguistic devices, cultural details, plot elements, etc., to retain. Many children's adaptations of *Beowulf*

successfully avoid changing the story's linguistic and cultural heritage while still making it accessible. Others, however, distance their audience from the tale by conveying a poor sense of its historical and linguistic context, by relocating it to a broader medieval or chivalric one, or by removing any context from it altogether. Looking at about thirty children's retellings and translations of *Beowulf* published in the last one hundred years or so, I intend to show how authors and editors separate their audience from the tale in two ways — through the language used in the retelling and through the removal of the story from its cultural setting — and how these separations have contributed to the creation of a less Anglo-Saxon, more universal interpretation of the tale.

The Separation of Beowulf from Its Linguistic Heritage

Authors faced with adapting the story of *Beowulf* for a juvenile audience must, from necessity, separate the story from its original language. Because Old English is a dead language, modern audiences can only be told the story through translation, resulting in a removal from the original text regardless of the narrator's skill and knowledge. The language used in children's retellings can be particularly removed from the original as authors employ different means to make the story more accessible to their audience. Finding the right balance between translation and adaptation can be difficult. Though many authors find ways to incorporate various Old English poetic devices into their retellings, they risk estranging their audience through relying too much on their source. On the other hand, they can also stray too much from the language of the original, again at risk of estranging their readers.

Children's authors, when retelling a work such as *Beowulf*, often make use of Old

English poetic devices and imagery. John Gibb draws upon Anglo-Saxon kennings in “Beowulf” (1907), mentioning the “gift-throne” of Hrothgar (4) and the “swan’s path” across which Beowulf sails (7). Kevin Crossley-Holland’s translation of Beowulf’s fight against the dragon, included in a children’s anthology of legends published in 1977, uses several of the poem’s distinctly Anglo-Saxon phrases, such as “the way of the coward is not thus!” (98; l. 2541)¹ and “It was the first occasion in all his life / that fate did not decree triumph for him / in battle” (99; ll. 2573-75). Certain poetic images and devices from the original poem also appear on a consistent basis, such as the image found in lines 217-18. Gibb writes “Wafted by the wind, the ship passed over the waves like a swift bird” (7). Marshall’s brief “The Story of Beowulf” (1909) invokes the same image: “Then likest to a bird the foam-necked ship, propelled by the wind, started over the deep waves of the sea” (61). John Harrington Cox says in “Beowulf” (1938) that “The foamy-necked vessel, urged on by the wind, departed over the sea, most like to a bird” (274-75), and Maurice Saxby writes in 1989 that the “curved prow of the ship darted like a bird over the water” as the Geats make their way to Denmark (122).

Not all such poetic devices are always used to their best advantage. The use of alliteration, for example, can prove an aid or an impediment to a retelling. Its appearance in “Beowulf’s Fight with Grendel,” included in an anthology edited by William F. Russell, is subtle: “when the morning came, great was the grief in the land of the Danes” (134; ll. 126-29). Ian Serrailier’s *Beowulf the Warrior* (1954) makes much more use of the device: “Thereafter, from dark and dripping caves / Night after night over the misty moor / Came Grendel, gross and grim, famished for flesh” (2; ll. 159-62). His clever use

¹ Line numbers refer to the equivalent passages in Seamus Heaney’s translation of *Beowulf* as found in the 7th edition of the Norton Anthology.

of the device, though prominent, makes the passage much more readable. However, Maude Isabel Ebbutt's utilization of it in 1910 is not so successful: "This the dire mighty fiend, he who in darkness dwelt / Suffered with hatred fierce, that every day and night / He heard the festal shouts loud in the lofty hall; / Sound of harp echoed there, and gleeman's sweet song" (4; ll. 86-90). Ebbutt, using such words as "dire," "festal" and "gleeman," seems undecided as to whether her setting is Anglo-Saxon or chivalric, and her use of alliteration in this passage just adds to the confusion. Whereas Serrailier's alliteration brings new life to his retelling, Ebbutt's alliteration and language merely enhance the already archaic feel of her writing.

Some authors are able to draw upon the poem's unique language without utilizing specific Old English poetic devices. For example, the last three lines of the poem, following Beowulf's death, are frequently invoked in retellings: Dorothy Hosford's 1947 version ends with the words "Of all the kings of the earth he was the most just and the most beloved, kind and gracious to all men, and in deeds most mighty" (63). Crossley-Holland's picture book retelling, published in 1982, states that "of all kings on earth, he was the kindest, the most gentle, the most just to his people, the most eager for fame" (46). "Beowulf the Chieftain" (1991), by James Riordan and Brenda Ralph Lewis, though only relating the hero's fight against Grendel and Grendel's mother, still concludes with "when at last he died, chieftain of the Geats, men said that he was, among world chiefs, the mildest and kindest to his people" (141).

Many retellers attempt to create a connection to the poem's origins by quoting sections of it within their text. Mary Pope Osborne uses a passage of Anglo-Saxon text as an introduction to her short 1998 retelling: "Tha com of more under mist-hleothum /

Grendel gongan, Godes yrre baer” followed by a verse translation: “Then up from the marsh, / under misty cliffs, / Grendel came walking; / he bore God’s wrath” (8; ll. 710-11). Osborne’s use of Old English text is unusual, however. A much more common practice is the quotation of translated verse passages within the text, a tendency that can be more distracting than elevating. Helene A. Guerber’s “Beowulf” (1896), for example, frequently quotes translations made by John Josias Conybeare, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Metcalfe, as well as a selection from J. C. Jones’ *Valhalla*. Though other authors do not draw from such a wide selection of translations, their inclusion of translated passages can be equally distracting. Those in Ebbutt’s “Beowulf” often take up the better part of a page. Being in verse, these passages are distinguished from the prose writing of the text into which they are incorporated, creating a separation between the author’s words and the “Old English” words. Furthermore, the archaic language usually employed within them heightens the readers’ sense that the poem is distinctly and distantly foreign.

Such wordy passages of translated verse became much less common after the First World War as plot progression came to be seen as more important in writing for children. Authors came increasingly to feel that adherence to direct translation made the poem less suitable for juvenile readers. Charles Sylvester commented in a prefatory note to his 1909 children’s adaptation that the poem’s “quaintness of phrasing gives it a very peculiar charm of its own” (478). However, not until the middle of the century did children’s authors begin to experiment with the poem, making the story accessible to their audience by straying more and more from its linguistic constructs. Hosford’s *By his Own Might: The Battles of Beowulf* (1947) follows a direct (though shortened) translation

of the poem fairly closely in describing Grendel's first raid on Heorot:

in the wild fens and moorlands there dwelt a monster
 whose name was Grendel. He heard these sounds of joy
 with fierce anger. When the night was dark he crept forth
 to the hall of the Danes. The band of warriors lay sleeping
 after their feast, unmindful of danger or sorrow. Grendel,
 with grim and greedy claws, tore thirty of the thanes from
 their resting places and sped to his dark home, exultant
 over his spoil. (2; ll. 86-90, 115-25)

The same passage in Sutcliff's *Beowulf*, published in 1961, does not follow a translation so closely in describing the approach of Grendel, the "Night Stalker": "He heard the laughter and the harp-song from the King's high hall, and it troubled him in his dark dreams, and he roused and came up out of the waste lands and snuffed about the porch. [. . .] So swift was his attack that no man heard an outcry; but when the dawn came, thirty of Hrothgar's best and noblest thanes were missing" (9-10). Welwyn Wilton Katz's *Beowulf* (1999) includes a description of the same event that is even further removed from its source, explaining that Grendel "hated humans, and King Hrothgar lived near enough to him that he couldn't prevent himself from hearing the sounds of their singing and laughter. So he went to Heorot one night when all the warriors were drunk or asleep and he killed and ate fifteen on the spot, and killed and took away fifteen others" (12). These retellings, while they show an increasingly decided lack of Anglo-Saxon elements, read more easily than direct translations, and are arguably more appealing than the retellings of earlier decades.

The desire of many authors to narrate the story of *Beowulf* in a less archaic, more natural style is not necessarily problematic. However, it can often result in the loss of the story's linguistic and cultural background. The rift between the story and its linguistic heritage grows as the retellings become increasingly shorter over the decades. Tony Triggs, for example, summarizes the entire story in only two short pages. His story begins: "Hrothgar, king of the Danes, built a mighty banqueting hall called Heorot. The monster Grendel heard the noise of feasting. At Heorot he found the retainers drunk and asleep. He devoured no less than thirty of them. Time after time Hrothgar's warriors were slaughtered" (36). The terse and uninteresting language of this brief account is hardly indicative of the Anglo-Saxon culture from which it stems; its inclusion in a book entitled *The Saxons* (1979) is the only clue provided in regard to its heritage.

As the story is condensed as much as possible, at times relating only one of the hero's battles, its Anglo-Saxon setting disappears almost entirely. This dramatic shortening of the story reflects a general feeling among children's authors that its roots are too foreign for their audience to understand. David Passes' "Beowulf and the Fire Dragon" (1993) ends its brief account of Beowulf's last battle with two short sentences: "As his life slipped away, Beowulf gave his own helmet and golden ring to Wiglaf. With his last breath he told his bravest follower, 'Now you shall take my place as king of the Geats'" (21; ll. 2809-20). No mention is made of the barrow, funeral pyre, or extent of Beowulf's eagerness for fame. The beginning of Stewart Ross's "Beowulf, the Monster-Masher" (1997), which retells the story of Beowulf's fights with Grendel and Grendel's mother, also eliminates the linguistic richness of the original poem:

The Danish King's hall, packed with happy partygoers,

rocked to the sound of singing, mead slurping, and table thumping. The din carried across the moors to the ears of Grendel, a fiend who screamed at even the thought of a smile. That night, he entered the hall, tore thirty snoring soldiers to pieces, and escaped into the fog. This sort of thing went on for twelve years, until the king was at the end of his rope. (18)

The informal, colloquial language of this narrative is a far cry from the poetic elegance of the original poem. Ross is much more preoccupied with establishing a modern-day “party” scene than with establishing any sense of linguistic or cultural depth. In failing to maintain a sense of connection with the Anglo-Saxon language and sentence structure, as authors in earlier decades had done, Ross loses any sense of connection with the Anglo-Saxon culture as well, in spite of his references to “mead slurping.” The corresponding passage in Marcia Williams’ “Grendel” (1999) also displays little that is Saxon in nature:

Thousands of years ago stories were told and songs sung about Grendel, a man-eating monster who terrorized the people of Denmark for twelve years. The Danish King, Hrothgar, had built a magnificent hall for his warriors. But each night, when the feasting was done and the men lay sleeping . . . the monster Grendel arrived, savage with hunger for human flesh. (14)

Any Anglo-Saxon imagery comes in the simple illustrations accompanying the text in cartoon format. Even the illustrations, however, in spite of the abundance of horned

helmets that they feature, do little to keep the story from slipping into cultural anonymity.

One reason that children's authors, particularly those writing after the 1950s, commonly make such changes to the poem is their unfamiliarity with Old English. Most of these authors (with a few exceptions, such as Crossley-Holland and Cox) have only encountered the poem — and the culture surrounding it — through translation, and are therefore already at least one step removed from the original. The foreign feel conveyed by those who adhere to certain Old English devices is, then, not surprising; nor is the tendency apparent in others to remove the foreign elements entirely.

Graciela Italiano points out that “Language and culture cannot be separated. We separate them in order to make it easier to look at these constructs in a linear form, but they cannot be separated. [. . .] Our language is our culture and our culture is our language” (120-21). This connection between culture and language is particularly close in a text such as *Beowulf*, in which the language is so closely tied to our understanding of the culture behind it. Despite some authors' inclusion of certain Anglo-Saxon linguistic elements in their children's adaptations of *Beowulf*, they are often more successful in proving the “Other-ness” of the ancient epic than in relating its cultural richness to their audience. On the other hand, those authors who exclude such elements altogether also distance their readers from the text's cultural richness.

The Separation of Beowulf from Its Cultural Heritage

If a lack of understanding of Old English can be problematic for authors retelling the story of *Beowulf*, a lack of understanding of Anglo-Saxon culture can be equally problematic. *Beowulf* is notable for its coming from a uniquely English background, and

as such has maintained a secure presence as part of our cultural heritage. However, as the popular conception of Old English history has become increasingly equated with medieval or chivalric history, the likelihood of the poem's being accurately contextualized has dramatically decreased. Children's retellings of the poem, which frequently remove or change many of its cultural elements and backdrops in an attempt to make it less foreign, have made the poem's move to a broader Middle Age setting all the easier.

Certain episodes and characters in *Beowulf* are frequently eliminated or changed by children's retellers. Among the least surprising of these is the exclusion of many of the digressions which are found within the poem, but which are not seen as necessary to the story. Some authors begin their retelling with the coming of Scyld to Denmark (ll. 4-11), such as Florence Holbrook in "The Story of Beowulf" (1905) and Charles H. Sylvester in "Beowulf and Grendel" (1909). Ebbutt mentions such episodes as the "Fight at Finnsburg" within her retelling (19). She also refers to Weland, the creator of Beowulf's armor (see ll. 452-54), as does Wilhelm Wagner in his "The Legend of Beowulf" (2003). Sigemund the dragon slayer is mentioned in Cox's 1938 translation (285; ll. 873-96). However, such allusions are the exception rather than the rule. The most meticulous retellers never mention such digressions as the story of Freawaru, and Heardred son of Hygelac only shows up occasionally. Even characters with larger roles, like Unferth, are often cut from the text in order to keep the tale moving more quickly. When Unferth does appear he can be particularly nasty. Ebbutt emphasizes his murder of his brothers and kinsmen (14; l. 587). Robert Nye's novelized *Beowulf: A New Telling* (1968) devotes many pages to establishing the evil nature of Unferth, who identifies

strongly with Grendel and Grendel's mother. He is first introduced as "a rude and drunken fellow, always ready to argue, even with the king himself" (10). Unferth, not Grendel's mother, is responsible for killing Æschere in this "interpretation" of the story (see ll. 1279-331). Though many authors take full advantage of the figure of Unferth to provide a clearly-drawn human antagonist, others leave him out entirely. "The Story of Beowulf" (1917), by Christine Chaundler and Eric Wood, foregoes mention of Unferth, and the sword Hrunting is given to Beowulf by Hrothgar. Harriet Buxton Barbour's "Beowulf" (1924) fails to mention either Unferth or the sword. Beginning in the 1980s, Unferth shows up in fewer and fewer retellings of *Beowulf*. He does not show up in Anthony Horowitz's "The Grendel" (1985), nor in "Beowulf the Chieftain" by James Riordan and Brenda Ralph Lewis (1987), in which Hrunting already belongs to Beowulf. Maurice Saxby leaves him out of "Beowulf the Dragon Slayer" (1989), as do Mary Pope Osborne in her "Beowulf" (1998) and Marcia Williams in "Grendel" (1999). Unferth's role in establishing Beowulf's competence as a slayer of monsters slowly falls out of the picture as retellings get shorter and faster-paced.

Another element of *Beowulf* often changed by children's retellers is Beowulf's childhood. Many authors highlight this feature in an attempt to heighten the story's appeal to their intended audience. This emphasis generally takes one of two directions: the first involves a young Beowulf whose strength and skill amaze all who know him from the beginning. In Florence Holbrook's adaptation of the story, published in 1905, the young Beowulf is fond of "all games and manly sports [. . .] Running, wrestling, and hunting were daily exercises of the young men, and Beowulf could excel them all in every trial of skill. Soon the men at court called Beowulf their leader, and they loved and

honored him” (75). The second direction involves a much less flattering picture of the hero, as he struggles to find acceptance from his peers before coming to Denmark. Welwyn Wilton Katz’s *Beowulf* (1999), for example, portrays the young protagonist as “clumsy” when his strength begins to manifest itself; he “boasted of his strength and then fell over his spear; he obeyed the arms master’s orders exactly and somehow broke his wooden sword on the target every time” (7). Katz also changes the structure of the original poem in order to tell it from the point of view of the young Wiglaf, who is told the stories of his uncle’s youth throughout his own childhood. Strafford Riggs’ *The Story of Beowulf* (1933) stresses not only Beowulf’s childhood within the text, but goes on to compare Hygelac’s thanes to children: “in times of peace, they often dropped their warlike mien and sang and laughed and fondled their dogs and played jokes upon one another like children” (4-5). However, the emphasis on Beowulf’s childhood is generally brief, and does not impede the reader’s understanding of the story’s setting.

Authors can be much more disruptive in retelling the story than merely emphasizing the hero’s youth. Robert Nye, for example, takes great liberties with the story in his novel *Beowulf: A New Telling*, which has been reprinted numerous times since its original publication in 1968. In Nye’s interpretation of *Beowulf*, Grendel is not necessarily defeated by Beowulf’s superhuman strength, but rather because, “Made of wickedness as he was, the good in this man [Beowulf] burned him” (40). He defeats Grendel’s mother by hypnotizing her with a long and heavily didactic speech, including such treasures of wisdom as “That man is truly brave who, feeling fear, yet puts his fear to use and plucks new courage from the fear itself. That man is truly good who knows his own dark places” (69). When this speech drains her of her magic, Beowulf is able to

strangle her. Beowulf's most amazing victory is over the dragon, which he defeats by causing it to swallow twelve hives of bees (his particular friends), with the help of his nephew Wiglaf. Though he never actually encounters the dragon, and certainly never does battle with it, Beowulf still dies after he "collapse[s] in the entrance to the treasure-chamber. His armor [. . .] was all too big and heavy for him" (101), making him a very un-Anglo-Saxon hero that never once willingly enters into battle.

The loss of Anglo-Saxon culture in children's adaptations of *Beowulf* is particularly evident in the illustrations which accompany many of them. Barbara Kiefer says that "the theme of the book, its setting in time and place, and its overall effect is strengthened by the artist's choice of certain historical or cultural conventions" (87). The use of illustrations, when accompanying text, in establishing a visualized setting can be very important. Those found in children's versions of *Beowulf* are often filled with such elements as Viking ships, horned helmets, and spears. Severin's illustrations in Serrailier's *Beowulf the Warrior* (1954) look like a combination of the artistry found in medieval manuscripts and the Bayeux Tapestry. However, many illustrators do not place much emphasis on the specific cultural aspects of their subject matter. Charles Keeping's illustrations in Sutcliff's *Beowulf* (1961) and Kevin Crossley-Holland's picture book *Beowulf* (1982) have a distinctly "universal" look to them, depicting warriors that could have come from any far-off land, despite the occasional use of ornate brooches or belt buckles in his illustrations of the latter. Kiefer also stresses that, in evaluating illustrations, the viewer "must judge the book not as to whether the illustrations match the definition of a particular period or culture but as to whether the artist has chosen those elements that enhance and extend the meaning of the book for today's reader" (87). Yet

in illustrating a story such as *Beowulf*, in which the setting is so important to many of the story's themes, what inconsistencies are created by the disparity between the culture portrayed by the author and that portrayed by the illustrator? In the retellings of *Beowulf* of the first part of the twentieth century, nearly all include pictures of Beowulf and his warriors in Viking ships, Viking halls, etc. However, their poses and attitudes, in spite of their Viking regalia, are reminiscent of the general Romantic medieval and chivalric ideal common in Victorian and Edwardian children's literature. In Katz's picture book *Beowulf*, published near the end of the century, the illustrator Laszlo Gal misplaces the tale into a broader — and later — medieval time. In spite of his horned and boar-crested helmets, those scenes which are not filled with blood and gore are filled with fleurs-de-lis. Rather than depicting Anglo-Saxon or Viking battle-gear, Gal depicts styles belonging more to the late medieval French and Anglo-Norman period, with warriors wearing garb reminiscent of the Crusades. He quite obviously displaces the original setting altogether, and with it the story's cultural background.

Yet Gal's confusion in placing *Beowulf* within a setting more chivalric than Viking in its influence is hardly surprising. Children's authors frequently attempt to help their readers identify with the story by setting it in a more accessible, courtly setting. In many versions, this quasi-Arthurian feel is very slight and easily overlooked, with halls filled with minstrels, as in "The Story of Beowulf" by Chaundler and Wood (1917). "Beowulf's Fight with Grendel," which appears in an anthology edited by William F. Russell, mentions not thanes, but knights (134). Zenaïde A. Ragozin's translation of the story, included in a collection of hero tales published in 1961, emphasizes this feeling a little more. The Danish coastguard refers to himself as Hrothgar's "herald and esquire"

(89), and Queen Wealhtheow is described as “well versed in courtly lore” (95). The language used by the characters of this adaptation is archaic, in a style generally associated with a chivalric, un-Anglo-Saxon court. For example, Beowulf’s reply to Unferth’s challenge is a far cry from its Anglo-Saxon inspiration: “Of a sooth, I say to thee, Unferth, that never would Grendel, the foul ruffian, have made this hall so much a horror, wrought such disgrace in Heorot, if thy spirit wert as high as thou wouldst claim for thyself” (94; ll. 590-94). Anthony Horowitz takes even more liberties with the story in 1985, turning the meeting of Hrothgar and Beowulf into an imagined scenario, with strong ties to a courtly ideal, unrecognizable from its equivalent scene in the original *Beowulf*. The scene opens on an old and very senile Hrothgar, sitting in the empty Heorot:

He was sitting in his chair, muttering to himself, when the door of the banqueting hall crashed open. He squinted as bright sunlight flooded in, capturing a million motes of dust within its golden beams. A figure stepped forward, silhouetted against the light which could almost have been emanating from his own body. The dust formed a shimmering aura around him. The king trembled. Never had he seen a warrior so tall, so strong.

The stranger approached and fell onto one knee. [. . .]
 “Your Majesty!” the figure said. [. . .] There was a movement at the door and fourteen more men entered the hall, bringing with them — or so it seemed to the old king

— the light that had for so long been absent. As one they
knelt before him, forming a semi-circle around his throne.

(161; contrast with ll. 390-406)

This scene, descriptive as it is, contains none of the mead-drinking, boasting, and ceremony that establish the story as coming from a distinctly Anglo-Saxon background. Stripping *Beowulf* of its Germanic roots, Horowitz instead creates a scene more like the Arthurian romances of late medieval England and France.

Joan Blos writes that, in evaluating children's historical literature, "it is important to look for the obligatory condition, the way a narrative convinces us that the author has made the most correct negotiation between our time and the story's" (39). Children's authors, retelling the story of *Beowulf*, must make several "negotiations" between its foreign setting and a more modern one. Such negotiations run the risk of distancing their audience from the poem's cultural uniqueness when they result in the removal of too many of its cultural elements, or in the misplacement of it into a more general medieval setting. In a culture unfamiliar with Anglo-Saxon history and culture, authors can hardly be blamed for removing such elements. However, in misplacing *Beowulf* into a chivalric setting, such authors have contributed to the gradual decline of placing the story within any inherent setting at all.

Beowulf and Multiculturalism

In 1961, Alice I. Hazeltine included part of Zenaïde A. Ragozin's translation of *Beowulf* in a collection of world mythology. Prior to this publication, anthologized renderings of the story had placed it only among its close "peers," that is, as part of

collections focused specifically on British or Northern folklore. Since the 1960s, as a result of the emphasis placed on multiculturalism, nearly all those compilations of stories that feature *Beowulf* draw legends from a much broader range of cultures than just “British” or “Northern.” One notable exception to this trend is its insertion into *The Faber Book of Northern Legends* by Kevin Crossley-Holland in 1977.

While *Beowulf* initially prospered from its inclusion in anthologies of multiculturalism, the cultural movement eventually proved damaging to the popularity and preservation of the legend. According to Hazel Rochman, a children’s book reviewer and former librarian, “Recently it has become much easier to find good books about diverse cultures. A lot more books are being published with ethnic characters and cultures that have long been ignored. There are many more books set outside the United States” (134). However, Rochman says of stories set in foreign cultures that they are often in danger of leaning in one of two directions:

either they can overwhelm the reader with reverential details of idiom, background, and custom; or they can homogenize the culture and turn all the characters into mall babies. There’s always that tension between the particular and the universal, between making the character and experience and culture too special, and making them too much the same. (143)

Whereas the legend’s inclusion in anthologies published one hundred years ago placed it within a cultural tradition and the heritage of British medievalism, anthologies compiled after the 1960s placed it within a more universal folkloric setting, de-emphasizing its

unique linguistic and cultural heritage. The culture surrounding *Beowulf* rarely received more than a brief mention of its characters as Danes and Geats, or possibly the tale's insertion in a "British" section of an anthology, as the story slipped into a sort of cultural vacuity. Children's authors, by separating the story from its linguistic and cultural setting, have contributed to the fading of the "Anglo-Saxon-ness" of *Beowulf*, affiliating it instead with a more general medieval or European backdrop.

The placement of *Beowulf* within a more European medieval setting reflects its gradual decline over the past few decades into the vague, unspecified "illo tempore" or "Once Upon a Time" background common among more universal folktales. By stripping it of any culturally-reliant, integral setting, recent adaptations have begun to remake the story into more of an archetypal fairy tale than a literary epic rich with the themes and meanings that accompany its unique heritage. Max Lüthi's discussion of the universal quality of European folktales is coming increasingly to apply to *Beowulf* as it is retold for children today. The folktale, he writes, "presents only pure action and foregoes any amplifying description. It provides a story line but does not let us experience its setting. Forests, springs, castles, cottages, parents, children, and brothers and sisters are mentioned only if the plot is dependent upon them; they do not serve to establish a setting" (38). In many European fairy tales retold for children, this lack of setting and minor characters has proved to be a strength, in that it has allowed certain tales to be placed within a multitude of settings, as "fractured" tales. For example, the story of Cinderella, identified as type 510 in the Aarne-Thompson index, has consistently been noted for its multicultural appeal and archetypes. Variants of the story, when reduced to its barest elements, have been and can be set in any culture around the globe. It has also

recently been adapted for settings such as a graveyard, the Wild West, the arctic, etc., without having disrupted any of its archetypes and themes. However, “universality” may not be so laudable when it threatens to lead to the near-extinction of the beautiful heritage behind the tale. Because the *Beowulf*’s story is so dependent upon its setting, attempts to remove the historical elements supporting the plot have resulted only in a “culturally-fractured” tale. Levy sums up this dilemma in stating that, by “attempting to westernize the traditional literature of a different culture, even when those tales have obvious connections to our own literature, we run the very real risk of distorting and misunderstanding that culture” (184-85). Though the story of *Beowulf* has universally appealing themes (some of which are not unlike those found in the traditional Cinderella story), stripping it of its imbedded setting could easily cause more damage than is gained by attempting to create a more “universal” appeal.

The story of Beowulf, particularly during the 1980s and 1990s, has come to be much like many other folktales told in our day: easily detached from a specific time or place. However, the story maintains an important place in English and American literature as an irreplaceable emblem of unique cultural heritage. The success of such translations as Seamus Heaney’s, published in 2000, indicates that a mass audience can still appreciate such a culturally “foreign” story. Rebecca Tingle’s *The Edge on the Sword* (2001), a historical novel about Anglo-Saxon England, has the young Æthelflæd telling the story to her younger brother, Edward. In 2003, a version of the story appeared in a collection of juvenile tales aimed at appealing to the newly formed taste for magic and fantasy created by the recent “Harry Potter” phenomenon. Though this last version emphasizes its German, rather than its Anglo-Saxon, heritage, the tale is told in a more

culturally-aware style than its recent predecessors, the result of its having been taken from an English rendering made in 1907 of Wilhelm Wagner’s German translation. That *Beowulf* has made it into a collection with such high pretensions toward mass popularity is evidence that its appeal has not yet become outdated, and that those with an invested interest in Anglo-Saxon studies are not alone in their ability to understand and appreciate the tale. *Beowulf*, like other ancient stories, has “found readers. On one level, reading [these stories] satisfies a need for escape and, at the same time, a spontaneous wish for contact with an Other who, as we vaguely sense, resembles us in some way” (Zumthor 11). Though *Beowulf* is representative of a culture that is now extinct, the story can still appeal to those who encounter it, whether its setting be universal or specific.

Chapter Four: Conclusion

R. D. Fulk and Christopher M. Cain say in their *History of Old English Literature* that “We would not read Old English literature if it did not somehow touch on what we believe about ourselves” (225). This statement holds true for any audience of any age, scholarly or otherwise. Children’s authors in the last century and a half have interpreted Anglo-Saxon literature and history in different ways as they have attempted to make it “touch on” the changing beliefs of the cultures in which they are writing. All have, in their own ways, tried to make history yield, in the words of Paul Zumthor, “a meaning that might be our own” (55). In his article “The Spirit of What Age?” Robert Leeson discusses different ways in which authors try to create that meaning:

Writers may look back to the past from two different motives according to their view of the present. One is to seek consciously or unconsciously the stability that is not ours today. The other is to seek the movement and development *then* which is the essence of our *now*. One view tends to see what is different, one what is the same. Which is truer to the spirit of the age? Each age has a spirit that must be caught. But if each age is different, then change there must be, the one age becoming the other, sometimes imperceptibly, sometimes, as at moments of crisis, in a great rush. (177)

Leeson’s words express what I have attempted to explore in charting the trends of children’s historical literature in this thesis. Over the last 150 years, children’s authors

have invoked the Anglo-Saxons as a means of providing either a sense of unity and heritage or of a distant and foreign past as they have focused on the similarities or the differences of the culture from their own. The roots of children's literature as it is recognized today came from the nineteenth-century fascination with medieval history, a fascination which fluctuated over time, at times imperceptibly and at other times in a great rush. To deal with these fluctuations, children's authors used the history in different ways in order to appeal to their audience. With this thesis, I have tried to chart and explain some of these uses, not only as they existed in the Victorian and Edwardian ages (a time that many medievalists have seized upon as a sort of "Golden Age" of popular medievalism), but as they existed in later decades as well. The Middle Ages have served purposes in children's literature ranging from didactic to popular; they have been explored and exploited in ways both specific and universal in terms of both history and culture. However, in drawing upon such a wide range of factors — history, religion, popular culture, etc. — through such an extended period of time, I have touched on these trends in only the most general way. The gap left by the absence of a more detailed discussion of the literature's reflection of and impact on society has yet to be filled.

I have attempted to address in my thesis two questions, if indirectly: the first is why children's authors of any age would draw upon the Anglo-Saxons in their writing. The second is a related issue; why a medievalist would be interested in children's literature at all. As I have tried to show, the relevance of children's literature to medievalism lies not so much in its quality and aesthetic appeal as in the purposes that its subject matter serves; that is to say, not so much in how well authors "handle" the Anglo-Saxons as in the reasons why they draw upon them at all, and in the reasons they focus on

different aspects of the history and culture. Though children's authors write of characters and situations that they hope will appeal to their audience, they also write with the intent, whether conscious or unconscious, subversive or overt, of indoctrinating or educating their audience, hoping in some way to shape and guide the future. Children's literature is in the unique dual position of having to meet the popular tastes and demands of its juvenile audience while also reflecting the values and ideologies of the adults who write it (at times more obviously than others, as in the literature of the nineteenth century). This feature has made it a particularly sensitive indicator of the societal trends and attributes contemporary with its publication, a more direct one even than the arguably more complex, sophisticated literature published for adult audiences. The means through which authors translate, explain and represent the Middle Ages in children's literature — or, indeed, in any media — reflect not only their own understanding of the past, but often the way in which the generations that follow will, in their turn, understand it as well.

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of *Beowulf*

Sylvester, Charles H., ed. "Beowulf and Grendel." Journeys through Bookland. Vol. 3.

Chicago: Bellows-Reeve, 1909. 478-94. Retelling of Beowulf's fights with Grendel and Grendel's mother

Triggs, Tony D., ret. The Saxons. London: Macdonald, 1979. Informational book about Anglo-Saxon life; includes a brief retelling of *Beowulf*

Wagner, Wilhelm, ret. "The Legend of Beowulf." 1907. Swords and Sorcerers: Stories from the Worlds of Fantasy and Adventure. Ed. Clint Willis. New York: Thunder's Mouth, 2003. Retelling of *Beowulf*, focuses on the tale's German heritage

Williams, Marcia, ret. "Grendel." Fabulous Monsters. Ill. Marcia Williams. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick, 1999. 14-19. Short, simplified retelling of *Beowulf*

**Appendix B: Historical Subject Matter Covered in Children's Literary
Accounts of Anglo-Saxon England**

In writing of Anglo-Saxon England, children's writers have a range of nearly seven centuries from which to gather their data and in which to set their stories. Though the majority of their work is written about King Alfred and the Battle of Hastings, the full range of history covered is fairly broad, covering periods from the arrival of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes, to the changes made in England after the Norman Conquest. This appendix provides a brief summary of the history covered in children's fiction and nonfiction.

Nonfiction accounts of the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in Britain can be found in the beginning of Kathryn Hinds' *Medieval England*, and in Hubert M. Skinner's discussion of Vortigern. Fictitious accounts include Clive King's *Ninny's Boat*, which details the arrival of one tribe of Angles to England. Rosemary Sutcliff writes about the coming of a Saxon tribe to England in her short story *A Saxon Settler*. Gillian Paton Walsh's *Hengest's Tale* draws from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and *Beowulf* to create a possible life for Hengest just before his coming to Kent with his band of Jutes. Sutcliff writes in *The Lantern-Bearers* of Hengest's treachery against Vortigern in England, and of his battles against the Romano-British prince Ambrosius Aurelianus. Patricia Malone's *The Legend of Lady Ilena*, set in the year 600, tells of the British fights against the Saxons as they spread North. "The Woodwise," in *Wordhoard*, a collection of short stories by Jill Paton Walsh and Kevin Crossley-Holland, is set in a Saxon village a generation after its settlers overthrow the local Roman nobility.

The arrival and spread of Christianity is the subject of most historical fiction set in

sixth and seventh century England. Sutcliff's *Dawn Wind* ends with the coming of St. Augustine to Kent in 597, and Barbara Willard's *Augustine Came to Kent* follows the bishop and his followers as they convert Ethelbert and Southern England. J. F. Hodgetts writes in *Harold, the Boy Earl* of the acceptance of Christianity by some West Saxons as a result of their dealings with the Welsh, ending with the conversion of King Edwin. Gertrude Hollis' *A Scholar of Lindisfarne* and Frederick Grice's *A Northumbrian Missionary* both follow St. Aidan and his Celtic missionaries as they convert Northumbria. Their continued efforts in East Anglia are the subject of Kevin Crossley-Holland's trilogy, *The Sea-Stranger*, *The Fire-Brother*, and *The Earth-Father*, which charts the missionary efforts of bishop Cedd. The first of these books also posits one theory concerning the Sutton Hoo burial, making it the burial mound of the East Anglian king Æthelhere, who died in 655 (the objects of Sutton Hoo and their significance are also explored in a children's book by Katherine East). The story of Caedmon is included in James Baldwin's *Fifty Famous People* and *Wordhoard* by Walsh and Crossley-Holland. H. E. Marshall includes an overview of the spread of Christianity in England in her informational book *The Child's English Literature*, as does Tony McAleavy in *Life in a Medieval Abbey*.

Charles Whistler, in *A Prince of Cornwall*, writes of the war which breaks out between kings Ina of Wessex and Gerent of the Welsh after the death of abbot Adhelm in the early 700s. In *A King's Comrade*, he writes of the murder of the East Anglian king Ethelbert by Queen Cynethrith (King Offa's wife) in 792. Offa is also mentioned in one of the stories found in *Wordhoard*. However, the majority of books set in the eighth and early ninth centuries are written about the invasion of the Danes. Michael Cadnum in

Raven of the Waves and Peter Carter in *Madatan* both write of the early Viking raids on English monasteries in the late eighth century. Whistler writes of the ninth-century Viking invasions in his novel *A Thane of Wessex*. Peter Chrisp's *On the Trail of the Vikings in Britain* and Terry Deary's *Vicious Vikings* are both nonfiction accounts of the arrival and expansion of the Vikings in Britain. Richard Parker sets the stage for the reign of King Alfred in his book *The Sword of Ganelon*, with the settling of Ragnar Lothbrok and his armies in England in the mid-ninth century.

Because Alfred the Great figures into the fiction and nonfiction of so many authors, the way in which his role is discussed varies widely, as do the parts of his life which are highlighted. Eleanor Noyes Johnson's *King Alfred the Great*, Eloise Lownsbery's *Alfred the Great*, and Eva March Tappan's *In the Days of Alfred the Great*, for example, present biographies of Alfred's entire life, though the first two are fictitious. Short retellings of the folktales surrounding his life show up in the collections of children's stories: *Fifty Famous People* and *Fifty Famous Stories Retold*, both by James Baldwin, *Heroes Every Child Should Know* by H. W. Mabie, *The Child's English Literature* by H. E. Marshall, and *My Bookhouse from the Tower Window* by Olive Beaupré Miller; Eleanor and Herbert Farjeon write a poetic account of his burning-the-cakes in *A Cavalcade of Kings*. Most works of historical fiction written about Alfred center around his battles against the invading Danes. These works include Erick Berry's *The King's Jewel*, Paul Creswick's *In Alfred's Days*, G. A. Henty's *The Dragon and the Raven*, C. Walter Hodges' *The Namesake* and *The Marsh King*, Eliza F. Pollard's *A Hero King*, Geoffrey Trease's *Mist over Athelney*, and John Tully's *The Raven and the Cross*. Charles Whistler's *King Alfred's Viking* focuses on Alfred's shipbuilding enterprises, and

“Asser’s Book” in *Wordhoard* recreates the battle of Ashdown. Some authors, though writing of Alfred’s time, do not focus on Alfred himself. Gwendolyn Bowers, for example, in *The Lost Dragon of Wessex*, uses Alfred’s life merely as a backdrop for telling the story of Othere’s voyage around the Northern regions. Rebecca Tingle also uses Alfred only as a background character in *The Edge on the Sword*, which posits a possible childhood for his eldest daughter, Æthelflæd. Nonfiction accounts also vary in their approach. Robin May’s *Alfred the Great and the Saxons* uses the historical figure as a springboard for discussing Anglo-Saxon life and history in general, whereas Jane R. Osborn’s *At the Time of King Alfred*, L. Du Garde Peach’s *King Alfred the Great*, and Brenda Williams’ *Alfred the Great* focus on just Alfred’s accomplishments and his immediate history.

Not much children’s literature is set in the years between King Alfred’s life and the Battle of Hastings. Whistler’s *Dragon Osmund* is written about the battle at Brunanburh, and a short story about the Battle of Maldon is included in *Wordhoard*. Eileen Meyler’s *The Story of Elswyth* tells the story of King Edward’s possible murder by his stepmother Elfrida. Maryhale Woolsey’s *The Keys and the Candle*, though centered around no specific historical figure, is set in an eleventh-century monastery. Walsh writes a story about Bishop Wulfstan of York, and another about the death of Archbishop Alfig of Canterbury by invading Danes during the reign of Ethelred the Unready in *Wordhoard*. Whistler writes of Edmund Ironside in *Wulfric the Weapon-Thane*. Canute, the Danish king of England in the early eleventh century, shows up in Baldwin’s *Fifty Famous Stories Retold* and Whistler’s *King Olaf’s Kinsman*, and Margaret Stanley-Wrench writes a fictionalized biography of King Edward the Confessor in *The Silver*

King. King Edward the Confessor also appears in many of the numerous children's books written about the Battle of Hastings.

Historical fiction written about the battle of Hastings can generally be separated into two categories: those that end with the battle, and those that begin with it. Those that end with the battle generally explore the personalities and motivations of Harold Godwinson and William the Conqueror, usually through the eyes of a young page or thane. Elizabeth Alder's *The King's Shadow*, Margery Greenleaf's *Banner over Me*, Vera Cumberlege's *The Grey Apple Tree*, Henty's *Wulf the Saxon*, Henry Treece's *Hounds of the King*, and Rosemary Sprague's *Red Lion* all fall under this category. Walsh and Crossley-Holland write a short story of the last moments and thoughts of King Harold before his death at Senlac in *Wordhoard*. Of the six, Greenleaf, Henty and Sprague are most sympathetic to William, who is in other cases portrayed as much more scheming and cruel in his actions. Those books which continue after the battle investigate its effects on the English people, as in Emma Leslie's *Gytha's Message*, Eloise Jarvis McGraw's *The Striped Ships*, and "Man on the Hill" and *Man with a Sword*, both by Treece. Hilda Lewis writes of the often cruel measures taken by William to subdue the English long after the battle in *Harold Was My King*, and Sutcliff's *The Shield Ring* follows the efforts of the last band of Saxon warriors as they fight against the army of William's son and grandson. Informational books written about the Battle of Hastings include Amanda Clarke's *A Day That Made History: Battle of Hastings*, E. S. Creasy's "The Battle of Hastings," Samuel Willard Crompton's *Hastings*, Hodges' *The Norman Conquest*, William W. Lace's *The Battle of Hastings*, and Philip Arthur Sauvain's *Hastings. The Bayeux Tapestry* by Norman Denny and Josephine Filmer-Sankey

discusses the battle and the events leading up to it as they are portrayed in the Bayeux Tapestry.

The numerous children's historical surveys written on Anglo-Saxon England cover the subject in varying levels of detail, and can be split into two groups: those that discuss the history by topic, and those that discuss it in a more chronological, narrative manner. Those in the first group include Clement Wallace Airne's *The Story of Saxon and Norman Britain Told in Pictures*, Nicola Baxter's *Invaders and Settlers*, Roger Coote's *The Anglo-Saxons*, Deary's *Smashing Saxons*, Jean Ellenby's *The Anglo-Saxon Household*, Bob Fowke's *What They Don't Tell about Anglo-Saxons*, Brenda Ralph Lewis' *Growing Up in the Dark Ages*, Rowena Loverance's *Anglo-Saxons*, Geoffrey Middleton's *Saxons and Vikings*, Peach's *The Kings and Queens of England*, Amanda Purves' *Growing Up in a Saxon Village*, *Anglo-Saxons* by John Reeve and Jenny Chattington, Sheila Sancha's *The Castle Story*, Margaret Sharman's *The Anglo-Saxons*, Monica Stoppleman's *What Happened Here? Anglo-Saxon Village*, *Saxon Britain* and *The Saxons* by Tony D. Triggs, Martyn Whittock's *Romans, Saxons & Vikings: Beliefs and Myths of Anglo-Saxon England*, and Tim Wood's *The Saxons and the Normans*. Those in the second group include Jacob Abbott's *The Story of English History*, Elizabeth Burton's "Saints, Kings and a Stone," Crossley-Holland's *Greenblades Rising*, Charles Dickens' *A Child's History of England*, Alfred Leo Duggan's "Romanesque Churches," Edward A. Freeman's *Old English History for Children*, Bernice Grohskopf's *From Age to Age: Life and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, *Saxon England* by John Hamilton and Alan Sorrell, *Everyday Life in Anglo-Saxon, Viking, and Norman Times* by Marjorie Quennell and C. H. B. Quennell, and R. R. Sellman's *The Anglo-Saxons*.

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