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Beowulf and babies

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This is the second time I have written about *Beowulf*. This is also the second time I have written about *Beowulf* in the weeks following and – now, as I revise this chapter – preceding the births of my two youngest children. *Beowulf* and babies. *Beowulf* and babies? The only easy connection I can make is alliterative. For scenes of childbirth and infant caregiving fall outside the narrative purview of the poem. Yet, in *Beowulf*'s opening lines, birth and childcare are brought to centre stage in the story of Scyld Scefing. A foundling of unknown origins, Scyld is set adrift in a boat and washes up on the shores of Daneland. Taken in by the people who live there, Scyld becomes the founder of a Danish dynasty: father of Beow and grandfather of Hrothgar. Upon his death, Scyld's body is placed in a boat then sent out into the sea, from whence he came.

Although Scyld's early childhood is marked by intentional abandonment and accidental discovery, *Beowulf* and its critics express little interest in the foundling:[1] the poem makes only passing mention of his condition as an infant, which is inserted between stories that track Scyld's rise to power and sumptuous funeral display. Such narrative inattention, some have argued, invites critics to 'write of' Scyld's origins 'in an off-hand … manner',[2] examining him from within '[t]he motif of the hapless … child exposed in a floating vessel … drifting helplessly in chests, casks, tubs, bins, baskets, and oarless boats'.[3] Thus, Scyld has been linked to youthful images that evoke the shadowy hero-deity, Sceaf;[4] the biblical figures of Moses in his reed basket,[5] the ark-born son of Noah,[6] and Seth, Adam's son;[7] and a range of characters from world folklore,[8] all of whom belong to literature rather than life.

Does it matter that *Beowulf* and its critical history do not dwell on the birth, infant experiences, and childhood development of Scyld? Does it matter that critics have considered his mysterious abandonment from within the exclusive, expectant purview of fiction

and folklore? Like Scyld, Beowulf comes to the Danes from the sea. He is also a child of obscure parentage. And these hazy origins enable him, perhaps, as with Scyld, to be taken into the care of others: as a child, Beowulf is fostered by the Geatish king, Hrethel; and as a young man, he is offered adoption by the Danish king, Hrothgar. In this chapter, written during the first weeks and months of my second daughter, Carmela's, life, then revised just before my third daughter, Mary Ellard, was born, I discuss the history of child abandonment and parental attachment in the early medieval North, and I consider the weight of these historical issues in relation to the fictional lives of Scyld and Beowulf. That the poem mentions yet fails to integrate Scyld's abandonment and Beowulf's orphancy within a narrative that assiduously recounts their heroic ascent is important not only to *Beowulf* but also its critics. For myself, the non-integrated childhoods of *Beowulf* have facilitated my own lack of critical care for the foundling Scyld and the orphan Beowulf. Despite being parent to a daughter, prior to the births of Carmela and Mary Ellard I had kept my research, my teaching activities, and my scholarly writing at a distance from children and, consequently, from the infant and child lives of Scyld and Beowulf. By letting *Beowulf*'s babies share narrative space with my own, I have learned to take seriously the infant lives and childhood experiences of Scyld and Beowulf and have found that, despite the poem's brief mention of them, it is not carelessness but deep ambivalence, emotional complexity, and resilience that underwrites *Beowulf*'s relationship to children. In thinking about such ambivalent concern, I attend to critics such as Lauren Berlant, making room for the ambivalently 'charged' interruptions of family life in the poem and in my criticism by recalibrating these intimacies to include babies in *Beowulf*.

Abandonment, childcare, and the early medieval North

The place of infants, children, and the family has been, in large part, an unknown and under-studied aspect of the societies and cultures of the early medieval North. In the wake of Philippe Ariès's 1962 *Centuries of Childhood*, which argued that medieval parents were generally dispassionate towards their children, medievalists began to examine the topic, and Mathew Kuefler was the first to challenge Ariès's assertions with respect to families in early medieval England.[9] Examining documentary and literary evidence, in 1991 Kuefler argued that although 'life was generally harsh, both physically

and psychologically … at least some Anglo-Saxon children enjoyed great affection … and were treated in some instances with great love, in particular by their parents'.[10] Several years later, Sally Crawford's landmark survey, *Childhood in Anglo-Saxon England*, extended Kuefler's rebuttal of Ariès and other social historians by including visual and material evidence of children and their families during the period, concluding that 'parents did invest love and care in their children, although their ideas about nurturing children were not necessarily in accordance with our views on best practice … however lovingly you reared a child, the purpose of your care was to produce an adult whose future was not yours to protect'.[11] Almost two decades later, Crawford's arguments are echoed and extended in the recent volume *Childhood & Adolescence in Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture*. As the first essay collection dedicated to the study of infants, children, and youth in early medieval England, many of its contributors take up Ariès once again, revisiting and revising his thesis of 'parental aloofness' as one of 'tough love'[12] and reinterpreting his 'pre-modern world of imminent dangers and high child mortality rates' as 'not necessarily a deterrent of maternal love … but rather occasion[ing] the most necessary displays of maternal strength'.[13] Editors Susan Irvine and Winfried Rudolf take up the legacy of Ariès's arguments and the ensuing scholarly debates by acknowledging that 'the current notion of childhood [is] a modern invention, essentially a social construct'.[14] Yet, in lieu of a discussion that would stake out historical 'thens' and contemporary 'nows', Irvine and Rudolf 'assum[e] a range of childhoods … varying in degrees of care and exploitation, emotional attachment and ludic freedom', all the while cautioning that the 'literary perspective of adults cannot … be assumed to a be a reliable guide into a child's world. Moreover, although textual accounts can provide important evidence for conceptions of childhood in the period, they cannot be assumed to reflect accurately the socio-historical reality of Anglo-Saxon childhood and adolescence.'[15]

A sticking point in the debates between Ariès and early medieval historians is the practice of infant and child abandonment, a topic addressed in John Boswell's 1988 book, *Kindness of Strangers*.[16] In his wide-ranging discussion of legal, historical, and literary sources from early medieval Europe, Boswell discusses what he categorically articulates as 'abandonment', a term and a practice that includes killing, exposing, and selling infants and children as well as gifting them to the Church.[17] In short, abandoning a child means giving it up permanently, whether to death, fate, other adults, or an

institution. As a consequence of such wide-ranging parental actions and life-or-death outcomes, Boswell makes no conclusive statements regarding the perception and frequency of child abandonment in any one particular place and time. 'In Germanic lore', he writes, 'all usually turns out happily … Scyld becomes a great king, and is returned at his death to the sea on which he was cast as a child. But the reality is much harder to judge.'[18] As Boswell and others explain, 'prophecy, adultery, incest, illegtimacy, and jealousy',[19] gender preference,[20] deformity, and superstition[21] were among the varied reasons why wealthy and poor parents gave up their children in the early medieval North. While evidence of adoption indicates that some abandoned children were raised by friends, extended family, or 'the childless rich', Boswell argues that 'most likely the majority of them were brought up as servants' or sold into slavery.[22]

In early medieval England, few references are made to abandoned children and foundlings. The Laws of Ine and Alfred make brief mention of the practice, setting fees for the maintenance of foundlings for the first three years of their lives and identifying who should be paid *wergild* for an illegitimate child given up by his father.[23] Likewise, Bede's well-known description of a marketplace encounter between Pope Gregory and a group of *pueri Angeli* unflinchingly bears witness to child slavery, a practice associated with *nutritores* who have taken in abandoned infants, and parents who have, on account of need, sold their children. Literary examples texture these attestations. The Old English *Life of St Margaret* suggests that the infant Margaret was cast out by her family because she is a girl; and J. A. Tasioulas has argued that the 'concept of child abandonment … provides the framework' for Riddle 9 and *Wulf and Eadwacer*, the latter of which, she explains, explores a mother's grief for her young, abandoned child.[24]

While these legal, historical, and literary references specify acts of desertion, abandonment is only a shade away from infanticide, as evidenced in Winfried Rudolf's assessment of Old English and Anglo-Latin homilies, which address mothers and young women who have – through ignorance, neglect, or intent – killed their children. While these religious texts and authors decry such *acwell[ende]* (killing) or *homicidum* (murder), Rudolf associates these 'infanticide practices' with 'the issue of child abandonment', and he suggests that such homiletic denouncements 'could indeed suggest the survival of a persistent practice in Anglo-Saxon England, even after the widespread conversion to Christianity … [w]hether it was established pagan custom, shame of illicit unions, patriarchal bias

against female offspring, or postpartum depression'.[25] Rudolf positions infanticide squarely within the conceptual range of abandonment and hypothesizes myriad reasons which might have prompted parents to let go of their children in early medieval England. By focusing his discussion on clerical voices in what is often perceived of as a lay action, Rudolf's essay points to the influence of the Church, which vocally opposed and, in some locales, criminalized the interconnected practices of abandonment and infanticide. Likewise, its reference to 'pagan practices' touches upon Boswell, who argued that, in a Christian milieu, traditional acts of and spaces for abandonment may have been redirected towards child oblation and the site of the church.[26]

In contrast, Old Norse texts and Scandinavian material culture, which reflect a society that converted to Christianity at a much later date, address abandonment more frequently. In addition to *Gunnlaugs saga*, *Hervarar saga*, *Finnboga saga*, and *Vatnsdœla saga*, which engage in open conversation regarding the topic, Sean B. Lawing writes that '[i]nfants appear to have lacked legal status in pre-Christian law – something that was gained only after an infant had been sprinkled with water (*ausa vatn*), named, or given food – and it was enough that the child was unwanted'.[27] He cites Norwegian and Icelandic Christian laws, dating from the eleventh to fourteenth centuries, which interdict infant abandonment, with the exception of deformity, arguing that '[p]hysically impaired children … if reared, would present too great a demand on resources and in the future would be limited in providing for themselves and contributing to the community's economy'.[28] In addition to the sagas and law codes, which mention child abandonment with some frequency, archaeological evidence supports this practice as a fact of early medieval life. Archaeologists have, for several decades, discussed the possibility that infant bones found in cairns, middens, wells, and bogs should be interpreted as infanticide[29] – caused by either strangulation or passive neglect – and some have argued that the dearth of adult female graves suggests that selective female infanticide may have taken place in pre-Christian Scandinavia.[30]

Child abandonment in Europe is now uncommon, and contemporary discussions of the topic are few and tend to focus on the medical, not psychological, outcomes for the child who has been abandoned and survived.[31] Only one very recent study has considered the emotional impact on the child, arguing that, among its small sample group of adults who were abandoned as infants, found, and adopted, respondents described their 'ongoing' difficulties 'to

foster and maintain relationships'.[32] They stated that 'long-term extensive internal grief … [was] a core part of their being and was ever present, even for those who had in some ways managed to navigate or contain such feelings'; and they noted 'feelings of anger and resentment … targeted at their mother figure'.[33] The study does not query the early childhood experiences of respondents, which may have contributed to their relationship difficulties and feelings of grief and anger as adults. Nor does it consider the respondents' expectations of family life, mothering, and childhood, all of which are culturally and socially determined. Absent these unaddressed factors, the language of participants and the findings of the study correspond with elements of attachment theory, a field pioneered by John Bowlby, who argued that the trauma of maternal deprivation may result in permanent, psychological consequences. Although Bowlby's original assertions have been overturned, the basic tenets of attachment remain upheld. Contemporary research continues to confirm the critical role of a primary caregiver in the development of a child's future emotional and social relationships. From the first moments of life, mother and newborn generate behaviours in one another that foster attachment. When placed skin-to-skin immediately after childbirth, the mother's body regulates her infant's temperature and respiration, soothes crying, and encourages nursing behaviours, just as the newborn baby regulates and consequently encourages the mother's attention through breastfeeding.[34] As the baby grows, crying, cooing, smiling, sucking, and grasping are signals that draw caregivers to them, 'develop[ing] clear-cut attachments with those adults … who are most likely to soothe, comfort, and protect them'.[35] In turn, these adults 'develop affectional ties with the child … called a caregiving bond'.[36] When these bonds are broken or disturbed – as a consequence of the caregiver's absence, separation, rejection, or death – this can result in a spectrum of feelings, ranging from anxiety to aggression, which can last throughout childhood into adulthood.

Medievalists have been quick to caution against biological determinism and psychosocial presentism when assessing the early developmental relationship between parents and their children. The evolutionary mechanisms that operate within infant–mother dyads do not override the social meanings of infancy and childhood, which differ across cultures and temporalities. Consequently, while historical assessments regarding attachments between early medieval parents and their children remain, to an extent, a fraught subject, recent scholarship on attitudes towards infant and child

caregiving in these societies has challenged the conceptual and affective frame of 'abandonment' that research by Boswell (and, perhaps, Bowlby) has placed around certain early medieval practices. In her introduction to the recent essay collection, *Anglo-Saxon emotions*, Alice Jorgensen writes that 'we need not be bound by our everyday, culturally instilled concepts, but it is only by applying them that we can begin to critique them, and get a sense of what our evidence is showing us instead'.[37] Mary Garrison advances this statement in her discussion of child oblation, a practice of permanent separation between parent and child that occurred around the age of six. Garrison argues that 'while attachment theory and modern grief studies undoubtedly shed some light on medieval experiences of grief and [early-childhood] separation', because early English peoples participated in 'a range of non-parental child-rearing practices' such as fosterage, court education, and political hostage taking, the findings of contemporary child psychology 'need to be qualified by attention to differences in [early medieval] family structure, expectations, and social environment'.[38] Such a statement, which articulates oblation as a 'child-rearing practice', challenges it as an instance of Boswellian abandonment by inserting it within a list of acts meant to extend, rather than cut off, kinship networks between families.

Patrick Ryan's *Master–servant childhood: a history of the idea of childhood in medieval English culture* attends to the differences suggested by Jorgensen and Garrison by using the term 'household' rather than 'family' to discuss these kinship networks, which, during the medieval period, often exceeded nuclear and biological units. Ryan writes, '[a]cross the medieval period … [b]elonging to a household was a general principle of *both* productive and affective ties'.[39] Consequently, he continues, 'growing up' in a household was physically enacted and discursively imagined as a 'master–servant relation[ship,] … a discourse [that] carried with it a strong sense of generational responsibility, care and family devotion. It simply did not share the modern dualism' not only between public and private spheres but also 'between power and love, or the opposition between violence and empathy'.[40] After reframing the conceptual parameters of medieval childhood and caregiving such that they do not align (and are therefore not in conflict) with these 'modern dualism[s]', Ryan turns to Classical and early medieval abandonment. He cautions against evaluating these practices from within 'a romantic polarity between sentimental parental care/affections and matters of power and polarity'.[41] Then he suggests that such false distinctions

may actually run cover for connections between abandonment then and now which we might not want to acknowledge:

> So too, Plato's and Aristotle's support for ridding the polis of deformed newborns was not based upon a rejection of the humanity of children in general, anymore than the contemporary debate over abortion is neatly divided between murderers and saviours of the child. Armed as we are with prenatal testing and hygienic abortive technologies, perhaps we should not be so superior when we consider the Roman *susceptio* – the father's power to accept or reject a newborn's entrance into his house. An honest look into current trends toward 'screening' (a telling word) for Down's syndrome *in utero* should complicate our moral assessment of the Spartan 'leskhe,' a council of elders, who had the power to inspect infant boys and remand those deemed defective to the 'apthetai,' [or pit].[42]

In the process of nuancing early medieval histories of childhood, childcare, and attachment, Ryan destabilizes 'abandonment' – a word brought into English during the fourteenth century and retroactively applied to myriad Latin terms for parental actions. In connecting Roman *susceptio* with prenatal 'screening', Ryan suggests that terminology such as 'abandonment' has a preservative psychological function. Namely, that in using it, 'we' run the risk of off-loading the modern-day semantic and moral weight of abandonment into the distant past so that 'we' do not have to recognize its function in contemporary practices of family planning. While Ryan's statement asks to what extent medieval histories of childhood, in particular Boswell's study of abandonment, preclude our abilities to perceive and admit that contemporary society continues to sanction practices of giving up babies and children, it also, and perhaps moreover, asks us to recognize the, at times, deep and profound ambivalence that parents experience in relation to acts of having, keeping, and raising a child.

Abandoning Scyld, Beowulf, and my daughters – lessons in ambivalence

Beowulf is an ambivalent poem. Its contradictory positions towards Beowulf and the monsters, its heroic and violent displays, and its scenes of living and dying express a position that is 'aware of simultaneously opposing emotions toward the same object and [yet] … able to live with it'.[43] As an organizing principle of the poem, *Beowulf*'s 'ambivalence does not … reflect indecision or paralysis

but a mature step towards acknowledging a more complex world of multiple perspectives and emotional resilience'.[44]

First among the poem's many ambivalences is its position towards the infant Scyld, whose 'expos[ure] in a boat' marks him as 'the ubiquitous founding foundling' and among Boswell's marquee examples of early medieval abandonment.[45] While mention of Scyld's origins appears in the prologue of *Beowulf*, this is not the poem's narrative beginning. Rather, two short statements regarding Scyld's early childhood are deposited and displaced in vignettes that track his ascension to the Danish kingship and funereal memorialization by the Danes:

> Oft Scyld Scefing sceaþena þreatum
> monegum mægþum meodosetla ofteah,
> egsode eorlas, syððan ærest wearð
> *feasceaft funden*. *He þæs frofre gebad*:
> weox under wolcnum, weorðmyndum þah,
> oð þæt him æghwylc þara ymbsittendra
> ofer hronrade hyran scolde,
> gomban gyldan. Þæt wæs god cyning.
> …
> Nalæs hi hine læssan lacum teodan,
> þeodgestreonum þonne þa dydon
> *þe hine æt frumsceafte forð onsendon*
> aenne ofer yðe umborwesende.
> Þa gyt hie him asetton segen gyldenne
> heah ofer heafod, leton holm beran,
> geafon on garsecg. (4–11, 43–9a; italics added for emphasis)[46]
>
> (Often, Scyld Scefing deprived mead-benches from enemy hosts, from many peoples, terrified men, though first he was found destitute. Because of that he experienced comfort/awaited consolation: he grew under the skies, thrived in honours, until each of the neighbouring peoples over the whale-road had to submit, to yield tribute, to him. That was a good king.
> …
> They did not furnish him with lesser gifts, treasures of a people, than those did who in the beginning sent him forth alone over the waves as a child. Then they set a golden standard high up over his head. They let the sea take him; they gave him up to the ocean.)

In the middle of two passages that chronicle Scyld's beginning and ending moments as king of the Danes, *Beowulf* inserts brief mention of his non-Danish origins. Line 7 explains that Scyld is *feasceaft funden*: a 'forlorn', wretched', or 'destitute' foundling,

who experiences *frof*, or comfort, among the Danes. Later on, line 45 reveals that Scyld is not a native son but *forð onsendon* as a young child by an unknown, plural subject, arriving in Daneland from over the sea. This account of Scyld's *frumsceaft*, or origin, textures his foundling status as one whose obscure tribal affiliations and unidentifiable homeland result from intentional abandonment or, more specifically, exposure. The poetics that generate Scyld's origin story are connected by way of subject matter and alliteration. *Frofre* and *forð*, the staves of these lines, look back to *feasceaft* and *frumsceaft*, respectively. Together, these compounds not only signal 'destitute beginnings' or 'wretched origins' for Scyld but also fold *sceaft* – a simplex referencing 1) the shaft of a spear or arrow, and 2) creation or that which is created[47] – within them. The conceptual ties between *feasceaft*, *frumsceaft*, and *sceaft* extend a micro-narrative of infant exposure and foundling past towards *Sc*yld *Sc*efing. Located amid sonic and lexical horizons that bridge a family lost and found with the weapons of war, Scyld is both the poem's narrative primogenitor and its alliterative 'creation'.

Lines 7 and 45 communicate a deep ambivalence towards Scyld's childhood. Scyld is exposed, yet discovered; he is sent from home, but arrives at another. His name carries the alliterative force of 'creation' (*frumsceaft*), infant 'destitution' (*feasceaft*), and weaponry (*sceaft*), even as these signals of originary loss, trauma, and violence are weighted against Scyld's adoptive 'comfort' (*frof*) and the promise of futurity (*forð*). Despite the poem's shifting and contradictory position towards the youngest of babes, its ambivalence towards Scyld is indicative of anything but carelessness. Rather, the emotional tension surrounding his earliest years articulates the poem's deep, unresolved concern for the baby, Scyld. And as a site of ambivalent unresolve, the particular environment of Scyld the baby opens the door for acknowledging a world of complexity, where emotional tension facilitates an emotional resilience that extends across the adult world of *Beowulf* and its alternative temporalities.

Not only are the pieces of Scyld's infancy and young childhood nested within the arc of his rise and fall from kingly power in Daneland; they are, moreover, centred within narratives that recount his adult activities, interrupting and structuring the passages that surround them. While recounting Scyld's rise to power by way of his terrifying violence, the poem steps back in time, revealing that Scyld was first found destitute. Because of 'that' – his foundling state – Scyld *frofre gebad*, a phrase that can mean 'experienced comfort' during childhood or 'awaited consolation' in the form of

future martial actions that result in political successes. When the scene of his abandonment is disclosed a few lines later, these infant experiences point, with more suggestive force, towards a martial future. Amid an elaborate narrative of Scyld's funeral, the poem explores new details about his beginnings. Just as Scyld is sent forth as a baby, the Danes place his hoary body on a boat, surround it 'hildewæpnum ond heaðowædum, / billum ond byrnum' (with battle weapons and war dress, swords and mail-coats) (39–40a), and set it adrift. Scyld is sent into the sea from whence he came. He floats, unassisted and surrounded by an armoury, beyond the Danish horizon.

Does Scyld travel back in time in search of those who sent him, as a baby, from them? Is his funeral an act of post-mortem abandonment – or, more precisely, exposure – by the Danes, who off-load his hyper-martial cargo on yet another unnamed, unknown, and unsuspecting people? The emotional ambivalence and complexity that underwrites Scyld's infant and funereal send-offs temporally entangles him in the pasts and futures of multiple semi-known communities. Abandonment, fraught with the complexities of love, heartbreak, fear, and dread, launches Scyld into the sea where he floats towards unknown destinations. He carries with him the materials of military might (at the centre of which are the hazy memories of a child's life) from which springs not only the story of Scyld but also of Beowulf.

The poem's ambivalent mention of Scyld's infant abandonment and discovery loops together and entangles peoples, places, and times; and these attachments acknowledge a complex world of multiple perspectives and emotional resilience. Consequently, Scyld's story functions as a micro-narrative that operates as an open circuit which, as John Hill writes, sets the tempo for a 'large-scale, structural vie[w] of *Beowulf* … [as] a poem of arrivals and departures'.[48] Scyld's story is generated by his abandonment and foundling state, a 'departure' from his biological and extra-biological kin and 'arrival' on the shores of Daneland. These movements, which separate the baby, Scyld, from his parents and immediate community, make way for adoptive kinships, both paternal and social, that are stronger, more fraught yet more tensile, perhaps, than the infant–parent dyad. Thus, as Hill argues, Scyld's circuit of childhood departure and arrival acts as a 'foundation myth'.[49] It generates 'an overall and variable narrative pulse' for Scyld's narrative of adult life and for other narratives of many other lives of the poem, generating the 'cultural model of a major battle-king'.[50] These narratives are defined by

their ambivalence – their emotional complexity and resilience – and it is important to recall that Scyld's martial activities and political behaviour, which circumscribe his infant goings and comings, are consequential of these childhood movements and the unspoken emotions that attend them. Thus, Scyld's post-mortem return to the sea is a second departure that ushers in many arrivals: a succession of heirs to his Scylding dynasty, the glory of Hrothgar as architect of Heorot, and the coming of Grendel. Yet it is not until Beowulf's boat launches from Geatland and lands on the Danish coastline that another traveller departs and arrives from the sea, following the emotionally ambivalent 'pulse' of Scyld towards becoming the poem's next celebrated 'battle-king'.

Scyld and Beowulf are, in many respects, parallel figures.[51] Both travel by boat – Scyld, an infant; Beowulf, a youthful hero. Both make their way to Daneland, where they re-establish the might of the Danes. Furthermore, both experience parental abandonment that is explored via micro-narratives that interrupt, put on pause, and thereby emotionally complicate their portrayals as 'major-battle king[s]'. Of Beowulf, Hrothgar states:

> Ic hine cuðe cnihtwesende
> wæs his ealdfæder Ecgþeo haten
> ðaem to ham forgeaf Hreþel Geata
> angan dohtor
> …
> Hwæt, þæt secgan mæg
> efne swa hwylc mægþa swa ðone magan cende
> æfter gumcynnum, gyf heo gyt lyfað
> þæt hyre ealdmetod este wære
> bearngebyrdo. Nu ic, Beowulf, þec,
> secg betesta, me for sunu wylle
> freogan on ferhþe. (372–5a, 942b–8a)
>
> (I knew him [Beowulf] as a youth. His once-living father was called Ecgtheow, to whom Hrethel of the Geats gave his own daughter as wife
> …
> Indeed, she may say, whichever of women among mankind who gave birth to that child, if she yet lives, that the Old Creator was kind to her in childbirth. Now, Beowulf, best man, I desire to love you in my mind as a son.)

Upon meeting Beowulf in Heorot, Hrothgar, a Danish king and descendant of Scyld, speaks of the Geatish warrior as a *cnihtwesende*, or youth, then proceeds to identify Beowulf's father and mother.

Hrothgar mentions his association with Ecgtheow, Beowulf's father and a figure of shadowy relations, who is possibly Geatish[52] but may be a Swede.[53] Regardless of his cultural identity, Ecgtheow, according to Hrothgar, is dead. As Beowulf's *ealdfæder*, his once-living father, Ecgtheow belongs to a former time or is no longer living.

Hrothgar not only places his father in a distant past but also deadens him, calling into question the bonds between father and son. Once Beowulf defeats Grendel, Hrothgar casts similar doubts upon the relationship between mother and son. As Hrothgar has explained previously, Beowulf's mother is the nameless daughter of Hrethel, king of the Geats. Now he questions her survival. In a half-line that brackets her identity – *seo*, or she – between the speculative, alliterating adverbs, *gyf* (if) and *gyt* (yet), Hrothgar commits Beowulf's mother to the *ealdmetod* (Old Creator) in childbirth. Such a benediction not only associates her with Beowulf's *eald*, or once-living, *fæder* (father) but also suggests the danger of childbirth, or *bearngebyrdu*, which she may not have survived. Hrothgar's prayerful statement tacitly removes Beowulf's mother from life by way of labour and delivery, acts that have always been a dangerous business. While *bearngebyrdu* is a unique self-alliterating compound that sonically attaches itself to 'Beowulf', in this line the hero's signifier is likewise bracketed by the personal pronouns *ic* (Hrothgar) and *þec* (Beowulf). Via the poetics of the line, *bearngebyrdo. Nu ic, Beowulf, þec*, Hrothgar draws the Geatish hero from a mother's womb into his own Danish, paternal orbit. As he reflects upon Beowulf's origins, Hrothgar suggests that Beowulf experiences a different shade of abandonment from that of Scyld – he is orphaned by his mother – and offers himself as an adoptive father.

While Hrothgar's statements hint at an infancy marked by abandonment, it is not until Beowulf faces death that the ambivalence associated with his early years comes into clearer focus. When the old king prepares to meet the dragon and fight his last battle, Beowulf's mind turns to a story of his childhood beginnings:

> Fela ic on giogoðe guðræsa genæs,
> orleghwila; ic þæt eall gemon.
> Ic wæs syfanwintre þa mec sinca baldor,
> freawine folca æt minum fæder genam;
> heold mec ond hæfde Hreðel cyning
> geaf me sinc ond symbel, sibbe gemunde;
> næs ic him to life laðra owihte,
> beorn in burgum, þonne his bearna hwylc,
> Herebeald ond Hæðcyn oððe Hygelac min. (2426–34)

> (In youth, I survived/was saved from many war storms, times of hostility; I remember all that. I was seven winters old when the prince of treasure, the beloved lord of the people took me from my father; King Hrethel held me and kept me, gave me treasure and feast, mindful of our kinship; I was no more of a burden to him while he was alive, a man in his fortification, than any of his sons, Herebald and Hathcyn, or my Hygelac.)

At seven, Beowulf was sent from his father, Ecgtheow, to be raised by his grandfather, Hrethel, who loved him like a son. This formative memory begins with individual 'survival' or preservation by another in the face of war, hostilities, and the unspoken emotional aftershocks of such a childhood. Then it swings dramatically to the safety of a dyadic relationship between grandson and grandfather, foster son and foster father. The emotional space of this dyad is expressed in an alliterative prosody that ties together 'Hrethel's' tender acts of 'holding' and 'having' Beowulf ('heold mec ond hæfde … Hreðel cyning') with a 'kinship' ('sibbe') that is demonstrated in the courtly acts of 'treasure and feast' ('sinc ond symbel'). As the biological bonds between father and son are broken, alternative bonds of kinship politics between Hrethel and Beowulf extend to uncles, nephews, and foster brothers. The alliterative sounds that accompany Hrethel's affection return when Beowulf names 'Herebeald ond Hæðcyn oðde Hygelac min'. This multi-generational portrait of family kindness is, however, surrounded by Beowulf's preparations for and enactment of his battle with the dragon, and temporally dislocated and displaced within an adult narrative of martial action.[54] Moreover, Beowulf's reflection upon his time spent with Hrethel, Herebald, Hathcyn, and Hygelac emerges from his own stark memory of being a child during a time of war, and the alliterative ties that knit together Beowulf's adopted family aid in its violent disassembling. Hrethel's loving embrace ('heold mec ond hæfde') (2430a) turns into a 'wearying heart' ('hreðre hygemeðe') (2442a) and a heart's sorrow ('heortan sorge') (2463b) when one of Hrethel's sons is killed, accidentally, by another. As with the micro-narrative of Scyld, Beowulf's mention of childhood 'survival' introduces an ambivalence that manages complexity in terms of emotional resilience and transtemporal entanglement.

While Beowulf has a mother and father, Hrothgar's statements echo those regarding Scyld's beginnings. Beowulf's youth, or *cnihtwesende*, recalls Scyld's *umborwesende*, or infancy. Beowulf's parentage, like that of Scyld, is neither fully known nor living, and

absent these ties to family or community, both are subject to Danish adoption. Moreover, for both Scyld the foundling and Beowulf the orphan, their respective stories of destitute origins and parental losses are temporally dislocated micro-narratives inserted into the poem's larger, mostly continuous narratives of heroic becoming. For Scyld, the details of his foundling past are inserted within passages that track his terrifying rise to power and sumptuous funeral, which arms him, once again, and sends him towards another unsuspecting people. For Beowulf, becoming an orphan unfolds alongside his combat narrative against the Grendelkin and the dragon. When examined together, these inserted origins of Scyld and Beowulf interrupt their paths towards heroism and eventual kingship with childhood experiences of abandonment and orphancy, community and parental loss, all of which are not only remediated by Danish adoption but also considered 'cultural models' of heroism and 'battle-king[ship]'. These interruptions, which are managed by a deep ambivalence towards the survival, compassionate care, and parental attachments between Scyld, Beowulf, and their fathers and mothers, articulate the critical and complex role that childhood plays in the narrative lives – the arrivals and departures – of these adult men.

There is no paved or easy path to childrearing for those who are responsible for children. Yet these movements, which separate Scyld and Beowulf from their biological parents and community ties, make way for adoptive kinships, both paternal and cultural, in life as well as after death. They suggest, ever so slightly, that infant abandonment need not be perceived as neglectful, but as an act pointed towards what Garrison categorized as 'non-parental child-rearing practices' which extend, rather than cut off, family ties. Via abandonment, 'family', we may understand, exceeds the biological unit. It becomes collective, dynastic, intergenerational, and, perhaps, intercultural. It is a complexity that engages simultaneously multiple emotions, responses, ethics, and interpersonal dynamics. Consequently, despite the partial, unintegrated, and recursive positions at which the infant and childhood micro-narratives of Scyld and Beowulf appear in the poem, *Beowulf* does not claim the early years of these heroes and kings as founding traumas upon which the poem builds its world. In spite of Scyld's abandonment and 'destitution', a 'comfort' (*frof*) follows from his foundling state. Whether we translate this comfort as an experience of Danish adoption or of warfare to come, its language does not suggest a childhood of

sadness but of warmth and love. And while Hrothgar suggests that Beowulf's parents are no longer living, at the moment of childbirth, the event that orphans Beowulf, he wishes Hrethel's daughter 'grace' (*este*).

What, then, is the role of infant–parent relationships in the poem? How does attachment theory find its place in the story? This chapter suggests that the presence of parents and parenting, babies and infant growth, signals an emotional narrative that is tensely present, but its complexity remains as an unresolved and unintegrated resilience within *Beowulf* that permits another story to be told. It suggests that these scenes of childbirth, infant care, and child guardianship – touched upon, but passed over – are loci where deep and meaningful attachments develop, if not from biological parents then from adoptive, Danish caregivers. While acknowledged by the poem, these attachments are sidelined and exchanged for the alternative intimacies of Scyld's conflict with neighbouring tribes and Beowulf's combat with Grendel. Further, when these attachments are addressed (for the anecdotes of parent–child bonds populate all corners of the poem), it is in tragedy's rearview mirror, when children are killed as a consequence of such violence. And yet they are never forgotten, but return as if they were present in the very last moments of a person's life and in a community's memorialization of them.

As I mentioned previously, I wrote and revised this chapter in the weeks and months after one birth and prior to another. What I could not predict when I alighted upon the topic of child abandonment and began to research it is that I would be writing this chapter while I was facing the very real possibility of having to abandon my own children. After much research and preliminary close readings, I found myself working on a draft while living in a hospital room with Carmela, who, at two months old, was struggling to survive after contracting infant botulism; and, as if in a terrible dream, I revised this same chapter during weeks of ultrasounds, non-stress tests, and doppler readings that showed Mary Ellard's signs of an intrauterine growth restriction that threatened her viability as a neonate. Abandonment became, for me, a real and existential concern, and *Beowulf*'s ambivalence towards its babies suddenly felt immediate. In the face of paediatric and neonatal specialists trained in medical procedures, the express purpose of which is premised upon never abandoning any baby – on never being ambivalent – my husband and I had to consider the lives of our two infants with extreme ambivalence. How to manage the flood of emotions associated with

preparing for the loss of a child still in utero, and yet remain understanding that some babies are not meant to – or cannot, because of genetics, biology, or the luck of the draw – live?

Ambivalence, intimacy, and babies in *Beowulf* and among its scholars

Beowulf's ambivalence towards childhoods that are marked by abandonment speaks to contemporary discussions of intimacy, a vast and sprawling topic that has fallen within the express purview of social scientists for over half a century. Intimacy is not created or sustained by a universal process, and it is understood and enacted differently in many places and times. Despite the many and diverse forms that intimacy takes, sociologists and psychologists point to two overarching activities that characterize it: 'self-disclosure and partner responsiveness'.[55] 'I express a vulnerability, and you accept or rebuff me.' Initially understood within the context of heterosexual relationships, intimacy was, until the 1990s, presumed to be limited to the private, rather than public, sphere. Yet as public–private divisions were interrogated, so were the formulations (and boundaries) of intimacy. Intimacy has been extended to include homosexual, transgendered, and interspecies relationships; and studies have articulated its presence in 'public' spheres such as the workplace, reality television shows, and forums for citizen expression. As a consequence of reframing its boundaries, intimacy is no longer understood solely as a matter of interpersonal, domestic relationships. It likewise functions as a practice of self-knowing. As Ken Plummer explains, the 'doing' of intimacy between partners in the public sphere feeds back into 'being' intimate within a family, a shift that renders intimacy no longer a functional aspect of relationships but rather one of affective fulfilment.[56]

As outlined in these terms, intimacy at work and at home stresses it as a highly pleasurable experience. Yet beginning with intergenerational family research[57] and then with parenting,[58] social scientists began to access the role that ambivalence rather than sentimentality and attachment play in parent–child relationships. As these discussions extended beyond the family unit, 'intimacy ambivalence' became recognized as a state of feeling that, according to Karen Prager, 'is built into intimate relationships',[59] whether these are enacted between couples or friends, in private or public domains. Thus, as Lauren Berlant comments, while 'in popular culture ambivalence is seen as the failure of a relation, the opposite of

happiness', in actuality it is 'an inevitable condition of intimate attachment and a pleasure in its own right'.[60] The dynamic interplay between conflicting emotions such as attachment and distance, sentimental affection and coldness, are necessary to sustaining relationships and even, as Berlant writes, 'pleasure[ful]'. Yet as Berlant also understands, such pleasure is often unspoken. Her research underscores intimacy in America as a construct sustained by narratives that reach for a life of happiness and belonging even though these aspirational stories carry the weight of institutions such as marriage and family life that fail their heroes; desires that contradict formulaic notions of love, friendship, or sexuality; and the inequalities of gender and race. With respect to my own life, the medical narratives into which Carmela and Mary Ellard were placed – narratives for which I am extraordinarily grateful because they saved my daughters' lives – are aspirational stories that fit into Berlant's assessment of American intimacy. The pain and grief of a child's death are both disavowed and avoided through medical practice, discourse, and procedures. Parents who are in the position of losing, giving up on, or 'abandoning' a child must face the deep psychic gulf between what they desire and what they cannot have, and grapple with an ambivalence towards intimacy that structures *living* itself. Further, for me to make such an anecdotal statement about my personal life is to further extend the place of intimacy from the domestic to the public domain, considering the extent to which ambivalence operates here, then draws each of us back to our own family lives wherein we might reconsider childhood abandonment in a different, more complex light.

To return, finally, to *Beowulf* and its babies: if we reposition Scyld's abandonment and Beowulf's orphancy and adoption as ambivalent scenes that radiate outwards and structure other relationships in the poem's narrative world, child lives become central rather than peripheral to adult ones. If we underscore the poem's ambivalence towards children as a sign of emotional complexity, then the abandonment of Scyld and Beowulf can be repositioned not as acts of carelessness but of complex care that manifest attachments beyond the immediate purview of one's biological family and cultural community. And finally, if ambivalence underwrites and structures not only intimacy but moreover the intimate aspects of living – in domestic and public worlds – then *Beowulf*'s brief but central descriptions of babies within its families ask us to give key consideration to babies within our working environments. Not only how and when they are present in the poem but also how and

when they are present in our professional lives – in the classroom, at conferences, and in our criticism.

Notes

1 Note that in contrast to scant scholarly discussions about Scyld's infant status, a robust critical tradition engages with his arrival by sea and his ship burial. Uninterested in the issue of Scyld's age, this critical tradition discusses the narrative details of his prologue in relation to source analogues, early medieval genealogies, and concerns regarding structural and artistic 'unity', often with the purpose of deciphering a possible date for the *Beowulf* poem. For an extensive summary of this scholarship, see Robert E. Bjork, 'Digressions and episodes', in Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (eds), *A Beowulf handbook* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), pp. 193–211, at 201–5.

2 Carolyn Hares-Styker, 'Adrift on the seven seas: the mediaeval topos of exile at sea', *Florilegium*, 12 (1993), 79–98, at 79.

3 R. D. Fulk, 'An Eddic analogue to the Scyld Scefing story', *RES*, 40.159 (1989), 313–22; quoted in Hares-Styker, 'Adrift on the seven seas', 79.

4 *Scef* is an Old English term that references a sheaf (of corn) or bundle. As Fulk, following Eisen, writes, *scef* has been associated with the Estonian folk-practices of keeping 'a wax image … formed to resemble a three-year-old child' in a grain bin ('An Eddic analogue', 314). The image, he continues, is meant to resemble Peko, a god of agricultural fertility, and Fulk traces the etymology of 'Pekko' from the Proto-Germanic form **bewv-* to the Icelandic and Old English words for 'barley' and finally to 'the Germanic barley-figure from which he must be descended' (Fulk, 'An Eddic analogue', 314, 315). Sceaf is likewise a figure that 'may instead (or also?) have been a culture hero … who came over the water to help his future people with a new crop' (Audrey Meaney, *Scyld Scefing and the dating of Beowulf – again* [Manchester: Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, 1988], p. 16). See also Mercedes Salvador, 'The arrival of the hero in a ship: a common leitmotif in OE regnal tables and the story of Scyld Scefing in *Beowulf*', *Selim: journal of the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature: Revista de la Sociedad Española de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa Medieval*, 8 (1998), 205–21.

5 Gale Owen-Crocker, *The four funerals in Beowulf: and the structure of the poem* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 18.

6 See Meaney, *Scyld Scefing and the dating of Beowulf*; Thomas D. Hill, 'The myth of the Ark-born son of Noe and the West-Saxon Royal Genealogical Tables', *Harvard theological review*, 80 (1987), 379–83; Daniel Anlezark, 'Sceaf, Japheth, and the origins of the Anglo-Saxons', *ASE*, 31 (2002), 13–46.

7 Kenneth Sisam, 'Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 39 (1953), 287–348, at 316; Anlezark, 'Sceaf, Japheth', 33.
8 Fulk, 'An Eddic analogue'; Hares-Stryker, 'Adrift on the seven seas'; and Tomoaki Mizuno, 'The divine infant coming over the waves: an Old Nordic *Mare-bito* figure', *Iris*, 23 (2002), 37–52.
9 Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of childhood: a social history of family life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage, 1962).
10 Mathew Kuefler, '"A Wryed existence": attitudes toward children in Anglo-Saxon England', *Journal of social history*, 24.4 (1991), 823–34, at 827, 828, 830.
11 Sally Crawford, *Childhood in Anglo-Saxon England* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), p. 168.
12 Winfried Rudolf, 'Anglo-Saxon preaching on children', in Susan Irvine and Winfried Rudolf (eds), *Childhood & adolescence in Anglo-Saxon literary culture* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), pp. 48–70, at 50.
13 Shu-Han Luo, 'Tender beginnings in the Exeter Book *Riddles*', in Irvine and Rudolf (eds), *Childhood & adolescence*, pp. 71–94, at 81.
14 Susan Irvine and Winfried Rudolf, 'Introduction', in Irvine and Rudolf (eds), *Childhood & adolescence*, pp. 3–14, at 8, 9.
15 Ibid., pp. 10, 11.
16 In the introduction to his book, Boswell addresses arguments made by Ariès which claim that, because a concept of childhood did not exist in pre-modern Europe, child–parent relations were 'inherently and categorically different from those in the modern West' (John Boswell, *Kindness of strangers: the abandonment of children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* [New York: Pantheon Books, 1988], p. 36). Boswell states that 'In regard to abandonment, [Volker] Hunecke wryly notes that the greatest known increase in the exposing of children occurred "at the point when, as Philippe Ariès has shown, Europe began to discover childhood"' (p. 37).
17 For Boswell, child oblation, or the practice of promising one's infant or young child to monastic life, likewise falls into this category.
18 Boswell, *Kindness*, p. 223.
19 Ibid., p. 213.
20 Carol J. Clover, 'The politics of scarcity: notes on the sex ratio in early Scandinavia', *Scandinavian studies*, 60.2 (1988), 147–88; Nancy L. Wicker, 'Selective female infanticide as partial explanation for the death of women in Viking Age Scandinavia', in Guy Halsall (ed.), *Violence and society in the early medieval West* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998), pp. 205–21.
21 Sean B. Lawing, 'The place of the evil: infant abandonment in Old Norse society', *Scandinavian studies*, 85.2 (2013), 133–50.

22 Boswell, *Kindness*, p. 225.
23 Felix Liebermann (ed.), *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, vol. 1 (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1903), p. 100, [26] and [27].
24 J. A. Tasioulas, 'The mother's lament: Wulf and Eadwacer reconsidered', *Medium Aevum*, 65.1 (1996), 1–14. While Tasioulas's article is referenced frequently in texts that consider the enigmatic place of *Wulf and Eadwacer* in the consideration of sex, gender, and emotions in Old English and medieval literature, her arguments regarding the poem have not been seconded. Sources that discuss infanticide include an eighth-century penitential attributed to Bede, and, possibly, Wulfstan's Homily 29. Cf. Jennifer Neville, 'Fostering the cuckoo: "Exeter Book" *Riddle 9*', *RES*, 58.236 (2007), 431–46.
25 Rudolf, 'Anglo-Saxon preaching on children', p. 60.
26 Boswell, *Kindness*, p. 228.
27 Lawing, 'The place of evil', 137.
28 Ibid., 142.
29 Wicker, 'Selective female infanticide', pp. 215–16.
30 Ibid.; Nancy L. Wicker, 'Christianization, female infanticide, and the abundance of female burials at Viking Age Birka in Sweden', *Journal of the history of sexuality*, 21.2 (2012), 245–62.
31 Lorraine Sherr, Joanne Mueller, and Zoe Fox, 'Abandoned babies in the UK – a review utilizing media reports', *Child: care, health and development*, 35.3 (2009), 419–30, at 420.
32 Lorraine Sherr, Kathryn J. Roberts, and Natasha Croome, 'Emotional distress, resilience and adaptability: a qualitative study of adults who experienced infant abandonment', *Health psychology and behavioral medicine*, 5.1 (2017), 197–213, at 202.
33 Ibid., 202, 203.
34 Jan Winberg, 'Mother and newborn baby: mutual regulation of physiology and behavior – a selective review', *Developmental psychobiology*, 47.3 (2005), 217–29.
35 David Howe, *Attachment across the lifecourse: a brief introduction* (New York: Palgrave, 2011), p. 12.
36 Ibid., p. 13.
37 Alice Jorgensen, 'Introduction', in Alice Jorgensen, Frances McCormack, and Jonathan Wilcox (eds), *Anglo-Saxon emotions: reading the heart in Old English literature, language, and culture* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 1–18, at 4.
38 Mary Garrison, 'Early medieval experiences of grief and separation through the eyes of Alcuin and others: the grief and gratitude of the oblate', in Jorgensen, McCormack, and Wilcox (eds), *Anglo-Saxon emotions*, pp. 227–62, at 254.
39 Patrick Joseph Ryan, *Master–Servant childhood: a history of the idea of childhood in medieval English culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2013), pp. 32, 33, 83, author's italics.

40 Ryan makes this argument via a series of lengthy etymological discussions that interrogate Latin, Old English, and Middle English words for boy, child, and servant, which illustrate the 'long-term thatching between terms of childhood and servitude' (*Master–Servant childhood*, p. 50).
41 Ibid., p. 83.
42 Ibid., pp. 83–4; cf. Stephen G. Post, 'History, infanticide, and imperiled newborns', *The Hastings Center report*, 18.4 (1988), 14–17, at 15.
43 D. Lorenz-Meyer, cited in Simon Biggs, 'Thinking about generations: conceptual positions and policy implications', *Journal of social issues*, 63 (2007), 695–711, at 706.
44 Ibid., 706.
45 Boswell, *Kindness*, pp. 214, 223.
46 Quotations of *Beowulf* are drawn from R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles (eds), *Klaeber's Beowulf*, 4th edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). All Old English translations are my own.
47 Joseph Bosworth, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, ed. Thomas Northcote Toller et al., comp. Sean Christ and Ondřej Tichý (Prague: Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 2010), 'sceaft' I, II; 'sceaft' I, II.
48 John M. Hill, *Narrative pulse of Beowulf: arrivals and departures* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), pp. 3–4.
49 Ibid., pp. 4–6.
50 Ibid.
51 For a lengthy summary, see David Clark, 'Relaunching the hero: the case of Scyld and Beowulf re-opened', *Neophilologus*, 90 (2006), 612–42.
52 Norman E. Elaison, 'Beowulf, Wiglaf and the Wægmundings', *ASE*, 7 (1978), 95–105.
53 Ruth Lehmann, 'Ecgþeow the Wægmunding: Geat or Swede?', *English language notes*, 31.3 (1994), 1–5; Erin M. Shaull, 'Ecgþeow, brother of Ongenþeow, and the problem of Beowulf's Swedishness', *Neophilologus*, 101 (2017), 263–75.
54 Richard North reminds that 'Beowulf's words on his childhood conflict with the poet's', and North emphasizes the context for these statements, 'for he is then speaking to his retinue before leaving them so that he may fight with the Dragon alone. Beowulf must convince these hand-picked Geatish warriors that he belongs to a family with experience in war.' See 'Hrothulf's childhood and Beowulf's: a comparison', in Irvine and Rudolf (eds), *Childhood & adolescence*, pp. 222–43, at 240.
55 Jean-Philippe Laurenceau et al., 'Intimacy as an interpersonal process: current status and future directions', in Debra J. Mashek and Arthur Aron (eds), *Handbook of closeness and intimacy* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), pp. 61–78, at 62.
56 Ken Plummer, *Intimate citizenship: private decisions and public dialogues* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2003).

57 Kurt Luescher and Karl Pillemer, 'Intergenational ambivalence: a new approach to the study of parent–child relations in later life', *Journal of marriage and family*, 60.2 (1998), 413–25.
58 Rozsika Parker, 'Maternal ambivalence', *Winnicott studies*, 9 (1994), 3–17; Wendy Hollway and Brid Featherstone, *Mothering and ambivalence* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
59 Karen J. Prager, *The dilemmas of intimacy: conceptualization, assessment, and treatment* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 139.
60 Lauren Berlant, *The female complaint: the unfinished business of sentimentality in American culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 2.