

## DRAMA AND DIALOGUE IN OLD ENGLISH POETRY: THE SCENE OF CYNEWULF'S *JULIANA*

In *The Semiotics of Performance*, Marco de Marinis notes that the field of performance studies has greatly expanded the traditional categories of drama and theatre. "It is obvious," he writes, "that we are dealing with a field that is far broader and more varied than the category consisting exclusively of *traditional stagings of dramatic texts*, to which some scholars still restrict the class of theatrical performances."<sup>1</sup> A few scholars of early theatre history have embraced expanded categories of performance. Jody Enders's "medieval theater of cruelty," for example, rests on a concept of "a *theory* of virtual performance" that translates "into actual medieval dramatic practice."<sup>2</sup> Carol Symes's study of the "dramatic activity" suggested by medieval French manuscripts identifies "a vital performative element within the surrounding culture."<sup>3</sup> Both writers have shown how new ideas of performance enlarge the category beyond the "traditional stagings" described by de Marinis.

Adopting an approach quite different from the approaches employed by Enders and Symes, I too propose to look for drama somewhere else than on the stage—in this case, in dialogue-rich Anglo-Saxon narrative poems. The performative tradition to which these texts belong has been excluded from drama criticism and theatre history, which have focused too narrowly on texts and productions involving fixed elements of the tradition—actors, paying audiences, costumes, and stages, among others. Taking a semiotic approach based on the work of de Marinis, Jean Alter, Erika Fischer-Lichte, and Keir Elam, I hope to show that narratives rich in dialogue and written for public declamation have a place in theatre history because they meet the essential criteria of "dramatic practice" and "dramatic activity," terms Enders and Symes use to describe drama that is not self-identified as text for performance. Those criteria include a speaker and an audience; dialogue that requires impersonation; gestures and words that knit the speaker's world to that of the onlookers; the creation of social communication and exchanges of meaning; and a text that establishes a standard of repetition but allows for each realization to manifest unique qualities.

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Semiotic elements do not in themselves make drama, and, as Paul Bouissac has written, it is not useful to use a semiotic model to recast any and all cultural activity, the better to call it drama. Commenting on Fischer-Lichte's discussion of "signs of signs," Bouissac asks, "Are not these signs subsumed by a narrative structure which commands and orients the cognitive experience of the spectators? Is it even possible to conceive the signifying material which unfolds on the stage as signs of signs, independently of the broader framework of the institution [of theatre], and of the dynamic structure of the plot?"<sup>4</sup> The answer, obviously, is no. Although theatre and drama depend on the interplay of signs, some form of narrative or plot—epitomized in agon or conflict—must be operative. Other features of the tradition often considered essential to drama, including stages, costumes, settings, and dedicated performance spaces, are either implied in the criteria I have enumerated or are dispensable—as indeed experimental productions have for many years demonstrated.<sup>5</sup>

My objective is to get the drama of Anglo-Saxon England off the page and into the world of semiotic communication, the world of ostension. Although the examples used in this essay are drawn from Anglo-Saxon narrative poetry, my argument about dialogue and drama applies equally well to comparable orally performed poems in Middle English and in other medieval vernaculars. For the later periods, which have well-developed performance traditions and dramatic literatures, the extension of drama outside its traditional parameters will at least seem plausible, although dramatic readings of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* remain decidedly out of fashion.<sup>6</sup> It will, however, be considered idiosyncratic, if not positively quaint, to make claims for drama in Anglo-Saxon culture (ca. A.D. 700–1100). The major (and relatively recent) Anglo-Saxon literary histories and encyclopedias do not mention drama, and histories of and introductions to drama do not, it hardly needs to be said, mention the Anglo-Saxons, except to note their liturgical traditions.<sup>7</sup> Thus I survey previous assessments of drama in Old English literature before looking beyond the theoretical limitations of those assessments to the relationship of semiotics to narrative and oral performance. I then analyze two Old English poems, *Beowulf* and *Juliana*, to show why the performative world to which these narratives belong itself belongs to our idea of medieval drama.



In *The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons*, published in 1949, George K. Anderson devoted just six pages to "A Note on Old English Literature and Drama."<sup>8</sup> In retrospect, his allowance seems generous, for subsequent literary histories have simply ignored the topic. No plays survive in the Old English vernacular, so Anderson inevitably reached negative conclusions about the drama of the Anglo-Saxons. But he did suggest that some Old English poems "imply drama" or "illustrate a dramatic atmosphere." More to the point, he described poems as having a "semi-dramatic structure" if they contained dialogue. Among those texts he included were *Christ*, *Genesis B*, and two well-known elegies, "The

Wanderer” and “The Seafarer.”<sup>9</sup> But the dialogues in those texts were, in Anderson’s view, “expository rather than dramatic in purpose,” and none of them satisfied his requirements for “real drama” or “true dramatic dialogue” (207–9).

Like readers before and after him, Anderson believed that the strongest links between Anglo-Saxon culture and drama existed in the liturgy of Holy Week. The instructions for the *Visitatio sepulchri* in the *Regularis concordia* or “Monastic Agreement,” a customary drawn up in the 970s by Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester, include references to dialogue, costumes, and role-playing.<sup>10</sup> Hence this text has been described as “the beginnings of liturgical drama in England.”<sup>11</sup> Even earlier signs of liturgical drama have been detected in the account of the Harrowing of Hell in the ninth-century Anglo-Saxon prayer collection known as the *Book of Cerne*, which includes rubrics apparently used to differentiate spoken and narrative sections.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately, discussions of the liturgical drama of the Anglo-Saxons have only served to isolate the dramatic nature of oral performance from Anderson’s “real drama” (209). We see the problem in the recent work of M. Bradford Bedingfield, who has significantly advanced the investigation into the connection between drama and liturgy by using the term “dramatic liturgy.” He has proposed that what he calls “liturgical reenactment” and “ritual expression” are closer to drama than many scholars have allowed. In his view, readers will fail to understand the dramatic nature of such reenactments, including the significance of their description in homilies, so long as they implicitly compare all forms of drama to the “representational drama of the later Middle Ages” (4). This is a point of indisputable importance; indeed, one can scarcely exaggerate the extent to which the representational world of the late medieval cycle plays constitutes a telos toward which all early medieval dramatic activity has been seen as evolving. Yet in reference to Anglo-Saxon drama more generally, Bedingfield’s conclusions resemble Anderson’s. Given the lack of evidence for secular drama, he writes, “One does not often find the words ‘Anglo-Saxon’ and ‘drama’ spoken together, and for good reason” (3).

I submit that the reason lies not in the performance traditions of the Anglo-Saxons but rather in the limited understanding of drama that informs Anderson’s and Bedingfield’s arguments—and a great many more discussions, to be sure. While making a case for the importance of dialogue, Anderson observed that “we can have the dramatic without the drama, for the drama, in the usual sense of the word, demands the interplay of two or more characters” (207). Bedingfield imposed a narrower and self-consciously theatrical criterion, claiming that drama “depends upon a performance in which a role is undertaken.” Since there is no evidence about how dialogues were presented (i.e., how those roles were undertaken as theatrical performance), he regarded inquiries into the dramatic nature of Old English poetry as mere “speculations” (3).<sup>13</sup> Bedingfield admitted that Old English narratives, including those incorporated into sermons, “contain dramatically used direct discourse,” but he doubted the usefulness of interpreting Old English dialogues or monologues as “dramatically inspired” (3). It should be clear that such terms as “dramatically inspired” and “dramatically used” fail because they rely on Anderson’s “real drama” as the basis for

comparison (209). It would seem that dramatic inspiration can come only from texts or enactments whose dramatic nature is unambiguously clear—that is, from plays. Even the term “liturgical drama” itself cannot escape this confusion, since it again positions liturgy as a prototype of “real drama” (Anderson, 209) which culminates in the great late medieval cycle plays.

Other definitions of drama combine performance and text without escaping the telos of representative drama. Lawrence Clopper has observed that “there are phenomena on the edges [of drama] that we might put into the category even if they do not totally conform to our sense of the genre.” One such phenomenon is the use of drama as “a poetic mode,” as a way of “presenting a narrative”: in narrative, the poet speaks; in drama the *personae* speak; and in a third form, those two voices are mixed. Clopper notes that Bede associated the *Song of Songs* with drama, identifying the text as an example of the mixed mode.<sup>14</sup> Although the *Song of Songs* lacks what Clopper calls the “visual signs of a dramatic text,” it can be rubricated “to conform to other liturgical manuscripts (responsories, for example)” and so can be said to contain “memorial cues to ancient dramatic texts such as Terence.” However, Clopper concludes that “textually or formally, the liturgy is a drama in the medieval sense; it is not a drama in our [sense] or the ancient one” (9).<sup>15</sup> As this comment shows, Clopper drew a clear boundary around drama; however mixed, the modes remain generically distinct. Hence he warned that when considering the *Song of Songs* and similar texts we should not “think of a script for enactment by persons assuming roles; rather, we should think of it as a formal and visual presentation of responding voices” (9). He adds, “When I use the term ‘drama,’ I mean *an enacted script* that contains, or, if it is a fragment, at one time contained, *an entire narrative*; that is, it is a text and a performance” (11; his emphasis). The limits implied by that definition become explicit in the range of texts that Clopper considers. Liturgy excepted, Clopper sets aside as undramatic the discursive modes in which drama is intermixed. He does not, therefore, consider the contribution of orally performed poems to the tradition of drama between the late antique and late medieval worlds.

Depending on its use of signs, however, an “enacted script” that contains “an entire narrative” (or a portion thereof) might well, even within Clopper’s strictures, be considered drama. With or without manuscript evidence suggestive of performance, narrative poetry has long been regarded as performed text. Noting that the distinction between reading a play and seeing it performed was often blurred, Rosemary Woolf asserted that in the Middle Ages “all literature was read aloud and dialogue often given vocal impersonation.” She added that “the learned in the twelfth century understood the dramatic form, but did not think of it as exclusive to the stage and therefore inappropriate for reading aloud, either by one reader with a change of voice or by a number of different readers.”<sup>16</sup> Likewise, it is plausible to claim that, two centuries earlier, the learned also understood what Woolf calls “the dramatic form” as they experienced it in dialogue-rich narrative poems and that, wherever they heard and saw those performances, they experienced theatre.

Like Bedingfield and Anderson, Clopper rigorously separates medieval and modern ideas of performance. Reinforcing that separation is the lack of material

evidence for Anglo-Saxon theatrical performance—that is, vernacular plays, stages or dedicated playing spaces, actors, and self-conscious references to a tradition of performance, all elements that constitute, in Clopper’s words, “a drama in our [sense] or the ancient one” (9). One would not want to suppose that the Anglo-Saxons had a tradition of theatre, for of theatres themselves the Anglo-Saxons seem to have known little. The Old English translation of the *World History* of Orosius, written near the end of the ninth century, contains four references to *theatrum*, once giving the word an Anglicized spelling with a “þ” (*þeater*).<sup>17</sup> It is doubtful if that word and others used by the Anglo-Saxons, including *ludus* and *palestrarum* (both terms were cited by Anderson), point to an understanding of theatre as an architectural term. The Anglo-Saxons might have derived some knowledge of theatre from the works of Isidore of Seville. Donnalee Dox’s study of the “idea of Latin theater” distinguishes the theatre as a building and as the process of putting on shows from drama, the latter being a textual phenomenon that comprises narrative structure and genre. Dox shows that those references remained textual rather than social: Augustine had a social understanding of theatre, she suggests, whereas Isidore did not.<sup>18</sup> Although the Anglo-Saxons seemingly had no knowledge of theatre as a social event, early medieval authors elsewhere did. The plays of Terence were familiar to the tenth-century nun Hrotswitha of Gandersheim, whose imitations of his works were designed to replace licentious models with chaste ones.<sup>19</sup>

But the Anglo-Saxons did understand gesture, a key performative component of the late antique tradition. Anderson dismissed the importance of the classical Roman tradition for the Anglo-Saxons. C. R. Dodwell, however, later showed that the Anglo-Saxons understood and employed an important element of the Roman tradition, Quintilian’s “language of the hands.”<sup>20</sup> Dodwell showed that Anglo-Saxons in Canterbury in the eleventh century learned that gestural language through Carolingian manuscripts that reproduced the illustrative vocabulary of Roman playwrights. Those gestures were used to comment on Anglo-Saxon psalter texts. Dodwell compares the gestures to those used by Benedictine monks and recorded in an eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon manuscript (again available at Canterbury). They do not belong to a single tradition, of course, since psalter gestures illustrate emotions, moods, and states of mind, whereas the Benedictine gestures illustrate persons and things.<sup>21</sup> Yet it is clear that the Anglo-Saxons spoke the “language of the hands,” and it is not difficult to imagine that the Anglo-Saxons incorporated those or even other gestures into performances of narrative poetry.

The performer of such poetry in the Anglo-Saxon period, as has long been assumed, was the *scop*, sometimes but not always using a harp.<sup>22</sup> His role is described in Anglo-Saxon commentary on the rhetorical tradition of the late classical period. In the Old English *Orosius*, for example, a text translated from the Latin near the end of the ninth century, *poeta* is translated as *scop*. So too is Latin *comicus*, “a term,” according to Janet Bately, “used of both comic actors and comic poets in classical Latin.”<sup>23</sup> In fact, one of those translations of *poeta* as *scop* refers to the Roman playwright Terence as “the great *scop* of the Carthaginians” (*Orosius*, 107/28). Four Anglo-Saxon glossaries support that

important link between *poeta* and *scop*, which is in effect a link between the performance of poetry in the hall, a moment frequently described in Anglo-Saxon texts, and acting.<sup>24</sup>

The *scop* was indeed an actor, a fact implied in several recent discussions of medieval vernacular verse that recognize the performative nature of such recitations. Writing about Welsh poetry, for example, Sioned Davies discusses manuscript evidence that suggests such activity, including the use of rubrication and “dialogue introducers” in narrative poems. Those features “highlight character switching,” according to Davies. “This would surely make more demands on a story-teller/reader who would have to rely on his vocal performance to differentiate between characters. . . . A vocal performance is implicit in the text: the subject-matter of each tale is highly dramatic, calling for a wide range of voices.”<sup>25</sup> Similar points have been made about the genre of sermons by Adrian Tudor, who describes “the multiple voices used by medieval preachers.” Tudor suggests that “each voice represents a new or separate role for the speaker, and the linguistic notion of a voice it highlights can easily be imagined to slide gently into the more dramatic notion of voices.” “Obviously,” Tudor concludes, “dialogue cannot be reported in a monotone.”<sup>26</sup>

In reference to *Beowulf* and the poem known as *Widsith*, Hugh Magennis has noted that the poems present themselves as the products of oral culture. The speakers adopted the stance of the minstrel and passed on orally “the things they ha[d] heard about.” Thus, according to Magennis, “these poems give the impression of being oral utterances of a minstrel, spontaneous performances, presumably delivered in the hall, which is implicitly evoked as the traditional setting for Germanic verse.”<sup>27</sup> The *impression* of spontaneous performance is different from spontaneous performance, of course, and that is the heart of the matter. We may assume that the *scop* more often than not recited texts that had already been recited many times—and perhaps also texts that had been learned by reading. Ursula Schaefer, who has written extensively about oral performance based on a written text, has proposed that a vicarious voice—the singer’s voice—is built into written composition and that that voice “had to be brought to life again by somebody who usually was not this singer.” Maintaining that “all (literary) fiction is ‘staged discourse,’” Schaefer uses the term “vocality,” derived from Paul Zumthor’s *La Lettre et la voix* (1987), to imply “a whole concept of medieval poetic communication” in the idea of “performance.”<sup>28</sup> For Zumthor, performance was “the temporal coincidence of communication and reception” and a point at which two axes of social communication intersected, one linking “the speaker to the author and [another] through which situation and tradition are united” (Schaefer, 117–18).

We do not usually think of Anglo-Saxon poems as “staged discourse” or as theatre of any kind, but Benjamin Bagby, who has performed *Beowulf* and Icelandic Eddas and who therefore offers a unique view of performance history, clearly does so. “When performing the Eddic stories or *Beowulf*,” he has written, “I enter with my voice into a world which is informed as much by the actor’s art as by the singer’s, and in that world I only rarely make use of the techniques suited to the needs of what we might call lyric song.”<sup>29</sup> Bagby himself seems to



think of the *scop* as both an actor and a singer. Whether we call them *gleoman*, *scop*, *leofwyrhta*, or *wopbora* (the four categories of poet considered by Jeff Opland), when the poets of Anglo-Saxon England recited narrative poetry, they *performed* it (Opland, 253). Anglo-Saxon narrative poems give the impression of “oral utterances” even though they are not spontaneous but are, rather, “staged discourse”—that is, repeated performances enabled by a “voice” built into written (or orally remembered and recalled) compositions.

A semiotic conception of performance invites us to examine not only the *scop* and his or her text but also attend to creative activity at the other end of the communication axis, that of the audience. In her important book on public reading, Joyce Coleman borrows Richard Bauman’s concept of the “emergent quality of performance,” which he describes as “the interplay between communicative resources, individual competence, and the goals of the participants, within the context of particular situations.”<sup>30</sup> Coleman adds that, “In a bardic or minstrel performance, everything from the choice of genre and of text, along with many decisions about the emphases within and the length of the text, would be subject to a feedback process.” Thus the “text, and the event, would be different with every performance,” depending on the “performer’s skills as composer, actor, singer, and/or editor (of the text as he or she performs it)” (29). That “feedback process” is the heart of semiosis, dramatic information (words, gestures, etc.) circulating between audience and performer in a communicative process that transforms both parties. Alter calls this iconicity. When he asks, “What semiotic competence is really necessary in theatre?,” his answer is that it is “a competence in the use of an *iconic code* whereby *all signs on the stage refer to their mirror image in the imaginary story space outside the stage*” (*Sociosemiotic Theory*, 97; his emphasis). Seen through this “looking-glass distortion,” according to Alter, “the referential story always lacks some precision, and individual spectators must draw on their own experience or imagination to round up its concretization in their minds” (98). His idea evokes the familiar reception model that addresses gaps in narratives that readers must fill by drawing on their own imaginative resources.<sup>31</sup> The text enacted before the audience—whether poem or homily, liturgy or play—is always incomplete: spectators must step in and cocreate it. Theatre, as de Marinis has written, is unlike film or television in that it requires “the real physical co-presence of sender and addressee (the latter is collective, as a rule)” and also the “simultaneity of production and communication.” The public performance of the text, however standard it is supposed to be (however familiar to the audience) is never the same from one recitation to the next; it is repeated as a text, but its dramatic meaning is always subject to conditions of performance, whether they depend on the performer or on the audience, that themselves can never be entirely duplicated. Rather, “every theatrical performance (every *single* theatrical occurrence) constitutes an *unrepeatable, unique event*, an ephemeral *production* that is different each time in spite of all attempts at standardization.” He concludes that “theater, in short, always involves *event*, as well as code and structure” (*Semiotics of Performance*, 50–1).

To see that the Anglo-Saxon hall was understood as a scene of performance animated by give and take—although perhaps not as vivid as Coleman’s invocation of “a bunch of drunken louts shouting down the performer” (29)—we need look no further than *Beowulf*. In Heorot, the assembled warriors gather to hear “the noise of the harp, the clear song of the *scop*” (“hearpan sweg, / swutol sang scopes”).<sup>32</sup> Later, as mead is served in the celebration following the monster Grendel’s death, the *scop* sings “clear-voiced in Heorot” (“*scop hwilum sang, / hador on Heorote,*” 496–7). At the celebration that follows the death of Grendel’s mother, the *scop* in the poem tells the story of Finnsburg, a fragment in *Beowulf* of an independent narrative:

Pær wæs sang ond sweg	samod ætgædere
fore Healfdenes	hildewisan,
gomenwudu greted,	gid oft wrecen
ðonne healgamen	Hroþgares scop
æfter medobence	mænan scolde
be Finnes eaferum	(1063–8)

Noise and song mingled together before Healfdane’s commander in battle; the harp was plucked, tales often told, when Hrothgar’s *scop* was set to recite hall-entertainment about the sons of Finn from his place on the meadbench.

When the grim account of death and revenge is finished, it is called “the singer’s song” (“leoð wæs asungen, / gleomannes gyd,” 1159–60).<sup>33</sup>

Although “the story of the *scop*” constitutes a performance, I do not regard it, as described in this passage, as drama, for it contains no dialogue and requires no impersonation by the performer of the poem; the narrative is specifically the *scop*’s story because it is delivered in *his voice only*, without dialogue requiring that he imitate the voices of others. To see why that point matters, let us consider the relationship between dialogue and narrative from a performative perspective.

In narrative poetry, dialogue holds the key to drama because dialogue is by nature deictic. Elam has defined deixis as direct verbal exchange indexed by pronouns in written or oral form (and hence found in many poems, liturgies, songs, legal exchanges, etc.). Such exchanges create Elam’s “dramatic world,” a “here and now” in which both a “you and I” are engaged, a speaker and a receiver. Because it is deictic, dialogue performs an “active” and “dialogic” function rather than one that is “descriptive and choric.”<sup>34</sup> For Elam, “dialogue is immediate ‘spoken action’ rather than reference to, or representation *of*, action, so that the central personal, political and moral oppositions which structure the drama are seen and heard to be *acted out* in the communicational exchange and not described at a narrative remove” (147; his emphasis). Elam stresses the role of dialogue in enabling the audience to see and hear the “central personal, political and moral oppositions” that structure the drama, a point that is underscored by Richard Ohmann’s view that “illocutionary acts move the play along.”<sup>35</sup> Nothing, so far as the text goes, is “acted out” in the *scop*’s account of the Finnsburg episode because the text does not move forward through the



intensifying force of dialogue. The *scop* in the passage above does not act out or impersonate; instead, he stands at a “narrative remove” and merely reports what the poet has already reported. The *scop* does not use dialogue to intensify the audience’s experience or involve them in the give-and-take of meaning that characterizes a semiotized space.

Another episode in *Beowulf*, however, showcases “the oral narrator,” who is in this case the young hero himself. Having returned to Geatland, Beowulf recounts his adventures in Denmark to Hygelac, the Geatish king. Even before he describes his own victories over Grendel and his mother, Beowulf refers to the forthcoming marriage of Hrothgar’s daughter, Freawaru, to the Heathobard warrior Ingeld. Beowulf predicts that deadly violence will erupt when, at the wedding feast, the Heathobards see armor captured from their families displayed as booty in the Danish court. He then delivers the speech of an “old spear-warrior” of the Heathobards who sees a sword, an “ancestral heirloom,” worn by the bridegroom as he enters the hall. The old man calls the weapon to the attention of a young warrior to whose father the sword once belonged, and asks if the young man recognizes it:

<p>“Þonne cwið æt beore eald æscwiga, garcwealm gumena onginneð geomormod þurh hreðra gehygd wigbealu wecccean, ‘Meaht ðu, min wine, þone þin fæder under heregriman dyre iren, weoldon wælstowe, æfter hæleþa hryre, Nu her þara banena frætsum hremig morðres gylpeð, þone þe ðu mid rihte</p>	<p>se ðe beah gesyhð, se ðe eall geman, —him bið grim sefa— geongum cempan higes cunnian, ond þæt word acwyð: mece gecnawan to gefeohte bær hindeman siðe, þær hyne Dene slogon, syððan Wiðergyld læg, hwate Scyldungas? byre nathwylces on flet gæð, ond þone maðpum byreð, rædan sceoldest.”</p> <p>(2041–56)</p>
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Then, over his beer, an old spear-warrior speaks, one who sees that ring-hilt and remembers all of the spear-deaths of men (fierce is his heart). Sad in mind [he] begins to tempt the thought of a young warrior, stir up war with his innermost thought, and speaks these words: “My friend, can you recognize the sword that your father bore in the fight under the grim war-mask for the last time, that precious iron, when the Danes struck him, controlled the slaughter field, when in the clash of heroes Withergyld fell, the valiant Scyldings? Now here a certain one, a son of the slayers, walks across this floor, exalting in his decorated armor, boasts of his murder, and bears the treasure that ought to be yours.”

We must imagine that Beowulf, as he voices the incendiary words of the old warrior, imitates the speaker's voice. The question—"Can you recognize . . .?"—invites interpretive gestures in its delivery. We hear just one side of the dialogue, but one side is all we need to see how the semiotized space created by dialogue intensifies the audience's experience and involves them in a cocreation of meaning. The *scop* impersonating Beowulf would, I imagine, move his eyes along the old warrior's line of sight to the weapon that the bridegroom wears and from it to the young Heathobard sitting nearby. The audience, I also imagine, would follow that progression and would also see weapons hanging on the walls of the hall in which this narrative were being performed—or would see something else that might be juxtaposed with the weapons of the *scop*'s speech. No young man would be sitting next to the *scop*, but such a figure could readily be imagined responding to the old warrior's words, turning to the weapon and, later, taking up a weapon of his own to avenge his father's death. The *scop* gives the barest outline of such dramatic activity, but it is all that is needed. By "acting out" the poem's words in dialogue, the *scop* creates a communicational exchange. In other words, he creates drama, and the space within which he is seen and heard is, perforce, a theatre. Whatever he wears serves as his costume; whatever is behind and around him constitutes scenery. These and all other essential theatrical properties are materially present. If they are absent, there can be no public performance, and if they are present, then so too is drama.

This episode forms a brief segment—just 16 of more than 150 lines—of the speech Beowulf delivers to Hygelac's court. Even though most of the passage cannot be considered dramatic by the standard that I have applied to the old warrior's remark, this brief, incisive moment shows how semiotics creates drama within a nondramatic text and generates a *mise-en-scène*. Joaquín Martínez Pizarro's concept of the "rhetoric of the scene" is useful in understanding the difference between an "acted out" exchange and narrative, between a story that is shown and a story that is told. Pizarro discusses two representative conventions. The narrator stands squarely between his audience and his tale in one, serving as their guide to it. In the other the narrator is effaced; the text represents the action as if it were being seen rather than reported, and description is suppressed in favor of dialogue. That second tradition, in Pizarro's view, produces a visualizing effect, since the reader has the illusion of "witnessing" the events the narrator describes. Gesture and posture become "dramatic elements" that "contribute to the illusion of some kind of visual correlative" of the narrative.<sup>36</sup> The less that is said about the situation by the narrator, the more must be communicated by dialogue and by gestures and objects. Pizarro argues that "the oral narrator" tries "to become transparent, to vanish from the scene or from his listeners' awareness; by appealing primarily to their dramatic imagination, he invites them to follow an action that does not include him as a judge, critic, or interpreter" (55–6).

When Beowulf conveys the words of the old warrior, the young hero becomes "transparent" and "vanish[es] from the scene [and] from his listeners' awareness," disappearing into the words of the old man. It is important to remember that my claims for the presence of drama in this scene are framed by the scene's own narrative frame. What we are talking about is, in Pizarro's

language, “the illusion of some kind of visual correlative” to the narrative (13). There is, of course, no warrior before Beowulf’s audience except Beowulf himself; there are no fictional warriors before the *scop*’s audience except the warriors conjured by his performance. The *scop* is not operating in a self-consciously theatrical context, since, so far as we know, there was no such context to which he could allude. His account of Beowulf’s account cannot, therefore, be compared to Hamlet’s use of “The Mousetrap” (act 3, scene 2), but the contrast is instructive. Hamlet explains his play to the stage audience because he must (albeit with malicious irony: “This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna,” he says, and adds, “it touches us not”).<sup>37</sup> Hamlet reverses the process I am delineating here because he narrativizes the drama he has produced, stepping in to explicate it, materializing before the audience much as the narrator of the Old English poem would seem to dematerialize. The *scop* can dramatize Beowulf’s narrative precisely because he does not have to explain it. He can disappear into Beowulf’s words, and Beowulf in turn can disappear into the old Heathobard’s words, because the audiences involved, Beowulf’s audience and the *scop*’s audience, can see for themselves how events in the narrative resonate with and comment on the world in which the narrative is being told.

There is no evidence in the *Beowulf* manuscript at this point of rubrication or the “dialogue introducers” or “identifying markers for the speakers” mentioned by Davies and Clopper.<sup>38</sup> In the manuscript, a new *fitt* (or chapter), marked by a large O, begins shortly before the passage I have quoted, which stands thirty-nine lines into Beowulf’s speech to the court.<sup>39</sup> But manuscript evidence pointing to direct speech is obscure even in later texts, as in the twelfth-century French materials discussed by Symes, where manuscript clues to performance have often been missed or misunderstood (790–810). John Hines has described the early Middle English *verse fabliau* “Dame Siriz” as a “performable text, arguably even marked up for performance.” Hines draws attention to the preponderance of dialogue over narrative in that work and in others included in London, British Library, Harley 2253, and suggests that they might have been “literally enacted within the homestead.”<sup>40</sup>

The *Beowulf* manuscript is not marked up for performance, but a poem in another Anglo-Saxon codex, the Exeter Book, might very well be. This is the manuscript containing *Juliana*, a poem attributed to Cynewulf, one of a few named Anglo-Saxon poets, that survives only here. Katherine O’Brien O’Keeffe notes that, although visual divisions within the poem do not indicate “conceptual divisions” as they do elsewhere in this manuscript, “most heavy punctuation or combinations of points and capitals mark the opening and closing of formal speeches by Juliana and her tormentors,” and that points are “rarely used within a speech.” When used, moreover, such points “set off direct address from the rest of the text.”<sup>41</sup> The pointing might have been used to identify formal speeches in *Juliana*, boundaries of the dialogues observed in performance; O’Brien O’Keeffe also notes that the “text-specificity of punctuation is a broad sign that pointing is subjective and marks a discrete reading of a text” (162), evidence that might also support the idea of a discrete performance of the text.

Cynewulf's *Juliana* exploits dialogue to far greater effect than most Old English verse. The poem contains an unusually high proportion of dialogue: 290 of 721 lines, or nearly 40 percent of the text, take dialogue form. Moreover, the dialogue is not simply an exchange between a saint and a demon but a debate that closely follows the form of a confession of sins, a verbal pattern that we can assume most educated Anglo-Saxon Christians experienced directly.<sup>42</sup> The dialogue creates a theatrical setting that, I contend, evokes the Anglo-Saxon Christian's theatre of everyday life. Cynewulf achieves this surprising effect by inverting and thus ostending the power relations of the scene. When the captive saint tortures the demon who has been sent to torture her, the demon impersonates a penitent who has been forced to confess.

Since not all readers will be familiar with the saint and her adventures as recounted, a summary is helpful in contextualizing the dialogue. *Juliana* takes place in Nicomedia (now Izmit, near Istanbul), a city that Diocletian intended to transform into an imperial center to rival Rome. His massive plans for reconstructing the city coincided with an infamous persecution of the Christian population in the early fourth century. In the poem, Eleusius, the city's prefect, declares his intention to marry Juliana. She insists that he must first become a Christian (25–57). Eleusius enlists the aid of Juliana's father, Affricanus (67–88), who fails to persuade Juliana to change her mind. He beats her and sends her to Eleusius (92–157), but he too finds the young girl unmovable. Eleusius orders her stripped and whipped before a crowd, tortures her, and then throws her into prison (140–233). Once in prison, she is visited by a devil who claims to be God's messenger. Juliana subdues and interrogates him (242–530). Her dominance subsides in the course of that interrogation, but Juliana regains the upper hand in their debate, rhetorically at least, when she is taken from prison, brought to trial (539–60), tortured once again, and put to death (605–70). The poem deploys spectacle in ways familiar to us from other early medieval hagiographies: gruesome torture is inflicted on a pious maid but ultimately destroys those who perpetrate it.

Scenes like this have been analyzed often in Anglo-Saxon criticism to establish relationships between a saint's sufferings and the Passion of Christ.<sup>43</sup> However, the poem's central section (242–530) uses dialogue to shift our focus from the allegorical to the mundane. The devil first appears floating in the air above Juliana—"lyftlacende," airborne—and speaks "bright from the clouds" (280, 285). But his advantage is swiftly (and, thanks to a textual lacuna, obscurely) lost; for most of the dialogue he is lying at her feet, bound in her grip. This inversion, in which the prisoner imprisons her intended assailant, frames the scene with irregularity. To quote Umberto Eco, the dialogue is "put upon the platform" or ostended by the irregularity of its context.<sup>44</sup> Eco's concept of irregularity takes shape as image, object, and gesture in what Elam calls "signal information" (36–7). "Signal information" grows in inverse relation to the appropriateness of the sign in context; where the sign is most inappropriate, its signal information is greatest. It is not expected that the saint torture instead of suffer torture; we expect her, not the devil, to be bound. The dialogue underscores the paradox, since it pits a saint, who is seemingly rock solid in her righteousness

and unvarying in her position, against a demon whose verbal dexterity sometimes seems to draw the saint into his frame of reference and out of her own. The devil's performance establishes a theatre of penance within the poem. His impersonation of a penitent connects the dramatic world (which Elam designates as  $W_D$ ) to the observing world (which Elam designates as  $W_O$ ).<sup>45</sup> Demonic protestations of pain and requests for mercy exploit a semiotic relationship with the audience that, however awkward on the theological level, becomes stronger on the dramatic level than the one created between the audience and the saint whom the poem honors.

The dialogue moves through several phases, each of them concerned with disclosing the unknown. Juliana's repeated demands for disclosure meet with the demon's attempts to fend them off or subvert them. The demon behaves like a reluctant penitent. In response to her demand that he explain who he is, for example, the devil reveals some of the crimes he has instigated, including the deaths of Christ, John the Baptist, and the disciples. Then, in response to Juliana's demand, he divulges a fuller confession (352–417), owns up to his role as the "originator of sins," and describes his actions as "the wounds of sin" (*synna wundum*, 354). The striking language would have been familiar to Cynewulf's audience—but not from the mouth of a demon. He even describes himself as a "sin-committing one [who] must suffer shame."

Several writers have noted the parodic nature of the devil's confession; John P. Hermann has compared the poem to the rhetoric of the Anglo-Saxon penitentials.<sup>46</sup> The demon's familiarity with that idiom is a ruse, of course, but also an instance of semiotic irregularity, since the demon deliberately ironizes a commonplace of the observing world (Elam's  $W_O$ ) within the dramatic world (Elam's  $W_D$ ). Although the poem is about the trials (formal and otherwise) of Juliana, it is the devil's trial that is ostended in the dialogue. In this scene his body and his voice are the poet's—and the *scop*'s—strongest "visual correlative" (Pizarro, 13) and most potent signs. It is not the suffering saint who is the center of attention; rather, the poet directs the *scop*'s and the audience's energies to the devil, whose impersonation of the sinful penitent has put the spiritual struggles of daily Christianity at the center of the drama.

The devil even parodies confessional prayer:

<p>to late micles, scyldwyrccende, Forþon ic þec halsige Rodorcyninges giefe, gebrowade, þæt þu miltsige þæt unsælig þeah ic þec gedyrstig siþe gesohte. . . ."</p>	<p>"Ic þæt sylf gecneow sceal nu lange ofer þis, scame þrowian. þurh þæs Hyhstan meah, se þe on rode treo þrymmes ealdor, me þearfendum, eall ne forweorþe, ond þus dolwillen (443–54)</p>
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"I myself know (about) that much too late. Now, because of this, I, a sin-committing one, must suffer shame. Therefore I entreat you through the

highest power, the grace of the sky king, the prince of glory who suffered on the rood-tree, that you be merciful to me, a needy one, so that, an unhappy one, I will not entirely perish even though boldly and thus foolishly I sought you in the journey. . . .”

As hypocrisy goes, this is difficult to match. The devil has already boasted that he caused Christ’s death (304–6); here he seeks to profit by the grace it brought into the world. He entreats Juliana as a sinner might entreat a confessor, using a mode that the audience would surely have recognized from other texts, including the pious Old English poem known as “A Prayer”<sup>47</sup> and the heroic narrative *Judith*.<sup>48</sup> The devil’s request “that you be merciful to me, a needy one” (*þæt þu miltsige me þearfendum* [449]) would also have reminded the poet’s audience of confession. Anglo-Saxon penitentials contemporaneous with the manuscript of *Juliana* contained dialogues written with the intention of performance. Although not literally “designed for stage production” (to refer to Elam’s requirement for drama), these dialogues were unquestionably intended for performance in private confession.<sup>49</sup> However, the power relations in the penitentials were opposite to those shown in *Juliana* since, in the penitentials, the priest offered mercy and the penitents did not request it.<sup>50</sup> The priest asked the penitent if, as one who sought forgiveness, he would forgive others: “Will you forgive each of those who have ever offended against you?” (*Wylt þu forgyfan ælcon þæra þe wið þe æfre agylton?*). If the penitent agreed, the priest proceeded to ask for mercy for the sinner and for himself: “If he says, ‘I will,’ say to him then, ‘May God be merciful to you and help me that I may be permitted (to do so)’” (*Gif he cwyð “ic wylle,” cweð him þænne to: “God ælmihtig gemiltsige þin, and me geunne þæt ic mote”*).<sup>51</sup> In the penitential rite it was the priest who directed the penitential. At this point in their dialogue the devil has seized the initiative from Juliana and begun to undermine her authority by professing the truths for which she has been imprisoned. His objective is to turn her from true belief, and he thinks he can best accomplish that aim by impersonating a true believer. It is remarkable to see how closely Cynewulf allows the demon to parrot confessional piety, as no doubt the expedient penitent often did. The rhetorical and dramatic success a good interpreter might have brought to the demon’s role is worth contemplating.

Juliana forces yet another confession from the demon, his most extensive (460–530). He has already confessed wrongs of historical significance, including the deaths of Christ and the apostles (290–306). But that confession, which grandiosely claims responsibility for the Fall of Adam and Eve (499–505), is different, for it also includes many sins that would have been recognized as the daily disasters of Anglo-Saxon life. Such references strengthen his connection to the daily lives of those in the *scop*’s audience. They include bloody deaths (475–7), deaths at sea (478), deaths by hanging “on the high gallows” (*on hean galgan* [483]), and the deaths of those caught in drunken revenge *in winsele*, in the hall of joy (483–8). All of these acts and circumstances were familiar to the Anglo-Saxons, and not just from their knowledge of *Beowulf*. The demon’s catalog cleverly mixes sufferings inflicted on Christians with sufferings they



inflict on others. We may assume that *Juliana*, like *Beowulf*, was performed in a hall, in the presence of an audience of Christians gathered for entertainment. That audience would find that dialogue in the religious poem, like dialogue in the heroic one, correlated to their experience.

It is clear that the demon talks like a penitent, impersonating a penitent's prayers and confessing to evils such as those some Anglo-Saxons confessed. The awkward similarity between penitents (i.e., the audience) and the demon is reinforced by his ostended posture. Bound at his confessor's feet, his voice apparently trembling with emotion, the demon mimics the posture and behavior required of Anglo-Saxon penitents. They were not bound, of course, but as the penitential quoted above shows, their behavior in confession was scripted. They were told to weep and prostrate themselves before their confessors, according to the instructions offered by the introduction that accompanies two eleventh-century vernacular penitentials. Sincere contrition required the sinner to "prostrate himself before [the priest] with utmost fear of God and humility, and in a weeping voice beg that he prescribe for him penance for all those faults that he has committed against God's will."<sup>52</sup> The demon does not simply borrow the rhetoric of the penitentials, then, but, through the skill of the *scop* re-creating his words, parodies the scene of confession itself. The demon's performance (operating through the performance of the *scop*) offered Anglo-Saxon Christians a glimpse of the theatricality of their spiritual lives: using language and words prescribed by the penitentials, he demonstrates both insincere confession and feigned sorrow for sins.

The dialogue between *Juliana* and the devil would have taxed the resources of the most capable *scop* as it moved from speaker to speaker and as the devil moved from one attitude to another. His shiftiness obscures the central ideological and psychological difference that the poem is expected to maintain: the separation between victim and victimizer. The devil's position as the bound one together with his canny use of confessional speech make it difficult to focus on the saint as a victim of persecution (which she is) and on him as tormentor (and persecutors' agent). He repeatedly contrasts her authority as a judge to his lack of freedom and power, doing his best to undermine her position with his words as he adapts his voice—his different voices—to his needs. The devil is an actor, and the *scop* performing his role needed to make the devil's theatricality clear. The devil's parody of the rhetoric of confession implicates the sincerity of all Christian penitents, whose emotional involvement in confession served as an index to their moral candor. There is a clash between what we have been told about the demon (by the poet and by the demon himself), and what we see and hear, which is a prisoner squirming at the feet of his interrogator and struggling to find some way out of his dilemma. He momentarily becomes the protagonist. To respond to the scene properly, the audience must resist the demon's words and the spectacle of his suffering by recalling instead the earlier frame of reference created by the saint's righteousness. The saint's words are temporarily superseded by the power of the devil. What actor, given the choice, would take the saint's role over the demon's?

Earlier and later in the poem, Cynewulf declaims as a historical narrator, making the poem's ideological lines clear. But when he relies on dialogue, the poet creates a scene wherein predictable truths become subject to the dynamics and contingencies of performance, inviting, at least momentarily, other interpretations. The possibilities of such interpretations would have greatly increased in a performance of *Juliana* read with different voices—not read with the magnificent bardic Anglo-Saxon declamation one imagined in the olden days, but rather with as much (or more) interpretive latitude as we would grant to Beowulf as he addresses his king and court. In performance, form follows function. If we think only about the clarity of the poem's ideological positions—and that, I would say, has been the chief concern of readers ranging from Rosemary Woolf to John Hermann—we miss its point, which is that those positions are not, after all, so clear. It is to Cynewulf's credit that his villain manifests so much power. The devil will finally be publicly humiliated in the realm of spectacle, where his fate is a foregone conclusion. But behind closed doors, he is a formidable foe. The less he is described, the more he must speak, and the more he speaks, the murkier the poem's moral lines become.

In his discussion of the overlap between “drama” and the categories of lyric, narrative, and exposition, Anderson argues that Anglo-Saxon poems exhibiting “the potentialities of dialogue” tended to be lyrical, and that poems in which “fancy and emotional expression can have freest play” sometimes manifested the “semi-dramatic structure” suggested by dialogue.<sup>53</sup> Anderson might have been thinking of the “dramatic voices” attributed to “The Seafarer” and “The Wanderer” by John C. Pope and others who assert that these are poems in which the parts of a divided self stand in dialogue.<sup>54</sup> Although it is not a lyrical poem, *Juliana* makes great demands on the *scop*'s powers of “emotional expression.” It is a poem, like *Beowulf*, rich in drama because it is rich in the semiotic properties of impersonation. Both poems, we must assume, were performed in a setting that reinforced the similarities between the dramatic world and the world of the observers.

The heart of my proposal for expanding the scope of theatre history to include the public performance of Old English verse rests on the communicative nature of that event, specifically as indexed by the texts' use of dialogue. How close such texts are to contemporary ideas of performance we can see in the words of Joachim Fiebach:

Theater is a type of social communication whose specificity is, first, the ostentatious display of audiovisual movements. The body's activities are their primary agency. This can manifest itself in innumerable forms. In oral societies, full-fledged theater occurs when a single body's facial expressions, utterances, gestures, and movements perform story-telling or praise-singing, demarcating and creating a particular space and a specific physical relationship with onlookers; the creative cooperation of several bodies is at the core of . . . complex theater forms.<sup>55</sup>

Fiebach's claims seem manifestly relevant to the performance of Anglo-Saxon narratives that are rich in dialogue—or would seem relevant, were

it not for the fact that readers are predisposed to reject the idea of drama among the Anglo-Saxons for the simple and wholly unsatisfactory reason that they wrote, so far as we know, no plays.

One of the most encouraging developments in theatre research is the isolation of the trappings of nineteenth-century theatre to their own period; it was, after all, because medieval plays lacked such trappings that they were not considered plays for so long. According to Hardin Craig, whose views now seem impossible to credit, “the religious drama had no dramatic technique or dramatic purpose and no artistic self-consciousness. Its life-blood was religion, and its success depended on awakening and releasing a pent-up body of religious knowledge and religious feeling.”<sup>56</sup> Medieval drama has long been recognized as being as rich in “dramatic technique” and “artistic self-consciousness” as modern drama. Rather than focus on such features, however, whether in self-identified dramatic texts or in the cultural world around them, I have followed scholars and critics who study performance. In the light of their work, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that the Anglo-Saxon *scop*'s recitation of dialogue-rich verse qualifies as theatre and that the texts that guided his performance belong to the corpus of medieval drama.

Anglo-Saxonists need the category of drama, I believe, not because Anglo-Saxon literature is somehow incomplete without it but because our ideas of the Anglo-Saxons' experiential worlds are, at best, extremely limited. An understanding of public poetry as dramatic text that informed theatrical performance is, in the first instance, a contribution to our knowledge of the performative experiences of the early Middle Ages. Drama is thought to have disappeared between the late antique period and the late Middle Ages. I hope to have shown that we have failed to see the continuity of the dramatic tradition because we have allowed representational theatre to stand for all dramatic activity. The continuity emerges when we apply the theoretical principles and the practical criticism of performance to early medieval narratives. It remains to be seen how other dialogue-rich Old English texts, including penitentials, demonstrate the semiotic environments of the Anglo-Saxons and illuminate their forms of drama—which, although we have overlooked them, have been in full view all the time.

### ENDNOTES

1. De Marinis, *The Semiotics of Performance*, trans. Áine O'Healy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 49; his emphasis. From among several important and roughly contemporaneous semiotic studies of drama, readers should also consult Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Semiotics of Theater*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Doris L. Jones (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); and Jean Alter, *A Sociosemiotic Theory of Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990). Very useful in putting these studies into perspective is Paul Bouissac's review of works by de Marinis and Fischer-Lichte, “The Theatre of Semiotics,” *Semiotic Review of Books* 4.2 (1993): 10–12.

2. Enders, *The Medieval Theater of Cruelty: Rhetoric, Memory, Violence* (Cornell: Cornell University Press, 1999), 11, her emphasis; see also her *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

3. Symes, “The Appearance of Early Vernacular Plays: Forms, Functions, and the Future of Medieval Theater,” *Speculum* 77 (2002): 778–831, at 778–9.

4. Bouissac, “Theatre of Semiotics,” 11. I take “institution” here in the most general sense of a “cultural institution,” not a building or organization.

5. Fischer-Lichte divides “theatre science” into three parts: theory of theatre, theatre history, and the analysis of performance; see *Semiotics of Theater*, 12. “Drama” can be seen as a text used in any of those domains.

6. John M. Ganim proposes a metaphor of “theatricality” to replace that of “drama” in reference to the *Canterbury Tales*; his reading, however, emphasizes “a governing sense of performance, an interplay among the author’s voice, his fictional characters, and his immediate audience,” a mode he describes as “primarily stylistic rather than sociological”; see *Chaucerian Theatricality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 4–5. See also Leonard Michael Koff’s rejection of the narrator’s performance as theatre in *Chaucer and the Art of Storytelling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 118; and Katherine S. Gittes, *Framing the “Canterbury Tales”*: *Chaucer and the Medieval Frame Narrative Tradition* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), where she describes the General Prologue “as a drama,” 131–2.

7. Drama is not mentioned by C. L. Wrenn in *A Study of Old English Literature* (New York: Norton, 1967) or by Stanley B. Greenfield and Daniel G. Calder in *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1986). Nor is there an entry for drama in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) or in *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001). In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. Michael Lapidge et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), Lucia Kornexl’s entry on the *Regularis concordia* briefly mentions the “*Quem queritis*” (389). In *Medieval England: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Paul E. Szarmach, M. Teresa Tavormina, and Joel T. Rosenthal (New York: Garland, 1998), with the exception of the *Regularis concordia*, the entries on vernacular drama concern only later medieval texts (242–9).

8. Anderson, *The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons*, rev. ed. (1949; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 207.

9. It has long been argued that Milton became acquainted with the heroic monologue of Satan in *Genesis B* through his friendship with Franciscus Junius, who published the poem in 1655. See Peter Lucas, “Genesis,” in *Blackwell Encyclopedia*, ed. Lapidge et al., 200–1.

10. O. B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1965), 110–15. Commentators include Barbara C. Raw, “Biblical Literature: The New Testament,” in *Cambridge Companion*, ed. Godden and Lapidge, 227–42, and David A. Bjork, “On the Dissemination of *Quem queritis* and the *Visitatio sepulchri* and the Chronology of Their Early Sources,” *Comparative Drama* 14 (1980): 46–69.

11. See Thomas Symons, ed. and trans., *Regularis concordia Angliae nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque: The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1953); on the textual tradition, see Kornexl, *Die “Regularis concordia” und ihre altenglische Interlinearversion* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1993) and, for the reference to “the beginnings of liturgical drama in England,” see Kornexl, “*Regularis concordia*,” in *Blackwell Encyclopedia*, ed. Lapidge et al., 389; also cited by M. Bradford Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), 3.

12. That idea was first proposed by David N. Dumville, “Liturgical Drama and Panegyric Responsory from the Eighth Century? A Re-examination of the Origin and Contents of the Ninth-Century Section of the *Book of Cerne*,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 23 (1972): 375–406. See a summary of the argument in Bedingfield, *Dramatic Liturgy*, 146–9.

13. See also A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theories of Authorship* (London: Scholar Press, 1984), 57–8, and Minnis’s discussion of the classification of texts “on the basis of the *personae* employed therein,” a tradition that includes Bede and Origen among other early authors.

14. Clopper, *Drama, Play, and Game: English Festive Culture in the Medieval and Early Modern Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 4–6. See also Clopper, “English Drama: From Ungodly *Ludi* to Sacred Play,” in *The New Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 740.

15. Clopper thus narrows the sense of drama found in Joseph R. Jones, “The *Song of Songs* as a Drama in the Commentators from Origen to the Twelfth Century,” in *Drama and the Classical*

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*Heritage: Comparative and Critical Essays*, ed. Clifford Davidson, Rand Johnson, and John H. Stroupe (New York: AMS Press, 1993), 29–51.

16. Woolf, *The English Mystery Plays* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), 28.

17. Janet M. Bately, ed., *The Old English Orosius*, Early English Text Society, Extra Series 6 (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), 3/25; 111/10; 134/30; 83/10 (pages followed by line numbers).

18. Dox, *The Idea of the Theater in Latin Christian Thought* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 13.

19. For recent commentary, see Stephen L. Wailes, “Beyond Virginité: Flesh and Spirit in the Plays of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim,” *Speculum* 76 (2001): 1–27.

20. C. R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Gestures and the Roman Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 101. See also Enders, “Of Miming and Signing: The Dramatic Rhetoric of Gesture,” in *Gesture in Medieval Drama and Art*, ed. Clifford Davidson (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001), 1–25.

21. For a discussion of Benedictine gestures, see Dodwell, 145–7.

22. In *Anglo-Saxon Oral Poetry: A Study of the Traditions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), Jeff Opland twice distances the *scop* from the harp (166; 253). He associates the use of musical instruments with the *gleoman* but argues that even the latter did not necessarily perform to music (253).

23. *Orosius*, 213n to 23/23–4.

24. Glossaries giving *comicus* as *scop* are cited by Bately in *Orosius*, 294n to 107/28. Such links also extend beyond poetry to ecclesiastical settings, including the delivery of sermons. Enders points out that in “De scena,” a chapter of the *Etymologies*, Isidore describes the “pulpit” as the place “where the comic and tragic poets sang and actors and mimes danced”; see *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama*, 85, and further comments, 77–88.

25. Davies, “‘He was the Best Teller of Tales in the World’: Performing Medieval Welsh Narrative,” in *Performing Medieval Narrative*, ed. Evelyn Birge Vitz, Nancy Freeman Regalado, and Marilyn Lawrence (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1985), 15–26.

26. Tudor, “Preaching, Storytelling, and the Performance of Short Pious Narratives,” in *Performing Medieval Narrative*, ed. Vitz et al., 141–54, at 145, in reference to Gloria Cigman, “Le Dramaturge malgré lui: Les Voix nombreuses du prédicateur lollard,” in *La Littérature d’inspiration religieuse: Théâtre et vies de saints*, ed. Danielle Buschinger, Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik 493 (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1988), 49–60.

27. Magennis, “Audience(s), Reception, Literacy,” in *Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. Pulsiano and Treharne, 84–101.

28. Schaefer on the views of Rainer Warning in “Hearing from Books: The Rise of Fictionality in Old English Poetry,” in *Vox Intexta: Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. A. N. Doane and Carol Braun Pasternack (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 117–36, at 124. Schaefer cites Zumthor, *La Lettre et la voix: De la ‘littérature’ médiévale* (Paris: Seuil, 1987), 21–2.

29. Bagby, “*Beowulf*, the *Edda*, and the Performance of Medieval Epic: Notes from the Workshop of a Reconstructed ‘Singer of Tales,’” in *Performing Medieval Narrative*, ed. Vitz et al., 181–92, at 186.

30. Bauman, ed., *Verbal Art as Performance* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1977), 38; quoted by Coleman in *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 28.

31. The best description of “the reading process” is Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns in Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 274–94.

32. Quoted from Fr. Klaeber, ed., *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 3d ed. with supplements (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1953), 40, lines 89–90. Citations from *Beowulf* are from Klaeber’s edition and are given parenthetically by line number. All translations from the Old English here and elsewhere are mine.

33. See also Klaeber's argument, in his discussion of the Finnsburg episode, that the text, originally a "short heroic epic lay," was adapted to a subordinate role in the Anglo-Saxon poem (236). See also Opland, 192–9, for a discussion of the narratives within the poem; he suggests that there might have been three performers, a *scop* (who does not sing), a harper, and "someone who tells (in prose) the story of the creation" (193), and thus the lines quoted here could refer to two of those figures, the *scop* and the *gleoman*.

34. Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, 2d ed. (1980; New York: Routledge, 2002), 126–7.

35. Ohmann, "Literature as Act," in *Approaches to Poetics*, ed. Seymour Chatman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973), 81–107, at 89.

36. Pizarro, *A Rhetoric of the Scene: Dramatic Narrative in the Early Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 13.

37. William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York: Norton, 1997), 1708–17, at 1713, lines 217–21.

38. Clopper, *Drama, Play, and Game*, 8–9.

39. See Klaeber, *Beowulf*, 76, line 2039, for the capital O and the editorially inserted *fit* numbers (XXVIII–XXX).

40. Hines, *Voices in the Past: English Literature and Archaeology* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 97.

41. O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Visible Song: Transitional Literacy in Old English Verse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 162–3.

42. All references to the poem are from Rosemary Woolf, ed., *Juliana* (New York: Appleton–Century–Crofts, 1966), and are given by line number in the text. For recent scholarship, see the essays in Robert E. Bjork, ed., *The Cynewulf Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2001) and, more fully, idem, *The Old English Verse Saints' Lives: A Study in Direct Discourse and the Iconography of Style* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985). Like most scholars of this and other hagiographic verse, I assume that the poet addressed an educated audience (not necessarily different from the aristocratic audience of *Beowulf*, although the settings in which these two poems were performed might have been quite different).

43. For a strong figural reading, see Joseph Wittig, "Figural Narrative in Cynewulf's *Juliana*," *Anglo-Saxon England* 4 (1974): 37–55, reprinted in Bjork, ed., *Cynewulf Reader*, 147–69. See also Thomas D. Hill, "Sapiential Structure and Figural Narrative in the Old English *Elene*," *Traditio* 27 (1971): 159–77, reprinted in Bjork's *Cynewulf Reader*, 207–28; and James W. Earl, "Typology and Iconographic Style in Early Medieval Hagiography," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 8 (1975): 15–46.

44. Eco, "Semiotics of Theatrical Performance," *Drama Review* 21 (1977): 107–17, at 110.

45. See Elam, 93, on the "possible worlds" of drama.

46. On parody, see Daniel G. Calder, *Cynewulf* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1981), 95; and, on the penitentials, see Hermann, *Allegories of War: Language and Violence in Old English Poetry* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989), 169.

47. "A Prayer" offers parallels to two key phrases in the devil's prayer in *Juliana: ic þec halsige*, "I entreat you" (446), and *þu miltsige me*, "(that) you be merciful to me" (449). See Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records 6 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 94–6.

48. *Judith* presents a contrast to the power that *Juliana* has manifested in her defeat of the demon. See, e.g., Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, ed., "*Beowulf*" and "*Judith*," Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records 4 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), 101.

49. Elam, 2.

50. For an introduction to these sources, see my *Literature of Penance in Anglo-Saxon England* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1983), 1–18.

51. This text is known as the *Old English Introduction* and is quoted from *Die altenglische Version des Halitgar'schen Bussbuches* (sog. *Poenitentiale Pseudo-Ecgberti*), ed. Josef Raith,



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Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 13 (1933; repr. with new introduction, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), xli. The text is also edited by R. Spindler, *Das altenglische Bussbuch sog. Confessionale Pseudo-Egberti* (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1934), 170.

52. “Ðonne man to his scrifte gange, þonne sceal he mid swyðe micelum godes ege and eadmodnysse beforan him apenigan, and hine biddan wependre stefne, þæt he him dædbote tæce callra þæra gylta þe he ongean godes wyllan gedon hæbbe”; in *Die altenglische Version*, ed. Raith, xli.

53. Anderson, 206–7.

54. See John C. Pope, “Dramatic Voices in ‘The Wanderer’ and ‘The Seafarer,’” *Franciplegius: Medieval and Linguistic Studies in Honour of F. P. Magoun, Jr.*, ed. J. B. Bessinger and R. P. Creed (New York: New York University Press, 1965), 164–93; and the response by Stanley B. Greenfield, “*Min, Sylf*, and ‘Dramatic Voices’ in ‘The Seafarer,’” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 68 (1969): 212–20.

55. Fiebach, “Theatricality: From Oral Traditions to Televised ‘Realities,’” *SubStance* 31.2–3 (2002): 17–41.

56. Craig, *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 4–5, 9.