The Narrative Performers:

An Examination of Medieval Musicians' Effect on Their Audiences and The Narrative

Christian Batchelor

MA in English and Literature Studies
Spring 2021

University of Stavanger

The Faculty of Arts and Education

MASTERS THESIS

Study programme:	Spring term, 2021
Advanced teacher education for levels 8-13 with specialization in English / Literacy studies	Open
Author: Christian H. Batchelor	…………………………………… (signatur author)

Supervisor: Sonya Louise Lundblad

Title of thesis: The Narrative Performers: An Examination of Medieval Musicians' Effect on Their Audiences and The Narrative

Keywords: Scop, minstrel, oral performance, narrative, music, oral tradition	Pages: 66 + attachment/other: ………… Stavanger, August 31st/2021 date/year

Acknowledgements

As I conclude this project, I would like to thank those who aided in motivating me through the ups and downs of the process. I am eternally grateful to my supervisor Sonya Louise Lundblad for encouraging my ventures into a previously unexplored field of study. You helped make this project as rewarding as it could be. I would like to thank my peers and lecturers these last five years for making English enjoyable and fulfilling. Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends, Trine Lise Sveindal, Aleksander Batchelor, and Roger Batchelor in particular, for their endless motivation and help.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

In this thesis, the field of oral tradition developed by Milman Parry, Albert Lord and later expanded by John Miles Foley will inform our perspective of the medieval texts "Cædmon's Hymn" by Bede and *Sir Orfeo* in order to understand the performative nature and its implications on the narrative. Specifically, attention will be given to the inclusion of musical accompaniment and interplay between narrative composition and performance as laid out in Linda Marie Zaerr's exhaustive work *Performance and the Middle English Romance.* Similarly, Foley's theory of metonymic reference detailed in his work *Imminent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* will aid in identifying metonyms resulting from the inclusion of instrumental accompaniment in the performance of "Cædmon's Hymn" and *Sir Orfeo*. In addition to Foley's metonymic reference theory, his ideas on the *performance arena* discussed in his work *The Singer of Tales in Performance* will better our understanding of the importance of each texts' musical register and the arenas in which they would be performed. The purpose of this thesis will be to broaden our understanding of the connection between the instruments and musical properties of oral performance with the performer. Additionally, as we investigate the significance of the instruments and the poet, we pose the question whether our findings illuminate new narrative details regarding the inclusion of instruments in the two oral texts. Foley discusses the use of harmony and musicality as tools for "summoning" narrative meaning through artistic imperative (*Tales in Performance* 5-7). Additionally, as we will see, Zaerr discusses the meaning added to both performance and narrative due to the improvisational skills of the singer and instrumentalist (110; 118; 144). Working with these discussions, there may be correlations between the instruments used for symbolic and metaphorical purposes and the metonymic value garnered by the audience. Foley states that both the poet and the audience rely on their own pool of experiences based on the specific "context of tradition" suggested by the performance (*Tales in Performance* 7). Thus, our goals are two-fold: How does our understanding of the instrument expand our knowledge of the performance, and how does the inclusion of the instrument in the poem expand our knowledge of the narrative.

CHAPTER 1: Methodology

1.1 Metonymic Reference Theory

Examining literature from the Middle Ages can prove challenging in hindsight. This is not in terms of extracting the conferred meaning of the text, but rather through discovering the inherent meaning which would be true to the context of its composition. As John Miles Foley explains, modern literature aims to place meaning in the text to be discovered (conferred meaning), whilst traditional literature makes use of – and depends on – the conventional knowledge of the audience (inherent meaning) (*Imminent Art* 8). Traditional literature then, depends on the linguistic and vocabulary conventions, many of which we do not possess today. Our language and society contain an abundance of inherent meanings which we make use of in literature. However, it is – in a major way – separated by time.

To obtain the inherent rather than conferred meaning, we must therefore pivot our attention to the metonym. Metonymity, that is, the act of referring to something by the name of something else that is closely connected with it, is at a surface level quite simple. We are able to draw direct parallels between the word we use and the word it is connected to. Consider the word *press*: *The press kept asking questions and wanting to take pictures.* In this example, *the press* means *the journalists.* By itself, the word refers to a printing press. In this case however, the word is used to refer to the people who write in printed newspapers. The words are not extrinsically connected, as it is only through the metonymic understanding of the word that we understand *press* to mean *journalist*. In contrast to this simple parallel drawn, we can observe the wider scope of the metonym. This becomes the basis for Foley's theory of metonymic reference.

Foley argues in *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* that metonyms are central to the inherent literature composition in oral storytelling (7-8). By this he means that traditional oral storytelling is reliant on the conventions of the societal context it was written for. These conventions refer to the inherent meaning which is aptly inherited through tradition (*Tales in Performance* 1). In a sense, this means that the author makes use of meaning surrounding the words used, without needing to deliberately state their meaning. As we look back on medieval literature, we may call the entirety of a text's inherent meaning its *immanence.* Foley defines immanence as "the set of metonymic and associative meanings institutionally delivered and received through a dedicated idiom or register either during or on the authority of traditional oral performance" (*Tales in Performance* 7). Key to

his definition is the idea of metonymic associations being *institutionalised* as part of the performance, as this would mean that immanence is as much a part of the process as the composition of words, or the performance of them. When composing, the performer must then consider the contextual conventions which surround them. An example for this we can examine the use of "Hwæt!" (commonly translated to listen, or what) in traditional poetry (Amodio 60). Famously used to begin both *Beowulf* and *Exodus*, this word can simply be a way to have the reader or listener pay attention as the poem begins. However, the word itself carries an enormous amount of conventional meaning as it signifies the "onset of a particular type of narrative" (Amodio 364). This is inherent to the audience, meaning that the word "hwæt" essentially gives the reader or listener an abundance of information which is established through traditional context. A Norwegian equivalent example would be that of "Det var en gang," (the equivalent of "Once upon a time") which is used to begin most Norwegian fairy-tales (eventyr). The author needs not explain that this is fairy-tale, as the conventions of the story are already conceived through the metonym.

1.1.2 Word-power

In some cases, the breadth of the referential metonym is dependent on the performance's context itself. Foley coins the term *word-power* in his work *The Singer of Tales in Performance* and defines it as "how words engage contexts and mediate communication in verbal art from oral tradition" (1). Essential to this term is the engaging of context, as it means the words themselves need not be metonyms by themselves. Rather, the words receive power as they refer to the context surrounding them, effectively making them mentonyms. Sonya Louise Lundblad provides insight into the application of this as she argues that we can "speculate how [the poet's] imagination created romance features out of the historical context" (7). Her suggestion of the involvement of imagination lends to the idea that *word-power* is actively used during the composition by the poet, specifically in order to relate to the audience or reader. The context is in a sense always there, however, only takes on life when the poet engages it in composition. Word-power as used in this way becomes a powerful compositional tool. However, Foley goes on to describe how identifying word-power can be challenging.

1.1.2 Oral Formulaic and Performance Centric Composition

Foley distinguishes between the terms *oral formulaic* and *performance centric* as he aims to have them "logically independent" from one another (*Tales in Performance* preface). This means that his coinage of *word-power* is meant to serve both the oral formulaic and

performance centric composition, although in separate distinguished ways. One of the major problems suggested is the difficulty in achieving this distinction, as determining which aspects of the story are strategically traditional and which are individual recreations of the story is difficult (*Tales in Performance* 23). Lord demonstrates this in *The Singer of Tales*, where he writes that "the song we are listening to is 'the song'; for each performance is more than a performance; it is a re-creation" (101). Essentially, this evokes the notion of the individual's effect on the meaning of the story, but also that every story is created from a foundation of tradition. The re-creation is in a sense both an image of tradition and performance – or formula and interpretation – in one. Thus, there are two different varieties of metonyms to consider when applying Foley's metonymic reference theory to Old English (OE) and Middle English (ME) writings; the metonyms brought on by the formulaic nature of the text, and the metonyms of the individual rendition of the reviewed version's context. Considering "Cædmon's Hymn", which itself is a retelling from Bede of the titular story, it is brief, and likely vastly different from the original manuscript. This means that although the re-creation of the hymn is based on the structure of the original (tradition), the story is exceedingly embossed by Bede's own interpretation of it (performance).

1.2 Performance and the Middle English Romance

It becomes necessary in this study to examine the medieval musician i.e., their role, position, and method of performing. Linda Marie Zaerr provides an in-depth look into many different aspects of the medieval performer(s) in her book *Performance and the Middle English Romance,* in which she specifically discusses the musical role minstrels play in medieval romances and the performance of them. The book provides an exhaustive look into the narrative performance, the historical English minstrels, their instruments, compositional techniques, and their function in the romance genre. Although these different topics lay an important groundwork for further discussion and will all provide insight toward this thesis, omissions will be made for the sake of brevity.

Zaerr discusses the difficulties of working with medieval performance in saying that "performances are ephemeral – and fundamentally unique" (3). By this she addresses the lack of evidence for the performances of written texts. The manuscripts which remain from the medieval period provide very few tangible ideas of how they were performed and how they might have been improvised. Therefore, she states that there is no point in looking for evidence. Instead, we should look to the examples of cultural, musicological, and textual research which has been done in order gain an understanding for how the performances might have appeared

(Zaerr 2). Because of this, all the evidence presented will naturally be indirect in that we may use it as a basis for interpretation. The interpretation therefore stands to gain a "mis-" prefix if not approached with the previous statement in mind. Nonetheless, gaining an understanding of cultural, musicological, and textual research can lead to a more convincing argument when discussing negative evidence.

Firstly, Zaerr lists evidence from historical records of payment and evidence from literature. The purpose of this is to ascertain the common performance arena of the minstrels. It is likely that "the minstrel prefers his audience to listen attentively in silence, and apparently holds a reasonable expectation that this will occur" (Zaerr 66). The minstrel's instrument in comparison to a trumpeter was effectively quieter to the extent that minstrelsy would occur more frequently in settings where the attention would be given to the minstrel. This is especially the case when examining the involvement of narrative to a musical performance, as it would require the possibility for legible poetry to be sung and understood over the instrument being played. Zaerr also states the very plausible act of minstrels often working in groups (57-9). This is done by examining payment records from courts in the middle ages where many performers were paid. The information present in these records is rather ambiguous, with data such as the specific roles for each performer, how many instruments were present, and how many actors were present lacking in specificity.

She goes on to examine romance manuscripts which she specifies are about minstrels rather than performed by minstrels (Zaerr 62). One of her key conclusions is that "performing music [in the romances] is symbolically associated with love for both men and women of the nobility" (Zaerr 73). This conclusion is based on a plethora of poems in which the main character (usually nobility) plays music in the context of love or sex. The results are correlated to the existence of historical records stating that nobles were essentially required to learn how to play and compose (Zaerr 74). Middle class entertainment is also found to be relevant, although the majority of research suggests that most mentions of minstrels as characters are portrayed as being nobles.

1.2.1 Minstrel Instruments

In Zaerr's chapter on musical instruments and the narrative, she poses the question of how instruments interacted with the performance (78). Due to the stress patterns and the syllabic nature of the poetry, the instruments would have to accompany in a specific way in order to not be disruptive to the general flow of the poetry. As most poems in the middle ages

which contain minstrelsy never mention recitation of poetry and playing of an instrument being simultaneous, identifying how the instruments were used becomes a challenge. Zaerr brings up *Sir Orfeo* as one of the best examples of a clue into the use of instruments however, as Orfeo is said to have been playing while singing lays (85). However, she then mentions the possibility that the storytelling and instrument-playing may have been separate, as none of the poems suggest a narrative simultaneous connection (Zaerr 87). This very specific wording is important, as it is naturally assumed that the minstrel would play and sing simultaneously, which may not be realistic. The omission of this specificity means that we ignore the various ways in which the instrument co-operates with the singer, rather than being simply an accompaniment. In *Sir Orfeo*, which may be the most clearly defined use of the harp as a minstrel's device, the narrator concludes the story by mentioning the lay as being good and the melody sweet. Therefore, a possible conclusion of the instrument being played while the lay sung can be made. This assumption can only rarely be made, as very seldom does the poetry recognise song and instrument as simultaneous. Although *Sir Orfeo* provides a quite clear indication of how the harp may have been used by minstrels, Zaerr states that evidence is lacking, and the little we have is ambiguous at best (87). Zaerr then goes on to include the symbolic difficulties of the harp as a narrative tool. The harp, in the case of many romances, can be interpreted as a religious symbol which further places the protagonists in the role of a religious figure as she states that "symbolism [in some cases] clearly overrides contemporary physical reality (Zaerr 87). In order to challenge this notion, Zaerr mentions the possibility of symbolic imagery being irrelevant in terms of the performance, and that in many cases, the instrument might have been played by the nobility performing them (88).

Symbolic difficulties aside, Zaerr discusses the physical elements of the instruments – focusing on the fiddle – and how they may influence how the music could interact with poetry. She points specifically to the bow on a fiddle and how it can be pushed towards the fiddle and pulled away from it (Zaerr 97). Pulling the bow away from the fiddle is naturally stronger due to being aided by gravity, thus creating natural strong and weak tones. The fiddle similarly produces breaks in the music naturally every time the bow changes direction. Therefore, it seems plausible that the fiddle could easily accompany a narrative. The interpretations of how this might co-operate with the narrative are many. Rhythmically, the fiddle could mimic the narrative, emphasizing important emotional lines. Additionally, the fiddle might play separately from the narrative, providing fills in between dramatic pause or tensions. This assumption leaves the question whether the harp may have similar (or differing) qualities which

aid the narrative performance. The harp player's fingers vary in strength, meaning that each finger used to pluck a sting might produce a different strength of sound (Zaerr 104). Rather, perhaps then the harp had symbolic importance which far outweighed the practical applications to performance. It might be interpreted as a necessary disharmony for an instrument which all but demands harmony. As Zaerr states, the harp is the preferred instrument for performers in the ME period, with many more examples of use in texts than the lute, fiddle, or any other instrument (83). Due to harp's ubiquity, coupled with the lack of evidence of use in tandem with narrative performances, thematic usefulness of the instrument must be significant enough to outweigh the practical use.

One solution presented is the ability of the harp to easily play chords (Zaerr 103). With the harp's ability to produce chordal foundation, and the probable rapid decay of the harp's sound, the voice – and therefore the performer reciting poetry – would be able to command the most attention during a performance. The narrative – which is perhaps underestimated in the search for an instrumental accompaniment – is the most important part of the performance. However, researching the practical and literary effects the instrument may have had on the performance is vital, as it broadens our view on the use of instruments as compositional and professional tools. The harp, as previously stated is lacking perhaps in its ability to be played simultaneously with the song in comparison to the fiddle, but on the other hand may be used sparingly in between breaks in order to accommodate for tension and release in the story. Used sparingly, the harp could serve to impact the audience in a greater way than the fiddle which would more directly correlate with the emotions of the story. This is of course if it is able to coincide with the already established rhythmic and metric complexity of ME verse (Zaerr 89; 102-4).

1.2.2 Middle English Verse

Zaerr provides abundant research into the complexity of ME verse, and shows how the different genres' rhythmic and metric structure stems from varying roots (105-106). ME romances commonly use one of two different rhythmic systems. One of these is the tail-rhyme, which with a common rhyme structure of *aabccb* has couplets followed by an ending line to round off each stanza which typically rhymes with each similar tail. The second is the couplet structure, which consists of rhymed couplets the entire way through. The complexity of the ME verse then, does not come from these two systems, but rather the rhythmic complexity which precedes the end-rhymes (Zaerr 109). In fact, ME romances typically follow one of the aforementioned structures, however the number of stressed syllables, where they might be

placed in the line, whether or not they are trochees or iambs and even how many syllables the line contains differs wildly. There are so many inconsistencies that they likely are a product of improvisational freedom. Similarly, Zaerr points out that this rhythmic ambiguity lends itself to the inclusion of instruments in performance, as it would allow for the verse to be more adapted to a specific way of arpeggiating notes in tandem with the narrative (110). Perhaps then it might work in reverse also, with the verse being dictated by the capabilities and limitations of the accompanying instrument.

Also concerning rhythmic verse, minstrels likely strived for complexity rather than regularity (Zaerr 118). This is shown as the rhythmic length of each stressed syllable would vary based on how many unstressed syllables followed. This means that improvisational methods of emphasizing certain words and syllables in composition might have been prevalent. At the same time, our interpretations of how the poetry might have been performed becomes more accurate.

1.2.3 Combining Instrument and Minstrel

In regard to the performance, the co-operation between instrument and minstrel was very important. Zaerr discusses the difference between *song* and *non-song* in ME poetry and how the poet and accompanying instrumentalist might work together to create "a means of applying strategic transformations in an ongoing engagement with improvisatory variation" (144). By this she means that the performers would contribute with different musical styles, be it singing alongside droning accompaniment or speaking alongside instrumental melodic accompaniment. Both would work together in order to emphasize the emotional narrative of the text. The resulting ME song is therefore "a simple melody, embellished improvisationally, that can accommodate the rhythms created by the stressed and unstressed syllables in ME verse" (Zaerr 146). Similarly, the accompanying instrument would function the same way, emphasizing the narration with improvisation.

CHAPTER 2: Scholarship Review

The scholarship surrounding oral tradition is vast. Our main scholarship inclusions are focused on the performance of poetry as well as textual concepts which pertain to the cultural surroundings of the middle-ages.

2.1 The Architectural Minstrel in *Sir Orfeo*

In "Artifice and Artistry in Sir Orfeo," Seth Lerer argues that musical artistry is central to our understanding of *Sir Orfeo* and the cultural conventions inherent in it. He does this by pointing to various examples of music in the poem and how they fit within cultural norms at the time of composition. In discussing *Sir Orfeo's* key ideas, Lerer states that "in the end, the poem argues for the place of artistry in civilization and the place of music and poetry in life" (93). This not only refers to the importance of musical performance and knowledge throughout medieval life, but also to the idea of music being an essential part of personal and societal development. Both aspects are given a moral importance rather than a trivial one. This is further emphasized as Lerer argues for Orfeo's journey being of mental importance, rather than physical (97). It is not through Orfeo's strength he is able to save Heurodis, but his artistry and communicational insight. As Lerer points out, many have argued that *Sir Orfeo* is a perversion of sorts of the Greek Orpheus myth into a tall tale of fairies. However, Lerer argues that the poem seeks to outline and strengthen the creation myth of Christianity. In connecting the dots, the poems musical artistry is adjacent to the structural and technical composition of the text (93). This means that the literary structure and meaning – that is, the story being compared to the Creation through both music and composition – is aided by both the musical aspects of the tale as well as the structure of the story.

Lerer goes on to show numerous examples of this in the story, framing his examples in the idea of art being able to "harmonize man with nature and with man" (93). Most relevant to this frame is perhaps Lerer's connection to the garden of Eden and how music enables the rediscovery of it. As Orfeo plays the harp, the music in every instance is able to "metaphorically transport its listener to paradise from court, and it can also create an Eden in the wilderness" (102). Essentially, Orfeo's playing is so beautiful that is summons the rediscovery of Eden, or at least the feeling of the rediscovery. Where the fairy king would be for those familiar with the Orpheus myth a strong allusion to hell and the Devil, it is through the idea of man being in harmony with nature once again which saves Heurodis and ultimately the day. This means then that the harmony present in *Sir Orfeo* is directly connected to Christian beliefs. Also, as Orfeo

travels into the wilderness, he can recreate the idea of Eden there as he creates a harmony between man and nature. This happens, again, through Orfeo's harping. Although this is one of the ideas presented by Lerer, it is done in order to ascertain the culture from which the audience would be examining the story.

Lerer points out that musical artistry has "the power to bring out the order inherent in creation" (93). By this, he suggests that the poet creating the story has the power to make sense of a world which may be chaotic or unclear. The Orfeo poet will have done this by creating an illusion of order in the world of *Sir Orfeo* through the character of Orfeo and the culture surrounding him. One of the examples Lerer gives is that of Orfeo's courts (105). The poet gives the audience a clear representation of how the courts would handle minstrels and music in a direct comparison to the court of the fairy King. Orfeo's court welcomes him openly as a minstrel after he has been gone for so long because music plays an important part of Orfeo's culture. Lerer would argue that this was done to create the "order" which would be familiar to the audience. This order would then also be contrasted with the fairy King and how Orfeo's presence as a minstrel is questioned thoroughly before anything can happen. As Lerer states, source material from the time of *Sir Orfeo's* writing suggest that "the narrator presents [the fairy king's palace] as an attempted ordering of the world through human artifice" (98). This is done through the architecture of the palace, which is supposed to summon conventional design of the time for the audience. In effect, the narrator creates a fictional world out of known design. This summoning of order through conventions adds performative weight to the audience, as they would need to be familiar with conventional decor, design, and etiquette in order to grasp the ideas behind Orfeo's court and that of the fairy king being similar, but different.

With an acute focus on the minstrel and their significance in accordance with their instruments, we can turn to Lerer to highlight which conventions perhaps would have been colloquially understood by the audience listening to a performance. Using Foley's metonymic referentiality in line with his idea of the performance arena, we may gain insight into the architecture of the minstrel and their instruments displayed in both "Cædmon's Hymn" and *Sir Orfeo*. This, in turn could be used to examine what might have been presumed by the audience in a specific arena. As an example, Cædmon is characterized as being rather clueless and ignorant of the finesse of composition, especially when paired with the "vain" singing of the feast. Perhaps this, when contrasted with the abrupt talent sparked thereafter is understood by the audience as being the make-up of a minstrel who improvises stories and songs? This would

be plausible due to the way oral story-telling would be performed: Through memorization and pattern recognition (Foley, *Tales in Performance* 2).

2.2 On Improvisation in *Sir Orfeo*

In "Sir Orfeo, The Minstrel, and the Minstrel's Art", Robert M. Longsworth argues that minstrels were "expected and encouraged" to provide their own twists and variations on vernacular romances (2-3). He does this by comparing the three manuscripts which survive of the Orfeo tale and highlights the liberties which were taken in composing the different versions. In doing so, Longsworth discusses the delicate balance a minstrel must strive for in only improvising what is not integral to the story itself (5). The example Longsworth uses is that of Orfeo's "holwe tre" (which is present in the Auchinleck MS) and how the other manuscripts contain differentiations which likely occurred through improvisation. An example of breaching with the fundamental aspects of the story would be to set Orfeo's travels in a location other than the wilderness. Rather, this aspect is consistent between manuscripts, with the elements within it being available for ornamentation.

In a similar vein to Lerer, Longsworth suggests that the "assertion of order in an apparently disordered universe" is a theme which was deliberately finessed by medieval minstrels (7-8). In debating the significance of order in *Sir Orfeo*, the question is also raised of the minstrel's role in securing this order from disorder and the importance of it. Longsworth details the progression of the story into disorder and how two things remain orderly: the poem's form and the music of Orfeo's harp. The harp functions as a major compositional tool in that it's music continually produces order from disorder relevant to the story. As the story kicks off, the harp represents the structure of civilisation and the harmony of nature. Then, as Heurodis is taken, the harp represents noble intent, civil duty, and justice. Finally, as Heurodis emerges from the "heart of disorder" only through the power of the harp to bring order, does the story return to harmony (Longsworth 8). Essentially, this idea coincides with that of Camacho and Pérez in that the harp summons nature. The order of nature is summoned by the harp, thus giving it the role of a protagonist in the face of disorder, which in turn functions as an antagonist.

In conclusion, Longsworth states that the composition of *Sir Orfeo* is dependent on the masterful minstrelsy of those who composed it (11). The literary tools – such as the poem's form, the harp and Orfeo – were used deliberately to showcase the minstrel's art as integral to the fundamental building blocks of the story. Orfeo is a skilled minstrel in the same way as the

minstrels who performed the story. The form and the music are beautiful in the same way that the music being performed would hope to evoke beauty and order. Whether the compositional tools of *Sir Orfeo* are meant to be a depiction of the minstrel's role in the 1300's or not is still a good question which Longsworth's interpretation aids in answering. The minstrel's art – and therefore the performers' art – is given due status and importance as the minstrel is required to use their improvisational prowess in order to play the role of the nature-summoning instrument.

2.3 Instruments and Nature

In "The Harp and the Poet", Manuel B. Camacho and Miguel P. Pérez discuss the symbolic importance of the string instrument in three different poems (31). In much the same way as Lerer, they state that music becomes an important part of nature, in that the poet summons nature through their instrument. Descriptions of the instruments themselves being connected to nature as analogies, are in effect summons from nature which require the outside interference from a scop or minstrel to be demonstrated (Camacho and Pérez 32). The example they use is that of the Grecian urn, and the instrument of a long-lost past which still can produce thoughts and ideas of music. Different things – as in the previous statement – intervene in the natural process in different ways. Firstly, it may be that our intellect recalls the feeling of nature (such as with the Grecian urn), therefore summoning nature. Secondly, regarding the body of the instrument, simply recalling the shape and discussing it metonymically references ideas of music. The instrument is itself a creation from nature which requires intervention from an outside party. Thirdly, and we're pulling at strings here, the direct playing of the instrument requires intervention (and thus the knowledge of how to intervene) to produce sound wave vibration. These are all our creations from materials of nature, meaning the analogy of instruments being a part of nature stands fair.

Camacho and Pérez bring up the point of there not needing to be an instrument at all as the poet themselves may be a representation of nature, and therefore music (32). Conversely, the presence of the physical instrument in poetry is not necessary in order to call the subject a poet, as simply referencing nature, harmony or an instrument is enough to connect them emotionally to the instrument, and therefore nature. Effectively, this broadens the possible interpretations of poets to include those who are in some way in touch with nature.

Furthermore, Camacho and Pérez suggest a closer relationship between the minstrel and the instrument they play (35-6; 41). Both in their findings of the poems where the poet envies the instrument for its ability to produce beautiful sounds at low effort but also through

the acts of the minstrel having a romantic role in poetry. The minstrel is in a sense a metaphor for romantic themes which can be related to the romance literature of the time (Camacho and Pérez 35). The instrument can therefore be given personifications to highlight their relationship which can take on different emotions. It might be tense, jealous, joyous, or even brittle. These qualities may shape the way we read the stories which include scops and minstrels, as the relationship between the poet and the instrument are highly influential to our interpretation of the story.

The instrument can similarly be considered an analogy for referencing a character-developmental attribute. This may be like the metaphor however used in different ways. In using the shape of the instrument, the sound of the instrument or even the descriptions of something else using the instrument as a direct analogy, the instrument's qualities can be a part of the poet in an indirect way. The example Camacho and Pérez use in their article is that of Edgar Allen Poe's poem "Israfel", in which the harp is used as a metaphor for the narrator's - and Poe's - jealousy of the angel (Camacho and Pérez 37). The narrator (a poet) compares themselves with the angel of music, however, in doing so realizes that their "poetry is mortal" (Camacho and Pérez 39). The assumption thus being that Poe compares his poetic mortality to the immortality of Israfel. Viewing this differently, we may interpret the connection between the poet and their instrument as the poet's connection to nature, and by extension, to religion. If a poet is in discordance with their instrument, we can view the thematic connection as the poet in a falling out with religion, morality, or intellect. Therefore, when considering romance tropes, connecting the poet and the instrument becomes involuntary. In the same way as Romeo falls in love with Juliet and cannot do anything but marry her despite familial issues, the poet *needs* the instrument to be happy.

As previously mentioned in the discussion on Poe's jealousy, Camacho and Pérez bring up the issue of mortality. Specifically, they use the idea of the poet's mortality being the only differentiation between the instrument and the poet. (Camacho and Pérez 37). What separates (or hinders) the poet is their mortality. Instruments, such as with the Grecian urn or simply natural vibrations etc. are immortal due to their physical connection to nature. In contrast to this, the poet's mind, their abilities, and their influence over nature, is not.

In discussing the romantic heart as a symbolic and thematic tool, Camacho and Pérez proclaim that "a woman's heart is a magical instrument" (43). In the poem they discuss, the woman's heart is effectively being destroyed by the outside. Therefore, if the woman's heart

is viewed as an instrument, we can conclude that nature (the outside) destroys the instrument. This differs from earlier examples, where nature is monumental in creating the instrument, or that the instrument is itself nature.

The article discusses the effective mortality of a poetic heart. The poetic heart – which as shown earlier, is an instrument – aims to identify the *intent* behind the instrument, or rather the justification needed to produce music (or poetry): "A man is a poet only when he loves, but a woman is always a poet" (Camacho and Pérez 44). This sentiment seems to speak towards the nature of music or poetry being important for its production. The poetic heart speaks to an instrument which always produces natural music, rather than trying to mimic nature. The main idea of the article therefore seems to be that of instrumental origin. On the one hand, we can view instruments – and therefore music – as being nature itself. This can be an ideal for poets to strive toward, or an intervention by us to produce it. We effectively don't produce music; we manipulate nature to produce it for us. Comparatively, the instruments can be seen as in a contest of time against its origin, effectively being destroyed. As everything can be an instrument, anything other than everything can oppose and challenge the instrument. If the instrument is a woman's heart, then the patriarchal society around it challenges the integrity of the instrument.

Camacho and Pérez explore post-medieval literature. Thus, in order to use the many ideas presented by Camacho and Pérez, we will adapt the correlation between the poet and the instrument in the renaissance romance to the similar correlation in the medieval romantic lai. In doing so, we will be able to outline the importance of identifying the connection between minstrel and instrument, and whether there are metonymic references to be understood from the newfound context. Both "Cædmon's Hymn" and *Sir Orfeo* present new interpretations when adopting the ideas from Camacho and Pérez in many different ways. In the case of "Cædmon's Hymn", we will bring into question the idea of Cædmon as an important scop through his connection to nature and religion with his voice. Similarly, we may interpret Cædmon's faith as the poem's "romantic heart", in that Cædmon's intent is bettered through his faith and his pedagogical aims – which in turn produces a talented scop.

2.4 The Narrative Importance of the Performance

In "The Acoustical Prehistory of Poetry", Brunella Antomarini argues that archaic language preceding literacy is highly rhythmic, and that oral storytelling requires a performance in order for the audience to apprehend what is being conveyed. She states that

performances are perceived by the senses of the audience, meaning that the vocal transmission is a foundation for "vision and spectacle" (Antomarini 358). In essence, the performance of poetry or religious rites is incomplete without the elements surrounding the actual poem. As she suggests, performances are made with the goal of having a memory imprinted on the audience (Antomarini 358). This means that although the text may be memorable in its own right, it is not permanent during a performance. Therefore, it requires complex rhythm, dance, song, or instrumentation in order to fully manifest. In addressing vocal rhythm, she writes that "the voice is like a musical instrument that accords itself with the flow of rhythm and connects with the stimulus that is solicited" (Antomarini 358). The voice then, is a de facto vehicle for the words to travel through, emotionally empowered by the rhythm. The rhythm and cadence of a voice is a major contributor to the memorization of the poem. This may also be benefacted by the structure of a poem. As an example, rhyme-schemes can be interpreted as a type of rhythm which creates a vocal dance, of "to and fro", of a progression of the senses (Antomarini 364). Thus, rhyme-schemes can also be interpreted as a form of formula, repeating in the performance and reigniting recollections of previous instances of similar rhyme-schemes and songs.

Antomarini, in arguing that the performances were so much more than the poetry found in our extant texts, states that there is "an enormous distance between mimetic art and musical poiesis: the first regards the poets who sing the sounds of things without taking any responsibility ontologically; the second is that of divine intermediaries–priests like Socrates, who do not write, but rather transmit, hymns and sang rituals and dances about the just and the good by means of which the world is made. It is they who are the true poets" (359). Essentially, a memorable and transmittable performance considers the reality of language; that it is alive and addresses all the senses of the audience. Antomarini builds upon the ideas of Parry and Lord and provides a foundation for understanding the logistics of a performance. For our purposes, it is necessary to understand that apprehension of a poem's substance requires more than the words. The formulae on which a poem is built includes the cadence of a voice, the movement of a body and the rhythm of instrumentation. Antomarini's article will provide insight into both our texts and shed light onto how they would have been performed for audiences who were not learned.

2.5 The Necessity of Metre and Rhythm in Medieval Poetry

In "The Performance of Medieval Songs", Hans Tischler argues that metric-rhythmic interpretation of monophonic songs is preferable to the school of thought that presents the

ability to improvise freely the structure, rhythm, and melody of medieval poems. Tischler presents both sides of the argument as he explores the tough questions regarding musical performance of poetry and the negative evidence surrounding their rhythmic content. Tischler, in trying to create a consistent answer for how to interpret musical rhythm in poetry, writes that "many editors and performers… insist that that no definite rhythm was intended by the composers" (226). From this Tischler suggests that their ideas of instrumentation and monophonic melodies which accompany the text is freeform, allowing for the performer to improvise the rhythmic context of the poem as they see fit. The performer then has "complete freedom to create the rhythm and to create it differently in each stanza and at each presentation" (Tischler 226). This argument is based largely on other scholars' opinions and the lack of musical notation in existence. In exploring the other perspective, that is, the necessity of metric and rhythmic structure in poetry, Tischler lists the discoveries and ideas of other scholars. Among these is the argument that most rhymed verse depends in some way on stress. Similarly, as the structure of medieval verse is stanzaic in nature, they would need to rely on some common rhythmic and melodic structure in order to be more memorable. The lack of such a structure i.e., the allowance of the performer to improvise each stanza's length, structure and melody would make for an immemorable poem, effectively contradicting oral tradition (Tischler 228-9). However, as Tischler proceeds to point out, the two schools of thought are based on preconceptions of the importance of metre in poetry. Supporting a "free-rhythmic interpretation" of poetry means the separation of metre and rhythm into separate elements. Tischler writes that "Just as, e. g., all waltzes employ the 3/4 meter, but their melodic rhythms characteristically differ, so the medieval authors correctly observed that a poetic meter could be reflected by many different musical rhythms" (230). In conclusion, Tischler suggests that metric-rhythmic structure is necessary in providing a structure for understanding the medieval poet's intent, and that adopting free-form improvisation disregards the cultural conventions and the tools available at the time.

Although Tischler presents both sides of the arguments fairly, his inclinations towards metric-rhythmic structure allows for interpretation in how the embellishments and ornamentations are conducted. There should be a degree of improvisation through poetry, however, the structure presented is needed in order to support the freedom of the poet, and also the oral tradition on which it stands. It can be argued whether or not these improvisations in fact were more severe and free-form compared to what is suggested, however, the structure is necessary for our own interpretation and research going forward.

2.6 The Protagonist Which Requires a Performance

In "For musike meueþ affecciouns': Interpreting Harp Performance in Medieval Romance", Alana Bennett argues that romances including musical protagonists require a musical performance, and that they can be interpreted and recreated quite accurately (2-3). As she unpacks the evidence toward this argument, she defines the historical post-conquest musician. They are categorized as professional and amateur performers. The professional performer does so for a living. Bennett writes that these performers were of a "low social standing and demeaned as 'jack of all trades'", and that they "could be hired as household musicians or employed by noble patrons, but for the most part they were little better than servants" (3). This is in stark contrast to the amateur performers, who very often – perceived in romances – are "nobles who have learnt music as a refined courtly achievement (Bennett 3). The separation of the two types of minstrelsy is important as it shapes our outlook of intent from the performer. As professional performers would earn their living in all manner of performance arenas, the amateur performer would pursue their musical abilities in courts or in private instances for their own, or familiar company.

As Bennett outlines the clues of performance in medieval literature, there are several observations made. The performances are conventionalised and follow a specific formula. Bennett notes that "the episodes often tend to focus on the physicality of the musician's performance," and that the skill of the musician and the emotional reply from the audience follows it (8). Particularly important is the tuning of the instrument used by the performer, as it was common practice to retune the instruments to different modes i.e., different intervals between the strings allowing for only particular scales (Bennett 8). This action of retuning the instrument before a performance is a symbolic gesture symbolizing the performers control and skill over the instrument. As Bennett writes, "the act of tuning sets the protagonist apart as they impose their authority – their tuning – on the performance setting" (9). It is suggested that the companionship between musician and instrument was highly important, as music was perceived as being highly influential. The co-operation between the performer and instrument would then be seen as a "harmony" itself (Bennett 9).

Additionally, Bennett outlines the well-known "minstrel disguise" motif found in many romances. In essence, the amateur musicians found in many romances are able to "alleviate their temporary social disadvantages by disguising themselves as minstrels and using music to gain entrance to private spaces" (Bennett 3) Many of the examples referenced, including *Sir Orfeo* bridge the gap between professional and amateur musician. Similarly, amateur musicians

were not commonly seen both singing and playing simultaneously, as that was a tremendously difficult skill which only those who made a living were able to dedicate enough time to achieve (Bennett 4).

Bennett aims to enlighten on the topic of musical performance in romances specifically using the harp. As this article summarizes many of the conventional practices in play during the literary middle ages, it informs our perspective on the treatment of our scop and minstrel. Bridging the gap between the professional and amateur musician will be important for discovering the effect of a performance on the audience when including a musically gifted protagonist such as Orfeo or Cædmon. Music was highly influential to the people, and therefore would be vital as a compositional tool in activating specific inherent knowledge in the audience.

2.7 Appositives in "Cædmon's Hymn"

In "Variation and the Poetics of Oral Performance in *Cædmon's Hymn*," Peter Ramey argues that the appositives used in "Cædmon's Hymn" to describe God serve as performative statements which progress the narrative of the poem (442). The description of God develops continually along the nine lines of the poem, presenting "not a finished text, but […] an event unfolding and recurring in time" (Ramey 442). This means that rather than being composed as a text meant to be read, this was composed as a performance which included an audience experiencing the various variations. Variations of the descriptions of God do not then serve as a poetic aestheticism, but rather an oral performative aestheticism. Not only would this performative aestheticism function for the audience as a constant summoning of God's power, but also, the variation continually develops the description of God. At the end of the hymn then, each variation has subsequently built upon the character of God, adding to his complete description.

Similarly, Ramey states that the themes and compositional appositive phrasing is in keeping with common cultural concepts instead of being experimenting with compositional strategies (443). The hymn, bringing back is appositive structure, metonymically refers to more than a description of God. Ramey examines the eight instances in which some form of the word "God" is used in the hymn. Thereafter, they examine the idea that all the phrases are very specific such as the "Father of glory", or "Guardian of the heavenly kingdom". Ramey remarks that all of these terms could take each other's place without changing the meaning of the poem (449). As they all have individual meaning and importance, they all metonymically refer to the

greater, more general idea of God. In essence, the performer is *retelling* God, rather than describing him, for the descriptions summon a meaning which isn't understood in the text, but rather in the performance in front of a newly Christianized Anglo-Saxon people.

The hymn is associated with multiformity, that is, the variation which happens in a poem in part due to its media being iterative in quality. Ramey, in defining multiformity, says that "multiforms are not merely lexical and narrative units that recur, but units that mean in and through recurrence; they perform traditional ideas without the burden of rendering them indefinitely" (446). By this, they mean that the iterative nature of the text – that is, the performative nature of it – possesses and demands an interpretation of meaning from the audience. The fact that it was performed and improvised would invoke the ideas of Oral traditional texts being meaningful simply because of the text's media. Similarly, the repeated appositives of the hymn serve as iterative in nature, each new appositive containing new meaning – a new performance – of the subject, which in this case, is God (Ramey 447). Essentially, the audience would through the performance of the hymn experience the descriptions of God in a new and separate way at each iteration.

Ramey's article not only grounds "Cædmon's Hymn" in the oral tradition using many different well-established scholars, but also allows us the thought of the composition of the poem and their performance's impact on each of their audiences. Ramey mentions the use of variation as being a literary device which expresses a character, but where each descriptor uses a different stress pattern (Ramey 447). This means that we can apply the changing stress patterns as a method of improvisational performance, which according to Zaerr would not only give different weight and meaning to specific words but would also aid the cooperation with the instrument in performance which in this case is Cædmon's voice (109-10). Therefore, we can investigate in which ways it would be likely for Cædmon to improvise and embellish each variation.

2.8 Spreading Faith in "Cædmon's Hymn"

In *Biblical paradigms in medieval English Literature : from Caedmon to Malory,* Lawrence L. Besserman argues that the performance of "Cædmon's Hymn" was aimed at spreading faith to the illiterates of newly Christianised Anglo-Saxons (9). Cædmon's character would serve the pedagogical purpose of teaching new Christians to praise God using the vernacular which was available. This was because Anglo-Saxons to whom writing was illegible would be able to understand and recite the short and concise hymn performed by Cædmon

mostly because it was in a familiar tongue (Besserman 9). Thus, the poem takes on the form of being a melding of oral-formulaic composition and the Christian themes presented by the clergy. That is, Cædmon's hymn would be performed likely through memorization and alliterative metre and likely slightly improvised from performance to performance, while adapting the Christian creation myth to it.

Besserman's book discusses a plethora of OE texts and how they are connected to the Christian faith. Considering Bede's recounting of "Cædmon's Hymn" similarly reveals its *purpose*, which for this thesis will aid in developing this argument of the performance arena and audience of the hymn's performance. Further supported by Ramey's thoughts on the hymn's appositives, the hymn was in its essence meant to be transferred to the audience for their own religious practice. Therefore, the hymn is to its core an oral traditional text.

CHAPTER 3: Laying the Foundation

During this chapter, we will examine the musical profession of the Middle Ages and the tools which allow for an interplay between the narrative and the performative in poetry. By determining the connection between the instruments and performers in medieval England, and how they were perceived by audiences, we can better understand the ways in which they interacted with the narrative in order to influence the audience. We will specifically examine the role of the voice and the harp in the performance and how they informed the performance. Ultimately, this historical examination will provide foundation on which to interpret our main texts *Sir Orfeo* and "Cædmon's Hymn".

3.1 The Scop and the Minstrel

3.1.1 Defining the Terms

The different terms used in labelling the performers of the middle ages seem to be somewhat interchangeable based on several scholars' uses of the term scop and minstrel. The etymology of both words proves to be quite different, although they both indicate a poet who is occasionally accompanied by one or several instruments, etymologically, scop and minstrel come from OE and French respectively. Although they may both be used as synonyms for each other, defining them as separate may prove useful in terms of the contextual clues they both provide. Using our knowledge of the profession itself, we can more clearly understand their importance on literature and their meaning in the narrative.

The OE poem "Widsith" provides one of the only biographical accounts of a scop, or at least the details of a profession we might identify as a scop (French 623). The scop then, is a travelling entertainer who recounts poetry to music, and is associated with a specific court. They would embellish real events, essentially showcasing their skill as storytellers through fictionalization (Horton 50). Although the term scop is used to define the profession of the Far Traveller in "Widsith", many translations use the term "minstrel" in describing the profession in action. The passage in questions is near reads:

> *Swa scriþende   gesceapum hweorfað*
> *gleomen gumena   geond grunda fela,*
> *(lines 135-136)*

The word in question, "gleomen" stems from both the OE word *glēo* meaning music or song. As minstrel originates from French and Latin before it, the translation is misplaced. Walter H. French states that the "Widsith" poet "was a scop", before describing the Far Traveller as "personify[ing] the whole craft of minstrelsy" (623). Similarly, John D. Niles labels OE poets as minstrels, seemingly melding the post-conquest description to that of the pre-conquest musicians (*Impact of the Conquest* 21; *Myth of the Poet* 25). These examples, as mentioned previously, brings into question the synonymity of the words. Functionally, "scop" and "minstrel" seem to be interchangeable, representing the same profession as a reciter of poetry. Some dictionaries label the scop as being strictly defined as hired musicians of a court whilst the minstrel perhaps had a freer role more prone to travel and freelance work. In that case, minstrels were less inclined to be constrained to a particular group and would be more of an entertainer for whoever would listen and pay. Williams suggests a definition to the scop as a profession that had "at court an important post which he might lose to another or leave to take up a similar elsewhere. His primary function was to compose and to sing to the accompaniment of his harp songs which would spread the fame of his royal patron" (Williams 93). This is true if we look to "Widsith" where the poet is reciting his CV. He recounts every important person he has met, and sings their praises, effectively comparing his future employer to those he has met. He also describes his own line of work in the ending lines of the poem:

> *So the minstrels of men turned to leave wandering*
> *among the created world, throughout many lands,*
> *talking at need, speaking grateful words,*
> *always to the south or north, measuring out*
> *a certain wise song, unstingy of their gifts-*
> *he who wished to rear up glory among the multitude*
> *to execute his authority, until everything hurries away,*
> *the light and life together-he works praise,*
> *having under the heavens an enduring reputation.*
>
> *(Translation by Dr. Aaron K. Hostetter, lines 135-143)*

Though scops were long-term court musicians, minstrels were more diverse and served many more purposes than that of the scop such as acrobatics and juggling (Southworth 3-4). J. A. Westrup describes the English musicians of the 11th century to be highly influenced by the troubadours and trouvères of France (250). By this he means that they took influence in the new methods of art which came about such as using polyphonic melodies (more than one) as

well as counterpoint melodies between instrumentations. Adding to this, Tischler describes the performance arenas to be more diverse, ranging from courts and monasteries to "bishops' palaces" (225). We also see a freedom of creativity compared to the scop, as Tischler describes: "Songs began to reflect political events, served heroic tales, entertainment, and dance ; after some time, they were incorporated into the emerging liturgical plays and began to express ideas of religion and ideals of courtly life" (225). Minstrels were free performers, wandering perhaps in a truer sense than the scop of "Widsith". Zaerr's examination of early court documents also suggests that minstrels were booked for individual performances and for entertainment specifically, rather than as long-term court musicians (57-9). The two professions are therefore not interchangeable in analysis even though they are functionally interchangeable in translation, as they provide a wholly different context for the performance. Scops were devoted to a specific cause, and a recurring audience. As this thesis is focused on explaining the impact of musicians have on the musical characters in their respective narratives however, a collective term is necessary. I shall forward refer to both professions as bards; a general term for describing musical performers. Though *scop* and *minstrel* are interchangeable, their contexts will be highlighted when relevant to the discussion regarding the performance arena and its impact on the narrative.

3.1.2 The Bardic Instrument

Discussion surrounding the instrumentation of scops and minstrels seems to be hotly contested. Specifically, scholars argue that it is hard to determine which instruments were used for accompaniment, as the only tangible evidence – that of the poetry's form – suggests mainly stress and rhyme. Instrumentation, which relates to the composition of poems, is challenging to ascertain. Zaerr investigates the use of the fiddle, harp, and trumpet. Her arguments are centred around the creation and performance of romances by musicians (Zaerr 97). Other investigations into archaeological finds seem to suggest that the harp was the most important tool for composition, as the Sutton Hoo harp is assumed to be that described in "Beowulf" (Wrenn 119). Robert Boenig explores OE examples of the harp and their connotations, as he not only shares some observations with Zaerr, but also targets many of the same areas of study, such as the performance (292). Similarly, the harp is often associated with the scops and minstrels in medieval literature. "Widsith" and the previously mentioned "Beowulf" both exist as early examples of poetry which associate the musicians to the Anglo-Saxon "hearpan" which pre-date the Norman Conquest.

3.2 The Voice and the Harp

The first thing that springs to mind when we think of the medieval bard is the instrument they employ. Specifically, Zaerr states that the "Middle English verse romances associate themselves with instrumental music at a fundamental level" (78). She examines ME romances, however, the same can be understood over a wider oral-traditional context also. As essentially all oral-traditional texts were performed before taking the written form, the examples of instruments we can connect to older literature are plenty. Whether it be a fiddle, harp, trumpet, or simply the voice, the instrument is the medium through which the story is told. The performers' instruments were part of the compositional process. Zaerr provides extensive research into the topic, specifically looking at how the instruments would have functioned in narrative performance. Although one of Zaerr's observations from payment records show the likelihood of song and instrument being separate, Boenig examines the OE term for harp (hearpan) in "Cædmon's Hymn"; speculating it's translation to mean "to sing with the harp" (299-300). Nonetheless, our main concerns for instrumental choice in this thesis are the voice and the harp. We'll therefore have a look at them specifically and build our understanding of how these instruments would function in the narrative performance.

3.2.1 The Voice

Concerning the voice, there exists negative – and therefore unreliable – evidence as to the development of the vocal method during the middle-ages. Some of this evidence, presented by Tischler in "The Performance of Medieval Songs", suggests that vocal poetry was mostly monophonic – that is, a single melodic line with no accompaniment – until European lyric poetry slowly developed in the 12th century (228). Tischler is mostly concerned with where the influences came from, and discusses the historical evidence concerning the spread of poetry from central Europe. However, the polyphonic developments (which came from Muslim poetry) certainly concern the newly normanised angles and their move to more complex narrative performance. Tischler states that the lyrical poetry before the influence of Muslim poetry, what he calls "young music" would stray away from complex rhythmical meters, rather sticking to the use of fixed iambs and trochees (227). The melodic content of medieval poetry (specifically before the 12th century) would also consist of the same melody sung over each stanza. From this we can garner that the melodies were continually dependent on rhyme and meter. The voice therefore relies on the structure and form of the poetry in order to contribute. This is the case largely in part because of the formulaic nature in which we have placed medieval performance. As Longsworth states, the encouragement and expectancy on

improvisation of the romances and the poetry's details encourages mellismas and embellishments to the melodies and rhythms which were sung (5). The uncertainty derives from our lack of knowledge of severity of these tools, which in turn makes analysis easier if there is an oral-formulaic structure to follow. Antomarini states that the singer's goal is to immerse us in a story using our vernacular language. To do this "he or she uses a verse that is rhythmic" (Antomarini 355). Assuming that a lot of melodies are repeated throughout poems, the complexity must come from these melodies shifting rhythmically. The voice itself is therefore a much more important factor in delivering narrative meaning in poetry before the 12th century. And with Zaerr informing our perspective, we can ascertain that the voice would be an important part of the performance not only because of the voice delivering the lines of text, but also through the interplay with the instruments accompanying it.

In *Beowulf,* the voice is seen to be very important in the performances. Lisa Horton speaks of the importance of the scop's profession and their repertoire and shows us an example of this before Grendel's first appearance (49):

> *Then a powerful demon, a prowler through the dark,*
>
> *nursed a hard grievance. It harrowed him*
>
> *to hear the din of the loud banquet*
>
> *every day in the hall, the harp being struck*
>
> *and the clear song of a skilled poet.*
>
> *(lines 86-90, translation by Seamus Heaney)*

The voice is given emphasis in this instance as the scop seeks to entertain the people of the hall using mainly recitation of poetry. However, throughout the poem, the voice is given significance to the narrative, as it is connected to important events, such as the example given here. Grendel being the antagonist of the first part of the story is depicted as being in opposition to the music. The continuation of song is a deciding factor in Grendel's decision to attack. After Grendel's defeat, we again see the scop performing as he is influential on the narrative:

> *They sang then and played to please the hero,*
>
> *words and music for their warrior prince,*
>
> *harptunes and tales of adventure:*
>
> *there were high times on the hall benches*
>
> *and the king's poet performed his part.*
>
> *(lines 1062-1066, translation by Seamus Heaney)*

Here, the entertainment is essential to the celebration of Beowulf's victory. A new poem is created during this celebration which recites Beowulf's triumph, and as Horton writes, "the *scop* duly records and praises suitably praiseworthy deeds, thus encouraging his lord's followers to display such courage and prowess in battle as would justify the song of the *scop*" (49). Additionally, the scop is accompanied by the harp, which serves to fill in the gap between lines of poetry. As Heaney's translation suggests, *harptunes* and *tales of adventure* are separate, meaning that they would take turns, both a part of the performance as a whole. However, it is the voice that is given narrative meaning as it treated as both the onset of Grendel's attack and recorder of history. The voice is therefore a symbolic inclusion similar to the harp. It is an instrument which carries referential weight towards impactful events as with *Beowulf*, and as a more literal carrier of meaning in poetry. It is therefore a more performance-centric than any other instrument as it conveys the narrative literally. Any improvisation done to the voice or poetry impacts the narrative in a more tangible way, as the information itself is changed.

3.2.2 The Harp

When examining the harp – which is an academic focus of many scholars compared to the voice – there are several observations to be made which relate to song. The rhythmic importance and physical construction of the instrument co-operates with the voice during performance. Zaerr speaks of the rhythmic interplay between several performers of a narrative. Particularly interesting is the "complex interactive rhythmic patterns in counterpoint with the rhythms of the text, selecting strong or weak fingers to build in musical nuances and phrasing" (Zaerr 103). The contrapuntal tool was familiarised through J.S Bach's compositions, where two (or more) separate melodies could function separately and simultaneously. The implication here being that the harp would have its own melodic structure to contrast the poetic and rhythmic structure of the singer. Whenever the singer had weaker stress patterns, the harp could interject with strong-stressed accompaniment and vice versa. This would also suggest pauses in between lines for the counterpoint of the harp to emphasise its melody. We examine how this might work in chapter 2.1. Additionally, the harp may have been favoured over the fiddle or the lute simply because of its symbolic value to the narrative e.g. Christianity or natural adeptness.

One of the questions brought to our attention by Zaerr is the choice of instrument from a bard's perspective. As she explores "loud" and "soft" instruments, that is, how amplified the sound is, she suggests that the differences in volume by instruments are not coincidental (Zaerr 79). Boenig similarly mentions how the *Beowulf* harp is a soft instrument, but logically must

have been loud in order to aggravate Grendel (292). This suggests that the instrument was used for metonymic effect rather than practical. Trumpets are logically not paired with poetry as an accompanying instrument due to the disruption its inclusion would bring to the poetic voice. There is an emphasis on the instrument in poetry having an accompanying role which allows the voice to be the focal point of the performance. We see this in *Beowulf* that the poet is given the main narrative focus, while the harps play adjacent to the singer. Using similar logic to the trumpet, the harp is paired with the voice due to its ability to accompany it without disrupting the performance. As this may not be a wholly valid interpretation of the instrumental accompaniment in medieval England, let us take a look at some qualities, both physical and narrative, of the harp.

The common conception of the harp is as a chordal guide to emotion. It functions as a foundation for the poetry to be reinforced over. Rapid, staccato notes or dissonant chords can highlight or strengthen tension in the poetry. Similarly, assonant chords and arpeggiated notes can highlight or strengthen positive or transcendent moments in poetry. Although examining these ideas serve as conjecture, the considerations are still meaningful as we can make conclusions about how certain styles of accompaniment would impact the narrative. Zaerr brings up this passage from *Syre Gawene and the Carle of Carelyle*:

> *First she harpyd, an seethe songe*
> *Of love and of Artorrus armus amonge.*
> *(lines 436-437)*

(First she harped, and then she sang about love and about Arthur's chivalry.)
(translation by Linda Marie Zaerr)

Zaerr uses this passage to highlight that the harping and singing are narratively separate (83). However, if we consider that the poem was *performed in tandem with a harp*, we can also speculate what type of accompaniment was given. Our attention is lead to the subject matter of the passage, which is Arthur's chivalry. As it shares a line with the word love, this concept is associated with the performance. Zaerr similarly suggests that this symbolic connection is ubiquitous across the romance genre (73). There may be several interpretations of how the instrumental accompaniment of the passage may have sounded, however, based on the narrative context of the example it would likely be assonant and pleasing. This interpretation reflects the "soft" aspect of the harp, laying a foundation for the poetry rather than accentuating it. This means that the harp has metonymic, performative value narratively. Playing soft,

assonant tones while the narrative presents themes of love pre-emptively informs the audience of the relevant emotion through its cultural connotations.

Determining the bard's effective role over between the pre-, and post-conquest cultures proves to be challenging for several reasons. Bards which occur in oral traditional stories were produced and performed by bards. This means that any bard included as a character will reflect the performers which portray them. Additionally, the bards included as characters (especially those who have a tangible effect on the story and its themes) have their narrative meanings changed by the performers who portray them. This means that for example, the bard performing "Widsith" essentially was the bard in the poem. As they performed the poem, the audience would be experiencing their biography. This is the nature of the bard's performance when music is a part of the narrative. As a performer sings, so does the bard in the poem. When this happens, the audience experience the bard in a very real way, which in turn emphasizes the poem's themes. This interplay between the narrative and performance is the foundation for improvisation and composition in oral tradition. Therefore, our aim is to discuss the performative versus the narrative and identify in which ways they impact each other.

3.3 The Interplay Between Narrative and Performance

The performing bard is highly influenced by the appearance of the bardic character. Similarly, the performance informs said character through the performance arena and the cultural context surrounding it. This narrative bard shapes and emphasizes the themes of the poem without interfering with the composition or performance. As we delve into these categorizations, we examine the different ways in which the inclusion of a bard as a character impacts our (or the audience's) interpretation of the narrative. Additionally, we examine the different ways in which the tools of the performer may shape that interpretation. Musical characters vary greatly from poem to poem; however, they all affect the thematic interpretation of the narrative in some tangible way. The more common way they are presented in medieval poetry is through the guise of a spectator. Similarly, the narrative bard might be included to reflect the topical nature of their songs, that of singing praise towards important events of characters. This works well with the *minstrel disguise* formula, in which nobility take on the disguise of a minstrel in order to progress the narrative. Important bardic characters often appear as chivalrous and honourable. They rank high in society, often as what Bennett labels "amateur performers" (3) Bards also exist to reinforce the themes of the story, effectively projecting them through their music. This reflects well on the mission of the performer, who also bears a similar hope of reinforcing tradition.

Considering the research done by Foley in investigating the performance of oral traditional poems, a clear view of the importance of the performing bard is presented. The narrative bard, as we have seen, concerns the characters of bardic profession present in the story which aid the narrative in some way. They are what survive today in written form. We can discuss Sir Orfeo the person because the information is there for us to recall. The performing bard would therefore be affecting the story in a meta-sense, projecting the characteristics of bardic figures in the stories. We do not know who the poets performing *Sir Orfeo* were, because not much is written down. However, the performers themselves are presenting a story in which bards are central figures, they are interpreted by the audience as being those figures. Other than performance techniques and musical skill, there were compositional tools employed in order to tailor the poem to the specific setting it was performed in. We will examine the different performative tools used in order to project bards to the audience.

3.3.1 The Audience

The role of the audiences is vital to our understanding of the performing bard, for they are as much as us, interpreters. In this case, splitting the collective definition of "bard" into "scop" and "minstrel" proves quite useful, as their audiences – and thus their performances – would be quite different. In the case of the scop, often intrinsically connected to an estate of some kind to whom they would perform over a longer period, was practically guaranteed a consistent, returning audience (French 623). This is juxtaposed with the minstrel, who would perform for a much wider variety of audiences. In lieu of this, which changes to the contextual registers between performances are likely?

When Foley speaks of the *performance arena*, he speaks of the ability to "be alive to the metonymic referentiality that the given register institutionally encodes" (*Tales in Performance* 28). By this, he proposes that the place in which poetry was performed is inherently linked with the context surrounding it. Being a part of that context is the only way to experience the metonymic references which exist purely based on the context. A good example to use when thinking of this is the nationalistic ideals the Angles naturally gravitated towards after the Norman Conquest (Behtash 144). Many poems were written in English, despite the national language being influenced by French and Latin. The arena in which these tales would be performed therefore would need to appeal to a crowd of Saxons who perhaps needed their national identities reinforced during the changes occurring in London.

3.3.2 Genre and Purpose

Considering the genre of the post-conquest bards is important because one of our primary texts is a *romance*. Gail Ashton provides an overview of the romance genre in her book *Medieval English Romance in Context*. Post-Norman-conquest England consists of turbulent societal and governmental change (Ashton 13). Not only does England turn Catholic, but Anglo-Saxon languages start to meld into their surroundings. With government becoming centralized in London, contests of land become rampant in lesser established and protected districts. Similarly, as French and Latin become prevalent and literacy increases, the more traditional notions of Anglo-Saxon England start to fade (Ashton 14-5). In a nation which progressively becomes more divided, the romance genre serves as a response to that. Romances functioned therefore as builders of nations; ideals for patrons to hold onto which tackled social matters prevalent in medieval society. These romances would tackle issues such as "inheritance and marriage, social ties and identities, and noble birth versus personal merit" similarly to how modern literature highlights societal problems without actually providing solutions (Ashton 15). Similarly, the romances were spoken in English, rather than French or Latin largely due to English being seen as a traditional and well understood language. The etymology of romance, it turns out, comes from the Old French saying 'mettre en romanz', which means to translate into vernacular (Ashton 17). English was the vernacular as it was spoken generally by the common folk and provided an arena for many to 'vent' their frustrations exhibited by the societal changes occurring at that time.

In earlier works, where the romance is not yet relevant (for example in one of our primary texts, "Cædmon's Hymn") we must consider genre after we consider purpose, rather than considering genre first. The romances after all were a well-established genre of popular literature with similar tropes consistent over generations. Purpose, therefore, becomes our mode of interpretation in a field of much fewer manuscripts and examples. The purpose of "Cædmon's Hymn" is prayer (Ramey 442). In the same way as the romances being building blocks for uniting a nation, this particular poem would be used as a building block for establishing a Christian narrative and following in a culture which, at the time, was not literate.

This lends well to the idea of audience's inherent knowledge of bards influencing their interpretations. Lerer's idea presented in "Artifice and Artistry in Sir Orfeo" gives us a perspective which can serve our purpose in determining the bardic inclusion. Architecture from the society in which the story was being performed would be used as a tool in order to aid the

audience's interpretation of the story (Lerer 98). Because of the familiarity to the architecture being described, the audiences were given an acute sense of whether things being portrayed in the story were different or not. In this way, we can also view musicians as architecture. Assuming bards were common on the streets, in courts, and in taverns, they would spark a familiarity with the audience which would key them into unique deviations from the norm. "Widsith" once again provides a good overview of perhaps what would colloquially be understood to be the 'architecture' of a bard:

> *So the minstrels of men turned to leave wandering*
> *among the created world, throughout many lands,*
> *talking at need, speaking grateful words,*
> *always to the south or north, measuring out*
> *a certain wise song, unstingy of their gifts-*
> *he who wished to rear up glory among the multitude*
> *to execute his authority, until everything hurries away,*
> *the light and life together-he works praise,*
> *having under the heavens an enduring reputation.*
>
> *(Translation by Dr. Aaron K. Hostetter, lines 135-143)*

The depiction of the bard presented here is enthusiastic and straight-forward. It entails the disrupted nature of bardic work and the amount of travel associated with it. As the poem ends with the word 'reputation' (at least in this translation), the final stanza follows the extravagance of the entire poem by listing what is essentially the reputation innate for bards. They flaunt their improvisational talent, seeking payment for gracious words and songs. As any person with coin essentially could "rear up glory among the multitude" in order to secure their authority, the bard would perhaps be viewed as somewhat of a superfluous and perhaps less-than truthful in nature. As this poem presumably dates from the 10th century, it provides a hearty look into how – even though perhaps a little embellished – the bardic profession was understood and viewed. Horton also describes the OE bard as being both a "observer and recorder" and that this is important they would not only serve to entertain and recite, but also to create new poetry based on ongoing events (49). This means that their employers would be able to effectively use their hired musician to record their own historical deeds. The bardic role definitely changes with the advent of the Norman conquest however, when they are not as dependent on the whims of courtly figures, as we shall see.

Similarly, a passage from the romance "Wars of Alexander", which likely dates from the 15th century, includes a grounded view of how bards would be viewed by the audience:

When folk ere festid and fed, fayn wald thai here

Sum farand thinge eftid fore to fayn[en] thare hertis,

Or thai ware fourmed on fold or thaire fadirs othir.

Sum is leve to lythe the lesing of sayntis

That lete thaire lifis be lorne for oure lord sake,

And sum has langinge of lufe lay[e]s to herken,

How ledis for thaire lemmans has langod endured.

Sum covettis and has comfort to carpe and to lestyn

Of curtaissy, of knyghthode, of craftis of armys,

Of kyngis at has conquirid and ovircomyn landis;

Sum of wirschip, iwis, slike as tham wyse lattis,

And sum of wanton werkis, tha that ere wild-hedid;

Bot if thai wold on many wyse, a wondire ware it els,

For as thaire wittis ere within, so thaire will folowis.

(lines 1-14)

Not only does this passage – which opens the poem – reinforce the topical nature of bardic songs across generations, but it also emphasizes the humble goals of bards in employment. Bards would be called in for self-indulgent entertainment by employers. In the case of "Wars of Alexander", bards are called in after a feast. They display their talent as is described in "Widsith", but they do not sing of themselves. Rather, the songs concern important characters and events which likely would reflect their employers and their contemporaries. Also, lines 13-14 provide a very useful insight into how bards would find their performances repetitious: "It would be a wonder if they did not desire many different styles [of story], for as their wits are within, so their will follows" (Zaerr 182). Here we can surmise that the bardic songs were always similar in nature, predictable in topic. Therefore, this very human assumption that the bards are *working*, probably having recited these poems many a time at the whims of their employers. Bards from this period were however less permanently stationed in their profession and more in line with the travelling musician than in earlier periods.

3.3.3 The Architectural Bard and the Narrative

From these two examples alone, we are able to paint a picture of how the architectural bard might be perceived by the audience. Bards, who sang professionally for entertainment (or as amateur nobles), would sing songs of grand characters and events which would serve in some way to strengthen the authority of the employer. Often present at feasts, or as visiting musicians among plebeians, they would fail to present themselves as humble, for they projected their talents into their work. After all, that is how they got employment. Similarly, bards would be viewed as any other profession, one that as a life-long commitment would also grow stale over time with the repeated repertoire. Although a more nuanced approach is needed for specific texts, this provides a grounded microscope in which to "create disorder within order" as Lerer would put it. Used to its full effect, the architectural bard can have great narrative effect. Consider this passage from *Sir Orfeo*:

> *There were trumpours and tabourers,*
> *Harpours fele, and crouders:*
> *Much melodye they maked alle.*
> *And Orfeo sat stille in the halle.*
>   *(lines 525-528)*

This precedes Orfeo revealing himself to be the king, which is drastically emphasized by the familiarity of this scene, which perhaps the audience would have had before listening to the performance. Although we will delve deeper into the narrative bard of *Sir Orfeo* in the next chapter, it is such a good example of the narrative important of the architecture of bards that it needs mentioning. The bards in the poem are what we would ascribe the conventional variety. They perform, much in the same way as with a feast, in the halls of Orfeo's castle. There are also many of them, perhaps signalling to the audience that they in their own right are not significant enough to be given individual importance. Orfeo's harping which follows is given gravitas by the notion of his playing being so far superior to the others, that he is unmistakably unique in comparison:

> *And herkneth; when they been al stille,*
> *He took his harp and tempered shille-*
> *The blissfullest notes he harped there*
> *That evere man yherde with ere.*
>   *(lines 529-533)*

When Orfeo plays, it is not only more beautifully described, but is also *only* Orfeo who plays, as he commands the attention of every other minstrel in the hall. Thus, Orfeo is given an incredible weight and importance. We can therefore conclude that the wall-flower bards were of importance in narratively supporting the importance of Orfeo's harping.

The bards in the *Sir Orfeo* example can be seen as wall-flowers for emphasizing other characters in a subtle manner. However, as we look to more other instances of bards in poetry, we see a more clearly defined role to the thematic progression. For instance, an abundance of poems tells of important characters being welcomed by musicians. In "Ywain and Gawain", King Arthur is welcomed into Alundyne's city:

> *And damsels danceand ful wele*
> *With trompes, pipes, and with fristele.*
> *The castel and the cete rang*
> *With mynstralsi and nobil sang.*
> *(lines 1395-8)*

Similarly, in "William of Palerne", the Emperor of Greece is greeted by bards as they ride into Rome:

> *and alle maner menstracie maked him ayens;*
> *and also daunces disgisi redi dight were,*
> *and selkcouth songes to solas his hertes,*
> *(lines 1619-21)*

The pattern which emerges is one of support for noble figures. This works well with the pre-established architectural bard as they in effect would serve to emphasize the importance of status and authority. It seems then that the bardic inclusion in poetry is commonly associated with importance, either of a character, or of an event. King Arthur's grandeur in comparison to Ywain does not require the added bards in order to be emphasised. Similarly, the bards play for the Emperor of Greece because the narrative demands that his character is important. From this we can assume some of the inherent knowledge an audience would have of bards to be for this purpose. The inclusion of bards metonymically refers to an important event or person in the story. Additionally, this can be observed in the many feasts of poetry which almost always include bards of some sort. As feasts are commonly used in order to progress a part of the narrative through the protagonist's development of thought, bards emphasize this as an important event. Consider this example from "Octavian", where the feast occurs shortly after

the Emperor Octavian murders the person whom he believes had fathered two children with his wife:

> *With gud myrthis tham emange,*
> *Harpes, fethils and full faire songe,*
> > *Cytoles and sawtrye,*
> *Till the sevenyghte was gone,*
> *With alkyn welthis in that wone*
> > *Of myrthis and mynstralsye.*
> *Was never so riche a gedirynge*
> *That had so sary a partynge,*
> > *I sall yow tell for why.*
> > > *(lines 199-207)*

In a peculiar move, the emperor holds a feast after the preceding murder. During the feast, he deceives his father-in law to pass judgement on the crimes of his wife. It is not a coincidence that this important development of character and narrative was set upon a feast. The bards present provide a musical backdrop, a contrast of emotion, and a strengthening of thought to the situation at hand, signalling to the audience that the conversation to be had between the the "kynges" is of importance. The feast (and the bards) is therefore not there for the sake of being joyful, but rather as a compositional tool to show the audience that the coming scene is pivotal. This is similar to the feast in *Beowulf* where the poet retells the tale of Beowulf's killing of Grendel. The poem frames the event as being celebratory and joyful, however, considering the previous example lends to the idea that the poet is not there to reinforce the emotion of the scene, but rather cement the event as being of particular importance.

3.3.4 Bardic Formulae

These thoughts work well across oral-formulaic poetry. Zaerr compresses most – if not all – of the narrative bardic mentions from medieval romances in her work, but with a focus on the performance. Their function in the narrative is mostly left out of the picture as the aim is to identify the details of the bardic profession. However, looking deeper, there are several similarities between the different works, even in the small mentions, which allow us a view into the inherent expectations and knowledge the audience would have upon hearing these romances. Perhaps the most common appearance for bardic performance is during a feast. The feast-sleep formula is very common in oral-traditional stories to precede an important event.

The feast then plays an important thematic part much due to the bardic presence, as "laughter and the sound of the harp […] is created only to be taken away" (Kavros 122). The feast is commonly used to provide a progression to the events of the story, as what comes after is usually conflict. However, there is a pattern which pertains specifically to the bards present at these feasts which would have an important for the thematic progression of the formula. As stated earlier, the bards are important to the narrative, not simply because the scene demands it, but rather that the presence of the bards brings metonymic expectations of the importance of the scene.

Another formula which the bard plays a big role can be identified as the chivalric disguise, during which a character disguises themselves as a bard in order to achieve their goal. One good example of this is in "King Horn". In the story, Horn disguises himself as a bard in order to rescue princess Rymenhilde from a wedding feast:

> *To herpe he gan drawe*
> *And wyght hys tweye felawe*
> *Knyghtes swythe felle,*
> *And schurde hem in pelle.*
> *Wyt swerdes he hem gyrte*
> *Anouen here schirte.*
> *He wenden on the grauel*
> *Toward the castel.*
>
> *(lines 1579-1586)*

Sarah Catherine Moore writes in her MA thesis that an important facet of the minstrel disguise motif is changing the protagonists identity in order to move between social ranks (17). As a narrative tool, the motif suggests a journey and familiarity to the audience. In tales which include nobility which the poet expects the audience to revere, the act of making the lower status disguise pivotal to the narrative seems intentional. Through the disguise motif, the performer is able to bridge the gap between the narrative and the performance in a way tailored to the audience. This brings forth the question of intent in much of ME poetry.

3.3.5 Religious Intent

Looking at OE poetry, intent is more uniform. A lot of the poetry which survives is dubbed "Cædmonian poetry", as the traditional metric diction supposedly stems from "Cædmon's Hymn". Besserman's idea of intent in OE poetry is that it aimed to convert Anglo

Saxons to Christianity (9). There are several pieces of conjecture which guide us towards this assumption. Firstly, we can look to the profession itself. As scops (OE poets) were more inclined to garner semi-permanent positions with courts, they would produce poetry and music according to the needs of their employer. Considering the definition set by Williams, the scop would "spread the fame" of their employer (93). However, it is not unreasonable to include the many monasteries as employers for the same reason, spreading faith. Tim Pestell writes in his book "Landscapes of Monastic Foundation: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia, c.650-1200" that "Religious life had always been dominated by the royal and aristocratic families of the various kingdoms, as founders, patrons and inmates of *monasteria*" (102). With that in mind, we can look to poetry and determine the intent behind its production and therefore establishing its likely register. Consider the opening passage from "Christ II" by the OE poet Cynewulf:

> *Seek now eagerly into the secret mysteries*
> *of the soul, reputable man, by the skill of your mind*
> *and the wisdom of your heart, so that you will know*
> *the truth about how it happened–when the Almighty,*
> *became conceived through the state of virginity,*
> *after he selected the safe haven within Mary,*
> *greatest of maidens, most famous of womankind–*
> *the angels did not show themselves there,*
> *wearing brilliant raiment when that nobleman arrived,*
> *the boy in Bethlehem. Heralds were ready,*
> *who revealed by the cry of their voices to the shepherds,*
> *speaking of true rejoicing, that the Son of the Measurer*
> *was made flesh in middle-earth, in Bethlehem.*
>
> *(lines 440-453, translation by Dr. Aaron K. Hostetter)*

As Besserman states the possibility of religious poetry being intended towards prayer by illiterate Anglo-Saxons, we can assume the same to be possible here (9). There are three reasons for this. Firstly, the opening lines of the poem state to the audience in a harkening fashion to explore the unknown. "Seek now eagerly into the secret mysteries" using your mind and heart to discover the truth suggests that those to whom the poem was performed were non-Christians. Secondly, it speaks highly of the audience in an attempt to sway the audiences curiosity. The poem then frames the story as a historical one, telling of Jesus' ascension (which the poem is

also known as) to heaven. And lastly, the poem uses many instances of appositive variation as described by Ramey (449). Through the poem, appositives of Jesus' and God's name are used liberally. Jesus is given the titles "Son of the Measurer", "Glory-Fast Prince", "Giver of Treasure", "Dispenser of Glory", and many more. The goal of these variations is arguably not narrative, but performative, as the repetition of the same concept resonates with the audience. A different interpretation of this idea is that the appositives are not there to convince the audience, but rather to legitimize the concept of Christianity through repetition. The performer in that case uses variations to reiterate on the presence of Jesus, therefore legitimizing his importance. Similarly, in "Beowulf", God is given an abundance of titles in a short span of words for this same reason. That is, not of narrative purpose, but for performative purpose:

> *how the Almighty had made the earth*
> > *(line 92)*
> *Cain's clan, whom the Creator had outlawed*
> > *(line 106)*
> *the Eternal Lord had exacted a price:*
> > *(line 108)*
> *they remembered hell. The Almighty Judge*
> *of good deeds and bad, the Lord God,*
> *Head of the Heavens and High King of the World,*
> > *(lines 180-182, translations by Seamus Heaney)*

The iterative nature of the compositions works to the effect laid out by Ramey, where we can envision the poet retelling God (Ramey 449). The variations of "Beowulf", similarly to "Christ II" can be interchanged with one another, effectively making them repetitions. We can view these two different ways. Either they are there as part of the register for the Anglo-Saxon Christian reform, or they are building the register through repetition. Both are effectively identical; however, they differ in interpretation. Assuming the former to be closer to the truth, the variations function as metonyms, calling on the contextual clues present in the changing cultural landscape. This also places the characters in the context of faith. Considering the latter leads us to interpret them from the monastic tradition, aiding in legitimizing faith in the context of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

The language used to portray the characters in the poems is also given utmost importance. In "Christ II" the virgin Mary is given the titles "greatest of maidens" and "most

famous of womankind". This language can be seen as a way to inspire awe in the audience, especially as a lot of the poetry would be composed based on Latin or Old French poetry (Ashton 15). These embellishments were common in other performances as well, as this example in "Beowulf" also shows:

> *(…) It harrowed him - Grendel*
> *to hear the din of the loud banquet*
> *every day in the hall, the harp being struck*
> *and the clear song of a skilled poet*
> *telling with mastery of man's beginnings,*
> *how the Almighty had made the earth*
> *a gleaming plain girdled with waters;*
> *in His splendor He set the sun and the moon*
> *to be earth's lamplight, lanterns for men,*
> *and filled the broad lap of the world*
> *with branches and leaves; and quickened life*
> *in every other thing that moved.*
>
> *(lines 87-98, translation by Seamus Heaney)*

Looking specifically at the poets use of the word "ælmihtiga" lends us to view the following description of the creation myth as matching in grandeur to the Almighty (God). This is similar in tone to the description in "Christ II", in which the Almighty (Jesus) is the de facto determiner of what happens. God decides to make the earth in the same way that Jesus does. This performed to Anglo-Saxons hearkens back to speaking and transferring Christianity's truth. The intent of these poems and therefore the performances is therefore clear, as they aimed to legitimize the Christian faith in the vernacular through repetition.

3.3.6 Cultural Intent

Much poetry from the middle-ages describes the physical performance, albeit to a less than satisfactory degree. Bennett suggests that there is a common element of describing the musician and the physicality associated with playing their instrument (14). Take this example *King Horn*:

> *Horn set on the benche;*
> *Hys harpe he gan clenche.*
> *He makede Reymyld a lay,*

And Reynyld makede weylawey.

(lines 1595-1598)

The importance of outlining the performance in many romances is essential as they give us detail into how the performances realistically (or exaggeratively) played out. There is a preparation to the performance as the bard gathers the attention of the audience. As Bennett describes, the physical descriptions of the performance often precede the emotional effect of the music (15). This may be an obvious point, as the musician preparing to perform versus the actual musical being produced contain very different levels of emotional impact. However, there are few descriptions of these preparations being described as having emotional effect, creating a contrast between the preparation and the performance.

Intent can in many other cases be elusive, as the objective of a distinct performance may not be as easy to grasp as it might be in modern times. Foley describes how the narrative relies on the audience to understand the contextual clues placed in the text. This is contrary to modern literature where the narrative is self-contained, as meaning is found in the text, rather than in the context surrounding the performance. Esmail Behtash describes that the intent behind the poetry was one of nationalism and regressive ideals toward a pre-Norman Conquest England (143). Essentially, through the introduction of French and Latin in an increasingly catholic country, civil unrest increased not only in London, but also amongst smaller communities all over the Norman England. As London advanced its literacy and educational rates, the rest of the country remained with no common vernacular. Therefore, one argument laid out by Behtash is that English oral poetry was used in order to speak to the vernacular of the majority of Saxons (145). The poems therefore evoked themes which aimed to alleviate the common issues present after the conquest such as nationalism, unity, marriage, nobility, and others. In some ways these themes were already on their way out in terms of popularity, making their inclusion quite peculiar (Behtash, 144). Ashton reflects this as well in her book, where we come to understand that the political strife which occurs in England post conquest ensures the thematic content of ME poetry intends to unify and quell unrest (14-5). Bennett suggests that poets included mention of the lai in their compositions in order to bring forth "nostalgia about music and musicians in the romances" (13). This – because the Breton lai – would be familiar to the audience, metonymically referencing the style of tale and what is to come.

In concluding this chapter then, we have established part of the interplay between the narrative and the performative. The compositional tools employed by the poet are chosen because they affect the audience and their interpretation of the story. The bard is able to shape the story based on the audience's inherent cultural context. In essence, the story is improvisational and iterative not only because it is oral formulaic and not written down, but because the audience changes and demands different qualities in the poems.

CHAPTER 4: *Sir Orfeo*

Having discussed the function of the bard in shaping the narrative and performance in the previous chapter, we will use our findings to interpret our primary texts in new ways. In this chapter, we will be using those results to gain insight in new interpretations of two poems. The first poem is *Sir Orfeo* – a poem written down in the 14th century is a poem based on the Orpheus myth from Greek mythology. Contrary to the Greek myth, in which Orfeo descends into hell in order to save his wife Eurydice, *Sir Orfeo* features a king who must rescue his wife from the fairy king by disguising himself as a bard and journeying to the fairy kingdom. This strong departure from the original story serves to highlight many different themes, such as honour, nationalism, Christianity, and civil duty. Our research so far has given us insight in how our knowledge of the profession affects our interpretation of bardic characters and how they would be understood by the audience metonymically. The second poem, "Cædmon's Hymn", is believed to be one of the first OE poems written down, likely composed between 658 and 680. Bede – a monk and writer mainly working in Latin – collected the story in "Ecclesiastical History of the English People". It tells of an illiterate farm-hand who receives a heavenly gift which grants him the ability to compose religious poetry. Cædmon then becomes a devout clergyman and spends his days composing poetry based on scripture. These poems are both examples of performances which necessitate musical skill. They also illustrate the cultural perception of bards by laymen. Our discussion on the importance of the performance will inform our interpretation of "Cædmon's Hymn" and *Sir Orfeo* by proving that the musical performance and compositional improvisation are fundamental in shaping the narrative. In *Sir Orfeo,* the poet utilizes the audience's inherent understanding of the bardic profession and cultural surroundings in order to emphasize their goals of influencing them. In "Cædmon's Hymn", we see a religious divide between clergy and illiterate laymen provide the performative purpose to which the performance is vital. While both poems aim to influence their audiences to different effect, there are also similarities to be found between them. Additionally, the poems provide opportunities for us to consider them metonymically, such as the importance of the feast and how we thus can compare our protagonists to the cultural norm.

4.1 Sir Orfeo's Harp

Sir Orfeo follows an oral-traditional formula known as *exile and return*. The idea being a character falling out of their natural society into unknown territory before returning after having developed morally or socially. Sir Orfeo as a king, exiles himself, relinquishes his titles

temporarily and brings only his harp in order to bring Heurodis from the fairy king. After many absent years, he manages return to the kingdom to reclaim his position as king with his wife. Being a Breton lay, the story encompasses the chivalric nature of Orfeo's character, demonstrating honour, leadership, love, and sacrifice which ends favourably. Similarly, one of the most prevalent features of Orfeo's character is his harp. As we'll come to see, the harp is perhaps more a bearer of the poem's central themes as much as a podium on which to display Orfeo as a character. Ten years after his exile, our narrator states:

> *His heer of his beerd, blak and rowe,*
> *To his girdle-stede was growe.*
> *His harp whereon was al his glee*
> *He hidde in a holwe tree,*
>
> *(line 265-268)*

In this passage, the narrator specifically attributes a weathered Orfeo with the attributes of his harp, effectively telling the audience that the harp represents his personality. As Orfeo is unkempt, wild, and very much lacking in royal appearance, all the positives we have come to know from before his exile are present in the harp. The harp is never separated from Orfeo's character, as it is an integral part of him. In the same manner as Orfeo's character, the harp demands attention, exudes joy, and ignites the imagination of those present. Boenig states that the harp in *Beowulf* exemplifies the important thematic oppositions i.e. "civilization/chaos, light/dark, creation/destruction" (292). We can observe many of the same oppositions in *Sir Orfeo*, as the harp comes to symbolise the difference between Anglo-Saxon/Norman, chivalry/discourteousness, and Christian/heathen among others.

The word 'glee' presented in the previous example occurs once again when Orfeo is disguised as a bard in front of the fairy king's castle:

> *Parfay, ich am a minstrel, lo,*
> *To solace thy lord with my glee*
> *If his sweete wille be.*
>
> *(lines 382-384)*

As we can see in this example, Orfeo presents his profession and that he will perform for the fairy king with his 'glee'. Whether or not we define the word as joy or music they both employ the same meaning in this case. Either he performs with his joy, which according to the previous example lies within his harp, or he performs with his music, which is entirely dependent on his

harp. The effect of this is Orfeo presenting himself – the protagonist – to the fairy king – his adversary. As the harp encompasses Orfeo's personality, its own characteristics must be divinely heroic.

4.1.1 Performing the Narrative Using the Harp

As discussed in chapter 3, instruments can metonymically strengthen the different aspects of the narrative. Orfeo playing music for the fairy king provides a clear example of how this can be visualised:

> *Bifor the king he sat adown*
> *And took his harp so merye of soun,*
> *And trempreth it as he wel can.*
> *And blissful notes he ther gan*
> *That all that in the palais were*
> *Come to him for to heere,*
> *And lieth adown to his feete,*
> *Hem thinkth his melodye so sweete.*
> *(lines 435-442)*

Here Orfeo plays beautiful music, where the harp specifically is "merye of soun". If the performance of *Sir Orfeo* were accompanied by a harp, this would mean that the playing of the harp needed to reflect this quality of sweet melodies. In the least, we can assume the harper wouldn't play notes which were unpleasant, as that would contradict the narrative. Similarly, we may also assume that in accordance with the narrative, the performance of the harp is given more space and importance. Zaerr mentions the co-operation between the performed poetry and the accompanying instrument improvising rhythmic and narrative complexity (144). A pause in the text makes sense not only narratively, but also performatively. As the poem is structured in rhymed couplets, it is perhaps not a coincidence that the notes from the harp begin at the end of one of these couplets:

> *And trempreth it as he wel can.*
> *And blissful notes he the gan*
> ***(narrative pause as harp plays melody)***
> *That all that in the palais were*
> *Come to him for to heere,*
> *(lines 437-440)*

The performative pause of narration between Orfeo commencing the harping and the audience gathering to hear would give the harp time to play and perform Orfeo's music. Similar to how the audience reacts in *Sir Orfeo*, the rhythmic allowance for space gives the harp room to refer to the character of Orfeo.

Additionally, Bennett writes that the word 'blissfull' is often used to describe heavenly grace, and that this in turn established Orfeo as a devout religious character (Bennett 10). Looking to how this is used in the poem, the harp itself plays a big role in exemplifying the religious themes as Bennett writes: "In the first performance, the harp creates what the Fairy palace can only imitate — the glory of Heaven — and Orfeo's music succeeds in influencing events and rescuing Heurodis where military power and kingship have failed" (10).

4.1.2 The Metonymic Harp

Sir Orfeo's harp carries enormous weight in the narrative, not only in the expression of Orfeo as a character, but also in the outcome of the story. The harp then metonymically refers to two things: the kingdom and the importance of its moral righteousness, and Orfeo himself. The former I would argue expresses oral-formulaic word-power, in that it engages the knowledge of the audience of regal situations and their musical inclusions. Similar to what Lerer suggests on the architecture which would be known by the audience, the harp refers to the architecture – or common knowledge – of their kingdom. Comparing this to the kingdom at the time in a state of moral change, the harp grounds the audience in the knowledge of the correct proceedings of traditional rule. The latter I would argue expresses performance-centric word-power, in that it refers to the performance itself, expressing and emphasizing Orfeo's character which the audience comes to know. It is a way for the performers to use what has been established about the character to bring forth new meaning, and to stress the tension of important narrative moments.

Beginning with the former, the metonymic reference is grounded in examples from other performances. Consider this passage from *Lai le Freine*:

> *When kings might our yhere*
> *Of ani mervailes that ther were,*
> *thai token an harp in gle and game,*
> *and maked a lay and gaf in name.*
> *(lines 15-8)*

The harp in this example is used in tandem with royalty. The use of the plural "kings" suggests that the act of writing down and composing lays as a part of oral tradition is a trend or norm in royal society. This example not only associates the harp with royalty, but also that royalty is expected to harbour innate understandings of composition. In *Guy of Warwick*, we see royalty again having knowledge of the bardic arts:

> *Þe king hadde a douȝter fair:*
> *Of al Aufrik ȝhe was air,*
> *A swiþe fair ȝonling.*
> *Meche ȝhe kouþe of menstralcie,*
> *Of harpe, of fiþele, of sautri,*
> *Of romaunce reding.*
>
> <div align="center">*(lines 139-144)*</div>

Orfeo's harp thus refers to royal stature. However, missing from *Sir Orfeo* is any description of the instrument's appearance. This omission of visual clues does two things. Firstly, it serves the performance in much the same way as previously mentioned with the co-operation between instrument and narration. The audience would not need to hear a description of the instrument if it is displayed in front of them. Secondly, the instrument itself functions as an adequate description due to the architecture it conveys. The harp is the expression of a kingdom and the traditional values of pre-conquest England.

Taking a look at an example from the text, we see that the Orfeo's harp is not described physically, but rather that the effects garnered from expressing through the harp call on the religious and moral conventions of the time:

> *Orfeo most of any thing*
> *Loved the glee of harping:*
> *Siker was every good harpour*
> *Of him to have muche honour.*
> *Himself he learned for to harpe,*
> *And laide theron his wittes sharpe;*
> *He learned so ther nothing was*
> *A better harpour in no plas.*
> *In al the world was no man bore*
> *That ones Orfeo sat before,*

And he mighte of his harping heere,

But he sholde thinke that he were

In oon of the joyes of Paradis,

Swich melodye in his harping is.

(lines 37-50)

It is specifically interesting that the narrator calls to attention that "every good harpour" would be certain of Orfeo's honour, as this suggests that the profession and skill with the harp is honourable in itself. As Orfeo is a king, the harp then becomes a means to the end that is royalty. Orfeo sits at the precipice of this profession as the best harper in the world. With such attention afforded to the harp, it is bound to carry a lot of weight as word-power. The harp as a symbol informs the audience of the qualities behind the instrument. They are told that Orfeo is an honourable and ideal person through the instrument. The audience's previous knowledge of the bardic profession lies with many different areas of ordinary society either in courts or in streets, with travelling minstrels and hired performers, but are contrasted with Orfeo's extraordinary abilities. Orfeo is an exceptional bard as a result of his instrument, as the harp is what is receiving the attention.

4.2 Sir Orfeo's Performance

Determining the bardic qualities of Orfeo and the effect of those on the narrative and the audience can prove to be difficult. The common traits of bards as performers and travellers in post-conquest England mean that either Orfeo represents different qualities or that the perception by us as an audience is construed to be metaphorical. Tischler echoes the very common notion amongst scholars that music, along with cultural context, is up for interpretation (225). Any ideas from the text as to who composed it, how many musicians were present, the instruments available and the culture surrounding the performance will always be conjecture based on our interpretations. However, as we interpret themes, we can also make educated assertions as to the possibilities of the cultural surroundings of the performance and therefore its contents. I argue that the text suggests different qualities than the cultural norms of the time, and that in bending the audiences understanding to fit with the moral and religious themes of the romance, the poet is able to make it more relatable.

4.2.1 Orfeo as a Protagonist

The middle English romance focuses on themes of love, chivalry, morality, and loyalty, all of which are strongly present in the *Sir Orfeo*. The chivalric theme is specifically poignant

as often the protagonists inhabit heroic qualities of some sort. In *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* Sir Gawain overcomes the green knight's challenge by exhibiting courage and will. He gains respect as a knight due to these qualities. Similarly, *Gawain and the Green Knight* along with all the other Arthurian romances have strong connections to Christianity.

Along with other post-conquest bards, much of the Orfeo poetry which hints at Christianity is done with the intention of encouraging devotion in the audience. Niles writes about how a "disguised minstrel" would intercept commoners by including scripture in his songs (*Impact of the Conquest* 21).

Important to note is the portrayal of Orfeo and how he differs from the traditional Greek Orpheus myth. As the Orpheus myth would likely have circularized from Rome to some degree, it would have been a part of the vernacular for bards. Considering that *Sir Orfeo* was popular enough to allow for several surviving manuscripts, the poet would be able to use this popularity to strengthen the ideas of Orfeo in the poem. The biggest difference between the Orpheus myth and *Sir Orfeo* is that the latter has a happy ending. Sir Orfeo is successful in his ventures to save his wife. The Greek myth sees Orpheus travel to the Hades' underworld in order to bring his wife Eurydice back from the dead. However, as he does not fulfil the condition set by Hades – that Orpheus does not look back at Eurydice as they walk out – Eurydice is trapped in the underworld forever, and Orpheus dies and is forced to stay in the mortal realm to sing forever. Sir Orfeo saves his wife, is crowned king anew, and lives happily ever after, ending with a Breton lay.

> *Harpours in Britain after than*
> *Herde how this merveile bigan*
> *And made a lay of good liking,*
> *And nempned it after the king.*
> *That lay is "Orfeo" yhote:*
> *Good is the lay, sweete is the note.*
> *Thus cam Sir Orfeo out of his care:*
> *God grante us alle wel to fare.*
> <div align="center">*(lines 601-608)*</div>

Sir Orfeo has a happy ending simply because it is a religious poem. The perception of God by the audience would differ wildly were it to end similarly to the Orpheus myth. This knowledge of the performance arena being actively engaged in during composition and performance is

intentional. Mentions of Christian sentiment is practically present in every other line of the poem. The poem even ends on the notion that "May God guide us in our travels." The idea being shared is not only of Orfeo as a moral idol to strive towards, but also as a religious pylon which may be much more relatable than the clergy preaching in the church. Sir Orfeo is much closer to the Anglo-Saxon English vernacular, while containing all of the modern teachings. As the story aims to include tradition from Anglo-Saxon identity, it effectively says that being devoted to one's faith in God is also part of the Anglo-Saxon identity.

The Anglo-Saxon identity is then a significant theme of the poem, as the intent is rooted in the cultural past of England. Dominique Battles' article "*Sir Orfeo* and English Identity" shows us a different example of this. She argues that the pacifistic tactics used by Orfeo are "often associated with Anglo-Saxons in other post-Conquest texts" (185). Orfeo makes the choice to resolve the dispute in a non-violent manner. This is in stark contrast to the fairy king, who displays the amount of power available to him through his army. As Battles states, this evokes "the portrait of the Norman invaders," effectively making Orfeo a representative of the Anglo-Saxons (186). Similar to Lerer's exploration of the architecture of the fairy king's castle and its impact on the audience, Battles suggests that the Orfeo's and the fairy king's castles are culturally different. Essentially, Norman castles were more closely related to private accommodations for royalty, rather than as fortifications (187). We see this in *Sir Orfeo,* as the fairy king's castle is treated as a domain directly linked to the character rather than a shared space for public affairs:

> *Amidde the lond a castel he seigh,*
> *Riche and real and wonder heigh.*
> *Al the utemoste wal*
> *Was cleer and shined as crystal.*
> *An hundred towres ther were aboute,*
> *Degiseliche, and batailed stoute.*
> *(lines 355-360)*

The difference in tone between Orfeo and the fairy king's castle is immense and paints the fairy king as an aristocratic figure which, as Battles states, the Anglo-Saxon audience would inherently understand as being aristocratic when compared to Norman architecture (188). Considering our earlier examination of the religious aspect of the poem, the performance

strikes a balance between representing nostalgic Anglo-Saxon themes and creating new inherent meaning.

4.2.2 Orfeo, Nature and Christianity

Orfeo's relationship with his instrument substantially influences his bardic character traits. As Camacho and Perez suggest, music can be viewed as an interaction with nature (32). I would argue then, that the inclusion of the harp is used by Orfeo not only to symbolise nature, but also to symbolise Christianity and the virtues within it. Firstly, we can interpret that Orfeo's instrument represents nature because it is associated with descriptions of it. Consider this short passage as Orfeo being searches for the fairy kingdom:

> *His heer of his beerd, blak and rowe,*
> *To his girdle-stede was growe.*
> *His harp whereon was al his glee*
> *He hidde in a holwe tree,*
>
> > *(line 265-268)*

Previously, we argued that the harp is given the same qualities as Orfeo, as the harp is effectively a part of him. After all, the only possession Orfeo brings into the wilderness is his harp. Having established this, we further develop it through adding Camacho and Perez's idea of Orfeo summoning the audience's ideas of nature and associating them with himself. Right after the previous passage, Orfeo plays music which causes animals and nature to stop and listen:

> *And whan the weder was cleer and bright,*
> *He took his harp to him wel right,*
> *And harped at his owene wille:*
> *In all the woode the soun gan shille,*
> *That wilde beestes that ther beeth*
> *For joy abouten him they teeth;*
> *And alle the fowles that ther were*
> *Come and sete on eech a brere*
> *To here his harping afine,*
> *So much melodye was thereine*
>
> > *(line 269-279)*

Here we can see much like we would with Snow White that Orfeo is very much a part of nature. This is also because Orfeo doesn't react much to the fact that the animals approach and listen. That is because Orfeo's music is a summoning of nature, which displays a harmony between him and the forest surrounding him. The Orfeo poet utilizes this, as he describes images of nature whilst including Orfeo in them. Therefore, we might say that Orfeo and his music are natural, rather than a construct of his own. Similarly, the imagery laid out in this passage depicts a tranquil and idyllic place similar to the garden of Eden. As Orfeo plays, it is his music which recalls the ideas of Eden.

This has an interesting effect on the audience, as their inherent knowledge of the performance of music is referenced. Both the start and the end of the poem reference pieces of societal "architecture" as explored by Lerer (98). Writing lays and performing them would be common along the tradition of minstrelsy. Therefore, as Orfeo is referencing cultural norms, such as the normalcy of gathering musicians, and the moral code of honour which is chivalric love, they are associated with the natural and religious descriptions of his playing. This in effect strengthens the moral architecture which the poet seeks to achieve, that being the combination of traditional English morals and the relatively new religion and culture. As stated earlier, the poem's inclusion of Christianity serves to strengthen the pre-conquest values and to unify parts of England. This, as we will see in "Cædmon's Hymn" also, establishes order which Longsworth also agrees with. As Orfeo's music is united with the descriptions of nature, they may be understood by the audience as being natural. This makes them susceptible to the ideas of the then modern Christianity into their traditions while creating a certain "harmony" of ideas.

Thus, Orfeo as a bardic character influences the audience's interpretation of the performance in several ways. Both as a religious figure and as a traditional connection to nature, Orfeo is understood by the audience as bridging the gap between the pre-conquest traditional values of England and the new influences brought by the Normans and the catholic church.

So far, we have looked into the musical qualities of *Sir Orfeo* and how these features compliment both the audience's perception of the story. Similarly, we have explored the contexts which the audience brings to the table. Some of our focus has been on the interplay between religion and the audience, and how the performance is in favour of encouraging devotion. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is commonly referred to as the first *history* of Anglo-Saxon England. "Cædmon's Hymn" is the retelling by Bede of a bard who performs a hymn based on the Christian creation myth. The hymn reads as follows:

> *Now we must praise heaven-kingdom's Guardian,*
>
> *the Measurer's might and his mind-plans,*
>
> *the work of the Glory-Father, when he of wonders of every one,*
>
> *eternal Lord, the beginning established.*
>
> *He first created for men's sons*
>
> *heaven as a roof, holy Creator;*
>
> *then middle-earth mankind's Guardian,*
>
> *eternal Lord, afterwards made–*
>
> *for men earth, Master almighty.*

Not only is the poem quite short, but it is also a third-degree account of the events. Cædmon recites the poem to the clergy where it becomes popular, before the venerable Bede picks it up and recites it in his history. It is unknown how Bede learns of the story as he is not mentioned in the story. Due to this observation, the translated poem presented offers a very clear *historical* oral traditional poem due to the passing down of information being known. This presents the possibility of considering how the poem has changed in intent, and also how the bardic qualities change the perception from the audience.

Should we regard Cædmon as a character of fiction similar to Sir Orfeo? Cædmon is a musician with remarkable skill, which would be demonstrated to the audience similar to the performance of *Sir Orfeo*. The difference is in how Cædmon is presented in the light of God. He is not courageous, he does not adhere to the status quo, and he is not a knight. One way we might explore these differences is by looking at the characters as being pre-, and post-devotees of Christianity. As Bede writes, "[Cædmon] had lived in the secular estate until he was well advanced in age without learning any songs" (Bede 31). Cædmon undergoes the journey of becoming religious, which is symbolised through his gifted ability to compose and sing.

Contrasting this, Sir Orfeo is already an established Christian. I have argued that Orfeo's musical talent is desirable to the audience and is therefore a catalyst for encouraging devotion in the performance. The performer engages in the audiences understanding of musical talent and relates it to religion, therefore bringing them together. In a similar fashion, I will argue that the same occurs in "Cædmon's Hymn". The performance speaks to the "longing for the life of Heaven in the hearts of many men," the many men being the non-religious members of the audience who need converting (Bede 31). The gift of song is related to converting to Christianity, rather than becoming more devout, as in *Sir Orfeo.*

Previously, the idea of *Sir Orfeo* strengthening the moral pillars of Anglo-Saxon England is argued to have been weaved into the lay, strengthening the foundation created by the Catholic church post-conquest. However, as "Cædmon's Hymn" aims to achieve the same goal as *Sir Orfeo*, we can examine the foundation which existed already and confirm connections between the two poems. The hymn is considerably shorter and more compact with information, achieving the same goal, but rather with a less entertaining intent. As "Cædmon's Hymn" seeks to impress the audience with the alliterative variation of God, *Sir Orfeo* attempts relate God to the achievements of man, and relate Christianity to the commoners, rather than the hymn relating to the greatness of God. Effectively, "Cædmon's Hymn" asks the audience to become Christian in order to praise God, whilst *Sir Orfeo* asks the audience to be Christian because that is what a moral Englishman does. *Sir Orfeo* achieves this by using the musical talent and Metonymity of the harp, whilst "Cædmon's Hymn" does this by using the Metonymity of the voice and God-given talent. The hymn itself does not give us the insight needed to unpack this argument. In order to do that, we must look to the context given by Bede in his retelling of the story.

5.1 Cædmon and His Voice

5.1.1 The Feast

One of the centrepieces of the story surrounds the feast, which sets up the relatability of Cædmon as a common person. In the history, Bede states that he would flee from feasts when "it was decided to have a good time by taking turns singing, whenever he would see the harp getting close to his place" (Bede 31). Several scholars, mainly Stephen Pollington, write about the importance of the mead-hall – or the meeting hall – in Anglo-Saxon society, and how it is the prime location for connection and plain-speaking. Pollington comments on Bede's

retelling in his article "The Mead-Hall Community" where he writes that "The hall in Cædmon's tale is so obviously a place of warmth and friendship that one might question why the herdsman wanted to leave, but the answer is clear: the price of sitting in the hall was participation, being part of the entertainment as much as of the audience" (24). Similarly, he shows in a fifteenth century carol that participation through song or any other form of entertainment was near mandatory:

> *If that he say he cannot sing,*
> *Some other sport then let him bring,*
> *That it may please at this feasting,*
> *(lines 5-7)*

The feast would be such an important custom in Anglo-Saxon England that Cædmon's rejection of participation is quite substantial. The fact that Cædmon leaves the feast willingly only when it is his turn to perform is certainly an important observation to make. It gives the performance of poetry and music a certain status. We may presume that most people of a significant status would have a degree of familiarity with oral and instrumental composition, simply due to the necessity of saving face at a feast. The implication of Bede's retelling states that this is not the first time Cædmon has left a feast when his musical challenges were summoned. Therefore, it is logical that showing Cædmon in this position would be recognised by the audience as breaking with tradition so to speak. The feast can then be viewed as a metonymic reference to status and pedigree. This scene is therefore brimming with inherent weight, as the audience would gain understanding of Cædmon simply through the cultural surroundings in which the particular line is written. Using the word *decided* is rather significant, as it states the expectance of quality that the music which was to be shared should have. As everyone had to partake, the actions of Cædmon perhaps were logical, as he did not with to ridicule himself or ruin the jovial nature of the harping. Should Cædmon partake, it would not live up to the standard of the other performances that evening. Contrary to the modern world, where the majority of people would act as Cædmon, music and poetics might have been a crucial part of any plebeian's life, making sure that the situation in question would be significant in describing Cædmon's person.

5.1.2 Cædmon's Compositional Prowess

Not only does Cædmon state according to Bede that he does not know how to sing, but also that he cannot sing (Bede 31). Exploring the self-consciousness in Cædmon would

certainly be worthy of a thesis on its own, however this tells us that at least Cædmon believes that his voice would bring a lower quality of entertainment to the feast. After he is forced to sing and realizes he has received his gift, he no longer has a problem with performing and trusting in his own abilities. Bede writes that "he [sang the] sweetest song, which sounded so delightful that he made his teachers, in their turn, his listeners" (Bede 32-3). It is then clear that Cædmon is turned a talented singer, but perhaps what is more interesting is his compositional talent gifted to him. His ability to compose verse is a bigger focus in the history, rather than his voice. We will address his voice again later on when discussing the performance of Cædmon's Hymn, as its significance is more important in portraying Cædmon as a character similar to Sir Orfeo being portrayed as a bard.

Cædmon is gifted the ability to compose improvisational verse to an extent. In his dream, he composes on the spot, and remembers the verse when he wakes. At other times, he is allowed a day to compose a specific piece of verse based on a story. As Cædmon is illiterate, his use of alliteration and metre exemplifies the purpose of his song. James Simpson in the stories preface (found in the Norton Anthology) suggests that Cædmon perhaps could always compose, and that he escaped performance at the feasts because he was "ashamed of knowing 'vain and idle' songs" (30). Considering the investigations of Bruce Holsinger is also useful, as he studies the *Historia* in its entirety. He suggests that "Cædmon's Hymn" is unreliable, as the author surrounded the story with other tales which strengthen the religious pedigree of Whitby (154-5). Regardless of whether his ability to perform songs was connected to the content of the songs he composed or not as Bede states, his voice, and his ability to compose rival that of Sir Orfeo.

Regarding as we did in *Sir Orfeo*, there is no doubt that the music is inherently understood by the audience as beautiful. Consider the line after he proves the existence of his gift: "...he converted it into the sweetest song, which sounded so delightful that he made his teachers, in their turn, his listeners" (Bede 32-3). Although "sweet" and "delightful" procure pleasant pictures in our mind, it is more so the captivation of his listeners which spark the images of beauty. In *Sir Orfeo*, the music is ascribed beauty due to the grandeur of both the player and the situation in which he finds himself. Likewise, for Cædmon, his music is ascribed beauty due to both his connection to the divine, but also due to his humble origin. It is entirely more captivating for *Cædmon* to be producing the sweet and delightful music, rather than an established clergyman.

When examining the music's qualities, there are other things to consider, such as the beauty of it only being ascribed to religious music. Cædmon is in fact not able to produce "vain and idle songs" which are secular in nature. Due to the vain and idle songs never being stated as bad or unpleasant, we can infer that beauty does not necessarily come from the music itself, but rather the music and the musician's purpose. The purpose of the musician being secular removes the music of virtue, and vice versa. Musical entertainment would centrainly be familiar to many of the locals, and would not be considered religious in purpose for many occasions (Pollington 24; Kavros 122). During the feast we can assume that the songs sung around the table were secular in nature, similar to the estate itself. In this sense the story of Cædmon reaches it's beauty not due to the "beauty and dignity" of Bede's words, but rather the purpose of teaching the audience the importance of religious ideals and goals.

5.2 "Cædmon's Hymn" as a Performance
5.2.1 The Purpose of "Cædmon's Hymn"

We have already touched lightly on "Cædmon's Hymn" as a performance in the previous sub-chapter, however what would be understood by the audience transcends the ideas presented previously of beauty and religiousness. As stated earlier, the purpose of the bard as described by Bede is more important to the performance than the skill inherent in the performer. Consider this line from Bede's recounting of the story: "Whatever he learned of holy Scripture with the aid of interpreters, he quickly turned into the sweetest and most moving poetry in his own language, that is to say English" (Bede 31). This line established several things. First and foremost, it shows that Cædmon's compositions were performed in English, the vernacular language of Anglo-Saxon England. However, it also clues us into that Cædmon did not only perform for the clergy but would also be able to perform for the laymen of his community. The next line of Bede's tells of how "It often happened that his songs kindled a contempt for this world and a longing for the life of Heaven in the hearts of many men" (Bede 31). As he performed his compositions which were religious in nature to a community of which most would be secular, the purpose of the hymn is clear. Cædmon's purpose is to spread Christianity through performance. This is further strengthened as we look to the hymn itself.

The hymn is short, and very concise. It details the creation myth of Christianity where God creates earth. And although the hymn can be summarized in one sentence, it is the weight of the content in each line which is of importance to the performance. Appositives of the ideas

of God exist in each line, giving different contexts to the creation of different aspects. These appositives are "heaven-kingdom's Guardian; the Measurer; the Glory-Father; eternal Lord; holy Creator; mankind's Guardian, and Master almighty". Although most are different in various aspects, they all serve to repeat ideas of God in the performance in order to reaffirm the idea of God as being the almighty figure that He is. The last line of Bede's retelling also reaffirms that the purpose of "Cædmon's Hymn" is to spread Christianity as Cædmon "sought to draw men away from the love of sin and to inspire them with the delight in the practice of good works" (Bede 33). Effectively, through the repetition of short and easy to remember verse, he asked laymen to look to religious songs and stories for entertainment, rather than the "vain and idle" songs which had previously been staples of the feast.

Similarly, Cædmon uses the hymn to relate to illiterates. Creation may be known to all, but as we look at the hymn, we can see that the composition is tailored to the understanding of the audience:

> *He first created he for the men's sons*
> *heaven as a roof, holy creator;*
> > *(lines 5-6)*

The audience would likely consist of secular laymen, with less inherent understanding of the metonymity of heaven as a concept. Therefore, Cædmon makes it tangible and relatable to the audience, stating that heaven is a roof above our heads. This leads to the understanding of the audience to be that God is likened to them, but as a father rather than a deity, as the laymen must do similar actions on a smaller scale. We see this done several times:

> *Now we must praise heaven-**kingdom's** Guardian*
> > *(line 1, boldened for emphasis)*
> *the **work** of the Glory-**Father***
> > *(line 3, boldened for emphasis)*

The concept of heaven is brought to the audience with the intention of having it develop through the performance. It is meant to make the concept stick to the audience through repetition and impression from the poem (Antomarini, 2004, p. 358).

The religious purpose of Cædmon also reflects the moral importance of his verse. Bede alludes to the many other stories performed by Cædmon as he received aid from his "interpreters". Should they be similar in nature to the first hymn he was gifted, they are arguably as concise and short. The purpose does not seem to lie solely with retelling of the

Christian story, but rather with the purpose behind the performer. Cædmon as a devout Christian follower and his purpose is what the audience is meant to interpret. As an illiterate farmer turned respected clergy, the intent is for the audience to interpret that as a relatable and possible outcome for themselves also. The key message lies with that Christianity is not something do divide the community but rather a part of the community in a strengthening process. It seeks to convert listeners by using the audience's inherent understanding of tradition, but also of Cædmon himself. In order for Cædmon's intent to be clear, the audience would need to know either Cædmon's origins and his gift, or there would have to be an explanation or an introduction to the song, aiding in the preaching of Christianity. As we look to the *Historia,* Bede tells us that Cædmon only "learned of holy Scripture with the aid of interpreters" because he did not have the ability to read himself.

The performance of *Sir Orfeo* lends the idea of music being an intervention of nature from the performer and therefore also the character. As Orfeo then can be interpreted figuratively as a harp due to the character effectively represeting the music he creates, we can see the same thing happening in "Cædmon's Hymn". However, the effect to which this works in "Cædmon's Hymn" is to a degree lesser than in *Sir Orfeo*. Regarding the previous argument of Cædmon avoiding mimicry of God in his performances, his "instrument" does not symbolize nature to the same effect as Orfeo. We could argue that Cædmon in fact *is* an instrument, but he is not calling to *nature* in the same way, but rather to his heavenly gift. As Cædmon performs, he can be understood by the audience to be interacting with God through his voice and therefore showcasing how Christianity affects him. This is similar to how Orfeo interacts with nature in his playing. As he plucks the strings of his lute, he creates music, which represents nature in the same way Cædmon's voice represents God. It is separate from the effect of Orfeo in that Cædmon is not himself God – or nature for that case – but a symbol for how being a part of the Christian faith affects him. Using Lerer's article we can similarly interpret that this symbolism for God in representation through music can also be a way to create *order* for the audience. Rather than reference inherent knowledge from the audience about their "societal architecture", Cædmon establishes an architecture in the variations of the hymn, and invites the audience to join in. Effectively, Cædmon uses himself as a representation of God's power to show the order that comes from converting. As Christian missionaries had already been preaching this for a while, perhaps it is Cædmon who belonged to the community prior to his gift who swayed the laymens' opinion (Cronan 334-6).

5.3 Comparing Performances Between "Cædmon's Hymn" and *Sir Orfeo*

Although discussing the similarities in performance between "Cædmon's Hymn" and *Sir Orfeo* serves to support the previous arguments on the use of music in poetry, it is to some degree done in vain. As both poems were performed, we will achieve a clearer and more wholesome overview of the performances by looking at both the similarities *and* the differences. It is through this study that we see clearly how the performances shaped the audiences interpretation of them. To some extent, we have already shown the correlation between two very different poems and how they used musical context to influence their audience's interpretation. However, there are glaring differences in how music is used, mainly that Cædmon's intent with song was not to serve himself as a poet, but rather to showcase the grace of God. Additionally, "Cædmon's Hymn" is part of a history, and would likely not be performed in the state that it was written. Several similarities between the poems can be seen, as they both have a focus on the performance of song and the purpose of their performances. The Orfeo poet attempts to morally unify the people of a post-conquest England in societal change. Cædmon and his clergy attempt to bring upon a change to the Anglo-Saxon laymen by skewing entertainment in the direction of Christianity. Additionally, looking at the rhythmic structure of the poems and their famed inclusion of music (voice in Cædmon and harp in Orfeo) they would likely both be performed using music. When we look to their respective performance arenas and their audiences inherent knowledge of the performances' content however, we see that the application of the performance is drastically different. Perhaps very interesting is that Orfeo is a character of fiction, whilst Cædmon is (likely) not. Scholars agree that Bede's *Historia* is the closest we have of a first chronicle of historical events. This in turn suggests that Cædmon would be performing the hymn without acting as a character. The purpose of song changes drastically as he is not portraying a character who sings, but rather uses song to represent the heavenly grace which has inspired him. Conversely, *Sir Orfeo* is performed by a bard who in performing, *mimics* the protagonist rather than representing him. As Orfeo plays sweet notes in the poem, the performer's purpose is to showcase the music's beauty. In effect, the music takes a more primary role in conveying meaning as opposed to Cædmon's hymn.

Ramey addresses the idea of *variation* in composition, and how this effectively functions in "Cædmon's Hymn to allow the audience to experience God in a multitude of ways (442-3). As a "perfect balance" of not imitating God in their compositions while also assuring the audience of Gods greatness was necessary and expected of Anglo-Saxon poets, these

variations are purposefully laid out to be non-inclusive of the performer. Cædmon does not sing of himself, but rather repeats the story which has been humbly given to him by God. The difference is important, as is obvious in *Sir Orfeo* where the opposite is the case. As the subject matter of the post-conquest poem deals with an arguably equally heaven-graced character as Cædmon, the difference between representing through music and imitating through music is highly important. The expectations garnered by the poem ensure that the performer will have to work very hard to fulfil the expectations of the audience. Consider these two passages from the poem:

> *He learned so ther nothing was*
> *A better harpour in no plas.*
> *In the world was no man bore*
> *That ones Orfeo sat before,*
> *And he mighte of his harping heere,*
> *But he sholde thinke that he were*
> *In oon of the joyes of Paradis,*
> *Swich melodye in his harping is.*
>   *(lines 41-49)*

> *"Bifor the king he sat adown*
> *And took his harp so merye of soun,*
> *And tempreth it as he wel can.*
> *And blissful notes he ther gan*
> *That alle that in the palais were*
> *Come to him for to here,*
> *And lieth adown to his feete,*
> *Hem thinkth his melodye so sweete."*
>   *(Line 435-443)*

The expectations set by the marvellous descriptions are perhaps beyond what a normal bard would be able to perform. Conversely, Cædmon specifically performs first as a layman to the clergy before – after leaving "secular life" – performing for a secular society in which he used to belong.

CONCLUSIONS

After examining the musical elements of both *Sir Orfeo* and "Cædmon's Hymn", there are clear observations to be made on the impact of improvisation in composition and performance. The oral-traditional compositional tools of Anglo-Saxon England serve the purpose of invigorating the practice of performance whilst asserting cultural values upon the audience. As the audience effectively melds their own inherent thoughts with those being integrated through variation and word-power, their cultural values shift into alignment with the performance. The addition of music serves as both a tool for performance and for enforcing the innate word-power of the performer. Through instrumental accompaniment and a connection to the natural, the performer makes the content of the poem relatable to the cultural norms of the audience. By examining two separate poems, one preceding the Norman Conquest and one proceeding, we have observed the ways in which these ideas are transferred, and ways in which they diverge to suit the current cultural trends. The ME bard is equally as important as the OE bard culturally. They serve similar purposes in bridging the gap between the societal ideals (clergy/nobility) and the common folk of England by relating moral themes to the audience's inherent knowledge of musical culture.

Narratively, we see that the metonymic references assigned to bardic characters remain consistent. They are applauded as an ideal for skill and virtue while simultaneously holding merit for being a source of entertainment and fame. Bardic characters are significant because they hold value as both a commoner and a noble. They aim to have the social divides of the Christian Anglo-Saxon England and an intruding Anglo-Norman society post-Conquest culturally intertwine.

The religious consistency across not only the poems, but the cultural context of each period in which they are set give clear indications of morality and understanding of how the natural world worked at the time. In Anglo-Saxon England, an abundance of variation and architectural word-power assures that the poems are easy to memorize and improvise around, both for the performer and the audience. This further increases the information retained by the audience and the inherent knowledge they eventually gain through exposure. In Anglo-Norman England, tapping into the audience's nostalgia of a pre-conquest culture aided in ensuring a smooth societal transition into the more unified religious society of London while keeping knowledge of tradition and pre-conquest culture alive. Allusions to chivalry, romance and moral justice are intertwined with those of God and heavenly grace, ultimately connecting them to the bardic character of Orfeo.

Our research aimed to show the interplay between performance and narrative by using the tangible medium of music. Because we are able to identify the significance between both Old English and Middle English literature, we can draw the conclusion that music served as an additional compositional tool for bardic performers *especially* when performing poetry with musical protagonists. The bardic narrative characters and the performing bards play off each other in order to strengthen the perception of the protagonist and effectively the performer. Effectively, our findings illuminate the performative intent behind the narrative. In "Cædmon's Hymn", the performer shapes the narrative in order to accommodate an audience with a lacking inherent knowledge of the concepts of heaven and God. Thus, the performance arena and the audience are highly influential to the shaping of the poem as without them the poem would likely not fulfil its purpose of creating metonymic references. Similarly, in *Sir Orfeo*, we identify the importance of romances in the cultural context of a Normanised England. The narrative is structured around securing traditional ideas of nationalism and honour in a country undergoing changes as a result of the Norman Conquest. Thus, the bardic character is sculpted to be relatable to an audience in need of reassurance of tradition.

There are limitations to this study. We have aimed to illuminate the performance practices of musicians both pre-, and post-conquest while examining the narrative meaning of the bardic characters portrayed during that time. It must be highlighted that even strong textual and contextual clues do not serve as accurate evidence of the actual performative and musical techniques employed during their composition. Bennett says it best as he writes that our extant poems "are not so much performances as echoes of performance, transmitted and transformed through a textual lens, presumably several degrees removed from 'real' performance (Bennett 2). *Sir Orfeo* and "Cædmon's Hymn" are written down by poets who either observed or heard of these performances. They were encouraged to improvise and adjust them for each audience, keying the audience into their own understanding of cultural norms. Thus, especially in the case of "Cædmon's Hymn" which was written at the behest of the Venerable Bede, our findings are ultimately conjecture. They are suggestions which aid our imagination in establishing a context for the texts we read.

Additionally, the field of oral tradition is vast, and continually developing due to the nature of its study. This thesis has focused on two greatly differing poems, in the hope of creating an understanding of the differences and similarities which occur as a result of oral tradition and bards that transfer them. As a result, there is not a wide enough array of primary texts. For future research, a greater focus could be placed on the extant historical texts

surrounding the poems, including influences from Europe, the middle east and Asia. Through this there would be a possibility for more greatly understanding the inherent knowledge of English poets and their audiences.

WORKS CITED

Amodio, Mark C. *The Anglo-Saxon Literature Handbook.* Wiley-Blackwell, 2014.

Antomarini, Brunella. "The Acoustical Prehistory of Poetry." *New Literary History,* vol. 35, no. 3, 2004, pp. 355-72.

Ashton, Gail. *Medieval English Romance in Context.* Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 2010.

Battles, Dominique. "Sir Orfeo and English Identity*." Studies in Philology,* vol. 107, no. 2, 2010, pp. 179-211.

Bede. "*From* An Ecclesiastical History of the English People." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Middle Ages*, 10th ed., edited by James Simpson, W. W. Norton & Company, 2018, pp. 31-3.

Behtash, Esmail Z., Toroujeni, Seyyed M. H., Samani, Farzane S. "An Introduction to Medieval English: The Historical and Literary Context, Traces of Church and Philosophical Movements in the Literature." *Advances in Language and Literacy Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2017, pp. 143-51.

Bennett, Alana. "For musike meueþ affecciouns': Interpreting Harp Performance in Medieval Romance." *Ceræ: An Australasian Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol. 2, 2015.

Besserman, Lawrence L. *Biblical Paradigms in Medieval English Literature : from Caedmon to Malory.* Routledge, 2012.

Boenig, Robert. "The Anglo-Saxon Harp." *Speculum,* vol. 71, no. 2, 1996, pp. 290-320.

Camacho, Manuel B., Pérez, Miguel R. "The Harp and the Poet: The Harp as a Metaphor for the Romantic Heart." *Anglo Saxonica,* vol 3, no. 15, 2018, pp. 27-49.

Cronan, Dennis. "Cædmon's Audience." *Studies in Philology,* vol. 109. no. 4, 2012, pp. 333-63.

Foley, John. M. *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic.* Indiana University Press, 1991.

---. *The Singer of Tales in Performance.* Indiana University Press, 1995.

French, Walter H. "Windsith and the Scop." *PMLA,* vol. 60, no. 3, 1945, pp. 623-30.

Heaney, Seamus, translator. "Beowulf." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Middle Ages*, 10th ed., edited by James Simpson, W. W. Norton & Company, 2018, pp. 42-109.

Holsinger, Bruce. "The Parable of Caedmon's "Hymn": Liturgical Invention and Literary Tradition." *Journal of English and Germanic Philology,* vol. 106, no. 2, 2007, pp. 149-75.

Horton, Lisa M. "Singing the Story: Narrative Voice and the Old English Scop." *The Hilltop Review,* vol. 4, no. 1, 2010, pp. 45-57.

Kavros, H. E. "Swefan Æfter Symble: The Feast-sleep Theme in Beowulf. *Neophilologus,* vol. 65, 1981, pp. 120-8.

Lerer, Seth. "Artifice and Artistry in Sir Orfeo". *Speculum,* vol. 60, no. 1, 1985, pp. 92-109.

Longsworth, Robert M. ""Sir Orfeo". the Minstrel, and the Minstrel's Art." *Studies in Philology,* vol. 79, no. 1, 1982, pp. 1-11.

Lord, Albert B. *The Singer of Tales.* Harvard University Press, 1960.

Lundblad, Sonya L. V. *Old Englishness in King Horn and Athelston.* Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020.

Moore, Sarah C. *The Importance of Disguise in the Middle English Romances.* 2017. University of Tennessee, MA Thesis.

Niles, John D. *The Impact of the Norman Conquest*. The Idea of Anglo-Saxon England 1066-1901*,* Wiley-Blackwell, 2015, pp. 1-49.

---. "The Myth of the Anglo-Saxon Poet." *Western Folklore,* vol. 62, no. 1/2, 2003, pp. 7-61.

Pestell, Tim. *Landscapes of Monastic Foundation: The Establishment of Religious Houses in East Anglia, c.650-1200.* Boydell Press, 2004.

Pollington, Stephen. "The mead-hall community." *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2011, pp. 19-33.

Ramey, Peter. "Variation and the Poetics of Oral Performance in Cædmon's Hymn." *Neophilologus,* vol. 96, 2012, pp. 441-56

"Sir Orfeo." *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Middle Ages*, 10th ed., edited by James Simpson, W. W. Norton & Company, 2018, pp. 188-200.

Southworth, John. *The English Medieval Minstrel.* Boydell Press, 1989.

Tischler, Hans. "The Performance of Medieval Songs." *Revue belge de Musicologie,* vol. 43, 1989, pp. 225-42.

Treitler, Leo. *Medieval Improvisation.* With Voice and Pen: Coming to Know Medieval Song and How it Was Made. Oxford University Press Inc., 2003, pp. 1-38.

---. *Written Music and Oral Music: Improvisation in Medieval Performance.* With Voice and Pen: Coming to Know Medieval Song and How it Was Made. Oxford University Press Inc., 2003, pp. 39-67.

Westrup, J. A. *Medieval Song.* Early Medieval Music up to 1300, edited by Don Anselm Hughes. Oxford University Press, 1954, pp. 220-66.

Williams, John E. C. *The Court Poet in Medieval Ireland.* Sir John Rhŷs Memorial Lecture, Oxford University Press, 1972, pp. 85-135.

Wrenn, C. L. "Two Anglo-Saxon Harps." *Comparative Literature,* vol. 14, no. 1, 1962, pp. 118-28.

Zaerr, L. M. *Performance and the Middle English Romance.* D.S. Brewer, 2012.