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# STUDIES IN ICONOGRAPHY



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# STUDIES IN ICONOGRAPHY

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## PLEYINGE AND PEYNTYNGE: PERFORMING THE DANCE OF DEATH

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*Elina Gertsman*

We know the original relation of the theater and the cult of the Dead: the first actors separated themselves from the community by playing the role of the Dead: to make oneself up was to designate oneself as a body simultaneously living and dead.

Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*.<sup>1</sup>

. . . sithen it is leueful to han the myraclis of God peyntid, why is not as wel leueful to han the myraclis of God pleyed? sythen men mowen bettere reden the wille of God and his meruelous werkis in the pleyinge of hem than in the peyntyng and betere thei ben holden in mennus mynde and oftere rehersed by the pleyinge of hem than by the peyntyng, for this is a deed bok, the tother a qu[i]ck.

“A tretise of miraclis pleyinge” from  
*Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*.<sup>2</sup>

“The actors presented all ranks, from crown to shepherd’s crook. Each time, one of the dancers disappeared, to indicate that each would come to an end, king and shepherd alike. [ . . . ] This dance, no doubt, was none other than the famous *danse macabre*.”<sup>3</sup> With this casual description of a now-lost fourteenth-century document from the Caudebec church archives, abbot Miette provides scholars with a hint that points to the connection between the Dance of Death imagery and theatrical performances.

Indeed, the Dance of Death paintings incorporate a number of visual and textual elements that alert us to the fact of their performativity: not only do they bear vestiges of enacted performances but they also offer cues for performative readings. On the wall, frozen in mid-motion, the hieratically arranged procession of men and women of different classes and ages, interspersed by corpses or skeletons, stands squarely above the inscribed verses, which comprise a dialogue between Death and the living; the poem articulates men’s equality in the eyes of death and the necessity to prepare for this death by way of repenting (Fig. 1). There is a distinct sense that the characters in the procession are not only demonstrating their identity through the particular articles of clothing they wear but that they also offer



Figure 1. Bernt Notke, *The Dance of Death in Lübeck*, ca. 1463. Detail: Empress, Cardinal, King. (Photo: W. Castelli, courtesy Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck).

to the viewer a carefully chosen display of costumes.<sup>4</sup> In the Lübeck Dance of Death, for instance, figures are carefully arranged in a row, each clearly displaying his or her attributes: the Pope carries a double-crossed staff; the Emperor, a heavy crown upon his head, dressed in a rich brocaded gown with an ermine mantle draped around his shoulders, holds a sword and a golden orb capped by a cross (Fig. 2). The Nobleman cocks his head and executes a dancing step that best showcases his elegant, richly decorated robes, and stretches his left arm to the side to display his falcon (Fig. 3). While the skeletons, partially draped in linen strips, twist their bodies in frenzy, the living stand very still, looking at the viewer, consciously displaying their attributes, as if making sure that they are clearly identified: the Cardinal by his hat, the Physician by his urine bottle, the Burgher by his keys. Moreover, each stanza in the verses inscribed below includes Death's summons and a particular character's reaction to this summons—commonly, their violent rejection of the coming of death.

The positions of these full-length figures, in fact, are reminiscent of the arrangement of the figures that announce the cast of *dramatis personae* in medieval drama manuscripts. In their article "Performative Reading: The Illustrated Manuscripts of Arnoul Gréban's *Mystère de la Passion*," Pamela Sheingorn and Robert Clark give a number of examples for such an arrangement: when the characters in such manuscripts are introduced for the first time—what the authors call "first speech miniatures"—they are accompanied by small illustrations at the side, parallel



Figure 2. Bernt Notke, *The Dance of Death in Lübeck*, ca. 1463. Detail: Pope and Emperor. (Photo: W. Castelli, courtesy Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck).



Figure 3. Bernt Notke, *The Dance of Death in Lübeck*, ca. 1463. Detail: Nobleman. (Photo: W. Castelli, courtesy Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck).

to the text, that depict the characters in question.<sup>5</sup> Usually, the figures appear only once, by way of overture, and then vanish from the pages for good. This is also true of the Dance of Death characters, whose images are delineated above the words they speak only once—because they indeed appear only once. In other words, they look like actors whose likeness has been introduced for the first time along with the words they utter.

The multivalent relationships between art and drama in the late Middle Ages have been well-established: as early as 1906, Émile Mâle brought attention to the fifteenth century as an especially fruitful period of collaboration between visual and performative cultures.<sup>6</sup> Mâle's conclusions, however problematic, sparked an extended debate about the relationship between art and theater.<sup>7</sup> Most recently, this discussion has been refined to consider them both as integral parts of a shared cultural discourse: so, in her 1995 article "Medieval Drama Studies and the New Art History," Sheingorn called for an erasure of boundaries between studies in art history and in medieval drama.<sup>8</sup> In this spirit, and in order to advance beyond simply identifying potential relationships between the Dance of Death imagery and dramatic enactments—an idea first formulated by Mâle and later adopted by other scholars, James Clark and Paul Binski among them<sup>9</sup>—I propose to explore the performative traits of the *danse macabre* paintings by employing the viewer-response theory that hinges on the discipline of semiotics. Semiotics allows for the consideration of visual objects of inquiry as cultural signs mediated, in varying degrees, not only by an artist or a patron but also by an audience. In his *The Pursuit of Signs* (1981), Jonathan Culler postulates that this kind of inquiry "does not interpret works but tries to discover the conventions which make meaning possible."<sup>10</sup> Further, he draws a parallel between semioticians and linguists:

Just as the task of linguists is not to tell us what individual sentences mean but to explain according to what rules their elements combine and contrast to produce the meanings sentences have for speakers of a language, so the semiotician attempts to discover the nature of the codes which make literary communication possible.<sup>11</sup>

The same can be said about the scholar of art history, who, instead of explaining what individual images mean, may wish to explore the nature of the codes that offer the possibility of visual communication. In exploring performativity of the Dance of Death text and imagery, this article attempts to determine the conventions that make the meaning(s) of the *danse macabre* possible. Interpretive criticism of particular images and their accompanying texts will be predicated on the existence of the viewer "as a decisive component of any meaningful literary [or visual] analysis."<sup>12</sup> In considering Dance of Death paintings as sites of interaction between the

text, the image and the beholder, this article explores the way the *danse macabre* exerts power over its viewer, structures his or her experience, and is, in turn, structured by that experience itself. The article finally inquires into the purpose and implication of converting the dynamic act of a theatrical performance into a static painting, thereby underscoring the necessity of investigating visual cues within Dance of Death paintings as tools for understanding the cycle's ultimate reception within the framework of its performativity.

## Defining Performativity

*Performativity* is a loaded and flexible term that has come to signify a number of distinct concepts in contemporary scholarship.<sup>13</sup> In linguistic theory, a performative is seen as a “discursive practice which enacts or produces what it names.”<sup>14</sup> The feminist philosopher Judith Butler, in *Bodies That Matter*, grapples with this concept and reformulates the performative as a “‘citation’ based on the principle that all intelligibility is a matter of . . . repetition.”<sup>15</sup> While discussing questions of sexual identity, Butler distinguishes between “performance” and “performativity” claiming that “the latter consists in a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of the performer’s ‘will’ or ‘choice.’”<sup>16</sup> In literary studies, this enforced passivity and constraint of the performer is taken a step further: a group of Berlin scholars, specifically interested in performativity of medieval texts, discusses the powerlessness of the performer in question to control the circulation of meaning.<sup>17</sup> For Hans-Jürgen Bachorski, Werner Röcke, Hans Rudolf Velten, and Frank Wittchow, as articulated in their article “Performativität und Lachkultur in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit,” it is this dependence on situational context, ultimately contingent upon the audience, that makes up a large part of the performative act and/or text.

A similar construct of performativity, this time specifically focused on art historical scholarship, is explored in the collection edited by Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson, *Performing the Body/Performing the Text*.<sup>18</sup> In the introduction to the collection, the authors define “performativity” as a dual agent: one that denies the role of the artwork as a static object, and another that highlights the traditional relationship of critics to the works of art, from which they seek to elicit “true meaning” and “cultural value.”<sup>19</sup> In their words, “artistic meaning can be understood as enacted through interpretive engagements that are themselves performative in their intersubjectivity.” This definition of performativity places emphatic stress on the spectator, bringing attention to “the complex web of relations among artists, patrons, collectors, and both specialized and non-specialized viewers.”<sup>20</sup>

Jones's and Stephenson's definition of the performative is therefore broad and all-encompassing. This article, in contrast, focuses on what is perhaps a more closely circumscribed concept of performativity, and formulates it as a combination of two defining characteristics of the *danse macabre* texts and images, viz.: traces of theatrical performances and cues for the enactment of such performances inscribed within the Dance of Death paintings themselves. My definition of performativity, then, stems from the formulation that Clark and Sheingorn put forth in their "Performative Reading" when discussing text and imagery of various manuscripts of Gréban's *Mystère*. While negotiating a complex relationship among theatrical performances, play manuscripts, and practices of their reading/performing, the authors argue that "the *mise en images* shaped the reader's reception and visualization of the . . . text. [ . . . ] The images were conceived to facilitate a specific kind of reading of the text, either by individuals or in small groups, a kind of reading we call 'performative.'"<sup>21</sup> In a very similar way, this article discusses intricate interconnections between medieval performances, mural paintings and practices of their viewing, while arguing that the Dance of Death images assisted the viewer with the visualization of the verses, and that, in turn, the verses were so formulated as to assist a particular way of reading of the images. Performance, to borrow from Paul Zumthor, becomes the moment of reception.<sup>22</sup>

### Performing the Dance of Death

The earliest representation of the Dance of Death took the form of a mural painted in 1425 at the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents in Paris<sup>23</sup> (Fig. 4). The popularity of the Dance of Death quickly spread, and *danse macabre* imagery began to appear not only in France but also in England, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland, and even in Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. The extent of its fame, however, is now hard to gauge: an enormous body of work has been compromised by equally enormous chance destruction. Plastered over in order to be covered by a newer, more fashionable subject in a newer, more fashionable style, or else destroyed along with the edifices on which they were painted, the *danse macabre* images suffered an exceptional streak of bad luck. From an immeasurably large body of fifteenth-century paintings, only a few survive, in one form or another, to attest to the former fame of the Dance of Death, and these are preserved mainly in Germany and France.<sup>24</sup> Particularly interesting are paintings from Paris (1425), Lübeck (1463),<sup>25</sup> Kermaria (1490),<sup>26</sup> Ferté-Loupière (1500),<sup>27</sup> and Berlin (1500),<sup>28</sup> in that they unmistakably demonstrate the vestiges of performances encoded both in their iconography and in the verses written below the images. These performative traces, as we will see,



Figure 4. The Dance of Death in Paris. Printed by Guyot Marchant in 1490. Detail: the Cardinal and the King. (Courtesy the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress).

transform into cues for the enactment of the Dance of Death, which allowed the message of the Dance to be performed, and thereby internalized and transformed into a rehearsed and therefore memorable lesson.

Dramatic roots of the *danse macabre*, and especially of its dreadful skeletal ghouls, may be traced to the personifications of Death that appeared in various feast day processions held in Swabian Gemünd, Haarlem, and at Aix-en-Provence, the last being the most curious. Orchestrated by King René in 1462, it included a series of so-called *entremets*, or small theatrical scenes.<sup>29</sup> Those featured devils hopping around King Herod and fighting with an angel for a soul; the Jews worshipping the Golden Calf;<sup>30</sup> Queen Sheba; three Magi following the star; a scene enacting the Massacre of the Innocents; a procession of the apostles headed by Judas, followed by St. Paul and concluded by Christ; young men riding horses; the dancers and the lepers; St. Christopher with Christ on his shoulder; and, finally, the character of Mouert (Death) that completed the procession. Death wore a black costume with skeletal bones painted over it, and swung its scythe on the ground, trying to touch everyone with it: to turn the entire world, it seems, into a massive *danse macabre*. Some of these live processions in particular have striking similarities with the painted processions of the Dance of Death. For instance, in the Swabian pageant that was heralded by the character of Death, certain actors pronounced verses as a

part of their act, a characteristic of the *danse macabre* cycles. Moreover, in the late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century Haarlem procession, the figure of Death was presented, to quote Eustache Langlois, “nude, emaciated and stripped of flesh,”<sup>31</sup> precisely the way it appears in many painted Dances of Death. Similarly, the *danse macabre* from the Berlin Marienkirche features figures of Death clad in tightly-fitting, pale attire, reminiscent of the “skin-colored costume” worn by an actor, dressed as Death, who participated in a 1507 procession that took place at Zerbst, not far from Berlin (Fig. 5).<sup>32</sup>

Likewise, personifications of Death appeared in fifteenth-century dramatic cycles as supremely vile characters, often placed alongside a Devil and Judas.<sup>33</sup> One play had Death continuously present on stage, waiting its turn to snatch those who died, including Christ. This performance, staged in the southern Austrian province of Carinthia and enacted in a public square on Good Friday, featured Death opening the first act with the words “Hodiè mihi, cras tibi” and subsequently pronouncing four monologues during the play, one before and one after Peter’s denial of Christ, one after the suicide of Judas, and the final one at the end of the play.<sup>34</sup>

Besides the dancing procession, mentioned by Miette and cited at the beginning of this article, we know of at least two dramatic performances of death connected to the *danse macabre* that took place in the fifteenth century.<sup>35</sup> References to these performances are found in the accounts of the dukes of Burgundy and the archives of the church of St. Jean at Besançon. In the first instance, in the year 1449, the Bruges painter Nicaise de Cambray enacted for Philippe le Bon in his own home “a certain play, history and morality, relating to the fact of the *danse macabre*.”<sup>36</sup> The expense account of the dukes of Burgundy, recorded between 1382 and 1481, states:

To the painter Nicaise of Cambray, from the city of Douay, to help him defray expenses for the month of September, in the year of 1449, in the city of Bruges, when he performed before the Duke, in his house, with his other companions, a certain play, history and morality about the fact of the Dance of Death . . . 8 francs.<sup>37</sup>

The record specifically states that this *danse macabre* was a “jeu”—a play—and it was indeed “joué”—played. There is no question that an actual performance took place, and that it had a didactic purpose, hence acquiring the name of “moralité.”

Four years later, Jean de Calais performed the so-called *Chorea Machabaeorum* after a Mass in the Franciscan church of St. Jean at Besançon. Charles Du Cange’s *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* includes this under the definition of “Machabaeorum Chorea”:



Figure 5. The Dance of Death in Berlin, ca. 1500. Detail: Figure of Death. (Photo: Courtesy Lukas Verlag).

Dance of Macchabees, commonly referred to as *Danse macabre*, ceremony in form of a play instituted by the ecclesiastics with a religious goal, and in which people of all classes those of the church or the empire, brought together in dance, disappeared one after another, showing by this that death takes everyone in his turn. Such use has been mentioned in the old manuscript from the church at Besançon, cited in *Le Mercure de France* in September of 1742, on page 1955: that the seneschal had to pay to Jean de Calais *la simaise* of wine, by *ledit matriculaire* to the one who, last July 10 (1453), after the hour of the Mass, performed the Dance of the Maccabees in the church of St. John the Evangelist, on the occasion of the provincial chapter of the minor friars.<sup>38</sup>

Here the Latin verb *fecerunt* is more ambiguous than *jouer*, because it might simply be translated as “did.” Within the context, however, it appears that the *danse macabre* was indeed enacted, and not painted, since the document specifies the particular date (July 10) and the hour (“*nuper lapsa hora missae*”) of the performance. A painting could hardly have been executed within a day, and, moreover, no record of such a painting is found in the archives of Besançon.

Records from Burgundy and Besançon provide a framework for further study of the Dance of Death paintings that points to their integration into the dramatic arts of the Middle Ages. Both documents, however, note dates posterior to the first Dance of Death fresco from the Holy Innocents. In order to demonstrate that the *danse macabre* imagery and its accompanying verses bear an inherent relationship with dramatic performances—that is, that the Dance was meant to be performed, its words pronounced, and its movement enacted—one needs to explore both the visual and textual evidence that Dance of Death frescoes have to offer. The active movement inscribed in these scenes, the aggressive body language of the characters, and exaggerated gestures evoke dramatic performances more so than any other contemporary paintings.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, the series of conflicts that unravels within the dialogical form of the Dance of Death verses offers a structure similar to that of dramatic plays: the lively exchange between the protagonists of the Dance asks to be performed, not just passively read. By establishing a dialogue across two media, the Dance of Death imagery offers insight into the interrelationship of dramatic performances, mural paintings and the modes of their viewing—and therefore insight into the engaged spectatorship these paintings were meant to elicit.

### **Visual Cues: Bodies and Gestures**

Movement, perhaps, is the first sign of the performativity of the Dance of Death, encoded both in the expressive movement of bodies and in the explicit gestures achieved by these bodies. Implicit in the *danse macabre* proper is the concept of dancing itself, which involves movement, and especially a conscious repetition

of particular elements of movement, including steps, body positions, and gestures. The Dance of Death panels translate this dynamic activity into life-size dancing figures painted on walls, and, in conjunction with the processional movement clearly rendered in each painting, present the viewer with action rivaled only by an actual theatrical performance.

That the Dance of Death, without fail, takes the form of a directed procession in the foreground of the paintings further underscores the concept of inherent active movement and brings to mind the progress of actors within the bounds of the improvised stage.<sup>40</sup> The background setting in these paintings plays a significant role in the way the movement is perceived. A detailed background, such as the one included in the Lübeck and Reval Dances, does not detract from the processional movement but rather heightens the sense of its reality, since it specifies towers, ramparts, churches, and gabled burgher houses,<sup>41</sup> particular to the Lübeck landscape (Fig. 6). With the landmark Kaiserturm, Mühlentohr and the Marienkirche sprinkled across the backdrop (Fig. 7),<sup>42</sup> it appears that men and women are literally moving past the city towards their graves. This might indicate that perhaps such performances took place not only inside but also outside in public places, like so many miracle cycles and morality plays.

Less defined is the setting of the *danse macabre* from the Cemetery of the Holy Innocents, which presented a long row of figures lined up at the very edge of the mural under round arches (Fig. 8). The figures of the living proceeded in the same general direction—towards the viewer's left, while the skeletons, represented in more ambiguous positions (many appeared to be simply dancing on one spot), denoted their participation in the moving procession by a turn of the head or the direction of their crossed legs. The purposefully indeterminate background offers the viewer a chance to focus on the movement of the figures and their body language, both of which indicate active participation in the procession.<sup>43</sup> This kind of movement, encoded in body language and gesture, signals another aspect of the relationship between Dance of Death performances and painted cycles: the strong dependence of both on the active use and figuration of the body and the importance of the gesture.<sup>44</sup>

Medieval culture understood the value of gestures: they merited an entire section in Caxton's *Mirroure of the World*, a fashionable encyclopedia of sorts, which enjoyed immense and immediate popularity in the late Middle Ages.<sup>45</sup> The treatise was translated from a French manuscript in 1480; the French version, *Image du Monde*, was itself translated from Latin in 1245.<sup>46</sup> *Mirroure of the World* addresses and underscores the importance of gesture: "Gesture is not only in excersising one parte of the body but in euey outward meber of the body / as in hede /



Figure 6. Bernt Notke, *The Dance of Death in Lübeck*, ca. 1463. Detail: Lübeck Panorama. The Burgher and the Canon. Background: Mühlentor, Kaiserturm, Dom, Absalomsturm, St. Aegidien, St. Johannis-Kloster, and St. Petri. (Photo: W. Castelli, courtesy Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck).



Figure 7. Bernt Notke, *The Dance of Death in Lübeck*, ca. 1463. Detail: Lübeck Panorama. The Nobleman. Background: Rathaus, St. Marien, St. Katharinen, St. Jacobi, Hl. Geist-Hospital, Burgkloster, Befestigungstürme, Inneres Burgtor, Äyeres Burtor, Gertruden-Friedhof. (Photo: W. Castelli, courtesy Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck).

armes / & leggs / and other vtt' partes / Therefore to euery mater that thou shalt vtt' thou must haue quemet gesture."<sup>47</sup> Medieval culture has been referred to as "gestural culture," and Jean-Claude Schmitt explains the value of this appellation not only in terms of the theory of gestures that comes from the Middle Ages but also in terms of "the movements and attitudes of the human body [that] played a crucial role in the social relationships of the past."<sup>48</sup> The importance of gesture in medieval society is witnessed by a large body of oral and written discourses that include texts of monastic rules, preaching manuals, and, significantly enough, liturgical dramas.<sup>49</sup>

Gestures played a seminal role both in medieval theater<sup>50</sup> and in dancing, which relied heavily on body language to represent internal mental states.<sup>51</sup> It is no wonder that gestures are clearly manifested in the Dance of Death murals and panels, evocative of performative acts: gestures lend these paintings a sense of artifice and endow the represented figures with an air of exaggerated enactment of their



Figure 8. The Dance of Death in Paris. Printed by Guyot Marchant in 1490. Detail: the Canon and the Merchant. (Courtesy the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress).

roles. Moreover, the paintings themselves provide keys to the interpretation of a profusion of gestures in the *danse macabre* imagery.

Many Dance of Death paintings fortuitously preserved the figure of the Preacher painted at the beginning or the end of the procession (Fig. 9). Here, the Preacher takes the place of a *festaiuolo*, particularly popular in Italian plays, or a *precursor* or *proclamator* who regularly appeared in French and German miracle productions, sometimes commenting on the play and pronouncing its prologue and/or epilogue.<sup>52</sup> Such is the function, for instance, of the N-Town manuscript's Contemplacio figure, who appears at the beginning of some of its plays and serves as an intermediary between the audience and the action.<sup>53</sup> In that, both Contemplacio and the Dance of Death Preacher are remarkably similar to the so-called framing figures, which became rather popular in fifteenth-century painting. Leon Battista Alberti particularly recommended their inclusion into the composition: "I like there to be someone in the 'historia' who tells the spectators what is going on, and either beckons them with his hand to look, [ . . . ] or points to some . . . remarkable thing in the picture, or by his gestures invites you to laugh or weep with them."<sup>54</sup> This, indeed, is the function and the role of the Preacher in the Dance of Death paintings, just as it was, perhaps, in performances: he instructed, admonished, pointed out important things, and invited the viewer to follow the pitiful journey of the dancers.



Figure 9. The Dance of Death in Paris. Printed by Guyot Marchant in 1490. Detail: the Preacher. (Courtesy the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress).

The Preacher's position at the pulpit, on the side of the procession, gives the viewer a sense of his continuous presence on stage, and his words, indeed, are addressed to both the dancing figures and the living audience; in fact, he specifically instructs the viewer about what is happening on the stage, i.e., the coming of Death. In the Dance of Death from Tallinn (Estonia), he exclaims:

O, reasonable creature, whether poor or rich!  
 Look here into this mirror, young and old,  
 and remember all  
 that no one can stay here  
 when death comes as you see here.  
 If we did good deeds  
 we can be together with God.  
 We will get the reward we justly deserve.  
 My dear children, I want to advise you  
 not to lead your sheep astray,  
 but to be to them a good model  
 Before death suddenly appears at your side.<sup>55</sup>

The Parisian mural, too, admonished those “reasonable creatures” who desire eternal life to carry themselves wisely, since everything—and everyone—is made from the same matter.<sup>56</sup> The English Dance at St. Paul’s church presented the Preacher who spoke of, among many other things, “Eche man / lowy take his chaunce Deth spareth not / pore ne blode royal.”<sup>57</sup> Although the Preacher does not necessarily look directly at the beholder, his words, aimed at both the procession and the viewer, cast him in the role of a narrator introducing a play.

The Preacher is thus the master of ceremonies, and what we have in front of us is an extensive illustrated sermon, a didactic performance of sorts translated into visual language. Lina Bolzoni cites a number of images—*The Triumph of Death* at Camposanto in Pisa among them—that share particular rhetorical codes with Dominican homilies.<sup>58</sup> In fact, fifteenth-century preachers often included visual imagery into their sermons: for instance, St. Bernardino da Siena (painted by Sano di Pietro ca. 1450 with the Christ’s Name triagram in his hands) quite possibly used a variety of paintings to make his sermons still more poignant. For example, while preaching in Siena on September 17 of 1726, and evoking Francis’s stigmata, Bernardino likely described an image that was then in place in the meeting hall located at the local convent: “Look closely at his [Francis’s] mouth, and see what it shows you. Oh, how that attitude pleases me!”<sup>59</sup> In the Dance of Death, the Preacher becomes one with the very image he comments upon, and the procession of Death transforms into the Preacher’s words made flesh, so-to-speak, since its figures appear to enact his admonishments. To understand the meaning of its participants’ gestures we will turn to works that specifically deal with gestures prescribed to preachers.

A number of instructions found in Caxton’s treatise work in concert with the Dance of Death images. To begin with, the rhetorical directions it gives to a sermonizing friar are clearly reflected in the figure of the Preacher. “And whan thou spekest of a weighty cause or mater to shewe a sad and solemn countenance,” teaches the *Mirror*, and adds “. . . whan thou spekest of a solempne mater to stande vp ryghte with lytell mevyng of thy body, but pyntyng it with thy fore finger.”<sup>60</sup> These words find almost direct reflection in the appearance of the *danse macabre* interlocutor. Every Dance of Death with a surviving figure of the Preacher—in Reval, Berlin, Meslay-le-Grenet, Kernascleden—has him positioned at a pulpit with utmost *gravitas*: his body rigidly straight and upright, his face mournful, his posture formal, his hand raised, his fingers pointing in admonition (Fig. 10). The living represented in the Dances are also subject to certain gestural rules found in the *Mirroure*. Certainly, their almost uniformly plaintive facial expressions (or, as Caxton’s treatise calls it, “the orderynge of thy face”) are directly related to “And whan thou spekest of a pytefull mater to shew a lamentable countenance & a heuy”<sup>61</sup> (Fig. 11).



Figure 10. The Dance of Death in Berlin, ca. 1500. Detail: The Preacher. (Photo: Courtesy Lukas Verlag).

And what of the dead—or Death? The skeletons or half-rotted corpses that wildly skip around their victims seem to be the merriest participants of the morbid show (Fig. 12). Do they, then, reflect the advice “as whan thou spekyng of a mery mater to shew a laughiyng and mery countenance?” Not at all, for they do not address merry matters but very serious ones, albeit with sarcasm and jest. Like the Preacher, they speak of death and the necessity to repent; like him, they urge the consideration of the inevitable end. Yet, the Preacher is compassionate and composed, while the skeletons are derisive and contemptuous (Fig. 13). Although their scorn echoes the friar’s warnings, their body language does not: the Preacher’s immobility at the pulpit is clearly juxtaposed with the fierce and disorderly movement of Death. This contrast is marked and purposeful: I propose here that the attitude of Death is deliberately distinguished from and diametrically opposed to the attitude of the Preacher.

In his treatise *De modo componendi sermones*, the Dominican Thomas Waleys warned the preacher to:

be very careful not to throw his body about with unrestrained movement—now suddenly lifting up his head high, now suddenly jerking it down, now turning to the right, and now with strange rapidity to the left, now stretching out both hands as if embracing east and west, now suddenly knitting hands together, now extending his hands immoderately, now suddenly pulling them back.<sup>62</sup>

While the *danse macabre* Preacher, always reserved and restrained, never disobeys these rules, the figures of Death very specifically do: exuberant, almost mad, they laugh in an exaggerated manner, throw their limbs around, and violently jerk their heads. These are the gestures deemed “unholy” in medieval culture—they are, in fact, gesticulations rather than gestures.<sup>63</sup> Here, the hysteria of Death, showcased in the skeletons’ uncontained gesticulations, is juxtaposed with the serene, composed and restrained body language of the Preacher—the body language developed by centuries of distillation of liturgical rites in monastic communities,<sup>64</sup> which points to the Preacher’s role of a shepherd who guides his distraught flock in apprehensive poise and pious quietude.

In medieval theater, as in medieval preaching theory, gestures were endowed with symbolic connotations; as Jody Enders so aptly put it, they “could do more than teach, move and stir: they could change lives just as much as they could change beliefs.”<sup>65</sup> Such was the purpose of the Dance of Death: to teach and impress, but also to change lives in preparation for imminent death. Gestures, as we have seen, play an important role in defining the essence of the Dance of Death, and their marked amplification and theatricality link the *danse* back to live performances, in



Figure 11. Bernt Notke, *The Dance of Death in Lübeck*, ca. 1463. Detail: the Cardinal. (Photo: W. Castelli, courtesy Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck).



Figure 12. Bernt Notke, *The Dance of Death in Lübeck*, ca. 1463. Detail: Prancing Death. Prancing Death grasping the Emperor and the Empress. (Photo: W. Castelli, courtesy Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck).



Figure 13. Bernt Notke, *The Dance of Death in Lübeck*, ca. 1463. Detail: Prancing Death. Prancing Death grasping the Curate and the Merchant. (Photo: W. Castelli, courtesy Museen für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte der Hansestadt Lübeck).

which the actors, in order to make their point clear, amplified their gestures, since these, after all, were supposed to express the “inner movements of the soul.”<sup>66</sup> In 1434, Alberti condemned the painters who “cast aside all dignity in painting and copy the movements of actors.”<sup>67</sup> Yet, the Dance of Death imagery is clearly at odds with the Albertian theory of painting. The intensified body language of the dancing

figures evokes theatrical performances and invites their re-enactment. These gestures are performative and participatory inasmuch as they engage the viewer and indicate the need for active involvement in the process of viewing.

### **Textual Cues: Conflict, Empathy, and Disconnection**

Not only the image but also the language of the Dance of Death poem invites involved participation from the beholder. Its dialogical structure, which reinforces the introduction of conflict, points to the performativity of its text. Such structure most often was found in the medieval texts that were meant to be performed. Two examples, both contemporary to the Dance of Death verses and especially evocative of their structure, provide insights into the way the *danse macabre* text was intended to be received.

The first example is the Redentin Easter play, produced in 1464 in Mecklenburg, not far from Lübeck.<sup>68</sup> The play includes a sequence best characterized as “soul-catching”: the devil sends demons to earth to hunt for souls, since Christ’s harrowing of hell has emptied it of all inhabitants. In the sequence that follows, demons are dispatched to grab any soul that comes their way: here, they play the role of Death and also seduce men and women into an eternity in hell. The dialogues between these lesser devils and human beings are uncannily similar to those between Death and the living in the Dance of Death.<sup>69</sup> There is an element of “snatching” in both, an element of surprise and antagonistic exchange between the unwilling victims and persistent pursuers—all signs of high theatricality, all elements of a successful, fast-paced, lively play.

Perhaps even closer to the Dance of Death conception of text is the so-called *Das Spiegelbuch*, which has been described as “an illustrated didactic book of the fifteenth century in dramatic form.”<sup>70</sup> It is unclear whether the scenes transcribed in the book were meant to be performed: its surviving texts in a few manuscripts take different forms—some are illustrated, while one, without any illustrations, is inscribed with red-colored stage directions, indicating that at least on some level these scenes may have been played out.<sup>71</sup> The *Spiegelbuch* is useful, inasmuch as it may provide us with an intermediate text, akin to the Dance of Death verses—not quite a morality play to be performed on stage, and not just a text to be merely read aloud.<sup>72</sup> Yet, unlike the Dance of Death poem that consistently follows the fates of its different participants, the *Spiegelbuch* comprises three seemingly separate bits of drama that all deal with humanity’s need to repent. The first tells of a young man and his conversion to Christianity; the second has a virgin deep in conversation with

the Devil and Death; and the third recounts discussions of the dead who talk about their punishment as they are tormented in hell.

It is the second scene that carries particular resonance with the Dance of Death text. First, it includes the figure of the Preacher, familiar to us from the *danse macabre* representations. Here, too, he is a wise interlocutor whose words are a call to repentance and contrition. Further, the woman's dialogue with Death is very similar to the one usually found in the Dance of Death, inasmuch as she laments her young life interrupted too soon, while Death explains the futility of her struggle against her fate.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, when the young woman dies at the end, she speaks as a corpse, not unlike the figure of the Dead King, so often placed at the end of the Dance of Death murals and prints as a powerful finale to the morbid tale.<sup>74</sup> Both call the viewer to contemplate the passing beauty of the world and its fleeting quality.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, some thirty-one lines in this scene are taken directly from one of the printed versions of the Dance of Death—specifically Knoblochzer's *Der doten dantz mit figuren clage und anwort*—providing a further link with the *danse macabre* texts.<sup>76</sup> The *Spiegelbuch* is performative at least as much as the Dance of Death verses are; the similarities between them are undeniable, and since the *Spiegelbuch* calls itself a dramatic text, it gives us cues to also consider the Dance of Death poem as drama.

In the Dance of Death verses, too, dialogue and direct address to the viewer take place, which is a fairly unusual trait. As a rule, in the medieval poems that featured different characters contemplating their death, a dialogue was not effected; rather, a series of moralized soliloquies succeeded one another. This is the case for *Vado mori* poem, a close textual corollary of the *danse macabre*, whose repetitive structure was formulated through a series of small soliloquies on death, each starting and ending with the words “vado mori”—“I will die”—declared by different characters.<sup>77</sup> Another such corollary, the *Legend of the Three Dead and the Three Living*, masks a string of monologues under the guise of a dialogical structure: each character talks in his own turn, and each monologue in itself is a separate poem that speaks of death, essentially, as *lex naturalis*.<sup>78</sup> The legend tells of three young men, dressed in their finest, who during the hunt encounter three corpses in various states of decay. In the resulting discussion between the living and the dead, the living are introduced to the baseness of human body and are urged to consider ephemeral quality of life. For instance, the second hunter opens his monologue just so:

“And so it is clear  
That death will conquer us  
And that we are destined to die  
There is no man  
Who can escape it [ . . . ]”<sup>79</sup>

The *danse macabre* poem, however, differs from the Legend and *Vado mori* verses, since its text presupposes an antagonistic exchange between the participants of the Dance. The *Vado mori* characters state evenly and somewhat monotonously that they will die, while the three hunters in the Legend are given a chance to contemplate their ghastly encounter in the forest and change their ways. The Dance of Death, conversely, gives its participants no such chance: theirs is a quick, bad death, *mors improvisa*,<sup>80</sup> and the words we read or hear are their last words.

As a result, not just one but a number of conflicts unfold before the viewer. Conflict, another characteristic of a dramatic play,<sup>81</sup> is evident in the Dance of Death imagery mainly through the aggressive quality of the dialogue or, rather, the series of dialogues between Death and the living. Each death brings about a different crisis, and in each the resolution is final, though not necessarily satisfactory to the living. For instance, in Kermaria, Death calls to the King: “Come, noble and crowned King, / Known for his strength and prowess [ . . . ] / But now all your high power / You must leave behind.”<sup>82</sup> The King attempts a struggle, claiming that he has never danced such crude dance: “I never learned to dance / Such savage dance and music,” but almost immediately he gives up, granting that “Death destroys all, such is its nature [ . . . ] / In the end one must turn into ashes”<sup>83</sup> (Fig. 14). Some characters are complacent—the Duke, for instance, recognizes that death is stronger than he is (“Je vois que la mort le plus fort”)—but others are actively unwilling to go: the Constable still wants to besiege castles and fortresses and acquire honor and riches, while the Archbishop even now contemplates the impossible escape (“Ou fuiray je pour moy aider?”).<sup>84</sup> The conflicts are always resolved by the end of the verse: the Constable recognizes that death lets no one escape, and the Archbishop admits that he must die since it is God’s law.<sup>85</sup>

The performativity of these texts, then, lies both in their form and their content. Hardly a series of uninvolved monologues, the eight-line verses succeeding one another presuppose a lively exchange between the participants of the Dance; in other words, they call to be performed. These exchanges, furthermore, allow for the act of performance due to the antagonistic quality of the dialogue, which calls for an active conversation between the characters. The conflict between Death and the living, as well as the internal struggle of each character, bears on the viewers who are left to experience a conflict of their own—a conflict that builds upon the tension arising between the text and image of the Dance of Death itself and the reaction of the viewers to such a cycle. On one hand, the viewers are called to identify with the participants of the Dance, the unfortunate sinners who are in dire need of atonement for their transgressions. On the other hand, this identification is immediately disrupted, as the beholders are distanced from the dancers who are

Mors

Nobilis rex cum Vestra corona  
Accedite iam satis fuistis  
formidatus ab omni persona  
Pompis fulgens nunc pauper eritis  
Nec honores hos importabitis  
Ad extremum Veniens examer  
De thesauris nullos habebitis  
Ditioni solum lintheamen

Rex

Non didici choream facere  
Tam siluestrem nec odam flebilem  
Imitari. heu quid est agere  
Contra mortem nimis terribilem  
Non respicit personam nobilem  
Genus forma et queque Veniunt  
In hoc mundo nil sunt apud illam  
Omnes cinis finaliter fiunt

Figure 14. The Dance of Death in Paris. Printed by Guyot Marchant in 1490. Detail: the dialogue between Death and the King. (Courtesy the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Library of Congress).

seized unaware, suddenly and ruthlessly. The viewers, the intended recipients of the didactic message, have time to contemplate upon the meaning of the moral. They, the viewers, after looking at the painting and reading the verses, will never be found in the same position as the unfortunate dancers, since the Dance of Death acts as a warning. The beholders no longer resemble the wretched souls painted before them, and can no longer identify with them completely. Like the dancers, they are sinners, but forewarned ones, for now they know that death may come at any moment. The simultaneous identification and distancing, empathy and disconnection, are effective: as the participants of the Dance of Death work through their individual crises with death, the viewers are left to undergo their own conflict.

This concept works still further on the level of the verses.<sup>86</sup> The texts differ from one to another: we have seen that the verses from Paris and Kermaria are more learned than those produced in Lübeck and Reval. Still, even the more erudite French text was meant to be understood by the majority, and was meant, therefore, to elicit a kind of visceral response. The verse spoken by the Child is a case in point:

A.A.A. je ne scay parler:  
Enfant suis, j'ay la langue mue,  
Hier naquis, huy m'en fault aller,  
Je ne faiz que entrée et yssue.<sup>87</sup>

The text at first replicates the screaming of a small child, somewhat contradictorily followed by “I cannot speak, I am a child.” The language is choppy, and so is its rhythm: “Born yesterday [ . . . ] I did nothing but came and went [ . . . ] Everyone dies, young and old.” This might be an extreme case, but other verses still evoke each character’s life with ease: the pilgrim dreamily recalls his travels in winter and summer (“En tout temps, yvers et esté, / Voyager estoit mon désir”), while the Ploughman admits that he often wished death to come (“La mort ay souhaité souvent”).

The beholder, in other words, is made to identify with each character, and this identification is furthered by the conversational way Death addresses every one of them: “You were wrong, Hosteller,” “Did you think you could escape death, Cleric?” and “Archbishop, don’t worry: your turn is coming.” The insistent alternation between first and second person, the constant play between “I” and “you,” points to the familiarity, informality, casualness, even, of Death’s address, and stimulates the beholder to relate to the painted figures, to find him- or herself almost at ease in their circle. The verses, clear and understandable, are made to attract the wide public and to allow them to empathize with Death’s victims, to become one of them.

At the same time, the text disallows the viewer from complete identification with the protagonists of the Dance. The familiarity of the language is undercut, first of all, by the fact that the lines rhyme. These assonances are the first sign that the procession is indeed enacted for the benefit of the beholder: in everyday life, one hardly speaks in verse. Second, almost each *huitaine* ends with a proverb, a didactic saying of moralizing character. The Esquire, for instance, declares at the end of his melancholic and dreamy lines: "Everything dies, no one knows when."<sup>88</sup> The Astrologer, too, after his lament, adds: "Who wants to die well, should live well."<sup>89</sup> Death, on the other hand, shuffles theological observation with jocular sayings: the Abbot gets "The fat one always rots first," and the Astrologer is reminded that the apple was the cause of everyone's death. Thus, effectively—but not monotonously—the text pulls in and repels its recipient, first with familiar language, next with rhyme, and then with the use of proverbs and moralizing expressions that the recipient of the text was apt to recognize.

Finally, repetition plays a dual role in this mode of reception.<sup>90</sup> The structure of the verses repeats itself constantly and soon becomes predictable. In the Parisian verse, corpses usually address their victims by exemplifying their deeds, more often than not drawing attention to their faults. The *huitaine* closes with an adage that pertains to the particular station of the man addressed (the Duke, for example, is told that the great ones are often taken first, and the King is made to realize that the richest ones will have nothing but a shroud). The chosen man then replies, attempting to defend himself, or else giving up almost immediately, and this reply is also rounded off by a proverb. The structure works a little differently in the German verse: there, Death "hooks" the character in question by addressing him, then listens to his complaint, and only then derides him. In either case, the repetitious structure of the entire poem fosters a sense of familiarity in the recipients of the poem. Their expectations are rarely compromised; here, repetition offers an impression of certain security, of certainty of what is to come.

Yet, at the same time, repetition alerts the recipient that he is not entering a true familiar conversation which is, after all, unpredictable. It is the changeability, a sense of variability, that allows dialogue to be true to life. Here, the repetitive structure signals the element of artifice that enters the poem and indicates to the viewer/reader/listener that the informal conversation between Death and the living is nothing but an exemplum for him to contemplate and ponder. Repetition stimulates memory and prepares the recipient to expect the predetermined reiteration.<sup>91</sup> Repetition also brings with it a sense of inevitability, an awareness of predictable recurrence and reappearance. This, of course, is the root of the message in the Dance of Death: the inevitability of demise, death's repeated return, is here underscored by the repetitive structure of both the verse and the image.

The performativity of the Dance of Death verses, then, is played out in two different ways. While hints of lively exchanges and enacted dramas are visible in its aggressive dialogical structure, the text itself performs in the way it involves the viewer and forces him to perform along. The verses engage the viewer's mind by simultaneously attracting and repulsing, involving and repelling him. Concurrently absorbed into the conversation between Death, the living, and now himself, and yet distanced by its menacing repetitiveness and recurring artifice, the viewer is now ready to turn to the contemplation of the role of Death in the spectacle that is the *danse macabre*. These are the uncanny figures that efface the border between the real and the imaginary. If the Dance of Death is meant to evoke a play, how does one negotiate the nature of the figures of Death? Are these actors who come disguised as Death? Or does it mean that Death itself came in the guise of actors?

### The Actor as Death

The first concept is more readily imaginable. At the inception of the theme, when the dead and not Death led the victims in the procession, the tangible dead were easy to interpret as actors dressed to represent corpses. Such morbid figures sometimes betray the artifice of their costuming: in Kermaria, some dead wear animal masks, endowing the painted procession with a sense of the carnivalesque,<sup>92</sup> while in Ferté-Loupière and Paris, the figure of Death that concludes the procession pauses to take a bow, which signals the end of the morbid performance (Figs. 15 and 16). In Berlin, it is Death that takes part in the dance, but even there the Death figures look like men dressed in flesh-colored garb painted to indicate bones: the tightness of their skin and the smoothness of their faces are akin to tight-fitting costumes and close-fitting masks pulled over the actor's heads (see Figs. 6 and 7).

Such plays and processions (and later the Dance of Death performances in Norman Caudebec, Bruges, and Besançon) are likely to have taken their root in medieval *tableaux vivants*, which were mentioned as early as the thirteenth century. James Clark points to Joannis de Fordun's *Scotichronicon* that describes a performance at the court of Alexander III of Scotland in 1285, which involved a dancing procession and presented a ghost-like character who vanished in front of everyone's eyes. The dance took place at Jedburgh, at the wedding of Alexander and Yolande, daughter of the Count of Dreux, and was described in the chronicle as follows:

When the royal nuptials had been duly solemnized, a strange semblance of a play was acted, by means of a procession among the company of spectators. Those preceded who were skilled in the art, with all kinds of musical instruments, and after them in turn and intermingled were others, performing a military dance in a splendid manner. There



Figure 15. The Dance of Death at Kermaria, ca. 1490. Detail: Dancing Death. (Photo: author).



Figure 16. The Dance of Death at Ferté-Loupière, ca. 1500. Detail: Bowling Death. (Photo: author).

followed one of whom it might almost be doubted whether he was a man or a phantom, since, like shade, he seemed rather to glide than to walk on his feet. He vanished, as it were, from the sight of all, and then the whole resplendent procession was silent, the singing died down, the music ceased, and the throng of dancers suddenly and unexpectedly grew rigid. Laughter was mixed with grief, and lamentation took the place of extremes of joy.<sup>93</sup>

While this, of course, is not the Dance of Death as we know it, the performance at Alexander's court was its likely precursor. The dancing procession was preceded by those "cum multimodis organis musicis," not unlike those usually played by the skeletal musicians of the Dance of Death. The "processio phainatica" brings to mind the opulent attire of the kings and bishops of the *danse macabre*, while the term *choream militarem* indicates the presence of knights and warriors. *Homo an phantasma* is more difficult to define, but he, compared in this text to a shadow, most certainly represented Death or a messenger thereof, since upon his appearance the procession of dancers was not only saddened and silenced, but also *diriguit*—became "rigid"—a reference, perhaps, to rigor mortis or simply to the inanimate bodies of the dead. Such a performance was most likely brought from France for the entertainment of Alexander's Scottish court, since Joannis Fordun refers to it as strange, or even exceptional.

The actor as Death also appeared in numerous fifteenth-century morality plays. These have a number of clear parallels with the Dance of Death: as the description of the enacted Dance from Bruges ("certain jeu, histoire et *moralité*") indicates, the *danse macabre* performances were conceived to present didactic lessons, and Death appeared in them as a moralizing rather than a threatening character. *Everyman* (the *Elckerlijc* in the Dutch version<sup>94</sup>), which was known throughout Europe, carries a moral similar to that of the Dance of Death and features Death in charge of bringing the hero to divine judgment.<sup>95</sup> Death seizes the unsuspecting Everyman much as it does the *danse macabre* protagonists; neither has time to repent. Everyman is warned that "turn again thou cannot by any way. [ . . . ] Thee availeth no cry, weep, and pray."<sup>96</sup> This admonishing message is also carried by a deathly musician in the Parisian Dance:

"Tell us, for what reasons  
You haven't thought of death? [ . . . ]  
It is poor living: not to think of it  
The danger of perishing is great."<sup>97</sup>

The similarities between the Dance of Death and *Everyman* are generally striking. Both imply movement, spiritual as well as corporeal. Both suggest physical

progress, whether a voyage or a dance, while simultaneously trying the intellectual inventiveness of their victims. In the morality play, Death invites Everyman to undertake a journey, while challenging him to find friends to accompany him on his way; and in the *danse macabre* poem, Death pulls everyone into a choreographed movement in which the living participants attempt, albeit unsuccessfully, to provide reasons why they cannot die just yet. Finally, in both, mortals die as ordained by God (and in that they are linked to the *Mors de la Pomme*)—"par divine sentence" in the *danse macabre* and "for Adam's sin" in the play.

*Everyman* was not alone among the morality plays to introduce an actor dressed as Death. The French *Moralité très singulière et très bonne des Blasphémateurs du nom de Dieu* included, among others, the character of Death accompanied by personifications of Hunger and Hell.<sup>98</sup> The German *Frau Yutta* that appeared in 1480 featured eight devils with a personified Death accompanying them.<sup>99</sup> Ostensibly, in all these plays, as well as in private performances and street processions, men enacted Death by dressing up in costumes, painted perhaps with a skull and bones, and holding a scepter, an hourglass, or a scythe. In this way actors anthropomorphized Death, gave it a human face and body, humanized it as it were, grounded it among the living in a recognizable and therefore less threatening form. Yet, just as men donned costumes in order to impersonate Death, Death, too, often came in the disguise of an actor, a concept we must consider if we are to fully understand the impact the Dance of Death was intended to have on the viewer.

## Death as an Actor

Death came in various guises onto the medieval stage. In *Death by Drama*, Enders recounts and analyzes on-stage deaths that happened often enough to be distilled into something of a series of urban legends. Often death came from natural causes and was therefore a passive agent, but sometimes it assumed the role of an active, albeit unintentional, intermediary between the performance and the man determined to orchestrate or see it. Jean Hemont was killed, on 27 March 1380, by a cannon ball that was meant to form a part of the Passion play and was accidentally fired at the wrong moment.<sup>100</sup> Four years later a similar incident occurred: another unfortunate soul, this time a spectator from the audience, was killed by a cannon blast during a performance of *Miracle de Théophile*.<sup>101</sup> Although in these two cases death was a result of performance as well as an unintentional part of it, there were times when death was deliberately orchestrated as a segment of a performance, and it then came in the role of an actor.

Enders also draws attention to a shocking case of punishment by death that took place during a play that enacted the apocryphal story of Judith and Holofernes. A condemned criminal, rather than being tortured, was hired to play Holofernes, therefore destined to be literally killed on stage. Another, lesser criminal was employed to deliver the mortal blow of an axe, in exchange for earning his pardon:

Jean de Bury and Jean de Crehan . . . had thought to render in its truest form the biblical story of Judith; consequently, they chose a criminal condemned to be torn with pincers to play the role of Holofernes; this poor man, guilty of several murders and entrenched in heresy, had preferred decapitation to the horrible ordeal to which he had been condemned. [ . . . ] but the planners . . . had substituted for the real Judith a young man condemned to banishment and to whom clemency was promised if he played his role well. [ . . . ] The supposed Judith unsheathed a sharpened scimitar, and, grabbing Holofernes's hair . . . delivered a single blow, with so much precision and vigor that the head separated from the body.<sup>102</sup>

Whether the story indeed happened, or whether it is a medieval urban legend that betrays certain anxieties associated with death and with theater, bears little on the matter: its appeal was extensive enough for it to be written down and to survive until this very day. Here death came on stage in the guise of an actor who played Judith (or, to be more precise, in the guise of a convict in the guise of an actor in the guise of Judith). It participated in the spectacle of artifice but delivered a genuine blow. Enacted on stage, death became a part of the performance: the borders between the two were erased, in order to mystify and to convince,<sup>103</sup> and this brings us back to the Dance of Death and the question of its performativity.

It would be inconceivable to suggest, of course, that the Dance of Death somehow implied mass executions on stage: while the paintings appear to have been inspired, at least in part, by performances, they do not necessarily suggest their direct re-enactment but, rather, invite a performative reception. Yet, within the mechanics of this reception there lies the belief in the erasure of the border between the real and the enacted. The presence of the ambiguous figure in the wedding performance staged in Scotland can thus be regarded in two different ways. Was its *homo an phantasma* an actor dressed as Death, or Death itself that sneaked into the procession under the likeness of one of the actors? Beyond the firm understanding that actors dress as Death in order to enact their roles (what *does* Death dress like?), there is always a nagging supposition that it might be Death dressed as an actor making its appearance on stage and in person. In the Dance of Death, two worlds similarly collide. The same anxiety that inquires into the ambiguous nature of the actor playing the role of Death, underlies the transformation of the Dance of the Dead into the Dance of Death in the painted imagery, when the skeletal protagonists

of the procession assume a new identity and, no longer tangible inhabitants of graves, become Death itself.

### Conclusion: Pleyinge and Peyntinge

By drawing its inspiration from the sphere of performance, the Dance of Death imagery, along with its text, invites a performative reading, informed by specific structures of the verses, the concept of movement, and the understanding of the body language of the *danse macabre*'s protagonists. It also showcases, I believe, fundamental differences and complex relationships between visual and performative arts in the Middle Ages, and their reception by a spectator.

The impact of a theatrical performance on the viewer is multifold. The nature of its immediacy allows the performed act to simultaneously influence and to be influenced by the viewer. Its power lies in the direct appeal it makes to the emotions of the individuals in its audience, by engaging their visual, auditory, and mental faculties. On one hand, a performance makes the presented didactic lesson more immediate in that it enucleates the intended meaning scene after scene after scene. The narrative, therefore, becomes readily accessible, as its every element is acted out, spelled out so to speak, for the audience. Performances are unparalleled educational tools in that they force the immediate internalization of the learned lesson upon the spectator. The visual cues encoded in the Dance of Death paintings serve a similar function: they urged the medieval viewer to internally re-enact the moral lesson of the *danse macabre*. In the Dance of Death performance, this notion of comfortable accessibility would be especially important since, unlike a miracle play, it did not rely on biblical narratives, but, akin to a morality play (that also repeatedly and painstakingly spells out its moral lesson), was entirely invented.

Another reason such performance would make a strong impact on the viewer is the fact that in medieval theater the roles of the actor and the viewer were interchangeable: the man who was in the audience one night was apt to perform in the play the next.<sup>104</sup> The spectator was therefore a potential actor, and any performer might have formed a part of the audience. Consequently, no one attended the play, as Erika Fischer-Lichte says, "in order to make an aesthetic judgment," but rather to absorb its lesson in full. "Therefore, be solemn in God today," calls the *Sterzinger Passionspiel* Precursor, "and do not go about cursing and mocking . . . [if] someone has made a slip in the text. [ . . . ] Rather, the actor plays for the sake of God . . . so that through his play, every man who absorbs himself in it is moved to far deeper devotion than he would be by the mere narration of the words alone."<sup>105</sup> Here, the intended impact of the performance is spelled out in the words of the performer himself.

The interchangeability of the actor/spectator roles in the act of performance, however, renders a performance unstable, since such an act lacks the dependability of a written text or a created work of art, and is therefore contingent on a situational context.<sup>106</sup> Max Herrmann, the originator of German theater studies, distinguished clearly between drama (as a written text) and performance or theater (as an enactment): “The drama is a linguistic-artistic creation by an individual; the theater is something achieved by the audience and its servants.”<sup>107</sup> The message of the performance is therefore shaped by its spectators, and performers, due to the nature of their craft, are less at liberty to control the circulation of the proposed meaning than a writer or an artist. Both a performance and a painting offer the viewer a chance to participate, but to varying degrees; both suggest what Germans aptly call *Ereignishaftigkeit*—contingency or eventuality—but in different ways and gradations.<sup>108</sup>

For Fischer-Lichte, “theater is a performative act par excellence,” and for Herrmann, it is this performativity of the theater that makes it so drastically different from the fine arts.<sup>109</sup> Herrmann would likely call art “a visual-artistic creation by an individual.”<sup>110</sup> The painting, in order to guarantee the stability of interpretation, freezes the Dance of Death on a two-dimensional surface, robbing the actors of their freedom of movement and therefore introducing an aspect of artifice into the already contrived Dance.

At first glance, the purpose of translating the dynamic act of a theatrical performance into a painting is self-defying in that it appears to compromise the impact the Dance of Death was to have on its viewers. Painting indeed offers a different solution to the transmission of the didactic lesson of the Dance of Death and its reception. The advantages of the painted image lie, plainly enough, in its permanence. Aside from expounding on the equalizing force of death, the *danse macabre* tells of the transitory nature of all things. The play itself is also transitory, it has a beginning and end, and it therefore inevitably comes to a conclusion. Not so in a painting. The Dance of Death imagery, rendered on a panel or a wall, juxtaposes the moral lesson of the fleeting quality of life with the permanence of the painting itself. The painting will last, it seems to say, long after you, the viewer, will dance with death, and many a generation will come to meditate in front of this very representation. The meditative quality of the *danse macabre* imagery favorably compares with the impermanence of a play: placed within church or cloister walls, the Dance of Death paintings were conceived to be seen many times, to be contemplated upon.

At the same time, performativity is inscribed into the Dance of Death from the start. These images include certain visual and textual cues encoded within the Dance of Death structure that allow such images to function partly as prompts or reminders

of performances. Ultimately, the effect of a painting that incorporates tools used in theatrical performances is even more profound than that of a theatrical performance itself. The *Ereignishaftigkeit* of an enactment is compromised in favor of the painting's permanence, precisely because the viewer comes back repeatedly to meditate upon the meaning of the Dance long after the drama is played out and the actors have disappeared from the stage.

#### NOTES

This paper, which grew out of my dissertation research, was presented at the "Performance" session of the Medieval Academy of America annual meeting in Seattle in April 2004. I am grateful to everyone in the audience who asked thoughtful questions and prompted me to think further about issues I originally brought up in my paper. I wish to thank Paul Binski, who read this article when it was still a part of my dissertation and extended his encouragement; Almut Breitenbach, whose literary expertise was invaluable for the writing of this article; and Robert Carroll, who patiently edited its numerous versions. I am also grateful to two anonymous readers who provided extremely helpful suggestions. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are mine.

1. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (1981; rpt. London: Vintage, 1993), 31.
2. *Selections from English Wycliffite Writings*, ed. Anne Hudson (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 100.
3. Rouen, Library, MS 2215, Y 39, folio 69: "Les acteurs représentaient tous les états, depuis le scepter jusq' à la houlette. A chaque tour, il en sortait un, pour marquet que tout prenait fin, roi comme berger. [ . . . ] Cette danse sans doute n'est autre que la fameuse danse macabre."
4. For studies on late medieval clothing and costuming, see Odile Blanc, *Parades et parures: L'invention du corps de mode à la fin du Moyen Age* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997); E. Jane Burns, *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles, Clothwork, and Other Cultural Imaginings* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli, *Gli inganni delle apparenze: Disciplina di vesti e ornamenti alla fine del Medioevo* (Turin: Scriptorium, 1996); and Margaret Scott, *The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, vol. 1 in the Visual History of Costume series (London: Batsford; New York: distributed by Drama Book Publishers, 1986). For late medieval clothing in England and France, see Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity During the Hundred Years War* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); Mary G. Houston, *Medieval Costume in England and France: The 13th, 14th, and 15th Centuries* (1939; rpt. New York: Dover Publications, 1996); and Joan Evans, *Dress in Mediaeval France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952). For vocabulary of medieval clothing in Germany, see Gudrun Lindskog-Wallenburg, *Bezeichnungen für Frauenkleidungsstücke und Kleiderschmuck im Mittelniederdeutschen: Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Kostümkunde*, 2nd rev. ed. (Berlin: [s.n.]; Svenljunga: Distribution, Lindskog-Wallenburg, 1977). For symbolic aspects of medieval clothing, see *Encountering Medieval Textiles and Dress: Objects, Texts, Images*, ed. Désirée G. Koslin and Janet E. Snyder (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); and *Le Vêtement: Histoire, archéologie et symbolique vestimentaires au Moyen Age*, ed. Michel Pastoureau (Paris: Léopard d'or, 1989). For theatrical aspect of costuming, see Clifford Davidson's *Technology, Guilds, and Early English Drama* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996).
5. Pamela Sheingorn and Robert Clark, "Performative Reading: The Illustrated Manuscripts of Arnoul Gréban's *Mystère de la Passion*," *European Medieval Drama* 6 (2002): 129–54, esp. 136–40.

6. Émile Mâle in *Religious Art in France, the Late Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Iconography and its Sources* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 35. For the discussion of the relationship between art and drama in the European Middle Ages, see Otto Pächt, "Pictorial Representation and Liturgical Drama," in his *The Rise of Pictorial Narrative in Twelfth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 33–59.
7. A. M. Nagler sums up the debate in "Pictorial Art or Theater," in his *The Medieval Religious Stage: Shapes and Phantoms?* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976), 89–105; I would like to thank one of the anonymous readers for pointing me to this book.
8. Pamela Sheingorn, "Medieval Drama Studies and the New Art History," *Mediaevalia* 18 (1995): 156.
9. See Mâle, *Religious Art in France*, 330–31; James Clark, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Glasgow: Jackson, Son, and Company, 1950), 92–4; and Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 156–7.
10. Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature, Deconstruction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 37.
11. Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*, 37.
12. Peter Rabinowitz, "Reader-Response Theory and Criticism," in *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 606, as adapted by Madeline H. Caviness in "Reception," in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).
13. A good overview of the concept of performativity in contemporary discourses is found in the introduction to *Performativity and Performance*, ed. Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1–18.
14. John Langshaw Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), as discussed in Geraldine Harris, *Staging Femininities: Performance and Performativity* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999), 68.
15. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 12.
16. This concept has been maintained by some feminist critics to be confusing; Harris (*Staging*, 73) writes that Butler's "statements deepen rather than clarify any possible confusion between performance and performativity." Butler's analysis of the gender performativity, in terms of postmodern art theory, is briefly discussed in Robert Williams, *Art Theory: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 254–5.
17. Hans-Jürgen Bachorski, Werner Röcke, Hans Rudolf Velten, and Frank Wittchow, "Performativität und Lachkultur in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit," *Paragrana* 10, 1 (2001): 165–8.
18. *Performing the Body/Performing the Text*, ed. Amelia Jones and Andrew Stephenson (London and New York: Routledge, 1999). Many of the ideas articulated in the introduction continue main precepts of Jones's earlier study, *Body Art/Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).
19. Jones and Stephenson, *Performing the Body*, 1–7.
20. Jones and Stephenson, *Performing the Body*, 1.

21. Sheingorn and Clark, "Performative Reading," 129–30.
22. Paul Zumthor, *Performance, Réception, Lecture* (Longueuil, Québec: Le Préambule, 1990), 55: "On posera donc que la performance est un moment de la réception."
23. *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris 1405–1449*, ed. Jean Thiellay (1963; Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1975), 234. On the Parisian image see the facsimile of Marchant's prints published as *The Dance of Death Printed at Paris in 1490* (Washington, DC: The Library of Congress, 1945). See also Pierre Champion, *La danse macabre de Guy Marchant* (Paris: Editions des Quatre Chemins, 1925); Edward Chaney, ed., *La danse macabre des Charniers des Saints Innocents à Paris* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1945); Francis Douce, *The Dance of Death Exhibited in Elegant Engravings on Wood, with a dissertation on the several representations of that subject but more particularly on those ascribed to Macaber and Hans Holbein* (London: W. Pickering, 1833); Gaston Paris, "La danse macabre de Jean Le Fèvre," *Romania* 24 (1895): 129–32; Jane Taylor, "Poésie et predication: La fonction du discours proverbial dans la *Danse macabre*," *Medioevo romanzo* XIV (1989): 215–26; and Josette A. Wisman, "Un miroir déformant: Hommes et femmes des danses macabres de Guyot Marchant," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23 (1993): 275–99.
24. Among documented but destroyed Dance of Death images are those of Amiens, Bayonne, Dijon, Hexam, Josselin (Morbihan), London, and Ulm; for a list of other paintings, still undoubtedly incomplete, see Hélène and Bertrand Utzinger, *Itinéraires des danses macabres* (Chartres: Garnier, 1996), 218–24.
25. On Lübeck painting, see Wilhelm Schultze, "Der Totentanz in der Marienkirche," *Märkische Sprachblätter* 5 (1929): 2:1–14; Carl Georg Heise, "Der Lübecker Totentanz von 1463," *Zeitschrift des deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft* (1937): 187–202; Paul Brockhaus, *Der Totentanz in der Marienkirche zu Lübeck* (Wolfshagen-Scharbeutz: Franz Westphal Verlag, 1951); Carl Julius Milde, and Wilhelm Mantels, *Der Totentanz in der Marienkirche zu Lübeck* (Lübeck: Verlag Graphische Werkstätten, 1886; rpt. 1989); and Hartmut Freytag et al., *Der Totentanz der Marienkirche zu Lübeck und der Nikolaikirche in Reval (Tallinn)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1993).
26. On Kermaria, see Lucien Bégule, *La Chapelle de Kermaria-Nisquit et sa danse des morts* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1909); and P. Chardin, *Revue archéologique* 24 (1894): 246–59.
27. On Ferté-Loupière, see Eugène Chartaire, "Deux fresques récemment découvertes dans les églises du département," *Bulletin de la Société archéologique de Sens* XXVI (1911): I–Ivi; Maximilien Quantin, *Répertoire archéologique du département de l'Yonne* (Paris: Imprimerie impériale, 1868), xlii–xliii; J. Cuillier, "Procès-verbal de la séance du 1er juillet 1928. Compte rendu de l'excursion du 9 juin 1928 à la Ferté-Loupière," *Bulletin de la Société des sciences historiques et naturelles de l'Yonne* (1929): xxvii–xxviii; Marquis de Tryon-Montalembert, "Les danses macabres les plus connues et les peintures murales de l'église de la Ferté-Loupière," *Bourignon* (1936): 16–8; Paul Mégnien, *La danse macabre de la Ferté-Loupière* (Auxerre: Imprimerie Moderne, 1991); Ch. Giroz, "La danse macabre: L'église de la Ferté-Loupière," *Bulletin de la Société archéologique de Sens* XLIII (1948): 118–21; Stéphanie Strarczala, *L'église de la Ferté-Loupière et sa danse macabre* (mémoire de maîtrise d'histoire de l'art sous la direction de Christian Sapin, Université de Bourgogne, 1998); and *Vifs nous sommes, morts nous serons: La rencontre des trois morts et des trois vifs dans la peinture murale en France*, compiled by the Groupe de recherches sur les peintures murales (Vendôme: Editions du Cherche-Lune, 2001), 100–101.
28. The mural in Berlin's Marienkirche is the only one that remains *in situ*. See Peter Walther, "Der Totentanz in der Marienkirche zu Berlin," *Jahrbuch des Vereins für die Geschichte Berlins* (1992): 9–21; Waltraud Volk, "Der Totentanz in der Marienkirche zu Berlin," *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Denkmalpflege* 15 (1961): 104–11; Burchard Meier, "Klosterkirche Berlin und Totentanzbild in der

Marienkirche," *Zeitschrift für Denkmalpflege* 1 (1926): 76–8; Willy Krogmann, "Der Berliner Totentanz," *Berliner Sprachproben aus sieben Jahrhunderten* (Berlin: R. Pfau, 1937), 24–37; R. A. Th. Krause, "Die Totentänze in den Marienkirchen zu Lübeck und Berlin," *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Lübeckische Geschichte und Altertumskunde* 9 (1907/08): 334–51; Erik Hühns, "Der Berliner Totentanz," *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 14 (1968): 235–46; and Renate Hermann-Winter, *Dialogverse zum Totentanz in der Berliner St. Marienkirche, Beilage zum Faltblatt "Der Totentanz von St. Marien in Berlin"* (Berlin: Gemeindegemeinderat von St. Nikolai und St. Marien, 1990).

29. Gaspard Grégoire, *Explication des cérémonies de la Fête-Dieu d'Aix en Provence orné de figures du lieutenant de prince d'Amour . . . &c. et des airs notés, consacrés à cette fête* (A Aix: Chez Esprit David, imprimeur du roi, 1777).

30. This particular "jeux," as the author describes it, is the most curious: it involved a cat thrown in the air by one of the dancers. Meant to represent other animals worshipped by the Jews in Moses's absence, the cat was to be held by one of the actors under his cloak, and then quickly tossed up and, the author hopes, caught. The public was apparently so fascinated by the cat flying through the air that this scene was renamed "Le jeux du chat."

31. "Nue, maigre et décharnée," in Eustache-Hyacinthe Langlois, André Pottier, and Alfred Baudry, *Essai historique, philosophique et pittoresque sur les danses des morts, suivi d'une lettre de M. C. Leber et d'une note de M. Depping sur le même sujet*, 2 vols. (Rouen: A. Lebrument, 1852), 1: 300–301.

32. Bernd Neumann, *Geistliches Schauspiel im Zeugnis der Zeit: Zur Aufführung mittelalterlicher religiöser Dramen im deutschen Sprachgebiet*, vol. 1 (Munich: Artemis, 1987), 788.

33. Performed as a part of a cycle of Christ's life, on 3 May 1521, in Lobau, Prussia, during the Discovery of the True Cross feast; see *Journal mensuel de Lausitz* 1 (1802): 103.

34. Sartorius, *Reisen durch Oesterreich* (Salzburg): "Me today, you tomorrow"; quoted in Ferdinand Naumann, *Der Tod in allen seinen Beziehungen ein Warner, Tröster und Lustigmacher: Als Beitrag zur Literaturgeschichte der Todtentänze* (Dresden: H-H Grimm, 1844), 75.

35. For more extensive information, see Langlois, Pottier, and Baudry, *Essai historique*, 1:116–63, 292, and esp. 138–40.

36. Mâle, *Religious Art in France*, 331.

37. "A Nicaise de Cambray, painctre, demourant en la ville de Douay, pour lui aidier à deffroyer au mois de septembre l'an MCCCCXLIX, de la ville de Bruges, quant il a joué devant mondit seigneur, en son hostel, avec ses autres compaignons, certain jeu, histoire et moralité sur le fait de la danse macabre . . . VIII francs." These accounts were published by Léon de Laborde in *Les Ducs de Bourgogne. Études sur les lettres, les arts et l'industrie pendant le XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, et plus particulièrement dans les Pays-Bas et le duché de Bourgogne*, vol. 1, pt. 2 (Paris: Plon frères, 1849–52), preuves, no. 7399 des comptes.

38. "Machabaeorum chorea, vulgo Danse Macabre, ludicra quaedam ceremonia ab ecclesiasticis pie instituta, qua omnium dignitatum, tam ecclesiae quam imperii personae choream simul ducendo, alternis vicibus à chorea evanescebant, ut mortem ab omnibus suo ordine opetendam esse significarent. Hujusce ritus mentio fit in veteri Codice Ms. eccl. Vesont., laudato in Mercur. Franc. mens. sept. an. 1742, pag. 1955. Sexcallus solvat D. Joanni Calti, matriculario S. Joannis, quatuor simasias vini per dictum matricularium exhibitas illis, qui choream Machabaeorum fecerunt 10 Julii (1453) nuper lapsa hora missae in ecclesia S. Joannis Evangelistae, propter capitulum provinciale Fratrum Minorum." Charles Du Fresne Du Cange, *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis* (1883–87; rpt. Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1954), quoted in Langlois, *Essai historique*, 119–20.

39. In one of his essays on medieval French theater, Alan E. Knight, while discussing a dramatic monologue entitled “Le Franc Archer de Bagnolet,” made the concession of calling it a play because it had all the pertinent characteristics of such: “impersonation, costume, gesture, conflict and action.” This definition is surprisingly accurate for characterizing the Dance of Death paintings: apparent translations of performed acts into the medium of painting, they appear to have retained all the features of theatrical performances named above, as should become explicitly clear in this article. See Alan E. Knight, “France,” in *The Theatre of Medieval Europe: New Research in Early Drama*, ed. Eckehard Simon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 165.

40. At this point the concept of “stage” remains very open—it could have been a street, a raised podium, a meadow, or a square.

41. On Hanseatic architecture, see Philippe Dollinger, *Die Hanse*, 3rd rev. ed. (Stuttgart: A. Kröner, 1981), 350; Horst Büttner and Günter Meissner, *Town Houses of Europe* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1982); Karl Heinz Clasen, *Die Baukunst an der Ostseeküste zwischen Elbe und Oder* (Dresden: Sachsenverlag, 1956), 36; and Nikolaus Zaske, “Zum Problem der Hansekultur und Hansekunst,” in *Bürgertum, Handelskapital, Städtebünde*, ed. Konrad Fritze, Eckhard Müller-Mertens, and Johannes Schildhauer, *Hansische Studien* 3 (Weimar: H. Böhlau, 1975), 272–9.

42. Specifically commented upon by Hildegard Vögeler in Freytag et al., *Der Totentanz*.

43. Predictably, two other French Dances that are closely based on the Parisian painting, those of Meslay-le-Grenet and of Ferté-Loupière, reproduce the same design. In Meslay, however, the participants dance along the north side of the nave and continue onto the east wall of the church, while at Ferté-Loupière they proceed along the south side of the nave away from the altar. The processional movement of these figures is clearly marked, especially at Meslay, where the right-to-left direction of the dance swiftly leads the eye towards contemporaneous frescoes painted above the altar, which represent the Passion of Christ. The culmination of the macabre procession, then, is found beyond its limits, on the west wall, where Christ himself is seized by Death. Fundamentally, however, every Dance of Death painting presents active, often frenetic, movement of the figures, ordered by the general direction in which they proceed. In Nørre Aslev in Denmark, the progression against a flowered backdrop moves from right to left, and at Albi in southern France, stooped figures cautiously dance along the wooden beams, hunching over as if to fit within the space constraints of the timber blocks.

44. Bibliography on the significance of the body is extensive. For social and cultural explorations, besides Butler’s work cited above, see Ian Burkitt, *Bodies of Thought: Embodiment, Identity and Modernity* (London: Sage, 1999); Chris Shilling, *The Body and Social Theory* (London: Sage, 1993); *Embodiment: Essays on Gender and Identity*, ed. Meenakshi Thapan (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997); Bryan Turner, *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory* (1984); *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, ed. Mike Featherstone, Mike Hepworth, and Bryan S. Turner (London: Sage, 1991); and Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 3 vols., trans. Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978, 1984, 1985). For anthropological perspective, especially important is *The Anthropology of the Body*, ed. John Blacking (London: Academic Press, 1977), esp. Roy Frank Ellen’s “Anatomical Classification and the Semiotics of the Body,” 343–73. For studies in religion, see *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). Specifically for medieval perspective, see Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); and two publications of Carolyn Bynum that appeared in 1995: *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christianity, 200–1336* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), and “Why All the Fuss About the Body? A Medievalist’s Perspective,” *Critical Inquiry* 22: 1–33.

45. For the newest edition of the book, see *Caxton’s Mirrour of the World*, ed. Oliver H. Prior (Millwoods, NY: Kraus Reprint, 1987). Studies of Caxton include Norman Francis Blake, *Caxton and*

*His World* (London: Deutsch, 1969); and Frieda Elaine Penninger, *William Caxton* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979). For bibliography on Caxton and Caxton studies, see Norman Francis Blake, *William Caxton: A Bibliographical Guide* (New York: Garland, 1985); *Caxtoniana, or, The Progress of Caxton Studies From the Earliest Times to 1976*, Catalogue of an Exhibition at the St. Bride Printing Library . . . 20 September–29 October 1976 (London: The Library, 1976); Seymour de Ricci, *A Census of Caxtons* (Oxford: Printed for the Bibliographical Society at the Oxford University Press, 1909); and two compilations by William Blades: *A Catalogue of Books Printed by or Ascribed to the Press of William Caxton: In Which Is Included the Press-mark of Every Copy Contained in the Library of the British Museum* (London: the author, 1865), and *The Life and Typography of William Caxton, England's First Printer: With Evidence of His Typographical Connection with Colard Mansion, the Printer at Bruges* (London: Joseph Lilly, 1861–63).

46. Prior, *Caxton's Mirrour*, ix. For the edition of the French version, see *L'image du monde de maitre Gossouin; rédaction en prose. Texte du manuscrit de la Bibliothèque nationale, fonds français no. 574, avec corrections d'après d'autres manuscrits*, notes and introduction by Oliver H. Prior (Lausanne: Payot, 1913).

47. *Mirror of the World, ca. 1527*, cited in Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England 1500–1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), 89–90. Howell uses the 1527 edition of *The myrroure: & dyscrypcyon of the worlde with many meruaylles* kept at the Huntington Library (London: L. Anrewe, 1527), D3v–D4r.

48. Jean-Claude Schmitt, “The Rationale of Gestures in the West: Third to Thirteenth Centuries,” *A Cultural History of Gesture From Antiquity to the Present Day*, ed. Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 59. This article summarizes Schmitt's *La raison des gestes dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris: Gallimard, 1990). The study of medieval gesture and its classification also appeared in Werner Habicht, *Die Gebärde in englischen Dichtungen des Mittelalters* (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften; in Kommission bei Beck, 1959). For gestures in specific works by specific artists, see, for example, Karl von Amira, *Die Handgebärden in den Bilderhandschriften des Sachsenspiegels* (Munich: Verlag der K.B. Akademie der Wissenschaften: in Kommission des G. Franz'schen Verlags, 1905); Ruth Schmidt-Wiegand, “Gebärdensprache im mittelalterlichen Recht,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 16 (1982): 363–79; and Mosche Barasch, *Giotto and the Language of Gesture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). For a study of a particular kind of gesture, see Barasch's *Gestures of Despair in Medieval and Early Renaissance Art* (New York: New York University Press, 1976).

49. Schmitt, “The Rationale of Gestures,” 64.

50. Studies on the implications of gestures for medieval theater are regrettably scarce; most notable is the collection edited by Clifford Davidson and entitled *Gesture in Medieval Drama and Art* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001); see especially the essay by Dunbar Ogden, “Gesture and Characterization in the Liturgical Drama,” 26–47.

51. Baxandall fleshed out this concept in regards to Italian painting in *Painting and Experience*, esp. 56–81.

52. Helmut de Boor, *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Beck, 1974), 168.

53. See *The N-Town Play, Cotton MS Vespasian D. 8*, ed. Stephen Spector (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 2v.

54. Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 77–8.

55. “Och redelike creatuer sy arm ofte ryke / Seet hyr dat spiegel junck vñ olden / Vnde dencket hyr aen ok elkerlike / Dat sik hyr nemant kan ontholden / Waneer de doet kumpt als gy hyr seen / Hebbe wi den vele gudes ghedaen / So moghe wi wesen myt gode een / Wy moten van allen loen vntfaen / Vñ lieven kynder ik wil ju raden / Dat gi juwe scapeken verleide nicht / Men gude exempel en op laden / Eer ju de doet sus snelle bi licht.” Translation of the Reval Dance of Death text courtesy of Almut Breitenbach.

56. “O reature roysonnable / Qui desires vie eternelle [ . . . ] / Mort nespargne petit ne grant [ . . . ] / Saige est celuy qui bien se mire. / Le mort le vif fait avancer [ . . . ] / Cest piteuse chose y panser. / Tout est forgie dune matiere.” Cited in Utzinger, *Itinéraires*, 277.

57. *The Dance of Death Edited from Mss. Ellesmere 26/A.13 and B. M. Landsdowne 699*, Collated with the Other Extant Mss, ed. Florence Warren (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), 6.

58. See especially the section “Words and Images: Modes of Reception” in the first chapter of her *The Web of Image: Vernacular Preaching from its Origins to Saint Bernardino of Siena* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2004).

59. Quoted in Lina Bolzoni, *The Web of Images: Vernacular Preaching from its Origins to Saint Bernardino da Siena* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), 135.

60. Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric*, 89–90.

61. Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric*, 89–90.

62. Thomas Waleys, “De modo componendi sermones,” rpt. in Thomas-Marie Charland, *Artes praedicandi: Contribution à l’histoire de la rhétorique au moyen âge* (Paris: J. Vrin; Ottawa, Institut d’études médiévales, 1936), 332.; trans. in Baxandall, *Painting and Experience*, 64: “Valde tamen caveat ne motibus inordinatis jactet corpus suum, nunc subito extollendo caput in altum, nunc subito deprimendo, nunc vertendo se ad dextrum, nunc subito cum mirabili celeritate se vertendo ad sinistrum, nunc ambas manus sic extendendo simul quasi posset simul orientem occidentemque complecti, nunc vero subito eas in unum conjungendo, nunc extendendo brachia ultra modum, nunc subito extrahendo. se jactabant quod videbantur cum aliquo duellum inisse, seu potius insanisse.”

63. On the distinction between positive connotations of gestures and negative implications of gesticulations, see Schmitt, “Gestus/Gesticulatio. Contribution à l’étude du vocabulaire latin médiéval des gestes,” in *La lexicographie du latin médiéval et ses rapports avec les recherches actuelles sur la civilisation du Moyen Age* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1981), 377–90.

64. Schmitt, “The Rationale of Gestures,” 66.

65. Jody Enders, “Of Miming and Signing: The Dramatic Rhetoric of Gesture,” in *Gesture in Medieval Drama and Art*, ed. Davidson, 3.

66. Schmitt, “The Rationale of Gestures,” 64.

67. Alberti, *On Painting*, 80.

68. A. E. Zucker, *The Redentin Easter Play* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1941), 22.

69. The play was first published in 1918 as *Das niederdeutsche Osterspiel aus Redentin vom Jahre 1464*, ed. Max Gümbel-Seiling (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1918). It was translated from Low German into English in 1941 by Adolf Eduard Zucker (see note 68 above), and then published again in 1966: *The Redentin Easter Play* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966). It also has been reprinted in German: *Das Meklenburger Osterspiel vollendet im J. 1464 zu Redentin*, ed. Albert Freybe (1885; rpt. Frankfurt am Main: Sändig, 1974).

70. Johannes Bolte, "Das Spiegelbuch, ein illustriertes Erbauungsbuch des 15. Jahrhunderts in dramatischer Form," in *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse* (Berlin: Verlag der Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1932), 130–71. The text cited is taken from the manuscript in Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen Cod. 985.507.

71. To quote Wilhelm Wackernagel (*Geschichte der deutschen Literatur: Ein Handbuch* [Basel: Schweighauser, 1879], 399): "Ein Drama? Wahrscheinlich."

72. There is a variety of late medieval texts that defy any particular definition. Some were specifically written to be used in a performance, while others were conceived of (or modified to) reading dramas. The former, intended to be reading dramas from the start, were not meant to be performed at all. Conversely, reading dramas may have been turned into texts meant for actual performances. A group of German scholars currently working in Berlin, called "Kulturen des Performativen," closely studies the issue of textual performativity in the Middle Ages. On medieval practices of reading, see also Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public in Late Medieval England and France* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

73. Bolte, "Das Spiegelbuch," 163: "Woltestu mir mein junges leben also bald abbrechen . . ."

74. Such a figure, for instance, is found in Marchant's and Vérard's books as well as at Meslay-le-Grenet.

75. Bolte, "Das Spiegelbuch," 164: Dead Young Woman: "Schend an mich, alle herschaft und wetliche schöne, / ich bin auch herlich gesessen in meinem trone." Héléne and Bertrand Utzinger, *Itinéraires des Danses Macabres* (Chartres: J. M. Garnier, 1996), 289: Dead King: "Pensez que humaine nature / Ce n'est fors que viande a vers."

76. *Der doten dantz mit figuren, clage und antwort schon von allen staten der werlt* (Heidelberg: H. Knoblochzer, 1485), lines 552–83.

77. BN, MS latin 980.

78. The best resource on the Legend is *Vifs nous sommes* (see n. 27). Stefan Glixelli was the first to differentiate among five versions of the poem in his *Les Cinq Poèmes des trois morts et des trois vifs* (Paris: Librairie ancienne H. Champion, 1914); the classification was supported by Mâle, *Religious Art in France*, 324 and the *Vifs nous sommes*, 15–8. For additional literature on the texts, see Anatole de Montaiglon, *L'alphabet de la mort de Hans Holbein entouré de bordures du XVIe siècle et suivi d'anciens poèmes français sur le sujet des trois mors et des trois vis* (Paris: E. Tross, 1856); Willy Friedrich Storck, *Die Legende der drei Lebenden und der drei Toten* (Tübingen: H. Laupp, 1910); and Karl Künstle, *Die Legende von den drei Lebenden und von den drei Toten und der Totentanz* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1908). Images are treated in Georges Servières, "Les formes atristiques du 'Dict des Trois Morts et des Trois Vifs,'" *Gazette de beaux-arts* ser. 5:13 (1926): 19–36; Richard Offner, *Corpus of Florentine Painting*, sect. 3, vol. 5 (New York: Institute of Fine Arts, 1947), 261–3; and Willy Rotzler, *Die Begegnung der drei Lebenden und drei Toten* (Winterthur: P. G. Keller, 1961).

79. "Est ce doncques a bon essiant / Que la mort nous va espiant / Et qui nous fault ainsi mourir. / Nest il homme qui secourir / En puist [ . . . ]." Rpt. in Utzinger, *Itinéraires*, 290.

80. On "good" and "bad" deaths, see Binski, *Medieval Death*, 33–50.

81. Knight, "France," 165.

82. "Venes noble roi couronné / Renommé de force et prouesse [ . . . ] / Mais maintenant toute haultesse / Laissez vous. . . ."

83. “Je n’ay point appris à dancier / A dance et note si sauvage,” and “Mort destruit tout c’est son usage [ . . . ] A la fin faut devenir cendre.”
84. Here texts are referenced from Joël Saugnieux, *Les danses macabres de France et d’Espagne et leurs prolongements littéraires* (Lyon: E. Vitte, 1972), 148.
85. Constable: “Contre la mort n’a nul respite”; Archbishop: “Morir me convient, c’est le droit.”
86. I owe my thoughts (and much of the information) on these matters entirely to Almut Breitenbach, and our correspondence on the performative qualities of the text and image in the Berlin Dance of Death.
87. Saugnieux, *Les danses macabres*, 161.
88. Saugnieux, *Les danses macabres*, 150: “Tout fault morir, on ne sctet quant.”
89. Saugnieux, *Les danses macabres*, 151: “Qui vouldra bien morir, bien vive.”
90. The question of functionality of repetition in the language has been explored by Elmar Besch in his *Wiederholung und Variation: Untersuchung ihrer stilistischen Funktionen in der deutschen Gegenwartssprache* (Frankfurt am Main and New York: P. Lang, 1989). A few studies have been completed that explore the significance of repetition in medieval literary works; among these are Joseph D. Wine, *Figurative Language in Cynewulf: Defining Aspects of a Poetic Style* (New York: P. Lang, 1993); Douglas Kelly, “‘Senpres est ci et senpres la’: Motif Repetition and Narrative Bifurcation in Beroul’s Tristan,” in *Voices of Conscience: Essays on Medieval and Modern French Literature in Memory of James D. Powell and Rosemary Hodgins*, ed. Raymond J. Cormier (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1977), 131–42; and Erich Poppe, “Favourite Expressions, Repetition, and Variation: Observations on *Beatha mhuire eigiaptacdha* in Add. 30512,” in *The Legend of Mary of Egypt in Medieval Insular Hagiography*, ed. Erich Poppe and Bianca Ross (Blackrock, CO, Dublin, Ireland, and Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 1996), 279–99.
91. On the study of medieval art of memory, see Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Carruthers, with Jan Ziolkowski, also has edited a compilation of medieval sources that deal with the question of memory as a craft: *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).
92. Mâle, *Religious Art in France*, 339. These animal heads are hardly legible anymore, since the condition of the wall painting at Kermaria is deteriorating rapidly. Some masks are still possible to make out, while others present a blur. Mâle may have seen them in better condition at the beginning of the twentieth century, or else he relied on even earlier sources.
93. *Joannis de Fordun Scotichronicon; cum supplementis et continuatione Walteri Boweri . . . E codicibus mss. Editum, cum notis et variantibus lectionibus*. Praefixa est ad historiam Scotorum introductio brevis, cura Walteri Goodall (Edinburgh: R. Fleming, 1759), 128: “Ubi in nuptiis regalibus dum omnia ritè fierent, factum est tale ludi simulacrum per modum processionis inter catervas discumbentibus, praecedentibus in arte illa doctis, cum multimodis organis musicis et tragoedicis instrumentis organicis, aliisque post eos vicissim et interpolatim choream militarem pompaticè agentibus, insecutus est unus, de quo penè dubitari potuit utrum homo esset, an phantasma: qui, ut umbra, magis labi videbatur quàm pedetentim transire. Quo quasi oculis omnium evanescente, quievit tota illa processio phainatica, melos tepuit, musicum dissolutum est, et chorealis phalanx dirigit citiùs insperato. Risus dolore miscetur, et extrema gaudii luctus occupat [ . . . ].” Translated in Clark, *The Dance of Death*, 34.
94. See *Den spyghel der salicheyt van Elckerlijc*, ed. A. van Eslander, 8th ed. (Antwerp: Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1985); and *De Spiegel der zaligheid van Elckerlijc naar de bewaarde bronnen*, ed. M. J. M. de Haan (Leiden: Vakgroep Nederlandse Taal- & Letterkunde, 1979).

95. Edmund Kerchever Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* (1903; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 153. On medieval morality plays, see especially Robert A. Potter, *The English Morality Play: Origins, History and Influence of a Dramatic Tradition* (London and Boston: Routledge & K. Paul, 1975). On the relationship between *Everyman* and *Ars moriendi* treatises, see Donald F. Duclow, "Everyman and the *Ars Moriendi*: Fifteenth-Century Ceremonies of Dying," *Fifteenth-Century Studies* 6 (1983): 93–113. Specifically on the satirical aspect of medieval morality plays, see Eva Keppel, *Ironie in den mittellenglischen Moralitäten: Eine Untersuchung der Dramen The Castle of Perseverance, Mankind und Everyman* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2000).

96. *Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays*, ed. A. C. Cawley (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1959), 210–1.

97. "Ditez nous par quelles raisons / Vous ne pensez point a morir / Quant la mort va en voz maisons / Huy lung: demain lautre querir. / Sans quon vous puisse secourir / Cest mal vivre: sans y penser / Et troupe grant danger de perir / Force est quil faille ainsi danser."

98. Langlois, *Essai historique*, 294. The only copy of this manuscript, he claims, was sold to Bibliothèque Nationale by Abbot Germain Barré for 900 francs.

99. Naumann, *Der Tod in allen seinen Beziehungen ein Warner, Tröster und Lustigmacher*, 89.

100. We read in the letter of remission: "And so it was that they arranged and prepared the aforesaid cannon for detonation and blasting at the specific time and place of the crucifixion, which is the customary practice in these plays in remembrance of the death and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. And because, upon the place where the aforesaid complainant and Jehan Hemont were standing, there had been placed a hot rammer [ . . . ] the plug of the aforesaid cannon misfired and exploded earlier and otherwise than . . . Hemont had anticipated and expected. It happened in such a way that the aforesaid Hemont was struck. . . ." Arch. Nat. JJ 116, no. 254. Lettres de rémission accordées par Charles V à Guillaume Langlois, cause involontaire d'un accident mortel survenu pendant une représentation de la Passion à Paris, le 27 mars 1380. Cited in Antoine Thomas, "Le Théâtre à Paris et aux environs," *Romania* 21 (1892): 609–11. Translated in Jody Enders, *Death by Drama and Other Medieval Urban Legends* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 69; full text also cited in Enders, appendix 5.1, pp. 211–2.

101. Arch. Nat., JJ 125, no. 117. 1384. Lettres de rémissions accordées par Charles VI à Fremin Severin, cause involontaire d'un accident mortel survenu pendant une répétition de *Théophile* à Aulnay-lès-Bondy, le 19 juin 1384. Cited in Thomas, "Le Théâtre à Paris et aux environs," 611. Translated in Enders, *Death by Drama*, 71; full text also cited in Enders, appendix 5.2, p. 212.

102. Frédéric Faber, *Histoire du théâtre français en Belgique depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours. D'après les documents inédits reposant aux Archives Générales du Royaume*, vol. 1 (Brussels: Oliver; Paris: Tresse, 1878), 14–15: "Jean de Bury et Jean de Crehan . . . avait imaginé de rendre au naturel l'exploit biblique de Judith; en consequence, on avait choisi un criminel condamné à être tenaillé pour remplir le rôle d'Holoferne; ce malheureux, coupable de plusieurs assassinats et convaincu d'hérésie, avait préféré la décapitation à l'horrible supplice auquel il était condamné [ . . . ] les jurés . . . avait substitué à la véritable Judith un jeune garçon condamné au bannissement et auquel on promit sa grâce, s'il jouait bien son rôle. [ . . . ] la prétendue Judith dégaina un cimeterre bien affilé, et, saisissant les cheveux d'Holoferne . . . lui appliqua un seul coup, avec tant d'adresse et de vigueur que la tête fut séparée du corps." Discussed in Enders, *Death by Drama*, 182–95; text cited in appendix 14.1, pp. 242–3.

103. See Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations," in *Selected Writings*, ed. and trans. Mark Poster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), on the mystification of death notion.

104. Erika Fischer-Lichte, *History of European Drama and Theatre*, trans. Jo Riley (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 46.

105. The words of the Precursor from the *Sterzinger Passionspiel*, cited and translated in Fischer-Lichte, *History of European Drama and Theatre*, 47.

106. A group of German researchers gathered at the Freie Institute of Berlin and headed by Erika Fischer-Lichte discussed the difference between a performative act and textuality. Their concepts are especially fleshed out in Bachorski et al., “Performativität und Lachkultur in Mittelalter und früherer Neuzeit” (note 17). In this article, the authors particularly consider performative aspects of laughing present in late medieval texts, yet their premises drawn out on pages 165–9 are pertinent to this discussion.

107. Max Herrmann, “Bühne und Drama,” *Vossische Zeitung*, 30 July 1918.

108. Bachorski et al., “Performativität und Lachkultur in Mittelalter und früherer Neuzeit,” 167.

109. Fischer-Lichte, *History of European Drama and Theatre*, 5. Fischer-Lichte’s belief that theater shapes the cultural identity is also found in her *Theater im Prozess der Zivilisation* (Tübingen: Francke, 2000); *The Show and the Gaze of Theatre: A European Perspective*, ed. and trans. Jo Riley (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1997); *The Semiotics of Theater*, trans. Jeremy Gaines and Doris L. Jones (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); and *Geschichte des Dramas: Epochen der Identität auf dem Theater von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (Tübingen: Francke, 1990).

110. Michael Camille in *The Gothic Idol: Ideology and Image-Making in Medieval Art* proposed “an enormous space between the text and its visualization” that sheds light on what he called “representational strategies” (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 160. A comparison between text/performance space and text/image space has been highlighted by Sheingorn in “Medieval Drama,” 150. This space, she believes, is similar to that between the dramatic text and its enactment.

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