THEATROCRACY

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BOOKS

Theatrocracy

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A nation is at a show like a woman in front of a mirror; it looks at itself and studies itself with pleasure, sometimes it recognises and approves of itself in its beauty, often through depravity it indulges in its vices and applauds its ugliness.

Isidore Latour Saint-Ybars, Nero: his life and times

All the proud Roman needed was entertainment and bread; But for the Frenchman, more than Roman, entertainment is enough without bread.

Anonymous

Originally, the rite in cults of Indo-European origin was, to use J. Evola's definition, a binding action on invisible forces and inner states, similar in spirit to that which is exerted today on physical forces and states of matter. What comes into play here are forces that must be described, even if the term is overused, as spiritual: forces of a superhuman order. As soon as these forces withdraw because those charged with performing the rite are no longer qualified to do so, the rite degenerates into a ceremony, as happened in ancient Greece and Rome.

The case of the three Abrahamic theistic religions, in particular Christianity and Islam, is different; founded on devotion (1), i.e. a sentimental element inherent in the human state, they only know the "envelope" of the rite: the ceremony, "an event involving a greater or lesser display of external pomp, whatever the circumstances that provide the occasion or the pretext in each particular case" (2). Yet it is ceremony that has given rise to theatre; ceremonial customs, not ritual practices.

Language reflects this: the word "theatre", originally used to describe a building designed for the presentation of shows, has come to mean the particular setting in which certain events and manifestations of human life take place. Figuratively speaking, we speak of political theatre, social theatre and, again figuratively, we refer to those in the theatre as "puppets", "marionettes", "actors", "comedians", etc.

We propose here to take them literally, and to see the historical processes that have made our continent what it is today as a gradual process of theatricalisation. The very state of things invites us to do so. Everything, thanks first to the media and then to multimedia, has become nothing more than spectacularisation. There is no longer an event, a fact, which, when mediatised, is not transformed into a spectacle. In this way, the spectacular is privileged, emotion cultivated to excess in its crudest, most overweening immediacy.

The first part of our study will focus on pre-theatrical forms and theatre in Greco-Roman antiquity: popular drama, aristocratic drama and, above all, hieratic drama and the festivals in honour of Dionysus, from which it originated. The second part, by far the most edifying, takes us from the "Middle Ages" to the modern era. Wherever a theistic religion informs and permeates the whole of social life, the whole existence of each of its members, and the whole of social life, the whole existence of each of its members, is punctuated by the ceremonies of this religion, the way is inevitably open to the dramatisation of public and political life. This was the case in the Judeo-Christian civilisation of the "Middle Ages". As we shall see, however, it was not until the end of the eighteenth century, with 1789, that the process of theatricalisation accelerated sharply, before reaching its conclusion under representative democracy, which has retained the spirit, law and morality of Judeo-Christianity - in other words, its most dangerous elements for white civilisation.

Since the term 'theatricalisation' is taken in its specific sense, we will focus exclusively on cases where we are dealing with a formal identity, whether potential, developing or complete, between the theatrical stage and the political world. The relations, interferences and reciprocal influence between political power, society in general and the theatre will only be considered in this context.

Theatricalisation should not be confused purely and simply with tittytainment, a set of multimedia entertainments designed to appeal to the masses, with the aim, as its critics define it, of "preventing them from thinking (for themselves)". Tittytainment, far from being a facelift to panem et circenses, is in fact a perverted version of it. Not only did evergetism consist of offering free entertainment, food and buildings to the plebs, whereas, it seems worth pointing out, you have to pay for a baguette, a games console, a subscription to a cable or satellite TV provider, an internet service provider, a "contribution to public broadcasting", etc., but also because the masses are now "the people". But also because the masses are naturally predisposed to entertainment and, as soon as they exist, any government must take them into account; making the masses think and even flattering them by making them believe that they can and do think for themselves, by means of schooling and media coverage, is, on the contrary, what the Republican clique set out to do as soon as it came to power and, one hundred and fifty years later, the result, in psychological terms, is impressive: Democracy has become as sentimentally and emotionally indispensable to the masses as the media have become to their schizophrenic impulses. The criticisms of tittytainment are based on the Marxist theme, largely irrigated by the crocodile tears of the

prophets of Israel, of the quasi-ontological opposition between two fixed entities: a humanity that is fundamentally good and healthy and a ruling class that can only be fundamentally evil and corrupt (the fact that, in parliamentary democracies, the latter is kept in power by the former through suffrage does not seem to trouble the proponents of this nonsense).

Secondly, tittytainment is only one aspect of theatricalisation. Taking issue with the assertion of Marxist historiography and its epigones that politics is in itself a spectacle and that politics has always been a stage, we will argue that politics began to become a stage in the theatrical sense from the moment it was emptied of its substance because real power had passed from the hands of those officially charged with running the state into those of the economic 'agents' who divide up the roles and to whom they serve as a screen. The dramatisation of political life is synonymous with depoliticisation. A single historical example will no doubt suffice to make the reader aware of this: before the conquest of Greece by Rome, several Greek cities had confederated and at certain times held political assemblies. When Greece came under Roman domination, these assemblies, although they were able to continue to exist, were deprived of all political freedom and forced to confine themselves to the administration of games and shows.

I. Theatre in ancient Greece

A. Festivals and shows

In Europe, theatre, as we know, originated in Greece (3). It found favourable soil there, for the inhabitants of Greece were fond of theatrical performances. "In a remarkably penetrating description of this racial type, J. Evola points out that "the 'Mediterranean' is a taste for exteriority and gesticulation. The Mediterranean type needs a stage, if not in the most inferior sense of vanity and exhibitionism, at least in the sense that his commitment and enthusiasm (even for noble, worthy and sincere things) often stem from a relationship with those who are watching him, and concern for the effect he will have on them plays a not inconsiderable role in his behaviour. Hence, precisely, this inclination to "gesture", i.e. to give his action characteristics that draw attention to it and mobilise it - even when the person acting knows full well that he has only himself as a spectator. In the Mediterranean man there is, therefore, a certain doubling between an 'I' that performs the role and an 'I' that looks at it from the point of view of a spectator or possible observer, and revels in it: more or less like an actor. We must not lose sight of these characteristics of this racial type in the course of this chapter.

1. Demos' taste for shows

Solemn performances were expensive, and not every town could have a large theatre and subsidise performances. What's more, those who were not of free means were excluded from the great theatrical solemnities. "It was therefore necessary, for the needs of every day, of every condition and in every place, to have actors of a lower order, responsible for continually providing the emotions of drama at little cost to all classes of inhabitants" (4): itinerant singers and dancers, ventriloquists, tumblers and rope dancers, jesters, jokers, mimes, who officiated in the streets, squares and crossroads. They were all associated in brotherhoods.

2. The aristocracy's taste for entertainment

The princes of the monarchic states were not to be outdone. They opened their palaces to all kinds of entertainment, on two particular occasions: days of mourning and banquets.

Plutarch reports that it became customary to solemnise the funerals of kings and princes with fights between actors. Forced or voluntary immolations around the tombs were replaced by fictitious combats: the pyrrhic, as this spectacle was called, originated in the Bronze Age in Minoan Crete, i.e. Pelasgic Crete (5).

Mourners, a type of actress specialising in funerals that already existed in monarchic times, became more common in the so-called Republican period (509-31 BC). The same name (θρύλοι) designated funeral laments and songs for tragedies. Moreover, funeral hymns were sung by pledged actors, who differed from tragic actors only in costume. As early as the 6th century BC, tragedies were performed at the funerals of tyrants, who had returned to power at that time. In Homeric times, singers celebrated the exploits of heroes not only at public gatherings but also in royal palaces, "always preferring the newest song" (The Odyssey, I, v. 350-352); cubistics, or pyramid dancing, which seems to have been originally dedicated to Cybele, was introduced into these celebrations, before becoming popular.

Music, dance and poetry continued to entertain citizens in the so-called classical era; many slaves and courtesans were admitted to aristocratic feasts to indulge in all kinds of dances of oriental origin. "Finally, when the luxury of Asia had completely invaded Greece, rich voluptuous people were seen calling naked dancers, naked singers and naked harpists to their feasts" (6). As well as dancers and actors, guests were entertained by jesters, tricksters, hoop players and, following the example of the Persian kings, madmen. The keeping of domestic fools was a custom that originated in Persia; another

fashion peculiar to the East was the keeping of domestic jesters, the employment of dancers and musicians of all kinds. The ancient paintings decorating the Heptanomid tombs show rich Egyptians accompanied by counterfeit dwarfs. In the 19th century, these entertainments still existed in Persia, India, Egypt and all Muslim countries. In ancient times, with the exception of the castle of Alexander, tyrant of Phères, which was indeed Pelasgic, it was mainly in the palaces of the kings of regions situated on the periphery of Greece, in Syria with the Attals, in Egypt at the court of the Ptolemies, in Sicily at the court of the Hierons, in Macedonia at that of Archelaus, Philip and Alexander's successors (7), that they were practised. One of these entertainments consisted in choosing a "king of the feast", whom all the guests were obliged to obey. In the so-called Republican era, he was given the name of symposiarch. Once again, this practice appears to have originated in the religions of the Near East and, more specifically, in the Phoenician and Canaanite institution of the marzeah (8). At regular intervals, the dead were honoured by the wealthiest members of the tribes at elaborate funeral banquets held in a building called bet marzeah (house of the marzeah), under the supervision of an rb marzeah ("prince of the marzeah") (9) elected "democratically" by all the guests; The guests also elected the "deputies" of the "prince", in a parody of the hierarchy that we shall see below would be found in certain European brotherhoods in the "Middle Ages". If Posidonius is to be believed, this form of worship of the dead was no more than a pretext for feasting and drinking. The fact remains that the voluntary and democratic nature of this institution was fully preserved and even enhanced when it moved to Greece, where it was not uncommon for the guests who had elected the "king of the feast" and who, in theory, owed him obedience, to accuse him theatrically, during the feast, of excessive power and tyranny. Greek festivals such as the Cronies and Pelories, in which slaves played the role of free men and sometimes even masters, also had their origins in an oriental festival, more specifically the Persian Sacaea, during which a slave in each house was dressed in royal robes and exercised sovereign authority (on the last day of the festival, he was beaten with rods and put on a cross).

Most of the entertainment enjoyed by the peasants and nobles of Greece was of exotic origin.

B. The influence of mysteries on theatre

1. Primitive Dionysian festivals

If the mimic instinct, the source of drama, is universal in all places, all times and all civilisations, in short, it is only formed into art through contact with an irrational element. In Europe, the Dionysian element may not have been the only one at the origin of the theatre, but there is every indication that it had a decisive influence on its birth.

A pre-Hellenic deity incorporated into the Pantheon around the seventh century BC, Dionysus was initially viewed with suspicion by the Hellenes, not only because he was a foreigner and was known to have precipitated more than one crisis in Greece, but also because his cult implied, on the one hand, the liberation of the forbidden, the violent manifestation of individual or collective feelings without guilt or restraint: The ancient festivals of Bacchus, the Agrionies, during which human victims were sacrificed, had left behind memories of murderous fury (10); on the other hand, because it tended to encourage the emancipation of the lowest strata of society as well as women, one of the audiences it specifically addressed: Dionysus is "a god who dissolves identity in general and the differences between the sexes" (11).

Until the beginning of the 6th century BC, there were three festivals in honour of Dionysus: the Rustic Dionysia, in the month of Poseidon; the Lenia, in the month of Gamelion; and the Anthesteria, in the month of Anthesterion. They all gave rise to ceremonial representations, hymns and tumultuous, grotesque processions of bacchants and bacchantes, who, often evoked by rudimentary masks, represented the divinities of the earth and fertility. The main festival, the Rural Dionysia, was extremely free; even the slaves enjoyed themselves with complete licence. The origins of comedy can be traced back to this festival, to the jokes and antics indulged in by the peasants. In any case, the first trestles and, soon, the first theatre were erected during the Anthesteries, the only festival where secret ceremonies in honour of Bacchus took place, while the other two were public. However, it should be stressed that the performances they hosted "were not intended... to imitate realities and create illusions; they remained an amusement without any serious thought, and did not become a truth for anyone. The theatres, standing alone on trestles one or two metres above the ground, had no decor that suited them to their purpose or served as a backdrop for the play; the pine branches and ivy garlands with which they were adorned were a constant reminder that all they were doing was celebrating Bacchus and enjoying themselves after a drink... The spectators therefore knew perfectly well that on the stage they were not seeing gods stripped of their divinity and vilified, but actors in drag, and their pleasure came above all from the contrast between the superhuman nature of the characters and their bad lives, between their real role in the play and the one they were supposed to fulfil in the world" (12).

In any case, these representations "counterbalanced the brilliance of the secret representations of the sanctuary" (13), about which, all in all, we know very little. "As traces of this mystical origin, we see the main priest of Bacchus occupying a place of honour on the first tiers of the Athenian theatre, in much the same way as we would later see our clergy in the person of the confreres of the Passion, for a long time keeping a grilled box at the Théâtre-Français, under the title of Loge des maîtres" (14).

The temple of Eleusis itself opened up to increasingly scenic performances. According to Strabo, it could hold as many people as a theatre. Of all the mystery cults, only Eleusis became a state institution,

particularly under the two anti-aristocratic regimes of tyranny and democracy, both of which turned it into a major plebeian cult: "In many cities, the advent of tyrannies, which relied on the people, raised the mysteries to the rank of an official cult; the democratic regimes that followed would give them ever greater importance. The mysteries are, in fact, the true Greek democratic religion (15). Hellenic art sought to realise an ideal, whereas the art of the mystery cults "sought to counterfeit reality and deceive the spectator's eye": "usually, if not always, the Mysts, immersed in a frightening darkness, were transported in imagination to the underworld, and the sight of the torments of the great criminals absolved divine justice of its slowness. Without at least a momentary illusion, these phantasmagorias would have been nothing more than puerilities unworthy of preoccupying the intellect: the spectators had to be impressed strongly enough to suspend their common sense and persuade them that the staging was the truth itself, and the spectacle a reality" (16). Generally speaking, whatever the mystery cult, the aim was to stir the imagination, (to) astonish the eyes, (to) charm the ears" (17), as was later the case with theatre. It is notable that a number of tragedians were linked in one way or another to the mysteries: Euripides is reputed to have composed most of his plays in a cave, the place where the mysteries of Bacchus were celebrated, and several of them have the Dionysian cult as their theme; according to Aristotle, Aeschylus was accused of revealing the secrets of the mystery ceremonies to the laymen on stage, without knowing that this was forbidden. Nietzsche, you will recall, links the birth of tragedy to the orgiastic festivals of Dionysus.

2. Theatre and tyranny

When Pisistratus (c. 600-527 BC) came to power, he introduced a fourth festival in honour of Dionysus, celebrated around the 12th of the month of Elaphebolion: the Urban Dionysia, which soon became the most important of the four and which, unlike the Rural Dionysia, was open to foreigners. Although it has been suggested that theatrical performances took place during the rural Dionysia, although no credible texts or sources mention theatre before the early or mid sixth century BC, it is certain that Pisistratus made theatre - perhaps tragedy, certainly comedy - the focus of the urban Dionysia. Pisistratus was himself, in his own way, an actor, judging by Herodotus' account of his buffoonish schemes: "... in [his] quarrel between the Paralians or inhabitants of the sea coast, commanded by Megacles, son of Alcmaeon, and the inhabitants of the plain, led by Lycurgus, son of Aristolaides, in order to clear a path to tyranny, [he] stirred up a third party. So he assembled this party on the pretext of defending the Hyperacrians. This is the ruse he devised: having injured himself and his mules, he pushed his chariot towards the public square, as if it had escaped from the hands of his enemies, who had wanted to kill him when he went out into the countryside. He begged the Athenians to give him a guard: he reminded them of the glory with which he had covered himself at the head of their army against the Megarians, the capture of Nisa, and cited several other feats of valour. The people, deceived, gave him a certain number of chosen citizens to guard him, and they followed him, armed with sticks instead of pikes. Pisistratus got them to rise up and captured the citadel with their help. From that moment he was master of Athens...". It has been suggested that Pisistratus instituted the Dionysia not so much to

worship Dionysus as to celebrate the prosperity of Athens, the decisive cause of the advent of tyranny; however, the two motives are not mutually exclusive. What is clear, however, is that they were introduced in response to a determination to unite the people, through a collective celebration, around this political regime, which was supported by a large bourgeoisie enriched by trade.

3. Democracy and the theatre

a) The so-called civic character of Athenian theatre

From the time of Pisistratus onwards, the theatre took on a civic character, which was accentuated under democracy. This is demonstrated by three main institutions: choreography, theorikon and competitions. The city entrusted the richest citizens with the task of using their own money to maintain a dance choir for dramatic or musical competitions: this was the choreography. The poorest citizens were paid an allowance to cover the cost of admission to the theatre: this was the theorikon, which soon became a veritable entertainment fund. The competitions, organised as part of the Dionysia, were subsidised by the polis, which paid the actors, poets and musicians, at least those who had received its approval - needless to say, the dramatic competitions were "controlled from start to finish by the political authorities". The content of the plays had to be approved in advance, with the sole criterion being "what was appropriate to say in public".

Under democracy, the theatre effectively took on the dimension of a collective event, in which the whole polis participated and which, even more than under tyranny, aimed to unite and "educate" the citizens; in the absence of racial homogeneity, the link could only be external, artificial, let's say social. Participation in the chorus - originally, the chorus was the group of people who performed the religious dances in the thymele, the altar dedicated to Dionysus at the centre of the orchestra (18), then the group of people who introduced the action and commented on its development - was a civil and religious duty. According to Demosthenes and Ulpian, choreographers were exempt from military service, their person was inviolable during their term of office and, a little later, they even seem to have received a monetary salary. Defamed persons, slaves and foreigners were excluded from these choirs.

However, the audience for the performances was not just made up of citizens, but also metagroups, foreigners, women (who were allowed to attend the tragedies, but not the comedies) and even slaves, and they had everything to captivate them, since, at least in the case of tragedy, their themes, which revolved around the human condition, were intended to be universal. The theatre can be seen as the keystone of the cosmopolitan project of the tyrants and, in their wake, of the democrats. Indeed, it was

no coincidence that Pisistratus decided to hold the Urban Dionysia on the aforementioned date: the reopening of shipping in the month of Bellerophon attracted many foreigners to Athens, and the Urban Dionysia was an additional incentive for them to make the journey and, for the many foreigners and metaethics that Clisthenes had admitted to the bourgeoisie, an invitation to settle there. In the 6th century, Pisistratus and his successors organised the theatre with the aim of "attracting citizens from all over Attica to the heart of Athens, on the Acropolis, for the major festivals such as the Panathenaeus and the Dionysia... The Greek theatre was therefore a place of mass acculturation. This is borne out by the huge capacity of the buildings, which were always built into the hillside: 14,000 seats at Epidaurus or Dodona, 17,500 at Athens and Corinth, 24,000 at Ephesus, 5,000 in an Attic deme or a small city" (19). When, under the archontate of Callias, fortunes were depleted, partly as a result of the Peloponnesian War, two citizens had to be allowed to combine their efforts to pay for a choir (synchoregia), foreigners were also allowed to finance choirs on behalf of citizens unable to bear the expense.

The assertion that the theatre had a "civic" character must therefore be seriously qualified. It is symptomatic of Hellenic decadence and the corresponding resurgence of Pelasgic influence that drama, born of a foreign land and a foreign spirit, ended up becoming a "national genre" (20) with which all Greeks identified.

b) Theatre, democracy and women

Democracy was, as it still is, founded on what is commonly known as "public debate" and, more generally, on logos, now conceived solely as "speech", "discourse" (21) and it is therefore not difficult to understand why this political regime did everything in its power to encourage the development of an art in which speech is king. Citizens were encouraged not only to participate fully in political institutions, but also to express themselves openly on matters of "public interest". They could do so in three places: the assembly (it is interesting and symptomatic that, once a year, the assembly met not in its usual place, the pnyx, but in a theatre, which is alluded to in Aristophanes' Acharnians), the court and, precisely, the theatre. Since, according to Aristotle, the assembly and the court did not play any real role in this respect until the beginning of the fifth century BC, the theatre was until then the privileged place for public speech and, correlatively, the theatre was the privileged place for democratic ideology. Isegoria, the "right to speak", was fiercely asserted by Euripides, and the concept of popular sovereignty first appeared in Aeschylus around 480 BC. The theatre even gave "the floor to voices that were normally excluded from political life, in particular women...".

In Greece, women were not allowed on stage, but they invaded it nonetheless, because women and, more generally, feminine values were at the heart of the theatre, as shown by an author whose

perceptive reading of the Greek tragedies partly echoes, albeit in a more analytical way, the considerations developed in section 361 of Gai savoir: "Women, if we are to believe [the] [Greek] tragedians, not only invented personal freedom, but brought something special to its expression... In all Greek dramas, tragic or comic, women vigorously and exclusively defend personal independence... what is universal and natural, as opposed to human justice; they also fight for the freedom to worship their own gods and to love the people of their choice. " "It is significant that the tragic heroine is often a slave: Cassandra in 'Agamemnon', the loyal Techmessa in Sophocles' Ajax, and, most markedly, Euripides' Andromache and Hecuba. This is even more true of many of the female supporting roles, but in many of these dramas the most important role is undoubtedly that of the chorus of female slaves, especially the captive Trojan women in Hecuba and Les Troyennes... in Greek myth [which, as R. Graves, can be read as a presentation of the transition from a Pelasgic matriarchal society to an Aryan patriarchal society], in Greek life and Greek theatre, not only are "servile power and feminine power linked", but both are linked to the thirst for complete personal freedom and the dangers it entails... almost all the women in tragedy, especially those who are slaves, express a strong inclination for personal freedom (22) ...". In the Choéphores, "what is remarkable about the chorus is that it is composed of slave women who participate in a plot to murder their master and mistress in order to achieve what they explicitly call freedom, both for free and semi-free men and, by implication, for themselves" (23).

The importance of women in tragedy is naturally accompanied by the emergence of subjectivism: "...the study of the inner life - debates, hesitations, contradictory feelings - takes on a hitherto unprecedented importance. In Euripides' theatre there is a new concern to reveal the true motives of the characters. Emphasis is placed on violent, contradictory feelings; psychological concerns take precedence over ethical considerations. And the personal involvement of the agent in the occurrence of the fault becomes increasingly clear. Fault is now interpreted in the light of individual psychological dynamics, and no longer with reference to divine intervention, which may, however, be invoked as an extenuating circumstance. The transition from the exterior to the interior of evil takes shape here, in the assumption of personal responsibility: disinclined to refer to the divine will, Euripides' hero, prey to all human weaknesses, bears his destiny in his own heart (24)."

The hero thus leaves the battlefield for the stage, abandoning living values for feelings, action for states of mind, external battles for purely psychological inner conflicts.

d) Theatre criticism

Theatre seems to have been embraced by all the thinkers of the time in Greece. Aristotle, as we know, even praised tragedy for its supposed ability to "purge the passions through pity and fear". Experience shows, on the contrary, that it has the opposite effect. On the other hand, it is fair to ask, without playing with words, whether the "imitation of a noble action" - supposing, for example, that the action of the Bacchae, where, after being ridiculed and disguised as a woman, Pentheus, the king of Thebes, the birthplace of Dionysus' mother, where Dionysus has just arrived to establish his cult, is handed over to women driven mad by Dionysus - would not be ignoble. Not all the tragedies paid tribute to the Athenian woman's foremost virtue, namely modesty; "By an exception that was noticed, Euripides forgot that he was talking to mothers, wives and young girls. A sophist with a poet's soul, an unbeliever with a strong faith in the religion of beauty, he pushed tragic emotion beyond the limits prescribed by a law that Aristotle had not yet drafted, but which lived in the depths of all consciences. He insulted women through oratorical invective, but even more so through the frank portrayal of the most ardent passions. It was like tearing the veil of austere modesty". (25).

Unlike Aristotle, Plato criticises the theatre in a number of ways. Firstly, he condemns imitation (nemesis). The actor, like the poet, is reprehensible because he is an imitator of the sensible and not of the being, a "ghost-maker" cut off from reality, and as a creator of imitators, liable to provoke a mimetic contagion, because of the Dionysian intoxication that transports him and that he can transmit to the spectators. Each individual soul that succumbs to it comes to confuse ghosts with reality. Based on the confusion of identities, theatre tends to blur each individual soul's perception of its own identity and, ultimately, to dispossess it of its own form, encouraging it to identify alternately with the different roles played by the actors on stage. It follows that, in the theatre, each individual soul can thus learn modes of behaviour alien to its nature, become other and be where it should not be, both literally and figuratively; In the literal sense, because Plato excludes "both the idea that craftsmen could be anywhere other than in their 'own' place of work, and the possibility that poets and actors could play roles other than their 'own' identity" (26); in the figurative sense, because the theatre leads the spectator to become accustomed to taking a place in the polis that is not his own. Its danger "comes from the power with which it invests spectators, without taking into account their delimited place in society" (27). Theatre thus plays a part in the dissolution of laws and the destabilisation and disorganisation of the political space that these laws presuppose and enable to be maintained. Up until this period, it was the privileged place for public discourse, so much so that Plato described the Athenian constitution of the time as "theatricrocracy", the government of an audience assembled in a theatre.

The birth of theatre in Athens signals the re-emergence of the pre-Hellenic Pelasgic substratum of Attica. Similarly, according to Titus Livius (Valerius Maximus, Tacitus and, later, Tertullian and Augustine agree), the Romans were introduced to the theatre in the 4th century BC by Etruscan actors.

II. The theatre in Rome

The arts and poetry, which in Greece had flourished within the priesthood in primitive times and spread rapidly throughout civil society, did not enjoy the same success in Rome.

On the one hand, they came up against a racial type that "had a fundamental repugnance for pictorial thought. Thus, in the secular sphere, one of the reasons for the Romans' contempt for the artist was the pride they originally took in being distinguished by ideals very different from the creation of images and the carving of marble" (28). Cato the Elder was resolutely opposed to the introduction of the arts and sciences into Rome, in the fully justified fear that the luxury of Greece and Asia would encourage sloth and sybaritism. The echoes of this mistrust of the arts were repeated throughout the empire; in the 1st century BC, Virgil could still write: "Roman! Remember to rule the world! These are your arts: imposing peace, forgiving the vanquished and taming the superb.

In Rome, on the other hand, priestly power was subordinate to political authority. The subordination of the priesthood to the imperium partly explains the rarity of initiation cults, whose rituals, as little as we know of them, were highly dramatised. There is no evidence of male initiations in early Rome, even though women were already called upon to celebrate numerous nocturnal and mysterious festivals in honour of Bona Dea. Until the end of the "Republic", the mysteries of Bona Dea took place in the presence of the vestals, in the house of the consul, praetor or high pontiff. Men were excluded, with the exception of the Grand Pontiff.

A. Religious festivals and shows of a dramatic nature

1. Mystery cults

a) The cult of Cybele (and Attis)

The arrival of the Stone of Cybele in 204 had given rise to games that were partly hieratic, partly popular, and which had been called Megalesian; ten years later, around 194 BC, according to Titus Livius, stage games proper were celebrated for the first time. Plautus' Pseudolus was performed there in 191 BC, in front of the temple of the goddess that had just been inaugurated on the Palatine; four plays by Terence were staged between 166 and 161. It is important to note that the exotic fanaticism that characterised the oriental cult of Cybele had been kept to a minimum once it had been transplanted to

Rome: "... the priests [there] appeared in parade dress, sacrificed to the goddess, and celebrated games in her honour; but in this celebration, they did not deviate in any way from ancient customs, and kept within the bounds prescribed by the laws. Thus, the ceremonies observed on these solemn days were stripped of all the chimeras that fable had mingled with the cult of Cybele. The Romans abandoned the practice of these foreign superstitions to a priest and priestess from Phrygia... They were allowed to walk through the whole city and, according to their custom, make a quest for the mother of the gods". This part of the ceremonies was highly dramatised: "The two ministers carried on their chests images representing some of the adventures of the goddess (29). As they marched, they performed furious dances to the sound of flutes, cymbals and tambourines. As fate would have it, the cult of Cybele, which had made great progress among the plebs towards the end of the res publica, gained even greater popularity under the Empire. The ludi megalenses, initially intended to do no more and no less than commemorate the arrival of Cybele in Rome, took on a completely different dimension, returning to their Phrygian sources, when Claudius introduced the ceremony known as Arbor Intrat, the mourning festivities for the death of Attis, Cybele's goddess. Over the course of five days, from 22 to 27 March, it featured the story of a mother who was saddened by the loss of her son and rejoiced when she found him again. Finally, Antoninus the Pious (138-161) organised a complete cycle of celebrations for the death and resurrection of Attis, and gave him the status of an official divinity (30). By this time, the festival, accompanied by self-mutilation and bloodshed, had fully rediscovered the wild, orgiastic character it had always had in Asia Minor (31).

b) The isiac religion

The isiac religion spread to Italy around the middle of the third century BC. Ennius, the first Roman author to mention the presence of isiac priests in Rome, compared them more or less to swindlers. Two centuries later, Virgil found them no better. These priests relied on the strangeness of their ceremonies and costumes to attract the curious and collect alms. Their hieratic performances were not part of national worship. Their private temples, if they were not destroyed as soon as they were built, were rejected outside the urbs. According to Propertius, only matrons were admitted to their mysteries. In Rome, only women were allowed to come together to practise secret nocturnal rites, while men were strictly forbidden to take part in this kind of gathering. The most vigilant magistrates realised that the mystery societies, which used religion as a pretext to alter the civil establishment, offered the most seditious and corrupt members of the res publica an opportunity to meet and plot, and severely repressed them.

2. Semi-religious festivals

Whereas in Greece, the citizens took an active part in the shows, the fights in the amphitheatre, for a long time the only secular spectacle in Rome, were left to the slaves. Whereas in Athens, many citizens took part in stage performances, either as choristers, actors or chorus girls, in Rome, with the exception of a few farces from Campania, reserved for patrician youth and forbidden to histrionics, only slaves and freedmen appeared on stage. However, young men and women of free status were allowed to take part in the choirs at certain semi-religious and semi-popular festivals (secular games, quinquatries, apollinaries). Some festivals gave Roman women the opportunity to play dramatic roles. During the Cerealia, semi-mystical and semi-public celebrations, they staged the adventures of Ceres and Proserpine. Courtesans played an important role in three semi-religious festivals: the vinales, orgiastic celebrations dedicated to Venus; the liberales, the equivalent of the Dionysia; and the florales, celebrated in honour of the Sabine goddess Flora. The maids themselves had their own festival, instituted to commemorate the courage they had shown at a time of extreme danger to Rome. After the retreat of the Gauls, several nations of Italy formed an alliance against Rome, and one of them, camped at its gates, declared itself ready to make peace with the Romans, on condition that the latter deliver matrons to them, in order to renew their ancient alliance through marriage. A slave named Philotis then proposed to the senate that she and some of her companions, dressed as matrons, should go to meet the enemies. Once in the enemy camp, she intoxicated them and, when they were asleep, gave the Romans the signal to attack. To preserve the memory of this event, the Caprotine nones were instituted, during which the ancillae sacrificed in the company of women of free status in the chapel of Juno Caprotine, where they appeared dressed in the stole, the distinctive garment of the matrons. This privilege had been granted to them by the Senate as a reward for the devotion that Philotis and her companions had shown towards their mistresses.

3. Saturnalia

The representation of equality was at the heart of another festival that the Romans celebrated in honour of Saturn: the Saturnalia, the equivalent in Latium of the Cronies and Pelories in Greece. Macrobius dates its institution to the time of Tullus Hostilius, the third legendary king of Rome, while Livy places it under the consulship of Aulus Sempronius and M. Minucius, in 257 BC. Like all Roman festivals, Saturnalia was preceded by sacrifices and followed by a frugal but joyous meal. Initially limited to one day, its duration was constantly extended until it reached seven days. During this festival of primitive equality, which is supposed to have existed under the reign of Saturn, slaves not only sat at the same table as their masters, but were also served by their masters. Augustus built on this practice when, following a vision, he believed he had to exchange his dignity as emperor for the role of beggar once a year. Later, Heliogabalus, dressed as a coachman of the green faction (at the circus games, there were four kinds of factions, factiones, distinguished from one another by the colour of their costume; they represented the four seasons. The green faction, factio prasina, represented spring) ran chariots inside the palace in front of his family and the people of his house and, to play his part to the full, he asked for

money and saluted the agonothetes and even the soldiers on guard duty in the manner of the coachmen.

4. Trade and craft festivals

In addition to these celebrations, there were trade and craftsmen's festivals. An anecdote about the musicians' festival, held on the ides of June, shows that the Romans' immunity to refinement had weakened. Around 83 BC, as musicians were gradually softening Roman morals, the magistrates decided to restrict their privileges. As a result, the musicians collectively decided to leave Rome and refuse to take part in the sacrifices where their presence was deemed necessary. Using a stratagem, the senate succeeded in getting them to return to Rome and gave them back their privileges, so that they could once again attend the sacrifices.

5. Triumphs

In the early days, the Romans' taste for reality still clearly prevailed over representation, as can be seen from the physiognomy of their triumphs. The Greeks, especially after Alexander, honoured the return of their victorious generals with a pomp that was more Bacchic than warlike. This was not the case in Rome, where it was only from the time of the first conquests that the triumphs, which until then had been very simple, took on a dramatic character. The procession, which entered the city through the Triumphal Gate on its way to the Capitol, was made up, among other things, of soldiers or public slaves, who carried on stretchers either maps of the cities that had been taken or pictures depicting the battles that had been won, rivers, animals, plants and simulacra of the divinities specific to the regions of the conquered peoples. However, the Romans always preferred the sight of the spoils of war, the weapons taken, the presence of defeated kings and princes as hostages and the presence of foreign animals. The only truly theatrical element in the triumph were the grotesque figures who, like the manducus, a mannequin with enormous jaws, an open mouth and teeth wagging loudly, were charged with entertaining or frightening the multitude, either at the head of the procession or following it; It is difficult to know for sure when they were incorporated into the triumphs; what is certain is that the atellane, a buffoonish farce of Oscan origin in which the manducus was one of the main characters, dates back to the 4th century BC.

B. Development of stage sets

The beginnings of theatre proper date back to 364 BC, when stage games were introduced into Rome. It was subject to two very different influences: Etruscan and Greek.

1) The Etruscan influence

Virtually all Latin authors attribute an Etruscan origin to the theatre in Rome (by which they mean that the theatre in Rome originated from rituals of the Etruscan religion, in particular necyomancy, the art of evoking the dead to predict the future) (32). According to Titus Livius, followed later by Valerius Maximus, the plague had just broken out in Rome around 363 BC and, to prevent its return, the senate decided to institute a new kind of festival, i.e. theatrical games and, to this end, "entertainers were brought from Etruria who danced to the sound of the flute and performed, in Etruscan fashion, movements that were not without grace... "And, as "bateleur" was (h)ister in Etruscan, the actors took the name histrio. The term larva itself, which originally meant "wandering spirit" before taking on the meaning of "evil spirit" and then that of "theatrical mask" (34), is, as the inscriptions (33) tend to show, of Etruscan derivation and thus supports the theory of the Etruscan origin of theatre in Rome.

2) Greek influence

In studying the influence of the Greek arts on Rome and, in this case, on the theatre in Rome, we need to distinguish between two periods: the first, which began with the capture of Tarentum in 272 BC, saw the customs and poetry of Greece begin to be known and appreciated in Rome, with some Greek actors called to the urbs to appear in public games; the second, which followed the capture of Corinth in 146 BC, is remarkable for the borrowings that Roman writers made from Greece in terms of stagecraft.

Oriental Greece indirectly influenced theatre in Rome through an art that the Romans had brought with them: eloquence, the art of expressing oneself with persuasive elegance, of moving and persuading through speech, which had only appeared in Greece at the end of the fifth century BC, in other words under the democratic regime. The first treatise on eloquence was written by two sophist rhetors, Corax of Syracuse and Tisias of Syracuse, both considered to be the founders of rhetoric (35).

The demos, who does not reason "is liable to be mistaken". This is why, in order to persuade the [demos] that you are telling the truth, all you have to do is speak more boldly than your opponent; all you have to do is shout louder, and say more insults than he says, complain about him more bitterly, propose everything you put forward as if it were an oracle, mock his reasons as if they were ridiculous,

weep if need be, as if you were truly sorry that the truth you are defending has been attacked and obscured. These are the appearances of truth. The people hardly see anything but these appearances, and it is these that persuade them" (36). The orator and the actor have a great deal in common. In fact, hypokrisis, which in Aristotle's writings, even though it does not yet have the modern meaning of "hypocrite", is nonetheless a pejorative term, means both "theatrical interpretation" and "oratorical interpretation"; similarly, actio designates the performance of a role in tragedy or comedy and consequently the performance of a speech (37). In Greece, as later in Rome, actors and orators used the same terminology to describe their art; they worked together: Demosthenes had been trained in declamation and oratory by the actor Satyrus (39), Aeschines (387-312 BC) had started out as an actor in a travelling troupe (40), before becoming a lawyer and then secretary of the people's assembly. Similarly, the influence was mutual in Rome, even if, according to the Syrian Epicurean Philodemus of Gadara (110 BC - c. 40 AD), most actors were reluctant to take lessons from orators; as far as the latter were concerned, "we know that Cicero learned from the two greatest actors of his time, the tragedian Aesop and the comedian Roscius, and that conversely Aesop and Roscius went to observe Cicero's rival, Hortensius, in order to transpose some of his oratorical effects to the theatre" (41). Quintilian (1st century AD), in Institutio oratorio, constantly insisted that the good orator must take care not to behave like an actor (38): the profession of actor, practised by foreigners, was infamous (dishonourable).

The indirect influence of Greece on the development of the theatre in Rome lay in the fact that it transmitted to the Urbs oriental customs which, because of their ostentatious nature, encouraged the dramatisation of private and public life. This is basically why Tacitus believes that the Greek theatrical tradition had a corrupting influence on the Romans.

It was at the beginning of the 2nd century BC, when the first table bed was brought from Greece, that Oriental luxury first appeared in Rome. Until then, the Romans, like the ancient Hellenes, ate their meals sitting down. The frugal meals were followed by banquets and then feasts (dubia), and the cook, who had previously been a second-rate slave, became the most esteemed servant in a great house, and what had previously been a vile profession was now considered an art. Musicians, Syrian harp players and jesters (ridiculi) were soon introduced to the feasts (42). There was also the little convivial drama, which we have already mentioned in Greece and, earlier, in the East, and which consisted of the guests choosing a king of the feast from among themselves; however, the democratic element specific to the original and its Greek copy was absent.

From Sylla to the advent of Caesar, luxury was on the rise and, with luxury, corruption. The excesses of the aristocracy were later surpassed only by the imperial orgies. One of the Proconsular festivals described by Sallustus (ap. Macrob., Saturn., II, 9) recalls, through its theatrical extravagance, the narcissistic debaucheries of Alexander the Great. Sylla lived surrounded by actors, while Antony travelled only with actors. Not only did the debauchees surround themselves with actors, but they

themselves took part in the greetings as actors. These saltations had nothing to do with the serious, military dances of the early Romans. The noble libertines of the last years of the res publica practised foreign exercises, the use of which had infiltrated Rome at the time of the general Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus Aemilianus (185-129 BC) and which had until then been reserved for slaves. Caligula dressed as Mercury, Neptune and Jupiter, played the roles of Bacchus, Apollo and Hercules, and disguised himself as Diana, Juno or Venus. Commodus, who had been trained in pantomime from childhood, once grown up, not content with dressing up as Hercules and Mercury, went so far as to show himself as an Amazon. Caracalla was content to dress as Bacchus.

All the dramatic rituals practised in Rome at funerals, with the exception of gladiatorial shows, which were probably of Etruscan origin, were borrowed from Greece. The Law of Solon and, later, the Law of the Twelve Tables, tried in vain to restrict funeral expenses and forbid women from bruising their faces at funerals. They also tried in vain to limit the signs of false sorrow that mingled with real sorrow: mourners continued to be so popular that some of these actresses had amassed enough money to hire mourners for their own funerals: not only mourners, but also musicians, dancers, jesters and actors, who came after them. The funeral was like a stage performance. The actor in charge of the lead role, i.e. the role of the dead person, would precede the coffin, trying to imitate the gait and language of the deceased. However, this practice undoubtedly dates back only to the Empire.

C. Theatre under the res publica

1. Pantomime

Until the middle of the 2nd century BC, theatrical performances took place on a mobile stage temporarily erected within the circus enclosure. In 154 BC, an attempt to build a Greek-style stone theatre aroused so much opposition that it was destroyed, by order of the senate, at the insistence of P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica, who not only demanded that it be demolished, but also requested that, from then on, Romans should attend theatrical performances standing up, so as not to fall into the effeminacy in which the Greeks indulged. It wasn't until 55-54 BC that Pompey had a permanent stone theatre built in Rome (though this didn't prevent certain plays from continuing to be staged in circuses and amphitheatres, often even in the Field of Mars or in the middle of the forum, on trestles); "(i)he deceived the senate, saying that he was erecting an altar to Venus, under which some tiers had been built for the shows; but the tiers held twenty-seven thousand spectators, and the temple that stood above them was no bigger than the imperial box in the circus" (43).

The construction of this first permanent theatre coincided with the development of a particular theatrical genre: pantomime (44), which rapidly came to almost entirely supplant tragedy and comedy, which had been dominant until then.

It had been imported from Etruria and brought to perfection under Augustus by Pylades, a freed slave of Augustus, born in Cilicia, and by Bathylus, a pupil and rival of Pylades, a former freed slave of Maecenas. Pantomime was the representation of a dramatic subject, borrowed either from history or, usually, from mythology, by a single dancer using dances and rhythmic gestures; he played all the roles, those of women and men, changing costumes and masks for each (45); "in risqué subjects, they went to the very limits of indecency. Either because of this, or because only delicate minds can appreciate the beauties of pure art, pantomime became and remained the most fashionable show for the upper classes of society, just as farces were for the masses of the people" (44bis; p. 331); these farces were called atellanes; originally performed by young citizens wearing masks at a time when other plays were performed without masks, they were later performed by professional actors. The mime was also a comedy of character, a tableau of ordinary life, but without the masks of the atellane. "They were dressed in a sort of harlequin costume (centunculus) and the recinium or ricinium, a piece of ancient clothing; the phallus was also part of their costume. Next to the main actor, the hero of the farce, there was usually another actor with a bald head whose role was characterised by the names parasitus and stupidus. The female roles were played by actresses who showed themselves to the public in a more or less state of nudity, especially at the Floralia. Like the play itself, the dances were characterised by obscene gestures and exaggerated grimaces. As taste became increasingly depraved, during the Empire the mime enjoyed the greatest favour with the Roman public; it owed this favour to the fact that a certain freedom of speech was tolerated, whereas everywhere else the slightest deviation was severely repressed" (46). Mimes were the only performances in which women appeared (it was not until very late that they played comedy) (47).

The racial chaos that began to reign in Rome at the end of the res publica explains the vogue for stage plays. This art form was able to serve as a universal language and therefore as a factitious link between the various ethnic groups and races in the imperial mosaic. The flattering verses that Martial slavishly addressed to Domitian reflect this: "Caesar, what nation, so distant and barbaric, does not have a few of its own seated as spectators in your city? To contemplate Rome, the inhabitant of Thrace comes from the summit of Hemus, the home of Orpheus; the Sarmathus, who feeds on the bloody flesh of his steeds, and the man who drinks the waters of the Nile at their source, and the man whose shore is beaten by the last wave of Thetis, are seen to come. The Arab and the Sabean flock here; the Sicilian, in your amphitheatre, believes himself to be wet with the mists of his homeland; the curly-haired Sicamber and the frizzy-haired Ethiopian gather here. They all speak different languages, but they have only one language in which to call you the Father of the Fatherland" (De spectac, 3). Theatrical pleasures were the only way to bring together and unify the diverse and varied races, impossible to unite, that made up the Roman Empire. The second reason why Augustus encouraged the spread of pantomime was that it

apparently lent itself less to political criticism than tragedy or comedy. The histrionics, a term applied to pantomime from his reign onwards, nevertheless found ways to outdo each other in attacking those in power through certain gestures or, since pantomime was not entirely silent, through the text (canticum) that was an integral part of it. If they ended up being suppressed and punished, it was mainly because the frenzy they aroused in the Romans led them to take sides with one or other of them, thus forming factions that "sometimes degenerated into parties as heated against each other as the Guelphs and Ghibellines may have been under the emperors of Germany" (48).

Under the res publica, theatre played a central role in the religious rituals of the urbs. Theatrical performances were an integral part not only of the funerary games commemorating the death of a notable person and the celebration of triumphs, but also of the consecration of temples. The theatre had also become an outward sign of power and wealth. In addition to games, magistrates had to provide theatrical performances and the theatres in which they took place. The number of days on which Romans could enjoy themselves at the theatre increased steadily, reaching the hundred mark around 350 BC. Members of the upper class were obliged to attend plays, especially magistrates and, later, the emperors themselves. The place spectators occupied in the theatres depended on their social status.

As in Athens, the theatre acted as a mediator between the government and the plebs, whose influence grew in the economic, military and political life of Rome from the mid-4th to the mid-3rd century BC; so it's hardly surprising that the theatre underwent spectacular development during this period. Like the circus, the theatre was a double-edged sword of power: On the one hand, by attending theatrical performances, the representatives of authority were supposed to show the plebs that they shared their tastes (and perhaps they did indeed share them), in order to win them over; on the other hand, they were exposing themselves to criticism from the plebeians, since the theatre was, along with the circus, the only public space where "public opinion" could be expressed; The plebeians did not shy away from this, whistling or applauding, depending on their mood, a particular dignitary when he or she arrived in the stands. Suetonius records a number of cases where spectators expressed their disapproval of an emperor. Admittedly, the resentment of the plebs could be better contained, controlled and channelled within the confines of a theatre than in the street.

2. The actor

Like many other professions in the empire, acting was hereditary. The association that many Roman authors made between the theatre and foreign influence was well-founded: actors were foreigners, captives or, more frequently, slaves who had been able to buy their freedom.

While in Greece actors had always enjoyed a good reputation and great respect, in Rome their status was originally average and contemptible. Actors were deprived of civic rights and excluded from public office, for a reason given by Cicero: "As our ancestors attached a dishonourable notion to the profession of actor and to the life of a man of the theatre, they wanted these kinds of people to be deprived of the honours of the Roman citizen; and even more, that the censor ignominiously expel them from their tribe" (Treatise on the Republic, IV, X). Civil servants were forbidden by law to marry actresses. Titus Livius tells us that actors were not allowed to become soldiers, as they were dissemblers, individuals who passed themselves off as something they were not. They were regarded as dangerous outsiders and associated with idleness, licentiousness and effeminacy. While the Greeks admired actors, the Romans initially considered it shameful to expose oneself on stage, to make a spectacle of oneself (49). In the Fasti, Ovid observes that theatrical performances are not appropriate honours for Mars. In the same vein, Tacitus felt that the theatre was alien to those who were warriors by nature - res nova bellicoso populo. One of the last survivors of this warlike people at a time when native patricians were becoming rare, a soldier, brought into Nero's presence after his involvement in Piso's conspiracy had been discovered, told him that he had been loyal to him until the day he learned that he was a parricide, a matricide and an actor.

The further the Orontes flowed into the Tiber, the more the actors' image and social status improved. The obligation imposed by Caesar on members of the equestrian order to appear on stage remained in force under the Empire, where, conversely, several actors, although still deprived of civil rights, received municipal offices (50). As in Greece, actors, under cover of their profession, enjoyed a freedom of expression that was the envy of many, even in the senatorial and equestrian orders. They had made "freedom of expression" fashionable. Stage actors, particularly pantomimes, were appreciated and even adored by Roman youth; they lived in the intimacy of knights and senators. Some of them won the favour of the emperors, got involved in palace intrigues and won important offices.

Actors formed guilds, confraternities that were both "religious and professional, bringing together within their ranks various stage specialists gifted with a certain know-how. The aim of their members was to put their artistic practices at the service of divine worship, and more particularly to honour the god Dionysus, under whose patronage they had placed themselves. At least, that was their stated aim. The fact that these guilds of artists were "organised on the model of the poleis of their time... with their own magistrates and even their own coinage (if a recent discovery is to be believed)" (51) leads us to suspect that they did not stop there, since any association with institutions and a hierarchy parallel to those of the civil establishment potentially had a subversive character. In fact, it comes as no surprise to learn that "(t)hey conducted a political activity that brought them into contact, through their ambassadors, with the various powers of the time: kings, dynasts, cities and peoples, to use the well-known formula of the diplomacy of the time, to which we should add the Romans, from the first century BC" (52). In other words, they were engaging in what is known today as lobbying, and they were doing so with complete impunity. Rome understood that the mystery societies, under the guise of religion,

were working to destroy institutions by providing plotters with the opportunity to meet and secretly prepare their criminal plans; it understood this and suppressed them. She had also sensed that the guilds of actors potentially exposed her to the same danger; this is why, while in Greece the guilds of actors "had become like the refuge of individual freedom" (53), she subjected them to close and strict control. Naturally, nothing could eradicate the seditious and vain nature of the members of this profession. Accius, a renowned Umbrian actor, is known to have refused to stand up when Caesar entered an assembly of poets in which he was taking part, arguing that, in such a place, pre-eminence is due to talent rather than dignity (Valerius Maximus, II, 7).

In the second century AD, "actors had become a powerful body in the State, honoured by all, patronised by the emperor, whose name they took"; "the theatre enjoyed every favour, and the brotherhoods were as if associated with public worship": "there was no longer an actor who was despised because of his profession" (54). From Scipio to Augustus, famous actors were honoured and showered with riches. Tiberius tried to put an end to this prevarication. Following a serious incident that had taken place at the circus games between the various factions that supported one gladiatorial squad or another, he issued a decree condemning the actors of the theatre, circus and amphitheatre to flogging and thereby stifling the factions they were stirring up, but a tribune of the people objected. The emperor did, however, succeed in passing laws moderating the actors' privileges, limiting the sums that could be spent on theatrical performances, giving the lenders the right to punish unruly spectators with exile, forbidding all senators to set foot in an actor's house, forbidding all citizens, especially women, to associate with actors and "abolished the senseless honours that the young nobility of Rome paid to these Kings of the Theatre" (55). His successors were much less wise in this respect, some of them, it is true, much less Roman in origin too.

5) Nero: a representative case of the softening of a certain section of the Roman nobility

Nero, who had been introduced to the theatre by his tutor, the Stoic Seneca, performed on stage himself. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that he spent more time on stage than in the senate, where, incidentally, he could not help acting too. Suetonius gives us the image of a man who constantly switched from the role of emperor to that of actor, whatever his audience. This had several serious consequences.

The first was the spectacular degradation of the imperial function. The episode reported by Suetonius of Nero's triumph in Naples shows that, while triumph was the supreme honour bestowed on a general who had won a great victory, Nero obtained the honours of triumph for having been crowned at the Olympic Games and, instead of making a solemn entry into Rome at the head of his army and followed

by prisoners and booty, like any general who has won a distinguished victory, he entered Naples surrounded by musicians and actors from all over the world, preceded by "eighteen hundred and eight crowns that he had won in the various Games in which he had taken part" (56) and followed by augustans, "hired applauders (54), shouting, as in the ovations, that they were the companions of his glory and the soldiers of his triumph" (Suetonius, Nero, XXV).

The second was the spectacular degradation of the patriciate. The whole of Rome was seen by Nero as an audience: his youth, that is to say the descendants of the great patrician families, "were divided... into two troops: one engaged on stage with him, to assist him, the other seated at the orchestra to applaud him (57)". When the latter was reluctant, he forced her to go up. Whether she performed willingly or under duress, she provided an opportunity for the plebs, as Juvenal lamented, to mock the nobility at their leisure. Gone were the days when a Roman of good stock who took to the stage was covered in infamy. A complete reversal had taken place in the space of a few generations: after having long despised the histrions, of plebeian extraction, the nobility, because some of its members thought they were histrions, could now be held in contempt by the plebs.

According to some accounts, emperors of non-Roman origin such as Heliogabalus were in the habit of blurring the line between reality and fiction by demanding that acts that were normally simulated in the theatre were actually performed there. Although Nero did not do this, the theatricalisation to which he subjected Rome naturally had the effect of blurring the line between reality and fiction, as this striking anecdote testifies: "It is said that at the performance of Hercules furious, a young soldier, who was on guard at the entrance to the theatre, seeing him loaded with chains, as the subject demanded, ran to lend him a hand". (Suetonius, Nero, XXI) In fact, this young soldier had only confused spectacle with reality insofar as he didn't know what spectacle was, or at least insofar as it hadn't occurred to him that an emperor could make a spectacle of himself, play a role.

The fourth fatal consequence was an intensification of the Asiaticisation of Rome: "Nero dramatised reality and installed mythological fiction at the centre of his individual imagination", but "by proposing the fantasies of his Greek culture as a model for Roman life. Mythology ceased to be a cultural language for analysing reality: it identified with it and invested it with all its monstrosities (58).

* * *

Now that the emperor had become a Christian, things were different. He now had a duty to uphold what was commonly known as Christian morality. Tatian called for the theatre to be banned because the

actors "on the stage teach adultery" (Discourse to the Greeks, XXII); Tertullian attacked the "obscenity" and "licentiousness" that reigned in theatrical performances (59). As well as being accused of immorality and indecency, the theatre had to face the accusation of "paganism". And "... as the influence of Christian orators is very great... as they demonstrate very well to the emperor that these are not festivals of God, but of the gods, festivals of the polytheism of these pagan divinities that they have brought down, and that the emperor himself has sworn to abandon, it is incumbent upon him to respect the scruples of the Church and to act accordingly. This led him to deprive the guilds of many of their privileges, at the risk of upsetting the people (60)...". Chrysostom asserted that the theatre "is the plague of cities" and "it is from there that all seditions and disturbances arise" (61). Far more interesting is the comparison he draws between theatre and magic, despite the fact that the term only has the meaning of "diabolical devices" that it has in Christian rhetoric (62). He fails to see that what is meant here is the art of the illusionist, of the person who produces illusionary effects through various mechanical and psychological processes (and, more recently, due to technological progress, through various special effects: 3D image synthesis, digital processing, pixilation, make-up, etc.).

With the fall of the Roman Empire, the theatre gradually decayed until it disappeared into the background in the 6th century, only to be taken out by the Church several centuries later. The theatre rose from its ashes when it came into contact with Christian liturgy. This is hardly surprising since, as we have seen, there was something profoundly theocratic about the origin and development of the theatre in ancient times. In the "Middle Ages", as in decadent antiquity, the lords and princes welcomed theatrical games as an object of luxury and parade, and the people gave themselves over to them in a frenzy, but only the clergy took hold of the dramatic instinct, cultivated it and developed it for a specific purpose. From the beginning of the period stretching from the sixth to the twelfth century, stage plays and even the use of masks were introduced into certain women's monasteries; in the eighth and ninth centuries, the funerals of abbots and abbesses ended with short funeral dramas in which male and female religious shared the roles; in the tenth century, the lives of saints and the legends of martyrs were performed in convents. Finally, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, ecclesiastical drama unfolded in cathedrals on major feast days, supported by music, sculpture and painting, in "tragic" as well as comic representations.

B. K., 2015.

(1) "It is high time," declared R. Guénon in Réforme de la mentalité moderne (Regnabit, June 1926), "to show that religion is something other than a matter of sentimental devotion, something other than moral precepts or consolations for the use of minds weakened by suffering, that we can find in it the 'solid food' of which Saint Paul speaks in the Epistle to the Hebrews". Twenty-four years later, when he died, had he done so?

(2) René Guénon, Aperçus sur l'initiation, Les Éditions Traditionnelles, Paris, 1946, p. 103.

(3) Religious theatre existed in Africa long before the invention of the alphabet; mythological tragedies accompanied by song and dance were frequently performed in India during the Bronze Age; the Indus Valley civilisation (2700-1500 BC) had a god of actors and dancers called Siva. In China, ritual performances by dancers, singers and impersonators were given during the Zhou dynasty (1122-256 BC); according to current research, it seems that the first tragedy was performed in Egypt around 2000 BC: its theme was the suffering and triumph of Osiris, and it is not unlike the Christian 'passions' of the 'Middle Ages' (see Egyptian 'Passion'Plays', [http://www.theatrehistory.com/origins/egypt001.html ; Eric Csapo and Margaret C. Mille, The Origins of Theater in Ancient Greece and Beyond: From Ritual to Drama, Cambridge University Press, 1st ed, 2008, chap. 13, which takes stock of the issue; Christine Schnusenberg, The Mythological Traditions of Liturgical Drama: The Eucharist as Theater, Paulist Press, 2010, chap. 1, which explores the theatre which, long before it was introduced and established in Greece, flourished in Egypt, Babylon, the Canaanites, Israel and Syria; see also Christianne Desroches-Noblecourt, Etienne Drioton, Le Théâtre égyptien [review]. In Journal des savants, vol. 4, no. 1, 1943, pp. 166-76). However, specific reservations must be expressed about one of the arguments put forward by the author to conclude that Egyptian theatre did not originate from the mysteries, namely that the Egyptian mysteries "do not include spectators: the assistants are priests or faithful who all take part in the action". The argument is anachronistic. In fact, the distinction between actors and spectators, surprising as it may seem, dates only recently, as we shall see in the second part of our study (see above all Peter Ukpokodu, Origines égyptiennes du théâtre occidental: obscurantisme scolastique ou ignorance coupable? In L'Annuaire théâtral: revue québécoise d'études théâtrales, no. 15, 1994, pp. 9-20, available at http://www.erudit.org/revue/annuaire/1994/v/n15/041193ar.pdf, consulted on 17 April 2015). With regard to the polemical title of this article, it should be noted that the Eurocentric literature that, since the nineteenth century, has endeavoured to pass off as a product of white civilisation a culture that is not originally its own, and at the centre of which are fetishised the by-products of action that are the sciences and the arts, whose progress merely reflects the growing inner and outer restlessness of the geniuses who make them possible and accentuates the general restlessness of those who are its paying guinea pigs ; The Europe of their dreams, whether they are aware of it or not, is the Negro-Semitic society that has been under construction there, on the ruins of traditional Rome, since the advent of Christianity.

On the subject of the cosmopolitan, a case little studied by psychiatry, the conclusions of the research of a Swedish psychiatrist, set out by Levi-Strauss (Le regard éloigné, chap. 12), are worth quoting: "... at the origin of the illness, we find an abnormal family configuration, characterised by a lack of maturity on the part of the parents and more especially the mother, either because she rejects her child or because, on the contrary, she cannot bring herself to imagine him separated from her. If, for the new-born child, the world is initially reduced to a united body in which he and his mother merge, then gradually enlarges to include their perceived and accepted duality, then a family constellation, and finally society as a whole, it is easy to see how the persistence of an initial pathological situation can result in the schizophrenic oscillating between two extreme feelings: that of the insignificance of the self in the eyes of the world, and that of its inordinate importance in the eyes of society, leading to a fear of nothingness in one case,

and delusions of grandeur in the other. Schizophrenics will never be able to experience life in the world in the normal way. For him, the part would be equivalent to the whole; unable to establish a relationship between his self and the world, he would be unable to perceive their respective limits: "While the normal individual has the concrete experience of his being-in-the-world, the schizophrenic's experience is that of himself as a world". At the four successive stages of apprehension of the world - one's own body, one's mother, one's family, one's society, grasped as worlds - the same indistinction reigns which, according to the stage at which the patient regresses, is reflected in different disorders always affecting the double aspect, contradictory only in appearance, of cleavage or confusion: from echolalia and echopraxia, to the alternating feelings of being entirely controlled by this or that ensemble perceived as the world, or of being able to exercise a magical and sovereign control over it". Particularly interesting, from a point of view far superior to that of psychiatry, is the view that schizophrenia arises from an abnormal relationship with one's mother, when it is linked to the lunar, undifferentiated and levelling view of the world that is peculiar to religions which, such as Christianity, stem from the matriarchal cult of the great mother or, in the modern era, to the various egalitarian ideologies that have emerged from these religions through 'secularisation', that is, to put an end to this catch-all term, through tactical adaptation to the conditions of a given era.

(4) Pierre Magnin, Les origines des théâtre modernes ou histoire du génie dramatique, vol. 1, L. Hachette, Paris, 1838, p. 138.

(5) On the chthonic religions of the mother goddess and the racial substratum of the peoples associated with them, see Julius Evola, Révolte contre le monde moderne, L'Age d'Homme, Lausanne, 1991, chap. La civilisation de la mère".

(6) Pierre Magnin, op. cit. p. 187.

(7) The following account amply confirms the negative overall assessment that can be made of the Macedonian sovereign's historical role: "Alexander often sat at table dressed as a god; sometimes he took on the purple robe of Ammon, his slashed shoe and his horns, as if he were that very god; sometimes he dressed as Diana and rode in this way in his chariot, wearing a Persian robe and showing the goddess's bow and javelin on his shoulder. He also sometimes dressed as Mercury. But his everyday garment was a purple chlamydia and a tunic embroidered in white; his headdress was a headband topped with a diadem. At gatherings of friends, he wore a winged petasus and heel cups like Mercury, and held a caduceus in his hand. He was also often seen covered in a lion's skin and armed with the club of Hercules", Ephippus, On the death of Alexander and Hephestion. Quoted in Athen, lib. II, p..537, E. F.

(8) Patrick E. McGovern, Uncorking the Past, University of California Press, 2010, p. 179; Shalom M. Paul, Michael E. Stone and Avital Pinnick (eds.), 'Al Kanfei Yonah: Collected Studies of Jonas C. Greenfield on Semitic Philology, 2 vols, Brill, Leiden, 2001, p. 910.

(9) It seems that some of them held the title of high priest.

(10) Charles Victor Daremberg and Edmond Saglio, Dionysia, Le Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines, t. 2, 1st part, 1877, Hachette, p. 230-46.

(11) In Martina Handler, Retelling the Nicaraguan Revolution as a Dionysian Ritual, Lit Verlag, 2011 p. 28.

(12) Édélestand Du Méril, Histoire de la comédie, Didier et Cie, Paris, 1864, p. 279.

(13) Pierre Magnin, op. cit. p. 94.

(14) Ibid, The presence of the main priest of Bacchus in these parts is one of the elements that invalidates the author's thesis that the various arts escaped from the hands of the representatives of the mysterious institution, in which they had hatched, and fell into profane hands, where they merged into a theatre.

(15) Jacques Pirenne, Civilisations antiques, Albin Michel, Paris, 2013, p. 424.

(16) Édélestand Du Méril, op. cit. p. 236-37.

(17) Ibid, p. 234.

(18) http://jfbradu.free.fr/GRECEANTIQUE/GRECE%20CONTINENTALE/PAGES%20THEMATIQUES/theatre/schema-theatres.php3.

(19) Marie-Françoise Baslez, Les sources littéraires de l'histoire grecque, Armand Colin, Paris, 2003, p. xxii.

(20) Marius Sepet, Le Drame chrétien au moyen-âge, Slatkine Reprints, 1975, p. 10.

(21) For Heidegger's etymological reflections on the term "logos", see Michel Fattal, Logos, pensée et vérité dans la philosophie grecque, L'Harmattan, Paris, Montréal, Budapest and Turin, 2001; see also Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, La notion de nomos dans le Pentateuque grec, Biblical institute Press, 1973.

(22) Orlando Patterson, Freedom in the Making of Western Culture, 1991, Basic Books, p. 109-10.

(23) Ibid, p. 111.

(24) See Évelyne Pewzner, Jean-François Braunstein, Histoire de la psychologie, Armand Colin, Paris, 2010 (see also http://www.armandcolin.com/upload/Histoire_de_la_psychologie.pdf, p. 11, consulted on 15 April 2015).

(25) Émile Egger, Mémoires de Littérature ancienne, A. Durand, 1862, p. 438.

(26) P. Hallward, Jacques Rancière et la théâtrocratie ou Les limites de l'égalité improvisée, available at: http://www.marxau21.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=97:p-hallward-jacques-ranciere-et-la-theatrocratie-ou-les-limites-de-legalite-improvisee&catid=47:ranciere-jacques&Itemid=7, accessed 15 June 2015.

(27) Casiana Ionita, L'Insoutenable Théâtralité de la Commune. In Théâtre(s) Politique(s), No. 1, March 2013, available at: theatrespolitiques.fr/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/CI-PDF.pdf, accessed on 19 April 2015.

(28) EA, Sul sacro nella tradizione romana, in Introduzione alla magia, vol. II, Edizioni Mediterranee, 1994, translated from Italian by B. K.

(29) François Catrou, Histoire romaine depuis la fondation de Rome jusqu'à l'an 47 de J.-C., t. 9, Paris, 1727, p. 289-90.

(30) See Marcel Van Doren, L'évolution des mystères phrygiens à Rome, L'antiquité classique, vol. 22, no. 22-1, 1953, pp. 79-88.

(31) See Ludwig Preller, Les dieux de l'ancienne Rome, Didier et Cie, Paris, 1865, p. 484-5.

(32) Necyomantic oracles seem to have used spring statuettes; see, for example, Cicero, De divin, II, 41; Martial, V, Epigr. I, v. 3. The testimony of the historian Cluvius Rufus (1st century BC), reported by Plutarch, is however at odds with that of Titus Livius, in that it implies that the urbs housed actors before the arrival of the Etruscan element within its walls: "in the early days of the republic, under the consulship of C. Sulpicius and Lic. Stolon, the plague killed off all the actors, but not one. Several highly skilled actors were brought from Etruria. The most famous of them, the one who had the most talent and experience in his art, was called Histrus; and it was from his name that all the comedians were called histrions".

(33) Pierre Magnin, op. cit. p. 326: "Originally, the name larvae or manias seems to have been given to the clay or flour imprints that were taken from the faces of the dead and sometimes buried with them. Often, to appease a lemur who frightened his parents and complained about not being admitted to the larorum, the mask was removed from the tomb and placed on the face of one of the familiar lares. When a house or village was threatened by some danger, the peril was warded off by placing larvae or masks above the door, or by hanging them from nearby trees, to replace the human heads that people used to offer to Saturn to redeem themselves on similar occasions. These suspended heads were called oscilla"; see, on the subject of the term larva in its sense of "mask", https://elementsdeducationraciale.wordpress.com/2020/07/16/mascarade/.

(34) http://www.maravot.com/Translation_ShortScripts_e.html [to be consulted preferably in cache]

(35) Twenty-four centuries later, unsurprisingly, eloquence would be "the craftsman of the Republic" (Dominique Dupart, Le Lyrisme démocratique ou la naissance de l'éloquence romantique chez Lamartine [1834-1849], Honoré Champion, coll. "Romantisme et modernités", 2012, Paris).

(36) Bernard Lamy, La Rhétorique ou l'art de parler, Paris, 1757, p. 385-6.

(37) Charles Causeret, Étude sur la langue de la rhétorique et de la critique littéraire dans Cicéron, Librairie Hachette et Cie, Paris, 1886, p. 199.

(38) Whitney Shiner, Proclaiming the Gospel, 1st edn, Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2003, p. 84.

(39) Athanase Auger and Joseph Planche, Oeuvres complètes de Démosthène et d'Eschine en grec et en français, vol. 5, Paris, 1820, p. 517.

(40) Clément Plomteux and Henri Agasse, Encyclopédie méthodique, t. 6, 1804, p. 627.

(41) Françoise Desbordes, Scripta varia, Peeters, Leuven, 2006, p. 131.

(42) See Émile Lefranc Histoire romaine, Meyer, 1833, p. 432. Under the Empire, a time of unbridled luxury, feasts included all kinds of entertainment. Heliogabalus sometimes invited eight bald men, eight one-eyed men, eight gouty men, eight deaf men, eight giants and eight obese men to supper, and to amuse himself, made them lie down in a bed that could not hold them. One day, Commodus had two stunted hunchbacks covered in mustard served in a large dish, only to dress them in dignity and cover them with silver. As for Domitian, his black banquet was remembered, particularly by the guests, for its impeccably macabre character.

(43) Latour Saint-Ybars, Néron: sa vie et son époque, Michel Lévy, Paris, 1867, p. 234.

(44) It is not uninteresting to note that Lucian, in his dialogue on dance, compares the Pythagorean rule to pantomime.

(45) Théodore Mommsen and Joachim Marquardt, Manuel des antiquités romaines. Vol. XIII: Joachim Marquardt, Le culte chez les Romains, Ernest Thorin, Paris, 1890, p. 444: "The use of masks was introduced after Terence; the innovation is attributed to the directors Minucius Prothymus for tragedy and Cincius Faliscus for comedy; previously the actors wore wigs (galearia, galeri) and dyed their faces. It was not until Roscius that the use of masks took root and became widespread (although he still sometimes performed without a mask)" (ibid., p. 324-5).

(46) Ibid, p. 329.

(47) Ibid, p. 324.

(48) Journal encyclopédique ou universel, t. 8, 1778, p. 16.

(49) To assume, as some do, that the hostile attitude of a certain part of the Roman elite towards the theatre and actors was due to the poor quality of plays in Rome is ridiculous enough to serve as the subject of a vaudeville.

(50) Joachim Marquardt, Le culte chez les Romains, p. 317-8.

(51) The first guilds of this type were formed in the third century BC in Ptolemaic Egypt and Asia Minor, from where they later spread throughout the Hellenistic world and the Roman Empire (Jean-Marie Pailler, Les mots de Bacchus, Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 2009, p. 102). Originally, they brought together itinerant artists who travelled to festivals and competitions on demand.

(52) Brigitte Le Guen, L'association des Technites d'Athènes ou les ressorts d'une cohabitation réussie. In J. Ch. Couvenhes and S. Milanezi, Individus, groupes et politique à Athènes de Solon à Mithridate, Presses Universitaires François Rabelais, Tours, 2007, p. 339-64.

(53) Émile Egger, Mémoire de littérature ancienne, Auguste Durand, Paris, 1862, p. 420.

(54) Ibid.

(55) François Catrou, Histoire romaine : Tibére Empereur, J.-B. Delespine, 1737, p. 198-9.

(56) Henri d'Escamps, Galeries des marbres antiques du musée Campana, 2nd edn, vol. 1, p. liii,

(57) Paid applauders were invented by the Syrian-born emperor Caligula.

(58) Paul-Augustin Deproost, Laurence Van Ypersele and Myriam Watthee-Delmotte, Violence et autorité ou l'impossible désunion, in id. (eds.), Mémoire et identité : Parcours dans l'imaginaire occidental, Presses Universitaires de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, 2008, p. 110.

(59) Gourcy (abbé de), L'Apologétique et les Prescriptions de Tertullien, Rivoire, Lyon, 1825, p. 583. It is true that the arguments put forward by Roman writers of the time, including Ovid, against the theatre did not go much beyond this.

(60) Émile Egger, op. cit. p. 419-20.

(61) Chrysostom was well placed to make this judgement, since the various Christian sects were constantly filling the empire with unrest and sedition.

(62) Homélies et Sermons de S. Jean Chrysostôme, Pierre le Petit, Paris, 1665, p. 229-30.

2

At the very beginning, in the ninth and tenth centuries, the theatre, it can be said, was completely merged with worship, or rather it was worship itself that was a theatre..... Outward worship consisted of ceremonies, and these ceremonies were symbolic; there were songs, stories, marches and counter-marches, and characters dressed in a variety of clothes. But what is a symbolic performance but a drama, in the primitive and absolute sense of the word? Drama means action: history, morals or dogma put into action. Since the Catholic liturgy puts Christian dogmas and their history into action, it is necessarily dramatic, today as in the Middle Ages, but in the Middle Ages it was more dramatic than today.

Marius Sepet, Christian drama in the Middle Ages

The Christian drama of the Middle Ages was born, among the pomp of the Church, from the ceremonies, readings and songs of the Catholic liturgy. This liturgy, in fact, contains, at least in germ, the three elements that together make up drama: the subject or action, the setting and the dialogue.

Ibid.

III. The world of theatre in the Middle Ages

The emergence of "liturgical drama" is the final consequence of the efforts made to make Christian teachings comprehensible to the people: it speaks first and foremost to the imagination and sensibility.

A. Dramatic genres

1. Genesis of the different dramatic genres

a. Liturgical drama

In the "Middle Ages", the faithful, the vast majority of whom were uneducated and superficially Christianised, heard little of the biblical accounts and did not understand the Latin service, so every means was used to express the dogmas of Christian doctrine as sensitively as possible.

The "liturgical drama" arose from the tropes sung during the service by two choirs placed opposite each other. The singing brought to life in the imagination the event that had just been read in the day's Gospel. Soon the different verses of the Bible were assigned to different soloists and the localities (mansions) where the action took place were indicated in the choir or in the nave.

At the end of the tenth century, when every feast day had its own dramatic representation, the tendency to vary the long offices by introducing rituals whose dramatic form was likely to strike the

spirits keenly reached its highest point of intensity. A little later, towards the beginning of the eleventh century, the two cycles in which the Christian feasts were structured were dramatised: the Christmas cycle and the Easter cycle (62).

There were two types of "liturgical drama": some were closely linked to religious ceremonies and followed word for word the biblical texts, which were then slightly paraphrased in order to be put into dialogue for the sake of the action. "The others, while having the same religious character, were not so closely linked to worship. They were already genuine dramatic creations. Their subject was the sacred text, but the development they underwent made them special compositions whose scope made it impossible to keep them in the services. They were performed sometimes during processions, sometimes during or after ceremonies, either in the choir or on the rood screen" (63).

b. The miracle and the mystery

Liturgical drama gave rise to two types of dramatic genre: the first included miracles and mysteries, and was intended to edify or moralise the people, while at the same time amusing them; mysteries borrowed from the lives of saints often had a marked advertising character: Many were written for a particular town or brotherhood, to celebrate a patron saint, recommend a relic or praise a pilgrimage; the other includes jokes, silliness, light-hearted sermons and moralities; its sole purpose is to amuse.

i) The miracle

From the early Middle Ages onwards, episcopal or monastic schools were veritable universities. Novices rubbed shoulders with actual students. The latter were destined to enter the world, while the former were to be trained for conventual life. The life of the latter was much less austere than that of the former; the freedom given to students could even go as far as licence. Poetry and music were the most decent amusements they mixed with their studies. "But both borrowed, sometimes beyond measure, from popular poetry and music, and even from that tradition of goliardic buffoonery that the low-class jugglers had transported... from the trestles of the Lower Empire to the fairs of the High Middle Ages" (64). Student poetry, both lyrical and dramatic, was not devoid of satirical spirit either. It was they who composed the earliest surviving miracles. They were represented at Christmas, Easter and the feast day of their patron saint, who was also the patron saint of youth, thieves and treasure keepers: Saint Nicholas, one of the most popular saints of the Middle Ages. The subject of these plays was not borrowed from the "authentic" life of the saint, but from the more or less fabulous legends surrounding

him, more conducive to the satirical developments favoured by the students. Their miracles were immensely popular with Christians from all walks of life.

ii) The mystery

Until the end of the early 14th century, a mystery was a figurative and mimed performance, mute or almost mute, given at royal or princely festivals and entrances. The term very rarely referred to religious plays in the strict sense of the term. It was not until 1450 that it began to be used to designate the serious plays in the repertoire, those in which the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption were staged, or those that dramatised the life of a particular saint. Born in the Church, the mystery, like any other religious drama, drew its inspiration exclusively from religious sources, although it was not limited to the orthodox accounts of the lives of the saints and the Old and New Testaments. The authors of the mysteries also drew on legends, not from the original text, but from French or Latin translations or imitations that had been reworked several times by anonymous authors.

2. External staging

a. Room, stage, set ("spectators"...)

As we have seen, performances first took place in the church and, in the 12th century, the theatre moved out of the church and into the open air, on the forecourt, in the cemetery, in the square or even in a disused quarry. The first permanent theatre in an enclosed hall was inaugurated in 1458 by the Confrérie de la Passion. The church was still occasionally used for the mysteries.

i) Literary drama

At first, liturgical drama was confined to the main altar in the choir, but gradually spread to other parts of the church. In the 10th century, one device was devised to spice up the Christmas cycle, and another to dramatise the Easter cycle.

On 25 December, the cot was covered with a carpet, which was pulled aside when the time came to show the baby Jesus to the shepherds.

The staging of Easter deserves to be reported in full, as described by the English Benedictine Æthelwold of Winchester († 984) in his Regularis Concordia: "To celebrate on this feast the burial of our Saviour and to strengthen the faith of the ignorant vulgar and of neophytes, by imitating the praiseworthy practice of certain religious, we have decided to follow it. In a part of the altar where there will be a hollow, let an imitation of the Sepulchre be placed and let a veil be stretched around it. Let two deacons carrying the cross come forward and wrap it in a shroud and carry it, singing antiphons, until they reach the place of the Sepulchre and lay the cross there as if it were the Body of Our Lord that they were burying. May the Holy Cross be kept in this same place until the night of the Resurrection.

"On the holy day of Easter, before matins, the sacristans will remove the cross and place it in a suitable place. While the third lesson is being recited, four monks dress, one of whom, wearing an alb, enters, as if occupied with something else, and secretly goes to the Sepulchre, where, holding a palm in his hand, he sits silently. At the third responsory, the other three appear, wrapped in dalmatic robes, carrying censer, approaching the Sepulchre step by step, as if they were looking for something, for all this is done to represent the Angel seated at the tomb and the Women coming to anoint the body of Jesus. When, therefore, the one who is seated has seen those who seem to be lost and searching approaching, he intones in a muffled and soft voice the Quem quaeritis [who are you seeking] this one sung to the end, the three answer in unison "Jesus of Nazareth", and they are replied: "He is not here, he has risen as he foretold. Go and proclaim that he has risen from the dead". Obeying this command, the three monks turned to the choir and said, "Alleluia, the Lord is risen! Having said this, the one seated recites to them this time, as if to remind them, the antiphon "Come and see the place", and, saying this, he stands up, lifts the veil, and shows them the place where the cross has been removed and where only the cloths in which it had been wrapped remain. Having seen this, they place the censers they had brought in the same Sepulchre, take the shroud, spread it out towards the clergy, as if to show that the Lord has risen, since he is not wrapped in it, and they sing the antiphon "The Lord has risen from the Sepulchre", then placing the shroud on the altar. When the antiphon is finished, the abbot, rejoicing in the triumph of our King who, having conquered death, rose from the dead, intones the hymn Te Deum laudamus and, as soon as he has begun, all the bells ring out at once".

It wasn't much. But the music; but the many-voiced choirs; but the processions, led by priests dressed in sumptuously embroidered chasuble and cope, shimmering stoles around their necks, enveloped in clouds of incense, in the mysterious half-light of the aisles of the churches whose stained glass windows drew on the walls and pavement luminous patterns of varied colours and changing shapes, were what gave the service a dramatic and spectacular character.

From a technical point of view, let's remember that the shroud enveloping the cross and the carpet closing the cot herald the curtain, a hanging used to conceal from the audience certain parts of the set where things are supposed to happen that they are not supposed to see, which prefigures the curtain, the retractable drapery that separates the stage from the auditorium.

It should also be noted that the first stage, in its most rudimentary form, i.e. a free space in front of the sets reserved for the histrions, was installed in the 12th century, for the performances of the "Resurrection of Lazarus".

ii) Miracles and mysteries

The histrions of miracles and mysteries performed on a stage called - and the reader is invited to keep this term in mind - a scaffold. The scaffold could be half-moon-shaped, rectangular or circular. Its dimensions varied greatly (65). The secondary sets were placed on the scaffold, while the main sets were placed on the three sides. Whether they were set up inside churches or, later, under their porches or along the length of the forecourt, they were made up of mansions, places built at different heights along the three sides of the stage, in which the action took place one after the other (66). They were rudimentary. For example, in the first play not to be performed in a church, the "Representation of Adam", there were two stones representing the altars where Cain and Abel offered their sacrifices, two or three benches on which the histrions could sit when the play called for it, and a few shovelfuls of earth representing the field where Adam and Eve, after their sin, had to work by the sweat of their brow. There were no backstage areas; in general, the histrions remained on stage throughout the performance, whether or not they had finished playing their part.

The "spectators", at least those who belonged to the common people, were massed in front of the stage or surrounded it on three sides, depending on the case. The town's and the region's notables, both lay and religious, attended the performances seated in the surrounding windows or, later, in boxes - for which they had to pay. Audiences could be very large - tens of thousands of "spectators", many of them women. In the 14th century, it seems that in some cases the "spectators" surrounded the stage on all sides. Towards the end of the Middle Ages, it seems that they gathered in front of the scaffold.

And here's why the word 'spectator' was put in inverted commas: "We drink, we eat, the apples fly towards the stage. One day, the spectators in the pit knock the stage over. A pole is set up in the

auditorium to which the pickpocket caught in the act is tied." This is a description of Shakespeare's audience, but it was no different in France at the same time. For example, a chronicler recounts that, "While games and farces were being played before Queen Yolande and her people, some thieves approached a spectator, Yvonnet Coyrant, cut off the sleeve of his dress and stole 10 sols and a seal" (67). We will come back to the particular atmosphere that always prevailed during performances in the early Renaissance and even up to the middle of the eighteenth century, which makes it difficult to speak of a "spectator" in the sense that we understand it.

b. Machinery

In ancient Greece, scenery consisted of pivoting prisms (periaktoi) and sliding panels (pinakoi). The first stage machine seems to have been the deux ex machina, an articulated arm with a hook to which a harness or gondola was attached, by means of which an actor was lowered onto the stage (68). Only Aeschylus seems to have used it in some of his plays; in fact, with the exception of Aristophanes, no other ancient playwright made as much use of machines as he did. The three other main mechanical devices were the bronteion, used to reproduce the rolling of thunder, the encyclema, a machine that turned on itself and was used to show the inside of a palace, and the anapeisma, a kind of trapdoor used to bring the deities up from under the theatre. Some of these devices were still in use in the Middle Ages.

The performance of mysteries and miracles involved a complex machinery known as "secrets". It enabled "spectacular effects of appearance, torture, disappearance, theft, fire, etc.". The machinery effects were based on mechanical principles of force multiplication by means of pulleys, hoists and drums, principles that had been used since Antiquity in construction, the navy and the theatre. These mechanical effects were complemented by what might be called magical 'tricks', such as the disappearance of characters through trapdoors in the floor of the mansions" (69) - trapdoors were one of the favourite devices of medieval playwrights. "The conductor of secrets used effects that were much expected in scenes of martyrdom, effects that were later taken up by the grand guignol: swivelling boards allowing the actor to be replaced by his bloody "corpse", "plausible" decapitations using trap doors, overflowing blood from pierced wineskins, etc." (70). Mechanical animals (lion, dog, bear, leopard, etc.) were added to the mix. It should be noted that every mystery had its scene or scenes of execution and torture, and that the most prized were those that contained the most.

Neither the actors, nor the staging, nor even the stage machinery were likely to produce the illusion. For a start, local colour was unknown in the literature of the "Middle Ages". Secondly, in dramas dealing with ancient subjects, the heroes were interpreted as feudal knights, the palaces described as

"medieval" castles. Finally, the fact that all the locations were present on stage at the same time made it impossible to create a nemesis, and the histrions had to make up for the shortcomings of the staging by telling the audience where they were and where they were going and, as they were playing several roles, telling the audience who they were each time they changed roles. "...where moderns try to copy reality, so that the space represented is as similar as possible to the real space, medievalists rely on a whole set of auditory and visual conventions known to the spectator, who is responsible for creating the theatrical illusion himself" (71). Visual conventions prevailed. Dramas "were in fact reduced to a succession of tableaux" (72). What counts here is "the designation of events, their presentation in the form of simple images that are immediately recognisable" (73). As Mortensen puts it, "the theatre of the Middle Ages was a kind of 'biblia pauperum', a Bible with images for the poor in spirit" (74).

c. Outsourcing liturgical drama - "dramatic fever

Three factors helped to break down the narrow confines of "liturgical drama".

The first was the substitution of French for Latin as the language of the services. The result was greater freedom: initially written in Latin and in prose, the text of the "liturgical dramas" was increasingly written in French and in verse; there were departures from the biblical text, freely invented scenes were added, and new characters were introduced into the performances, whose subjects had until then been exclusively biblical: the merchant, Judas and the devil. In addition, comic interludes began to be inserted into the action.

The second factor was the tendency to add more and more biblical episodes to the "liturgical dramas". As a result, they were considerably longer and went from being interludes in the service to becoming the most important part of it. They required more complex staging, a larger number of histrions and a more varied décor than that provided by the churches.

The third factor, which should be particularly emphasised, is the permeability between the religious and secular worlds. "Apart from the fact that the two societies constantly elbowed each other, there was a whole class of people who lived, as it were, on the borders of the two worlds, and even passed back and forth between them with singular ease. I am referring to simple clerics who, having received only minor orders, returned after more or less completed studies to the ranks of civil society, where they held various offices which, by their very nature, kept their holders in touch with clerical and scholastic society. Such as, for example, notaries, lawyers, doctors, etc., who generally, at the time we are considering, belonged to the numerous category of internal clerics and even married clerics" (75). "The

pious brotherhoods which, from the beginning of the twelfth century, began to compose and perform sacred dramas in the vulgar language alongside the students' Latin dramas, using the same but enlarged model, were certainly largely recruited from among the former students of episcopal or monastic schools, who had become good bourgeois without ceasing to be clerics and academics. At that time, in France, these two words would have been synonymous. The clerics who returned to the world provided, all the more so, a good number of members for these academies which, towards the end of the same century, developing the literary side of the first associations, established themselves in several towns, especially in the north and north-east, under the name of Puys and generally placed themselves under the protection of Notre-Dame" (76).

As a result of their growing success, the repraesentationes, ludi, or historiae, as they were called at the time, soon came to be performed outdoors, first in the cemetery or on the forecourt, then in the market square and, later still, in the village square. At the same time, they ceased to be performed exclusively by ecclesiastics, and were instead performed by the bourgeoisie. This undoubtedly explains the increasingly "realistic" nature of the situations.

The theatre acquired incredible popularity in the 14th century, and its popularity grew throughout the 15th and the first half of the 16th century. In the 15th and 16th centuries, the mysteries took on enormous dimensions; they now embraced long series of biblical events and were as long as sixty thousand verses. Some were performed for days on end, requiring hundreds of histrions. These were veritable public festivals. The longest drama to be performed without interruption was the Acts of the Apostles: performed in Bourges in 1536, it lasted four days. "The whole of France, and not just France, but Germany, England, Italy and Spain, indulged in this passion, this dramatic fever" (77).

The mysteries reached their apogee towards the middle of the sixteenth century, when they died a natural death, but not without undergoing a new metamorphosis, by being transformed into historical and chivalric drama. In 1548, the Parliament of Paris issued a decree definitively banning the public performance of the mysteries (78). But can we seriously believe that, aware "of the danger that the performance of the sacred mysteries on such a profane theatre could pose to religion", the parliament took more than five centuries before definitively banning them? Especially since, as we shall see, the initiators of this secularisation were the ecclesiastics themselves?

De Julleville points out that theatre in general, and mystery plays in particular, supplanted the chanson de geste, which conveyed more virile values, in the imagination of the common people, and that this substitution corresponded to the rise of the bourgeoisie and the third estate. Is it unreasonable to think

that the cultivation and propagation of the theatre by ecclesiastics was one of the means deployed by the Church to bring about its deviralisation? Given the moisture content of Christianity, perhaps not.

3. Internal staging

a. Histrions

i) Ecclesiastical historians

The repraesentationes were performed by canons, monks, deacons and sub-deacons, as well as sacristans and altar boys. The common people soon joined in. Then came the bourgeoisie, who mingled with the ecclesiastics and ended up supplanting them in certain roles, before joining together in secular brotherhoods.

ii) Dramatic brotherhoods

The bourgeoisie, taken separately, had no rights; their strength lay solely in their spirit of solidarity, so they formed associations for the most diverse purposes. These included trade unions, industrial guilds and literary associations.

These were called puys or confraternities. The others were pious and philanthropic circles, a kind of academy that organised competitions between authors, most of whose members were priests at the beginning. Although some were secular, most were under the patronage of the Virgin or some saint. The feast of the patron or saint was celebrated by the performance of a dramatic play, and it was in this way that these societies came to play a major role in the history of theatre, especially in the development of the miracle. Historians have pointed out that, under their impetus, the subjects diversified, incorporating legends and tales from the East into the biblical accounts, such as that of Theophilus, whose troubadour Rutebeuf performed a miracle, commissioned by a puy, which has remained famous, attacking the vices of priests and religious orders. But isn't the Bible itself a collection of oriental stories?

In the 15th century, three guilds gave public performances: the Basoche, farces and moralities; the Enfants sans souci, sotties; and the Confrérie de la Passion, religious dramas, at least at the beginning. In 1402, the Confrérie de la Passion obtained the exclusive privilege of performing the Passion, the Resurrection and all other mysteries of saints in Paris, and retained this privilege until the middle of the 17th century.

The Confrérie de la Passion was made up of bourgeois. The Basoche was made up of lawyers, clerks and bailiffs from the Paris courts; the Enfants sans souci were recruited from the bohemian community; many members of the former also belonged to the latter.

The three brotherhoods were parodies.

It resided in the comic scenes that the Passion Brotherhood began to mix with the religious scenes, to the delight of the public, in the interpretation of miracles.

It was part of the decorum of the Enfants sans souci. This fraternity was organised as a society of fools, whose leader was the "Prince of Fools", assisted by the "Mother Fool". Once a year, the Prince of Fools made a solemn entry into Paris, accompanied by his subjects.

It was an integral part of the Basoche, and it is for this reason that an investigation into this brotherhood has its place in this study of the dramatisation of life.

The "basoche" was a hierarchical association for the mutual protection of clerks acting as public prosecutors in the Parliament of Paris and certain provincial towns. It is thought to have been created in 1303, under Philip the Fair. However, the term did not appear until the mid-fourteenth century and the first known statutes date from 1543 (79).

Numerous privileges were granted to La Basoche. It had a special jurisdiction. It exercised sovereign justice over all the clerks of the palace. Its organisation was modelled on that of the Parliament, from which it also borrowed the titles of its dignitaries, their powers and, to a certain extent, their authority and costume. The dignitaries of the Basoche thus bore the titles of chancellor, master of requests, grand referendary, etc, From the outset, the Basoche was given the title of kingdom and its leader was authorised to take on the title of king, as had been the case with many other associations ((there already

existed a king of the ribauds, a king of the crossbowmen, a king of the minstrels and even a king of the barbers, who was the king's barber (80)). The king of the Basoche (a title abolished by Henry III) was elected by the Basochians; he judged all disputes between clerics and regulated their discipline. He had all the attributes of royalty: crown, hat, coat of arms and even the name of the monarch with a number (81). There was a court of the Basoche, whose dignitaries, in accordance with their parodic titles, were authorised to wear the most pompous insignia and decorations.

Another privilege of the Basoche consisted in having a box at the comedy of the Hôtel de Bourgogne (82).

La Basoche had two main aspects (83): the first was obviously judicial, the second artistic.

In the first instance, its role was to defend the professional interests of court clerks, lawyers, public prosecutors and parliamentary councillors, and to oversee the training of apprentice public prosecutors.

The second aspect of the Basoche may come as a surprise. It will be less surprising if we remember the similarities that Cicero and other ancient orators had already noted between judicial practice and the theatre.

In the "Middle Ages", the interference between the theatre and the judicial system became more pronounced. "Before theatrical performances, the Parlement and the Palais de Justice, the bailliages, the prévôtés and the sénéchaussées were, so to speak, the meeting places for all those who were unoccupied, who, for recreation and curiosity, attended the moving scenes of the pleadings. After the transfer of the papacy to Avignon, the jurisconsults and practitioners of Italy hastened to compose elementary works for the instruction of the bar, in which procedure was presented in all its twists and turns and from all its angles... To make this study more attractive, they imagined a sort of trial between the great figures of antiquity, who attacked and defended each other through prosecutors and lawyers, developing for the reader all the resources of legal discussions. Then they took from the Bible and the Gospel litigants and subjects for dispute. Such was the origin of these singular treatises which appeared from 1300 to 1350, in which we see Satan and Lucifer, God the Father, Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the prophets and the apostles, sometimes plaintiffs, sometimes defendants, sometimes lawyers, sometimes prosecutors, judges or court clerks, giving each other summonses, repelling each other with exceptions, provoking investigations and interrogations on facts and articles, serving writings, handing down judgments, policing the hearing, disturbing it if necessary, and being called to order" (84).

The "court", i.e. the tribunal, was in fashion. Poets like Marot drew their verses from judicial formulas (85). From the twelfth century onwards, troubadours took their debates and moods to the courts of love, which, it should be remembered, were originally held by women (86). Some notaries went so far as to rhyme marriage contracts. Were the fantasies of the jurisconsults inspired by contemporary poets or, on the contrary, were the acts of the "courts of love" taken from the rulings of the jurisconsults? The influence must have been reciprocal, since a number of jurisconsults were also poets. Would you believe that most authors and men of the theatre came from the social group of jurists (87)?

To a certain extent, their texts lent themselves to theatrical representation. After all, "Doesn't every legal case, every procedure, necessarily involve a form of dialogue, which is almost dramatic? Isn't a whole act of a drama or a comedy nowadays often made up of a court or assize court session? Most trials pit human passions against each other and in open conflict, with a liveliness, a naturalness, a variety even, that the theatre does not always achieve" (88).

There's no reason why the Basochians shouldn't have developed a taste for dialogue and stagecraft in the exercise of their profession. On fat days, they would plead in rhyme what were known as "fat cases", i.e. cases, real or fictitious, "whose subject matter was suitable for amusement", such as accusations of adultery or impotence brought against a lawyer, prosecutor or notable person; they could also be questions of state. The pleas were "more worthy of a theatre or a cabaret than the temple of justice" (89) and, in fact, some of these "fat cases" were actually performed at the theatre.

At the same time, in England, mock trials played an important role in the training of lawyers. In the Inns of Court, the English law schools, these legal fictions were dramatised and performed on stage by apprentice lawyers (90). They are reputed to have had a decisive influence on the development of Elizabethan theatre.

The organisation of festivals was written into the statutes of the Basoche. The main one, the "monstre", or general review, was held at the end of June or the beginning of July, with great pomp and a wide variety of costumes. It was a sort of masquerade that took the whole of Paris by storm. The dignitaries of the Basoche were all there. The clerics were divided into companies of a hundred men, each of whom chose a captain, a lieutenant and an ensign. Once elected, each captain adopted the colour and costume to be worn by the clerics under his command. This costume was reproduced on a piece of vellum, which remained attached to the company's standard. The company's name was chosen to reflect the order of the day. A decree tells us that, in 1528, "one of the companies had even adopted a woman's costume" (91); this company was made up of women and clerics disguised as women. The playful nature of this

display cannot hide the fact that the mixture of democratic practice and inversion it contained was part of a trend that, as we saw above, had its origins in the Dionysian cult.

It wasn't long before the Basochians, driven by a taste for spectacle and staging, began larding this "monster" with comic plays, which they themselves wrote and performed. They went on to give performances three times a year: farces and silliness, with a carnivalesque and cynical spirit. It was a "satire of the people of the palace: clerks, bailiffs, public prosecutors, lawyers, even judges, were the object of biting mockery; it poked fun at the ridicules and abuses of Lady Justice; it was a sort of comic tribunal before which the serious court charged with the sanction of the laws itself appeared on certain days; And these little clerks, leapers, paper-pushers, each benefiting from the collective privileges of the association, and becoming characters to be reckoned with, acquired, on the great dates of their theatrical entertainments, the exorbitant rights of those Roman slaves who, during the saturnalia, could take revenge with impunity in free speech on the tyranny of their masters. Then the circle widened by degrees, and soon the farces and moralities of the Basochians embraced within their vast framework the whole of human comedy, or at least all that could be penetrated by the buffoonish and mocking, but naively coarse, verve of these Thespians of the French theatre" (92). Their success was so dazzling that the magistrates invited them to perform at official celebrations and princely entrances. But little by little they acquired such a pronounced satirical character that they attracted the wrath of the authorities. With the English driven out of France and civil peace restored in the kingdom, Charles VII forbade the Basochiens to perform without his permission. In 1442, Parliament censured their performances. When the Basochiens ignored the order, some of them were sentenced to a few days in prison. The ban was renewed at regular intervals during the reigns of Charles VII and Louis XI. It should be pointed out, however, that the bans only applied to public performances. Barely had they been allowed to perform in public again under the latter's successor, Charles VIII, when they were once again forbidden to do so, following the performance of a morality play in which the king was strongly attacked. Louis XII reinstated them on the grounds that he wanted "everyone to represent the abuses of his court and his kingdom" (93). Let these young men play freely", he declared, "let them speak of me and my court; if they notice abuses, let them show them to us, since so many others who claim to be wise do not want to do so; only let them refrain from speaking of the queen, because I want the honour of women to be respected" (94). According to one tradition, the actors dared to portray Louis XII himself on stage as an insatiable miser who drank from a large golden vase. Whether the story is true or not, it is certain that he was criticised on stage as a miser and a laird and that it was courtiers, irritated by the king's thrifty nature, who got the Basochians involved in this villainous scheme (95). When informed of the success of the performance, Louis XII replied: "I would much rather make the courtiers laugh at my avarice than make my people weep at my profligacy". His maxim was that "the justice of a prince obliges him to owe nothing, rather than his greatness to give much". In short, Louis XII was criticised, on the one hand, for not squandering the royal treasury and, on the other, for having reduced taxes and therefore, potentially, the expenses paid to the Basochiens, who had no regard for spending as long as the money did not come out of their own purses.

The content of the numerous measures and the text of the decrees and repeated defences that parliament took against the Basoche (on the other hand, parliament never ceased either to recognise the Basoche's jurisdiction or to help it meet its entertainment expenses) indicate that what earned it the wrath of the authorities was not solely and directly its artistic output. Their farces and silliness were characterised by "the licence and vivacity of their attacks on royalty, the church, the nobility, the magistracy, in a word, all the great bodies of the State. The aspirations of freedom, emancipation and independence are to be found at every step, and if the new ideas were more calmly and authoritatively expressed in the writings of thinkers, poets and historians, in the theatre of the Palace clerks they had a more direct influence on the masses, because they borrowed the language that was within everyone's reach and were popularised in all classes through performance" (96). Their plays were considered too satirical not to constitute a danger to public order; they were also a danger to civilisation, since one of the topoi of Basochian farces was that of women who express social demands and end up taking power.

It was not for nothing that, in 1545, the Basochiens were forbidden by decree to "carry out any seditions, mutinies or dissensions, on pain of imprisonment and arbitrary fines". During the reign of Charles VII, the Basoche was involved in the troubles that broke out in Paris as a result of the war with England. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Basoche gave satirical and licentious theatrical performances and, during the reign of Henry III, in certain regions of France, it took to the streets and incited the people to revolt (97), as it would do again under Henry IV, at the time of the League.

By favouring farce and silliness, Louis XII brought the theatre into his politics, into politics; he thought he could use the stage to influence public opinion and turn it to his advantage: in doing so, he made a bad calculation, which was rare for this sovereign.

After the death of Louis XII, theatrical performances by clerics were once again subject to censorship, before being definitively banned in 1582. The Basoche as a judicial institution was abolished in 1790 along with Parliament.

b. From histrion to "actor

The lay histrions, the 'players', were drawn from all ranks of society: the theatre was a factor in social levelling, just as its god, Dionysus, was a force for sexual indifferentiation. Most of the histrions belonged to the common people; the theatre could allow the most appreciated to rise socially; others, to have the illusion of it, by wearing, back to ordinary life, the clothes of the great characters (kings, saints, popes, etc.) that they incarnated on stage, a mania whose vanity was mocked by the moralists

and satirists of the time. But the nobility, the clergy, the gentry and the bourgeoisie, particularly the petty bourgeoisie, also provided histrions for the mysteries. The "actor", on the other hand, was most often drawn from the populace.

i) Birth of the "actor

The word "comédien" only entered the French language in 1500, in the form of "comediain", and "acteur, actrice" only in 1661, in the sense of "the person who portrays one of the characters in a play"; prior to that, "acteur" meant "author of a book" and "actrice" meant "the person who plays a role in an affair". The term came from Italy, along with the profession it designates. The art of portraying one or more characters on stage was not a profession in its own right in France until the reign of Henry II.

The Middle Ages had their "jugglers", heirs to the mimes of the Roman Empire, but there is no evidence that they ever performed comedy. The oldest histrions in France are undoubtedly, as we mentioned earlier, the "écoliers", i.e. university students, who had long performed semi-liturgical dramas before turning to farces and satirical plays, the Basochiens as well as members of pious confraternities (there were hundreds of them in France) and members of the puys, these semi-literary, semi-religious academies which, from the end of the 11th century, gave repraesentationes in French.

ii) Theatre on the road to professionalism

Until the end of the 14th century, all that existed in France were temporary theatres on which performances were given at irregular intervals by troupes of "players" formed on the spur of the moment, so to speak. A turning point came in 1398, when the Provost of Paris banned the Brotherhood of the Passion from giving performances. A tug-of-war immediately ensued between the confreres and the provost. In 1402, Charles VI attended one of the brotherhood's suspect performances and, in the following weeks, recognised it and granted it all the privileges of the most privileged guilds. The professionalisation of the theatre had begun. The Confrères de la Passion had not yet obtained their letters patent when they set up regular performances in the buildings of the Hôpital de la Trinité; to attend, an admission fee had to be paid. Constituted at Saint-Maur in 1390, according to one plausible hypothesis (98) , as an association for edification and piety giving pious and free performances, it had bided its time and its time had come to make the most of charity and voluntary work, by extending its repertoire, as soon as it was officially recognised, to farce and silliness, more likely to attract the public, by flattering its taste for the trivial and obscene.

However, the Confrérie de la Passion was not made up of professional "actors", and it was not until the mid-sixteenth century that the first proper theatre company set foot in France. "On 27 September 1548, to celebrate the stay in Lyon of King Henri III and Catherine de Médicis, a troupe of Italian actors, called by the archbishop, performed Cardinal Bibbiena's Calandria in the presence of the sovereigns and the court. The success of this troupe, which was perhaps that of the Gelosi and led by Domenico Barlacchi, exceeded all expectations. It showed what could be done by trained actors, experienced in all the skills of their art, and who possessed a repertoire, how much superior they were to makeshift actors, without cohesion or style, who were not used to declamation" (99). In the ten years that followed, two theatrical troupes were formed in France, travelling troupes. However, it should be pointed out that from the end of the fifteenth century, royalty and princes had their own "character players" (this practice continued until the nineteenth century). The prelates themselves had "players" in their service. Many towns had their own players, whom they subsidised at public expense.

iii) The woman of the theatre

Women played a decisive role in the professionalisation of the theatre.

The view, propagated over the last few centuries, that women were banned from the stage in the "Middle Ages", has become an established fact. It is not based on any text. One would be hard pressed to find a decree, conciliar or otherwise, to support it (100). All we can say, as de Julleville does, is that it was custom that forbade them from appearing on stage during the mysteries; in the mysteries, because "it authorised their presence in the mimed mysteries, and in the performances of all kinds by which the entries of great personages were usually celebrated" (101). However, in exceptional cases, female roles were played by women in the mysteries (102); female roles were therefore not systematically played by men, who were generally beardless young men dressed as women.

In fact, the first theatrical works of the "Middle Ages" were composed in the tenth century by a woman, the abbess Hroswitha von Gandersheim, and as early as the "High Middle Ages", nuns appeared as actors in plays staged in convents, plays written by women and performed before an exclusively female audience. These plays included both male and female roles: the nuns played both (103). In other words, in the "Middle Ages", women usually took to the stage, even if they did so mainly and almost exclusively inside religious buildings. The theatre was part of the education of nuns (104), who in turn introduced the young girls who were being educated there to the theatre. Once a young girl had left the convent, where she received a theatrical education (105), it was difficult for her to forget and not apply what she had learned in this field. For the most part, these were young noble girls, but, as Régine Pernoud has

shown, nuns and monks (106) provided instruction for commoner children. Noble girls never took to the stage - at least not in public and outside convents and monasteries - and it was from the commoners that the first actresses emerged. It seems that the first professional actresses were the concubines of the actors and that they led such dissolute lives that they were, in the words of Tallémant des Réaux (107), the "common women" of the whole troupe. Is it by chance that the prostitute was, in the eyes of the founder of this religion, "the model of heroic faith" (108) and a reference point ("I tell you the truth, tax collectors and prostitutes get to the Kingdom of God before you do")? (Matthew 21, 31)?

Be that as it may, the practice of casting women in female roles became widespread in the early sixteenth century, and it cannot be ruled out that convents, intellectual hotbeds in the Middle Ages, played an important role in establishing this practice. The advent of the professional actress brought about a profound change in the theatre's relationship with society: "... not all actresses," Julleville remarked with modest irony, "married gentlemen, but the theatre became an element of gallantry in French society, something it had not been in the Middle Ages" (109).

In England, things were different: official permission to go on stage was granted to women by Charles II in 1662 (110), on the grounds that women's roles "were played by men dressed as women" and that this "shocked some people": it must have taken the English monarchy six centuries to realise this and draw all the consequences. With consummate hypocrisy, no doubt, and a total ignorance of feminine nature, perhaps, actresses were expected to restore to the theatre a respectability it had never had. Naturally, just the opposite happened.

Meanwhile, for actresses, the theatre was "the means of making a career and achieving social success... Like her male partners, the English actress learned to manage her image, to use publicity and to earn money, thus actively contributing to the modern development of the actor's status" (111).

iv) The status of the histrion

Although, as early as the fourth century, at the Council of Elvira and the Council of Arles, the Church had "inflicted all sorts of penalties on actors", preventing them, through irregularity, "from attaining holy orders" and, through excommunication, from receiving the "sacraments of penance and the Eucharist, unless they renounced the theatre", it was the profession and not the person who practised it that the Church condemned; the Church "prejudges nothing... on the morality of this or that actor; she does not claim to deny him or her any of the qualities they may possess" (112). In any case, the Councils of Elvira and Arles were regional councils and their jurisdiction in canonical matters was not universal. No

ecumenical council ever anathematised actors; "we still have no sentence of legal excommunication concerning theatre actors pronounced on the scale of Western Christendom... The canons listing those excommunicated in the major provincial councils do not mention them, which cannot be explained by the obviousness of the penalty incurred insofar as simoniacal and nicolaic priests are just as logically condemned, but extremely explicitly" (113). On the contrary, an ordinance issued by Justinian in 537 recognised their right to salvation.

This may have something to do with the fact that Justinian courted an actress, Theodora, who was also a prostitute, even though the two were far from mutually exclusive. Whereas in the Western Empire, senators were still forbidden to marry actresses, the daughters or granddaughters of histrions, the very Christian emperor of the East was the first sovereign to marry an actress, once she had converted to Christianity. As Empress, she used her influence to defend what was not yet known as "women's rights" and to facilitate the birth of the Orthodox Church (114).

In the thirteenth century, canon law relaxed its position. In the glossa ordinaria to Gregory IX's Liber extra, "From the possibility of no condemnation of the actor, we move to the possibility of an appreciation of his practice", coupled with "explicit recognition of the legality, and even the legitimacy, of the theatre, and therefore of the actor's gesture" (115). This text, written not by a theologian but by a jurist, paved the way for the complete and definitive rehabilitation of the actor by Thomas Aquinas in the following century. How could it have been otherwise when, throughout France, most religious, whether regular, secular or friar, performed in the theatre and, as mentioned above, the performances took place in the churches themselves?

In 1210, Innocent III prohibited ecclesiastics from performing in shows. With the exception of Rome, this prohibition had virtually no effect in other Catholic countries until the 15th century, when the roles of God and the saints were still played by priests. In France, priests continued to organise mysteries and act in them until the 16th century.

v) Status of the "actor

The first real comedians, who, as we have seen, appeared in regular troupes around the middle of the sixteenth century, were immediately held in suspicion and badly treated by the clergy and parliaments. The authorities were very lenient towards "gamblers". "The prejudices that are so widespread, especially in France, against theatre-goers, these deep-rooted prejudices that have kept them apart from society for so long, date back to the time when professional comedians first appeared, having no

other profession or social status than that of performing plays. As long as one was an actor by taste, by occasion, but was attached by birth or profession to a well-defined social condition, being, like everyone else, a priest or a nobleman, a bourgeois or a craftsman, a schoolboy or a Basochian, even the habitual practice of theatre was highly regarded" (116). The fact that these were itinerant, "wandering" troupes goes some way to explaining the mistrust to which the professional actors who made them up were immediately subjected. The mystery and farce players were all good bourgeois from the region where they performed, well known to their mayor and their parish priest. The professional comedians were foreigners, unknown vagabonds: they legitimately lent themselves to suspicion.

B. Celebrations

The Church based its liturgical calendar on the calendar of festivals held in ancient Rome. The Saturnalia took place from mid-December to the fifth day of January, and the Church found it useful to divide this long festival into several special feasts: Christmas, the Feast of St Stephen, the Feast of the Evangelist and that of the Holy Innocents, from 20 to 25 December, the Feast of the Circumcision and that of the Epiphany or Three Kings, on 1 and 6 January. The lupercalia, which were celebrated in February in honour of Pan, were divided into two distinct series: the festivities of Carnival, which began the day after Epiphany and ended on Ash Wednesday; and the festivities of May, which, although they sometimes lasted the whole month, were generally limited to the first day of the month and the three days of rogation. All these extravagant festivals were given the generic name of Fools' Day, in some way in honour of King Solomon, who had declared: "Stultorum infinitus est numerus" ("The number of fools is infinite"), but above all in perfect harmony with the Gospels (1 Corinthians 1:18, 20; 1 Corinthians 1:10) and Augustine ("The wisdom of the serpent deceived us; the folly of God disabuses us. Divine wisdom was foolishness in the eyes of those who despised God; and divine foolishness has become true wisdom for those who triumph over the devil" (On Christian Doctrine, I, xiv, 13).

Masks and cross-dressing in general were at the heart of these burlesque revels.

1. The mask

a) Origin and functions of the mask

The mask is presented as universal. It would be more accurate to say that it has become universal.

The mask has been known since time immemorial among the Negroid populations of West Africa, the Yellows of Oceania and the Amerindians, where it was used for religious, social, funerary, therapeutic or festive purposes. However, it did not make its appearance in Europe until the establishment of rustic festivals in honour of Dionysus, in the second millennium BC. In the processions that took place during the Dionysian celebrations, the priests of Dionysus and the initiates of both sexes, disguised as fauns, satyrs or silenas, their faces smeared with dregs or covered with grotesque masks, bells in one hand and thyrses in the other, danced frenetically, shouting and invoking Dionysus. It is remarkable that the first cave representations of masks date from the Palaeolithic (35,000 BC) (117), a period when, as we have seen elsewhere (118), a "new religion" appeared, that of the bull and the Woman; equally remarkable is the fact that they are worn by hunters in dance scenes.

Dionysus is the god of the mask (119). The priests of the temple of the god Banebdjedet - compared by the Greeks to Pan - in Mendes wore a goat mask (120) as part of the rituals of sacred prostitution. According to Herodotus, the Dionysian cult was brought to Greece by a certain Melampus ("black foot").

Another point seems to indicate a possible link between "sacred prostitution" and the use of masks, from the time when masks became widespread in the theatre. The first masks were made of grass, leaves, broad plants, bark and even earth, then leather lined with canvas or cloth and, as these were easily deformed, wood. Some represented people in their natural state, others monsters, still others gods and heroes. In all cases, whether they were intended for tragic, comic or satirical roles, they were deformed and hideous (121); what's more, most of the masks covered the face right up to the shoulders. The poet and playwright Thespis of Icarus (6th century BC) innovated: after using wine lees or white chalk to smear his actors' faces, he made a mask from linen (122). The veil is the traditional accessory of the prostitute in the Middle East (123).

"The primitive significance of this rite seems to have been twofold. In the dithyramb, which featured Dionysus himself and his divine procession, the purpose of the mask was undoubtedly to transform and idealise the all-too-familiar faces of the performers. In the phallic cômos, on the other hand, where the peasants exchanged many quips and insults, the disguise was, it seems, no more than a precaution to conceal the identity of the joker" (124) Similarly, the women who took part in the celebration of orgiastic feasts in honour of Dionysus used to wear a mask so as not to be recognised, a habit that would be seen again during the Renaissance at public festivities (carnivals, etc.) or semi-public festivities (bazaars, etc.).) or semi-public festivities (balls, etc.) (125).

In Rome, histrionics were not allowed to appear masked on stage until the beginning of the 1st century B.C. According to Pliny, Roman youth entertained themselves by playing the atellane under masks and did not want to be confused with professional histrionics. The tragedian Roscius is said to have introduced the use of stage masks to Rome, for a personal reason: to hide a deformity he had in his eye. The use of stage masks was initially reserved for the rustic festivals of a cult of foreign origin: the rustic festivals, imported from Etruria, known as the Fescennine games. It was lawful to wear one during the megalenses games, also known as hilaria, as well as during festivals in honour of Isis, the goddess who presided over prostitution in Rome and throughout the Roman Empire and whose cult, at least in the Italian peninsula, was associated with that of Dionysus (126) : According to Apuleius, the priests of Isis, already mentioned in the first part of this study, wore a mask with the head of a dog when, dressed in filthy linen robes, they gave alms in the streets.

b. Prosôpon - persona

Before examining the use of stage masks in Christian Europe in the Middle Ages, we need to develop a few semantic and etymological considerations.

Prosôpon means both 'face' and 'mask'. The etymology sheds light on what at first glance appears to be a contradiction: what we see (pros) when we look at the part of the human body between the head and the neck (ôps) can be either a mask or a face, depending on whether or not the person being looked at is wearing one.

Prosôpon came to designate, by extension, a role played in the theatre, then a person whose profession it is to interpret a character in a play. It then took on the meaning of a function performed in life, a social individual and, finally, that of individuality, the self. The Stoic Panetios of Rhodes (185 - 110 BC) was the first to use the term prosôpon in the sense of the role played by a man in society, even though the idea that a man plays a role, or even several roles, in life was already present among the early Stoics and the Cynics, notably Theodore of Cyrene (c. -340 - c. -250) and Bion of Antisthenes (444 - 365 BC) (127). As we shall see below, dramatic metaphors were frequently used in Middle Stoicism to describe the human condition and social life.

In Rome, the noun persona seems to have appeared for the first time in Plautus; "used in the plural, (it) took on the meaning of theatrical 'characters'. Gradually, it came to designate a literary character, a role or a type of behaviour encountered in everyday life, to which an individual could be assimilated in order to valorise or sully him or her. We need to distinguish between two possible meanings of the term

persona, depending on whether it retains the meaning of a role - a role that can be assumed (induere personam) or abandoned (deponere personam) as desired - or whether it comes to correspond to the characteristics that define an individual. In the first case, the persona corresponds to a social or family role, but also a civic role when it designates the role of the magistrate. In this sense of "official role", persona also corresponds to the way in which an individual occupies a function, and then takes on the meaning of "public figure", thus indicating the place occupied in the city independently of magistracies... It can then designate an individual whose value is recognised, a "great man".

"In contrast to these uses, persona is used to designate the specific characteristics of an individual, all his or her character traits, actions and known behaviours, once again in a positive or negative way? Taken in this sense, the persona makes it possible to make axiological judgements, to deduce the probability of a behaviour, but also to evaluate the property of an action or an attitude according to what an individual owes himself, considered as the sum of his acts, the honours he has acquired and the place he intends to occupy in the city. The persona thus comes to designate an individual taken as a whole, as all of his characteristics, without these characteristics necessarily being mentioned: the notion thus comes closer, through its abstraction, to the meaning of 'subject of law' that it takes on in the legal context. But this persona may also represent a mere appearance: rediscovering its theatrical origins, the term then designates the qualities or attitude that an individual makes appear in order to deceive others or to adapt to a particular situation" (128).

Cicero drew inspiration from Panetios to conceptualise his theory of the four persons, which he set out in his De officiis. For him, the term persona retained the meaning of character or social role, that of outstanding personality or constituted in dignity and that of personality or concrete character of an individual, while taking on that of person in the legal sense and of human nature as strictly individual or as a participant in reason (129). Whatever meaning the Stoic author gives it, it has a more or less pronounced theatrical connotation. Cicero saw everything through the distorting prism of theatre. Since Pliny, actor has meant one who performs or represents. Cicero gave it the meaning of "one who pleads a case". Conversely, agere, among other meanings, had those of exercising magistrature and pleading a cause; Cicero wrote of his friend and mentor, the histrion Roscius: "noluit hodie agere."

J. Evola's interpretation of the term persona, even if it does not always correspond to the use of the term in antiquity, proves to be correct, since it refers to a normal human type: the essential part of the individual is the "face", while "the external, artificial, acquired part, which is formed in social life and creates the 'person' of the individual" is the "mask", persona (130). C.G. Jung adds: "Fundamentally, the persona is nothing real; it is only a compromise between the individual and society as to what a man should appear to be... in relation to the essential individuality of the person concerned, it is only a secondary reality, the result of a compromise..." (131). It is indeed the result of a compromise, in a being in whom the genotype is overwhelmed and neutralised by the phenotype. In themselves, the "face" and

the "mask" are complementary and remain so, as long as there is a correspondence, a conformity, a transparency between them and the "face", so to speak, shapes the "mask". Otherwise, the persona has a negative function, either as a support for a feigned attitude, or as a bulwark. It should also be noted that the persona is "the result of a compromise, in the making of which others often have a greater share than this person" (132), "others" here referring not only to people, as Jung indicates, but also to things. In other words, which are those of J. Evola and which make it possible to raise the examination of the question to a level higher than that of "depth psychology", the person, in this case, is acted upon more than he acts. They are thus properly possessed - more or less like the corybantes in the festivals in honour of the Chthonic goddess Cybele.

The etymology of persona may be obscure, but most of the hypotheses put forward to explain the origin of this word refer to the chthonic deities. The word could come either from a contracted form of a variant of the proper name of the chthonic divinity Persephone, namely Persepona, or from an archaic adjective relating to the Etruscan proper name Phersus (133), which could be either the infernal husband of Phersipnai (the Etruscan name of Persephone), or Perses, the father of Persephone, or Perseus, or finally an agent, a masked "executioner" of Persephone (134). Whatever the case, it is worth noting, since we have just been talking about the goddess of the underworld and the mysteries of Arcadia, that during the festivals in honour of one of her daughters, Despoena, the faithful wore masks (animal masks) (135) ; in addition, the priests of the mysteries of Demeter Kidaria, mother of Persephone, wore the mask of the goddess for the main ceremony (136); finally, Persephone spends six months of the year on earth and the other six months underground, in other words in an invisible, "masked" place. C.G. Jung is perfectly right to say that the persona is a fragment of the collective psyche. In fact, all these divinities belong to the cults typical of the "natural" races, in which the feeling of race and blood "always represents something sub-personal, completely naturalistic" and "the collectivist element, as instinct, 'genius of the species', spirit and unity of the horde", predominates (137).

With the Christianisation of the Roman Empire, the use of masks was discouraged throughout the Western Empire, as part of Christianity's so-called fight against the practices of "paganism". However, it was never banned. It continued to be used in liturgical drama and mystery plays. It was worn by actors personifying demons or animals, Satan or one of the seven deadly sins; during the performance, they moved around the stalls to give the audience the shivers. In general, these hideous masks were used to dramatise the ugliness of sin. But ecclesiastical theatre also used masks for the characters of God, angels and saints (138).

2. Ceremonial cross-dressing

a. In ancient times

In the Bacchae, Dionysus, in revenge for King Pentheus's refusal to accept his cult in Thebes, manages, by depriving him of his reason, to persuade him to disguise himself as a woman so that he can visit the maenads in the mountains. Verse 821 may allude to a time when only women took part in the mystery cults and men who wished to attend were obliged to disguise themselves as women, to assimilate themselves to Dionysus, to become Pseudanôr ("false man"), one of the god's four epithets (139).

Cross-dressing was a feature of the festivals of the Dionysian cult; in the oschophoria, which had been instituted to commemorate Theseus' departure for Crete and his victorious return (among the seven boys whom, in addition to the seven girls Athens had to pay tribute to the Minotaur every year, Theseus, for the first time entrusted with the mission, had hidden two young men dressed as girls), the procession was led by two boys disguised as girls; at the ithyphallic festivals, the phallophores wore women's clothes and at festivals in honour of Cybele, the priests were disguised as women; etc.

In the Hellenistic period, it appears that the disguise of a man as a woman was customary at kômoi (nocturnal drinking parties in honour of Dionysus) and symposia (140). Cross-dressing from woman to man was also common in ritual ceremonies. A number of vases dating from the fifth century BC show men dressed as women, as well as women dressed as men, some of them phallophores, at the Lenaia festivals (141). In Macedonia, the priestesses of Dionysus were called "imitators (of men)" (mimellones) (142). In Cyprus, according to Philophorus, women sacrificed to Venus in men's clothes and men in women's clothes. The priestesses of the temples of Aphaca, Tyre and Sicca Venerea, near Carthage, who served the divinity by offering their bodies, were usually disguised as men (143); among the "Chaldeans", the women sacrificed to Venus disguised as men, the men as women (144); Macrobius, the Greek historian of the third century BC, similarly reports that, in the third century BC, the women sacrificed to Venus in men's clothes and the men in women's clothes.C, similarly reports that, among the Cyprians, men sacrificed to Venus dressed as women and women as men (145); the fourth-century grammarian Servius, in his commentary on the Aeneid (II, v. 632), makes the same observation about the inhabitants of another Cypriot town, Amathunte.

This ritual of sexual inversion was later found in the carnivals of the "Middle Ages" (146).

b. In the Middle Ages

"A woman shall not wear a man's garment, and a man shall not put on a woman's garment; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God," says Deuteronomy (22.5) (147). Christianity will comply with this commandment, but will not be as strict with transvestites as with transvestites in its legislation, but will show more leniency to transvestites than to transvestites in practice.

The first laws against cross-dressing were passed by the Church in the middle of the fourth century. They arose from the need to react against heresies and in particular against the practices, linked to the development of the ascetic life of women, encouraged by these heretical movements. A provincial council met in Gangres in 340 to examine the case of Eusthatus of Sebastea ((† c. 377). This Christian religious, who had just established monasticism in Asia Minor, imposed unnatural attire on his followers, both men and women (148). He was condemned, as were the practices of his followers, but only those of women. Canon 13 of the Council condemned women who cross-dressed (149), but not men who cross-dressed; the same was true of Gratian's decree (c. 1150), which took up canon 13 of the Council of Gangres word for word. The penitential of Burchard of Worms too: "Si qua mulier propter continentiam quaeputatur, habitum mutat, et pro solito muliebri amictu virilem sumit, anathema sit" (150). It was not until the Synod of Auxerre (561 - 605) that disguises and cross-dressing were prohibited for both sexes (151). The ban had no effect. In contrast, in the Germanic world, the Grágás, the ancient Icelandic criminal law, provided that transvestites and transvestite women could be ostracized. The level of determination with which the Church fought against transvestism can be seen in the fact that the more Iceland fell under the yoke of Christianity, the less these laws were applied (152).

3. Literary transvestism

The theme of cross-dressing is very present in the literature of the "Middle Ages", whether religious or secular, however anachronistic the latter term may be.

a. The transvestite: the knight

The motif of the knight disguised as a woman (153) is represented in the chanson de geste, but above all in the romances of the Round Table (Meraugis de Portlesguez, Guiron le Courtois, Prophesies de Merlin, Claris et Laris, Isaÿe le Triste).

In the chanson de geste, "the one who disguises himself, however vulnerable he may be, holds power over the one he abuses: he makes him ridiculous and always manages to defeat him, first with laughter

and then with weapons" (154). In the Arthurian novel, the desire to ridicule the adversary while defeating him can be found in certain transvestite heroes; for example, in the Prophesies of Merlin, Lancelot, disguised as a damsel during a tournament in Surluse, defeats Dinadan who, as if the cup were not already full, is then dressed as a woman: he is doubly ridiculous. The hero, dressed as a woman, is never ridiculous. A number of Arthurian novels emphasise that women's clothing suits him perfectly and enhances his beauty. In Claris et Laris, for example, Calogrenant, transformed into a "pucele" the moment he enters a bewitched city, manages to resist Mordred's assaults and escape by stealing his horse. Despite his transformation, Calogrenant continues to behave like a real knight. The disguise is temporary and is linked to either war or love. It is first and foremost a ruse, and as such is hardly compatible with the declared values of chivalry.

Finally, a few words should be said about the main work of a thirteenth-century Austrian aristocrat by the name of Ulrich von Lichtenstein. Its title doesn't tell the whole story, but it does say a lot: Frauendienst ("Ladies' Service"). It is a fictionalised autobiography, and it is very difficult to say just how fictionalised. Ulrich, a contented husband, is in love with a woman who is also "glücklich verheiratet". To prove his love for her, he decides to travel from Italy to Bohemia disguised as "Frau Venus". Before setting off, he writes to all the knights in the area, proposing a joust in honour of his "Lady". "It's about a project carried out in the name of love itself and not the love of a single woman" (155). Can we believe that the women Ulrich von Lichtenstein meets along the way all feel honoured by his undertaking? That the knights - with one exception, who will be thanked by a spear to the head - who have accepted his proposal do not lose their respect for him when, once the joust is over, he reveals his secret to them? The journey comes to an end and Ulrich von Lichtenstein puts away his Venus costume; he has become famous and earned the respect of everyone... What is particularly interesting, though not surprising, is that, on several occasions in his account, Ulrich von Lichtenstein claims not only that he was never bothered by either the Church or the political authorities during his Venusfahrt, but that he was even allowed to go to church and take part in religious ceremonies such as the kiss of peace, even though those who had authorised him to do so knew they were dealing with a man (156).

What impact did these more or less romantic figures have on readers at a time when, in the East, crusaders were "more often at the public baths than on the battlefields" (157) and when, in Western Europe, women, in the absence of their husbands, whose desire to deliver Jerusalem they had not been the last to whip into shape, took over, occupying functions that were traditionally their prerogative, at least when they were not themselves taking part in some expedition or other (158)? How is it that, at a time when any man in drag was ridiculed in everyday life and even despised, he became a character in the novel and was showered with glory? While it is impossible to answer the first question, i.e. to assess the influence that the very popular works we have mentioned may have had on their readership, the contradiction between the negative view of transvestites in everyday life and their positive representation in literature is not necessarily perplexing. Literature often serves to condition minds.

b. Transvestites

Transvestites were much more common than transvestites in the literature of the period.

i) Cross-dressing saints

Christian ascetic literature and hagiography are full of cross-dressing saints; for some, the cross-dressing is temporary; for others, permanent (159).

Marie takes the clothes of a monk and the name of Marin to follow her father to the convent; the latter, who has retired there after the death of his wife, has managed to convince his abbot to allow his only child to join him there; he has not told her that it is a girl; dressed as a man, with her hair cut short, she enters the convent; she is soon expelled, having been accused of raping a young girl and knocking her up; she is eventually forgiven and reintegrated into the community; the monks - this is a constant in the topos : the cross-dressing is perfect - only become aware of her sex when she dies. Eugenie takes the name Eugene and dresses as a monk to enter the monastery, her hair cut very short. One of the women she was treating fell under her spell. Eugène rejects her advances. Humiliated, the woman accuses him of rape; the trial takes place; the verdict is about to be announced... Eugène tears his tunic and thus gives proof of his femininity to the audience, which includes his father, mother, brothers and sisters, who throw themselves into his arms (160). Nathalie disguised herself as a man to help Christians; Theodora, Euphrosina and Pelagia, to preserve their virginity; Thecla, to be able to follow Paul of Tarsus (161).

Here, cross-dressing has four main functions: "it allows the heroine to escape danger, to steal her body from male lust, to travel incognito or to slip surreptitiously into the society of men" (162). In no case is it presented as a transgression, and this should come as no surprise, since Christianity itself is largely founded on transgression and inversion.

Here, the cross-dressing is nourished by the interpretation of certain eschatological scaffolding in the New Testament and the patristic conception of man and woman.

Firstly, don't Ephesians 4:13, Romans 8:29 and 12:2 imply that women will be resurrected as men? This is what was inferred from these verses not only by heretics (encratists, origenists, priscillianists), but also by at least one orthodox: Tertullian (De cultu feminarum, 1-2). Augustine sought to refute their exegesis in The City of God (XII, 27).

Secondly, faith is identified purely and simply with masculinity: Ambrose (Expositio Evangeliis secundum Lucam, P.L., t. 15) comments on Jesus Christ's apostrophe to Mary, "dicit ei mulier": "Quae non credit, mulier est, et adhuc corporei sexus appellatione signatur ; nam quae credit, occurrit in virum perfectum." ("She who does not believe is a woman and still designated by the quality of her sex according to the body; for she who believes comes to the perfect man, to the measure of the completed age of Christ'; she no longer has her name of the century, the sex of her body, the mobility of youth, the chatter of old age") (163). Augustine speaks of the "virile courage" that Felicity and Perpetua "display in their battles", adding that this "virile courage", "despite the weakness of their sex, can only be attributed to Jesus Christ" (164). But this is an aberrant identification. Faith, like all things sentimental, is subject to change and, as such, is the property of the female spirit, whether in a woman's or a man's body (165).

Thirdly, the Church Fathers were under the illusion that virginity gave women a masculine character (166). In Jerome's eyes, [...] as long as the woman is for childbirth and children, she is as different from the man as the body is from the soul. However, if she aspires to serve Christ more than the world, then she ceases to be a woman and must be called a man" (167). The illusion is perfect in the Passion of Perpetua and Felicity and in the Letters of the Martyrs of Lyons. In the account of the vision in which Perpetua is surrounded by "beautiful young men" in the middle of an amphitheatre, she is suddenly transformed into a man: "they undressed me, and behold, I was a man" (168). As for Blandine, "suspended from a post and exposed to be the fodder of the beasts unleashed against her", the Christians who witnessed her martyrdom "saw with the eyes of the body, by means of their sister, the one who had been crucified for them." (169).

By freeing herself of her femininity, women, according to certain Church fathers, can equal men, or even surpass them (170). This sentiment is expressed by Christine de Pisan (1364 - 1430), with accents that fully justify the status she has been accorded as the initiator of feminism (171), in particular for her allegorical novel La cité des dames. The work is divided into three parts, each of which, in addition to describing a particular phase in the building of the city under the direction of an allegory sent by the Christian god, is a pretext for paying tribute to famous women of the past. Firstly, Raison helps Christine to build the foundations and walls of the city with blocks of stone representing illustrious women of antiquity who, like the Amazons, distinguished themselves in politics and war; Raison also helps her, to borrow a term from psychology that suits the character perfectly, to "rebuild herself", by persuading her that women are not evil or useless creatures and that, as far as she is concerned, she should not doubt

her intellectual qualities. Droiture then lends her a hand in constructing the houses and buildings that represent the virtues with which women are just as endowed as men - at least, that's what she tries to make Christine understand, using as examples the great Jewish, Christian and 'pagan' women of antiquity. One of the virtues that Christine values above all in the exemplary women she portrays is undoubtedly chastity. Of Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, she says: "This princess despised all carnal love and for a long time rebelled against marriage, because she wished to keep herself intact for the rest of her life"; "She was exemplarily chaste, because not only did she avoid other men, but she only slept with her husband to ensure her descendants...". With regard to Pentheles, Queen of the Amazons, she declares: "This woman was so proud and haughty that she never deigned to mate with a man and remained a virgin all her life". Is it too much to infer from these passages that they present "sexual contact with a man as degrading" (172)?

Finally, Justice guides her in the finishing work and in the choice of inhabitants for the city, which will be governed by a queen surrounded by virgins and martyrs: the Virgin Mary, "head of the female sex"; and this is an opportunity for Christine to talk to some of the transvestite saints mentioned above: Marine, Euphrosyne and Nathalie. Christine justifies her choice, saying that these legends are beautiful and prove that women are constant (173). But, in the end, could a woman who, in one of her first works, had expressed her desire to be born a man and who, in "La Cité des dames", imagines herself "vrays homs", not identify with and magnify transvestite saints (174)?

Did Christine de Pisan, whom the Chancellor of the University of Paris described as a "virilis femina" (175), ever feel the temptation to disguise herself? The question, trivial and inappropriate in itself, will seem much less so in the light of the fact that cross-dressing is one of the best ways for a woman to blunt, or even extinguish, male desire (176).

ii) The bearded lady

The figure of the transvestite is found in the literature of the "Middle Ages" in another variant, that of the heroic woman who saves her city, her country or her people by taking up arms. Her virility does not come from the clothes she wears, but from her hair: she is either bearded or wears a false beard, or she has a highly developed hair system. This theme emerged in Arab chronicles in the 10th and 11th centuries, and was taken up shortly afterwards by Christian historiography. For example, in the Arab chronicles, Theodomir, who had taken refuge with a handful of men in the fortress of Orihuela, led the attackers to believe that he had a large army at his disposal by having all the women of the town climb the ramparts, wearing men's hair and carrying sticks that, from a distance, could be mistaken for spears. In his Gesta langobardorum (I, 8), Paul Diacre recounts that when the mother of the two chiefs of the

Winili went to Freya to ask her to help her people conquer the Vandals, the goddess "advised her to order the women to undo their hair and arrange it on their faces in the shape of a beard". Contrary to the belief of the Grimm brothers, who include the episode in their Germanic Nightmares, this tradition is not of German or even Germanic origin. It is a transposition of the Middle Eastern motif of the bearded goddess, a motif linked "to calendar liturgies of inversion generally involving rituals of bilateral transvestism...". (177) and thus to the Dionysian cult.

The motif of the hairy woman is considerably diminished by the Christian conception of heroism. There are three saints of this type: Wilgeforte, Paule Barbue and Galla. According to some Spanish sources, Wilgeforte was "the daughter of a pagan king of Lusitania who, having had his states invaded by a king of Sicily, promised him Wilgeforte as his wife in order to have peace. The princess, not knowing how to avoid this marriage, prayed to God for help, and a long beard suddenly grew on her chin. Furious at this unexpected resource that the saint had found, the father had her crucified" (178); according to other sources, she begged Jesus to make her as ugly as possible, to counter the incestuous passion that her father felt for her (179); finally, other texts report that she made this vow to escape being raped. Forced marriage, incest, rape, it's all there. Paula d'Avila, wanting to avoid being pursued by a debauchee, took refuge in a chapel dedicated to Saint Lawrence, where she threw herself at the foot of a cross to implore her god to make her grow a beard, a wish that was instantly granted (180). As for Galla, according to Gregory, "the doctors had threatened her... with an eruption of the beard if she renounced her marriage. She took no notice, and the prognosis of the disciples of Hippocrates was confirmed. But," says Saint Gregory, "it mattered little to the generous widow to lose a beauty that did not attract the gaze of the heavenly Spouse, to whom alone she now claimed to please" (181). So the woman is virilised, no longer to protect her people or her country, but to defend her virginity. Her virile character is still hair, no longer a false beard or a man's hair, but a real beard, which completely obliterates her femininity and makes her repulsive to men (182).

c. Dissemination and popularity of the theme of the cross-dressing saint in the Middle Ages

How popular and influential was the figure of the transvestite in the "Middle Ages"?

The motive is essentially literary. Very few women in the "Middle Ages" took up arms in men's clothing. In fact, the only attested case is that of Jeanne de Flandres, Duchess of Brittany in the 14th century (183). However, Pélagie, Euphrosine and others seem to have been emulated (184). The best known is Hildegund von Neuss (1170 - 1188), who lived as a man in the monastery of Kloster Schönau (185).

Although it is obviously impossible to know how many women thought of making the same request to Jesus Christ that Wilgeforte had made, it is certain that the cult of this saint enjoyed immense popularity (186), particularly, one suspects, among women (187). It was established in the fourteenth century in Portugal, France, the Germanic countries and Scandinavia - she was included in the martyrology two centuries later. What's more, she is one of the only saints to have been depicted crucified (188). Relics of Wilgeforte were brought to Castile by the Bishop of Siguenza in 1082, and others were brought to Grandselve a few years later, when the abbey there was founded (189).

Whether or not these characters really existed is therefore of little importance in absolute terms: they were part of apologetic literature and were venerated by the people, for whom "their lives came from authentic 'historical' sources" (190).

The legends of cross-dressing saints are found in many texts and have many variants. They seem to have flourished in the monastic communities of Greece from the 4th to the 6th century. The eschatological theme of sex change is found both in orthodox writings (the Acts and Passions of the early Christian martyrs) and in heretical writings (the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles and the Apocryphal Gospels) (191). Eugenie is named in a Gallican sacramentary taken from a seventh-century manuscript (192). Various transvestite saints are mentioned in the "Life of the Fathers" by Gregory of Tours (538-594), then by Bede (672-735), Raban Maur (780-956), Notker Balbulus (840-912) and Flodoard (894 - 966). Eugenie and Thecla are exalted in the De laudibus virginitatis by Aldhelm (639-709), abbot of Malmesbury and first bishop of Sherbone. The legends of cross-dressing saints were translated into Latin in the early Middle Ages and spread widely throughout Europe thanks to collections of legends and moral narratives. Later, some of these stories, translated into the vernacular, were included in such popular works as the Speculum historiale (1264) by the Dominican friar Vincent de Beauvais and the Legenda aurea by the Archbishop of Genoa Jacob de Voragine (193).

4. Masquerades

a. Crazy days

The Feast of Fools was celebrated in both the Latin and Greek Churches. "The Christian Church," says a historian with a fairly Christian sensibility, "had no difficulty in declaring itself, as it were, the mother of fools, repeating with Jesus Christ: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit! The Church of these early centuries associated itself in fact and in intention with all the actions of her children, with their joys as well as their sufferings; she thus kept within her bosom and under her immediate authority the pious Saturnalia

which were the cradle of modern theatre. Councils and synods never ceased to protest against these scandals, glaring vestiges of paganism; but the bishops in their dioceses, the parish priests in their parishes, the abbots in their convents, were more indulgent and did not venture to upset popular sentiment by proscribing the Festival of Fools, which Christian Europe had introduced into its liturgy" (194). We shall see below the real reason why they did not "dare" to do so.

It is mentioned for the first time in 1182, in a liturgical work, which calls it the "freedom of December". Churches, cathedrals, bishops' houses and all convents for men and women were subject to it. The Festival of Fools was usually spread over three or four periods, each with its own actors and spectacle. On the first day, Christmas Day, the clerical and monastic plebs shouted in unison: Christmas, Christmas! and went into raptures. On 26 December, Saint Stephen's Day, the feast of the subdeacons was celebrated, derisively called the feast of the drunken deacons. The deacons and sub-deacons would hold a council to elect a bishop for the lunatics, or even a patriarch or pope for the lunatics; once elected, he would be clothed in priestly vestments, consecrated, blessed and taken around the city to the sound of bells. On the day of the circumcision, i.e. New Year's Day, the clergy went in procession to the Bishop of the Fools, led him with feigned solemnity to the church, where his parodically triumphal entry was greeted by the tinkling of the bells. Once in the choir, he took his place on the bishop's chair and gave the signal for high mass. The ecclesiastics were disguised, some as balladeers, others as women; their faces were smeared with soot or covered with hideous beard masks called barbatoires (195). The "freedom of December" consisted not only in cross-dressing, but also in switching roles and ranks among the clergy: Clerics, deacons and subdeacons officiated in place of the priests; the latter danced lewd dances, sang obscene songs and played dice, paume, boule and other games of chance, in front of the altar, on which they ate black puddings and sausages, while the altar boys, masked and covered in copes, occupied the canons' stalls. After mass, "the disorder, extravagance and profanity took on a new seriousness. The ecclesiastics, emboldened by custom and Bacchic fumes, gave themselves over to the delirium of a crude and noisy joy, and presented the image of the ancient saturnalia, which was celebrated at the same time. Jumping, lascivious dancing, wrestling, lustful gestures, shouting and obscene songs were the main activities of this ecclesiastical orgy, but they were not the only ones".

"We saw deacons and sub-deacons, inflamed by wine, strip themselves and indulge in the most criminal debaucheries among themselves. Others, whose anger had replaced their joy, increased the din by quarrelling and fighting. Sometimes the floor of the church was covered in blood".

The party didn't stop there. "The ecclesiastics, having left the church, spread out through the streets; some, mounted on tombereaux loaded with mud and rubbish, amused themselves by throwing it on the crowd of people who followed them, and thus marched in triumph through the squares and streets wide enough for the passage of a tombereau".

"Other ecclesiastics, confused with libertine secularists, set up trestles in the form of a theatre and performed the most scandalous scenes. The most ordinary one was very worthy of the time. Actors dressed as monks would attack other actors dressed as nuns: the latter would succumb, and then, to the shame of the century, they would be seen, in indecent postures, simulating acts whose publicity is forbidden among all civilised peoples" (196).

One point in particular needs to be emphasised here from the point of view of ideas: Christian masquerades went much further than the bacchanals of ancient "paganism", not perhaps in terms of turpitudes and furious orgies, but in terms of impiety, since the ecclesiastics who took part parodied their own liturgy.

The Festival of Fools, which had been celebrated in Sens since the eleventh century, was just as parodic in character. It was the famous festival of the donkey, or donkeys, also instituted, with variations, in Rouen, Autun, Beauvais and other towns, in memory of the donkey that Jesus Christ rode on as he entered Jerusalem. On that day, the donkey, dressed in a priestly cope, was brought into the church, where he/she appeared to officiate in place of the priest. He/she was presented before the altar and sang, to the accompaniment of the organ, the conductus ad tabulam (the donkey song), the refrain of which "is undoubtedly a consonant imitation of the Evohé Bacche, repeated by the worshippers of Bacchus" (197). Once they had finished singing, the clerics put on their pontifical vestments and covered their faces with hideous masks; the deacons and subdeacons, dressed as women, gave the blessing to the people, while some clerics began dancing in the choir and others prepared the feast in another part of the church.

Convents for men and women also had their festival of the insane: the festival of the innocent, celebrated especially in Normandy and Flanders. Here, at dawn, the abbess would hand over full powers to the youngest novice, who would command the congregation until dusk (198). In the men's convents, "on 28 December, the lay brothers, dressed in torn clothes and turned inside out, would sit on the seats intended for the fathers and perform the service in their place; they held their books upside down and shouted at the top of their voices while looking at a lectern through glasses whose worms were orange peels". Here, the festival of the innocent went even further: "it was an occasion for debauchery and indecency for all the communities of both sexes" (199). The nuns disguised themselves as men, elected an abbess-crazy, usurped the power of the abbess and sang funny lessons at the service, while, in the monasteries, the religious chose an abbot-crazy, an abbot of the Sots or an abbot of the Conards and had a good time with the abbesses-crazy.

b. The procession

Processions and cavalcades were the last expression of the festival of fools in civil society. Every town had its own procession. The most famous was undoubtedly that of Corpus Christi in Aix. It took place on the eve, day and octave of the Blessed Sacrament, on Whit Monday and Trinity Sunday. It consisted of two distinct parts: the procession and the interludes. One of these consisted of a sort of parody of Olympus; the others were episodes from the Bible and the life of Jesus Christ, in the form of pantomimes and allegorical dances of varying degrees of burlesque. Most of the "players" were lay people rather than clergymen. The Fête-Dieu continued until the French Revolution.

5. Dionysian Christianity

Sexual inversion in hagiography, social inversion, the use of disguise and, in particular, masks in Christian bacchanals, masks and disguise in liturgical drama, then in mystery and miracle, all indicate that a Dionysian current runs through Christianity (200).

The opinion gained ground from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, and gradually took root in people's minds, that Christianity, unable to uproot the practices of 'paganism', had formally adapted them. It is both true and false: true, because a certain number of Christian customs, beliefs and ceremonies do indeed constitute an extension of "paganism", i.e. not of the mos maiorum, but essentially of the chthonic, lunar and feminine cults of Near and Middle Eastern origin that it found firmly established in Rome; false, because it never sought to eradicate them, for the simple reason that it could not, being itself an Eastern cult.

The early Christians, like the followers of Dionysus, gathered at night in secluded places. These meetings sometimes lasted until dawn. The taste for nocturnal gatherings was so pronounced among early Christians that all ecclesiastical festivals came to be celebrated preferably at night (201); for it was a matter of taste rather than necessity, as shown by the fact that these nocturnal meetings continued until the beginning of the sixth century, several centuries after the measures taken by Rome against Christians had ceased to be in force. "And, astonishingly, it was precisely within religious practices that the disorder began and developed prodigiously. For example, under the pretext of celebrating the martyrs, people went to the cemeteries at night and indulged in unheard-of debauchery. After obscene feasts, all those present, men, women and children under the influence of drunkenness, would form huge rounds, similar to those that later came to be known as the Dance of the Dead" (202). By the fourth century, some of the accusations that Celsus had levelled against the Christians and that Origen

had struggled to refute had been fully proven, not by the few men still faithful to the mos maiorum, but by certain ecclesiastical authorities themselves (203).

Undifferentiation, the Dionysian levelling, was also at the heart of primitive Christianity and its agapes, the communal evening meal during which the Eucharistic rite was celebrated. "In this way, the Church found a way to further weaken the differences between social positions, races and nationalities, by bringing all the faithful together in celebrations where all divisions disappeared. It replaced worldly ties with a common attachment to the Master, it replaced differences of position with the new title of disciple of Christ, and the religious festivals of the early Church were to remind those they brought together of the precepts of equality and mutual benevolence that Jesus had come to bring to the world" (204). The distribution of the Eucharist was preceded by a more substantial meal, if we are to believe Tertullian's recriminations against his "brothers": "Your agape is cooked in the kettles... your faith is warmed by the kitchen fire, your hope rests entirely in the good food" (205). As for the question of whether "the brothers (slept) with the sisters before or after the Eucharist, the Berber writer's comments do not provide an answer.

Not even Corybantism (206) found refuge in, or on the fringes of, the Church. The feast of the insane gave rise to four types of frenetic dance: that of the Levites or deacons, that of the priests, that of the children or clerics and that of the sub-deacons (207). But the ones we want to talk about here are considered to be properly pathological: the dance of St John and the dance of St Guy, so called because the saints in question were reputed to cure those who suffered from this "nervous disease". To heal or, on the contrary, to make sick. In fact, St Guy's dancing was "referred to as a saint's disease". The belief in a "saint's disease", attested throughout Europe, refers to the saint's dual power over the disease that bears his name. As the only person who could cure the disease, he could also cause or inflict it" (208).

The descriptions of sufferers given by writers of the "Middle Ages" are reminiscent both of those given by ancient writers of corybantes in ecstatic convulsions and of those given by nineteenth-century European travellers of fakirs, dervishes and Sufis in trance (209). In Christian Europe, however, the sick were considered to be possessed by the devil and the only remedy offered was exorcism. Several epidemics of danceomania broke out between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries, most of them in the fourteenth, in Western Europe and especially in Northern Europe, some of them near religious buildings. Curiously enough, danceomaniacs saw their chorea suddenly worsen as the feast of Saint Vitus approached; no less curiously, once they had arrived at a church or chapel dedicated to the saint at the end of their pilgrimage, they were asked to dance to the sound of music in order to be cured (210); Less curious is the fact that the exorcism lasted only one year and that the sick therefore had to make the pilgrimage every year, when we know that the exorciser did not operate for free and that, moreover, the higher or lower salary paid to him "depended on the more or less rapid escape of Satan or his companions" (211). Several authors, including Ami Perrier, have stressed the causal link between

Christian superstition and danceomania. Hermann Ewerbeck identified the problem: "The clergy made fairly unsuccessful efforts to pacify this rather too widespread molochism; it had been provoked indirectly by the mystical overexcitement of Christian souls, perpetuated from generation to generation for thirteen centuries" (212).

6. Outsourcing the masquerade

We said earlier that the masquerade gradually disappeared from the celebrations that punctuated Christian life in the Middle Ages. Its spirit obviously remained. Just as the "liturgical drama" had left the Church and spread throughout civil society, so the masquerade began to appear outside the hieratic framework, inviting itself into the court, where, in passing, it took on an attenuated, more subtle and therefore more dangerous form. In the 14th century, masquerades were already part of the festivities at most European courts. In France, it was in 1393, on the Tuesday before Candlemas, during the reign of Charles VI, that the first masquerade was organised by the court at the Hôtel Saint Pol: a "dance in the semblance of wild men", later known as the "bal des ardents". The king appeared dressed in "coats covered in loose linen in the shape and colour of his hair", accompanied by five gentlemen disguised in the same way. The Chronicle of the monk of Saint Denys indignantly depicts the king and his companions gambolling from side to side with the howling of wild beasts, performing "Saracen dances", as if in the grip of a diabolical frenzy" (213). During the festivities, the linen clothes of the king and his companions caught fire and several of the young men were burnt alive; the king narrowly escaped the same fate.

The arts and luxury, which were already widespread in Italy, began to be introduced into France under Francis I, under the impetus of Catherine de Médicis. She "introduced pleasures into politics as a means of governing...". (214).

From then until Louis XIV, the masquerade, now called ballet, was one of the court's favourite entertainments. Ballets consisted of entries by characters dressed in various guises depending on the subject being represented. The subject was explained in a musical narrative sung by a character just before each entrance. The first masked ball held in France, under the reign of Charles VI, as we have just seen, had an exotic theme. The subject matter of subsequent ballets was no less exotic. Thus, in the grand ballet given by Louis XIII in his Hôtel-de-Ville in February 1626, the Duke of Nemours played the role of a Mohammedan doctor; the king himself played the role of Mohammed (215). In the carrousel given by Louis XIV in 1662 in the courtyard of the Tuileries to celebrate the birth of the Dauphin, the Prince of Condé was given the role of the Emperor of the Turks.

Under Louis XIV, Isaac de Benserade (216) was the great composer of ballets, in which the king almost always appeared. At the time, dance was one of the exercises included in the education of the nobility and "a gentleman who ignored the art of dance would have been considered a savage" (217). Two centuries earlier, had ballet not been synonymous with "dancing in the semblance of wild men"?

Catherine de Médicis had brought a large number of artists from her country, including attori dell'Arte. Commedia dell'arte, a theatrical genre that seems to have originated in the Oscan atellane, was born in Italy in the middle of the 16th century; the actors, at least the supporting roles, were masked. Perhaps this is what gave the queen the idea of introducing a new type of celebration at court, combining masquerade, ball and dance: the masked ball. It is certain," declared the Marquis de Paulmy (218) without malice, "without malice since he congratulates himself on it, that, by this invention, this Queen has infinitely increased the sum total of our nation's pleasures: and what princess was more suited than she was to taking advantage of the mask?"

It was at this time that, thanks to masquerades, the use of masks began to spread in France. At these festivals, masks allowed "princes, princesses, lords and ladies" to indulge incognito "in all the excesses of debauchery" (219). It soon extended to everyday life. "The fashion of the great ladies and the little mistresses was usually to go out only masked" (220). The fashion for masks was all the rage, to the point where it gave rise to serious disorders: by covering their faces with a mask to commit crimes (theft, murder, adultery, etc.), some people evaded prosecution. Between 1508 and 1514, the Paris parliament issued three rulings forbidding merchants from selling masks. In 1539, François 1st was forced to forbid "all makers and sellers of masks, that from now on they do not make or sell any masks publicly, or otherwise; and to all of whatever state and condition they may be, not to wear... masks or otherwise disguise themselves, on pain of imprisonment and punishment by the law...". (221). This decree, which Martial d'Auvergne amended a few years later, limiting the ban to "merchants and people of low status", had no more effect than the aforementioned rulings. It is true that Francis I was enthusiastic about this new form of entertainment (222). Later, Charles IX and Henri III continued to indulge in it. They would go through the streets dressed "in matelotte skirts," wearing "testes of black velvet with silver trim" accompanied by their sweethearts, their faces hidden under thin Venetian masks, disguised as women, for the most part, with veils of gold and silver gauze, followed by a large troop of musicians, singers and lute players magnificently disguised and escorted by pages carrying flaming torches" (223).

The mask became fashionable again during the reign of Henry III. Courtiers, following the example of the king's minions, wore wolves, as did the ladies. Henry III himself went to bed wearing a mask with ointment and blush on the inside. Under Henry IV, ladies covered their faces with a wolf. Only aristocrats were allowed to wear the mask (224). Henri IV did not shy away from this form of entertainment, displaying the same exoticism as some of his predecessors. On Sunday 23 February

1597, for example, "he made a masquerade of witches" (225). Sunday 23 February was the first Sunday of Lent.

Masquerades had been forbidden without effect by, among others, the Council of Basel (1436), then by the Councils of Rouen (1445), Soissons (1456), Sens (1485) and finally Toledo (1566). The most successful carnivals were undoubtedly these councils.

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In France and most other European countries, theatre was revived within the Church in the "Middle Ages", both in churches and convents. The rural dionysias of antiquity were followed by the various fêtes des fous and, in a less acute form, the processions; the urban dionysias were followed by the ludi, repraesentationes, historiae, in other words the "liturgical drama", which already had most of the characteristics of what we call a stage performance. It featured religious subjects. Initially, the scenes were few in number, but as they multiplied and the subjects became more varied, the service became longer and longer. Certain particularly dramatic parts of the service became detached from it and constituted real dramatic scenes, which found their place after mass. These were performed in Latin by the clergy. Theatre was useful for spreading Christian ideology and extending the influence of the Church, so it is logical that it was eventually carried into civil society and that the vernacular was substituted for Latin in the repraesentationes.

The theatre spread out from the church, where it had grown and flourished, to the whole of civil society, where it quickly established itself as the favourite pastime of the French, whatever order they belonged to. The fête des fous moved out of the ecclesiastical setting and into the court, in the form of the ballet, the masked ball and so on. Repraesentationes, ludi, historiae gave birth to miracles and mysteries. The former were performed by ecclesiastics, the latter by burghers, tradesmen, craftsmen and merchants.

The gradual secularisation of the theatre led to its gradual professionalisation, starting with the creation of the first theatrical troupe in Italy in 1545: the appearance of the first permanent theatre and the first professional "actors" turned it into a commercial enterprise in its own right.

At the beginning of the "Renaissance", not everyone could go on stage, unless they became an "actor", but, as we shall see, it was still possible for anyone to act: in the parterre. And some did indeed leave their profession to become comedians; by the mid-sixteenth century, certain provinces were being

scoured by numerous troupes (226). The profession opened up almost immediately to women, who were able to take advantage of it socially. Unlike the histrion, the professional "actor" was regarded with suspicion. The term is placed in inverted commas and will continue to be so, like "spectator", for as long as it is used to designate people who lived at a time when, for reasons we will explain in due course, there was not yet a demarcation between those who played a role in a play and those who attended a performance, any more than there was a clear separation between the stage and the auditorium (the distinction would appear in practice in the middle of the 18th century). "An actor in a mystery one day could be a spectator the next, and vice versa.

The first permanent theatre in France dates from 1518; in England, from the 1640s; in Italy, from 1580: the Italian-style theatre, designed with the specific aim of producing illusion, did not spread to other European countries until the end of the 17th century. Until then, it was up to the "spectator" to produce it himself, relying on a whole series of auditory and visual theatrical conventions, especially visual ones. The "Middle Ages", as we shall show below, were already a "world of images"; Thanks to perspective, which was rediscovered by Italian architects infatuated with the refined abstractions of Arab science in the early Middle Ages, the theatre increasingly focused on the visual and on producing as complete an illusion as possible.

Cross-dressing is part of illusionism. Cross-dressing is twofold: clothing and psychological. The aim is either to become someone else, to change one's nature or state, or to parody or alter the nature of something (the hierarchy, the established order) for subversive purposes. The two aims are not mutually exclusive; the first is individual, the second collective.

Cross-dressing is closely linked to the Dionysian cult; from the ancient festivals in honour of the god of the mask, it passes into Christianity and its liturgy; discreet in the "liturgical drama" and its epigones, the miracle and the mystery, diffuse in hagiography and courtly literature, it is unleashed in burlesque festivities such as the Festival of Fools, before bursting into courtly life at the end of the 14th century.

In the nobility, being a patron of the arts was no longer the sole role of aristocrats, whose main concern had become "to appear, to play their own part, to show that they were still worthy of themselves, and this concern grew as the absolute monarchy reduced their prerogatives. Aware that they were actors to be admired by the people, they were also gradually reduced to the status of decorative staff designed to show off the sovereign alone: the Versailles of Louis XIV was little more than an immense theatre" (227). Politics tended to become a spectacle.

The development of the theatre represented the rise of the third estate, both bourgeoisie and common people, and the theatricalisation of court life in a way reflected the gentrification of the nobility and, correlatively, the insensible transfer of power from the hands of the nobility to those of the bourgeoisie, under the watchful eye of the Church, whose conciliar firmness in regularly condemning the theatre and the acting profession was equalled only by the self-serving complacency with which it tolerated and even encouraged them. The semantic evolution of the term "representation" is eloquent: from "the action of placing before someone's eyes", as in a play, a repraesentatione, for example, it came to take on a political meaning in the first half of the 14th century, that of "group of people representing a town" and, in the early 1770s, in Raynal, "body of representatives of a people". During the French Revolution, many actors rose to important positions in the army, government and administration, and theatre became politicised and politics theatricalised to the point of becoming almost indistinguishable (228).

Comparing the courtier to an "actor" has become a commonplace. This in no way detracts from the accuracy of the comparison. To understand it, we need to look at it from a psychological point of view. The actor's soul is "composed of scattered and, as it were, floating elements, which never gather around a centre and, consequently, are not capable of forming a unity either" (229). Hence his ability to play a role, to change character at will. He may have to play several roles in the same play and therefore change costume and personality as many times as necessary; and, of course, he is likely to play several roles in the course of his career (it is not without relevance that this protean phenomenon has been compared to what spiritualists call transmigration). Similarly, the courtier moves from one character to another, as circumstances dictate, on stage, because he is keen to "play", as well as in everyday life - but can stage and everyday life still be distinguished in this context from the 17th century onwards?

This human type is characterised by instability and the quest for instability, by a taste for appearances and ostentation, for the strange and the ephemeral, for the staged and the disguised; it is the baroque man; inwardly feminine, it is a weather vane particularly sensitive to the suggestions of the atmosphere, especially those that take on a playful, festive form. The theatre has become politicised, it has become a tribune and, from "backstage", it influences, or at least endeavours to influence, not only the course of events, but also the thoughts, feelings and behaviour of individuals. The theatre acts as a sounding board; from a certain period onwards, cross-dressing was prohibited in principle, or at least subject to restrictions, in everyday life. Omnis mundus texercet hisirioniam", said Petronius, "So everything is a mask in the world, by the very admission of the theatre. I know that the theatre was not the first to create false and hypocritical men, perhaps even a false and hypocritical mind helped to create it; but it has greatly increased the number of them, educated, moulded and hardened the guilty. Tartufe has made more hypocrites than he has corrected; he has not corrected any of them, he has taught them to disguise themselves better, or to raise their masks scandalously, by slashing virtue and practising vice open-faced" (230).

From a racial point of view, it should be remembered that the Baroque man corresponds fairly well to the Mediterranean type as well as to the race of Western man: "What is 'Mediterranean' in the first place is the love of external appearances and gestures. The Mediterranean type needs a stage, if not, at worst, out of vanity and exhibitionism, at least in the sense that he often draws his impetus and motivation, even to perform noble, remarkable and sincere deeds, from his relationship with those who are watching him, and that concern for the effect he will have on them plays a very important part in his conduct. Hence, precisely, his propensity for "gesture", i.e. to give action the character of something that attracts attention and imposes itself, even when the person acting knows that he has only himself as a spectator. In Mediterranean man there is therefore a kind of doubling between a 'self' that plays a role and another 'self' that considers it from the point of view of a possible spectator and observer, as actors do" (231). Similarly, according to H. F. K. Günther, the desire to appear rather than to be is "a characteristic of the man of the Western race, who would therefore have a pronounced, but rather superficial and sometimes even theatrical, sense of honour". The Western race is found in the coastal areas of the Mediterranean and, today, mainly in Spain, Portugal, Italy - where modern theatre was born - and the Mediterranean islands, i.e. in areas where major cross-breeding with the Semitic and Black races has taken place since ancient times. With their volcanic emotionalism, artistic sensitivity, imaginative power and taste for the marvellous, Baroque man is also a member of the negroid race (232).

B. K.

(62) The first is based on an apocryphal prophecy of the birth of Christ, attributed to the Sibyl and inserted into a matins lesson. "The sibyl was first personified by inviting a separate cantor to come and sing her prophecy in appropriate garb, then other prophets were added, and finally entire scenes were composed, sung and acted on prophetic themes about the coming of Christ...". (Liturgical drama, Encyclopédie Larousse en ligne, available at: http://www.larousse.fr/archives/musique/page/335, accessed on 14 July 2015).

The second has as its core an introit trope comprising the Gospel dialogue between the angel and the three Marys at the tomb of Jesus Christ. "It was not enough to read in the Gospel the account of the visit of the holy women to the Sepulchre of the Saviour; the pious eagerness of their love, their worries and joys still had to be dramatised..." (Jacques Louis Antoine Marie Lochet, abbé). (Jacques Louis Antoine Marie Lochet (abbé), La province du Maine, Galienne, Le Mans, 1846, p. 115) The staging of the ceremonial of the Three Marys grew over time. Here is what it consisted of at the monastery of Saint Benoît sur Loire: "To imitate the scene of the sepulchre, three religious will first appear, prepared in advance and dressed in such a way as to imitate the Three Marys. They will come forward slowly, looking sad, and will sing, in the form of a dialogue, the following verses... (These are complaints about the death of the Saviour, and the resolution to embalm his body)... When the three brothers representing the Three Marys have come to the choir, they will approach the tomb, like people who are

searching, and together they will sing the following verse: ... Who will remove this stone, etc.? An angel seated outside, at the head of the tomb, dressed in a golden alb, before a mitre on his head, a palm in his left hand, and in his right a branch laden with candles, announces to them that Jesus has risen .... the Three Marys announce this to the people... After this, Mary Magdalene, separating herself from the other two Marys, approaches the tomb, and looking at it frequently, complains of being deprived of the presence of a beloved master. Then she moves quickly to meet two people who represent Peter and John... Then stopping in front of them in an attitude of sadness, she says to them: They have taken away my Lord, and so on. Peter and John heard these words and ran to the tomb. John, who was younger, arrived first and stopped at the door. Peter followed him and entered quickly; John went in with him. They moved away, and Mary Magdalene, looking sad, moaned, as above: Oh pain, oh cruel anguish! I am deprived of the presence of a beloved master", etc. (ibid., p. 177). Whatever the church or cathedral where the ceremony of the Three Marys took place, it was dramatised in a way that there is no reason to believe was any less sentimental and grandiloquent than in the extract just quoted; and this dramatisation continued to grow until the eighteenth century. In addition to their dramatisation, the number and frequency of representations of episodes from the life of Jesus Christ in religious buildings increased. The feast of the "birth of the Saviour" came to be celebrated several times a year. Together, they formed what was known at the time as repraesentationes, ludi, historiae, etc., and which Romantic writers later dubbed "liturgical drama".

(63) Edmond de Coussemaker, Drames liturgiques du moyen âge : texte et musique, Librairie archéologique de Victor Didron, Paris, 1861, p. ix-x.

(64) Marius Sepet, Origines catholiques du théâtre moderne, Lethielleux, Paris, 1901, p. 164.

(65) As de Julleville wisely points out (Les comédiens en France au Moyen Âge, Léopold Cerf, 1865, p. 73), "the ruling expressly applied only to the capital".

(66) see Johan Mortensen, Le Théâtre Français Au Moyen Age, Picard, Paris, 1903, p. 174.

(67) Nicole Decugis and Suzanne Reymond, Le décor de théâtre en France du Moyen Âge à 1925, Compagnie française des arts graphiques, 1953, p. 16.

(68) Gustave Cogen, Histoire de la mise en scène dans le théâtre religieux français du Moyen Âge, Champion, Paris, 1906, p. 258.

(69) Patricia Vasseur-Legangneux and Florence Dupont, Les tragédies grecques sur la scène moderne: une utopie théâtrale, Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2015, p. 63.

(70) See Anne Surgers, Scénographies du théâtre occidental, 2nd edn, Armand Colin, Paris, 2011,

(71) Ibid.

(72) Dominique Bertrand, Le Théâtre, Armand Colin, 2005, p. 75.

(73) Johan Mortensen, op. cit. p. 169.

(74) Maurice Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Âge, Droz, Geneva, 1979, p. 67.

(75) Marius Sepet, op. cit. p. 177. In some cases, the distinction between religious and lay was purely nominal. It should be remembered that "(b)y a slow but uninterrupted work of nearly two thousand years", the Church had brought "(its) spirit, (its) tradition, (its) tendencies and all (its) aspirations to the very heart of humanity, to the very bowels of civil society. It has enveloped this society on all sides with an immense network of institutions..." of lay people in all fields (see https://elementsdeducationraciale.wordpress.com/2012/09/30/les-racines-asiatiques-du-mondialisme). There are countless associations of this type today, both private and public, not to mention institutions. Secularism' is itself a distillation of the primitive substratum of Abrahamism (see, for the recurrent use of religious vocabulary in politics in the modern era in the United States, Lucia Bergamasco, Evangelism and Politics in the Young Republic, In Transatlantica 1, 2002, available at the following address: http://transatlantica.revues.org/505, consulted on 15 July 2015; Mark A. Noll and Luke E. Harlow [eds. Harlow [eds], Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the Present, Oxford University Press, 2nd edn, 2007 ; David C. Leege and Lyman A. Kellstedt, Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics, M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 1993, as far as France is concerned, did not the main promoter of "secularism", the anti-clerical Ferdinand Buisson (1842-1931), co-founder and president of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, whose statutes are a rehash of the Gospels, declare that "the religion of Jesus is the religion of every republican citizen"? (see http://www.seuil.com/livre-9782020985215.htm).

(76) > Ibid, p. 186.

(77) Marius Sepet, Le Drame chrétien au Moyen Âge, 1878, Didier, Paris, 1878, p. 46.

(78) Maurice Accarie, op. cit. p. 67.

(79) Bernard Ribémont, Marie Bouhaïk-Gironès, Les clercs de la Basoche et le théâtre politique (Paris, 1420-1550), in Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes, 2007, available at http://crm.revues.org/3283, consulted on 15 July 2015.

(80) see Pierre Larousse, Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle, vol. 2, Paris, pp. 314-6.

(81) Torsten Hiltmann, Les 'autres' rois, Ateliers Des Deutschen Historischen Instituts, Paris, 2010, p. 119.

(82) See M. Vaïsse Cibiel, Note rétrospective sur la Basoche toulousaine. In Mémoires de l'Académie impériale des sciences inscriptions et belles-lettres de Toulouse, vol. 6, 1868, Toulouse, pp. 221-43; Michel Cassan, Basoches et Basochiens à Toulouse à l'époque moderne. In Annales du Midi : revue archéologique, historique et philologique de la France méridionale, vol. 94, 1982 [p. 263-76], available at: http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/anami_0003-4398_1982_num_94_158_1994, accessed 15 July 2015.

(83) It undoubtedly also had a religious aspect, at least in Toulouse, since on major religious feast days it was grouped into brotherhoods under the invocation of the Holy Trinity and sat in the church of the Grands Carmes..." (Jean-Baptiste Dubédat, Histoire du Parlement de Toulouse, vol. 1, A. Rousseau, 1885,

(74) Maurice Accarie, Le théâtre sacré de la fin du Moyen Âge, Droz, Geneva, 1979, p. 67.

(75) Marius Sepet, op. cit. p. 177. In some cases, the distinction between religious and lay was purely nominal. It should be remembered that "(b)y a slow but uninterrupted work of nearly two thousand years", the Church had brought "(its) spirit, (its) tradition, (its) tendencies and all (its) aspirations to the very heart of humanity, to the very bowels of civil society. It has enveloped this society on all sides with an immense network of institutions..." of lay people in all fields (see https://elementsdeducationraciale.wordpress.com/2012/09/30/les-racines-asiatiques-du-mondialisme). There are countless associations of this type today, both private and public, not to mention institutions. Secularism' is itself a distillation of the primitive substratum of Abrahamism (see, for the recurrent use of religious vocabulary in politics in the modern era in the United States, Lucia Bergamasco, Evangelism and Politics in the Young Republic, In Transatlantica 1, 2002, available at the following address: http://transatlantica.revues.org/505, consulted on 15 July 2015; Mark A. Noll and Luke E. Harlow [eds. Harlow [eds], Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the Present, Oxford University Press, 2nd edn, 2007 ; David C. Leege and Lyman A. Kellstedt, Rediscovering the Religious Factor in American Politics, M.E. Sharpe, Inc, 1993, as far as France is concerned, did not the main promoter of "secularism", the anti-clerical Ferdinand Buisson (1842-1931), co-founder and president of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme, whose statutes are a rehash of the Gospels, declare that "the religion of Jesus is the religion of every republican citizen"? (see http://www.seuil.com/livre-9782020985215.htm).

(76) > Ibid, p. 186.

(77) Marius Sepet, Le Drame chrétien au Moyen Âge, 1878, Didier, Paris, 1878, p. 46.

(78) Maurice Accarie, op. cit. p. 67.

(79) Bernard Ribémont, Marie Bouhaïk-Gironès, Les clercs de la Basoche et le théâtre politique (Paris, 1420-1550), in Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes, 2007, available at http://crm.revues.org/3283, consulted on 15 July 2015.

(80) see Pierre Larousse, Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle, vol. 2, Paris, pp. 314-6.

(81) Torsten Hiltmann, Les 'autres' rois, Ateliers Des Deutschen Historischen Instituts, Paris, 2010, p. 119.

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(83) It undoubtedly also had a religious aspect, at least in Toulouse, since on major religious feast days it was grouped into brotherhoods under the invocation of the Holy Trinity and sat in the church of the Grands Carmes..." (Jean-Baptiste Dubédat, Histoire du Parlement de Toulouse, vol. 1, A. Rousseau, 1885,

p. 317). But, at the time, what association had no religious character? Although the Basochiens staged moralities and farces in which they ridiculed the vices of the clergy, they did have one thing in common with clergymen: they had to be celibate (see Pierre Larousse, op. cit., p. 314).

(84) Adolphe Louis Fabre, Études historiques sur les clercs de la Bazoche, Potier, Paris, 1856, p. 178-79.

(85) Désiré Nisard, Précis de l'histoire de la littérature française, Librairie classique, Paris, 1841, p. 176.

(86) Less light-hearted than Alexandre-Joseph-Pierre de Ségur, his editor makes the following statement on the influence of women on morals in the "Middle Ages": the "court of love" "had a great influence on the morals of the century, and perhaps caused the destruction of chivalry by its ridiculous rulings, which often turned warriors into Arcadian shepherds. Inconstancy and indiscretion were crimes, and the penalties depended on the nature of the offence. A discourteous knight was condemned not to wear his arms for a certain period of time; a lover was condemned not to pronounce the name of his mistress until such time as this penance had sufficiently punished the outrage of which he had been guilty.

"These decisions were all the more harmful to morals, as they were punctually executed; they made the idea of honour less important, and often gave dangerous approval to women's vices. This new empire gave rise to a relaxation in almost all the institutions of the century. On the other hand, women softened the ferocity of those Gothic times, and prepared minds to receive the enlightenment that soon spread throughout Europe.

"It was around this time that the first troubadours appeared. These poets dedicated their songs to beauty. Guillaume IX, Count of Poitiers and Duke of Aquitaine, born in 1071, set the example. He was followed by a host of others, and soon this noble profession became even more illustrious and counted emperors, kings and princes among its followers: there is no doubt that the troubadours did much to change their century, which unfortunately, in losing its barbarity, lost many virtues" (Alexandre-Joseph-Pierre de Ségur, Les Femmes, leur condition et leur influence dans l'ordre social, vol. 1, Raymond, Paris, 1820, pp. 195-7); the least gallant passage in Ségur's work is undoubtedly the one in which he declares that Europe "seemed to be plunged into a state of uncertainty and imbecility" (ibid., p. 188), in which, apart from a few rare virile awakenings over the following centuries, it has remained ever since. "The development of the order of knights in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the excessive exaltation of spirits, made chivalry no longer a distinction of good taste, a gracious token of deference and respect, but a rigorous law above all others. The slightest desire, however difficult to satisfy, became an order. In a word, passive obedience to ladies' whims was proclaimed as a principle.

"This excess gave rise to the courts of love. So much care, so much submission, so much unalterable devotion, must undoubtedly have awakened in women an ambition other than that of pleasing. The crown of roses that love had placed on their heads may have seemed to them for a moment the royal headband...". (Francisque Mandet, Histoire de la langue romane, Paris, Dauvin et Fontaine, 1840, p. 369-70).

Franz Christian Dietz, in a thorough and detailed study, asserts, more or less convincingly depending on the arguments he puts forward against Raynouard's undoubtedly exaggerated thesis, that "there never

existed any formally constituted and permanent courts of love where lovers would have come... to make public both their differences and the secret of tender relations. But in the event of misunderstanding or quarrel, and unable to reach an agreement, the amorous couple would refer to the arbitration of one or more persons, in other words a small court of circumstance elected by the parties concerned, and to whom they would usually confide only under the safeguard of anonymity and through the intermediary of a third party.

"Nor was there any law or code of love that the courts or judges could enforce. But at chance meetings, in guest circles, nobles, knights and comely chatelaines liked to practise their witty subtleties; difficult questions of erotic doctrine were raised, discussed and resolved. This was merely a social pastime" (for a review of the work, see Miller and Aubenas, Revue de bibliographie analytique, vol. 4, Paris, 1843, pp. 41-6).

These practices, whether formal or informal, nonetheless bear witness to the growing influence of women and feminine values in the "Middle Ages".

(87) Tréteaux, vol. 2, no. 2, Société internationale pour l'étude du théâtre médiéval, 1980, p. 39.

(88) Louis Petit de Julleville, op. cit. p. 95

(89) Armand Gaston Camus and André Marie Jean Jacques Dupin, Lettres sur la profession d'avocat, H. Tarlier, 1833, p. 47.

(90) Marie Bouhaïk-Gironès, Les clercs de la Basoche et le théâtre comique : Paris, 1420-1550, Honoré Champion, 2007, p. 169.

(91) Louis Petit de Julleville, op. cit. p. 92. Let's take a closer look at this episode: "This female company appeared in public. The official of Paris took exception to this, and had the captain of the women summoned before him; and a clerk from this company refused to attend the show in this disguise. These two acts outraged the king of La Basoche, who was very powerful at the time. He appealed as an abuse of the official's summons, who was obliged to withdraw it, and had the cleric who had refused to appear at the watch dressed as a woman condemned to ask for forgiveness; and, in the formula for this forgiveness, we read that: 'For his defences... he protests that he will not say anything derogatory to the royal majesty of the most illustrious 'king of the Basoche'" (Jacques Antoine Dulaure, Histoire physique, civile et morale de Paris, 7th ed. 1, 1839, p. 621)

(92) Pierre Larousse, op. cit. p. 314.

(93) Carl Schnabel, Abrégé de l'histoire de la littérature française, Leipzig, 1847, p. 22.

(94) Jules Lacroix de Marlès, >Paris ancien et moderne, Gosselin, Paris, 1837, p. 243.

(95) J. G. Masselin, Histoire de Louis XII, roi de France, Paris, 1822, p. 374.

(96) See Adolphe Louis Fabre, Études historiques sur les clercs de la Bazoche, Potier, Paris, 1856, p. 268-9.

(97) Pierre-Amable Floquet, Histoire du parlement de Normandie, Édouard Frère, Rouen, vol. 3, 1841, p. 280.

(98) Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile-de-France, Ecole nationale des Chartes, Champion, Paris, 1898, p. 42.

(99) See George Lotte, Histoire du vers français, t. 4, Presses universitaires de Provence, 1988, p. 211-7.

(100) Did Pope Sixtus V (1521-1590) issue a decree banning women from the stage? If so, we'd love to be able to read the decree in question, which in any case dates from the "Renaissance". In 1588, did Pope Sixtus V ban performances by the Desiosi, Italy's first theatre company, until they had replaced the women with men, as is claimed here and there? No. The truth is this: he granted the Desiosi permission to give public performances, on condition, among other things, that the women's roles were played by men (Joseph Alexander Hübner [Baron], >Sixtus V: d'après des correspondances diplomatiques inédites, t. 2, Hachette, Paris, 1882, p. 99).

(101) Louis Petit de Juleville, op. cit. p. 277.

(102) Germain Bapst, Essai sur l'histoire du théâtre, Hachette, Paris, 1893, p. 46.

(103) See, for example, Silvia Evangelisti, Nuns: A History of Convent Life 1450-1700, Oxford University Press, 2008.

(104) Daniella Cavallaro, Catholic Theatre for Women in Post-War Italy: Education, Morality, and Social Change, in Kevin J. Wetmore, Jr. (ed.), Catholic Theatre and Drama: Critical Essays, McFarland & Co Inc, 2012, p. 125; see also Jelle Koopmans and Darwin Smith, Un théâtre français du Moyen Âge? in Médiévales, 59, autumn 2010, available at: http://medievales.revues.org/6055 : consulted on 15 July 2015.

(105) See L.-V. Gofflot, Le théâtre au collège du moyen âge à nos jours, Champion, Paris, 1907.

(106) Régine Pernoud, Pour en finir avec le Moyen Âge, Éditions du Seuil, 1977, p. 94

(107) Louis-Jean-Nicolas Monmerqué, Les historiettes de Tallemant des Réaux, vols. 9-10, p. 40, 2nd ed. by Garnier, Paris, 1861.

(108) Abbé de La Chadenède, Le christianisme démontré, Bibliothèque Universelle de la Jeunesse, Paris, vol. 2, 1837, p. 447.

(109) Louis Petit de Juleville, op. cit. p. 11.

(110) Michel Adam, Femmes-dramaturges & actrices en Angleterre (1660-1706), 1983, Publications de l'Université de Rouen, p. 42-3.

(111) Christine Bard, Prostituées, Clio et Presses Universitaires du Mirail, Toulouse, 2003, p. 279. Anecdotally, in 1629, the actresses of a French troupe invited to perform in a London theatre were greeted with rotten eggs and apples as they entered the stage (Karl Mantzius, The Middle Ages and the

Renaissance, Duckworth & Co, 1903, p. 280). Was the audience allergic to actresses or French women? Or were they simply not to their taste? Forty years later, actresses, or rather actresses' charms, less and less concealed in increasingly risqué plays, had become one of the means by which the two London theatres attracted and retained their audiences (Elizabeth Howe, A State of Undress: The first English actresses: 1660 - 1700, in Elizabeth Woodrough [ed.], Women in European Theatre, Europa, 1995, p. 16).

(112) Jean Baptiste Glaire and Joseph-Alexis Walsh (Vicomte) (eds.), Encyclopédie catholique, vol. 1, Paris, 1840, p. 305.

(113) Simon Gabay, Le statut juridique de l'acteur en droit canon au Moyen Âge. In Le théâtre de l'Église, 1st ed, LAMOP, Paris, 2011, p. 28, available at: https://lamop.univ-paris1.fr/IMG/pdf/Gabay.pdf, accessed 15 July 2015.

(114) See William Downs, Lou Anne Wright and Erik Ramsey, The Art of Theatre: Then and Now, 3rd edn, CENGAGE Learning, 2012, p. 290.

(115) Simon Gabay, op. cit. p. 29-30.

(116) Louis Petit de Julleville, op. cit. p. 7.

(117) The evolution of rock art in this respect is instructive, even if, as the author of the following lines points out, it is not absolutely certain that these drawings represent masks in the strict sense of the term: "When all the known human profiles are brought together, it can be seen that there is a gradual transition from the normal profile to that of an animal's head. The back of the nose lengthens and appears almost horizontal, which causes the lower part of the face to protrude exaggeratedly, so that the whole face ends up looking like a snout. This transformation only occurs in the case of male figures; female figures follow other canons. Henry Pernet, Mirages du masque, Editions Labor et Fides, 1988, p. 36. See also François Soleilhavoup, A propos des masques et visages rupestres du Sahara, in Archéo-Nil, l, p. 43-58, available at http://www.archeonil.fr/revue/AN01-1991-Soleilhavoup.pdf, accessed 15 July 2015.

(118) See https://elementsdeducationraciale.wordpress.com/2014/12/07/larabie-noire-et-lorigine-africaine-de-lislam-ii.

(119) Followers of Dionysism used to gather around a mask placed in a basket (David Wiles, Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 147). Ancient vases show women dancing around a Dionysus represented by a robe suspended from a stick topped by a mask (Michael Gagarin (ed.), The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome, t. 1, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 429).

(120) "While I was in Egypt," says Herodotus (c. 484-c. 420 BC), "an astonishing thing happened in the Mendezian nome: a goat had public intercourse with a woman, and this adventure became public knowledge" (II, 46).

It is claimed that "the question of zoophilia has been settled", on the pretext that Plutarch, "the best connoisseur of the instincts of the beast... (how should we understand this sentence? [Editor's note]) corrects the Greek traveller's report in one of his dialogues from the 1st century AD", by pointing out that "the billy goat of Mendes (here is a billy goat several hundred years old [Editor's note]) remains indifferent to the beautiful women with whom he is locked up and that he only sets fire to the goats" (see Florence Maruéjol, L'Amour au temps des chèvres). See Florence Maruéjol, L'Amour au temps des pharaons, Éditions First, 2011). The question of the goat's zoophilia or that of these "beautiful women"?

(121) François Joseph Michel Noël, L. J. Carpentier and Louis Puissant, Dictionnaire des inventions, 4th ed. revised and corrected, J. P. Meline, Cans et compagnie, 1837, p. 332.

(122) Karl Kerényi (Dionysos: Urbild des unzerstörbaren Lebens, Langen Müller, 1976, p. 308) points out that, according to this tradition, the crowns he adorned the heads of his actors were made from the fronds of komaros, an intoxicating wild strawberry plant whose fruit is used to fortify wine. According to the Hungarian philologist and historian of religions (op. cit., p. 207), "The massive presence of followers of a non-Greek religion between Lake Gennesareth and the Phoenician coast is attested to by the founder of Christianity, who travelled through this region as far as Tyre".

(123) http://www.danielpipes.org/comments/68303.

(124) Jules Girard, Dionysia. In Charles Daremberg and Edmond Saglio, Le Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines, t. 2, 1st part, Paris, Hachette, 1892, p. 230-46; see also Octave Navarre, Persona. In ibid, vol. 4, part 1, Hachette, 1873, p. 406. In practice, the use of masks was certainly necessary. In fact, only three hypokritai were allowed in a tragedy, and any tragedy had more than three characters. However, this very rule testifies to the Dionysian hold over the theatre: it responds to the protean and elusive nature of Dionysus.

(125) Those who took pleasure in masking themselves were called satyrs - a term that Lucien de Samosate links to the Hebrew word "satur", "hidden" - or fauns, in Hebrew fanim, "mask" (Encyclopédie du dix-neuvième siècle, 3rd ed., vol. 9, Paris, 1870, p. 166).

(126) At Pompeii, for example, Isis is depicted alongside Bacchus in a fresco and on silver leaf (Michel Malaise, Les Conditions de pénétration et de diffusion des cultes égyptiens en Italie, 1972, Brill, Leiden, p. 197).

(127) Andre Laks and Malcolm Schofield, Justice and Generosity: Studies in Hellenistic Social and Political, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 150.

(128) Charles Guérin, Persona: Antécédent grecs et première rhétorique latine, vol. 1, Vrin, 2009, p. 16-7.

(129) Maurice Nédoncelle, Prosôpon et persona dans l'antiquité classique. Essai de bilan linguistique. In Revue des Sciences Religieuses, t. 22, fasc. 3-4, 1948, p. 277-99.

(130) Julius Evola, Métaphysique du sexe, L'Âge d'Homme - Guy Trédaniel, Lausanne and Paris, 2006, p. 48.

(131) Carl Gustav Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, 2nd edn, Routledge, London, p. 158.

(132) Ibid.

(133) The name 'Phersu' is inscribed on a fresco painted in the tomb of the augurs in the Etruscan necropolis of Monterozzi, near the Italian town of Tarquinia. The inscription is located behind the head of a masked figure holding another figure on a leash. On the subject of the Etruscan mask, see Jean-René Jannot, Phersu, Phersuna, Persona, in Spectacles sportifs et scéniques dans le monde étrusco-italique. Actes de la table ronde organisée par l'Équipe de recherches étrusco-italiques de l'UMR 126 (CNRS, Paris) et l'Ecole Française de Rome. Rome, 3-4 May 1991, Ecole Française de Rome, 1993, p. 281-320.

(134) Maurice Nédoncelle, op. cit. p. 288-9.

(135) Martin Nilsson, Die Geschichte der Griechische Religion, vol. I, C. H. Beck, 1955, p. 461-2; Georg Friedrich Schömann, Antiquités grecques, vol. 2, A. Picard, 1887; see also Honoré d'Albert de Luynes, Etudes numismatiques sur quelques types relatifs au culte d'Hécate, Firmin-Didot frères, Paris, p. 64.

(136) C. Goudineau, Ιεραι Τραπεζαι, In Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire, vol. 79, no. 79-1, 1967 [p. 77-134], p. 100.

(137) Julius Evola, Sintesi di dottrina della razza, Ar, Padua, 1978, p. 155.

(138) Lindley Powers Spencer, Masks in Theatre, vol. 2, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1968, p. 243.

(139) Sylvain Lebreton, Les épiclèses dans les Hymnes orphiques : l'exemple de Dionysos, in Richard Bouchon, Pascale Brillet-Dubois and Nadine Le Meur-Weissman (eds.), Hymnes de la Grèce antique: Approches littéraires et historiques, Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée, 2012, p. 205.

(140) See Margaret C. Miller, Reexamining Transvestism in Archaic and Classical Athens: The Zewadski Stamnos. In American Journal of Archaeology, vol. 103, no. 2, April, 1999 [p. 223-53].

(14)Ibid.

(142) Here are the circumstances in which this name was given to them: "Aragaeus was king of Macedonia, and Galaurus was king of the Taulantians. The Taulantians waged war against the Macedonians at a time when Aragaeus had very few troops. He ordered the daughters of the Macedonians, when the enemies advanced their phalanx, to come down from Mount Erebia and make themselves visible to the enemies. When the Taulantians approached, these girls came down from the mountain, waving thyrs instead of darts and their faces shaded by the crowns on their heads. Gaulaure, struck with astonishment, and mistaking this troop for men from afar, gave the signal to retreat. The Taulantians fled, threw down their weapons and left their baggage behind. And the girls whom the Macedonians had previously called Ctodones (a name coined to express the noise they made at

Bacchus' orgies), he ordered to be called Mimallones (as one might say imitators), because they had imitated men" (Polyen, Ruses of War, 4, 1).

(143) Ferdinand Hoefer, L'Univers: histoire et description de tous les peuples, vol. 3, Firmin-Didot, Paris, 1852, p. 76.

(144) Bernard Picart, Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde, Jean Frédéric Bernard, Amsterdam, vol. 7, p. 148.

(145) Œuvres de Macrobe, translated by Ch. de Rosoy, vol. 2, Firmin Didot, Paris, pp. 32-3.

(146) It should be noted in passing that under Henry III, according to Mézerai, "the most unbridled licence reigned in the court festivities. He gave a feast, among others, to his mother, where women served disguised as men" (in Jean Gaume, La Révolution, vols. 7-8, 1857, p. 180).

(147) This verse, as most secular commentators have observed, could imply that cross-dressing was more or less common in ancient Israel.

(148) "... the Eustatians had advised women to wear men's habits, that is, monk's habits; they wanted to show by this that, in the state of holiness to which they had reached, there was no longer any distinction between man and woman" (Karl Joseph von Hefele, Histoire des Conciles, t. 2, Adrien Le Clere, Paris, p. 177). Anathematised, they had only, so to speak, taken Paul of Tarsus at his word (Galatians, 3:28): "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus".

(149) See François Bovon, Bertrand Bouvier and Frédéric Amsler Brepols, Acta Philippi, vol. 12, Brepols, 1999, p. 507; see also L'Émoi de l'histoire, no. 23-29, Association historique et archéologique des élèves du Lycée Henri IV, 200, p. 40; M. Delcourt, Le complexe de Diane dans l'hagiographie chrétienne. In Revue de l'histoire des religions 1958, vol. 153-1, p. 1-33, p. 21.

(150) Hartmut Hoffmann, Rudolf Pokorny and Burchard (Bishop of Worms), Das Dekret des Bischofs Burchard von Worms, Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1991, p. 311.

(151) If a man dressed as a woman, the conviction was based on the belief that the culprit did so either to gain a woman's confidence for sexual purposes or to engage in magic rituals (this was the only reason given by the Silos Penance [John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, Medieval Handbooks of Penance, Columbia University Press, 1938, p. 289) to prohibit men from wearing women's clothing (the only prohibition of male cross-dressing in canon law), or to satisfy homosexual urges. In all cases, it was judged and condemned (Marie de Rasse, Travestissement et transvestisme féminin à la fin du Moyen Âge. In Questes, no. 25, p. 16, available at http://questes.free.fr/pdf/bulletins/0025/06-art_Marie.pdf, accessed on 15 July 2015.

Cross-dressing in this sense, if we can put it that way, was tolerated in two cases: when the man who donned women's clothing was recognised as such (an astounding example is a playful joust organised by Henry II in 1286 in Tyre, in which the knights fought dressed as women (Antoine Charles Gidel, Études

sur la Littérature Grecque Moderne, Paris, 1866, p. 48); when he performed a social function forbidden to women. (This practice had not entirely fallen into disuse in the great mysteries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, nor even later, albeit exceptionally, in secular theatre: in Molière's plays, certain female roles, including that of Mme Pernelle and Mme Jourdain, were played by men; in Corneille's plays too.) It was also used in a fourth instance: carnivals and burlesque festivities associated with liturgical festivals, such as the Festival of Fools, during which clergymen and altar boys used to dress up as women.

Naturally, these festivities were also an opportunity for women to dress as men. Outside this ceremonial framework, "many concrete cases" of cross-dressing would have existed in the "Middle Ages", indicating that "the attitude of late medieval society towards female cross-dressing remained relatively pragmatic and tolerant" (see Marie de Rasse, op. cit.).

Homosexuals disguised as women risked being burnt at the stake if they were accused of sodomy. This is what happened in 1372 to a certain Rémon, who was brought to trial for "the sin of buggery and sodomy" and for having "lived carnally with several men from whom he received profit". It was the first trial of a transvestite in France (Maurice lever, La Répression de l'homosexualité. In Historama, n° 17, July 1985, p. 36-43). In England, the first trial was held in 1395, at a time when the Lollards were accusing the clergy of sodomy and the Church was accusing the Lollards of being sodomites. The accused was John Rykener, alias Eleanor. As Isaac Bershady puts it (Sexual Deviancy and Deviant Sexuality in Medieval England, Primary Source, vol. 5, no. 1, p. 14, available at http://www.indiana.edu/~psource/PDF/Current%20Articles/Fall2014/2%20Bershady%20Fall%2014.pdf, accessed 15 June 2015) 'it was not the sin itself that frightened the clergymen', but the negative publicity the scandals brought to the Church. During her interrogation (Internet Medieval Source Book, Paul Walsall, The Questioning of John Rykener, A Male Cross-Dressing Prostitute, 1395, accessed at: http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1395rykener.asp,consulté on 15 July 2015), Eleanor claimed that many of her clients were priests, monks and nuns and that her favourites were priests because they paid well; there is no reason to doubt her testimony (Isaac Bershady, op. cit., p. 15).

(152) Vern L. Bullough and Bonnie Bullough, Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993, p. 45-6.

(153) See, for the corpus and not for the interpretation of the motif, Delphine Dalens-Marekovic, Le motif du héros travesti dans le roman arthurien, 22ème congrès de la société internationale arthurienne (Rennes, 2008), available at the following address: http://www.sites.univ-rennes2.fr/celam/ias/actes/pdf/marekovic.pdf, consulted on 15 July 2015.

(154) Hélène Gallé, Déguisements et dévoilements dans le Charroi de Nîmes et la Prise d'Orange (comparés à d'autres chansons de geste). In Les chansons de geste: actes du XVIe Congrès International de la Société Rencesvals, pour l'étude des épopées romanes, Granada, 21-25 July 2005, Société Rencesvals. International Congress Universidad de Granade, 2005, p. 275.

(155) Debbie Kerkhof, Transvestite Knights: Men and Women Cross-dressing in Medieval Literature, MA Thesis, University of Utrecht, 2013, p. 51.

(156) Ibid, p. 62-3.

(157) See Alain Demurger, Croisades et croisés au Moyen Âge, Flammarion, 2010.

(158) Neal Bonenberger, The Forgotten Crusaders - A Comparative Analysis of the Roles of and Effects on Christian Women in the West and the East during the Crusading Era. In Binghamton Journal of History, Autumn 2013/Spring 2014, pp. 4, 9-10, available at: https://www.binghamton.edu/history/resources/journal-of-history/n-bonenberger.pdf, accessed 15 July 2015 .

(159) No fewer than thirty-four have been recorded in hagiographic writings from the fourth to the sixth centuries. See Valerie R. Hotchkiss, op. cit. p. 14.

(160) Delphine Dalens-Marekovic, op. cit. p. 2.

(161) Basile de Césarée, La vie de sainte Thècle, translated by Joachim Trotti de La Chétardie, N. Jacquard, 1668; see also Frédérique Villemur, Saintes et travesties du Moyen Âge, Clio. Histoire' femmes et sociétés, 1999, available at http://clio.revues.org/253; DOI: 10.4000/clio.253, accessed 16 July 2015.

The Acts of Paul and Thecla were denounced as apocryphal, but this did not happen until the sixth century, four centuries after they were written. Christians of the fourth and fifth centuries held them "to be as valid as the Gospels or the Pauline Epistles" (Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Éditions Klincksieck, 1968, p. 60) and "The most orthodox authors will recognise in her not only a historical saint who enjoys a cult (essentially oriental, but also found in the West), but also the prototype of the ideal of chastity on which female (and male) monasticism is based. Better still, she became the model of sanctity, supplanting Perpetua, mother and martyr" (Frédérique Villemur, op. cit. [emphasis added]). The legend is based on the cult of Meriamlik in Seleucia, where Thecla came from (see André-Jean Festugière, "Les énigmes de sainte Thècle", Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1968, vol. 112, no. 1, pp. 52-63).

(162) "La Vie de sainte Eugénie", available at http://orthodoxievco.net/ecrits/vies/moniales/eugenie.pdf, accessed on 16 July 2015.

(163) In Iogna-Prat Dominique, La Madeleine du Sermo in veneratione sanctae Mariae Magdalenae attributed to Odon de Cluny. In Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Moyen-Age, vol. 104, no. 104-1, 1992 [p. 37-70], p. 59.

(164) It is worth mentioning the custom of women feminising Jesus Christ. "At Perpignan, he wears a wig made of women's hair, and under his tunic, a feminine shirt; at El Escorial, another has long hair and a tunic embroidered to the knees". (see Frédérique Villemur, op. cit.)

(165) Of his mother he said, a virtuoso of oxymoron, that she hid "under her woman's clothes a heart full of virile faith" (Augustine, The Confessions, IX, p. 307, in Masterpieces of the Fathers of the Church, t. 12, Paris, 1838).

(166) See Laila Abdalla, Man, woman or monster: some themes of female masculinity and transvestism in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. PhD thesis, McGill, 1996, available at: http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk3/ftp04/nq29865.pdf, accessed 16 July 2015.

(167) In Yelena Mazour-Matusevich, La position de Jean Gerson (1363-1429) envers les femmes. In Le Moyen Age, t. CXII, 2006 [p. 337-53].

(168) In Dominique Arnauld, Histoire du christianisme en Afrique : les sept premiers siècles, ARTHALA, 2001, p. 328.

(169) Eusebius of Caesarea, Ecclesiastical History, V, 1, 41.

(170) Marie-Frédérique Pellegrin (ed.), >François Poullain de La Barre, De l'égalité des deux sexes, Vrin, p. 298-9. On the other hand, the sense of the equality of men and women is very present in patristic literature, from Hierosmos to Clement of Alexandria and, naturally - de Gobineau has wisely pointed out that it is only the inferior who can speak of equality and that the inferior's discourse on equality is the means he uses to usurp the place of the superior - the superiority of women emerges.

(171) For de Pisan's feminism, see Sarah Hanley, "Identity Politics and Rulership in France: Female Political Place and the Fraudulent Salic Law in Christine de Pizan and Jean de Montreuil". In Michael Wolfe, Changing Identities in Early Modern France, Duke University Press, 1996, pp. 78-94.

(172) Isabelle Constant, Les mots étincelants de Christiane Rochefort : langages d'utopie, Éditions Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA, 1996, p. 158. Why would a woman disguise herself as a man to enter the monastery, since women were not forbidden to enter the monastery or the convent? To be able to become a deacon or priest, since women had not been admitted to the priesthood since the decree of Gratian (1140). But this explanation can only apply to those who disguised themselves to enter these religious institutions from the second third of the thirteenth century, since the decree of Gratian, curiously enough, did not enter canon law until 1234.

(173) Bernadette McNary-Zak, Christine de Pizan's Vision for the Exemplary Parenting of Mother Marina, available at http://www.readperiodicals.com/201411/3522786971.html, accessed 16 July 2015.

(174) Christine McWebb, Le Roman de la Rose de Jean de Meun et le Livre des Trois Vertus de Christine de Pizan : un palimpseste catoptriqu. PhD thesis, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada, available at: http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk1/tape9/PQDD_0009/NQ40277.pdf, accessed 16 July 2015.

(175) Nicole Pellegrin (ed.), Histoires d'historiennes, Publications de l'Université de Saint Etienne, 2006, p. 26.

(176) Witness the case of Joan of Arc, whose fellow soldiers "repeatedly declared during her trial that they had never felt any sexual desire towards Joan the transvestite, even when they slept in the same room with her and saw her naked body. Jean II, Duke of Alenyon experienced the same phenomenon

even though he saw her breasts. Gobert Thibault, a royal lord, testified that the soldiers in the fields with Jeanne 'believed that it was impossible to desire her'" (Amy Christine West, Christine de Pizan : la construction d'une 'autorité' féminine. M.A. thesis, McMaster University, May 2001, available at: https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/bitstream/11375/13562/1/fulltext.pdf, accessed 16 July 2015

(177) It seems to have originated in two ancient anecdotes, one told by Aeneas in his Poliorcetica, the other by Polyen in his Stratagems; both are apparently based on oriental folk traditions and, in any case, are of Dionysian inspiration (François Delpech, Pilosités héroïques. In Bulletin Hispanique, t. 100, n° 1, 1998 [p. 131-64], p. 144).

(178) Charles Cahier, Caractéristiques des saints dans l'art populaire, 1867, p. 121.

(179) See Frédérique Villemur, op. cit.

(180) Augustin Fangé, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la barbe de l'homme, Liège, 1774, p. 57.

(181) Charles Cahier, op. cit. p. 122.

(182) The figure of the transvestite warrior, shrouded in wonder, was to become a topos in fifteenth-century Spanish novels. Much more realistic are the features of the young orphan girls who join the king's army to follow their lover and defend their country with arms in hand, in the novels, given as true-false memoirs, by Madame de Villedieu (1640-1683).

In the 17th century, the theme of the young girl who disguises herself as a man to perform warlike feats in the absence of a sick father or a dead brother, and who changes out of her male clothes once her mission is accomplished, recurs in the tales of Mademoiselle L'Héritier de Valandon. Influenced or not by these tales, it was precisely from the seventeenth century onwards that women disguised as men made their way into European armies on a massive scale (Augustin Redondo, Relations entre hommes et femmes en Espagne aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles, 1995, p. 59).

(183) Nicole Dufournaud, Femmes en armes au XVIe siècle. Penser la violence des femmes, Paris, 2010, p. 3, available at: https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00687858/document, p. 3, accessed on 16 July 2015.

(184) For documented cases of women disguising themselves as men to enter monasteries, see Valerie R. Hotchkiss, Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe, Routledge, 2012, pp. 15-6.

(185) Yongku Cha, Hildegund von Schönau - Eine Mittelalerliche Transgender - Eine historisch-psychologische Analyse, Chung-Ang University, Seoul, available at: http://medsociety.or.kr/layouts/MLT_Simple_sub/2010Yong-Ku,%20CHA.htm, accessed 16 July 2015.

(186) Saints, Cult of the. In Carl Lindahl, John McNamara and John Lindow (eds.), Medieval Folklore: A Guide to Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs, and Customs, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 356.

(187) The name Liberata, which was given to the saint "because of the way in which Heaven had rid her of marriage, caused her to be called more or less Saint Débarras... As a result of this name, the idea had arisen in England that the saint could be particularly helpful to women who wanted to get rid of their husbands" (Charles Cahier, op. cit., p. 60).

(188) Frank Dufossé, Sainte Wilgeforte, available at: http://www.mincoin.com/infos/sainte-wilgeforte.php, accessed 16 July 2015. She is present in iconography in Italy under the name Liberata (see Federico Troletti, The continuity between pagan and Christian cult, available at: http://www.rockartscandinavia.com/images/articles/santea10.pdf, accessed on 16 July 2015), in France and England (Worstead, Boxford, Norwhich and, under the name Uncumber, at Westminster Abbey - see Christine King, "Shrines and Pilgrimages before the Reformation", History Today, vol. 29, no. 10, October 1979, pp. 664-69, available at http://historyonline.chadwyck.co.uk/getImage?productsuffix=_studyunits&action=printview&in=gif&out=pdf&src=/pci/c172-1979-029-10-000006/conv/c172-1979-029-10-000006.pdf&IE=.pdf, accessed 16 July 2015).

(189) Jacques Baudoin, Grand livre des saints : culte et iconographie en Occident, EDITIONS CREER, 2006, p. 310.

(190) Valerie R. Hotchkiss, op. cit. p. 16.

(191) Jennifer Lynne Henery, Early Christian Sex Change. The Ascetical Context of Being Made Male in Early Christianity. PhD thesis, Marquette University, 2009, pp. 13-4, available at: http://epublications.marquette.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1153&context=dissertations_mu, accessed 16 July 2015.

(192) Jean Mabillon, Museum italicum, t. 1, pars alt, p. 281, 1687. The accounts of the martyrdom of certain cross-dressing saints are still part of the liturgy of John Chrysostom, the most common in the Byzantine rite. In the Catholic world, many catechisms still refer to a particular cross-dressing saint in the 19th century. This is the case, for example, of Charles Colbert de Croissy's Catechisme de Montpellier, which was reprinted until the mid-nineteenth century.

(193) Valerie R. Hotchkiss, op. cit. p. 14.

(194) Paul Lacroix, La Fête des fous, in Paul Lacroix and Ferdinand Seré (eds.), Le Moyen Âge et la Renaissance, t. 1, Paris, 1848, p. 110.

(195) In the sixth century, the nuns of Poitiers, known for their debauchery, were accused, among other offences, of having celebrated barbatoria, masquerades in which fauns were represented. The presence of barbatoria in the Fools' Festival seems to indicate that it was simply a continuation of the barbatoria and that it is therefore older than we think. Incidentally, the barbatoria, like the other Christian liturgical celebrations of the "Middle Ages", had their origins in Roman antiquity, but in this case in a specifically Roman custom that had nothing to do with the Dionysian cult: the custom of giving a meal to friends on the day they had their beards done for the first time (Jacques Antoine Dulaure, op. cit., p. 307).

(196) Jacques-Antoine Dulaure, Histoire de Paris et de ses monuments, vols. 1-2, Furne et Cie, p. 115, 1846.

(197) Paul Lacroix, op. cit. p. 114.

(198) Even in the nineteenth century, an Ursuline convent in the Netherlands celebrated the Feast of the Innocents in this way.

(199) Hermann Ewerbeck, What is the Bible? d'après la nouvelle philosophie allemande, Paris, 1850, p. 129.

(200) The similarities between Christianity and the cult of Dionysus are numerous in other respects. "Dionysus, whose father, as in the Christian story, was a 'god', but whose mother was a mortal (Semele), was represented in the East as a bearded, majestic-looking young man who not only taught men to cultivate the vine, but also gave them laws, while promoting the arts, preaching happiness and promoting peace. Like Jesus, he had died a violent death and descended into hell. But he then experienced a resurrection and an ascension, and these were commemorated in sacred ceremonies. According to one legend, he was transformed into a bull and hacked to pieces by his enemies; according to another, he was changed into a ram. His worshippers used to cut up a bull or a goat and eat the meat raw. He was associated with various animals, including the goat and the donkey. (Acharya S., Suns of God, Adventures University Press, 2004, p. 99; see also Karl Kerényi, op. cit.) What's more, according to the historian Theopompus of Chios (378-323 BC), Dionysus turned water into wine every year on the island of Naxos. The similarities between the cult of Dionysus and Christianity were so numerous that the Romans of the second century AD confused the two cults, as witnessed by Saint Justin's Dialogue with the Jew Tryphon (X).

(201) This would be the origin of the night services still celebrated today, at certain times, in Catholicism.

(202) Ami Perrier, La danse, les mascarades et les processions dans l'Église Romaine, Geneva, 1870, p. 13.

(203) Ibid, p. 14.

(204) Ibid, p. 15.

(205) De Jejunio, 17, in Stuart A. Donaldson, Church life and thought in North Africa, A.D. 200, Cambridge University Press, p. 70; see also Louis Joseph Antoine de Potter, Histoire philosophique, politique et critique du christianisme et des églises chrétiennes, 1830, p. cxxxv. It should be noted that Tertullian does not target the "heretics" in particular and does not give any details about the agape. Perhaps it is for the latter reason that his accusations are not declared "suspect" by the very few scholars who have dared to rub shoulders with De Jejunio's quoted line. On the other hand, Epiphanius of Cyprus' detailed account of the agape practices of the Phibionites (as well as those of the Cataphrygians, Quintillians, Pepuzians and Priscillians) is rejected by the very few scholars who attempt to tackle it.

According to Epiphanius, these sects "indulge in sumptuous feasts that begin with a very special greeting: the men shake hands with the women, secretly caressing and tickling their palms from beneath (Panarion, 26, 4, 2)... But the festivities do not really begin until the company is seated with food and drink. Married couples separate to engage in a liturgy of sexual intercourse, each with another member of the community (ibid., 26, 4, 4). The union is not destined to succeed, however, as the man withdraws before orgasm. The couple then collect the seed in their hands and swallow it together, exclaiming: "This is the body of Christ". Whenever possible, the couple also collects and consumes the woman's menstrual blood, saying, "This is the blood of Christ" (ibid., 26, 4, 5-8). If by chance the woman becomes pregnant, the foetus is allowed to develop until a manual abortion can be performed. Then, says Epiphanius, it is dismembered, coated in honey and spices, and devoured by the community as a special Eucharistic meal (ibid., 26, 5, 4-6).

"The leaders of the group who have reached perfection no longer need women for these festivities. They indulge in homosexual relations among themselves (Panarion 26, 11, 8). Epiphanius also informs us that the followers practise sacred masturbation. They can then consume the body of Christ in the privacy of their own room".

Bart Ehrman, the author of these lines, is inclined to think that Epiphanius' account is not very credible and is only intended to slander the Phibionites in order to discredit them (see Bart T. Ehrman, Lost Christianities, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 199-20, available at the following address: : https://thebibleisnotholy.files.wordpress.com/2010/06/ehrman-lost-christianities_the-battle-for-scripture-and-the-faiths-we-never-knew-2003.pdf, accessed on 16 July 2015.

The fact remains that the Phibionites could rely on certain biblical verses to justify their practices, as could other 'heretical' sects (John of Damascus states that the Pepuzians, "To perform their initiations... kill a young child with bronze needles" and that, "like the Cataphygasts, they knead wheat flour with its blood, make bread from it and take their share of the oblation" (Pierre Champagne de Labriolle, Les sources de l'histoire du Montanisme, textes grecs, latins, syriaques, L'Université de Fribourg, 1913, p. 248); Augustine reports that the Cataphrygians, the Pepuzians and the Quintilians have "guilty mysteries", which consist "in serving, to compose their Eucharist, the blood of a one-year-old child whose body they cover with pinpricks, and which they mix with flour to make bread. If the child dies as a result of this treatment, they consider him a martyr; and if he survives, they make him a high priest" (Augustine, De haeresibus, 26. In Œuvres Complètes de saint Augustin, t. 25, Paris, 1870, p.. 222); Philastre says that the Cataphrygians "are said to mingle, in the celebration of the Passover, the blood of a child with their sacrifices" (in Thomas Rogers, The Catholic Doctrine of the Church of England, The University Press, Cambridge, 1854, p. 295). They could rely, among other things, on John 6:53: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in yourselves."

Béranger of Tours, having disputed the real presence of Jesus Christ in the host, was condemned at the Council of Tours (1050) and was forced to retract his statement at the Council of Rome (1079): "I, Berenger, believe with my heart and profess with my mouth that the bread and wine placed on the altar, by the mystery of sacred prayer and by the words of our Redeemer, are converted substantially

into the true, life-giving and proper flesh and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord, and that, after consecration, it is the true body of Christ, which was born of the Virgin and, offered for the salvation of the world, was hung on the cross, and sits at the right hand of the Father, and it is the true blood of Christ, which flowed from his side, and this not only as a sign and by virtue of the sacrament, but in property of nature and in truth of substance" (Louis Georges Bareille, Le catéchisme romain, t. 4, 1906, Soubiron, p. 427-8).

In 1418, the Council of Constance condemned forty-five propositions drawn from de Wyclif's doctrine, including this one: "Christus non est in eodem sacramento identice et realiter propria praesentia corporali" (Gaetano De Folgore, Institutiones theologicae ad usum studiosae juventutis, t. 5, Naples, 1822, p. 480). He corrected it as follows: "quod post consecrationem sacerdotis in sacramento altaris sub velamento panis et vini non sit panis materialis et vinum materiale, sed idem per omnia Christus, qui fuit in cruce passus, et sedet ad dexteram Patris; - Quod facta consecratione per sacerdotem, sub sola specie panis tantum, et praeter speciem vini. sit vera caro Christi et magnis et anima et deitas et totus christus. ac idem corpus absolute et sub una qualibet illarum specierum singulariter." (Karl Joseph von Hefele, op. cit., Letouzey et Ané, 1916, 1876, p. 523)

The Council of Trent confirmed this: "If anyone says that in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist are not contained truly, really and substantially the body and blood together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ and, consequently, the whole Christ, but says that they are there only as in a sign or figure or virtually: let him be anathema". Pius X reaffirmed this (Large Catechism of Rome: prescribed by H.H. Pope Pius X to the dioceses of the province of Rome. Authorised French translation, Lethielleux, 1908). Paul VI (1897-1978) drove the nail in: "The Holy Council teaches and professes openly and unmistakably that in the venerable Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, is truly, really and substantially present under the appearance of these sensible realities". (Gervais Dumeige, Textes doctrinaux du magistère de l'Église sur la foi catholique, KARTHALA, 1993, p. 405).

Who are the "heretics"? Who are the "orthodox"?

The academics and students who have been explaining to us for the last few decades that "vero", "réellement", etc. in these texts should not be taken literally are no longer forced to retract their statements. It is not certain that, to take just one of a thousand examples, the Anabaptists whom the inhabitants of Leiden saw running naked through the streets at the beginning of the seventeenth century, on the grounds that "truth is naked and that one should be clothed only in virtue" (Mathieu-Richard-Auguste Henrion, Histoire Générale de L'Église, t. 11, 4th ed., Gaume Frères, 1841, p. 439), would have followed them. Admitting that it is naïve to take the Bible literally, it is even more so to think that the common people, who have always formed the bulk of Christianity's troops, were ever capable of grasping its "anagogical" meaning, especially as the doctrine of the four meanings (literal, moral, mystical and, precisely, anagogical) of Scripture was only sketched out in the middle of the third century by Origen, and not systematised until the fifth century by the Scythian Cassian (360-435) (Donald Senior and John J. Collins, The Catholic Study Bible, 2nd ed, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 58); all the more so since Origen, no more than the Church Fathers, "does not (volatilise) the historical or literal meaning.

It is the primary meaning of the text and the basis of all interpretation" (Jacques Liébaert, Les Pères de l'Église : Ier - IVe siècle, vol. 1, Desclée, Paris, 1986, p. 96).

Coming back to the specifically orgiastic nature of the sexual practices of the Phibionites, it will not have escaped the reader's attention that some of these practices are related to Tantrism. Secondly, there is evidence from the 'Middle Ages' that orgies were held within Christian movements such as that of the reforming monk Tanchelin († 1115), the Fossarians, the Turlupins and their high priestess, the aptly named Guillermine la Milanaise, the Brothers of the Free Spirit, and so on.

(206) Othon Brunsfels, in his Onomasticon Medicinae (1524), was one of the first to equate corybantysm with the dance of Saint Vitus.

(207) Paul Lacroix, op. cit. p. 115. Plato (The Laws) approved of certain dances and condemned others, in particular those of the Tuscans, because they were lascivious and involved indecent postures; they were also danced at the saturnalia and bacchanalia and, in Rome, they took the name of nuptial dances. As these dances caused disorder in Rome, they were abolished under the reign of Tiberius; gifted with a keen sense of what was properly Roman, he had all the dancers and all the dancing masters, who had long been established there for the education of youth, expelled from Rome by a decree of the Senate; passionate about dance, his successor, Caligula, had it re-established in all its forms (Jacques Bonnet, Histoire générale de la danse, sacrée et prophane, Paris, 1724, p. 180-1; more Roman in spirit, Domitian expelled from the senate senators who publicly danced this type of dance (ibid., p. 24).

Perhaps you would like to know," asked François Henri Joseph Castil-Blaze, "what the nuptial dance was? My respect for antiquity forbids me to tell you; but read the Promenade autour du monde, published by M. Arago: if my memory serves me right, you will find a description of the chica, the dance of the African negroes. Assume that the actors are white and dressed in Roman costume, and you will have an exact idea of the entertainment that was all the rage at the opera house in the capital of the empire of the Caesars". (François Henri Joseph Castil-Blaze, La danse et les ballets depuis Bacchus jusqu'à mademoiselle Taglioni, Paulin, 1832, p. 14).

(208) Claire Biquard, Le mal de saint Vit (ou saint Guy), Bulletin du Centre d'étude d'histoire de la médecine, no. 39, January 2002, pp. 33-50.

(209) Alfred Maury, Du Corybantisme, Annales médico psychologiques, t. 10, Victor Masson, Paris, 1847, p. 63-4.

(210) Claire Biquard, op. cit.

(211) Ami Perrier, op. cit. p. 53.

(212) In Hermann Ewerbeck, op. cit. p. 128-29. We can also quote Jacques le Goff (L'Occident médiéval, Paris, 1964, p.303. In Claire Biquard, op. cit.): "We need to think about this physical fragility, this physiological terrain capable of sustaining, in sudden flowerings of collective crises, illnesses of the body and soul, extravagances of religiosity".

(213) Paul Rayher, Les Masques anglais, Hachette, B. Blom, Paris, 1909, p. 2-3.

(214) Dupontel, Les bals costumés. In La revue de Paris, vol. 1 [p. 55-65], p. 58.

(215) Ibid, p. 64.

(216) When the bishop who gave him his confirmation asked him if he did not want to change his Jewish name from Isaac, he replied: "With all my heart, as long as I do not lose anything in the process". (Jean Baptiste Ladvocat, Dictionnaire Historique-Portatif, vol. 1, Jean-Jacques Schorndorff, Basel, 1758, p. 154). Isaac de Benserade seemed more interested in his surname: he liked to give himself a Moorish origin, claiming that "Benserade was a corruption of 'Abencerage'" (Charles-Joseph Panckoucke (ed.), Encyclopédie Méthodique, vol. 1, Paris, 1784, p. 594).

(217) Ibid, p. 64.

(218) Antoine-René de Voyer de Paulmy d'Argenson, Mélanges tirés d'une grande bibliothèque, 1782, Moutard, p. 280.

(219) Benjamin Gastineau, Paris en rose (le carnaval). In Le Moniteur de la mode, 1 January 1866, p. 30.

(220) Claude Noirot, L'origine des masques, Constant Leber, 1609, p. 126.

(221) Ibid, p. 127.

(222) Henry Prunières, Le ballet de cour en France avant Benserade et Lully, Henri Laurens Paris, 1913, p. 37.

(223) Ibid, p. 38.

(224) Benjamin Gastineau, op. cit, p. 30.

(225) Pierre-François Godard de Beauchamps, Recherches sur les theatres de France, Prault, 1735, p. 39.

(226) Claude Longeon, Une province française à la Renaissance, Centre d'Etudes Foréziennes, 1975, p. 196.

(227) Georges Forestier, Le théâtre dans le théâtre, 2nd ed. Augmented, Droz, 1996, p. 38.

(228) Paul Friedland, Métissage: The Merging of Theater and Politics in Revolutionary France, Princeton, Institute for Advanced Studies, Occasional Papers No. 4, available at: https://www.sss.ias.edu/files/papers/paperfour.pdf, p. 2, accessed on 10 June 2015.

(229) "The great majority of individuals are in this sense deprived of a nucleus, but it is only in remarkable and important individuals that one is struck by this absence, observed moreover essentially in those who have a talent for recreation, especially in genius actors and more particularly actresses" (Arthur Schnitzler, Relations et solitudes. Aphorismes, Rivages poche, 1988, p. 13.

(230) Bertrand de La Tour, Réflexions sur le théâtre, in Œuvres complètes, t.. 4-7, J.P. Migne, 1855, p. 888-9. Although the theatre is criticised from a strictly moral point of view and the author, an ecclesiastic by profession, finds it difficult to come to terms with the fact that the spread and success of the theatre are largely due to his employer, and although it is not without historical errors and one-sided explanations, this pamphleteering work is remarkably caustic.

(231) Julius Evola, >Gli Uomini e le rovine, Edizioni Mediterranee, 2013, p. 208.

(232) "The power of the arts over the masses will always be found to be in direct proportion to the quantity of black blood they can contain" (Arthur de Gobineau, Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines, Pierre Belfond, 1967, p. 317).

3

"A generation has risen up to solve the problems of the world's poorest people.

of supernatural systems, imagines a vast and powerful thing

which has no form, but which represents itself to her as a

Great Eye. This infinite optic they take for natura

naturans, or forming principle. According to the opinion

readers of the ridiculed old legend that is the Bible

that man is made in the image of his creator, it is claimed that

the human soul is qualitatively similar to its original.

The soul of man, in the opinion of these naturalists, is therefore a

immense optical principle which is spread throughout all its parts,

although it is mainly located in his head. From which they conclude

that all beings are reduced to eyes...".

Daniel Defoe, The Consolidator; or, Memoirs of Sundry Transactions from the World in the Moon

"There are some unspectacular looks.

The worker can observe the operation of a machine,

he is not a spectator. He is looking for a

dysfunction is that it is paid to do so and that the

is its activity. This gaze, like that of man

who scans his surroundings to find his way, is

subordinate to action. In this way, man manifests his

interaction. Looking is a way of acting, of responding,

to take part in the movements of the world. On the contrary,

the viewer's entire gaze is held by it, but

in a gaze absolutely separate from the action. What makes

the viewer is the exteriority of his gaze".

Thomas Dommange, Instruments of resurrection

"The aperture of the camera obscura corresponds to a single point,

mathematically definable, on the basis of which the world can be

logically deduced by progressive accumulation and combination

of signs. It is a device that embodies man's position

between God and the world. Based on the laws of nature (optics),

but transposed onto a plane outside nature, the camera obscura

provides a view of the world analogous to the eye of God. It is

an infallible metaphysical eye rather than a 'mechanical' one. The

testimony of the senses was thus rejected in favour of representations

of this monocular device, the authenticity of which was indisputable.

Jonathan Crary, Techniques of the Observer on Vision and Modernity in the Century

Theatron ("theatre") derives from the verb theaomai, "to look at, to contemplate" ("to look by absorbing oneself in the sight of the object") and "to be a spectator", i.e., in the literal sense, to attend a performance, a spectacle and, in the broader sense, to content oneself with observing a phenomenon, an event, without getting involved. To begin with, dramatising will mean, if I may put it this way, making the theatre theatrical: giving the theatre all the characteristics likely to make the spectator detached, or better still: passive; and, at a second stage, making him the spectator, not just from time to time, of a performance, but, continuously, of his own life: splitting him up, making him outside himself and making him the object of his own contemplation. A screen will have to be placed between his gaze and reality, and he will have to be accustomed to staring at the image projected onto it. His gaze will have to be cut off from beings and things, to be exposed to the representation of beings and things. This representation will be perspective: it will subject the image to mathematisation. The more the eye is accustomed to the image, the more it will tend to look at reality in the same way: with detachment, with passivity, until it no longer has any hold on reality; the more the eye is accustomed to the perspective image, the more it will tend to see and unconsciously experience the world as a number, a pure quantity. The eye of the hunter will give way to the eye of the hunted.

The image was first pictorial, i.e. fixed, then animated, i.e. theatrical (wasn't the theatre, as art theorists of the Renaissance liked to think, a painting in motion?), before becoming cinematographic and finally (?) digital. The disproportionate importance that these two visual arts came to assume during the Renaissance can only be explained by the centrality of the concept of the image in the Christian religion, and it is with an overview of this concept that this study of theatricalisation during the Renaissance begins. It continues with an examination of the Old Testament concept of the artisan/artist divinity (*); taken up and spun endlessly by the artists and art theorists of the period, it led to a conception of the world as painting and, at the same time, as theatre. "From the Middle Ages onwards, there were close links between these two arts, conceived as two means of preaching in images, where frescoes and sacred representations played the same role and used the same processes of spatial figuration. The similarity became more pronounced with the gradual advent of Italian-style theatre (or "theatre of pictorial illusion") in the 16th century: the stage, framed and set at a distance, was thought of as a painting. The invention of pictorial perspective in the Quattrocento and its application to the theatre, where the painter gradually took over from the architect, laid the foundations for a visual culture common to all theorists" (**).

The pictorial representation of the world crystallised at the court of Versailles, where the Jesuit theatre seemed to find its culmination. We will focus here on the Society of Jesus, which had a profound influence on the mentality and sensibility of its contemporaries, not only through its pedagogy, but also through the part it played in the spread of Baroque art and thus in the development of the subjective

point of view. It was at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that "a change occurred in the way we conceive of the world as it appears to our senses. The sensible is now autonomous from the intelligible; it is no longer an imperfect reflection of the Ideas and constitutes an autonomous phenomenal world that Kant theorised in the Critique of Pure Reason. The aistheta, facts of sensibility, become an independent object of reflection" and, at the same time, the sensible is subjectivised: it exists only for and through a subject. Sensible beauty is not a quality intrinsic to the object" and even less the echo in the object of the intelligible Idea of beauty: it is a relational quality that arises from the meeting of an object and a subject, an idea that is born in us through contact with certain properties of things. More precisely, it is a particular complex of primary and secondary qualities perceived by an internal sense. From now on, therefore, beauty must be thought of in terms of its relationship to the subject and not in terms of its link with the world of Ideas. Sensible beauty thus acquires a consistency of its own and becomes independent of any other form of beauty, intellectual or moral". To show the importance of this change, it is essential to take a quick look at what, from antiquity to the Middle Ages, opposed or, on the contrary, prepared the way for the birth of aesthetics. This study will conclude with some essential considerations on the device that served as a kind of laboratory for research into the modern subject: the so-called Italian theatre and the perspective representation that characterises it.

Given our premises, it is almost needless to say that art in general, and the visual arts in particular, are considered here as practices of what has been called 'social engineering' since the end of the nineteenth century.

Imago

The concept of the image, which originated in the Near East (232), is central to Judeo-Christian theology and anthropology.

From a theological point of view

"You shall not make an image for yourself" (Exodus, 20, 4-6); "no carved image". "You shall not make any image" (Deuteronomy, 5-8); "no carved image". By making a golden calf, the Israelites violated the second commandment; the statue of Nebuchadnezzar (ibid., 3-4) and the statue of Zeus that Antiochus IV Epiphanes had installed in the temple in Jerusalem (1 Maccabees 1, 41-64) in 167 BC were also clear violations. On the other hand, Yahweh ordered two golden cherubim to be made and placed on the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:18-22) and embroidered on the ten linen rugs of the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:1); and Solomon was never criticised by later biblical authors for ordering "two cherubim of wild olive

wood" to be placed in the Temple (1 Kings 6:23-28). In the former cases, images were considered signs of idolatry, i.e. worship of the idol of a divinity as if it were the divinity itself; but not in the latter cases.

The Fathers of the Church took up this distinction between idolatrous and non-idolatrous images, some condemning the former (never, even in Tertullian, in an absolute manner), others approving the latter, albeit with reservations and limitations. Neither the poet and ecclesiastic Paulinus of Nole (c. 353 - 431), nor the monk and writer Nil of Ancyra (late fourth - early fifth century), nor Sixtus III (440), contravened the second commandment, the first when he had the churches he had dedicated to Felix decorated with paintings (233); the second when he approved the presence of images of saints in churches (234); Sixtus III when he had the main episodes of the Nativity painted on the vault of the church of St Andrew (235). All contemporary testimonies attest that all the churches were more or less richly decorated with mosaic paintings (236). Christians were no more iconophobic than Jews (237).

Constantine, the first Christian emperor, set the tone by building and lavishly decorating the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, while at the same time destroying the temples and "idols" (238). He commissioned a profusion of paintings, statues and bas-reliefs bearing the effigies of Jesus Christ, Mary, the prophets and the apostles, at a time when churches were growing like mushrooms from Rome to Bethlehem and from Tyre to Naples, with all due respect to these cryptogamic plants. By the time Constantine came to the throne, Roman art had become both heavier and softer under the influence of the East. It had been contaminated by mosaic and arabesque painting. Paintings were overloaded with gold, armenium and cinnabar, fine stones and coloured glass. The eyes had to be dazzled by the most bizarre colours and the rarest, most precious materials. Himself effeminate (he wore gold-embroidered silk robes and was covered in pearls, precious stones, necklaces, bracelets, etc.), Constantine only had eyes for curves (239).

The reigns of Arcadius and Honorius saw a rapid proliferation of religious images, which continued under Theodosius. The custom was established of covering the entire interior of churches with paintings and mosaics. This practice continued until the 11th century. Wherever the faithful looked, they would see an image, whether it was a painting of a story from the New or Old Testament, the death of a martyr or the portrait of an apostle or bishop; it was not unusual for their gaze to cross the walls and see a seascape, a landscape, an animal or hunters. Damasus (c. 305-384) had the catacombs restored. Vigilius (late 5th century - 555) and John III († 574) followed his example. Gregory I (c. 540 - 604) encouraged bishops to multiply the number of holy images. Pelagius II, Pope from 579 to 590, had churches and catacombs decorated with new mosaics. Throughout Europe at the time, prelates embellished religious buildings. They didn't have to look far to find artists. The earliest known painters were ecclesiastics; even once the execution of paintings had been entrusted to lay painters, their composition remained the preserve of bishops and abbots for a long time.

Two events of considerable importance in the history of painting took place between the end of the 7th and the beginning of the 8th centuries.

First, the Council of Constantinople (692) outlawed allegory in the depiction of religious subjects, particularly the crucifixion (240), in favour of realism. It was following this council that images of Jesus on the cross began to spread.

Subsequently, Leo the Isaurian's proscription of images of Jesus Christ, Mary and the saints in 730 and the subsequent persecution of Greek painters had the opposite effect to that intended. Iconoclasm merely aroused new enthusiasm for images and boosted the industry. In fact, to break the ties that bound Rome to Constantinople, the papacy had vast monasteries built for the artist monks who had fled Greece. Since the iconoclastic emperors had replaced religiously inspired paintings in churches with images of animals, trees and plants, they had become accustomed to depicting scenes of this kind, and their move to Western Europe gave new impetus to realism.

In 787, the Second Council of Nicaea, attended by representatives of Pope Hadrian, condemned iconoclasm and decreed that images of the crucifix, Jesus Christ, Mary and the saints could be depicted on vases, clothes and walls. The acts of the council, translated into Latin in Rome, were sent to Charlemagne's court. The translation was abysmal. The Frankish king's theologians interpreted them as a sanction of idolatry and set about answering them point by point (241). Their response took the form of a theological treatise in four books, called Libri carolini (242), in which it was asserted that images were permitted as decoration in churches, as long as they were not signs of idolatry. Charlemagne confirmed the ancient practice of painting churches by means of a capitulary. Every year, his missi travelled the provinces to check that this practice was being respected. The oratories he had erected in the middle of the camps were entirely decorated with coloured images. A church was not considered complete unless it had been decorated with religious scenes and various ornaments. In the ninth century, in addition to paintings, it became common to use tapestries and hangings, known as "Saracen carpets" (the origin of the tapestry is oriental) (243) to decorate churches; their subjects were drawn from holy stories and bestiaries.

Crowned heads and ecclesiastics were quick to emulate Charlemagne. The walls of monastery dormitories and refectories were covered with paintings, manuscripts with illuminations, and diptychs and triptychs enjoyed renewed popularity (244). Monarchs and prelates sought out manuscripts decorated with miniatures; every monastery wanted one. Not even the common people were

unaffected: the poorest pilgrims took away paintings and sculptures in wooden diptychs and triptychs (245).

Paintings had a dual purpose: to educate the people (they were, in the words of the Council of Arras (1025), "the book of the illiterate") and to police the warrior (246). The Middle Ages were also the time when images began to be used in private homes, first in the residences of the nobility, then in the homes of the bourgeoisie in the cities. The practice of decorating furniture such as chests, seats and wardrobes with paintings had spread to Italian cities as early as the eleventh century, along with wealth and luxury (247). In France, it was in the fourteenth century that tapestries with figures began to establish themselves as an "external" sign of wealth in bourgeois flats (248), but also, along with paintings, in theatrical decor.

"In the Middle Ages, images were everywhere" (249), mainly in urban spaces.

From an anthropological point of view

Yahweh created man "in his image", (tsèlèm </em") (250), "according to his likeness" (Genesis, I, 26-27). As we pointed out above, the motif of the "image of God" is of Near Eastern origin. However, in the ancient Near East, as in ancient Egypt, only the king was regarded as the image of God. In the Bible, on the other hand, every human being has the status of "image of God".

The theme was taken up again and amplified in the New Testament, particularly in Paul's Epistles, where only Jesus Christ is conceived as imago dei, and then by Church Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria (150 - 215), Tertullian (c. 155 - 220), Origen (185 - c. 253), Gregory of Nyssa (335 - 394), Ambrose (337 - 397), Augustine (354 - 430), Cyril of Alexandria (376 - 444) and above all Irenaeus (130 - 202) and, in the "Middle Ages", by a host of theologians, including Thomas Aquinas. As a theological concept, it gave rise to a variety of interpretations. For some, it referred to the similarity, purely physical or physical and extra-physical, between man and the divinity; for others, it indicated their homology and alliance as well as, more specifically, the relational life of men and the exercise of their personal freedom (251); for still others, it meant that the people are the representative of the divinity on earth; finally, it implied man's domination over the earth.

If these four interpretations are all inherited from the Old Testament, the fourth is undoubtedly even more so. Genesis (1-28) (252), echoed by Descartes' "to make ourselves masters and possessors of

nature", assigned man the mission of subduing the earth and subduing the animals (253). Now, as Heidegger pointed out, there is only one way to achieve this: science and technology; the art of mathematically subduing nature in order to control it and derive material benefit from it. Augustine's theological conceptions were decisive in the implementation of the biblical programmatic statement. For him, "understanding the letter of the Scriptures is not enough; we must also know the nature of all the beings spoken of in them: minerals, plants and animals. The symbolism of the sacred text is unintelligible to anyone who does not know what the things we are looking for symbols for are in themselves; hence the need for a broad knowledge of the natural sciences, including geography, mineralogy, botany and zoology. The mechanical arts and astronomy, although of little interest from this point of view, must be added to them, because they cannot be considered totally useless". And, "if the principle of the subordination of the sciences to wisdom is maintained intact, the possibility of fixing a precise term for the use of the sciences becomes increasingly problematic the closer we examine the question. At first, Augustine endeavours to distinguish between the science of human institutions, which are of secondary importance, and that of divine institutions, which are fundamental, but the former cannot be entirely ignored, so that any precise formula ultimately becomes impossible. The Christian must reject pagan superstitions: he must avoid knowledge, even true knowledge, which is useless for the science of salvation, but for the rest, he must despise nothing that is true and useful in the secular sciences". The comparison used by the Numidian theologian to illustrate his dialectic is worth quoting for its chutzpah: "Just as the Hebrews, leaving Egypt, legitimately appropriated gold and silver vessels, clothing and other objects which they intended for a better use; so Cyprian, Lactantius, Hilary, all the Greek Fathers and, before them, Moyse himself who learned from the Egyptian sages, did not hesitate to seize knowledge useful to the true religion" (254). In practical terms, Augustine expressed the wish that all human knowledge should be compiled. This was underpinned by the conviction that the unity of knowledge had been broken by original sin and needed to be restored (255). In the centuries that followed, the men of the Church responded to his call: Cassiodorus, with the Institutiones (c. 560), Isidore of Seville, with the Etymologiae rerum sive origines libri XX, Bede, with De natura rerum, Raban Maur, with De universo, then Honoré d'Autun (256), with an encyclopaedic treatise whose title, taken up by Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly (1351 - 1420) for one of his treatises on cosmography (it was not published until the end of the sixteenth century), then, in vernacular and verse, by the ecclesiastic Gossouin de Metz (thirteenth century) (257), is worth a closer look: De imagine mundi. Let us linger over it in the company of Heidegger.

The German philosopher makes the crucial point that, in essence, "imago mundi" does not mean "representation/vision of the world", but "the world conceived as an image". (258). In his view, until the end of the "Middle Ages", man had a direct and immediate experience of the world, whereas from the "Renaissance" onwards, by setting himself up as a subjectum, he became aware that he was separate from it, and the world became an image for him. This is why we can agree that "Until the Renaissance, the eye is 'in' the world, and it can have a direct influence on things in the world (the 'evil eye', the witch's gaze)", but that "From the Renaissance onwards, the image settles between the eye and the world". And it settles there "by means of various devices (camera obscura, telescope, perspectivist

devices), and it is this that we look at, because it is not a product of our senses, which deceive us, but of our reason...". (259).

Another term used in the titles of a large number of encyclopaedic didactic works, as well as in collections of moral precepts (the "prince's mirrors"), was "speculum", closely linked to "imago". Honoré d'Autun explains that the title Imago mundi was applied to his opuscule, which "must be published for the instruction of all those who do not have an abundance of books..., because in it they will see the layout of the whole world as in a mirror" (260). According to Varron, quoted by Augustine (The City of God, VII, 35), mirrors originated in Persia, where they were used as divinatory instruments. In Europe, those who questioned the future in this way were called specularii; they were still very numerous and highly valued in the "Middle Ages" (261). In 1389, the Faculty of Theology in Paris formally condemned catoptromancy, but not the literary use of "speculum". Since Plato, the mirror had been a metaphor for the soul, and had gradually gained renown thanks to the interest shown in it by Socrates, Seneca and Plotinus, whose speculations led him to posit that the mirror was both an instrument of self-knowledge and a means of knowing, albeit more or less indirectly, the divine, speculations that were reflected even in the New Testament (262): "God imprinted the image of his own nature in creation, but sin blurred it (263). "

Gregory of Nyssa diametrically Christianised the theme: "Whereas the neo-Platonic mirror is completely inert, that is to say the receptacle of a mechanical reflection, the soul... is a kind of active mirror, capable of being turned in two opposite directions upwards to receive the divine image, and downwards to receive the image of matter. Each soul decides by free will in which direction it turns the mirror, and it has the faculty of transforming itself into what it reflects". (264). Augustine innovated by comparing the Bible to a speculum. Just as, he said, never short of imagination, the divinity had covered the first men with skins, so he extended the firmament of his holy books, above which reside angelic choirs who see his face directly, while, below them, sinners can only see him "in the enigma of the clouds and the mirror of heaven". (Confessions, XV, 16-18).

The "Middle Ages" inherited the concept of the "mirror book", and the "speculum" even became a literary genre in its own right. It was, so to speak, a mirror squared, because, according to Vincent de Beauvais (c. 1190 - 1264), "the mirror of Revelation is related to that of the soul: the role of vision in the external mirror is to make the image of God shine in the internal mirror". Guibert de Nogent (1053 - c. 1125), comparing the divinity to a painter, an illuminator, can thus say: "The Creator is... the 'Good Image Maker' and all Creation is the 'image' that he has made and in which he is reflected. Creation is the "image of the world", imago mundi. All of it bears the mark of the "Good Imaginator" and of his omnipotence. The world, nature, human institutions and the moral life itself are thought of as reflections, images reflected by a vast mirror (speculum)..." (265)

The painter god

The Hebrew verb bara', in the first chapter of Genesis, means "to generate", "to establish the principle of an organisation". It especially means artistic work, the making of an ordered object, a work of art (266). The Bible often compares the divinity to the craftsman/artist, the divine work to craftsmanship/works of art (267). Poiein, the Greek verb by which it was translated in the Septuagint, has the same meaning, since it "applies to all kinds of operations, from those that mould clay to the highest achievements of the artist or poet". It retains this meaning in three of the 49 occurrences of 'creavit' in the Vulgate. For the Stoics, God is "the craftsman of the universe and like the father of all things" (D.L., VII, 147.) Irenaeus of Lyons uses the metaphorical expression "craftsman of the universe" (Against Heresies, 3, 11, 8) to describe the Word, but it is above all in Augustine that divine art and human art are compared (268), even if, as in Anselm, to indicate what separates them rather than what brings them together. The "great difference" that Anselm sees between "supreme nature" and the craftsman is that the latter "has taken absolutely nothing out of himself... whereas a craftsman can absolutely neither conceive by imagination a corporeal object, unless he has learned to know it in some way in whole or in part by other things, nor execute the work he has conceived, if he lacks a material or some other thing without which the work already thought out could not be realised" (269). Similarly, Augustine points out that, unlike God, artists "can do nothing with nothing" (270). The reference is obviously to "Creare est aliquid exnihilo facere". However, contrary to what the Fourth Lateran Council taught, the idea of a universe created ex nihilo by the divinity is unknown in the Old Testament (271). Wulfila (c. 311 - 383), less concerned with finding a theological justification for comparing the Judeo-Christian divinity with a craftsman/artist, confessed: "I... bishop and confessor... believe in one God the Father, alone unbegotten and invisible, and in his only Son, our Lord and our God, the creator and author of every creature...".

As early as the "Middle Ages", the analogy between divine creation and artistic creation was widespread in theology, from which it spread to artistic theory. The monk and theologian Honorius of Autun (1080 - 1151) compared the Judeo-Christian divinity to a zither player ("The supreme creator constructed the universe as if it were a great zither, on which he arranged various strings in order to produce a variety of sounds"). Alain de Lille (c. 1128 - 1202) (Planctu Naturale, II, 468) lists the most fashionable analogies in this respect in his time: "God, like an elegant architect of the world, like a blacksmith in his forge, like a master of incredible talent who would have done a remarkable job, built the world like a royal palace of marvellous beauty." The generic term "craftsman/artist" gave way to more precise designations. The most popular in the "Middle Ages" was "painter".

The theme of the deus pictor first appeared with Empedocles (272) and Pindar, and resurfaced with Clement of Alexandria, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas; it became one of the favourite topoi of the Spanish theorists and Mannerists of the early sixteenth century. In his treatise on the life of Saint Eustace (1659), René Le Breton glorified the Judeo-Christian god as "the first and most excellent of painters". P. Monier (1639 - 1703), in his Histoire des arts, compares creation to the "drawing" of the Judeo-Christian god. In some of Michelangelo's paintings, the attitudes and gestures of this divinity are reminiscent of those of a painter. From the parallel drawn by Augustine between the divinity and the artist, between the Creator and the creator (Augustine says: "to God alone belongs the power to create" (On the Trinity, III, 9), but, as the context clearly indicates, "creare" here means "to give existence to someone" and not "to make an object of art"), it would be up to others, the humanists of the fifteenth century, to draw the consequences, substituting the concept of the divine artist for that of the artist god. In the 17th century, it became difficult "to envisage divine creation independently of one's own creative experience. Human art is a tool for thinking about divine art and, conversely, divine creation is a model for thinking about human art" (273).

If the divine artist had revealed himself through the pictures of his creation, no human artist could praise his greatness better than a painter. Just as the Creator was glorified for the beauty of his creation, so, little by little, the creator was to be admired for the beauty of his painting(274). The process of divinising the artist had begun.

The world as painting

In Byzantine art, an image was perceived as a fragment of the divine being and judged according to its resemblance to the transcendent prototype. Not all natural elements were excluded, however, insofar as nature was conceived as an emanation of the transcendent prototype.

This theory gradually spread to Western Europe and, in the twelfth century, the world of the senses entered painting, while the Church entered the world. Institutionalised in 1216 and 1223 respectively, the Dominicans and the Third Order Regular of Francis of Assisi, breaking with the monasticism of the first religious orders, decided to carry out the apostolic mission exhorted by Mark 16:15 ("Go into all the world. Proclaim the good news to all creation") and opted for the worldly life that the apostolate implied. They were true patrons of the arts, commissioning frescoes, panels and altarpieces all over the place, characterised by a desire to represent nature as it is perceived and to choose subjects from everyday life (275).

In 1339, the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena was adorned with a fresco by Ambrogio Lorenzetti that would have been inconceivable a century earlier: the fresco of the Good Government shows not only a lively city with its inhabitants enjoying themselves in the streets, but also vineyards, fields of wheat and peasants at work. Equally unthinkable in the twelfth century would have been Giotto's fresco entitled "Stories of Saint Francis", with its figures whose "physiognomies have been stripped of the abstract beauty of classical types and are those of the men and women who then populated the streets of Assisi" (276) and, in other frescoes, the scenes of crucifixion or flagellation of a humanised Jesus Christ of the same size as the other figures. The humanisation of the figures, whether sacred or secular, famous or unknown, and the realistic representation of the environment met two needs: firstly, to persuade the observer that the Church was closer to the little people, that Jesus Christ himself was closer to them, that he was even always present among them, in contemporary social reality. Secondly, it was a matter of making nature proof of the existence of the divinity and the truth of the Scriptures and, following the path opened up by Augustine and, before him, Paul (Epistle to the Romans, 1, 19-20), encouraging the faithful to study nature as a witness to Creation and to contemplate it in order to be able to rise to the divinity. For Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), "the beauty of the world is the splendour of the face of God". Francis himself raved about nature in the Canticle of Creatures: "Praise be to you, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially the brother Sun, who is the day, and by whom you illuminate us; and he is beautiful and radiant with great splendour, from you, Most High, he bears signification." The physicists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, from Newton to Fontanelle, J.B. Nollet and Pieter von Musschenbroek, also insisted, albeit in a less pathetic tone and in a less contemplative than intellectual vein, on the theophanic character of nature (277). As for artists, they contemplated Creation from an aesthetic point of view.

During the Renaissance, the question arose as to how best to represent it. The innumerable poetics, i.e. treatises on the arts, published from the fifteenth century onwards sought to answer this question, basing themselves, not without forcing or even twisting the meaning, on the few rare reflections on art by the philosophers of antiquity, in particular Aristotle (278). Their starting point was two passages from the Poetics, the one where it is stated that "Sophocles said that he himself represented men as they should be, and Euripides as they are" and the one where it is asserted that art, at least tragedy, imitates "not men but action, life, happiness...". (despite the clarity of this formulation, many playwrights of the "Renaissance" based tragedy on the imitation of character and morals, or even, like Dubos, on the passions). Their speculations were also based on the following statement from the "Physics": Holôs te hè technè ta men epitelei ha hè phusis adunatei apergasasthai ("Either art imitates nature or it accomplishes what nature is powerless to do" (279).

These ideas were interpreted differently, even oppositely, by the thinkers and artists who tried to formulate the principles of so-called "classical" art. Some set themselves the goal of imitating reality; they imagined that imitation consisted in reproducing through art the appearances and forms of real objects taken as models.

At the other extreme were the "idealists". Like others, they believed that an exact imitation of nature was a slavish imitation: artists should not imitate simple nature, but "beautiful nature", in other words, they should select the most beautiful and perfect elements and imitate them as perfectly as possible ("The difficulty lies not in representing objects well," declared Perrault, "but in representing beautiful objects"). But they felt it was necessary to go even further: to extract the characteristic features of the model and achieve universal types through stylisation. "... it is not enough to choose one's models well, or even to combine them judiciously; one must also, through a process of abstraction, consider "nature in itself" and", for example, "not represent the irascible man or the courageous man, but the very form of anger and courage" (279bis). The model became the type, the idea. Here, "(imitation) involves both selection and recomposition, activities both guided by the idea of perfection, itself to be deduced from nature. This process is based on observation carried out not with the eyes but with the mind, and applies not to material and sensible reality, but to a possible, conceivable, ideal nature" (280). This idealist conception was an attempt to reconcile Poetics, XV, 10 and, in a simplified form, the Platonic dialectic of forms (281).

In their quest for perfect imitation, whether ideal or realistic, it was inevitable that the theoreticians of the "Renaissance" would come to systematise the comparison between the arts, which had remained in a sketchy state in antiquity.

The first person to draw a parallel between certain arts was Simonides of Ceos (556 BC-467 BC). "Painting is silent poetry and poetry is painting that speaks", he wrote (282). Cicero (Rhetoric, IV) and Quintilian quoted him to illustrate a point of rhetoric. The passages concerned in the Rhetoric were among those whose style the early humanists sought to imitate, and it was in this way that the paragon found its way into the Italian literature of the early fifteenth century. It soon came to the fore thanks to the rediscovery of the Poetics, neo-Platonism (a parallel between poetry and painting is established in the fifth book of the Republic and the fifteenth chapter of the Poetics) and Horace's Poetic Art, one of whose formulas became the principle of "Renaissance" poetics: "Ut pictura poesis erit". Translated not, as it should be, as "poetry is like painting", but as "painting is like poetry", it became the pillar of art theory from the time when the visual arts, long somewhat despised despite the frequent use of painting in Church propaganda, were positively re-evaluated.

However, the idea that painting was synonymous with illusion and deception was much less common by the twelfth century: for example, the theologian and poet Alain de Lille exclaimed in admiration: "O astonishing prodigies of painting, behold, what could not be becomes what it is! And painting, mimicking the truth, playing with a new art, transforms into things the simulacra of things, and changes into truth all things that are lies" (283). But in this respect, things only really began to change with the publication

of De pictura (1435) by the humanist, writer, philosopher, painter and mathematician Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), whose aim was precisely to include painting among the liberal arts.

Alberti's skill consisted firstly in borrowing the composition of his three-part work from Quintilian's Institution oratoire, one of the three rhetorical treatises on which teaching was based in the "Middle Ages", and in applying to painting the three aims that Cicero had assigned to rhetoric: to please, to move, to convince; then, to (284) transpose to painting the principles of mathematics (not pure mathematics, "but mathematics applied to things perceived by sight, hence to physical objects") (285); finally, to attempt to extract painting from the craft, by requiring the painter to be a scholar, a lover of bonae litterae (286), even a philosopher of nature and a scientist, better still : an innovator, both in the field of techniques and in that of the arts. The methods and processes of painting had to be scientific and technical (287), if the imperative of representing and imitating nature as faithfully as possible was to be respected.

Translated into French, De pictura was certainly no stranger to the positive reappraisal of the visual arts in France during the 16th century, and to the subsequent debate on the respective mimetic merits of painting and poetry.

Art was hierarchical: there were superior arts (the "fine arts") and inferior arts (crafts) and, among the former, an art superior to all the others. For Alberti, as for da Vinci, the writer and literary critic Giovanni Pietro Capriano (1520-1580), the theologian and scholar Gregorio Comanini (c. 1550-1608) and many others, painting was undoubtedly the noblest art, the one best able to imitate and represent nature and therefore also the one most likely, like science, to lead to knowledge. The diplomat, cryptographer, translator and alchemist Blaise de Vigenère (1523-1596) was of the same opinion, and published the French translation of the Tableaux du sophiste Philostrate, with the intention of "offering a young audience an art of interpreting images that unfolds in several stages: recognising the subject, translating the visible into words and attempting to produce by this means effects comparable to those of painting, in order finally to go beyond painting by accessing dimensions that cannot be represented pictorially, such as smells, noises and words, all culminating in judgement" (288). From Philostratus' ekphrasis the Jesuits derived a "rhetoric of paintings" and included it in the syllabus of their colleges (289), making a major contribution to making painting the model of representation in the sixteenth century.

As early as the Cinquecento period, the primacy of aesthetic appreciation had been asserted by Italian authors. Cardinal Paleotti seems to be the first to have maintained that sacred art could be the object of an aesthetic judgment (290).

A century later, two works in particular illustrated the importance that pictorial representation of the world had taken on: Charles-Alphonse du Fresnoy's poem De arte graphica (1668) (translated into English by the poet John Dryden in 1695) and the allegorical dialogue by the architect and historiographer André Félibien (1619-1695) Le Songe de Philomathe (1683).

Let's take a look at his text, because it condenses suggestions that were 'in the air' at the end of the 17th century.

One summer day in Versailles, Philomathe dozed off in the park and two sisters, one blonde, the other brunette, appeared to him in a dream. The first is a painter, the second a poet. They compete for the glory of celebrating the great deeds of Louis XIV.

Six important points in relation to our presentation can be drawn from this text.

Firstly, the form corresponds exactly to the content: Le Songe abounds in visual metaphors. The subject matter lends itself particularly well to this, and the remark is worthy of note only because the many poetry treatises of the time all stressed the importance of pictorial representation.

Secondly, the dream appears as an extension of the waking state and, conversely, the waking state as an extension of the dream. Philomathe remarks at the beginning of his dream: "So many excellent images, with which my eyes were filled, kept my mind in such pleasant reveries, that I thought I was still in one of the rich Pavilions of Renommée... "When, drawn out of his dream by a noise, he "half-opens" his eyes and sees the King approaching him with his entire court, his first reaction is to see if Love, one of the allegories that appeared to him in his dream, "was not approaching the King to do him some good turn, and (he) closed his eyes so as not to be disabused of the notion for a moment...". On the other hand, the dream itself takes place in the park where he was when he fell asleep. Descartes goes so far as to assert that certain ideas are "like images of things", "images" and not "paintings", but, as the philosopher expresses elsewhere his conviction that "the things that are represented to us in sleep are like pictures and paintings", it is not forcing the text to hypothesise that the term "images" is here synonymous with "paintings" ; "However, doesn't he maintain a few lines above that "there are no certain indications by which we can clearly distinguish wakefulness from sleep"? From here, the question is then taken to the gnoseological level, where it is not our intention to go any further. From these speculations, we need only remember that imagination is considered to be one of the faculties of knowledge, and that images and paintings are considered to be means of knowledge. Like images in painting, thoughts in sleep, but also - Descartes invites us to consider this by giving the impression that the two terms are

interchangeable for him - in the waking state. In any case, painting is considered to be the art form most likely to represent reality faithfully. We have finally understood," said Fénelon, "that we must write as Raphael, the Caraches and the Poussins painted". This judgement reflects, if not the general feeling, at least an important current of thought at the time.

Thirdly, Painting is so certain of its victory (a dream means a series of images. Poetry itself will have to present its arguments using images and even "tableaux": Painting has won in advance) that it does not refrain in the least from taunting its rival, by openly presenting itself as an illusionist: "I exhibit things that appear so real that they deceive the senses... by a pleasant and innocent magic I make the most subtle eyes believe they see in my works what is not there. I make living bodies appear in subjects where there is neither body nor life. I represent a thousand different actions and everywhere there seems to be agitation and movement. I discover countryside, meadows, animals and a thousand other kinds of objects that exist only through shadows and light and through the secret of an all-divine science with which I know how to deceive the eye". In the seventeenth century, illusionism, so to speak, came into its own in painting and, as we shall see below, in theatre.

Fourthly, the Dream echoes the myth of the invention of painting recounted by Pliny: in Corinth, a young girl traced on a wall the outline of the shadow, cast by the light of a lantern, of the face of her lover, who was leaving for war; the girl's father, having watched her do it, applied clay to it and, after detaching the relief from the wall, hardened it in the fire. Here, painting allows a lover to compensate for the absence or loss of a loved one. Where poetry can only make the loved one present through words, painting shows and re-presents him or her, and in this respect painting is akin to magic. Alberti asserted that painting "has within it an almost ('admodum' can also mean 'quite') divine quality, so that painting not only makes the absent present... but also shows the dead to the living after long centuries" (291).

Fifth, Le Songe repeats the topos of the deus pictor: Painting, daughter of Jupiter, tells Poetry that Love came to her father on Mount Olympus, after she had painted the heavens and the earth, to persuade him to let her come down to earth to teach men to know and adore the gods. Painting alone was capable of representing them faithfully. Jupiter gave his consent to Amur, with whom Painting descended to earth. Amour was the first of the gods she made images of, and she remained at his service for ever.

Sixthly, Le Songe reappropriates the Middle Eastern theme of the sovereign as image of the divinity on earth: the first person to enter Philomathe's field of vision, when he "half" opens his eyes, is the king, who, given the intermediate state he is in at that moment between sleep and wakefulness, is not yet distinguishable in his eyes from the images, the pictures that appeared to him in his dream. On the one

hand, Louis XIV is the most beautiful painting in creation and, on the other, as the representative of the divine artist on earth, he is the painter of a kingdom that he has painted in his own image. The privileged language of Love, divinity and authority is painting, which must be placed at the service of the king, with a view to reflecting his glory and making his authority loved (291). In the seventeenth century, the pictorial image was omnipresent in all fields, both theoretical and practical. Painting provided the metaphor, the model and the example of representation, first, as we have just seen, in the arts and then in politics. The generalisation of the pictorial paradigm was accompanied by the spread of an increasingly scenographic royal decorum.

Versailles

Under Henry IV and Louis XIII, the Jesuits taught young nobles everything they or their offspring would need to look good at Versailles: good manners, elegance of gesture, moderation and subtlety of speech.

Louis XIV had a passion for entertainment and, unlike his predecessors, organised numerous theatrical festivals and performances, each more sumptuous and luxurious than the last, much to the satisfaction of Richelieu and his courtiers and, later, Mazarin and his courtiers. From then on, literature was considered a noble occupation, and its practice was increasingly well rewarded. The king, godfather to Poquelin's son, was a great fan himself. The theatre was one of the most popular entertainments at court. Most renowned actors performed there. The courtiers (292) were not averse to taking to the stage themselves. The king was a regular. On 23 July 1661, he played the role of Apollo in the Ballet des saisons; on 2 December 1666, he interpreted two different roles in Le ballet des Muses, where, accompanied by other nobles, he danced among professional dancers. In Les Amants magnifiques, about a competition between two princes for the favours of a princess, the courtiers played characters from Greek mythology, dressed in antique style. "... the play gives rise to a festival on stage that includes ballet, pantomimes and pastorals. Thus, in this mise en abyme of the play, the court watches itself celebrating" (293). In the festivities held at Versailles, the "spectator" could indeed become an "actor" at any moment. Apostolidès would say of the courtiers that "they believe themselves free to enjoy the surroundings and are merely extras in the monarchical spectacle." (294). It was no longer enough for them to be in permanent performance in a palace where one play followed another at a spectacular pace (295).

The Château de Versailles did not have a permanent theatre until 1682. Plays were performed either in the "petite galerie" or in the Salle des Manèges, or in the gardens. "The first Versailles was indeed an open-air Versailles, a Versailles dominated by décor, a Baroque Versailles" (296). "The decorations varied from one day to the next, and the participants were always surprised because they only became

aware of the changes as the festival progressed" (297). Temporary Baroque buildings were erected in the gardens to house the entertainment. Scene changes were frequent within the same play. Machine effects, although rudimentary compared with the technical means available to modern theatre, were sufficiently developed to capture the audience's imagination and satisfy their taste for the new, the unexpected and change.

A major change in court entertainments occurred in the years following the king's marriage: "fiction alone was no longer enough; what was needed was a mixture of reality and fiction in which the great men of the court could retain some of their personality, while adding a touch of convention; and as the court could not spend its life on the stage, everyday life became theatrical; simplicity was the exception" (298). The theatrical instinct came to guide "in everything the noble organizers and the noble extras of these entertainments" (299), which followed one another relentlessly; "... rising, dining, going to bed, all acts ... take on the appearance of a spectacle. pomp became a means of government, splendour a way of being, and the art of representation a distinctive social sign" (300). Everyone at court played their part around them. Frivolity was so widespread that, "Between two wars, Louis XIV... staged a great military parade at Compiègne with a mock siege war" (301), to amuse the ladies.

Women, naturally predisposed to the theatre in the broadest sense of the term, played a central role in its continual entertainment: "The court was a stage on which every daughter of a great house aspired to play. What we called her education was the rehearsal of her role. Everything about women, right down to the highly varied culture of their minds, was arranged for show, everything was geared towards external splendour, success and conquest (302).

The theatricalisation that Louis XIV imposed on Versailles shows that it is no exaggeration to take at face value the confidence he once confided to his daughter-in-law, the Dauphine: "We are not like private individuals, we owe ourselves entirely to the public (303)". In the same vein, he went on to say: "People enjoy shows, where the aim is always to please them; and all our subjects, in general, are delighted to see that we like what they like, or what they do best. By this we hold their minds and hearts, sometimes more strongly perhaps, than by rewards and benefits..." (304) - the first proposition could not be more correct; but stroking the instincts of the populace in the direction of the hair is, on the part of a nobleman, despicable. In fact, shows of all kinds became increasingly common in Paris under his reign.

The theatre of the world

The idea that the world is a theatre and that man is an actor was in all the great minds of the early Renaissance. Calderón composed El gran teatro del mundo around 1635. What is this life?" moaned Jacques Grévin in his Gélodacrye (1561), "a public scaffold, / where he who knows how to play his character best, / According to his passions exchanging faces, / Is always wellcome and nothing fails him". The motto of the Globe, the London theatre that opened in 1599, was "Totus mundus agit histrionem". In the same year, life was compared to a theatrical performance in Shakespeare's comedy As You Like It, which includes the famous line: "All the world's a stage". "Ce monde périssable et sa gloire frivole / Est une comédie où j'ignorais mon rôle", pontificated Genest in Rotrou's play (IV, 7, v. 1303-1304). Although the expression quickly became pontificating, it was nonetheless an expression of sensitivity. Proof of this, for example, is that, as Carl Schmitt recalls, James I urged his son never to forget that, once on the throne, he would be on stage and all eyes would be on him. Nothing," he says, showing that not only men of the theatre were aware of this, "resembles the theatre more than court life. "In Shakespeare's Elizabethan England, the Baroque dramatisation of life was still superficial and rudimentary - not yet integrated into the strict framework of the sovereign state and its intended establishment of public peace, security and order, as was the case with the theatre of Corneille and Racine in the France of Louis XIV" (305). However, as Carl Schmitt points out, Shakespearean theatre "was an integral part of the reality of its time, of a society that perceived itself as a real theatre - a theatre that, therefore, did not oppose the situation of theatrical representation to the concrete political situation. Society, too, was seated on the stage and the performance could quite naturally appear as a theatre in the theatre of the world" (306) and, corollary to this, society as a theatrum mundi. "In those days, men of action saw themselves on a stage in front of spectators, and saw themselves and their activities in terms of the theatricality of their roles. This kind of comedy had existed in other times, but in the Baroque era it was particularly intense and widespread. Action in the public sphere was stage action and therefore role-playing" (307).

The view that the world is a theatre is said to have been formulated for the first time in the "West" by Heraclitus in the following maxim from a manuscript first published in the 17th century and attributed to Democritus: "The world is a theatre, life a comedy: you come in, you see, you go out" (308).

The embryo of this would be found in the Heraclitean conception of logos: "logos as Necessity implies that man is an actor. He must play the role assigned to him on the stage of life. But if he desires gnosis, he must also play the role of spectator" (309). It is precisely this latter role that the Epicurean proposes to play: a spectator, but an unruffled spectator, of the world. The Cynics would emphasise the other role, that of actor: "Just as a good actor must play his part well, whatever the role assigned to him by the poet, so must a good man play his part well, whatever the role assigned to him by Fortune." (fragments) Teles, a contemporary Cynic philosopher, added: "Just as a good actor must play his part well, whatever the role assigned to him by the poet, so a good man must play his part well, whatever the role assigned to him by Fortune. For it is Fortune who, like a poetess, assigns sometimes a leading role, sometimes a supporting role; sometimes the role of a king, sometimes the role of a beggar. So don't you dare, if

you're the second part, to want the first part: if you dare, your performance will be inappropriate (anarmoston)" (According to Télès, 2, 5).

It would be wrong to see in these precepts a sanction of the principle according to which, to use R. Guénon's definition of a regularly established traditional society, each person must be in the place he or she should normally occupy so that the social order accurately reflects the hierarchical relationships which result from the very nature of beings. In fact, in these reflections, no mention is made of each man's own nature, by virtue of which he is suited to fulfil certain functions to the exclusion of others. What each individual must respect, what he must submit to, is not his nature, but the whim of Fortune. For the Stoics, who saw man as both actor and spectator, the "director" was not Fortune but Providence. Life is illusory and as such has no meaning: in this respect, man is a spectator; what gives him meaning is the fact that it is governed by a higher, divine force and, in this respect, man is an actor, in that he is part of the logos at work within him and can achieve happiness by rationally discovering how the logos works. Seneca put man at the centre of a performance before God: Here," he says of "the man of heart in the grip of bad fortune, especially if he has provoked the struggle", "is a spectacle worthy of attracting the gaze of the God who watches over the work of his hands; here is a duel worthy of God" (De Providentia); To the idea that man must play the role assigned to him by Fate, Epictetus adds the idea that he must play all the roles that Fate assigns him; that he must play them as well as possible and, above all, that he must never forget that he is an actor. For Epictetus, man is first and foremost an actor; one could almost say: an actor before being a man. The proof lies in this existential paradox: "Do we not remain good actors more surely by ceasing to act when we must, than by still acting when we must?

For Stoicism, the human actor is resigned to playing his role, which is 'bitter', but hopes that his life is part of a larger, more important script that has been written by the logos, the 'director'. The Stoics believed that there was no life after death, and that it was therefore necessary to make a success of one's final exit from life. For the Church Fathers, Stoic indifference to life was the prelude to the hope of entering the kingdom of heaven. Life was a shadow; reality belonged to God alone. Death, therefore, brought down the masks and was, as it were, a harbinger of eternal life. For them, the topos of the theatre of the world was coupled with an entirely spiritualist opposition between, on the one hand, the motif of the factitious nature of existence and the illusory role that each person plays in it ("... when death comes and the spectators are dispersed, all, stripped of the masks of wealth and poverty, have gone to the afterlife", Chrysostom, Sixth Homily) or the adjacent theme of contempt for the world (Tertullian, Against the Spectacles, 30) and, on the other hand, the theme of the authenticity of the post-mortem experience, at the beginning of which each person will be judged "according to his deeds" (Tertullian) or the motif of the second life ("... it is no small thing, when one has proposed the second life, to participate in virtue; to esteem God and one's own salvation more highly than the glitter below; to consider this glitter as a theatre or a mask for vulgar and ephemeral things in order to play the comedy of this world, while one lives for God, with the image that one knows one has received from him

and owes to the one who gave it...". Gregory of Nazianzus, Funeral Discourses, 4). Tertullian compares the Last Judgement to a spectacle: "But, above all, what an admirable and imminent spectacle is the coming of the Lord, then at last recognised for what he is, then superb and triumphant! How great will be the rejoicing of the angels on that day, the glory of the risen saints, and the magnificence of the new Jerusalem, where the righteous will reign for ever! Other sights remain for you: the day of judgement, an eternal day, a day that the nations do not wait for, a day that they insult, a day when the earth, with its ancient monuments and its new creations, will disappear in a single conflagration. (Against spectacles, 27) For Augustine, the world is a "stage" and every human being is an actor: "As soon as they are born, children seem to say to their parents: Think of retiring; it is now up to us to play our part. For this human life, full of temptations, is only a role, since 'every man living on earth is nothing but vanity'" (Commentary on the Psalms). Man plays his role on the world stage under the gaze of the Judeo-Christian divinity (308). The motif of the divinity witnessing the spectacle of human life seems to have appeared in the Syrian-born satirist Lucian of Samosata. He ridiculed the gods and made them objects of ridicule. Augustine's god, on the other hand, watches this spectacle with a vengeful eye. Christianity establishes man in the role of spectator in the theatre of the world and of the theatre of the world, under the eye of the Judeo-Christian divinity, at once creator, scriptwriter and producer.

The metaphor of the theatre of the world is found among the Neo-Platonists. Philo of Alexander, a Jewish philosopher of the 1st century BC, wrote: "The guide of the universe, like an organiser of games and feasts", ensured that man would immediately find "the holiest banquet and theatre" (sumposion kaï theotron ierôtaton) (310). Plotinus conceives of the earth as "the theatre" of an "immense drama", and he too depreciates earthly life as such, compared to the supraterrestrial concerns of the "immortal soul". "... the metaphor refers to the world as a stage on which the play of which God is the author is played out. Contemplation of the spectacle of the world is then the way of knowing God's work". (311). For the neo-Platonists, the theatrical metaphor was a way of representing the nature of the created universe, which man, as a spectator, could come to know by means of contemplation, in order to be able to unite with the divinity through gnosis. Finally, the mystery cults and certain treatises of the Corpus Hermeticum introduced the idea that man was a magus and a second demiurge: the "director of the spectacle of life" (312).

The metaphor of the theatre of the world is said to have disappeared from literature at the end of antiquity, only to reappear during the 'Renaissance', in its Stoic-Christian guise, under the influence of a work published four centuries earlier by the humanist John of Salisbury (c. 1110- 1180): the Politicraticus, in which we can read that "man's life on earth is a comedy", that "totus mundus agit histrionem", etc., under the watchful eye of the Christian divinity, under the watchful eye of the Christian divinity. Now, the Politicratus is a treatise on political philosophy - the first of the "Middle Ages" - and was therefore intended for the edification of sovereigns. In this spiritualist form, the topos of theatrum mundi was very much in vogue among Jesuit writers (Antoine Vieira, Giovanni Botero, etc.).

The satirical vein also began to be cultivated again: the whole world was a vast comedy in which everyone hypocritically played this or that role, depending on the circumstances.

Baroque packaging

In December 1543, the Council of Trent issued a decree enjoining bishops to teach "with care that, by means of the history of the mysteries of our redemption represented by paintings or by other similar means", because "great fruit is drawn from all holy images, not only because the people are taught about the benefits and gifts bestowed on them by Christ, but also because the miracles of God performed by the saints and the salutary examples given by them are brought before the eyes of the faithful". As we have seen, the Church had always proceeded in this way in practice to instruct and strengthen the little people in the articles of faith; there was therefore nothing new, only a difference in degree and means. In reaction to the sobriety of Protestant architectural art, the Church, which always had a taste for pomp and theatrical ceremonies, went one step further, enlisting the services of artists inclined to treat religious subjects in a manner grand and spectacular enough to unleash violent and instantaneous emotions. The result was an art form that, under the impetus of the Jesuits, spread throughout Europe and into all artistic fields over the following decades, as both an aesthetic principle and an ideology: the art that would later be called Baroque.

Baroque ideology

As an ideology, philosophically, it asserts that man, whatever his condition, whatever his dignity, is an essentially inconstant being and that he is the plaything of fate, "a compound of opposites" (313); religiously, it embroiders vanitas vanitatum ad infinitum: everything is vain, except God; politically, it maintains that "the best governments... are those that combine opposites : they are mixed or mingled governments" (314); economically, clearly identifiable in Baltasar Gracian and other contemporary Baroque Spanish authors are the characteristics of a human being that later economists would call homo oeconomicus (315); socially, men are seen as monads, whose relationships need to be organised (316), from a behaviourist perspective before the letter and "variety - we would probably say "diversity" today - is advocated (317).

Baroque aesthetics

As an aesthetic principle, Baroque is characterised by the bizarre, the unexpected, contradiction, movement and the spectacular. The methods it favours to express these are ellipsis, surface distortion, deep space and trompe l'oeil. Among the plastic arts whose use was advocated by the Council of Trent, we need look no further than painting and architecture. The aim of Baroque painting was to move the spectator and give him the illusion of the presence of the divinity, to "convince the faithful of (its) greatness", and it did this "with impressive, dazzling, overwhelming effects.... The expressions and attitudes of the figures show inner feelings, the passions of the soul, heightened religious ecstasy... Triumphant, the image bursts out of its frame and blends in with the sculpture and architecture on the ceilings of religious buildings. The trompe-l'œil technique developed and achieved a striking precision" (318). Movement is created by swirling dizziness, flows, swirling spaces, meanders, volutes, spirals and criss-crossing; contradiction, by contrasts, destructured or fragmented objects; the unexpected, even the bizarre, by masses of warm, bright colours, asymmetries and asymmetries (319).

The first example of Baroque architecture is the façade of the Jesuit Church of the Gesù in Rome. If you look at it, you will see that it is composed of the same elements as the facade of other "Renaissance" churches: pediment, architrave, columns and pilasters. But the architects presented them in dramatic form, doubling up the columns, curving the pediments, hollowing out the walls with niches adorned with statues, making the walls concave or convex, etc. The oval replaces the circle on the tympanum of Baroque ellipses; this is because Kepler has just discovered that the orbit of the planets is elliptical and not circular. The circle," says Swiss art historian Heinrich Wölffin, "is an absolutely tranquil and stable form; the oval", which the Baroque used for the floor plans of churches, courtyards and halls, "is restless and seems to want to vary at every moment"; restless and fickle, like the character in the Baroque novel; changing, like the forms of the Roman Baroque. The façades of Baroque palaces and churches are turbulent, like the character in the Baroque novel, unstable and impulsive, "the plaything of fortune". The pediments of Baroque buildings are spectacular, abundant and overloaded, reflecting the multiple, extremely complicated plots of the Baroque novel and the endless twists and digressions in which the author loses himself. The walls and ceilings are covered in a profusion of trompe l'oeil paintings.

Optical illusion is a fundamental characteristic of Baroque aesthetics. In the Église Saint-Charles-des-Quatre-Fontaines, the Église Saint-Yves and the courtyard of the Palazzo Spada, all designed by the architect Francesco Borromini (1599-1667), alternating concave and convex structures give the impression that space, considerably amplified by trompe l'oeil perspective, is simultaneously expanding and contracting; spiral lanterns and elliptical domes complete the optical illusion. Slow or accelerated perspective, which makes a space appear shallower or deeper than it really is, invaded not only architecture, but also painting and gardens (320). Quadratura, the art of using perspective to simulate scenic settings on walls, artificially extending space, was revived and perfected by the painter and architect Pietro da Cortona (1596-1669), the painter Gian Battista Gaulli (1639 - 1709) and the Jesuit friar and painter Andrea Pozzo (1642-1709); Their works combine pictorial, architectural and sculptural elements to such an extent that it is often difficult to recognise and distinguish between them: Is such

and such a column made of stone or painted? Is this angel made of stucco or painted? What's more, is a building a theatre or a church? In the Viennese church of St Charles Borromeo, the altar and the glass galleries above it are reminiscent of a theatre set. The concave facades of the buildings lining Piazza Vigliena in Palermo were decorated with statues and fountains representing the four seasons, in the style of a theatre set. "As everyone has said, Italian cities are often rethought in terms of décor, and foreign travellers, particularly French, have long been sensitive to this particularity, such as Orbessan, quoted by Focillon (Piranesi, ed. 1963, p. 153), who, as soon as he passed through the Porte du Peuple, was struck by the 'theatrical' character of the square, where three fan-shaped streets open out" (321). The chapel of the church of Santa Maria della Victoria was organised by Bernini as a theatre: seated in the side boxes, the spectators watch the representation of the ecstasy of Santa Teresa of Avila. It is true that one might wonder "whether the initial influences were not in the opposite direction, at least as far as the installation of the spectators is concerned: the proscenium boxes seem to derive from the oratories that the Jesuits placed above the doors of the sacristies, to the right and left of the choir. The side balconies are reminiscent of the stands at the Gesù". What is certain is that, "as theatre architecture develops and religious architecture is enriched, the influences undoubtedly work in the other direction", i.e. theatre influences the design of religious buildings (322).

Getting the eye used to no longer distinguishing between what is real and what is fake, between what is real and what is virtual, blurring the boundaries - that, in essence, is what baroque is all about.

The Society of Jesus

The Society of Jesus, founded in 1539 by a descendant of Maranes through his mother (the Society of Jesus was the only order to accept - officially - lay members into its ranks) and recognised by Pope Paul III in 1540, quickly established itself as the most important Catholic order, both in terms of size and influence. It had made itself indispensable to the papacy through its fight against Protestantism, its mass evangelisation in Asia and its central role in the opening of numerous charitable establishments. The aim of the Society, according to its Constituciones, is the good of souls with a view to their salvation... The means is teaching: languages, theology, philosophy, the Bible and rhetoric (323). She placed Thomas Aquinas' Summa at the heart of theological teaching, adapting it to the new needs created by the Reformation, as long as nothing was said that ran counter to the ideas of the theologians. In morals, metaphysics and philosophy, Aristotle's doctrine was advocated. Teaching had to be practical, with a view to training an elite in all areas and, ultimately, "evangelising the universe and reconstituting the Christian world in its unity: offensive and restoration will be achieved through pedagogy". By the end of the 17th century, the Jesuits had more than five hundred colleges throughout the world. "The education of children is the renovation of the world", said the Jesuit Jean Bonifacio (324), apparently convinced that he had made a discovery.

However, "among the means liberated by Jesuit spirituality, the theatre was retained as a privileged and almost immediate vector of expression and relationship with the world" (325). It was an integral part of Jesuit education. In this, the Society of Jesus was copying the Protestants, who had introduced theatre into their own teaching as early as the 1530s. In 1586, Ignatius of Loyola sent the following instructions to the Ingolstadt community: "To encourage and entertain the pupils and their parents, and to attach them more closely to our Society, let them recite verses and dialogues on the stage, according to Roman usage". The Jesuit theatre was spotlessly decent. The heroes of the plays had to be saints or pious men. The Society of Jesus was therefore not contravening the Edict of Blois (1579), which had forbidden performances in colleges "containing lasciviousness, insults, invectives, convictions or any scandal against any state or public or private person". In addition, Jesuit students were forbidden to go "to public spectacles, comedies and games" (Ratio studiorum, p. 202), on the grounds that these were given in places of bad company and that frequenting professional actors and actresses, who were frowned upon because they accepted money to play immoral characters, risked corrupting them. The Fathers protested vigorously to the local authorities when they authorised performances by professional actors (326). Shows... comedies... games" were only allowed for pupils as part of their secondary school education.

Permanent theatres were built and costume shops established. Jesuit school tragedies and comedies, which the Ratio studiorum stipulated should be "very rare" (in theory, their number was limited to two in the course of the year) (327), multiplied rapidly and were performed more and more regularly throughout the seventeenth century. Audiences grew - some performances could draw several thousand people. At first, each performance had two seats, one for men and one for women, before the audience became mixed (328). Tickets had to be paid for. The success of the Jesuit school theatre was such that other teaching congregations (329) opened their own theatres. Long before Franciscus Lang drew up a list of the effects ("flight of divinities and genii, flames and storms, visions of hell, lightning striking the impious hero to death... naval battles", etc.) (330) that they had to produce to transform spectators into viri perculsi, stage machinery was widely used in Jesuit theatre; dance and music also played their part. The Jesuits rehabilitated the passions. Much to the chagrin of Bossuet, they believed that the theatre was not designed to purge passions, but to develop and even justify them; they insisted on the need for the actor to use every emotional means to provoke the spectator's identification with the character he was playing (331).

Specifically, as far as actors were concerned, the Ratio studiorum stipulated that "no female character, nor ever the garb of that sex" should be introduced into plays (332). The author pointed out just one exception, although there were others: some plays "contained a few roles for women, or even for young women or girls who were the object of amorous passion. In the ballets, women's roles seemed to me to be very rare, but, by a singular inconsistency, there were many female divinities and allegories... We

have information about the disguises of the schoolboys who were given the female roles. They were not content, like a nineteenth-century Breton peasant who was given the role of the Virgin Mary in a popular performance, to wear a woman's shirt over their ordinary clothes! They were dressed as women, and in 1653, Loret reported that, at the Collège de Clermont, Suzanne, virgin and martyr, had her face adorned with black flies, some round, some long; you can get an idea of this make-up by looking at the portrait of Jélyotte disguised as a woman, which is in the possession of one of our museums. In 1741, the Nouvelles ecclésiastiques reported that at the Collège de Montpellier three actors in a tragedy were dressed as women and wore their hair like actresses at the Opéra; their faces were plastered and covered in flies. In Limoges, in 1759, the actors wore make-up and flies. In 1760, Abbé Bertrand de la Tour confirmed these accounts. Obviously, the students who played the roles of goddesses or female allegories in the ballets were dressed in similar fashion" (333). Who said the Jesuits practised double standards?

As stage costumes were expensive, the main roles were generally given to children from wealthy families. Learning the roles and how to perform them was subject to a series of highly complex directives, particularly regarding the actor's gesture and attitude (334). The Jew Franciscus Lang (1654 - 1725), in his Dissertatio de actione scenica (1727), indicated that "there is no dignity when speaking in advancing the index finger while closing the other fingers, that it is very appropriate on the contrary to join together the ring finger and the middle finger while spreading the others a little" (335); and Father Jouvancy was quick to apply the recommendations of this Jesuit authority to acting. It is true, as Boysse acknowledges, that "it is not with these prescriptions that one can train good actors", if one has the theatre actor in mind; but the Jesuits trained actors for the "theatre of the world", even if some of their former students (Molière, Dancourt) did indeed embark on a theatrical career. What is certain is that, contrary to what Lang maintained, it is not with such antics that you can train a man.

No doubt the codification that the Jesuits had undertaken of the smallest gestures and expressions was in some ways the culmination of the teaching that had been given in the cours de maintien to the boys and girls of noble families since the beginning of the "Renaissance" and which prepared them to play their lives. The cours de maintien had already borne fruit in mid-sixteenth-century France. By the end of the reign of Henri III, the grandees of the kingdom had adopted a gongoric gesture. "The table manners of a prince such as the Duc de Guise or the Cardinal de Bourbon already required a restrained body language, because they had to distinguish themselves from ordinary mortals in the way they ate. Added to this is the requirement of political circumstances, where every loyal servant, every curious observer, will be interpreting the signs suggested by the gestures that the hosts make to their principal guest and vice versa, and will be reporting them to anyone who will listen. Banquets are so full of affectation that the servants in charge of table service are convinced that they are part of a staged event (336).

Some of the actors were strangers to the colleges, although they may have been former pupils. "To the great indignation of their religious opponents... the Parisian Jesuits had recourse to the greatest contemporary artists who mingled with the students and whose aura served their enterprise" (337) and, in return, it was not uncommon for professional actors to take up themes from the Jesuit repertoire. The Jesuit theatre was the subject of much criticism. Couldn't the long months of preparation required for the performances by the students and their teacher, who was responsible for composing the play and directing the rehearsals, have been used for more formative exercises? Wasn't the teacher, who depended on his pupils for the performances, in danger of losing his authority? Wouldn't the young histrions, covered in applause by a very indulgent audience, derive a vain satisfaction from it? Only the Sulpician Bertrand de la Tour (1701-1780) was able to see the full extent of the inescapably disastrous consequences of the Jesuits' theatrical education: "A whole college, that is to say several hundred young people, are enchanted by a play, everything in it flatters the inclinations of their age. When they go out into the world, they will bring with them their own ideas and tastes, and will seek to satisfy them. All the families, charmed by their children's success and delighted by the show, will feel the same way. They will learn the scenes, they will read the comedies, they will know the authors, they will be initiated into all the mysteries, they will exercise the children, they will have them rehearse their roles, their brothers and sisters will imitate them, they will be magnificently dressed, they will do it without remorse, guaranteed by the pious regents. In this way, without realising it, an entire town will gradually become an actress by taste, and soon it will be calling troupes of actors and building theatres. Public performances would not be enough; troupes of actors would be formed, and theatres would be built in private homes. The seeds of this theatrical fury were sown at the Collège; the first attempts were made there by a regent (professor): what fruits will blossom under these holy auspices? It should not be forgotten that a serious cleric distributed, taught and practised comic roles, set the tone, directed the gesture, enlivened the eye, taught how to perform on stage, how to gracefully make a statement to one's mistress, how to portray the character of a soubrette or harlequin. These lessons were not fruitless; it was not long before they were put into practice." (338) Incisively, Bertrand de la Tour remarked that "(i)l would have missed something in the education of youth, if she had not been made an actress" (339). It is hardly surprising that minds imbued with entertainment in childhood come to see society in general as a vast theatre and that, if it does not entirely correspond to their playful expectations, they tend to transform it in this sense once they reach positions of responsibility. The theatrical training that Jesuit students received left an indelible mark on them, as shown by the theatrical character of the style and language of most of the Jesuits' literary works; for example, in Houdar de La Motte, "the furnace of Babylon is a theatre; Mount Tabor a spectacle; the recognition of Joseph a stage... David Salomon, great actors", the apostles a "troupe" (340).

In the Baroque period, the Jesuits were the only ones to draw practical conclusions from the thesis that the world is a theatre: "if the world is a theatre, the teaching of theatrical techniques is the best possible school for everyday life. Anyone who has mastered the body, the voice and the gesture will be able to accomplish without fail what is expected of him, to be a great clerk of the State (341). Jesuit students

learned at drama school "to flee or to seek out the feelings they see on stage greeted with mockery or applause". In short, the stage was for them a training ground for life in society.

Aesthetics (342)

Aesthetics, understood as the study of artistic sensibility and the definition of the notion of beauty, already existed in antiquity, even if the notion of beauty was not necessarily related to art.

Socrates, in the Memorabilia and in Xenophon's Banquet, teaches not only that the gods are invisible and the human soul invisible, but also that the soul is more beautiful than the body and that the gods love beautiful souls. Plato learned from Socrates and laid the foundations of the science of beauty. In the Platonic doctrine, the idea of beauty is produced by dialectic. Reason rises from individuals to general ideas of the characteristics they have in common, then from these general ideas to even more general ideas, and finally to absolute ideas, or rather to ideas of the characteristics of the absolute, conceived as a living being and not as an abstraction. In a previous life, the soul, which lived in this suprasensible world of essences, contemplated the Ideas, and if the feeling of true beauty awakens in man at the sight of earthly beauty, it is by reminiscence. The beautiful ideal is God himself, or rather the character of one of the powers of the divine soul, which is its power to act. There is nothing beautiful anywhere, except in the soul. According to Plato, unity and harmony are two of the essential characteristics of beauty. Perfect beauty is identical with the good. The science of beauty does not lie in the knowledge of sensory data, but in the application of reason to this knowledge. Reason first admires a beautiful body, then rises to the ideal model of physical beauty, i.e. the beauty of the soul, and finally sees invisible and immutable beauty, incorporeal and eternal, the source, cause and model of all other beauties. The contemplation of beauty has an effect on human sensitivity: it provokes the very love that has been called platonic. Of all the senses, sight is the one that best enables us to contemplate beauty, through a slow ascent from physical beauty to the beauty of the soul, from the beauty of the soul to moral beauty, from moral beauty to the beauty of the sciences, from the beauty of the sciences to eternal beauty. The feeling of beauty is an emotion that is both affectionate (because it is an ardent love) and delicious (because it is happiness).

Plato's theory of art, like his theory of beauty and his theory of the good, derives from his conception of God. God is the complete type and artist who created all that is; in him lies the ideal of being and the ideal of art; in God lives and acts the ideal artist, who is one with God. Man must propose God as his model. The true artist is the one who most closely resembles the divine artist, and ideal art is the one who proceeds like divine art. Ideal art is the production, according to an ideal type, of a being that imitates the beauty of that type. There are two arts, one divine, the other human. Things produced by

nature are the work of divine art; things produced by man from nature are the work of human art. Divine art makes its works in the image of ideal models, which alone are real. Human art produces nothing real; it only makes images, simulacra of life and reality. It cannot be complete because the being it creates does not have the same degree of life and reality as the being copied. Divine art is identified with knowledge, while human art is identified purely and simply with non-knowledge. In the human order, Plato does no more than rank the arts, distinguishing between the art of copying (eikastiké téchné) - that of faithfully representing the proportions of the model - and the art of simulacra (phantastiké téchné) - that of distorting the proportions of the model and making the senses believe that they are faithful to the model's proportions. Poetry and painting are thus among the most deceptive of the arts. However, there is such a thing as a beautiful imitation - the imitation of things that are held to be beautiful and just.

Plato had thus laid the foundations, if not of aesthetics, even if he had studied the psychological conditions of receptivity to beauty, at least of the science of beauty. The Aristotelian theory of beauty derives from that of the Athenian philosopher. The latter had not categorically defined beauty. Aristotle gave a precise definition: "beauty consists in order and grandeur". For him, greatness meant, in some cases, the scope within which tragedy must be confined; in others, moral greatness. In this sense, "Homer portrays men as greater than they are, while Cleophon paints them in their ordinary nature and Hegemon of Thasos... disfigures and degrades them". The way to represent men as greater than they are is to give them the greatness of the type of their character. Plato said no different. Order is harmony and unity: "The parts of the drama must be arranged in such a way that not a single one can be moved or subtracted without the whole being changed and upset". Beauty, defined by grandeur and order, is, as for Plato, the type of character, the universal. What separates the two philosophers in this respect is that Aristotle rises from the universal to the absolute, while Plato stops at the universal. Aristotle professes that the ideal is above reality and that it is a conception of man's reason, but does not place the ideal types of each kind in God's reason. Since, in his view, art can reach the universal, it follows that it can provide a certain form of knowledge.

"Art imitates nature" ("é tekhné mimetai tèn physis", Physics, 194 a), not in the sense of imitating nature as faithfully as possible, of simply reproducing the physical form of a pre-existing model, but in the sense of producing it. The artist's faculties are a purely intellectual power, active and free to produce external objects. The aim Aristotle sets for the artist is to seek an ideal model embellished in his own mind; this ideal is the ideal soul; true art uses forms to express the invisible. The only true purpose that he assigns to art is the pleasure that comes from beauty. This pleasure is cathartic. It would be futile to look to the Stagirite for a description of aesthetic emotions. Man has an innate inclination to imitate, a natural taste for imitated things, and this taste lies in the pleasure he derives from learning. Pleasure is linked to the discovery of what is true or good, not to any aesthetic delight. Aesthetics "seeks beauty above all in perception, whereas Aristotle seeks it in the discovery of causes, in reasoning" (343).

For Plotinus, as for Plato, the supreme goal of philosophy is the knowledge of the good, and the means of achieving this is beauty, in other words God himself. Dialectically, all those who are sensitive to beauty rise from the sensible to the intelligible, from physical beauty to ideal and absolute beauty, from multiple and changing matter to one and unchanging form, from evil to good, to reach Unity, which has no attributes, not even beauty and form. For Plotinus, matter is the basis of everything. By joining with matter, form imposes on it everything that it itself possesses: quantity, quality, determination, in other words, order. It coordinates and combines its various parts, producing something that is one. For Plotinus, beauty is the unity of form that imposes harmony on the varied elements of being: it is order. Better still, form is a fertile energy that shapes the object intended to reflect its own beauty. Sensible objects are therefore beautiful because they participate in a form, and they can participate in a form because the individual soul in each of them reflects the ideal form of the universal soul in their bodies. Divine intelligence contains the ideal forms of all that is created. The earthly world is the image of an ideal world whose beauty it reflects, because it reproduces its animate life, active power and rational order. Physical beauty is the manifestation, the expression of the soul's ability to reproduce the ideal order of the type. The soul obtains this beauty by distancing itself from the body and turning towards God. Purified by this elevation, it becomes a form, a reason, an incorporeal, intellectual essence. It can go even higher and reach the summit, which is good. To do this, it must remove from itself all that is multiple and all that prevents it from being one like absolute unity.

Like Plato, his teacher, Plotinus observed the aesthetic phenomenon. Like Plato, he states that the purpose of art is to achieve the beautiful, and teaches that art does not lie in the imitation of physical nature, but in the representation of ideal nature. Like him, he asserts that the beauty of the supreme principle can only be grasped through contemplation (theoria), and in particular through the use of the visual sense, the inner gaze. But, unlike him, he distinguishes between an objective and a subjective aspect of beauty. While he asserts, like his predecessors, that "beauty is a metaphysical property of objects", he nonetheless affirms that "we recognise this beauty in them because we judge them to be beautiful..."; and from the variability of aesthetic judgement according to individuals, races, environments and times, he concludes that it does not depend on the beauty of the object, but on the knowing subject (344).

The first representatives of Christian thought inherited the ancient philosophers' judgements on beauty. But the Scriptures themselves gave them food for thought. The Old Testament's attitude to beauty is twofold. On the one hand, material beauty is associated with vanity and danger (a cynical influence). On the other hand, Genesis evokes the beauty of creation in a verse that is echoed in Ecclesiastes (XLIII, 9; XXXIX, 16), in the Book of Wisdom (XIII, 7; XIII, 5) and in other passages too. The Book of Wisdom defines beauty, so to speak mathematically (some detect a Pythagorean influence here), as that which is arranged "with measure, number and weight". (Job, 38:4-7) The New Testament allusions to beauty are

devoid of any aesthetic dimension; beauty there is exclusively moral; the word "kalos" ("beautiful") itself is given the meaning of "good".

The early Fathers of the Church had three approaches to beauty. The first, influenced by Greek and Roman culture, emphasised the immediate and objective nature of beauty, conceived as proportion and harmony; the second, stemming from Jewish tradition, stressed the importance of its subjective dimension; the third attempted to reconcile the two.

The first representative of the latter trend was Basil of Caesarea (329-379). His theory of beauty remained within the framework of orthodoxy as long as it stuck to the idea that it "results from the symmetry of the parts", but departed from it when he added: "and from the beautiful colour of the exterior"; and departed from it still further when he also defined beauty in terms of light and claimed that the beauty of light, which is attributable to God, is not due to the harmonious relationship that exists between its parts, but to the harmonious relationship that it has with the organs of sight. Basil of Caesarea inherited this theology of light from Plotinus and Proclus, who had themselves received it from the Stoics, who had probably borrowed it from the Alexandrians, who in turn probably inherited it from the Gnostics and the Chaldean oracles.

Plato and Aristotle saw the notions of the beautiful and the good as one and the same, and what is more, as an objective, ontological element. Basil of Caesarea was the first Christian thinker to take up Plotinus' view of the objective and subjective nature of beauty and, in this context, to place the emphasis on subjective sensation, with a sentimentality that foreshadows the tremolos of Young Werther ("And the evening star is the most beautiful of stars, not because we find in it harmonious proportions, but because it lets fall upon our gaze some sweet glow that soothes and consoles the sorrows of the soul"). Beauty is found in the external world, in light, shapes and colours, but to perceive the beauty of light, shapes and colours, sight is necessary. In other words, beauty must be grasped by the senses: by a knowing subject. Beauty consists not only in a harmonious relationship between the object and the subject, but also in the correspondence between the object and its purpose. The world is beautiful because there is harmony between its parts, because man can appreciate its layout and find in its contemplation a means of reaching the Creator, but also because it corresponds perfectly to the purpose that God set himself in creating it. And because the world is beautiful because it was created for a specific purpose, it resembles a work of art in this respect. This concept, already formulated more or less precisely by Cicero and Plutarch, became widespread in patristic literature, where the idea also emerged that this work of art, nature, revealed the spirit of the Creator. Basil of Caesarea's thinking on beauty also includes the idea that Creation is a veritable "spectacle". He uses the term three times. John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) (345) is not to be outdone. Since Socrates, as we have seen, inner beauty, in other words the beauty of the soul, was considered superior to outer beauty. The latter virtually

disappeared from the scene in the neo-Platonic-influenced writings of pseudo-Denys. The spectacle of Creation became "the mysterious spectacle of superhuman things" (346).

Following Plotinus, he presented beauty as a suprasubstantial and absolute reality and, not being a mystical theologian for nothing, associated it with the Christian divinity, conceived as absolutely transcendent. The Fathers of the Church had understood God's relationship with the world in a dualistic way. The divinity was perfect and, compared with it, the world was insignificant; everything here below was imperfect, but could reflect the divinity more or less perfectly, could be endowed with intrinsic beauty. Pseudo-Denys, a monist in this respect, denied that things and beings could have a beauty of their own. Sensible beauty certainly existed, but it was only a very imperfect, very illusory emanation of divine beauty. There was only one true, perfect beauty: divine beauty. This emanation was compared to the radiance of light. In fact, luminosity, "radiance", was, along with the proportion, or rather the "measure", of the parts, the criterion of the beauty of a work of art, that is to say of an artistic theophany. To make a work of art, the artist had to fix his gaze on "archetypal" beauty, to contemplate it.

For pseudo-Denys, beauty became synonymous with perfection; it ceased to be an object of observation and experience and became an object of speculation. The work of art was to have no sentimental character, was to arouse no emotion, none of those emotions that, in radical contradiction to his principles, the theologian expresses openly in the pages of his work that deal with sensible beauty. The whole of the "Middle Ages" was inspired by the pseudo-Dionysian conception of beauty. Thomas Aquinas spoke of it with the greatest respect.

The Augustinian definition of beauty, largely inspired by the Pythagorean mathematical concept of proportion and harmony and by the above-mentioned passage from the Book of Wisdom, naturally also had a major influence on artistic theory and practice in the "Middle Ages". All things," he says, "are pleasing only in beauty; in beauty, in form; in form, in proportion; and in proportion, in number" (De Ordine, II, 15, 42) "There is no ordered thing," he adds, "that is not beautiful" (De vera religione, XLI, 77) "Beautiful things," he insists, "are pleasing in number" (De musica, VI, 12, 38). Beauty therefore has three characteristics: modus (number), species (form) and ordo (order). Leon Alberti, one of the main theorists of the Italian Renaissance, reformulated them in his architectural treatise De re aedificatoria (1450): "Beauty is an agreement, or a certain conspiracy (if we must speak in this way) of the parts into the whole, having its number, its finish, & its place, as required by the aforementioned correspondence, absolute certainly & principal foundation of nature" (IX, 5). For Augustine, beauty is an objective property of beings and things, insofar as their constitution results from a harmony between their parts. However, no more than pseudo-Denys, Augustine was able to contain and hide the feelings that beauty aroused in him, even if he had wanted to, as he was the first to make his own self the subject of a book: "Very late, I loved you, O beauty so ancient and so new. Very late, I loved you. And now you were inside

and I was outside. That's where I was looking for you, and on the grace of those things you did, poor disgraced man, I rushed! You were with me and I wasn't with you; they kept me away from you, these things which, if they didn't exist in you, wouldn't exist! You called, you shouted and you broke my deafness; you shone, you shone and you dispelled my blindness; you perfumed, I breathed and gasped, I yearned for you; I tasted, I hungered and I thirsted; you touched me and I burned for your peace." (Confessions, X, 27-38.) Here, the term "beauty" could be replaced by "God". God is absolute beauty. He is even the principle and source of all earthly beauty. Dialectically, the contemplation of the spectacle of sensible objects - through the inner eye - leads Augustine to that of his soul, then to numbers, abstractions, ideas and finally to Him: the ideal.

Augustine adopted Plotinus' view, already taken up by Basil of Caesarea and the pseudo-Denys, that beauty consists in light. This view became established in the "Middle Ages" in the work of the theologian, bishop of Paris, adviser and confessor to Louis IX Guillaume d'Auvergne (1190-1249), in the Summa fratris Alexandri attributed to the theologian and philosopher Alexandre de Hales (1185-1225) and in the work of the Bishop of Lincoln and secularist close to the Franciscan Order, Robert Grosseteste (1175-1253), who was well acquainted with the works of the Egyptian scholar Ibn al-Haytam (965-1039). Ibn al-Haytam made a major contribution to this theological theme, not by asserting that the world could be described as beautiful because it was the work of the Creator, perfectly shaped and harmonious, but because, unlike his predecessors, he saw beauty as the proportion of parts from a purely quantitative point of view, reducing it to a mathematical and geometric relationship. "Creation is made in the image of the Creator. God is therefore the spiritual Light of the universe, and bodily light is his reflection in the visible world. Created beauty radiates the likeness of infinite beauty. Since in God, the pure Act, live the exemplars of all things, in physical light, the simplest possible body, are contained the forms of all bodies. "Dum calculat Deus, fit mundus": from the divine unity flow the numbers of things, so that as light radiates, the various materialisations of the fundamental proportions arise. The mathematical laws that the scientist discovers in the structure of things are therefore the expression of the luminous wisdom of the Architect-Geometrist who is God" (347). Beautiful forms are therefore based on "measures", and beauty understood in this way gives pleasure ("Et ut in hac congregatione et unificationeomnia delectabiliter maneant"). Grosseteste's aesthetic sensualism, which had emerged in Basil of Caesarea ("Nothing can give rise to a perception charged with more voluptuousness than light"), was thus to be found.

Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (1221-1274), archbishop, cardinal, Doctor of the Church, Minister General of the Franciscans and a pillar of theology in the "Middle Ages", developed a clear interest in the empirical and psychological dimension of beauty, in the subject's ability to be in harmony with the object he grasped through the senses or the intellect, in other words, in his sensibility, against a backdrop of the philosophy of light. By placing the emphasis on the subject, Bagnoregio was able to give an important role to two complementary faculties whose use had hitherto been outlawed in artistic creation: imagination and creativity. The work of art was thus conceived no longer as the representation of

something external to its creator, but as a projection of the artist's inner states. Although Bagnoregio's reflections on beauty were part of an attempt to explain the dependence of the created world on its Creator, they also reflected a tendency in Franciscan thought to attribute value to the intrinsic beauty possessed by the creature and to the individual's ability to express it.

The first traces of aesthetic relativism appeared in the original speculations on light by the theologian, philosopher, naturalist, chemist and Dominican friar Albert the Great (c. 1200-1280). Their novelty lay in the following proposition: an object that receives light is more or less beautiful according to the quantity of essence that can be seen through its sensible form.

The aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas was largely inspired by notions we have already encountered in Aristotle, Augustine and, above all, pseudo-Denys. His contribution to the birth of the modern subject was no less important. It lies in the fact that, unlike Aristotle, he made a clear distinction between the beautiful and the good, and isolated in each a subjective, psychological element that he considered just as important as the other. He defined beauty as "that which pleases the eye" ("id quod visum placet") and laid down three objective conditions for an object to be beautiful: integrity, harmonious proportions and clarity, brilliance. The cause of the pleasure produced by beauty could not be attributed to an absolute ideal; it had its origin in the dialectic between subject and object, in other words in the subjective recognition of the objectively good and beautiful qualities of the object. Through his sensory organs, primarily sight, the subject grasped the object, scrutinised its inherent qualities, formed a precise image of it and passed judgement on it.

At the end of the thirteenth century, attention turned resolutely to the role of the subject in the perception, recognition and definition of beauty. Significant of this trend was the publication of Perspectivorum libri decem seu optica (1273) by the physicist, mathematician and philosopher Witelo, a treatise on optics and perspective in which, for the first time on this scale in terms of the theory of knowledge, experimental concerns prevailed over theological or philosophical statements.

The perspective

According to Vitruvius, the painter Agatarchos of Samos was the first to compose painted panels for a performance - that of the Oresteia - which inspired the research of Democritus and Anaxagoras on perspective. Perspective, as we know, was known in Greco-Roman antiquity, but "in all the surviving works of antiquity in which the representation of depth is at stake, whether in relief, mosaics or painting, there is nothing to suggest the application of a geometrically coherent perspectival system,

which would be the analogue, in angular perspective or not, of what rectilinear perspective was in the Renaissance". (348)

Originally, perspective (from the Latin perspicere: "to see clearly") was the science of seeing well, i.e. the ability to distinguish error from truth in the phenomenon of vision. In Greece, with Euclid, Heron of Alexandria and Ptolemy, this science was known as optiké. The Arabs called it al-Manāẓir, "appearances" (349), thus completely distorting its meaning. While optike applied itself to classifying the various errors in interpreting visual data (350), the Kitab al-Manāẓir was the origin of a science which, especially in the practical and commercial applications to which it lent itself (351), took pains to deepen, foster and perfect all the means of producing illusion.

The main premise of optike was that visual rays emanate from the eye in the direction of what is seen (352). Ibn al-Haytham, on the other hand, postulated that light rays go from what is seen to the eye (353); for Euclid and Ptolemy, the physical agent of perception was the visual ray; al-Haytham "proved", following numerous experiments in a dark room, that it is in fact the light which, emanating from a light source, bounces off the surface of what is seen, to penetrate the pupil; the light rays thus form a cone whose apex is located in the eye and whose base is the visible surface of the objects (354); light is considered to be the stimulus of sight, and this is so from a strictly quantitative point of view: "the eye has the sensation of illumination, and this sensation is controlled by the quantity of light that penetrates the eye; the eye sees the object when the quantity of light coming from this object is neither too strong nor too weak. " (355); third point: "In a theory of the visual ray, the image is strictly speaking a mirage, having, in the absence of the beholder, no objective existence, no reason for being. With al-Haytham, on the contrary, a distinction becomes necessary: light and its broken propagation have to be treated by themselves, because they are intramundane phenomena, occurring independently of sight; and as a result, if not the image, at least the reflection and refraction of the light ray acquire an objective status"; fourth point: "Neither reflection, nor especially refraction (since it is involved in direct vision, as Book VII demonstrates) can any longer be held exclusively as causes of error" (356): in contrast, the Catroptic, a treatise attributed to Euclid, showed "the deceptive appearance of mirrors". Above all, where his predecessors had been content to explain the nature of light, Ibn al-Haytham studied its properties, particularly in relation to the problem of vision; and this study was experimental and mathematical (357), unlike, for example, Aristotle's physical optics, which was based on an empirical approach.

The Arab scientist's method "replaces thought experimentation with a meticulously described experimental method (material required, protocol, observations, etc.). Each theoretical advance is presented as being induced by the observations presented. Al-Haytham introduces each of his conclusions with an expression like: "From what we have discovered by experiment and induction, it is obvious that...". In the same way, most of the propositions made before him are thus subjected to the sieve of experiment" (more precisely, "most of the propositions made before him are thus subjected to

the sieve of experiment", which is not at all the same thing (358). For Ptolemy, visual perception had become "the result of a very complex judgement (see in particular Book 11). Thus, in order to appreciate this or that magnitude, or this or that displacement, it is necessary to combine different metric elements and to bring several faculties into play". (359). It becomes even more complex with al-Haytham, for whom "the understanding of visual perception ceases completely to rest on the intuitive evidence of seeing, and the specialist is obliged to rethink each of its components" (360).

The first, Alexander of Aphrodite (361), sought to explain visual perception by integrating geometry with its physical, physiological and psychological dimensions. Ibn al-Haytham replaced geometry with mathematics, and the visual rays of his predecessors became "strictly mathematical, meaning that they are no more than abstract lines that light follows towards the eye". He "has an experimental and mechanical conception of light, whose sensible and observable reality he takes into consideration without appealing to intelligible forms or species that would be the substantial forms of reality. The visual forms are mathematical figures, radial pyramids, formed by rays propagating light according to the laws of geometry. (362) Can we speak of a transition from Plato's metaphysics of light to the physics of light? Undoubtedly, provided we add that it was facilitated by the nature of the research undertaken by certain Christian theologians from the twelfth century on colours, the propagation of light and optics (363), as part of the "specific mathematical project of late Scholasticism". This project was "characterised by the predominance of a problematic of measurement and mensuration understood as a logical problem of naming; by the search for possibilities of translating the rules of 'measurement' from one... analytical language to another; by the multiplication of tests imposed on each rule of measurement in relation to all conceivable variations of an entity measured secundum imaginationem. These tests do not involve any confrontation with experience or active experimentation, and their aim is not to gain knowledge of reality as such or to verify a hypothesis or conjecture, but to produce new rules or generate new 'logical puzzles', or sophismata. Progress here is made in the field of logical analysis, not in that of scientific induction. The 'measurement' made by the natural philosopher only has value within the imaginary playground of logical possibility". (364) The tendency that gave rise to this monstrous project can only be compared to the Semitic taste for mathematics at its most disembodied, a taste that, as far as the Jews are concerned, can be explained, according to J. Evola, by the "abstract relations between the human mind and the universe". Evola, by the "abstract and mechanical relations" that, by virtue of their racial make-up, they have with the divine (365) and which, in the modern world, has resulted, in the scientific field, in the theory of relativity, the fruit of an "over-mathematisation of physics", This is "the ultimate case of the dissolution of physics in mathematics, of the pure abstraction of a knowledge which, although certain, takes refuge in a world of algebraic entities absolutely indifferent to the data of sensible experience" (366), in which only numbers, equations, integrals and differentials remain? To say nothing of the bureaucratic monstrosities that this veritable mental trisomy has produced in the administration and the economy.

The Kitab al-Manāẓir, translated into Latin in the late 12th or early 13th century and into Italian in the mid-14th, taught at the University of Florence from the second half of the 14th century, had a considerable influence on optical theorists such as Roger Bacon (1214-1294), Witelo, the Franciscan John Peckham (1230-1292) and finally Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), whose Astronomia pars Optica (1664) set out the fundamental principles of modern "optics". The decisive influence of the Kitab al-Manāẓir, however, was on art before it was on science. The inventor of linear perspective, Filippo Brunelleschi (1377 - 1446), as well as the Florentine sculptor Lorenzo Ghiberti and Leon Battista Alberti, the designer of the "perspectiva artificialis", drew on it.

It is worth clarifying here what is meant by "perspettiva naturalis" and "perspettiva artificialis", and at the same time the consequences of Alberti's "discovery": "Perspective is not natural, it is not a law of the objective world. It is a bias, a reconstruction of the world. And if today we no longer realise this, if this given image of the world goes without saying, if it is 'natural', it is because perspective has become a historical and cultural given" (367). Naturalis or artificialis, perspective remains an illusion. Perspectiva artificialis, which developed from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, simply extended perspectiva naturalis by mathematising the realm of the sensible, and particularly the way in which we see the world - to the point of setting up this vision as a paradigm of intelligible clarity, as a pure reflection of intelligence; "By making vision part of a mathematised science, Alberti removes it from any attachment or adherence to what might be called visibility, to this given, this "lived experience", usually the starting point, which is the fact of seeing with one's eyes, to this common sense evidence that seeing... is seeing. It could be said, then, that with the sharp stroke of his triangle, Alberti tore vision away from the visible. He thus invented a kind of 'pure' vision, purely geometric, i.e. made up of points and lines, where, if we put the eye at the top of the system, this eye has no other content or consistency than that of being the vertex of a triangle, no other acute property than that of a point at the angle of two straight lines, no other quality, virtue or thickness than that of a simple point, by definition without thickness, virtue or quality... Vision reduced to a strict combination of lines and points is what Desargues and projective geometry would lead the invention of perspective to in the seventeenth century (368)... "La perspectiva artificialis n'est pas de l'invention perspective". Perspectiva artificialis not only quantifies vision, it also aims to cut the viewer off from reality: Brunelleschi's "deliberate, intentional, deliberately constructed perspective" works "on the viewer's gaze by interposing between it and the object being viewed a surface, the plane that the drawing was to reflect. This plane artificially interrupted the infinite depth of the visual lines suggested by the perspectiva naturalis. The viewer of the drawing was literally put in his place by the plane he was looking at, which had been designed to reflect this perspective. If he was invited to project his point of view onto the surface he was looking at, he in turn experienced the effect of the convergence of the vanishing lines that responded to this intention. The point of convergence sent him back to the depth that this point suggested" (369) and Leonardo da Vinci, the inventor of atmospheric perspective.

Both, influenced directly or indirectly by al-Haytham's empirical-mathematical conception, were at the origin of a process of rationalisation of vision, image and space. Alberti thus judged "that images are not the ontological forms of the ancient metaphysical visual tradition, but that species or images are formalised geometrically as radial or radial pyramids, according to a geometric technique for which species or images are merely figures constructed with the aid of optical rays delimiting the sides of the pyramid and its base surface, which depends on the perception of distance from the eye.... Pictorial and plastic figuration has no reality in itself independently of the viewer, in terms of its spatial constitution, which is its essential element: the observer and the artist are identified in vision" (370). For the science of appearances, vision is achieved by light rays which, emanating from all points on the illuminated surface of bodies, reach the eye of the observer. If a surface is interposed between the eye and the objects and the intersection of each light ray and this surface is determined, all these points together will produce the same sensation on the eye as the objects themselves, since they will give rise to an identical perspectival cone. The geometric determination of this figure constitutes the science of modern perspective, linear perspective.

Linear perspective can thus be defined as "the art of presenting objects as they are seen from the point of view or visual point" (371), or as "the set of lines that sketch the image" (372); or as "the process that makes it possible to represent three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface, so that the representation coincides with that provided by direct vision (373)".

But the perspective is much less neutral than these definitions suggest.

Firstly, "(b)y means of a regular grid of intersecting lines, it will be possible to structure the space of representation around three fundamental points: the viewer's point of view, which gives the angle; the vanishing point, towards which all the lines of the visual pyramid converge on the horizon; the source of light, which directs the shadows... Perspective begins, however, with an invisibility that gives birth to a deception: the artist will give a two-dimensional surface the illusion of depth and relief. The structuring element of the painting becomes the void, the space, and no longer the object. Things are only held together by a relationship of successive planes, of visual compartments linked together by vanishing lines...". (374) Perspective made it possible, for the first time, to represent the infinite within the framework of the finite, yet another sign of the orientalisation of white culture (375). And since infinity is by definition boundless, the central vanishing point was soon flanked by distance points, which were later seen to be vanishing points as well, and thus representations of infinity; the horizon itself appeared as the site of a multitude - an infinity - of vanishing points; and finally, around 1600, the idea emerged that every point in the painting was, in the final analysis, a vanishing point.

As far as the viewpoint is concerned, it is "unique". In the famous experiment Brunelleschi is said to have carried out in Piazza San Giovanni in Florence in 1415, by looking through a single hole drilled in a panel, each of the participants was able to see that, placed on a board, the perspective drawing he had made of the cathedral's baptistery was superimposed exactly on the real building. "The "point that perspective assigns" (to use Pascal's phrase) defines a place, not a person, and it is a strange subject, deprived of extension and perfectly anonymous, that representation presupposes" (376).

Then, "(the) image... obtained by geometrisation of space presents itself as a break in the flow between the individual and the world" (377); "... from the eye to the visible a line is interrupted. Something has been lost. By allowing us to read the world as a rationally organised and knowable structure, perspective replaces reality with its representation. At the same time, it reorganises our vision of the world" (378). "Perspective presents itself as the particular history of a gaze in the process of being constituted. A narrative, no longer referring to a world but to a subject. What we see is less important than the place from which it is seen: the point of view. This perspective view of the world establishes the beholder as a modern subject" (379), an "autonomous subject". "The men of the Middle Ages did not see the world through a window. One might even say that they did not see the world at all, at least not in the sense in which we understand it today, i.e. from our 'personal' vision. They were immersed in a world from which they could not extract themselves to see it from a distance. They were never impassive spectators of a world unfolding before them, from them, for them... With perspective, not only is the status of what appears to consciousness (the object or the phenomenon) radically altered, but also that of the knowing subject and his body, since the conception of things and the capture of phenomena take place respectively through the latter. Firstly, by reducing the gaze to a conceptual grasp of space, a strictly 'geometrical' gaze (the Cartesian cadaverous bull's eye), perspective distances the body in its material density and its carnal reality (a body that will become today, according to the author Robert D. Romanyshyn, for whom the world is reduced to its spectacular dimension, united only by the fact of light). Perspective redoubles what the eye sees, but by reducing that eye to what we might call an 'angelic' eye: a static, fixed eye that captures things in their stability, continuity and homogeneity, as opposed to a vision that might be described as temporal, dynamic, alive, even productive ('desiring' vision that twists and transforms the phenomenon observed). For this 'android' eye, detached from the external world, the world becomes a spatialisation frozen in time, and therefore always-already an image. Modern subjectivity... results from this process by which the 'thinking thing', in a way analogous to God, differentiates and excludes itself from the 'in-itself' (the material density of the world) in order to posit the world as an object, which becomes 'for-itself', and hence a representation for the subject" (380).

However, we should qualify this very pertinent analysis by recalling that, while people of the "Middle Ages" were not subject to linear perspective, either in art or in everyday life, they were to a certain extent subject to images. In the iconography of the "Middle Ages", images "seem to emerge from the manuscript, the altarpiece or the painted wall to project themselves towards the viewer...". (381), in

contrast to the "perspectivist images" of the Renaissance, which conversely invite the viewer to enter the illusionist space of figuration as if through a window" (382). If the two processes are opposed, there is no denying that they are complementary diachronically. In order to draw the viewer into the image, to suck him in, don't you first have to capture his attention? "What we now call a painting - that object marked by classical perspective - presupposes the capture of the gaze" (383). "For the subject to be caught in the trap of the device, he must himself be looked at from a point in the painting" (384) and his gaze must be fixed and immobile: hence the "assignment" of a point by perspective; and also that the painter's eye must be fixed and immobile at the moment when he draws or paints. The principle of Dürer's perspectograph, which "makes it possible to obtain the perspective of a given drawing or, more precisely, to obtain a figure similar to the perspective image, on a vertical plane, of a given drawing in a horizontal plane" (385), in short a machine for reconstructing space, consists in immobilising the eye of the draughtsman and, so to speak, by extension, that of the viewer.

Finally, "(b)y introducing a third dimension, in accordance with Euclidean geometry, the truth of the represented is not achieved without violence. It is only at the cost of a growing virtualisation of reality that we can represent it with the greatest precision. Descartes, in his Dioptrique: "According to the rules of perspective, circles are often best represented by ovals... and squares... by lozenges". We only get as close to a faithful representation of reality as we move away from it, according to the rules of geometry. At the same time as it simulates reality in its three perceptible dimensions, perspective appears above all as a construct, an artifice dependent on human rationality. There is a fundamental ambiguity here: to reproduce reality as faithfully as possible, it is necessary to deconstruct it, then rebuild it according to the geometric rules of human vision. This is the first step towards phenomenological constructivism. Representation only 'renders' truth because it is false. It only seems natural in proportion to its artifices.

Autism, monomania, mythomania, dissociative disorder: each of the effects, or rather each of the purposes, of the linear perspective on the observer potentially corresponds to a pathological symptom (386). The modern individual, who is the subject of nothing and even less of himself, is a pathological case, and there is no doubt that linear perspective has played a part in his definitive alienation, for by "(transforming) psychological space into artificial mathematical space" it "turns the retinal (anatomical) image into a psychologically conditioned visual image" (387).

The perspective opens onto the Italian-style theatre

The infectious hotbed of perspective was Florence, and it is probably no coincidence that "such a precise method of evaluating the illusion of space was first employed in a city that was so absorbed in

calculation and accounting - a city of merchants, traders and bankers where the ability to count was not an exception, as in the rest of Europe, but a rule" (388).

The first perspectivists were Florentine painters and architects, and it was they who initiated the so-called Italian-style theatre. Alberti, in addition to his decisive contribution to the development of perspective, stood out, along with Brunelleschi, as a stage director and set builder. Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554), chief architect at the court of Francis I and creator of the term "scenography", refined perspective by devising the "central vanishing point", which consists of making the right-hand side of a decoration converge on a plane further away than the backdrop, in order to give depth to the décor; The Italian architect and scenographer Nicola Sabbatini (1574-1654), author of Pratica di fabricar scene e macchine ne' teatri (Ravenna, 1638), was one of the first to design theatre machines capable of creating realistic visual and sound effects, and described and developed new stage lighting techniques, including a process, which we will come back to later, for darkening the stage in an instant. The English architect Inigo Jones (1573-1652), designer of Whitehall and Covent Garden Square, the architectural model for the West End, and designer of the sets and costumes for a series of court masks commissioned from Ben Johnson by the Crown, is considered to be the man who introduced moving sets and the stage frame into English theatre. It is therefore hardly surprising that the first Italian-style theatres were built in noble palaces (389), the nobility being, along with the Vatican, the architects' main clients.

The Italian-style theatre has a number of specific characteristics, both in terms of the facilities for the performance and those reserved for the public: 1. the building, which is smaller than that of the ancient theatres, is, unlike the latter, covered (the ceiling is domed) and closed (which means that admission has to be paid for); 2. a stage frame separates the stage, which is cubic in shape, from the auditorium, which is oval. A stage frame separates the cube-shaped stage from the oval-shaped auditorium (The separation between the stage and the auditorium was made increasingly clear from the 16th to the 19th century by the "dilation of the stage frame, by the systematic use of the stage curtain", which, from being very thin in the "Middle Ages", became considerably thicker, "by the possible addition of extra frames behind the stage frame, by the differentiation of lighting between the auditorium and the stage, by the appearance and then the development of the orchestra pit" and finally by the backstage area (390) ; the auditorium is raised above the stage to facilitate the illusion; 3. A stage frame vertically delimits the opening of a stage cage, in which machinery is installed: a large part of the stage is thus invisible to the audience; 4. the stage frame can be compared to the hole in Brunelleschi's experiment described above and to the famous "window" (for Alberti, the painting was "an open window through which one can look at history"); 5. everything is done to ensure that the members of the audience have a good view of the stage. Everything was done to ensure that members of the audience were and remained motionless throughout the performance, while still being able to see each other: the auditorium had a parterre, surrounded on three sides by balconies, divided into tiered boxes, where the "spectators" were seated; 6. The set, in perspective, "is conceived and designed according to two precise points: that of the eye and that of the convergence of all the vanishing points in place" (391).

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Although the Italian-style auditorium was designed to optimise the show, i.e. to ensure that the perspective representation of the stage sets produced the illusion necessary to entertain the audience, at least two conditions were not met. The first is still impossible, because in the auditorium, "They drink, they eat, the apples fly towards the stage. One day, the spectators in the pit knocked the stage over. A pole is set up in the auditorium to which the pickpocket caught in the act is tied". This is a description of Shakespeare's audience, but in France it was no different at the time. For example, a chronicler recounts that, "While games and farces were being played before Queen Yolande and her people, some thieves approached a spectator, Yvonnet Coyrant, cut off the sleeve of his dress and stole 10 sols and a seal" (392). We will come back to the particular atmosphere that prevailed during performances in the early Renaissance and even up to the middle of the eighteenth century, which makes it difficult to speak of a "spectator" in the sense that we understand it. Secondly, even if those attending a performance were nailed down and tied up, the quality of the illusion varied considerably according to the place each person occupied in the auditorium.

This is determined by his social standing. The higher his rank, the closer his place in the auditorium is to the point where "all things marked on the stage will show themselves better than in any other place" (393), i.e. the ideal point of view, the mathematically determined point of view from which it is possible to visualise the perspective offered by the scenery without distortion (394), in other words the place where perspective is most successful and therefore from which the performance can best be seen. "The history of centred perspective - a history shared by the two arts (painting and theatre) - is intertwined with the search for the point that provides the perfect illusion, the visual condition for the spectator's credibility and adherence to the story represented" (395); the corresponding seat was reserved for the most eminent member of the audience. A reflection of a highly hierarchical society? Undoubtedly, but it was also a society in which the elite were deluded, since, if the ideal viewpoint was the one in which the scenery could be seen best and was therefore the one in which the illusion was most perfect, this made the nobility the most deluded state in the "corpus mysticum".

The expression "corpus mysticum", when it first appeared in the Carolingian world of the ninth century, referred to the Eucharistic body of Jesus Christ as opposed to the "corpus proprium et verum Christi", or "corpus naturale". In the middle of the twelfth century, for reasons that are well explained in "The King's Two Bodies" and that we need not go into here, it came to be applied to the Church, i.e. the community of Christians, which, while forming a hierarchically organised social body, was endowed with a mystical nature; the head of this social body was Jesus Christ. In the thirteenth century, the concept of "corpus mysticum" was transferred to the political sphere, where it took on more or less the meaning of "political community". At the beginning of the fifteenth century, it became more precise, and was superimposed on the concept of "corpus mysticum regni", "mystical political body", as part of the emergence of the idea of the nation. This idea had a mystical character, because "(o)ne did not believe...

that the nation was created by its history. It pre-existed it, a gift of divine will, and went back to a unique and glorious ancestor to whom it owed its primordial qualities" (396). Just as Jesus Christ was the head of the "corpus mysticum", whose members were the community of Christians, so the king was the head of the "corpus mysticum regni", whose members were his subjects: the three states. "Even if the corpus mysticum was intangible, it was in some ways more concrete, more comprehensible than the chaos of the visible world. And, just as the inhabitants of pre-modern France were often encouraged to see themselves as members of the Christian community and not as independent individuals, so, as political individuals, they were supposed to see themselves as part of the mystical body and not as individual citizens of a nation" (397). But, continues P. Friedland, "the mystical body was not always purely mystical. In extraordinary circumstances, the mystical body of the French nation became visible, was literally re-presented in a visible, tangible form. On the king's orders, ordinary people from the remotest corners of the kingdom would gather on a particular day in a particular place to take part in a political spectacle: the re-presentation of the mystical body. With the king (literally) at their head, these individuals, together with the king, constituted the incarnation of the mystical body of France. This political spectacle, in which the spirit was incarnated and the political actors re-presented an insubstantial mystical body through their own bodies, was called... the Estates-General" (398).

The reason why the author speaks of "political spectacle" and "political actors" goes much deeper than the fact that, as we have seen, Versailles had become a real theatre. To understand it, we need to ask ourselves what an actor was at the time. Up until the middle of the 17th century, all the works on theatrical theory show that an actor was expected to really experience the emotions of the character he was playing, in other words to identify so much with his character on stage that he literally became his character. The actor had to metamorphose into his character, embodying his persona, with the aim of moving the audience through the veracity of his emotions (this conception of acting goes back to Horace ("Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi; tum tu me infortunia laedent", a line laconically paraphrased by Boileau as "To make me weep, you must weep"). Many contemporaries compared the Incarnation of the divine Word in the human body of Jesus Christ to the incarnation of the playwright's Word in the actor's body.

Here, theatrical representation joined political representation, and even religious representation, for just as the political body of the Estates-General made the invisible mystical body of France visible and tangible (just as the Eucharist represented the invisible mystical body of Jesus Christ in a material and visible form), so the actor's body materially represented the immaterial body of the character. Everything began to change around 1750, with the publication of François-Antoine-Valentin Riccoboni's The Art of Theatre, translated into German the same year by Lessing (Die Schauspielkunst). Riccoboni, a famous Parisian actor, challenged the cardinal rule of French theatrical tradition. For him, the actor should not actually experience the emotions of the character he was playing, but should act as if he were actually experiencing them; the performance should not be true, but - the concept had in fact been part of the thinking on theatre since the 17th century - plausible. The new way of acting advocated

by Riccoboni soon formed the core of a wider project designed to transform theatre theory and practice as a whole. The Paradoxe du comédien (1773-1777) gave a definition of theatrical acting that was almost identical to Riccoboni's: "All (the actor's) talent consists not in feeling, as you suppose, but in rendering the external signs of feeling so scrupulously that you are mistaken". Diderot goes further than Riccoboni, however, by making insensitivity and duplicity the essential qualities of the actor: he must render passions "in cold blood"; "he weeps like an incredulous priest preaching the Passion; like a seducer at the knees of a woman he does not love, but whom he wants to deceive; like a beggar in the street or at the church door, who insults you when he despairs of touching you; or like a courtesan who feels nothing, but swoons in your arms". In the theatrical tradition, the actor's metamorphosis into his character depended entirely on his ability to convince himself that he really was his character. The revolutionary theatre sketched out by Riccoboni and defined by Diderot depended not on the actor's ability to believe that he was metamorphosing into his character (he even had to do everything to avoid believing that he was metamorphosing into his character), but of the spectator's capacity to believe that the actor was metamorphosing into his character, to, as Colleridge would say a few decades later, "suspend his incredulity", in other words to accept being momentarily fooled by a fiction: for the length of time that a performance lasts. Since the spectator as we understand it did not yet exist, it would be meaningless to talk about role reversal here. It would be more accurate to say that, having redefined the role of the actor, the new theatre set about inventing the spectator, on whom it placed all the responsibility for the effectiveness of the performance.

By 1789, the theatre that had existed in France until 1750, with its "metamorphoses", "incarnations" and carnivalesque interaction between actors and audience, had almost completely disappeared. It had given way to two radically different worlds. One was the world of artificial reality, where actors bathed in stage lighting, seemingly indifferent to anyone and anything outside the stage space. The other was made up of individuals sitting in the dark, whose sole function was to drink in the eyes of actors who ignored them. Once an active participant in the performance, the individual was now merely a passive observer. The same process took place on the contemporary political stage.

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(*) These two terms are used here as synonyms, since, as we know, "the distinction between arts and crafts, or between 'artist' and 'craftsman', is ... something specifically modern" - although, (see infra, note 252), certain terms in the Old Testament have the meaning of "the act by which an artist produces a work".

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(233) Denys Gorce, Paulin De Nole, Les éditions ouvrières, Paris, 1959, p. 35.

(234) Olivier Boulnois, Au-delà de l'image : une archéologie du visuel au moyen âge, Ve-XVIe, Le Seuil, 2008, p. 85.

(235) L'Artiste, Paris, 1837, p. 60.

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(237) The superficial theory of the hostility of the first Christians to images was based in the nineteenth century on the chapters on the beginnings of Christianity in Edward Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. See the revisionist study by Stéphane Bigham, Les chrétiens et les images, Éditions Paulines & Médiaspaul, 1992, available at: http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:_adX2MA8r_MJ:srbigham.com/livres/chretiens-et-images/les-chretiens-et-les-images.docx+&cd=2&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=en, accessed on 4 September 2015.

(238) Louis Moréri, Le Grand dictionnaire historique, t. 6, Paris, 1759, p. 243; Bonaventure Racine, Abrégé de l'histoire ecclésiastique, t. 1, Paris, 1762, p. 431-4.

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(245) Toussaint Bernard Émeric-David, Histoire de la peinture au moyen âge, Gosselin, Paris, 1862, p. 72.

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(247) Toussaint Bernard Émeric-David, op. cit. p. 124.

(248) Thomas Lüttenberg, "Fabric as aura. Les fonctions des tentures à la cour d'Aragon et à Barcelone (XIVe-XVe siècles)", Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome. Moyen-Age, 1999, vol. 111, no. 1 [p. 373-392], p. 374.

(249) Philippe Walter, De l'image à l'imaginaire médiéval. In Medievalista [Online], nº13, January - June 2013, available at:

http://www2.fcsh.unl.pt/iem/medievalista/MEDIEVALISTA13/walter1303.html, accessed on 30 September 2015.

(250) "The word image tsèlèm is used 15 times in the Israelite Bible:

twice in the creation story...,

once for the first human..,

only once as an allusion to the first story,

twice in the Psalms to designate a shadow and a nightmare,

twice as human objects of prostitution, in Ezekiel 16:17 and 23:14,

twice, in 1 Samuel 6:5 and 6:11, in a grim tale of haemorrhoids to force the Philistines to return the Ark of the Covenant they had stolen,

finally five times as idols of pagan gods in Numbers 33:52, 2 Kings 11:18, 2 Chronicles 23:17, Ezekiel 7:20 and Amos 5:26: Take away therefore Sikkut, your king, and Kiyoun, your tzelem images, the star of your god, all these things that you have done!"

("God made man and woman in his image and likeness", available at http://jean.luc.dupaigne.free.fr/index.html, accessed on 30 September 2015).

(251) S. Gannon Murphy, "On the Doctrine of the Imago Dei (Man in God's Image)", [Online], available at: http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-religion/698208/posts, accessed 30 September 2015.

(252) "What does the Text say?" God blessed them and said to them 'Grow and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it (vekhivechouah)! Command (ouredou) וּרְדוּ the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, all the animals that move upon the earth!'" Two terms immediately stand out for their strange vigour, translated here as "submit", kavash, and "command", radah. They are far more virulent in their original meanings: kavash means "to overcome", "to force", "to enslave", "to violate", "to trample underfoot", while radah means "to dominate", "to triumph", "to grate", "to devour", "to trample", "to subjugate"... From Creation, well before the original sin and curse, these two words make it clear that the ascendancy exercised by humans over the earth, the sea, the sky and their fauna is a matter of brutal aggression and supreme subjugation" (Stéphane Zagdanski, Domination et dépossession chez Heidegger et dans la pensée juive, available at the following address http://parolesdesjours.free.fr/domination.pdf, accessed 30 September 2015).

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(373) Invention and development of linear perspective, in The Science of Art by Martin Kemp: Les Fiches de lecture d'Universalis, Encyclopaedia Universalis, p. 2015.

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(375) What dominates the Greek mind "is its disdain for the infinite, that rebellious, formless notion. Hellenic thought regards as perfect only that which is completed, defined and therefore limited, that which forms a harmonious and organic whole. Only a few isolated thinkers, such as Anaximander, spoke reverently of the sanctity of the infinite. But Eastern influences soon imposed this point of view, which, since Christianity and certain advances in modern science, has become our own: for us, it is rather the infinite that generates the finite; it is the finite that is a pure negation and limitation of the infinite. This is not the only time that religious, social or scientific suggestions have led modern thought to the antipode of [the Greek spirit]" (see https://elementsdeducationraciale.wordpress.com/2013/10/01/la-liberte-un-concept-desclaves-2/).

(376) Denis Favennec, Douce perspective: une histoire de science et d'art, Ellipses, 2007.

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(378) Ibid, p. 23.

(379) Ibid, p. 22.

(380) Matthieu Brouillard, La notion de " crise du sujet " chez les poststructuralistes et sa mise en scène dans une série photographique ayant pour prémices le panneau de la Résurrection du retable d'Issenheim de Matthias Grünewald. Thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2012, p. 89

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(382) Ibid.

(383) [For there to be painting, I must be looked at: the painting must be in my eye, and I must be in the painting], https://www.idixa.net/Pixa/pagixa-0901221813.html/.

(384) In the classical perspective, the subject is manoeuvred, called upon, caught in the painting, his desire captured in the field of vision, https://www.idixa.net/Pixa/pagixa-0901221714.html/.

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