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Recovering ancient ritual and the theatre of the Apache: a journey through the false consciousness of Western theatre history

Marla Kathleen Dean
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

RECOVERING ANCIENT RITUAL AND THE THEATRE OF THE APACHE: A JOURNEY THROUGH THE FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS OF WESTERN THEATRE HISTORY

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Marla Kathleen Dean
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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this study to my children: Simone, Christian and Julia; who have each supported me with their special gifts throughout this journey. I could never have completed these pages without their love, encouragement, and patience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the second year of my doctoral candidacy, during a nineteenth century theatre seminar led by Dr. Jennifer Cavenaugh, I suddenly felt like Blanche Dubois describing her first confrontation with love in Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*: "All at once and much, much too completely. It was like you suddenly turned a blinding light on something that had always been half in shadow."[1] It was at that moment, discussing English melodrama, that I saw for the first time the material theatre of the past being reconstructed by the historian to fit into the *idea* of Western theatre. I felt devastated, confused, betrayed and saddened. My excitement as I began to view the histories in their context of the culture where and when they were written would come later. My revelation was insignificant to everyone else in the room and yet, it changed my course and threw open the doors to my scholarship. Thank you, Dr. Jennifer Jones Cavenaugh, for my enlightenment and my quest.

I give special thanks to Professor Cavenaugh for her guidance, thoughts and inspiration throughout this dissertation. Her skills as an editor and necessary role of the *devil's advocate* assisted me on every level within these chapters. I also wish to acknowledge Professors Oscar Brockett and John Brokaw for throwing down the gauntlet of historical scholarship before me. They both inspired and challenged me to dig deeper. Their contributions to my methodology and research techniques gave me the tools to complete this study. Without Professor Les Wade's theoretical challenges this dissertation would be very short. Through his patience and questions he gave me the courage and desire to confront and seek new paths. His insight and instruction made this

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[1] Tennessee Williams, *A Street Car Named Desire* (New York: Signet Classic, 1947) Sc. vi, 95.

work possible. In addition, I thank Professor Femi Euba for his gifts of insight and challenge to see through another lens. His ability to gently shift my perspective was of great benefit to me throughout my studies. An analysis such as this stands on the foundation of many. It is to these scholars and specifically theatre historians who have preceded me that I give my most heartfelt thanks, for it is because of their explorations that I have found a path.

In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge those who have fed my heart and soul: my mother and father, Raymond and Nadene Dean, who have always supported my dreams and shaped my courage to pursue them; my dearest friend and fellow artist, Rosalyn Rosen, who never lost faith in my mission; and my fellow travelers, Gino Chelakis and Kristin Hanson who have never failed to listen.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines past cultural influences which have shaped theatre historians' perception of ancient Greek and contemporary Native American performance. It suggests that through a recognition of these influences, which have long tempered the Western narrative of theatre, ancient and Indigenous performance can be reviewed as similar forms of a *lived exchange*. This study also examines theatre history's place within Western ideology, which has shaped contemporary scholarship of the Indigenous and classical Greek performance, based upon the cultural residue of ancient inversion processes.

The study tracks the formation of certain beliefs and assumptions within performance history through Roman, early Christian and Renaissance cultural identities. It notes the misrepresentation of oral and popular theatre within theatrical scholarship through its reliance upon the written remains of the ruling classes and confronts the notion of *high* and *low* forms of art within the theatre canon. Through an historical methodology, the chapters attempt to disclose and refute long held assumptions within the discipline of theatre history. It explores contemporary Apache and ancient Athenian performance as both sacred tribal rituals and theatre. In conclusion, the dissertation reviews the constructed opposing paths of fifth century Athenian theatre and ritual performance of the Native American within theatre history. It summarizes the impact of ancient social structures upon our view of Indigenous performance today and argues that without these religious and cultural biases, the Apache ritual and fifth century B.C.E. theatre can be seen simultaneously as dramatic and sacred forms of equal importance within their tribal structures and theatrical narrative.

Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously,
it is true, but with a false consciousness. The real motive
and forces impelling him remain unknown to him. . .
Friedrich Engels, 1893

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Watching the televised opening ceremonies of the 2002 winter Olympics in Salt Lake City, I suddenly understood what Friedrich Engles meant by the *false consciousness* inherent within ideology. *False consciousness* is the belief that acts and ideas are conscious and yet, in actuality are dominated by cultural influences of which we are unaware. The Olympic ceremony was a theatrically performed linear narrative of Utah's history transmitted via satellite in numerous languages to a billion member audience around the world. At one point during the pageant the four tribes of Utah were introduced upon the ice, dancing and singing. Each distinct group, in various Native dress, danced separate performances and sang in different languages simultaneously. Their voices rose into unintelligible songs, distinct customs and colorful dress blurred, their movements diffused into one recognizable and understood image: *The Native American.* Four separate peoples with very different histories were combined into one indistinguishable historical event for this theatrical pageant. Five centuries of Native American history and performance were abridged into an historical American performance *moment*, diffusing all tribes into one image of a dancing and singing *other.* I had witnessed in that televised moment the unveiled *false consciousness* embedded in Western ideology and its impact upon the history of performance.

As a historian approaches an *historic monument* such as: the Golden Age of Greek Theatre or the nineteenth century image of the Native American, I believe the process of examination should be viewed as active. This study looks at the history of a people and their cultural constructions, such as theatre, as a site of diverging interpretations, debate, power struggles and always a battle for ownership. My intention within this analysis of theatre history and its cultural influences is to suggest another way of *seeing* what has been written or not written. I, like many contemporary scholars recognize the *box* of ideology and the struggle to get outside of it. I also acknowledge that "the subject's role in the creation of ideology is an enabling one."[1] By negating the sacred within Greek performance and removing drama from the ceremonies of the Apache both oral cultures are misrepresented. The past as it was can not ever be fully realized, however it can be reconstructed, reinterpreted and the resulting interpretation acknowledged as a product of ideology's process.

If James Decker is correct in his recent writings, ideology contains its own paradox.[2] Any attempt to describe the *false consciousness* within theatre history would then necessarily find itself rooted within ideology. How can I, a theatre historian, possibly critique the process while being inside of it? *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* defines ideology as: (1) A system of ideas and ideals, specifically on which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy or (2) the ideas and manner of thinking characteristic of a group, social class or individual. Decker defines ideology "as a reciprocal process wherein subjective, institutional, and political ideas operate within a

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[1] Decker, 43.

[2] James M. Decker, *Ideology* (New York: Palgrave, 2004) 13.

power web of both the intended and the unanticipated."[3] He also does not view any ideology as entirely conscious or stable even as it performs to produce power. This is in direct conflict with Daniel Bell's perception of the term, in his 2000 *The End of Ideology,* as an inflexible set of beliefs forced upon a susceptible population by a malicious, self-serving elite.[4] Both definitions of ideology seem to not allow the historian any path of escape, trapped within an endless process of strengthening the very thing they wish to eliminate. However, there are some benefits in knowing your own prison. In 1620, Sir Francis Bacon speaks of the imperfect lens which we of the West are looking through:

> All of our perceptions, both of our senses and of our minds, are reflections of man, not of the universe, and the human understanding is like an uneven mirror that cannot reflect truly the rays from the objects, but distorts and corrupts the nature of things by mingling its own nature with it.[5]

Perhaps it is through the recognition of Bacon's compassionate distortion and Decker's inescapable process of ideology, that we can begin to see Western categories and definitions as *blinders* restricting our view of both ancient and Native American performance.

If ideology is perceived as Decker's *process* instead of Bell's *product*, it functions with an inherent attribute of *inversion*. Slavoj Zizek's *The Sublime Object of Ideology*

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[3] Ibid, 8.

[4] Daniel Bell, *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000) 400.

[5] Sir Francis Bacon 1620

(1989) states that any ideology must maintain itself through its opposite.[6] For example, early Christianity defines itself through its enemy, Paganism and ancient Rome by its depiction of the barbarian. For Zizek, the idea of community depends more on the perceptions of alien threats than on mutual similarities. A cultural identity cannot be formed without a *scapegoat.* Thus, ideology both produces and threatens itself.[7] By using the inherent paradox within ideology this study attempts to refocus our view of Classical Greek and Native American performance and argues that ancient cultural influences form the basis of the *false consciousness* which continues to dominate Western theatre histories.

The Western history of performance through any age is an example of ideology in practice. Consequently, a brief glance at the Western cannon of dramatic literature reveals the product of the process of inversion inherent in *false consciousness*. Inversion constructs illusion as reality and refutes the material in favor of the idea. It reverses the concept *I am so therefore I think* with *I think so therefore I am*.[8] Ideology manufactures itself through opposing definitions: civilization/barbarism; Christianity/Paganism; alien/citizen; theatre/ritual; communism/capitalism. Cultural identities are formed in opposition to the *other*. Within ideology, the illusory *idea* constructed through the process of inversion (definition by opposition) is reality. For example, the performance of a contemporary Native American tribe and that of the ancient Greeks are located at separate ends of the Western theatre cannon. The hierarchy

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[6] Slavoi Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (New York: Verso, 1989) 21.

[7] Decker, 129.

[8] Ibid. 15.

of the Western theatrical canon is based upon the illusory beliefs in *high* and *low* art formulated through *inversion*. The Apache *primitive* puberty ritual is designated as the polar opposite of ancient Athenian *civilized* theatre and each are identified by what they are **not.** Although, twentieth century scholars have refuted categories such as the *primitive/civilized* dichotomy, the terms continue to haunt contemporary research and are imbedded, if hidden, in the belief systems of the West.

Raymond Williams in his 1983, *Culture and Society*, challenges the privileging of *high* culture within the literary canon and locates its origins, during the emergence of the *people's* democracy and industrialization, in the aristocracy's fear of the mob: mass-thinking, mass-suggestion, mass-prejudice. However, I contend the practice of privileging *high* culture is far more ancient and located within *residual* cultural influences of ancient Rome and early Christianity and that it is still apparent today. Williams does not believe any society can be evaluated or understood without an equal study of all of its components.[9] Such a statement is relevant to any study of performance within a particular culture and forms the foundation of this study. Despite the revolutions in contemporary historiography and the emergence of cultural studies, theatre histories have largely neglected or misrepresented the entertainments of the ancient general population and of the colonized until contemporary times. This study offers an alternative historiography that is of course incomplete, but gives a view of performance cultures that comes with an awareness of the ideology which has shaped Western perceptions. The purpose of this study is to add to the scholarship of ancient popular non-literate

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[9] Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983) 298.

performance and also to examine *why* the theatre of the masses and Indigenous populations continue to serve as the *scapegoat* within theatre history.

The performances of the City Dionysia festival are located as the lofty source of Western theatre and encased in such labels and phrases as: *the Golden Age of Greece, tragedy*, *heroic,* and *classic repertoire.* Similarly, Native American performance, regardless of tribal function or period of enactment, is fixed as a nineteenth century Indigenous ritual and carries all of the weight of the term: *simplistic, Pagan, savage, repetitious* and *primitive.* The fixed image of the ancient Greek, robed in white, expounding the wisdom of the ages in meaningful poetic phrases or that of the Native American, half-naked, painted and dancing to rhythmic drum beats are manufactured by the cultural residue of Western ideology. The polar identities of the Native American and fifth century Greek are constructed *historical monuments* shaped within the process of ideological inversion. The *idea* of the *Indian* signifying the *savage* and the ancient Greek signifying the *civilized* has distorted our view of both cultures and their performances. The weight of the illusory images and their identities constructed through their opposition reflect the crippling effect of inversion within theatre history. Native American and fifth century Greek performance are what I choose to call, *historically challenged* because of their manufactured and *fixed* semblance within Western ideology.

Since the mid-twentieth century scholars and theorists have been chipping away at these two *fixed* images and yet, their place within the historical theatrical canon has remained largely unchanged. In 1994, Vine Deloria Jr. re-published *God is Red*, his

revised edition of a Native[10] view of religion. Deloria, a noted *Indian* spokesman, is not a historian, but his book framed the *problem* of any scholar's attempt to explore the history of a colonized people. "To retrench the traditional concept of Western history at this point would mean to invalidate the justification for conquering the Western Hemisphere."[11] A similar *problem* is confronted when theatre historians approach a historical monument such as ancient Greece. To lessen or invalidate the importance of fifth century Greek performance within the theatrical narrative shatters the historical concept of Western theatre.

To illuminate the *problem* located within any contemporary exploration of the *historically challenged* ancient Greek theatre one need only turn to contemporary scholarship and statements such as: "Theatre as we understand it in the West was invented in all essentials in ancient Greece, and more specifically in classical Athens;"[12] or "we know what 'theatre' and 'drama' are because we derive those words and concepts from the Greeks;"[13] or "the earliest known theatre was that of the Greeks, particularly as found in Athens in the fifth century B.C.E. . . .;"[14] or,

> Whole modes of thought and expression have their fount
> and origin in Greece between 500 and 300 B.C.E: self-

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[10] I have chosen to captalize the term "Native" throughout this document as a means to place the Indigenous of the Americas upon an equal standing with the term "European".

[11] Vine Deloria, Jr., *God is Red*, 2nd edition, (Golden, Co: Fulcrum Publishing, 1994), 112.

[12] Paul Cartledge, "Deep Plays: Theatre as process in Greek Civic Life", *The Cambridge Guide to Greek Tragedy,* P.E. Easterling, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 3.

[13] David Wiles, *Greek Theatre Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 1.

[14] Ronald Vince, *Ancient and Medieval Theatre* (London: Greenwood Press, 1984) 3.

> conscious abstract political thought and moral philosophy; rhetoric as a study in its own right; tragedy, comedy, parody, and history; Western naturalistic art, and the female nude; democracy as theory and practice.[15]

The accepted and rarefied view of the Greeks and their theatre is established through centuries of scholarship crossing many disciplines. To reevaluate Dionysian festivals and question them as the source of Western theatre would seem to nullify the entire Western history of performance as we know it. The intent of this study is not to shake this golden tree, essential to Western ideology, but to examine how another form of Indigenous performance ritual has been devalued within the theatrical narrative in order to support the *idea* of Greek theatre. Through this analysis our understanding of ancient Greek drama and contemporary Apache performance can be enriched. Although I can never truly know either the ancient Athenian world nor the Apache, by comparing them the complex interconnectedness between the two sacred and tribal performances becomes apparent.

When approaching a Native American performance, a theatre historian confronts both different and similar problems as those surrounding the *Golden Age* of the Greeks. The Western conception of history has little relevance to the *Indian*.[16] The idea of *world ages* in many tribes, such as the Apache, is comparable to those held in India. The idea of world ages is a type of history based on the many destructions of the world, for

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[15] Robin Osborne, *Greece in the Making: 1200-479B.C* (London: Routlege, 1996) 2.

[16] Throughout this document I capitalize and italicize the word *Indian*, which similar to the term "Apache", is a Western construction derived from early misconceptions and misunderstandings. Just as "European" is

example, through a great flood or fire. There was a belief in many tribes of periodic catastrophes, for example, the Hopi believe they have survived three world destructions. Similarly, the origin of the Apache tribe begins after the world is destroyed by flood. Before each annihilation, instructions for survival were given by spirit powers and as the new world began, the tribe received songs and ceremonies designed for living in the newly formed world. Thus, ceremonial life and history would end with each destruction and begin anew with each rebirth of the tribe.[17] An evolutionary history or one chronicled by dates as in the Western linear narrative retains no value within the circular narrative of the Native American where locations, movements of a people, or catastrophes replace concepts of time. Perhaps the words spoken by Chief Seattle in 1854, exemplify the *Indian* concept of history more clearly: "But why should I mourn at the untimely fate of my people? Tribe follows tribe, nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea, It is the order of nature, and regret is useless."[18] In other words, cause and effect, are not necessarily linear events, but always present, continuous and unimportant as the next tribe begins anew.

The basic differences in the concept of history between Native Americans and Europeans were explained in *Major Problems in American Indian History: Documents and Essays* (1994) by the editor's statement: "American *Indian* history is not to immerse oneself in a dead past, rather it is to explore a vibrant present that is the child of many

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capitalized and represents a large population on a single continent, I have chosen to recognize the term *Indian*, as representative of all Indigenous peoples in the Americas.

[17] Delorian, 102.

[18] Spoken at the signing of the Medicine Creek Treaty in Washington territory. Quoted in *Uncommon Controversy* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1970) 29.

pasts."[19] Such a concept is almost incomprehensible to Western historians who have followed events not as equal representatives of things past, but in a single path with often one singular event causing the next. The challenges found within any history of the North American tribes are detailed by scholars in *Clearing the Path* (2002) edited by Nancy Shoemaker and within the 1990 collection, *Essays in North American History*. Within the majority of American history textbooks *Indians* are perceived as either obstacles to white settlement or victims of oppression.

> In short, the texts reflect our deep-seated tendency to see whites and *Indians* as possessing two distinct species of historical experience rather than a mutual history of continuous interaction and influence.[20]

There is an inherent belief in the West that our history is the American *Indian* history and that the European does not represent a rupture within an Indigenous culture, but the introduction of the European enhances the population and offers a better way of life. There is also a basic assumption in scholarship that Native oral histories similar to Homer's epics are fiction. However, we know through the studies of archaeologists that Troy, its war, and Agamemnon did exist. We also know that the fossil remains of giant whales from the period of the last Pliocene were found in the place where *Indian myths,* passed down for 10,000 years, said there was a great flood. LeAnne Howe in her 2002 article, "The Story of America: A Tribalography", describes the Choctawan way of

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[19] Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson, "Preface", ix.

[20] James Axtell, "Colonial America Without *Indians*", *Essays in North American Indian History*, ed. Michael J. Gillis (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall Hunt Publishing Company, 1990) 175.

looking at their world and history; "everything touches everything, and everything is everything."[21] Howe explains that the Native American, similar to the theory of symbiosis, perceives all things in continuous forms of cooperation, interaction and mutual dependence. In contrast to the Western distortion of Darwin's *survival of the fittest*, life does not exist through competition, but by networking.[22]

The *Indian* theory of an historical past and its unimportance within the religious system of the American Indigenous[23] population is also in direct conflict with Christianity's emphasis upon linear history. The placement of Native American performance as ritual, and thus, *outside* of *theatre* and *drama* based upon supposed ancient (interpreted) Greek definitions of the forms, has also created a vacuum within the theatrical narrative. During the latter decades of the twentieth century the idea rose that scholarship of the Native American is only valid if produced by the Native American. This is seen by the editor, Roger Nichols, within *The American Indian: Past and Present*, who offers an apology for the lack of Native American scholars within his book of essays.[24] However, such an attitude seems almost reasonable if one considers that for many historians, "*Indian* history is significant only when it intersects with the history of European settlement."[25] The lack of historical evidence, performance documentation and

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[21] LeAnne Howe, " The Story of America: A Tribalography", *Clearing a Path*, Nancy Shoemaker, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2002) 34.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Within this document, similar to the term "*Indian*" and "Native", the term "Indigenous" is capitalized to grant the colonized the same importance as the colonizers.

[24] Roger L. Nichols, "Preface", *The American Indian* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1981) viii.

[25] Frederick Hoxie, "The Problems of *Indian* History", *Major Promblems in American Indian History,* Albert L. Hurtado and Peter Iverson, eds. (Lexington, MA: D.C.Heath and Company, 1994) 33.

analysis within North American *Indian* studies is both excused by the lack of Native scholarship and proliferated by its placement outside of Western methodologies. It is a "Catch 22" for the theatre historian, securing the Native American's location within ideology as both the necessary *other* and a fixed historical monument. The illusory *Indian* and ancient Greek cultural identities represented and defined by their opposing concepts are a product of Western ideology's inversion.

Following the process of inversion this study of two performance cultures focuses upon the Native American tribes of the Apache because their members are represented within American histories as the *most savage* in direct opposition to the Greeks who are depicted as the *most civilized.* The challenges inherent within such a comparison are founded within the unequal weighted historical documentation of the Greeks and the *fixed* location of ancient Greek and Apache cultures within the inversion process of Western ideology. For example, the label, Apache, is a Zuni word meaning enemy. The Apache tribes are depicted within American histories as *early terrorists* and their culture described as *savage*, oral, and nomadic. The Apache were the last American tribe to be conquered, the most feared, and their historical narration incorporates various images of atrocities, bestial behavior and vicious warriors. They were the definitive representation of all that the colonizers were not. As in the Greek culture, not all performances within the Apache culture are distinct as theatre or sacred ritual, but a combination of the two forms. Examining an Apache performance paralleled with the ancient Greek exposes the polar inversion necessary within ideology to define both as separate and opposite even as similarities are glaringly apparent.

The origin myth, enacted within the female puberty rite, *Na'ii'ees*, suggests a history of Apache performance before and after colonization which is an unfixed, complex and a dramatic form equal to the Greeks. In both cultures the communication of myth through verbal utterances and performance are considered creative acts of the highest order.[26] However, the treatment of Apache performances within theatre history is decidedly different than the Greek Similar to the treatment of the female, portrayed through her relationship to man, within Western history, the chronicle history of the Apache has been written through its relationship to the European. Bernard Bailyn, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and former president of the American Historical Association leaves out the *Indian* within his histories of North America because: "A narrative history of the coastal North American *Indian* population is still almost impossible to assemble. Even the approximate size of the Native population is in question."[27] Many reasons are given for the invisibility of pre-European Indigenous history including the lack of written evidence within an Indigenous oral tradition; evidence dated much later than the actual event; or the complexity of multiple languages, religions, and cultures (many of which have vanished) for each tribe. However, these same reasons have not stopped non-Greek scholars from constructing their histories of fifth century B.C.E. Athens.

Theatre history is an intimate history of a people. Through the study of performance (at any given period) allows those of us outside of a culture to glimpse, even

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[26] Keith Basso, "To Give Up on Words," *Apachean Culture, History and Ethnology* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1971) pp.151-159.

[27] Bernard Bailyn quoted in "The Problems in *Indian* History", 35.

if distorted, what a society found or finds important. Social structures, tribal beliefs, humor, sexuality, religion, decorum, and conflicts can all be studied within the performance history of a community. Within an oral performance culture, the intimate knowledge gained through performance analysis is limitless and is a cultural history of the people where it originates. An in-depth theatre history of an audience and their temporal performances can tell us more about a population's dreams, fears, and beliefs than any other form of history. However, the theatrical narrative of the West has long been bound to the written and a small portion of its society, thus largely excluding the rich cultural history of the general and often illiterate population. During the nineteenth and twentieth century various theories arose pertaining to the source of theatre, all of which negate the sacred and the transformation process inherent within most Indigenous rituals. Some scholars focused upon the re-telling of stories while others viewed dance, its rhythms, pantomimes and imitations of animal sounds, as the source of western dramatic art. Jennifer Wise in *Dionysus Writes* positions the emergence of theatre with the emergence of the written text. Others look at theatre's origins within ancient Pagan rituals which evolved into theatre, leaving their sacred beliefs behind.

By far the most popular theory of the origin of Western drama is founded on Aristotle's concept that to imitate is instinctive to man and pleasurable. However, not much has changed since this early statement by Oscar Brockett written in his 1968 textbook on theatre history:

> 'imitative instinct' does not necessarily lead to drama.
>
> At least two other conditions seem to be essential:

> first the appearance of men[28] who can organize theatrical elements into an experience of high order, and second, a society which can recognize the value of theatre and drama as independent specialized activities. It is for these reasons that the Greeks must be considered the primary inventors of drama.[29]

All of these theories are based in cultural Darwinism and adhere to an evolutionary model denoting theatre as progress towards *civilization,* growing from a simplistic form of enactment into a complex and secular entity devoid of metaphysical transformations.

Today, theatre historians recognize many Asian performance forms as theatre despite their inherent ritual structure and sacred function. These same histories (if Native American performance is even mentioned), locate the performances of the *Indian* as distinct from theatre and bound as *ritual.* However, the tribal performances of the fifth century B.C.E. Greeks, often perceived as evolved from ritual, are restricted and termed *theatre* within ancient history, simultaneously separating the enactments from the sacred and its function of transformation. This study focuses upon the division of performance forms defined through the fictional process of inversion. My argument is that, regardless of similarities or material realities, the *primitive sacred ritual* has remained the illusory constructed idea within theatre history's *false consciousness* which defines the *civilized and secular theatre* of the Greeks.

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[28] The term "men" has been replaced with "people" within the 2003 edition.

[29] Oscar Brockett, "Origins of Theatre," *History of Theatre*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, (1968), 1995) pp 1-8. Also found in the 2003, 9th edition, 5.

Many scholars have questioned categorizing the performance of sacred ritual as theatre and have particularly rejected non-textual ritual.[30] For example, Native American religious rituals are largely ignored and designated as *primitive* aligning with the misconception that the many diverse religions existing in prehistoric Indigenous tribes were neither complex nor speculative.[31] Today ancient and current Indigenous myths and their oral re-telling through ceremony can be viewed as complex, dramatic, and filled with supernatural forces similar to the ancient Greek. These oral performances express diverse histories, moral questions, and religions expression through dance, prayers, songs, words, and spectacle. Through indifference, ancient cultural influences and the disproportionate weight given to written texts, the West has long designated one culture's sacred re-telling as theatre, created by a civilized population bound to a written text while the other is labeled "crude manifestations" devoid of deeper meaning and strictly oral in nature.[32]

Within theatre histories, Greek and Native American performances are perceived as segregated by such binary terms as ritual and theatre, *high* and *low*, sacred and secular, holy and profane, *civilized* or *primitive,* or oral and written. In order to question the binaries and delineate their diverse uses within contemporary scholarship it is first necessary to define their meaning within this study. For example, although museums and

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[30] Charles Robinson, "Introduction", *An Anthology of Greek Drama*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962) vii-xxi. Simultaneously negates all sacred rituals by announcing their primitive status while privileging the later written text.

[31] Radin, Paul, *Primitive Religions,* (New York: Dover Publications, 1957) pp 3-4.

[32] Hultkrantz, Ake, *Native Religions of North America,* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987) pp.1-20. Tracks the religious practices of prehistoric *Indian* tribes in North America. Documents rituals of Hunting religion.

the written text have been situated as performance,[33] this study necessitates an experience of performance rooted in the immediacy of a lived exchange. I define *performance* as planned reenactments before an audience and view *theatre* and *ritual* as performance. The definition of these terms are based upon social anthropologist Victor Turner's concept of ritual and theatre as actions born from social conflict which stimulate the transition between *what is* and *what becomes.* Traditionally, theatre performance is viewed as an ever-changing commodity and valued as an art form, while ritual performance, regardless of its theatrical nature, is often perceived as static, with no aesthetic or financial value, and segregated to belief systems of localized cultures. However, theatre, like ritual, is based on similar cultural patterns and must also be experienced through a lived exchange communicated through the body's senses. For the purposes of this study the definition of *theatre* as a lived exchange is aligned with both the sacred and secular and dependent upon its particular culture for designation. *Ritual*, on the other hand, is defined as sacred enactments found within and without theatre performances.

The term *sacred* (aligned with ritual within my chapters) is usually perceived as pertaining to the divine and religion, however, within this study the word is used as interchangeable with *reverence*. Its use through history can also be perceived as a double-edged sword, granting power and immunity to that which is sanctioned as *holy,*[34] but also restricting its exploration and (assumed) benefits from those deemed outside of

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[33] It is not my intention to negate the broad implications of performance within academia, but for this study the term performance is perceived as a lived experience between audience and participant and is temporal in nature.

god's favor. The *sacred* within this analysis of performance history is defined as both an ever-changing perception outside of religious consecration, and also as a linguistic weapon of those in power. Considered its opposite, the term, *profane*, is similarly wielded as a weapon by those in power. However, the function of the "profane" (irreverence towards the gods or God and sacred things) is reviewed within this study as a necessary component to ancient and Indigenous performance. The perception of the profane, like the sacred, varies through time and class structures. Our understanding of the terms and their functions within contemporary Western ideology are very different from those of ancient Greece or Indigenous populations. For the purposes of this study, *profane* and *sacred*, are defined as irreverence or reverence and also as linguistic labels that connote status.

Within theatre histories the term secular is closely linked to the sacred and the profane. Its use by historians often marks the birth of theatre and is defined by that which concerns the non-religious. The secular is outside of the sacred, viewed as worldly, profane, or simply founded in civic rather than religious concerns, and contains within it what has been deemed *high* and *low* forms of performance. I perceive the label *secular*, to be just as restrictive as the terms *profane* and *sacred* within theatre history when placed upon ancient or Indigenous performance. The contemporary definition of the term often proliferates a distorting influence and should be viewed with caution. Designations such as *high* or *low* within secular performance are class based and relegated to the subjective perception of the scholar.

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[34] Declared sacred for religious use or entitled to religious reverence due to exalted religious purity. Consecrated as holy.

Historically, religious performance changes through time. What existed in fifth century Athens is often conflated with later periods of Greek performance and any historical view of Apache performance is largely excluded from theatrical scholarship until the late twentieth century. Our conception of ritual today, as static and repetitious, was not necessarily apparent in ancient Greece nor is it within contemporary oral cultures today. Scholar Martin Nilsson notes the deterioration of popular religion in Athens during the fourth century was due to increased materialization and secularization of religious practices by the *State* for political purposes. He also views the criticism of religious beliefs in the plays of Aristophanes as causes for the decline of Greek faith.[35] However, I suggest that the reversals represented by the satires, ritual enactments and the *mimae* performances, similar to the inversion found within ideology, were an important part of the fifth century Greek religious and political discourse.[36]

The profane functions by contaminating the lofty with the base and forms a critical tradition of ridicule[37] which was a means of *seeing* the whole as well as creating an identity. This same conversation, with its juxtaposition of the sacred and profane, is also apparent within contemporary Apache performances. The destruction of the world followed by the emergence of the tribe is a necessary juxtaposition within the Apache performance of their origin myth. Birth and death are viewed as equal journeys. Tricking the monster or the god, or mimicking the arrogance of man, were necessary

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[35] Martin Nilsson, *Greek Piety* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1948) 66-78.

[36] "Jeering" (yelling insults) at members of the audience was part of the entrance ritual as the god was carried into the theatre.

[37] Antony T. Edwards, "Historicizing the Popular Grotesque", *Theatre and Society in the Classic World,* Ruth Scodel, ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993) 91.

portions of both the Greek and Apache performance conversations. Just as Odysseus deceives the Cyclops or Clytemnestra her king, *Changing woman* in the Apache puberty ritual defeats her enemies by outwitting them and seduces gods to conceive the tribe. *Trickster* is a character found throughout Native American stories and is used to show improper behavior within the community in comparison to those well-mannered. The character of the *clown*, (coyote, trickster) was also represented at most ceremonial dances or transformation rituals.

The Sacred and Profane in Ancient Greece

The *grotesque* represented by the misshapen *mimae* performer, the burlesque of the *beast/men* within Satyr plays and the later officially sanctioned comedies (486 B.C.E.)[38] indicate a common practice founded within the ancient religions of the Shamans, embraced by the general population, and proliferated by the nomadic *mimos* troupes. The characters portrayed by the troupes: Wild man, old woman, fool, doctor or magician, were carriers of the ancient fertility rites of birth, death and rebirth. Variations of these same characters can be found within the dramas of Indigenous populations throughout the world as origin myths are performed: trickster, monster, coyote, and *Shaman.* The inversion or chaos of the world is depicted as closely connected, and necessary, to the portrayal of transformation and transcendence within the ancient Greek world and within Apache performance. The marriage of the profane and the sacred found in the performances of the Dionysian festival Satyr Play and *Tragedy,* suggest an equal status where both were revered. The Satyr play within fifth century Athens "was treated

[38] Our first known record of a comic competition won by Chionides.

as an intrinsic element of the *tragike didaskalia.*"[39] Inversion instead of defining through opposition, compliments through an overlapping process within the ancient Greek and *Indian* performance. Joy and sorrow are equal and necessary partners to depict the whole.

The comedies of ancient Athens by Aristophanes, Chionides, Magnes, Ecphantides, Cratinus, Eupolis and Crates,[40] separate and distinct from the early format of Tragedy and Satyr play, were officially sanctioned at a later date within the Athenian City Dionysia festival. Mikhail Bakhtin perceives the origins of this comedy form within the rural population and its ancient traditions.

> In all these phenomena, laughter (in its various expresssions) is present in permanent conjunction with death, with sexuality and also with food and drink. We find this same conjunction of laughter with cultic food and drink, with sexual indecencies and with death in the very structure of Aristophanes' comedies.[41]

Theorist Jean-Claude Carriere observes these comedies, confiscated from the *mimos* troupes, as "introduced into the city as a sanctioned critic of the democracy, to stimulate a

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[39] P.E. Easterling, "A Show of Dionysus", *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, P.E. Easterling, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 40 He supports this statement with a quote from Plutarch's comment about Pericles: "Ion apparently expects that virtue, like a complete *tragike didaskalia*, should not be without a satiric element" (*Pericles* 5).

[40] We only have written remains of Aristophanes. The other creators are noted through contest lists.

[41] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. M. Holquist, trans. M. Holquist and C. Emerson (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1981) pp.212-213.

debate upon the still evolving form of the democratic *polis*.[42] The conversation, although within a different and appropriated form, continues the tradition of the necessary dialogue between the sacred and profane found in the festival offerings of Satyr play and Tragedy.

Some evolutionary scholars view the *old comedy* of the Greeks as having its roots in fertility rites, apotropaic magic, the mocking laughter of the *Komos*, and iambic poetry.[43] Others perceive the form as confiscated by the State in Greece to serve political purposes. Anthony Edwards in a 1993 article states that

> comedy was introduced into the State-sponsored festivals out of the desire to institutionalize demotic culture, and through its license for ridicule it served as a check upon the authority and prestige of the aristocrats typically chosen as leaders earlier in the century.[44]

Possibly, the incorporation of the general population's *entertainment* into a State sanctioned form was a means to control resistance. Appropriation, a necessary component to the process of ideology, becomes a means to subsume the sacred within popular performance. However, within the Greek discourse with their gods, the "ying and yang" of the world was the conversation. Laughter and tears, the grotesque and the sublime, were viewed as equal and complimentary methods of dialogue within the fifth century. One view was perceived to be weakened by the absence of its opposite. I argue

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[42] Edwards, 92. He refers to Jean-Claude Carriere's *Le Carnaval et la politique* and his theories concerning Old Comedy.

[43] Kenneth Reckford, *Old and New*, Jean-Claude Carriere, *Carnivale* and Lesky's *A History of Greek Literature*

[44] Edwards, 97.

within this study that the transition of the sacred into the secular was accomplished long after the oral performances of this *golden age.* The *idea* that the separation from the divine was necessary for the formation of theatre is an assumption found within evolutionary performance history. This origin theory locates the source of theatre within a State sanctioned Dionysian festival and the product of *primitive rituals* that had evolved into complex, secular, separate dramatic forms. The theory also places written texts as proof of theatre's source. We know today that the playwrights, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes, who were embraced by the West because of written remains documented centuries after their initial performance, were all members of a privileged class.[45] It is my belief that stationing their work as the enlightened form of classical drama, the foundation of Western theatre and representative of all ancient Greek theatre restricts history's view of ancient popular theatre or any other existing forms of performance outside of the ruling class of Athens.

The Written and the Oral

Scholars such as Jennifer Wise refute the ritualistic base of theatre and promote the spread of literacy as the *seed* of theatre despite the evidence that all, but one, extant dramatic text (third century C.E.), were copies created after the tenth century C.E.

> Theatre emerged as the first text-based art in the Western poetic tradition . . .Theatre may originally have been a Dionysian art form, for there is no denying the identity of

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[45] Ibid, 100. Edwards suggests that the tragic playwrights all appear to come from upper class families. "The training needed to master such extensive and developed genres as tragedy and comedy required extensive financial resources." In *Symposium* Plato places Aristophanes among the social and intellectual elite of Athenian society, and in *Archarnians* and *Knights* the playwright aligns himself with the upper-class cavalry corps.

> drama's patron deity; but this particular god presided over theatre only because, by the time of theatre's appearance in Greece, Dionysus could read and write.[46]

Largely based on the written, the Greek fifth century performance rituals of the Dionysian festival are positioned as the source of modern theatre. Wise's statement that: "the historical moment of theatre's appearance thus coincides with Greece's literate revolution,"[47] is dependent upon a belief in the primacy of the written over oral performance. However, "with the concept of the fixed text comes the concept of the correct text,"[48] thus defeating the active and changing conversation found in fifth century performance and contemporary Apache ritual. No two Apache rituals are ever identical as the participants, singer and myths shift through time and tribe. Conversations change as new obstacles occur and new journeys are made. For example, Christian symbols can be noted on traditional tribal artifacts within performances today representing the changing nature of the rituals as religions, cultures, and necessary functions fuse. "The ceremonies, beliefs and great religious events of the tribes were distinct from history; they did not depend on history for their verification. If they worked for the community in the present, that was sufficient evidence of their validity."[49] This study examines the scholarly interpretation of found written remains through time which exhibits both the fluidity of ideology and the appropriation of ancient beliefs within theatre history's *false*

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[46] Jennifer Wise, *Dionysus Writes*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998) 3.

[47] Ibid, 4.

[48] G. S. Kirk, *The Nature of Greek Myths,* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985) 110.

[49] Deloria (1997) 103.

consciousness. The primacy of the written within these histories is evidence of the inversion process of ideology being used to construct a category called theatre. Within this constructed *identity* the exclusion or misrepresentation of the oral popular performance and Indigenous sacred ritual is mandatory.

These pages attempt, through the work of contemporary and past scholars, to prove that the Athenian literate revolution, upon which theatre historians base their opinions of fifth century performance, was not only authored by a very small section of the Athenian population, it also appeared long after the actual performances. Evidence of this revolution is largely founded in contracts, civic decrees, account records, [50] and later cultural influences not in performance artifacts. For example, using a fragment from Aristophanes (not of the fifth century), Wise supports her belief in the written text during the *Golden Age*. In a footnote she quotes Aristophanes who describes Euripides as a writer. However, at the time of Euripides, I will argue that the *gift* was not in the writing, but in the oral creation of the composition for these ancient Athenians. Aristophanes' statement could possibly be perceived by this fifth century audience as a profane and satirical insult. Though there are references to writing in many of the dramatic texts of this period, it should be noted that most, if not all were written a least a century later than their initial performances. "Aeschylus' use of the metaphor of the mind as a writing-tablet"[51] suggests that the skill was known. Euripides uses literacy to define class and often as a plot device. For example, Phaedra writes and the king

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[50] Wise, 13.

[51] W.V.Harris 109.

reads,[52] and a fragment from his lost play, *Theseus* (third century B.C.E.) depicts an illiterate herdsman. Euripides' Electra speaks of her lower class husband as illiterate. Aristophanes uses writing to satirize intellectuals or expose the skill's fraudulent nature.[53]

In an oral performance society, the written is a rarity. Not only was the *fixed* viewed as unnatural, but the written was not considered entirely trustworthy. Aristophanes' comedies are often used as evidence by theatre historians to support their views, however, within ancient logic the author of satire was making fun of Euripidies or any poet who writes. Within fifth century B.C.E. Athens, "the oral way of doing things was established and universally understood, while letters and some other types of documentation had a certain reputation as a source of fraud."[54] Aeschylus speaks of a written document within the *Suppliants* and implies that the written, in contrast to the oral, is unnecessarily obscure.[55]

Statements such as those quoted by theatre historian, Peter Walcott: "although the book was not a great rarity, it was none the less something out of the way, and it remains true that Greek culture was much more a culture of the spoken word than of the written word,"[56] or Havelock's argument in his *Preface to Plato,* that Greek culture was

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[52] In contrast Iphigeneia in the *Iphigeneia in Tauris*, when she is in need of a letter has it written for her. Euripides also represents a shepherd in *Theseus* as unable to read or write.

[53] The *Birds* introduces fraudulent oracles emphasized because they are written. He lampoons Euripides as a writing playwright and Dionysus as a god who reads Euripides in the *Frogs.*

[54] W.V. Harris, 73.

[55] Aeschylus, *Suppliants,* 944-949

[56] Quoted from F.D. Harvey's (1963) *Revue des Etudes Grecques* in Peter Walcott, *Greek Drama and Its Theatrical and Social Context* (Caldiff: The University of Wales Press, 1976) 24.

essentially oral in character before the fourth century B.C.E.,[57] do not deflect the historical assumption that fifth century B.C.E. dramatic texts existed. For example, Walcott states "Greek drama was *written* to be performed on a stage and not to be read by an individual."[58] Brockett notes, "no drama from the sixth century has survived,"[59] he accepts without question that the fifth century playwrights were writing. "The oldest surviving Greek plays are by Aeschylus."[60]

Any history of the sixth or fifth century Greek performance is riddled with assumptions, educated guesses based upon methods of patterned regularity, and largely supported through the writings of the fourth century. Consequently, the narratives should be viewed as possibilities and not facts. However, when the assumptions and histories are produced unconsciously to serve the existing ideology both meaning and data become misinterpreted and distorted. This is clearly evident when it is recognized that there are no complete remaining written dramatic texts of the period,[61] only fragments, and yet, many scholars assume the plays were written at the time of their oral creation. Even our earliest written source of *Agamemnon* contains only 190 phrases that could have possibly been created during the lifetime of Aeschylus.[62]

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[57] E.A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963)

[58] Walcott, 8.

[59] Brockett, 15.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Sappho, a female poet presumed to be writing in the last quarter of the seventh century, should be regarded as exceptional, though not unique, her family having been a privileged one.

[62] Dr. Dawes, expert upon the classical texts of Aeschylus and linguistic classic scholar. Information obtained through correspondence.

Much of literary classical scholarship is based upon *an order* given by the politician Lycurgus in 330 C.E. that editions be compiled by scribes in Hellenistic Alexandria more than a century after the Athenian tragedies were originally performed.[63]

> There is general agreement that the tragic scholia are derived primarily from Hellenistic commentaries (albeit from an accretion of Byzantine learning), with much in particular from the great Alexandrian philologists of the early second century B.C.E. like Aristophanes and Aristarchus, there is little that is certain about the process by which they came to be excerpted by late antique or early Byzantine copyists.[64]

There is no evidence to confirm that the Greek farmer had any knowledge of writing or reading or that any of the early Athenian performances were produced based upon the written text. However, despite the population's illiteracy, the reverence given to the oral creation within the culture, and the lack of written evidence within the period, scholars continue to point to later written dramatic text as *proof* that the Greek theatre had literary roots. A similar distortion appears if the theatre of ancient Greece is reconstructed outside of its religious context. Wiles notes that in fifth century B.C.E. Athens, the theatre is the end-point of the procession which was the core of rural Dionysia. He

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[63] Plutarch, *Vit, X orat.* 841 F. In 330 B.C.E. it was ordered that a public copy of the text of the tragedians be placed in the State archives supposedly to provide an **authorized version** for actors to use.

[64] Thomas Falkner, "Scholars versus actors: texts and performance in the Greek tragic scholia", *Greek and Roman Actors*, eds. Pat Easterling and Edith Hall, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 342.

further states that "tragedies, under the eyes of the god, were the culmination of a process of communal self-display and self-definition."[65]

Privileging the written text does not seem to come from the fifth century Greeks. Even in fourth century Athens the courts regarded oral testimony more than documentary evidence.[66] Plato objects to writing as

> a recipe for recollection, not for memory: your pupils will have the reputation for wisdom without reality: they will receive a quantity of information (*polyekooi)* without proper teaching, and will seem knowledgeable when they are for the most part ignorant.[67]

Socrates claims that true knowledge cannot be acquired from writing and writing is only useful for storing up things for the forgetfulness of old age. "One cannot question a piece of writing, it can only say the same thing over and over again."[68] He further condemns those who use written text in performance:

> Nothing serious has ever been written in prose or poetry, or spoken for that matter, if by speaking one means the kind of recitation that aims merely at creating belief, without examination and instruction.[69]

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[65] Wiles, (1997) pp.26-27.

[67] Plato (275 a-b)quoted in Rosalind Thomas, "Prose Performance Texts," *Written Texts and the Rise of Literate Culture in Ancient Greece,* Ed. Harvey Yunis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 167.

[68] Socrates (276d) Quoted in Thomas (2003) 168.

[69] Socrates (277e) Quoted in Thomas, (2003) 168.

In the fourth century B.C.E. Aristotle still speaks of writing as serving particular functions: "moneymaking, household management, learning things and civic affairs."[70] The ability to write also seems independent of the ability to read and the Greek word *agrammatos* and its Latin equivalent, *illitteratus* can be translated to mean *uncultured.* Aristotle uses the word *agrammatos* to refer to animals that are "unable to utter articulate sounds."[71] The same descriptions were made by Romans to characterize the barbarian. Oliver Taplin writes in 1978 that there is still a tendency "to regard any information written in ancient Greek (or Latin) as above criticism."[72] The value placed upon the written document seems to have proliferated within the ruling classes of the Romans despite the warnings of Greek philosophers. Greeks who were literate were prized by the Romans. The practice became institutionalized within the Christian church in the Middle Ages. Writing and reading separated those of money, property and birth from the lower ranks and allowed those in power to write their own histories, interpret what was written and decide which class, gender, and race would receive the gift of literacy.

By concentrating upon the few remaining written texts of a predominately oral culture, large segments of a society are often misrepresented or excluded completely by contemporary historians. Without a cultural evaluation of the class structures within ancient societies and the prejudices of those writing the histories the found texts are of questionable value today even though they remain tools of various ideologies. Ancient church texts referring to Pagan ritual as devoid of the sacred and to theatrical performers

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[70] William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) 66.

[71] Ibid, 6.

[72] Oliver Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus* (London: Methuen & Company, 1978) 436,

as despised by God and vanquished from history should be noted as written by those hostile to performances found in the *old religion*.

To deny the importance of the written would be to deny a history based upon the written remains.[73] I suggest that the theatre history of fifth century Athenian drama seems to be largely based upon evidence found in State contracts. "The major step toward drama seemingly was taken during the sixth century B.C.E., when it was accorded official recognition."[74] Such a privileging of source within the State authorized functions discounts the parallel non-literate forms of theatre which existed throughout ancient Greece and the rest of the world, promoting the historical assumption that performance outside of the State was inconsequential to Western theatre. Any history of the sixth or fifth century Greek performance is riddled with assumptions and should be viewed as possibility not fact. This study will argue that by valuing the written, largely produced by a ruling class, theatre history has distorted the oral and unsanctioned theatrical performances of the masses and oral performance cultures. This study also perceives the fifth century Greek written texts as based in the construction of illusory *ideals* within the inversion process of Western ideology. The consequences of the weighting of the written within theatre histories has contributed to distortions of ancient and Indigenous oral performance.

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[73] Only one complete Greek play, Menander's *Dyskolos* has reached us from antiquity and it was written in the third century C.E. (Vince, 39) The earliest history in the Western world is the work of Herodotos of Halikarnassos, written in the second half of the fifth century B.C.E.

[74] Brockett, 14.

Methodology

Chapters two through four establish the problem within theatre history concerning its perception of Ancient Greek and Native American performance. The chapters trace a lineage of historical writing about Greek theatre and Indigenous rituals revealing Western ideology's strangle hold upon theatre history. These early chapters focus upon the many misconceptions and exclusions pertaining to popular theatre outside of State or church sanctioned performance and also track the construction of *false consciousness* within performance histories beginning with the early Roman Republic and ending with Europe's encounter with the Americas. Chapters two through four examine the constructed prison within theatre histories and its product of binary categories. The chapters recognize the cultural residue which continues to form the *blinders* that limit our view of both ancient and Native American performance. By focusing upon ideologies and cultural influences the chapters explain how perceived differences were defined and examines their impact upon theatre history. Chapters five and six offers an alternative historiography that will give us a more complex view of both cultures and their performance.

Chapter two reexamines a Roman performance history based upon the writings of the patrician class. The chapter constructs the weight placed upon Greek *drama* as a Roman patrician fashion, separate and unique from popular theatrical entertainment during the Republic and Empire. Chapter three explores early Christianity, performance and the writings of the church which pertain to theatre from the fall of Rome to the

beginnings of the Renaissance. It negotiates the cultural influences of the early church as a Christian identity is formed through its opposition to Paganism. The chapter examines a medieval theatre history based upon early Christian writings and the impact of designating popular theatre as a Pagan and therefore profane product. It also reflects theatre history's dependence upon prejudicial writings of the period as a means to construct a medieval performance history that largely ignores all but Christian and State performances. Chapters two and three trace oral popular performance forms and their resistance to, and appropriation by, the dominant ideology of the era. Locating the sacred within or without performance is also noted as a cultural means to differentiate class structures.

Chapter four examines the first encounters between the European and the Indigenous of the Americas. The chapter assembles the argument of past cultural influences, noting how classical myth dominates each culture's perception of the other. It depicts past ideologies found within early Christianity and the Roman Empire that have shaped theatre history's representation of Native American performance. The chapter also notes the complete separation of sacred and secular within theatre and ritual performance during the Renaissance. It exposes how many written accounts during this period of exploration are contaminated by class structures and religious dogma and yet, remain influential within history's perception of the first encounters, The chapter explores the ways in which theatre history continues to distort the image of the Native American, even as the ancient Athenian performance is cemented into a dead and heightened icon.

Chapter five begins by examining some current scholarly arguments pertaining to fifth century B.C.E. performance. It reviews the positions and continuation of theatre scholars bound by categories forged by cultural influences. However, the chapter then offers an alternative historiography of ancient Athenian performance by examining the performance as a sacred tribal ritual based upon its placement within the *xenismos* ritual form. Chapter five introduces Athenian performance within the City Dionysia as one of several elements: procession, sacrifice, ritual dining and performance, creating the ritual form which functions to welcome a god. The chapter then expands to examine the ritual elements within the Dionysia performances: sacred space, communal participation, poet as sacred channel, costumes and masks, and inversion. The final segment of chapter five focuses upon the ritual functions of the City Dionysia performance for the tribes. The chapter does not negate the Athenian ritual enactments as the source of Western theatre, but views fifth century B.C.E. Greek performances as theatre and ritual which functioned in this ancient tribal society as both sacred and profane entertainment, solemn and riotous teachings, and the bridge between the spiritual world and the community.

Chapter six reviews the location of Apache performance within the Western theatrical narrative. The chapter then examines the performance of a contemporary Apache tribe's annual ceremony as possessing similar ritual elements, as the City Dionysia. The chapter explores tribal performance as both dramatic, highly theatrical and also steeped in sacred rituals operating in form and function much like the City Dionysia for its tribal culture. It locates the performance as an element of the ritual form known as *Na ii'ees*, the Apache female puberty ritual. Through this alternative historiography our

knowledge of performance and the cultural importance of the enactment within the tribe is expanded, but also our view of ancient tribal performance is illuminated.

I conclude my study questioning Western scholarship's ability to analyze or interpret an oral performance culture if we continue to be bound by categories created by ideology's inversion process or fail to recognize our own distorted vision. It is my hope that this study offers an alternative means to review ancient as well as contemporary performance. Although I used Apache and fifth century B.C.E. Athenian performance as my model, the same historiography can be used with many varied cultures and their enactments. Through a comparison of similarities instead of differences a more complex view of oral cultures and the location of performance within ritual forms is illuminated. I do not think we can ever really know the ancient world of the Greeks or the contemporary culture of the Apache, but I believe theatre historians can acquire a greater knowledge of each culture by re-viewing their performances through both ritual and theatrical lenses. The purpose of this study is to expose the problem which exists today within theatre history and to introduce an alternative way of seeing the temporal *lived exchange* within tribal oral performance cultures.

A study such as mine relies on the research of many scholars of distinction across diverse disciplines encompassing archaeology, religious studies, history, cultural studies, anthropology, literary theory, Native American studies, classic studies and theatre history. In addition to these essential sources of historical data there are several scholars whose theoretical writings have effected the overall concept of my research. Their ideas, histories and musings have challenged my vision, clarified my argument and shaped my methodology. Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society* (1983) and his perception of the

incomplete and misrepresented histories as essentially class-based, channeled my energies toward ancient oral performance outside of the ruling classes. His focus upon literary canons that are confined to culturally interpreted *high* art as the source of history's silence had a profound effect upon my research as my attention was turned upon the silences within the Western theatrical canon. Archaeologist Michael Shanks and theatre director Mike Pearson combined their fields to create *Theatre/Archaeology* (2001). Their methodology shifted how I, a theatre historian, review historical events. Within their book they explore how the found ancient artifact shapes performance and how performance reshapes the artifact. The *life* of the found remains is reinterpreted, reshaped, and culturally *recontextualized* to *fit* the present society and yet, the very presence of the ancient object carries its own cultural influence. The history or original context of the object no longer can be found, but what was once *dead* and without meaning has been given a new life, a new context and is reborn as a powerful cultural icon devoid of all, but the reconstructed and fabricated image of what once *was.* *Theatre/Archaeology*'s continually evolving artifact fused with James M. Decker's theory of the ever-changing process of power he terms *Ideology* (2004) have shaped this entire study. These two theoretical views of the artifact, its cultural image, and its reconstructed meaning within ideology are the framework for this study. Michael Shank's found artifacts are the cultural residue of classical antiquity which Decker's Western ideology has appropriated for contemporary use.

Native American scholars such as Stephen Greymorning, Ward Churchill, Vine Deloria Jr., and Donald Fixico assisted me to attempt to see through the colonized eyes and view another culture from the point of view of its own members. It has allowed me

to realize their frustration at the distortions within a Western history of their culture and understand the misrepresentations that occur when applying Western theories to a non-Western population. Their writings have also exposed the *false consciousness* that appears in contemporary scholarship concerning the American *Indian* which often still plague the writings of those outside of the Indigenous community despite the best intensions.

The Roman concept of *the just war* or the early Christian binary of the female as whore/virgin are only two examples of cultural influences still infecting the contemporary unconscious of Western society. These ancient structures, concepts, and ideals, although *re-costumed*, are especially prevalent within theatre histories and have retained their power to restrict and hold long dead constructed images within place. Prime examples of these powerful and yet illusory images are evident in the continued nineteenth century representation of the Native American, early English actresses described as whores, the theatre of the *common* man ignored as nothing more than bear fights and vulgar farce or the idea that European theatre sprang from the writings of noble Greeks. I see this as a pervasive problem within theatre history which I have chosen to address within the next few chapters. It is not upon the abstract theory which abounds, reshapes and transgresses that I focus, but towards the artifacts of fifth century Greek theatre and Native American ritual which have retained their ancient fabricated images in today's performance histories.

Because ancient Greek theatre has been designated as the foundation of Western dramatic practice it has seemed crucial for scholars to distinguish intellectually between dramatic convention and ritual practice. The ethnocentric belief that the Greek

philosophy and literary mind are basically incomparable with "primitive thought"[75] reflects the inversion process of ideology. To state that there is no evidence that drama arose out of ritual or that all drama originates in ritual are equally problematic views. This is not an argument which can be settled during the pages of this study, if ever, nor is it my intention to do so. The chapters which follow seek to expose *the false consciousness* within theatre history, which has long located one peoples' performance as the source of Western theatre and another as *primitive* ritual. What separates fifth century Greek performance from a contemporary Apache ritual? Is it merely founded in terms such as *ritual, theatre, sacred* and *secular*, based upon function and method, or, are theatrical definitions, canons, and categories, unconsciously, through cultural influences, constructed through shifting representations of inversion? A reconstruction of the cultural influences which have dominated theatre histories illuminate the inherent problem of any history which bases is definitions upon difference. This is not a study of the ancient Greeks nor the contemporary Apache, but a brief glimpse at performance within each culture and how Western theatre history has perceived them. It suggests an alternative means to review both Greek and Apache performance in order to deepen our understanding of each.

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[75] A. David Napier, *Masks, Transformation, and Paradox* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) pp.31-33.

The same theories that encourage a broader view of theatre and the theatrical also called for more precise definitions of terms and clearer distinctions between theatrical and non-theatrical performance.
Ronald A. Vince, Ancient and Medieval Theatre, 1984

CHAPTER 2
INFLUENCES UPON THEATRE HISTORY'S PERCEPTION OF GREEK AND ROMAN PERFORMANCE

Viewing history texts through time reveals an ever-changing pattern of colonialism as the history of the conquered *idea* or people is rewritten through the victor's belief systems. Just as specific events, historical data and even words are reshaped to serve a specific cultural identity, the histories of performance and its forms are pronounced *sacred* and *profane* or *high* and *low* drama. Much of our knowledge of Greek and early Roman performance is incomplete and riddled with fragmentary accounts written centuries after the events occurred, such as those written by Livy, during the reign of Augustus. What little evidence there is largely comes from the writings of the ruling minority (or its slaves)[1] and are subject to class, gender and religious bias. Ancient performance is further obscured as layers of interpretations are placed upon the accounts by centuries of historians and archeologists shaded by their own biases, ideologies, and cultures.

Ancient popular performance, outside of State sanctioned documentation, is often ignored, marginalized, or misrepresented by classical scholars because of their focus upon the literary text and the scholarly mindset that, "the history of Roman theatre has

[1] An educated captured slave was considered a prize during the Republic and Empire and served as scribe, accountant and often biographer for their masters.

often been seen as a continuation of the history of Greek theatre."[2] Ancient theatre history has consequently become a history of those in power and those who are writing. Within an oral culture, this type of historical representation based largely upon the written or State documents, reveals a distorted and limited view of performance while simultaneously locating the sacred or revered exclusively within State sanctioned rituals or within the colonizer's religious preference. By focusing only upon the written remains of a specific class or limited pictorial remains, historians often exclude the possibility of the sacred within the oral non-literate performance of ancient entertainment and neglect the ritual performance as a complex, dramatic, theatrical form. The imposed division between the sacred and secular within a society, where the gods played an active role in all phases of life, can also be viewed as both politically and class based. Historians, who have focused upon this division as the origin of theatre, continue to promote an evolutionary and restricted history of performance tradition.[3] Such histories distort our perception of ancient theatre, neglect indigenous performance perceived as inconsequential, and force a chronicle of performance constructed to *fit* the European centrist model.

What seems to be commonly *understood* by the ruling classes, general population and State controlled religions and *misunderstood* by historians of Greek antiquity is that for the ancient Greeks, the sacred is not found in performance, but in the *gifts* from gods given to the performer. It was believed the better the performer the greater the gift from

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[2] Vince, 1984, 63.

[3] I define "tradition" through the words of Raymond William: Tradition is "a deliberately selective and connecting process which offers a historical and cultural ratification of a contemporary order." *Marxism and Literature* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977) 117.

the gods. The creator of performance was believed to be a conduit between the gods to the audience that moved information both ways.

> A poet is a light and winged and sacred thing, who is unable to compose until he has been inspired and put out of his senses, and his mind is no longer in him. . . . the poets are merely the interpreters of gods. . .[4]

The act of creation in the mind of the artist, oracle, or priest through the voice or body was the message transmitted from the gods. The enacted ritual or performance was the means by which those watching were transformed by their communication with supreme beings. The enlightenment of the audience through the experience of the *lived exchange* pleased the gods. It was not the story of Greek tragedies, so revered by later scholars in the form of the written text, but the performer's gifts from the gods in the **creation** of dance, music and oral story telling, which opened up a channel of communication between man and Olympus, that was considered sacred to the Greeks. Ancient performance was the product of the sacred.

Fifth century B.C.E. Greek public officials, whom we consider as secular because they are not priests, had all the duties that could be viewed as religious today. The State, in ancient Athens, where theatre supposedly emerged, used performance to maintain the goodwill of the gods. In this ancient society, religion and politics were not easily separated and deities were not an abstract force. It was believed by the ancient Greeks, Romans, and the early Christians that the gods, or God, intervened in human affairs on a

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[4] Plato, *Ion* 534.

regular basis and spiritual authority was also secular power. Working in the area of Greek literary and cultural studies, Christane Sourvirnou-Inwood argues that to the fifth century B.C.E. audiences the tragic chorus was not only perceived as a group of people in the world of the play, in the present's past, but also as a chorus, a group of male citizens acting as ritual performers, in the here and now, a chorus to Dionysus in the world of the present.[5]

Ancient Germanic tribes in Scandinavia, Iceland, England and in continental Germany, like the early Greeks had an extensive oral culture and it was not until their conversion to Christianity that we began to see tribal sacred stories adapted through Christian ideology into a written text form. "That they (the stories and songs) were highly developed we know, because when they eventually came to be written down, they were revealed to be of a complexity in structure that argued a formative period of generations before writing recorded it."[6] That which was spoken or sung by those specifically chosen by the gods, would remain a sacred communication form for centuries among the populations of antiquity and a battle ground among its ruling classes and religions as each sought to contain and control the sacred or *magic* believed to be present within the creation of performance.

In an ancient world where the breath of the gods was believed to be felt in every step and moment of life, fifth century Greek theatre was both sacred and a conversation between the community and their gods. Dressed in the robes of Greek priests and using

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[5] Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion* (London: Lexington Books, 2003) 50.

[6] Alan Bates Lord, *Epic Singers and Oral Traditions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) 20.

the gesticular language of the *mimos*,[7] citizen performers, for one day a year, danced and sang upon purified ground beneath the shadow of Athena's temple. Performance created the conduit through which their audience could question and understand that which was unknowable. As the sacred gift of oral composition was relegated to a written form and performance to replication, the temporal and on-going conversation between populations and their gods became fixed and *dead*. Today, some scholars have even questioned whether Homer was a man or simply the term used for the *storytellers*, who through the whisperings of gods composed in oral form the ancient legends and histories of a people.

Just as the sacred songs and stories of the ancient northern tribes did not suddenly appear with the written text neither do the Greek revered dramas or the legends of the many *Homers*. Aeschylus was only the first *sacred* creator who was documented by found written text and State proclamation. Thespis[8] was not the first Greek actor. He was merely the first for which we have a written record. For example, fragments of a marble stele found on the island of Paros[9] in 1627 provided historians with many of the historical dates to support assumptions concerning ancient Greek theatre.

> On this stone, the date of 534 B.C.E. was recorded as the first known instance of a tragic contest in Athens, with Thespis as the victor. However, today we know the

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[7] Jody Enders, *Rhetoric and the Origins of Medieval Drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992) 19.

[8] Some scholars even view Thespis as a word for a particular type of performer, not the name of a particular individual.

[9] Seventy miles from the city of Athens.

> inscription was not cut until 264-263 B.C.E., some 270 years after the fabled events. [10]

Historians' dependence upon found written remains has enshrined such fixed dates regardless of their *misreadings* and *reasonable doubts*. Such found written evidence continues to mark the beginning of secular theatre and ignore any possibility that the dramatic texts were only an outline created after, not before, the sacred and oral conversations.

A possible explanation for the lack of the written dramatic texts during the fifth century B.C.E. performances may simply be because they were not written, but composed orally. Literacy was not prevalent before or during the time of Aeschylus and perhaps, similar to Socratic writings, the conversation was framed by the written word because it was a particularly interesting or useful conversation for the elite. "The written culture of antiquity was in the main restricted to a privileged minority."[11] It should not be forgotten that the sacred within ancient Athens was located within the gifts of the performer in the act of composing orally and the channeled *lived* performance. Almost two thousand years of theatre pass before the origin of Western dramatic form was relocated within the written and non-performed, translated, adapted and reinterpreted ancient conversations between the Greeks and their gods.

The State in Rome, like Greece, defined its religion and appointed its priests and festival days. However, unlike the Greeks who honored their performers, the Roman upper classes pronounced performers *infames* and sanctioned theatre of the Republic was

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[10] Clifford Ashby, *Classical Greek Theatre: New Views of an Old Subject* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999). 21.

no longer a conversation with the gods nor were its *histriones* seen as channeling the divine dialogue. Beginning with the assimilation of Greek drama into Roman culture and ending at the rise of Christianity, this chapter attempts to illuminate the battle for interpretation and control of performance that took place within ancient Rome, as a patrician class shaped their identity distinct from those beneath them. This chapter examines how and why Roman performance became a tool of religion and politics by its ruling class and what effect the practice and its found remains have had upon the Western theatre narrative. Theatrical offerings outside of the Dionysian festivals or the sanctioned Roman theatres are largely ignored within theatre histories even though alternative performance is evident and prolific throughout the Greek States and Roman Republic. The chapter depicts an alternative theatre existing outside of the sanctioned and patrician based performance. The definition of the sacred, as that which is regarded with reverence and its location within popular and formal performance, is explored through the juxtaposed treatment of Greek dramatic texts and the nomadic *mimos* troupes by the Roman patrician class.

Three forms of historic documentation within this chapter are reviewed and their influence upon the theatrical narrative is noted: found written texts; government decrees; and historical scholarship. I begin this examination of Greco-Roman influence upon theatre history with the nomadic performance troupes because: they span the entire time period of this chapter; are frequently ignored or misrepresented in the traditional performance narrative; maintain the oral performance form throughout the known ancient world; and are continuously persecuted by those in power.

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[11] William Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) 337.

If it is true that Thespis traveled from city to ancient city in a curtained wagon, his historical description describes a member of a *mimos troupe.* While the majority of theatre scholars perceive the traveling performers as marginal secular entertainers, some scholars have argued that these nomadic entertainers were carriers of an *other* sacred. It seems logical these alternative performances, popular throughout the ancient world, although not sanctioned by the State, may have been perceived by the general population as a product of the sacred gifts of the performer or as carriers of ancient sacred rituals and mystical secrets.

Mimos

The traveling troupes are largely ignored as the source of Western theatre. This may be due to their origins in Shamanism among pre-agricultural, nomadic, non-citizen performers, their universal appeal to the general population, and a lack of written texts associated with their performance. What is fascinating about these non-literary performance troupes, who became popular entertainers during the Roman Empire, is that their fragmented history is largely documented from the writings of those who restricted and persecuted them. Existing in the margin of civilizations, often outside of known histories, and cloaked with the ecstatic mysteries of the shaman they were called *mimos* by the Greeks, those who imitate; in the northern European tribes they were called *scops,* those in the ring of worshippers who had the gift; and *mimae* and *sceneci*, indecent and blasphemous performers by the Romans.[12]

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[12] Rogan P. Taylor, *The Death and Resurrection Show* (London: Anthony Blond,1985) pp. 67-8.

Beacham suggests that "adaptability and minimal staging requirements"[13] explain why the *mimae* troupes remained popular throughout the thousand years of the Roman Republic/Empire. In contrast, Brockett describes the Roman *mimae* forms of entertainment as essentially a short dramatic form, but one that could also be very elaborate and complex in its use of spectacle and large casts during the Empire.[14] The longevity of the *mimae's* popularity among the general population is quite possibly due to their marginal status within communities as the *outsider, which* allowed the performers to remain a brutal and comic objective mirror where no man or god was safe from their burlesque. The troupes' universal appeal to an audience outside of the ruling classes may be connected to their improvised performances that could be both topical and localized. Their enactments also spoke to the audience through a recognized connection with the sacred gifts of the gods and *magic* of the shaman (born in the ancient Shamanism of the nomads), which could heal and transform its audience as clown, prophet, storyteller, magician and traveler. Taylor implies that the *mimos'* wide range of talents, such as juggling, singing, tightrope or stilt walking, dancing, and spectacle, grew as a means to engage the diverse urban audiences through *ecstatic magic*.[15] However, the diverse entertainments may also have been a method to disguise their attacks upon the aristocracy. Wisdom often concealed in the buffoon or *fool* allowed laughter to soften the sharp edge of criticism.

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[13] Beacham 129.

[14] Brockett 31.

[15] Taylor pp. 57-59.

The division between State sanctioned performance, enacted within a sacred space by Greek citizens, and theatre performed by traveling groups of entertainers seems to have existed long before and parallel to, the religious festivals of Dionysus. Troupes of *masked men* were documented in Sparta as early as seventh century B.C.E.[16] and *Mimos'* plays in Megara in the sixth century B.C.E. Athens provided records of traveling performers in the fifth century B.C.E. with play titles such as: *The Quack Doctor, Dionysus and Ariadne,* and *The Woman Visitor to Isthmia*. In this same century, southern Italy and Sicily favored the *phlyakes* (*mimos* who burlesqued the gods, domestic life, and the powerful) above all other forms of performance.

The comedies of Aristophanes performed in front of the gods and their temples upon sacred ground, recovered in literary form long after their first oral performances, suggest both the acceptance of public ridicule and parody as a prevalent form of humor in the early Greek society and the belief that comedy was also a form of the sacred. What is commonly forgotten by later ages was the pre-classical "belief in the apotropaic power of obscenity."[17] It seems that the Greeks believed in their gods' sense of humor and the power of the satire to transform and enlighten. It is a mistaken belief that all ancient rituals are necessarily solemn. The Satyr play, a comic dance and burlesque of gods and humans, was included in the fifth century B.C.E. performances within the City Dionysia. However, we know probably less about this comic form than we do about the *mimos* troupes. One full script was recovered and attributed to Euripides and there are

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[16] J.H. Towsen, *Clowns* (New York 1976) 38 and Oscar Brockett and Franklin Hildey, *History of the Theatre*, 9th Ed.(Boston: Allyn and Bacon 2003) 43.

[17] Albin Lesky, *A history of Greek Literature*, Trans.mJames Willis and Cornelis de Heer (London: Antony Blond 1966) 234.

fragments from other playwrights, but the form suggests, like the tragedies and ancient comedies of the period, that performance preceded text. Many scholars consider the Satyr play as an ancient performance form from which Greek comedy and tragedy may have emerged.[18] However, this is an assumption that serves the theory of cultural Darwinism and has provoked an evolutionary weighted bias within theatre history.

Possibly improvised, consisting of mimic dance, song, and the satirical treatment of known myths and heroic legends, the Satyr plays were said to be interludes or after pieces of the great tragedies, but this was pure assumption and marginalizes the form. For all we know today, they may have been the ritual centerpiece of the entire festival, but regulated to a minor role due to a lack of written texts and the Western belief that the sacred must be solemn. The historical devaluation of the comic, with its seemingly obscene performances, can be attributed to the Roman aristocracy and was further established during the rise of Christianity and Islam. Later ruling classes valued the more solemn tragedies that existed in text form. The tradition of the Satyr play seems to be ancient and existed before the written documentation within the Greek State sponsored competitions. The similarities between the Satyr play and the *mimos* playlets cannot be ignored. Comedy, in the form of satire and parody, was a prevalent form of popular and formal performance in the Mycenean world and was widespread throughout the Aegean and surrounding populations.

The satiric nomads appeared to be active in the Etruscan cities during the sixth and fifth century B.C.E. as well as in Egypt, Asia, northern and central Europe during the

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[18] Brockett 17.

fourth century B.C.E.[19] The Persian court during its war with Greece was known to use visiting troupes as entertainment.[20] The occupation of the actor was declared *outcaste*[21] in India sometime in the fourth century B.C.E. The ancient laws of Manu, on which the Indian caste system was based, recognized performance troupes. The codification of Roman law in the Twelve Tablets of 450 B.C.E. severely restricted *mimos* performance, proscribing death for the slander of living persons and severe punishment for political allusions in drama.

> The Romans were probably familiar with the mime from an early date, certainly before the introduction of scripted comedy, and it may have exercised a formative influence on their own emerging theatrical fare of music, songs, jests, dance, and buffoonery.[22]

Troupes were also recorded in Mesopotamia, Syria, Jerusalem, Israel, Lebanon, Russia, and North Africa from 331 B.C.E. onwards.[23] Vases dated 400-325 B.C.E. were found in southern Italy which depict a *mimae* troupe in performance. The temporary stage of a touring troupe and costumes of short padded togas, with the enlarged phallus are represented upon various vases. Whether the padded togas and phallus were

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[19] Taylor pp.14-65, Brockett pp. 42-43, and E.T. Kirby *Ur-Drama: The Origins of Theatre* (New York:: New York University Press 1975) pp. 90-141.

[20] Schmuel Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature in the Medieval Arab World* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press 1992) 10.

[21] J.P. Clebert, *The Gypsies*, Trans. Charles Duff, (New York: Vista Books, 1963) 129.

[22] Richard C. Beacham, *The Roman Theatre and Its Audience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1992) 129.

[23] Moreh, 1.

representative of all touring troupes, carriers of the Athenian myth of *Dionysus' curse*, or the common costume for all comedy players is unknown. The date also suggests that the performances were occurring more than a century before the burlesque phylax plays of the region were written.

The *mimos* were excluded from the Greek professional guild of entertainers, Artists of Dionysus, created during the Hellenic period,[24] and yet, were said to have traveled with Alexander's armies. Oscar Brockett in his *History of Theatre* suggests that the *mimos* were probably the first professional entertainers, the first to include women, and the first to perform without masks. He also alludes to the lack of documentation about them during early antiquity because their performances were not officially sanctioned and did not generate written commentary.

> Many types of popular entertainment are often grouped under the heading of *mime*. . .while they left fewer records, they were certainly a greater part of the lives of the average person in the Hellenistic age.[25]

What we know of these ancient troupes is that they were not simply actors, but also acrobats, singers, musicians, healers, conjurers and jugglers, and they consisted of male and female performers, freedmen, Pagan and Jew,[26] who retained a connection with the ancient Shamanistic religions. They were noted as performing barefoot, with and

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[24] Brockett, 39.

[25] Ibid, 42.

[26] Moreh, 5.

without mask.[27] If typical characters were used, they were usually the "doctor, rustic fool, old crone and a pair of lovers."[28] Richard Beacham, in his *Roman Theatre and Its Audience,* describes the typical troupe as usually small, consisting of two or three performers and notable because of its lack of stock characters.[29] However, Ovid speaks of a *mimae* troupe containing the stock characters of old man, shrewish wife and vapid lover[30] and Brockett suggests the troupes could be large or small during the Empire period. *Mimae* in many regions were mentioned as having shaved heads and faces and sometimes wearing prominent phalluses. They are associated with a colorful patchwork tunic and the *ricinium*, or hood, and often traveled in covered carts, which served as their basic stage.[31] The troupes sometimes performed with a basic *understood* storyline, but the majority of the performances, similar to the *Commedia dell'arte*, were probably improvised and manipulated to fit a specific locality or issue. The performers presented both serious and comic treatments usually satirizing some aspect of local life, religion, or politics.

It has been argued that the *skene* was actually the awning at the rear of these early nomadic carts, serving as a curtain to hide the magic held within.[32] Most theatre scholars represent the *skene* with a much later origin upon the Athenian stage, translating the word

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[27] Plautus' name, which can be translated 'flatfoot', may indicate that at an earlier stage of his career he performed in mimes, whose presenters were also known as *planipes*, 'barefoot performers'.

[28] Taylor, 64.

[29] Beacham, 130.

[30] Ovid, *Trist.,* 2.497-500.

[31] Beacham, 132

[32] Ibid.

to mean *hut* or *tent*, a term used for a temporary structure at the rear of the Greek playing area, "intended originally as a dressing room, but later incorporated into the action of some imaginative playwright."[33] If the word does begin with the ancient troupes it is an example of exclusion or assumption which promotes the Western view of theatre as springing from the sacred arenas of Athens. Similarly, Brockett noted that the majority of scholars tend to discuss the *sceneci* "almost wholly in terms of obscene or violent examples" and views many of theses testimonies as originating from early Christian writers attempting to negate the appeal of the performers.[34] Attacks upon the *mimae* are found in the writings of the Roman elite during the Republic and Empire, who were often the focus of the performers' disguised satire.

> References abound to the performers' shocking behavior both onstage and off, and the disgrace of associating with them, while commentators frequently lumped them together with other low-life denizens; whores, pimps, parasites, and the like.[35]

Considered outcasts with no loyalty for any formal power structures, the troupes were a distinctive form of entertainment outside of State control and religions because of their biting satires, parodies of the powerful, multiple techniques of performance and retention of the old beliefs of rural populations. The plays of the *mimos* retained the attitude of the nomad toward the settled, and mercilessly characterized the weaknesses,

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[33] Brockett, 28.

[34] Ibid, 51.

[35] Beacham, 131.

cruelty, and inflated manners of *settled* society while retaining the seductive mystery surrounding nomadic groups. Often involving a trance-like death, a shaman-like healing rite and a resurrection which connected directly to ancient seasonal mythologies and rites[36] the *mimos* inspired awe within rural and city populations. The popularity of these performers among the general population from pre-history through the Middle Ages seemed to cross all cultures, languages and shifting ideologies and was documented (if only by declarations of their infamy) by their continuous activity throughout the known world.[37]

By the first Punic War (264-241 B.C.E.) the *mimae* had become the favored entertainment of the *plebs* of Rome and were considered dangerous by the aristocracy. The Republic of Rome and its senate could not entirely rid themselves of what they considered blasphemy and treasonous, but they could impose severe restrictions on the performers. Early Roman governmental policy and its attempted control of the performer began the segregation of the actor from *proper* society in the West, which continued for centuries. Early nomadic theatre practitioners were subject to extensive caste-laws and legal prejudices within Republic.

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[36] Kirby pp. 1-33.

[37] E. Catharine Dunn, "Clerics and Juglaria: A Study in Medieval Attitudes", *Between Folk and Liturgy*, Alan Fletcher and Wim Husken, eds. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997) pp.160161. This essay, using the writings of E.K.Chambers (*The Medieval Stage* Vol. I and II, 1903), Ramon Merendez Pidal (*Poesia juglaresco y juglares*, 1969) and Edmond Faral (*les Jongleurs en France au moyen age* 1964, 1910) supports the *mimae* as flourishing from Roman antiquity into the 13th century under the labels of minstrels (England), *julaeia* (Spain), *jonglerie* (Fance),

> Popular entertainers were allowed neither to vote nor to achieve public office. Men could not represent themselves in civil courts, nor could their women appoint anyone to speak for them. They were refused the right to bring criminal action and were not allowed to marry outside of their profession.[38]

Roman prejudice against *mimae* was in direct contrast with the value placed upon the entertainer within the Northern tribes of Europe, who saw their performers as retaining the magic of the performing shaman or the central tribes of Europe who worshipped Wodan (Wotan, Odin), who was a god of magic and ecstatic poetry.[39] Long before the Christian influence of the early Middle Ages, before their territories were conquered by Roman forces, northern and central European ancient performers were considered magical and were thought to be the carriers of tribal myths and histories through song and story-telling. The performances were associated with transformation and the performers seen as selected for their supernatural powers. Even in Rome *mimae* performances were often perceived as healing rites and were presented to ward off the effect of epidemics or a bad harvest. The attitude of the Roman audience toward the *stranger* represented by the nomadic troupes was class based. The patrician class viewed the foreigner as suspicious and inferior. The plebs and lower classes perceived the stranger as mystical and the holder of secrets. Nevertheless, what was seen as a highly spiritual act by a German ruler, who played an instrument publicly, was viewed by the

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[38] Ibid 68.

[39] Hilda.R. Ellis-Davidson, *Pagan Scandinavia*,(New York: F.A. Praeger, 1967) 109.

Roman ruling class as a stumble into the lower depths of humanity: "For a Nero to perform among the *sceneci* was to descend; for a Hrothgar to touch the harp was a customary and honorable act."[40] The early church favored the Roman view of the *mimae* during the Empire and as Christianity rose in power, it began forcefully to remove the belief in the sacred or *magic* within popular performance.

However, the troupes remained popular during the Republic and the Empire. Hundreds of warnings from the powers within the early Christian church and the constant decrees against the performer[41] from the sixth through the tenth century C.E. indicate that *mimae* were still active in the Roman territories, the British Isles, and throughout early Europe despite the claims of their eradication. We know that ruling chieftains and kings after the decline of the Empire retained the services of the troupes. The name of the *mimae* or *scop* may have changed to players, jesters, gypsies, ioculators and minstrels, but their appearance continues at Pagan and Christian festivals and also at court functions from 500 to 900 AD. Considered blasphemous by the Church, the traveling troupes still seem to be carriers of a *healing magic* connected to the performers' gifts. They also compose and distribute the ancient legends, histories, and cultural beliefs to the general population.

The influence of the *mimae* performance upon medieval performance and modern Western theatre is a necessary history. Its inclusion within the narrative theatre histories tells a very different story than the evolution of secular drama from the sacred

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[40]E.K. Chambers, *The Mediaeval Stage* Vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1903) 30.

[41] Ibid 1-390. The first two chapters of the book list numerous and constant decrees from the church focused upon the performance troupes or the actor.

performance of Dionysian festivals or its subsequent reemergence from the early Christian church.

> The seed of modern drama is held to either in the so-called *tropes*, elaborations on the chanted liturgy associated mainly with the Benedictine monasteries of St. Gall in Switzerland and St. Martial at Limoges in France, or in the Mass itself.[42]

The traveling performance troupes depict an uninterrupted form of theatre in parallel to the sanctioned sacred performances of Roman, Greek and Christian cultures. Their performances characterize a theatre, which is both sacred and secular, popular and reviled, and its invisibility within the performance histories reflects an approach to historical narrative which is both class-based and text oriented. The influence of the *mimae* performance methods appeared in all forms of theatre throughout Europe and yet, its place in the evolutionary theory of drama is misrepresented within many contemporary theatre histories.

The major theatre historians of the twentieth century give very little space to the traditions of the *mimae.* They are called *mimoi, skenikoi, thymelikoi, mousikoi,* and *orchestai.* As a result, the labels cover a wide spectrum of entertainers: singers, dancers, imitators, and pantomimes. By the end of the Western Empire, the terms seem to refer to the effeminate, unmanly, perverse, and obscene and those who dress up in fancy clothes,

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[42] Vince (1984) 23.

imitate others unlike themselves, and indulge in perversions.[43] Roman *mimae* are said to wear masks, carry clubs and wear phalloi in contrast to the Greek *mimos* who did not and usually had shaven heads. However, these accounts vary and due to their improvised performances, nomadic nature, confusion with other theatrical forms, and condemnation by the early church, little of the *mimae* performances are documented after the rise of Christianity. "Many sources stress the lascivious dress and trappings of the mime actresses."[44] Another states that during the Hellenistic era, theatres were fitted with a wooden stage in the *orchestra* to accommodate the mime performances.[45] Nothing of the Byzantine mime performance has survived, although we know they were prolific and numerous.

Theatre historian Richard Beacham allows only a brief paragraph in his final chapter upon Roman Theatre concerning performance after the Trullan Council's ban in 692 until the mid-fifteenth century and yet, hints at the influence of the *mimae:*

> . . . when *commedia dell'arte* first emerges from the mist (already it seems in a fairly well-developed form) its striking resemblance to earlier popular drama makes it difficult indeed to doubt the survival of an ancient craft.

However, by ignoring some eight hundred years of performance with the statement, "By its nature, such activity (strolling players, jesters, mimes, and mountebanks) left little

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[43] Walter Puchner, " Acting in Byzantine Theatre", *Greek and Roman Actors,* eds. Easterling and Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 313-314.

[44] Ibid. The *Codex Theodsianus* XV.7.11. forbids actresses (mimes) to wear precious bracelets and silk dresses embroidered with gold.

[45] Gregory of Nazianzus uses the word *Skene* for the wooden platform of the mimes.

concrete evidence behind . . . ," [46] Beacham disregards both the *mimae's* influence upon European theatre and its popularity among the population. The troupes' performance form and their proliferation throughout the Roman territories was evident in the writings of the Roman, Lucian of Samosata, as he discusses the art of rhetorical delivery and depicts an art which has incorporated the language of the *mimae.* Brockett's chapter entitled "European Theatre in the Middle Ages" compares the Greek ancient theatre environment of sixth century B.C.E. to the early medieval period. He also notes at least four different kinds of performance during this period (500-900 AD): "the remnants of the Roman mimes, Teutonic minstrelsy; popular festivals and Pagan rites; and Christian ceremonies."[47] He further states that the *scop* continued to flourish from the fifth century C.E. until the eighth when the church denounced these performers and branded them as infamous along with the actor and mime. Three centuries of popularity and yet, the majority of any history of medieval theatre rests heavily on Christian or State sanctioned performances.

> Initial interest in folk customs and drama was largely a phenomenon of the nineteenth century, but early stage historians found it difficult if not impossible to determine any positive influence it may have had on the medieval religious theatre.[48]

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[46] Beacham, 200.

[47] Brockett, 74.

[48] Vince, (1984) 26.

The prolific carriers of theatre seem neglected in favor of the ideology promoted in sporadic Christian spectacles or State receptions in the chronicle of theatre history. O. B. Hardison in *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (1965) argues that no difference between religious ritual and drama existed in the ninth century. For him, the theatre of medieval Europe was the religious ritual.[49]

Harris in his *Medieval Theatre in Context* provides much more space for the oral performances, but his study is a general survey and his scholarship lacks documentation. An example of his assumptions can be found in his brief passage pertaining to the *scops* that he suggests developed from a new found nationalism as the Northern tribes conquered Rome.

> Tribal warriors began to fuel their nationalistic spirit with a new form of entertainment, the lays, or epics, about heroes of their race and their mighty deeds, sung to the harp by musicians who were known variously as skops, skalds, gleemen, minstrels, jongleurs, or troubadors, depending on when and where they sang. It seems, too, that lays were not always presented by the solo minstrel, but sometimes involved mimetic dance and a male voice choir.[50]

Harris' chapter, which he titles "Christians versus Pagans", is riddled with possibilities and reads as a fictional novel. He founds his theories on the Church's continuous

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[49] O.B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1965) 41. And Vince (1984) 25.

[50] John Wesley Harris, *Medieval Theatre in Context* (London: Routledge,1992) 18.

condemnations and proclaims there was an active, if humble, theatrical movement of troupes consisting of acrobats, mimes or singers traveling the roads of ancient Europe.

Historian Rogan Taylor claims the *poet* is a Christian concept that alleviated the obstacle of the *scops'* sacred standing among the populations of northern Europe.

> The European folk, unlike the citizens of Rome, held their entertainers in extremely high regard. To overcome this awkward problem, there developed the concept of the 'poet' as someone removed from popular entertainment. This was a novel concept for northern Europe, for the poet had never before been seen as distinct from other entertainers. The creation of a type of higher performer was an attempt to split off a respectable segment of the show. . . .Once a wedge had been driven in, the remainder of showbiz could be safely consigned to spiritual oblivion.[51]

By removing the *poet* from the realm of demonism represented by the traveling troupes and giving them a place of honor in the secular world, the church could defame and reclaim the once sacred *scop*.

Just as Homer and his ancient oral histories were reclaimed and privileged as epic poetry, [52] instead of vilified as a Pagan history of gods and men, the *scop*, beloved by the rural villages, is transformed from a sacred and Pagan oral storyteller into literary poet.

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[51] Taylor, 69.

[52] Lord, 1.

The improvised music and songs of the nomadic *scops*, once sacred to Northern Pagan tribes, were converted into religious hymns of the Christian faith or love songs and those who sing them are renamed minstrels. Still nomadic, still a configuration of clown, magician, healer, singer, dancer, and improviser, and still very much a part of medieval popular culture, the *mimae* troupes and their ancient magic are referred to as *folk drama*, *mummers' plays* or the *old religion* in narrative histories. It is often considered that war or trade linked the Roman and Greek societies, but quite possibly, it was also nomadic performers, who, long before slaves were taken and writings shared, carried their sacred gifts of magic, myth, dance, and song to diverse prehistoric populations.

The ruling class of the Romans, the medieval church and contemporary historians spend a great deal of time and energy proclaiming the troupes and their performances as profane and yet, the troupes stubbornly continue. The division between ancient sacred and secular performance, if viewed as enforced by those in power or existing in parallel, negates the cultural evolutionary assumption that ancient secular theatre is simply the residue of sacred ritual performance. Many scholars such as Religionist Theodore Gaster argue that ritual becomes theatre when it is no longer inspired by belief. "Experience becomes mimetic, imaginative, and drama is what is left when the ritual act ceases to be a direct impersonatory; a ritual form becomes a mere convention."[53] Others view the origin of theatre, as having nothing to do with ritual, but springing from "the conscious

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[53]Gaster. (1961) *Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Norton, 1977) p.103.

acts of rational men."[54] Such assumptions, largely accepted within theatre histories, are supported by the writings and opinions of those in power and depict a theatre history based upon the class structures of early Roman and medieval societies. Such histories ignore the oral and popular performance forms and privilege the theatre of the ruling classes while simultaneously accepting that popular entertainment could not possibly be sacred and that performed rituals are too static and too simplistic a base to be the source of the theatrical dramatic form.

Rome

Rome began to assimilate Greek culture long before its armies marched upon Greek cities or Alexander spread Hellenic codes through his known world. Contemporary archaeologists uncovered a sanctuary to the ancient Roman god of destruction and devouring fire, Volcanus, in an early layer of the Roman Forum, dated from the sixth century B.C.E. Within the sanctuary, they found a black-figured vase from Athens with a representation of Hesphaestus, the Greek god of fire and blacksmiths.[55] Rome's first history was written by a Roman, Fabius Pictor, in Greek and as early, as 433 B.C.E., the Greek god Apollo was adopted by the city of Rome when plague broke out within the city. The foundation myth of Rome was also linked with Greece through Aeneas, a refugee from Troy.

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[54] Vince (1984) 21. Noting Gerald F. Else, *Origin and Early Form of Greek Tragedy* (New York: 1965) 63. "The Conclusion is obvious: tragedy did not begin as cult drama, Dionysiac or otherwise, and its mythical material normally had nothing tro do with Athens."

[55] M.Beard, J. North and S. Price. *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1998) 12.

As Rome began to conquer the Greek territories, in the third century B.C.E., the elite membership of the Roman social structure consisted of those of wealth, property, education, and political office. These patricians began separating themselves from an ever-growing mass of slaves, foreigners, freedmen, merchants, craftsmen and the illiterate. The *plebian* class (merchants and craftsmen) grew in strength and power during the period leading to the first Punic War (264-241B.C.E.) allowing them to acquire wealth, power and social prestige and eventually high political office. It was at this time that Brockett states that the Romans first encountered Greek culture in southern Italy where the *mimae* troupes were flourishing.[56] However, it seems very unlikely that the nomadic troupes and their performances, which are evident throughout the known world by the fifth century B.C.E., suddenly emerged within Roman culture because of its invasion of Greece. Possibly, due to its oral nature and improvisational methods, Roman performance is completely ignored before the absorption of Greek culture. It should be noted that the early Roman ruling class did not view the performer's gifts as sacred and that performance was sanctioned as sacred if it followed correct form and repetition. It was not seen as a means of conversation between god and man, but a ritual deemed as pleasing to the gods that must be performed in precise formulations to be accepted. However, the diverse population of Rome, which grew as its territories expanded, viewed performance and performers through varying degrees of the sacred. Theatre performance served a complex range of functions depending upon the population and audience beliefs.

As the Greek cities began to fall, Rome filled with the spoils of the conquered: Greek artifacts, slaves, writings and ideas, which over the centuries shaped Roman

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[56] Brockett 43.

dramatic text form. However, theatre historians list the performance of Roman written drama (225 B.C.E. - 29 B.C.E.E) and its adoption of a Greek dramatic form and story line as short lived if compared to the thousand years of Roman dominance. This is based on the earliest plays of the Greek slave Andronicus (approximately 225 B.C.E.) until Varius Rufus' tragedy, *Thyestes* (29 B.C.E.). This brief history of the performance of Roman written dramas is also founded in the perception that plays such as the plays of Seneca (5 B.C.E.-65 C.E.), the only Roman tragedies which have survived in written form, were not performed.

> References occur to other tragic playwrights from time to time, extending into the second century C.E., although it must be doubted that they wrote for full-scale performance; probably preferring publication and recitation. The same is likely to have been true of the nine tragedies of Seneca. [57]

The pantomime, a dramatic form danced with a narrator speaking or singing the text was the preferred entertainment of the patrician class during Seneca's life. The possibility that Seneca's tragedies were not performed at a time when his emperor, Nero, was known to dance with his own pantomime performers, is very unlikely.

The diversity of performance forms that existed during the Republic and Empire suggest a continuous and popular theatre distinct from the Greeks. Romans found Greek temples and architecture acceptable; however, Greek science, mathematics, philosophy and the tradition of nudity during the competition of games were viewed with

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[57] Beacham 126.

indifference or as distasteful. *Gymnasia*, which literally mean *places of nakedness,* were much later additions to Roman society along with the invention of the public baths.[58]

> The upper classes in Rome soon developed an attitude that regarded the fine arts as frivolous, foreign, and unsuited to the practice of a serious public figure. The fine arts, practiced by foreigners and inferiors, could serve for adornment, occasional entertainment, or public ritual. Theatre was viewed with suspicion by the aristocracy, as morally threatening and not legitimately 'Roman'. [59]

This attitude of the patricians toward foreign arts gradually changed during the Republic as the ruling class sought to separate themselves from the growing middle and lower classes. Greek artifacts, slaves and art forms became both valued and desired and were perceived as status symbols. The preference for specific Greek plundered objects by educated Roman commanders was documented by Aemilius Paullus' choice of the royal library of Macedonia after his victory over the population in 168 B.C.E. The library contained the writings of the Greek classical philosophers and the Hellenistic written plays . Quintus Caecilius Metellus' selected a specific group of sculptures by Lysippus of Alexander after Rome's final victory over Macedonia in 148.[60] Through the poetry of Ovid of late first century B.C.E., scholars know that the religions and myths of the two cultures were intimately entwined.

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[58] E. Gruen, *Culture and the Identity in Republican Rome* (Ithaca*:* Cornell University Press, 1992) Is an indispensable source in the explanation of the relationship between the Roman and Greek culture.

[59] Gordon Williams, *Change and Decline* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) 103.

Despite their hatred of the Greek form of *mimos'* satires, popular among the lower classes, the Roman elite of the Republic fully embraced the Greek tool of rhetoric as an essential means to speak well before the masses and incorporated the techniques of the *mimae* to enhance their communication skills. Lucian's description of language is a description of the *mimae* performance: "there is a display of mind in performance as well as an expression of bodily development."[61] The language of the *mimae,* "imitative and undertaking to present by means of movement"[62] diffused into all parts of Roman public life: theatre, politics, the games, and the practice of the law. During the final century of the Republic, the ruling classes tolerated the performance of Greek plays in censored Roman theatrical forms as exotic entertainment. The Greeks, although conquered, were admired for their schools and educated slaves. Knowledge of Homer and the Greek tragedies was a mark of social status to the literate Roman upper classes of the late Republic. However, writing, an elite art, was still relegated secondary to the oral in many instances.

Julius Ceasar seems to agree with Socrates in his remarks concerning Gaul when he states that literacy tends to weaken the memory.[63] The cultural hegemony of the patrician class was even more pronounced because it included a knowledge of classics in a foreign tongue.[64] By the second century B.C.E., Roman playwrights were criticized if

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[60] Charles Freeman, *Closing the Western Mind* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 2003) 48.

[61] Enders 19.

[62] A.M. Nagler, *A Source Book in Theatrical History* (New York: Dover, 1952) 62.

[63] Caes, *BG* vi. 14, 4.

[64] J. Harris, 333.

their plays were too "Hellenistic" or not "Hellenistic enough.[65] It became the fashion for the Roman aristocracy during this period and until the end of the Empire to educate their children in the Greek arts, rhetoric and language. Greek dramatic texts, which retold ancient histories and embraced the myths and gods, were acceptable and controllable in written forms, as tools for the schools of rhetoric, and sources for religious doctrine. The Roman restricted educational system reinforced class distinctions and halted any form of upward mobility for the general population. Access to elementary education was limited, and access to the rhetorical education, which was the mark of the elite, was very restricted.[66]

In contrast, it is evident in the decrees of the Republic, that the power and popularity of improvised performance, reverred by the Greeks and embraced by the Roman population, was both feared and deemed profane by the ruling class. Unlike the Greek texts, or their own Roman written adaptations, which could be censored, edited and interpreted by a literate and ruling class, performance and its *lived exchange* was perceived by the patricians as provoking an alternative view of the Roman society and an uncontrolled discourse among *inferiors*. The disdain of an elite, educated class toward the popular tastes of the majority of the Roman population can be found in writers such as Horace several centuries later: "When Greece was captured, she herself made a slave of her savage subduer and introduced her fine arts to the rustics of Rome . . ."[67] This distaste for the lower classes was perhaps based upon the early class structure of Roman

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[65] Beacham pp.27-56.

[66] J. Harris, 333.

[67] Horace, *Epist.,* 2.1. 156-7; 161.

society (753-509 B.C.E.) where inclusion in the ruling class was based on birth, and marriage was forbidden between the patrician order and those who handled the mundane necessities of the urban centers such as trade and crafts. The codification of law in the Twelve Tablets of 450 B.C.E. set social distinctions between groups and individuals that were no longer based entirely on birth, but also upon property. The lifting of the ban on marriage between the *plebs* (merchant and craftsman citizens) and the patricians in 445 B.C.E. greatly assisted the position of those once deemed inferior. Later Roman historians viewed these functional tasks as having low social esteem and moral worth unlike farming and military service, which according to legend, Romulus himself had forbidden the Romans from abandoning.[68]

The immense territory that Rome gathered during the Republic years maintained an upper class that controlled most of the wealth of the cities. In return for their wealth, the upper classes were expected to nurture their home city by financing new buildings and supplying its citizens with food and entertainment. A knowledge of Roman law, training in rhetoric and an ability to speak, read and write Latin remained important attributes for those who sought power in the courts of Rome, regardless of the language of their province. The prejudice toward common entertainment, censored and controlled by those in office as a way to appease the masses, while never challenging Rome's complete power, was in direct conflict with the aristocracy's high regard for Greek dramatic texts that ridiculed and questioned such power gone awry. Building the

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[68] Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita,* 7.2 Documents the events in 364-3 B.C.E..

structures for performances over the entire territory[69] promoted and denigrated live performance. These same patricians, who proclaimed the necessity of theatre to appease the gods, ridiculed the Roman public theatre and praised Greek dramatic texts from a Greek theatre form they had never witnessed. It is these class-based writings, often used to support and document theatre historians' portrait of Roman theatre. "The primary function of written communication is to facilitate slavery"[70] in a society where only the ruling class is literate. Throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries theatre historians continued to adhere to the doctrine of the Roman ruling class, promoting Greek texts and reviling popular entertainment, without recognizing the prejudicial constructions caused by the class division between those writing the histories and the audiences of the Roman theatre.

The irony of the aristocracy's support for that which they despised may be explained by the Roman official's *fear of* and *need for* the votes of the masses and the continued assimilation of conquered cultures ranging from Egypt to Britain. The Roman upper classes needed the loyalty of the masses so they condoned a type of theatre they actually disliked and felt was beneath them. Fifty-five officials were elected each year and though it was against Roman law to *buy* votes through gifts, entertainments were allowed. Money spent upon public entertainments was limited until the latter period of the Republic. As restrictions were removed candidates sponsored lavish spectacles which continued to grow in number. All Roman citizens, women, prostitutes, and many freemen had the right to attend the free entertainments.

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[69] The first known permanent theatre in Rome was built in 55 B.C.E.

[70] M. Cole and S. Scribner, *The Psychology of Literacy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981)

To understand how the theatres in the Roman Empire were used as a means to communicate, control and appease one needs to understand the audience. Those who filled the seats of theatres, were a diverse body and it was upon these playing areas that governors made the policies of the Empire known. Inscriptions scratched upon the benches at the theatre of Aphrodisias leave a telling example of the class structure of the Roman city. Seats were marked for younger men, Jews, elder Jews, butchers, tanners, gardeners and goldsmiths, but were also open for visitors and villagers of the region.[71] Recognizable groups celebrated their cultural identity, loyalty to, and membership in, the urban community within the theatres of the Roman Empire. Although unseated, slaves could attend the entertainments unlike the poor, who had no place in the city's theatre, and retained no entitlements of free or cheap food. The size of the provincial Roman theatres gives some evidence of their importance to the Empire. For example, the hippodrome in Antioch held 80,000[72] audience members and the theatre of Ephesus 24,000.[73] In Caria the theatre of Aphrodisias held 8,000, the smaller odeon, 1,700 and the stadium, 30,000.[74]

The class structure of the Empire, with the supreme rule by an elite educated few, was fueled by the taxes enforced upon those who were powerless to object. Tax exemptions were doled out, or deficits called in, to wealthy land-owners as a means of favor or disfavor within the Roman court and large sums were required for any pursuit of

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38. The authors refer to domination in general not specifically slavery.

[71] Ibid 85.

[72] John H. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986) 447.

[73] Clive Foss, *Ephesus after Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 61.

[74] Kenan T. Erim, *Aphrodisias* (New York: Facts on File, 1986) pp.79,62,68.

office or status within the imperial system. The urban citizens were not subject to a land tax, but the notables were responsible for their population's respect for the law and their deference to the upper class. This deference toward the public official, based upon the belief that these notables spoke for the lower classes, provided entertainment, and maintained the economic health of their cities. Those who collected the taxes for Rome leaned heavily upon their agricultural populations to feed the cities. Civic notables, expected to feed their cities with cheap or free food, were also expected to benefit their cities by providing services such as the upkeep of public baths and the presentation of regular games and entertainments.

Due to the Empire's vast land areas, diverse cultures and languages, the Emperor although considered the supreme power of the Empire, was forced to rely upon local officials whose power equaled or surpassed the Emperor's own governors. Local notables often refused to collaborate with unpopular governors and left them isolated and powerless to enforce the Emperor's policies. Direct opposition to policy or criticism of the Emperor were unheard of, but silent resistance was evident throughout the society. Representatives of the Emperor were never certain if their authority would hold as they distanced themselves from the centers of power. Appointed governors in large, diverse, and riot-prone cities such as Alexandria entered their new home *in fear and trembling*.[75] Late Roman Emperors, who imposed their religious policies upon vast regions of their Empire, were often confronted with their population's silent resistance. Emperor Honorius complained that his laws against Donatists and Pagans in Africa were

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[75] *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium,* 37, Ed. J. Rouge, Sources Chretiennes 124 (Paris: *Le Cerf,* 1966) 174. Quoted in Brown 81.

ineffective because of the "evil sloth of the governors . . . the connivance of their office staffs and the contempt of the municipal senates."[76]

Responsibility for the upkeep of the city and its residents was placed upon the heads of wealthy notables within each region who were expected to provide entertainments for the masses. These performances were to foster loyalty to the Emperor and his representatives, unify the population, and communicate to its citizens. However, due to the immense cost of the games, the staged events took place far less often and in fewer cities throughout the fourth century. The great theatres of the Roman Empire, which once served to appease its population, had become centers of riot by the end of the fourth century AD. Riots were an accepted, although feared, form of expression within the Roman cities. They took on a much more frightening turn during the decline of the Empire. Chanting was an age-old custom and audiences often shouted down unpopular performers or dignitaries delivering unpleasant news in the theatres. These chants, often for lower food prices, sometimes escalated into full-blown chaos as angered audiences poured into the streets. The *mob* was allowed and sometimes promoted for political reasons by Roman rulers. Riot was perceived as a way to release pressures built up within city populations. Theatrical performances, once perceived as both sacred and as a means of population control, had become sites where population's displeasure erupted in rioting at the end of State sanctioned entertainment. The mimae performers, who satirized the ruling class and challenged that which was decreed as sacred within their performances, remained popular street entertainers even as restrictions upon them grew.

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[76] *Sirmondian Constitution* 12 (C.E. 407), Trans. C. Pharr, in *The Thesodisian Code* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952) 483.

The Roman aristocracy during the Republic, which determined the will of the gods and the ways to accomplish it, believed the well-being of the State was intimately tied to the practice of sacred ritual performance. The State sanctioned theatre of the Romans, similar to the Greek fifth century Dionysian festival performances, accomplished its role as a function of religion and a means to unite its audience through shared legends and myths. During the Republic "theatrical offerings (regardless of content) were long thought to be pleasing to (or capable of propitiating) the gods."[77] Beacham's study of Roman theatre supports this view of performance and its sacred function for the early Romans as evidenced by their use of *insaturation.* This was a practice of repeating from its beginning any performance that experienced an omission or was interrupted in any way. *Insaturation* was an Etruscan tradition and probably introduced along with Etruscan sacred forms of dance, music, and gladiator contests to the population before Roman independence in 509 B.C.E. Comparable to the same practice used in formal religious rituals, insaturation was applied even if a dancer stumbled or an actor misspoke his/her lines. Livy suggests that games were ruled invalid if the place of performance was violated and not sanctified.[78] The use of the same myths within theatre as those, which formed the basis of Roman religion, also gave the State sanctioned performances a sacred standing.

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[77] Brockett 46.

[78] Livy 7.2, quoted by Beacham 216.

The oldest State-sponsored theatrical performance in the Republic was the *ludi Romani* that occurred each September.[79] The festial, established in the sixth century B.C.E., honored Jupiter. Sites of *ludi scaenici* were located in front of the temple of the god to be honored,according to J.A. Hanson, in *Roman Theatre-Temples* (1959). Hanson also suggests each performance was presented "in sight of the god." Temporary stages were placed facing the temple and the statue or representation of the god was arranged to observe the show.[80] Some scholars have stated that permanent theatres were not built in Rome until 55 B.C.E. because Roman politicians were afraid that by honoring one god they might offend another. These transient stages also suggest that Roman theatre and its staging were directly related to the *mimae* production form with its movable stage. "The Romans presented plays in honor of many gods, each of whom had his or her own sacred precinct in which it was considered unsuitable to dedicate offerings to any other god."[81] In the second century B.C.E., the Greek historian Polybius noted religious demands dominated Roman life and provided the ideological basis for the society.

> The greatest advantage of the Roman social structure. . .
> lies in my view in their attitude towards the gods. What is
> in other peoples a reproach is precisely what forms the
> foundation of the Roman State, an almost superstitious fear
> of the gods. At Rome, religion plays this part in both

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[79] Brockett 47.

[80] J.A Hanson, *Roman Theatre-Temples* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959) 156.

[81] Ibid. 155.

public and private life: its significance is hardly conceivable.[82]

However, Beacham clearly separates Roman ritual from popular and improvised theatre performance: "The ritual is simultaneously a real event, taking place at the moment of its enactment, and also a timeless replication of itself."[83] He disregards the notion that the general population may have perceived *all* performance as pleasing to the gods (if performed properly) and a means to transform bad situations into good ones. Livy's writings do not negate the possibility of much earlier forms of theatre being present in Roman villages and prevalent throughout oral societies in the form of the traveling troupes or local performance rituals. Beacham sees many possible influences upon early Roman theatre beyond the Dionysian festivals and Roman formal dramas: the Oscans and their farces, *Atellanae;* the Greek-speaking areas of Southern Italy and Sicily and their farcical dramas, *phlyakes* (Brockett states the term was used in southern Italy to mean mime)*;* and the local practice of *Fescennine* verses among the Roman farming population.[84] Each of these influences were based in comedy and satire forms of *mimae* performance. Confusion within scholarship seems to come from the assumptions that forms of comedy are not sacred and popular theatre performances were not rituals. The devaluation of comedy and popular theatre forms escalates during the Republic. The vilification of improvised comedy, dance and music of the *mimae* is in direct contrast to the aristocracy's value of Greek tragedy texts which were viewed as both a tool of

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[82] Polybius, 6.56.6 *ff.*

[83] Beacham 3.

[84] Ibid.

rhetoric education and the *ideal form* for Roman written drama. The distinction was class-based. The patrician class separated itself from the masses by its value of Greek dramatic forms, which were unpopular with the plebian class. To put this division of tastes in perspective, the city of Rome in 100 B.C.E. has approximately 2000 male citizens and a population of over 150 thousand. The 2000, as the plebian class swelled both economically and politically, sought to distinguish themselves both in art, education, and manner, gradually adopting as valuable that which the general and inferior population found both static and boring.

Roman tragedy, based upon the Greek dramatic form, was promoted by the Roman aristocrasy. Tragic playwrights, existed through their patronage, were often Roman slaves, or like Seneca, a member of the class. The enforcement of *insaturation* suggests tragic performance was sacred. Popular *mimae* performance, enjoyed by the majority, was considered by the patrician class as tasteless, dangerous, and necessitating laws of control. This separation due to class structure and the fashion of the powerful within theatre depicts a world where the sacred was defined by decree and distorts our view of the theatre of the Roman masses as both secular and profane. Often modern historians perceive no difference between the formal entertainments, presented for political and religious reasons upon designated festival days, and uncensored popular performance, outside of the State's control. In many cases, historians conflate the two types of entertainments causing us to lose the more complex attitude towards theatre which existed at the time. This promotes an either/or scenario. The division within theatre performance as sacred or secular does not allow a view of the combination of

each term within theatre forms and disallows that the popular forms were possibly both sacred and profane which is evident by their presentation within Greek and Roman religious festivals.

The town councils, who controlled the Roman cities, did so without coercive force. Armies were usually stationed at the borders of the Empire or at great distances from cities and soldiers were only used in the rarest event against urban populations.[85] The system worked as long as the urban populations were wellfed, indulged through popular entertainments, and happy with current government policies. The harmony of the city was delicately balanced by public performances offered by public officials in the hope of uniting a population through cultural histories, sacred rituals, and entertainments. However, by the time Rome became an Empire most of the written Roman drama intended for sanctioned performance was finished and written comedy rarely performed after 100 B.C.E. Brockett lists *Thyestes* by Varius Rufus, presented in 29 B.C.E. at a festival honoring the Roman victory at Actium, as the last Latin tragedy written with performance in mind.[86] This vacuum of the written is not reflected in theatre histories, which jump from Aristophanes to Terrence to Hrosthvita as if in an uninterrupted line. Roman written drama, a patron based product, ended before the Empire began, possibly because of the lack of popular response and the severe restrictions levied upon playwrights who did not please their benefactors. The structure of Roman tragic drama was based upon the ancient Greek tragedies. There is not documentation that the Greek form of performance, represented by a whole play with three actors and a chorus,

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[85] Brown, *Power and Persuasion* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press 1992) 81.

[86] Ibid 49.

survived later than the early third century B.C.E. in the Greek East. It had probably disappeared, if it ever occurred, at a much earlier date in the Latin West.[87] The sacred ritual performance of the Greeks, if performed at all in Rome, was transformed into a succession of excerpts recited or sung by a *tragicus cantor* or *tragoidos*.

Dramatic "Roman literature is usually said to have begun with Livius Andronicus (240-204 B.C.E.)."[88] He was a slave, captured in Tarentum (city in the Greek territories of southern Italy) during Rome's invasion of the area. Later freed, Andronicus was always tied to the Roman ruling class. First as slave, and then as a playwright, Andronicus was dependent upon the patronage of the wealthy, and wrote in the language of the conqueror. Gnaeus Naevius (270-201 B.C.E.) began writing in 235 B.C.E. and is considered the first native-born Roman playwright. He and Andronicus wrote within both forms of dramatic literature: comedy and tragedy. Roman playwrights, who followed, specialized in either comedy or tragedy and were dependent upon their patrons and religious festivals.

It is evident that the nomadic *mimae* troupes, although reviled, existed as an alternative to entertainments funded by the ruling classes. The theatre spaces of the Romans were routinely sanctified by priests and contained scarifices as well as prayers and offerings. Festivals were designated to specific gods and goddesses and performances were part of the Roman ritual structure. However, the alternative performances of the troupes were also seen by the masses as a means to heal the sick,

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[87] Ibid. 96. This essay supports this statement through the scholarship of C.P. Jones in the 1993 essay "Greek Drama in the Roman Empire," and T.D. Barnes in the 1996 essay "Christians and the Theatre".

[88] Brockett, 47.

promote a good harvest and please the gods. At the end of the third century B.C.E., the State attempted to control the troupes of *mimae* through the establishment of a professional guild and raise the popularity of State sanctioned formal entertainments.

Slave performance troupes, created by wealthy Romans, were strictly censored and shaped to the tastes of the elite. The Sibylline books (oracle advisement), which commanded, through State selected priests, the creation of the *Ludi Florales* to secure favor from the goddess Flora (fertility) and the *Ludi Megalenses* to honor the Phrygian goddess, *Magna Mater* (protection), happened to coincide with the political need of the ruling class to obtain plebian support during the second Punic war. By 200 B.C.E. there were at least twelve days officially recognized by Rome for religious festivals, which consisted of scenic games, plays, religious rituals and food distribution .[89] Although often hired participants in the formal entertainments, the *sceneci* were also performing in parallel to these State performances and were competitors for the Roman audiences during festival days. The freedmen troupes drew huge crowds on the streets of Rome while the State sanctioned dramas serving political or religious criteria for specific festivals, never reached the *mimae* state of popularity.[90]

The aristocracy began to retain *mimae* as part of their household staff for private entertainments during the first century B.C.E. Centuries later, ancestors of the *mimae* are seen seated at the feet of European kings and are called fools or jesters. The growing popularity and official recognition of the performers enabled Tigellius Hermogenes to

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[89] Beacham, pp. 22-23.

[90] Taylor, 65.

establish a school for the mime in Rome. However, a State school for the infamous *mimae* might also be seen as another attempt by government powers to control the troupes. A literary form of mime performance emerged briefly in the first century B.C.E., but reverted to its original nonliterary form soon after. The school, slave troupes and an attempt at a literary form depict a ruling class striving to *institutionalize* the *mimae* performance and exposes their lack of understanding for the reasons the theatrical troupes were so popular with the "common" audiences: improvisation, ridicule of those in power, and the belief that the performers retained sacred transformative magic.

The *sceneci* social status was pronounced lower than that of the dramatic actor (histrione) by decree. Depending upon the state of Rome and its ruler, the traveling troupes, throughout the era of the Republic and the Empire, were at times banished from the cities, awarded with civic honors, publicly punished, executed, or hired to please the gods.[91] For example, the *mimae* were ordered out of Rome in 115 B.C.E., but their exile was short lived primarily because of their popularity among the general population of the city. Livy implied they were imported into Rome (musical and dancing performers) in 364 B.C.E. "as an effort to appease the gods when plague was ravishing the city."[92] The persecution of the troupes tends to grow with their popularity at the end of the Republic.

The *Mimae* were the performers of choice for the general audience while the elite of the Empire preferred what they perceived as a classical form: the narrative dance of pantomime. Those who ruled Rome's expansive territories and controlled its religion

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[91] During the first century C.E. a mime employed at court by Domitian, Helvidius Priscus the younger, was executed for writing a mime which alluded to the Emperor's divorce. Domitian also executed Paris, an acclaimed pantomime, in 87 C.E.

[92] Brockett, 45.

continued to view the popular entertainment of the *sceneci* as distasteful, but also as a political tool vital for the appeasement of the masses. Popular Roman theatre,

> on the one hand, was the rallying point of all disturbers of the peace and the last stronghold of public opinion debarred from the Senate and the forum; on the other it was a potent means of winning the affection of the populous and diverting its attention from dynastic questions.[93]

Augustus was said to support the troupes with money and hospitality and is claimed to have recognized the profession in his final words: "Have I played the mime of life believably?"[94] During his reign, the law that allowed public officials to beat performers whenever they wished was limited to beatings only for offenses committed during the games or public performance. However, this era still denied the *mimae* citizenship, their descendants were banned from marriage within the senatorial class until the fourth generation and if condemned for adultery they were put to death without impunity. [95]

Pantomime, considered an Etruscan form of sacred entertainment, became the favored dramatic mode of the elite during the final years of the Empire. Using the tragic themes of the Greeks, the dramatic form is first noted within the Roman Empire at the end of the first century B.C.E.[96] However, the *mimos* or *sceneci,* who had been performing throughout the territories for centuries had probably introduced the Roman

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[93] Chambers,3.

[94] Ovid, *Trist,* 2.507 *ff*; Suetonius, *Aug.,* 99. Quoted in Beacham 137.

[95] Beacham, 145.

[96] Easterling and Miles, 6.

populations to forms of mimic dance before it became the fashion of the aristocracy. Pantomime was primarily a dance solo, backed by musicians, while another actor or chorus provided the narrative. Performers could grow rich from the rewards of their wealthy patrons or risk execution or exile if in disfavor. Brief descriptions from Lucian of noted tragic pantomime performances illuminate the form as well as the class that admired it:

> In general, the dancer undertakes to present and enact characters and emotions, introducing now a lover and now an angry person, one man afflicted with madness, another with grief, and all within fixed bounds . . .within the selfsame day at one moment we are shown Athamas in a frenzy, at another Ino in terror; presently the same person in Atreus, and after a little, Thyestes; then Aegisthus, or Aerope; yet they are all a single man. . . .The dancer should be perfect in every point, so as to be wholly rhythmical, graceful, symmetrical, consistent, and unexceptionable, impeccable, not wanting in any way, blent of the highest qualities, keen in his ideas, profound in his culture, and above all, human in his sentiments.[97]

The pantomimes were highly valued by the aristocrats, but not sacred. However, this value could shift in a moment's displeasure. Periodically, the pantomimes, similar to

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[97] Exerpts from Lucian, *De Saltatione,* trans. A.M. Harmon in the Loeb edition *Lucian,* vol. V (London: Macmillan 1936) pp. 209-89.

the *mimae*, were severely punished and restricted. Performance of the *mimae* and pantomime were confined to the theatre building on festival days in 15 C.E., and the street performances of the traveling troupes were forbidden. Rowdy audience members were subject to exile. Tiberius ejected all performers from Italy in 23 C.E., Nero in 56 C.E., and Domitian also forbid the mime troupes and pantomime from the public stage. Lucius Verus, co-ruler with Marcus Aurelius, favored troupes from Syria and Alexandria, but his successor had the performers exiled from Rome once again. All of these *banishments* and confinements to permanent theatres were short-lived decrees. However, denying the performer citizenship was to leave them without protection under Roman law and without country or identity. Such decrees do not seem to radically change the conditions of the traveling performing troupes, who owed no allegiance to country or king, and who had pedaled their wares for centuries within the margins of diverse cultures throughout the ancient world.

The majority of the Roman aristocracy, Jews and early Christians leaders despised the *mimae* for their satiric depiction of their beliefs, laws and customs. Each group saw themselves and their sacred beliefs ridiculed in the unsanctioned performances. Christian Emperors whose sole task was to protect Rome and keep her peace, often restricted but did not forbid the *mimae* from performing. Carinus, in 283 C.E. filled Rome with *mimae* from all over the Empire even as early Christians denounced the profession. Julian took a troupe of *mimae* with him on his final campaign in 363 C.E., after forbidding priests to attend the theatre in 360 C.E. Theodosius banned performance by the mime and pantomime. He further restricted female *mimae* by

forbiding them to leave their profession once they had entered it. The church officially excommunicated members of the troupes in 452 C.E.

The loss of the Western provinces by the Imperial government of Rome at the beginning of the fifth century C.E. did not signal a complete end of the Roman culture, which continued to influence all of the European continent. Due to its immense territory and centuries of dominance, although overrun by the Northern tribes, Roman laws remained a common influence even as power was decentralized. Romans, who had seen themselves as superior to their barbarian neighbors, gradually reshaped the barbarian image of being more beast than man, into their own image. Barbarian kings readily assumed the *civilized* qualities of the Roman and used accepted Roman traditions to remain closely tied to the wealthy Roman landowners and their accumulated taxes. "The Romanness of successor kings was an attempt to outbid rivals for much needed support from the landowners of Western Europe."[98] The Osogothic king, Theodoric II, also followed his Roman predecessors by creating massive public occasions, such as his entrance into Rome in 500 AD, which proclaimed his sanctity and divinely inspired right to rule.[99]

Those who conquered Rome did not necessarily discard the performers. Attila is said to have entertained ambassadors in 448 with the antics of Scythian and African troupes of entertainers, and the Vandals are documented in Northern Africa as early as 429 indulging in *spectacula.* Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, and ruler of Italy from

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[98] Peter Heather, " The Barbarian in Late Antiquity: Image, Reality and Transformation," in *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity,* Ed. Richard Miles (London: Routledge, 1999) 250-252.

[99] M.J. Johnson, "Towards a History of Theodoric's Building Programme," *DOP* 42: 73-96.

462 to 466 allowed the *mimae* to perform at his festivals.[100] We know that a theatre in Pompey underwent extensive repair in 500 C.E. due to a private benefactor and Claudian describes a performance at the beginning of the fifth century C.E. following his account of a wild beast hunt:

> . . .Nor let gentler games lack in our delights: the jester who makes us laugh with his happy wit; the mime whose language is in his nods and gestures; the musician who sets the *tibia* pulsating with his breath. And the lyre, with his fingers; the slippered comedian with whom the stage echoes; or the tragedian raised on loftier boots. . .or acrobats who throw themselves like birds through the air and build swiftly rising pyramids with their entwined bodies.[101]

The Emperor Justinian, married to a former mime, Theodora, improved the legal status of the mimes, but ordered the public theatres closed in 526 AD. However, his proclamation was only enforced if the local magistrates allowed it. His orders were not valid in Italy until after the Gothic wars in 540. Christian fathers continued to view kings and Emperors as representations of Christ on earth anointed by God[102] and education remained in the hands of a favored few. The military machine of the Romans was no longer of consequence and the *barbarians* confiscated Roman inventions and adapted to

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[100] Chambers pp. 34-35.

[101] Claudian Claudianus, Quoted in Beacham 196.

[102]Bertelli 11. In 337, after Constantine's conversion to Christianity, the Roman mint struck a coin with the legend *Divus Constantinus Pater Augustorium* (divine Constantine, father of Emperors), showing the Emperor ascending the heavens riding in a solar chariot.

the decorum of rhetoric and the power of the written law. Just as the Romans relied upon the Greeks for poetry, myths, and song, the Northern kings relied on the Roman elite as trusted advisors in law and culture.

The status of the *mimae*, long labeled *infames* by Roman law, continues well into the Christian dominated culture.[103] Hippolytus of Rome, during his screening of candidates for admission to the *catechumenate* in the same breath rejects active performers and those involved in prostitution.[104] The early church rising in power during the last two centuries of the Western Empire favored the Roman view of the performer and began to forcefully remove the belief in a sacred or *magic* within popular performance. In 393 C.E., Augustine denies the sacraments to prostitutes, performers, gladiators, and pimps.[105] By the fourth century C.E., stage performers were also among those *corporibus obligati* whose social mobility was circumscribed because their service was deemed vital to the public interest. The children of parents involved in theatre were required by law to take up their parents' profession.[106] The performers were damned by the Christians if they did not reject their profession and by the Roman rulers if they did.

The theatre and its performers were perceived by the early Christians of the Empire as the epitome of Paganism and an enemy of the gospel. The decline of the public Roman theatre, although assisted by the rise of Christianity, was also due to economic factors within the late Empire and the fear of those in power of their rebellious

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[103] *Liber Syroromanus*, a text book of legal instruction, based upon the Greek original, continues to condemn the performer as *infamia* in 475 C.E.

[104] Hippolytus *Tradito Apostolica* 16.

[105] Augustine, *De fide et operibus* 18.33.

populations. The Romans who once viewed performance during the Republic as sacred, dedicated *ludi* to the gods during the Empire also used the sacred performances as an effective means of communication and crowd control. With the rise of Christian Emperors, public sacrifices were banned and any connection between public theatre and Pagan festivals was ended. However, performances were still presented by the patrician classes for political reasons. Theatre remained an important part of civic and imperial functions of the Roman cities and a continued challenge to the Christians throughout the life of the Empire. Richard Lim, in his article "Converting the Un-Christianizable," questions if the stage was ever fully Christianized in late antiquity or the Middle Ages despite the rise of Christian performance after the 10th century C.E.

Many theatre histories within the 20th century began to focus upon the diversity of Roman performance, however, they remained tied to the written remains of the patrician class. The dependence upon writings, contaminated by class-based bias, shaped the depiction of popular performance during the Roman era within theatre history. The distortion of a largely improvised and oral performance form by anti-theatrical Roman texts is apparent in many of the histories as the *mimae* are portrayed as obscene and their audiences crude. Theatre histories, heavily weighted toward the entertainment of the elite, the few remaining written dramatic texts, and the decrees persecuting the Roman performer, continue to privilege the Greek texts above popular performance just as the Roman patrician class had done. They fail to note that by binding the performer to their profession the Romans maintained a continuous supply of entertainers to fill the public theatres and arenas. Basing the history of Roman ancient performance upon the

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[106] Richard Lim, "Converting the Un-Christianizable: The Baptism of Stage Performers in Late Antiquity",

architectural and written remains of the minority and privileged class has often misrepresented, ignored, or excluded the powerful and diverse role played by the *mimae* and their oral performances within the Roman population. It also marginalizes and distorts our view of middle and lower class entertainment depicting popular performance as both unimportant and unnecessary within a theatre narrative focused upon the written instead of the *lived exchange*.

Following the lead of their Roman counterpoints, the early church leaders continue to reinterpret, isolate, and value the sacred performance of the Greeks in text form. While negating the power they feared in performance, the Christians retain and control the shared history and cultural identity of their Roman congregation through the written text. Christianity's privileging of the written text above performance can be viewed as directly related to the rise of the sacred text and its primacy within the early Church. The mystical value granted to the written word during the emergence of a new dominant religion can also be viewed historically as an efficient and powerful tool of propaganda within an illiterate population. Christian leaders, like the Roman Emperors before them, used performance as a tool to impose their own ideology on the people of the Middle Ages. However, performance outside of State and church control was also apparent throughout the European territories, Africa, Middle East and Asia as the nomadic troupes expand throughout the regions. Roman class structure and its law continued to shape the attitudes toward the performer as it combined with the medieval

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Conversion, Kenneth Mills and Anthony Grafton, eds. (Rochester: University of Rochester 2003) pp87-88.

Christian intolerance for theatre and *sets the stage* for theatre history's exclusion of *drama* and the *sacred* from the performance of colonized and Pagan populations.

If there were any dramatic continuity between the world of the Greek and Roman temples and the world dominated by the fantastic imagination of the Gothic cathedral, we must look for it in the pitiful and despised gesturings of the mimes.
Allandyce Nicoll 1976

CHAPTER 3
THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY AND ITS IMPACT UPON THE WESTERN THEATRE NARRATIVE

As the Christian cults began to take form within the Roman Empire it was commonplace among the second century C.E. population to perceive the spiritual world as subject to one supreme god, with the many other gods as lesser divinities. For example, the Egyptian goddess Isis spread across the Empire as a mother goddess with many diverse powers.

> I am nature, the universal mother, mistress of all the
> elements, primordial child of time, sovereign of all things
> spiritual, queen of the dead, queen also of the immortals,
> the single manifestation of all gods and goddesses that are.[1]

The second-century Platonist Celsus writes that "it makes no difference whether we call Zeus the Most High or Zeus or Adonis or Sabaoth or Amun like the Egyptians, or Papaeus like the Scythians."[2] A faith in an all powerful deity by this period was the most prevalent belief of the Pagan religion. What is pivotal to all of these emerging cults was

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[1] Apuleius, *The Golden Ass,* 160 C.E. quoted by M.J. Beard, J. North and S. Price in the "Introduction" of *Religions of Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) In Aprhrodisias, a city in southern Asia Minor, a cult statue dedicated to Aphrodite, traditionally goddess of love and sexuality, was found to have panels detailing her powers over the sea and the underworld dated at this same period.

[2] *Contra Celsum* 5:41 quoted in the Introduction of P. Athanassiadi and M. Frede, eds. *Pagan Monotheism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 8.

their versatility. Regardless of the difference in names or cultural rituals, each cult believed that at the center of divine forces was one higher power. For the conventional Romans this was Zeus or Jupiter; the poorer classes were attracted to the cult of *theos hypistos;*[3] Aristotlelians spoke of the *unmoved mover*, Platonists of the *Good*, the Jews had the God of Israel, and the Stoics one supreme rational principle.[4]

No development in the ancient world has had a more profound effect upon subsequent Western history and its perception of theatre than the Christian ideological intolerance toward Paganism that became institutionalized during the late Roman period.[5] Within this ancient world the state was itself a religious institution and the emperor of Rome was, literally and figuratively, pope, *pontifex maximus,* head of the Roman state religion.[6] The Christian emperors of Rome shifted their allegiance to the Christian God, but not their methods of rule. The Christian perception of popular theatre's link to idolatry and its battle for the theatre audience also affects the writing of performance history.

As the church's power grew Christian leaders' gained the ability to destroy, disregard or reinterpret historical records and dramatic texts.[7] The influence of the early

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[3] A mass of inscriptions, found throughout the east and Egypt, are dedicated to *theos hypsistos,* "the Most High God" and worshippers of this divinity seem to have modeled their practices on Judaism while maintaining distinct form. These inscriptions are dated before the second century C.E.

[4] Charles Freeman, *The Closing of the Western Mind* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003) pp. 69-70.

[5] D. Bowder, *The Age of Constantine and Julian* (London: Brewer 1978) 20.

[6] G. Fowden, *Empire to Commonwealth: Consequences of Monotheism in Late Antiquity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993) 112

[7] Tydeman, in his *English Medieval Theatre,* admits that our knowledge of secular dramatic activity in England during the late Middle Ages is regrettably confined to a handful of texts and a few partisan accounts. For this he states we must blame a combination of forces: the ravages of time and the instincts of disapproving ecclesiastical censors as two of the major reasons why many exciting scripts have disappeared

church and its impact upon our perception of Roman and medieval theatre as well as ancient ritual performance is easily recognized in the West today. Still these distorted records continue to be used by contemporary scholars as documentation, thus, often fostering a weighted theatre history focused upon the written text of an ancient religious theatre which was a theatre of the elite. Such a theatre history ignores performance outside of government controls, distorts its prevalence during the rise of Christianity throughout Europe, and promotes the either/or argument that theatre was either secular or sacred while negating the possibility that the general population may have perceived both within unsanctioned performances.

Theatre was an accepted entertainment throughout the Empire as Christianity formed. Its many diverse forms, such at pantomime, farce, scenic games, tragedy, comedy and mime, were a mix of sacred myth, foreign and local gods, and historical enactments. Unsanctioned performances were often satiric comments upon society, religion and politics and they enthralled audiences through a stream of exotic performers presenting amazing feats. The nomadic troupes, long viewed by those in power within Rome as both dangerous and *other* retained their popularity among diverse cultures as their methods were assimilated into later Christian performances. Within the margins of Roman society, many nomadic troupes were still perceived as carriers of some mystical force among the general populations as they continued their combination of the grotesque and ancient Pagan rituals.

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from view, although perhaps the best he notes are dramatic entertainments which were never committed to paper.

However, theatre historians' reliance upon the written dramatic text has led to almost a thousand year vacuum in the performance narrative of often thriving non-literate theatrical forms. From the last Roman dramatic texts in the first century C.E. to the emergence of Liturgical drama in the tenth century lies a wasteland of morally based historic assumptions. Early Christian scholars, similar to the Romans, who saw the Republic as an *ideal,* reflect a revulsion for the theatrical offerings of the Empire. This inherent bias saturates medieval documentation of performance, but is often ignored by contemporary scholarship. For example, the use of the Latin term *theatrum, (*a place for seeing) was applied to all secular performances during the Middle Ages and seems to be severely contaminated by the thirteenth century as the Christian use of the term becomes interchangeable with the brothel.

St. Isidore's *Entymologiae* and his definitions of ancient theatre are perpetuated through the Renaissance and today.[8] His sources are not from Aristotle or Horace but the writings of early Christian leaders: Eusebius, Augustine, Tertullian and Diomedes. He notes that "the theatre, furthermore, was also a brothel, for after the shows were over, prostitutes plied their trade there."[9] Caesarium of Heisterbach reported in 1222 a lightning strike upon a known brothel killed twenty men, but a priest was miraculously spared when lightning struck a *theatrum.*[10] Chaucer, translating Boethius in 1380, writes

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[8] Joseph Jones, "Isidore and the Theatre," *Drama in the Middle Ages*, Clifford Davidson and John H. Stroupe, eds. (New York: AMS, 1991) pp. 10-11. Jones agrees with Isodore, proliferating the brothel/ theatre idea: "The theatre was indeed associated with prostitutes because the entrances and arches (*fornices,* which give the English *fornicate)* provided the ideal place for courtesans to meet their clients at night."

[9] Quoted in Jones, 8.

[10] Bigongiari, Dino, "Were there Theatres in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Century?" (*Romanic Review* 37 1946) 201-24.

of "thise comune strompettis of swich a place that men clepen the theatre."[11] The evils of **Roman** performance through its identification with the heretic faith of Paganism and the brothel was successfully promoted as offensive to the moral state of man during the rise of Christianity within medieval Europe. Just as Paganism was eradicated by beheading a statue of a Greek god, Pagan theatrical performance was similarly erased within histories. Theatre historians' dependence upon the written remains of a Christian ruling class or the rare dramatic texts in an oral dominant culture construct an often distorted view of ancient performance. Archaeological finds for many centuries were also interpreted to support these assumptions.

Chapter Three examines the effect of a new dominant religion upon theatre history as the sacred/secular division within performance is established in the final centuries of the Western Roman Empire. It documents the inherent biases in a scholarship that is largely based upon Christian records of the written text and the interpretation of the architectural found remains of a patrician class. The chapter also continues to track the touring troupes through the Middle Ages as Christianity becomes a political force in Europe and the Eastern Roman Empire. Beginning with the early Roman Christians and ending with the birth of a formal secular theatre during the Italian Renaissance, Chapter Three examines the site of the sacred as it is removed from performance, separated from the general population, interpreted by the elite few and placed as a fixed and *dead* form within the written dramatic text.

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[11] Robinson, F.N. ed. *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer,* (Boston, 1968) 321, quoted in Tydeman, (1978) 46.

The Early Church

What the Christians encountered in Rome as theatre was a far different version than the performance ritual that fifth century B.C.E. Greek audiences had experienced. It should also be noted that the early Christians did not invade Rome, they were Romans, and gravitated to the same histories and cultural identity as their Pagan neighbors. The tragedies of the Golden Age by the fourth and fifth century C.E. were no longer based in performance, but had been regulated to a text-based literature. The division between theatre as text (represented as Roman and Greek Tragedy and Comedy) and theatre as performance (represented as pantomime and mime) was already established during the early Christian polemics against theatre as was the second wave of Sophist discourse that favored performance as a focus for civic identity. These Sophists, largely consisting of elites from Greek cities that had become Roman provinces, were characterized by a renewed interest in the glories of classical Greece and in the art of rhetoric.[12] Neither the Christians nor the Sophists of the Empire recognized any difference between the studied text and performance in their writings. The fourth and fifth century C.E. references to tragedy were based upon the literary texts of grammarians even though their arguments were centered on the impact that performance had upon the spectator.[13] The difference

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[12] Freeman, 62.

[13] Pat Easterling and Richard Miles, "Dramatic Identities" in *Constructing Identities,* Ed. Richard Miles (London: Routeledge,1999) 97-98.

between the written and performed is often confused within theatre histories which privilege dramatic literature over performance.

The use of examples from the ancient tragedies (Greek performance texts) in sermons and schools was justified by the early Christian writers as a means to support their teachings of a classical past and shared humanity. Clement of Alexandria felt his quotes gleaned from Pagan rituals were appropriate because he perceived that even the ancient Greeks could not have been completely impervious to God's world.[14] Sophists, such as Libanius and Choricius of Gaza, and the Church fathers continue to speak about the written text in terms of performance, but the Greek comedy and tragedy or its Latin hybrid, to which they often refer, no longer existed within the theatres of the Roman Empire. What was being attacked by the church in ancient Rome and defended by the Roman Sophists was actually the performance of pantomime, mime, scenic games and the designated obscene farces combined within in one term: *ludi*

> Come forward and say previous generations were corrupted by tragedy and they were destroyed by comedy. Homer destroyed Greece . . .Say that it is also now necessary for the theatres to be closed to the actors and for the schools to be closed to the poets . . .[15]

By the second century C.E. the comedies and tragedies of the Greeks, which fueled the Christian sermons attacking theatre by their excess and obscenities, had not

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[14] Clement of Alexandria, *Protrepticus 7*, Trans. G.W. Butterworth. He later quotes from Euripides' *Orestes, Alcestis,* and *Ion* because of their derogatory views of divine beings.

[15] Libanius, *Or.* 64.74.73.Cf. Chorius, *Or.* 8.141-2.

been performed in over four centuries and yet, are referred to as if the Church's (illiterate) audience had knowledge of Greek themes and its tragedies in performance.

> Then their dramas were replete with adultery, lewdness and corruption of all kinds . . .One man loved his stepmother, a woman her stepson and in consequence hanged herself . . . Would you see a son married to his mother? This too happened among them and what is horrible, though it was done in ignorance, the god whom they worshipped did not prevent it, but permitted this outrage to nature to be committed, even though she was a person of distinction. And if those, who, if for no other reason, yet for the sake of their reputation with the masses might have expected to keep to virtue rushed headlong into vice, what was likely to be the conduct of the greater part who lived in obscurity? . . .The wife of a certain one fell in love with another man and with the help of the adulterer killed her husband on his return. The son of the murdered man killed the adulterer and after him his mother, then he himself became mad and was haunted by the furies. After this the madman himself killed another man and took his wife. What can be worse than these disasters?[16]

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[16] John Chrysostom, *In Tit. Hom.* 5.4; cf. *In Phil. Hom.* 15.5; *In 2 Thess. Bom.* 1.1.

What is apparent is that the ancient themes were recognized by Roman audiences in the second century of the Empire regardless of performance form and that the plot of *Oedipus*, although noted as drama, is viewed by the Christians as non-fiction and proof of hollow gods. Clement in the second century C.E., quotes the *Bacchae* in his final chapter of the *Protrepticus* and suggests the Bacchic mysteries can be perceived as the revelation of Christianity.[17] Public theatres and stadiums continued to be routinely sanctified before each performance during the Empire, and Roman audiences recognized the ancient themes and myths represented in their diverse entertainments as both their history and part of their religious life. The deep veins of Paganism throughout the Roman territories can be documented through the ferocity of the Christian attacks upon theatre under the guise of its proclaimed obscenity.

Tertullian connects theatre directly to immorality and Paganism in his *De Spectaculis*, 200 C.E., as he condemns theatre, circus, and *spectaculla* as idolatry which takes place at Pagan festivals and in the holy places of Venus and Bacchus.[18] St. Chrysostom, priest at Antioch before 397 C.E. and later patriarch of Constantinople, two centuries after the writings of Tertullian, continues to view the theatre as a present danger. His perception of theatre as Christianity's enemy was possibly bolstered by the city's empty churches due to a scheduled week of popular *ludi* which coincided with the Christian Holy week. Chrysostom's 399 C.E. Easter sermon focused upon the corruption found within all things theatrical and threatened to enforce the sentence of

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[17] Esterling and Miles 104.

[18] Tertullian, *De Spec.,* cc.4,26,30.

excommunication for those who attended performance on Sundays or holy days.[19] Christian writers such as Augustine are still concerned during this period with the spectator of tragedies even though the text form of Greek (or Roman) tragedies have not been performed for centuries.

> What miserable delirium is this! The more a man is subject to such suffering himself, the more readily he is moved by it in the theatre. Yet when he suffers himself we call it misery, when he suffers out of sympathy with another we call it pity. But what sort of pity can we really feel for an imaginary scene on the stage?[20]

It is evident that certain themes of Pagan myth are acceptable in the controlled form of the text, and when regulated to a *dead* and literate model. They are not acceptable however, in the sacred arenas of Roman performance where the illiterate masses could experience the power of the *lived exchange*.

The popularity of performance can be documented by 353 C.E. within the city of Rome which is noted to contain over 3,000 female dancers and a much larger population of male performers of every variety.[21] Roman theatrical performers, similar to the nomadic troupes, adapted their art to communicate to an Empire audience which consisted of many languages, cultures and diverse populations. Dance, music, mimic performance, farce, known tragedies and legends were the tools of Roman theatrical

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[19] Chrysostom, *Th, xvi.* 10, 17, (399)

[20] Augustine, *Conf.* 3.2, Trans. H. Chadwick.

[21] Beacham 151.

performance that *spoke* to this wide audience. Many of these theatrical forms were disdained by the elite because of their popularity among the foreign and lower classes, and these performers were proclaimed blasphemous by an expanding Christian cult which viewed popular theatre performance as both a seducer of men souls and a product of Paganism.

Theatres were one of the few public arenas of mass communication in the ancient city and were viewed by the early Christian church as an immediate competitor not only for material space, but as a challenge to the Christian interpretation of the past, present and future. Often viewed as temples for idol worship (the first permanent theatre built in Rome had a temple dedicated to Venus at the top of the auditorium),[22] theatres were said to be bricked closed during the Christian rise to dominance or even refurbished as churches. However, Pagan shrines were also saved from demolition, even as public Pagan worship was banned,[23] **because** they contained theatres within them. Performance remained very popular among the general population and Christian leaders perceived particular performance forms as symbols of their battle for cultural hegemony. They were principally threatened by pantomime and mime, robust farce, and spectacles provided by the scenic games, but they did not condemn the Greek plays which had long

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[22] Ibid 55.

[23] Constantine's Edict of Milan (313 C.E.)which decreed religious tolerance for all, was ended in 530 C.E. by the emperor Justinian. "All those who have not been baptized must come forward, whether they reside in the capital or in the provinces, and go to the very holy churches with their wives, their children, and their households, to be instructed in the true faith of Christianity. And once thus instructed and having sincerely renounced their former error, let them be judged worthy of redemptive baptism. Should they disobey, let them know that they will be excluded from the state and will no longer have any rights of possession, neither goods nor property; stripped of everything, they will be reduced to penury without prejudice to the appropriate punishment that will be imposed on them." Pierre Chuvin, *A Chronicle of the Last of the Pagans*, (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990) 133.

been segregated to a text form in Rome. The fervor of the early Christian sermons, often delivered in the streets, focused their hatred upon Roman performance and its Pagan origins. "All the old gods are devils: Dionysus the old god is lord of the theatre, therefore the theatre belongs to a devil, the devil."[24]

The followers of the early church sprang from Pagan and Jewish populations that recognized theatrical performance and ritual as an important symbol of their civic and cultural life.[25] Although condemning all forms of theatre, Christian writers continued to privilege Greek tragedy in text form because it represented a common shared language between themselves and their Pagan peers. Early Christians, such as Justin Martyr, who first studied philosophy in Asia Minor before becoming a Christian, saw the God of Abraham as the God of Socrates and both as *Christians before Christ*. For Justin all rational thought and right moral conduct were evidence of the participation in universal reason, *the right reason* of the Stoic moral ideal, realized in Jesus.[26] This embrace of some Greek philosophy and writings as part of the divine preparation for the gospel allowed these Christians to retain their educational teachings and discard those which did not fit the identity of the church. Thus, Plato's theory that the cosmos was created by the will of God aligned him with Moses and was acceptable, but the philosopher's belief in the transmigration of the soul, which did not agree with Christian convictions, was rejected.

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[24] Tertullian 200 B.C.E.

[25] Brockett pp. 54-60. Explains in depth that most of the theatrical performances in the city of Rome, before the first century B.C.E., outside of spectacles within the stadiums, were performed in temporary spaces.

[26] Henry Chadwick, "Justin Martyr's Defense of Christianity" in *The Early Church and Greco-Roman Thought,* Everett Ferguson, ed. (New York: Garland Publishers, 1993) pp.41-42.

The belief that "heresy and idolatry are inseparable and that all the accepted practices of Pagan religion are the work of demons"[27] combined with an assimilation of some classical philosophy and dramatic texts, to form a church identity that belonged to the Gentile world in general and specifically to the Roman Empire. In his dialogue with a Jewish interlocutor, Justin explains, more than two centuries before the first Christian emperor, that the symbolic shape of the cross on the military standards of the Roman army was anticipating the rise of Christianity among all men.[28] To these early Christians the history of man was a dramatic struggle between God and the devil for possession of man's soul. The soul was not itself Christian for one must become a Christian. If man was to save his soul from evil anything which is linked to idolatry must be avoided and man must embrace the faith of Christianity. Theatre and the games took their origin from the worship of idols and this origin must not be forgotten. "Those who try to serve two masters finish by serving the devil."[29] The sacred of these early Christians was limited to the scriptures as the *divine source of truth*.[30]

Baptism and the Eucharist were their sacred rituals. Baptism allowed the reception of *divine* truth found in the rule of faith. It is through this faith and baptism that believers receive a new birth and purification which is necessary for the entrance into the kingdom of heaven. A weekly *eucharistia* or thanksgiving ritual blesses God for both

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[27] I *Apol.* 23.3.

[28] Chadwick, 35.

[29] *De spectacuis* 7 and *De poenitentia* 5.

[30] E.F. Osborn, "From Justin to Origen, the Pattern of Apologetic", *The Early Church and Greco-Roman Thought,* Everett Ferguson, ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993) 11.

creation and redemption and is perceived as mystical and natural. Those participating in this weekly ritual receive the bread and wine (mixed with water)[31] not as common food and drink but as the flesh and blood of Christ. This mystical analogy is based upon the incarnation found within the scriptures: "Jesus Christ our Savior was made flesh by the word of God and had flesh and blood for our salvation."[32] Justin also suggests a natural analogy combined with the *supernatural* and recognized the everyday miracle by which the food we eat is transformed into human flesh. Any ritual outside of the *divine* truth represented by the final words of God spoken by "he who did not become the Son of God, but was always so,"[33] corrupts man and binds him to idolatry and superstition without the power to free himself. It was the church's mission to offer the possibility of conversion throughout the world to every known race, uniting Jew and gentile under this *divine truth* with Christ at its head. The *mimae, histriones,* and all performers during the empire were denied these sacred Christian rituals unless they refuted and quit their profession and even then, some were still refused entrance into the faith. The *mimae* were viewed as both the corrupters of men and also themselves corrupted.

Theatre was clearly recognized by the early church as a dangerous combatant. In 212 AD, the emperor Caracalla granted citizenship to all free inhabitants (except the *mimae*) of the Empire, creating a common bond throughout its territories. The educated elite of the Roman Empire, regardless of their religious preference, were all trained in the same great Pagan schools of rhetoric where the writings of the Greeks were an essential

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[31] *Ap.* i. 65. 3. The text speaks of a cup of water and wine diluted with water.

[32] *Ap.* i. 66. 2.

[33] *Dial*. 48. 4.

part of the curriculum. Destroying the concept of the sacred in theatre performance was essential to the creation of a Christian identity. Retaining the patrician distaste for the entertainments of the general population, Christian leaders acknowledged performance as a powerful link to civic identity and simultaneously attacked it as a representation of a personal immorality.

For example, Norvarian perceived the performer and their profession as enemies of all Christians in his third century C.E. writings in Africa.

> Since the evils of the present day do not suffice to glut the sensuality of our times, recourse has to be made to the theatre where the aberrations of a past age are again presented. It is not permissible, I repeat, for faithful Christians to be present. It is absolutely unlawful for these whom, to charm their ears, Greece sends everywhere to all who are instructed in her vain arts (mime, pantomime, musical accompaniment and) . . . senseless ravings of the tragic voice.[34]

The distinct separation between the Christian sacred and theatre was of great importance to early Christian leaders who sought to control the cultural identity of a population who believed in the coupling of the profane with the sacred magic of public performance. The *sacred* for the Christians could not exist outside of the holy scriptures and those who performed ancient non-Christian rituals or ridiculed the word of God were heretics and

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[34] Norvarian, *De Spect.* 7

damned. These early Christian writings proclaim loudly the incompatibility of Christian teachings with the lived exchange of performance. It is also within Christianity's rise to dominance that the Roman actress, doubly damned by gender and profession, was first renounced as whore.

Just as the Pagan philosopher was profaned by Paul's condemnation, the sexuality of the female was also condemned as the cult of the virgin was formed. The female was placed into two distinct categories: sacred and virginal as Mary, or profane and whorish, like Eve. The mutually exclusive division between virgin and whore recognized no admissible expression of female sexuality in between. The majority of women when contrasted with Mary, proclaimed the mother of God and ever virgin at the Council of Ephesus in 431 C.E., were equated to Eve.

> Do you realize that Eve is you? The curse of God
> pronounced on your sex weighs still in the world . . .
> You are the devil's gateway, you desecrated the fatal
> tree, you betrayed the law of God, you who softened up
> with cajoling words the man against whom the devil could
> not prevail by force . . .[35]

This medieval Christian approach to female sexuality is deeply ingrained in later Christian tradition (still experienced today) and reflects the historic view of the public woman or actress.

"There came to be an almost complete identification, so far as words went, between the actress and prostitute. The *mimad* and the *hetaera* were looked upon as the

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[35] Tertullian quoted by Marina Warner in *Alone of All her Sex,* (London: Routledge, 1985) 58.

same."[36] For example, Chrysostom refers to all female performers as *pornai* (harlots),[37] and Procopius' sixth century C.E. narrative, *Secret History*, describes Theodora (*mimae* who married Justinian) as a prostitute from an early age who walked through the streets of Constantinople almost naked.[38] The early church seems to link the visibility of the female to sexual availability in thought as well as in practice. John Chrysostom repeatedly expressed the danger to the male audience by the sight of women on stage and that even the memory of a female performance could accompany them home and threaten the sanctity of their marriage.[39] The story was told among the early Christians of a demon who entered a woman in the theatre and then excused himself at an exorcism because the woman was already evil and a member of his territory. Legends were also passed among the faithful of sceneci who while mimicking the sacred rituals of the Christians were transformed, renounced their obscene profession, and sought redemption within the church.

Ironically, it is because of the church's condemnation of their profession and gender, that any records remain documenting the female performer throughout Europe and within the east during the Middle Ages. Chrysostom while in Alexandria boasted of an actress who became a Christian under his preaching and Bishop Nonnus writes of a famous singer, Margarito, who he induced to abandon the stage. Due to the rise of disapproval from the church, women who performed during this period often took

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[36] Tunison 28.

[37] Ruth Webb, "Female entertainers in late antiquity," *Greek and Roman Actors*, eds. Pat Easterling and Edith Hall, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 283.

[38] Procopius, *Secret History* 8.9: 292.

fanciful Hellenic names to escape prosecution. To name only a few of the many, they were known as *Sappho, Bacche, Chrysamallo* (which means golden hair), *Cleophantis, Calliope,* and even Antonina, sister of the wife of Justinian, known by her stage name as *Cometo.*[40] Once famed for their dress[41] and grace and loved by the rural populations for their reenactment of the goddess, the old woman who must die for spring to come,[42] or their healing rituals, the actress of the period is only briefly mentioned in early twentieth century histories and excluded almost completely by medieval scholars until the late twentieth century. The female's performance, highly popular and common within the touring troupes and ancient sacred rituals, was considered immoral coinciding with the condemnation of the public female in any form by the Christians. The actresses' continued participation in medieval performance and the Church's abhorrence of them can be recognized in Christianity's protracted refusal to baptize any women who performed and in the laws' exclusion of the actress from its protection. The rhetoric of the Theodosian Code and of Christian argument against the stage allowed a performer to leave the stage and its social status[43] if they underwent a conversion to Christianity and renounced their profession. Legislation of the fourth century C.E. actually protected

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[39] Chrysostom, *PG* 62.428*, PG* 56.266-7.
[40] Tunison, 26.

[41] Ibid. 27. He states that actresses set the fashion for women in Byzantine cities until all women's dress was limited by sumptuary laws at the rise of Christian dominance.

[42] Chambers, Vol.I 161.

[43] The Roman stigma of *infamia* reflected the *de facto* social exclusion of a group whose members were either born into the profession or were slaves and whose profession separated them from the communities in which they worked. Their status also left the performers without legal protection. For example the rape of a *mima* was not a rape at all. Cicero states that rape was part of the traditional treatment meted out to *scaenici* in small towns. Cicero, *Pro Plancio* 12.30.

"daughters of *scaenicae* who lived virtuous lives from being forced to follow in their mothers' footsteps."[44]

Although performers could be beaten and actresses raped with no apparent consequence,[45] there is very little written of actors being physically punished by the church or performances being forcefully disrupted by the clergy within Europe. Leonese Martin Perez' *Libro de confessiones* written between 1312 and 1317 is evidence that male and female minstrels, mimes and actors are still prominent within the late medieval culture. Within chapter 137 Perez attacks actors who disguise themselves as devils and animals and also those who perform with gestures and leaps in the marketplace to earn money. In chapter 140 he accepts those who sing and play musical instruments if they articulate the lives of saints and the needs of kings, but condemns "male and female minstrels and singers," who jump, dance cavort, and distort their bodies. To support them is to support Satan.[46] The outrage of church leaders and medieval accountant records portray a wealth of information concerning the performance troupes. The Council of Valladolid condemns and notes the practice of inviting Moorish and Jewish minstrels into the churches on the eve of saint's days to sing and play. Two years later, The Council of Toledo attacks bishops and nobleman who allow female entertainers to dance in their palaces.[47]

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[44] *Cod Theod.* 15.7.1(371); 15.7.2 (371); 15.7.4 (380). Webb, (2002) 297.

[45] Webb (2002) 293.

[46] Quoted in Stern pp. 82-83.

[47] Stern, 84. The council refers to the women as little more than prostitutes.

It is also during the fourth century C.E. that a growing Christian intolerance to other forms of belief becomes evident through acts of imperial legislation and popular violence. For example, the Christian emperor Theodosius II closed the theatre at Antioch by official edict. John Chrysostom, in his sermon delivered after the closing, argued such action could only enhance the city's civic identity. Chrysostom was promoting a Christian identity as he spoke of the reputation of the city, not being built upon its large and beautiful structures, but upon the piety and virtue of its population.[48] Possibly the most graphic representation of a dominant ideology reshaping history and identity can be found in the early church's use of the Roman practice of statue and portrait destruction.

From the first century B.C.E. to the end of the fourth century C.E. throughout the Roman Empire the symbolic destruction of statues and other portrait images was a common practice.[49] This cultural practice allowed the population to unleash violence upon the figure of the fallen Emperor or disgraced citizen and erase their place in history as well as their status in the society. The portrait statue was analogous to the human body and continued to serve the rituals of honor and dishonor within the Empire. The widespread reproduction of statues represented the dominant ideology and the population's adherence to it. The destruction of the images had a similar cohesive effect. As long as the Emperor or the gods were associated with prominent public images the idea of the statue's symbolism was important and the tradition of mutilation, decapitation, toppling, dragging and disposal of the portrait statue as refuse was a cultural convention.

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[48] Easterling and Miles 100.

[49] Peter Stewart, "The Destruction of Statues in Late Antiquity," in *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity,* Ed. Richard Miles (1999) 161.

This form of mutilation was carried out upon the theatre within the pulpits of the early church and demoted the performer, once prized as Shaman, religious citizen or gifted storyteller, to the image of whore, vagabond and thief. Pagan cult images were viewed as evil by the early Christians and their destruction and mutilation a Christian victory. Evidence of the desecration of the sacred is noted by such historic images as the torso of a Venus statue which was left to stand near the church of St. Matthias as a target for stones thrown by those who passed. A medieval inscription at its base claimed the statue had been made an object of ridicule by St. Eucharius.[50] Christianity attempted to annihilate Paganism fueled by Old Testament scriptures such as: "Ye shall destroy their altars, break down their images, and cut down their groves . . . for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a Jealous God."[51] The urban tradition of riot inspired several centuries of destruction in which the writings of philosophers, classic texts, statues and sacred performance were discarded, destroyed or banned by church decree during the early Middle Ages.

The murder of Hypatia, a famed female mathematician and philosopher, ripped to pieces by a mob of Christians in the streets of Alexandria, and the pillage of the library of Alexandria condoned by Bishop Thesophilus are only a few examples of the process of destruction levied upon the evils of Paganism as the Christians proclaimed their victory in the fifth century C.E. Although Jews and synagogues were also subject to violence and intimidation during this period, the full wrath of the Christian faithful was primarily

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[49] Ibid. 172.

[50] E.M. Wrightman, *Roman Trier and the Treviri* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1970) 229.

[51] Exodus 34:14

focused upon the religion of the majority. Archaeologists have found signs of Christian iconoclasm throughout the Roman territories: cutting out phalluses of Amun on Egyptian temples, the carving of crosses on Pagan statues, the erasure of the inscriptions of gods' names, the breaking up or melting down of Pagan statues, bathhouses were sealed (bathing naked was condemned) and marked by a cross at the door or converted into churches,.[52] Eusebius' panegyric, delivered at Tyre, proclaims that Christ has made evil vanish and so completely that it seems never to have had a name. During the reign of Constantine, Eusebius and writers such as Firmicus Maternus depict the destruction of Pagan idols as almost a Christian duty. In the *Vita Constantin,* Eusebius presents Constantine as the destroyer of idols and describes in detail the demolition of statues designed to expose the cult images as mere stone and metal.[53] Later in the *Triennial Oration* "Constantine is said to have sent out his friends to end idolatry; they supervise the destruction of the statues, which takes place with much laughter and degradation."[54]

This use of one of the most powerful fourth century emperors of Rome as an icon for the Christian war on Paganism is only one of the many forms of confiscation, distortion and propaganda used by Christian writers of the period. It is very unlikely Constantine promoted the destruction of Pagan idols or riots within his streets. When Constantine founded his new capital, Pagan statues and monuments were taken from all over the Empire to decorate his city. "Jerome tells of whole cities being stripped of

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[52] Freeman 267.

[53] Bowder 80.

[54] Stewart 179.

monuments."[55] The emperor built temples within his city to honor Rhea, mother of the Olympian gods and protecting goddess of the Byzantium, and to the deity Tyche, the personification of good fortune. Peace within the Roman cities was the goal of all Roman leaders. Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, not because of his belief in one God, but because of his disruption of the Roman peace. Twentieth century scholars have found that Constantine tolerated Christianity as a means to gain peace. Constantine never attended a Christian service, was not baptized until a few weeks before his death, and continued his patronage of Hercules (his father-in-law, Maximinian's protecting god), Apollo (appeared to him in a vision in 310) and *Sol Invictus* (the cult of the unconquered sun) popular among soldiers. As late as 320 C.E. he was still issuing coins bearing images of *Sol Invictus*. He consolidated the Christians into his realm as a means of control and built their churches in the same way Roman emperors in the past had rewarded segments of their constituents and presided over their arguments commanding harmony.[56] His army remained Pagan and few Christians played any part in his administration.

In contrast to the Christian reshaping of Constantine into "God's Commander-in-Chief"[57] the theatre, as a symbol of Pagan ritualized performance and the unifying factor of an oral society, like the images of the gods, was defaced and profaned in order for a new cultural Christian identity to emerge. Paganism was eradicated by beheading a statue of a Greek god and the tradition of Pagan theatrical performance was similarly erased

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[55] Ibid 173.

[56] The Council of Nicaea (considered the first expression of the Nicene Creed.)

within histories. In 400 C.E. Augustine states that theatres are falling on every side and yet, fifty years later Salvian speaks of the despised circus in Rome and a theatre in Ravenna thronged with citizens from throughout the Empire.[58] Sidonius also speaks of the theatre in Rome twelve years after it had been sacked for a second time in 467. He also writes of mimes, pantomimes and acrobats still flourishing at Narbonne.[59]

The theatres in the Eastern Empire, which the church claimed to have eradicated within the fifth century, although periodically closed, remained a prolific and continuous part of the society throughout the Byzantine era. This is evident by the church's Trullan Synod's banning of all *mimae* and theatrical performances in 692, long after performance was supposedly eradicated. Many theatre historians view this banning as the end of Roman theatre.[60] The proclamation seems to have very little real effect upon performance in the Byzantine Empire. *Mimae* are still noted at state festivals "and the emperor, who was both head of state and church, blessed the participants with the sign of the cross from his box in the Hippodrome."[61] Sathas, a Greek scholar, at the end of the nineteenth century established this belief in a Byzantine theatrical tradition throughout the period, but was immediately in conflict with his fellow scholars of the day, who dismissed his writings and pointed to the lack of dramatic literature as their proof. It seems very probable that a church which despised performance and had destroyed the

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[57] Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine,* Eds. and Trans. Averil Cameron and Stuart Hall, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

[58] Salvian, vi, 39, 42, 49.

[59] Sidonius, *Carm*. Xxiii. 263

[60] Kelly, Beacham, Tydeman.

[61] Brockett 67.

writings of conflicting Pagan philosophers and which had proclaimed a Pagan emperor as Christian could easily have obliterated any dramatic texts that did not uphold Christian anti-theatricality.

The sacred performance of the ancient Greeks, regulated to a text form, allowed the Christians and Pagans to share the accepted cultural identity of the past. However, by negating the power of the *lived exchange* and secularizing the sacred space of Roman theatre, the early Church attempted to control, interpret, and devalue Pagan ritual performances. Just as church sources tend to exaggerate the practice of Christianity and view Paganism as only surviving in isolated pockets within the Empire of the fourth and fifth century, the documentation of the *sceneci* is suspiciously scant. Throughout the era warnings from the Church to avoid those performers who ridicule Christians indicate a continuous and unofficial performance tradition well into the Christian era. Although theatre was attacked by the Church as the representation of Paganism, due to its popularity, only the clergy was prohibited from attending. The laity were restricted upon Sundays and other holy days by the threat of excommunication. No Christian could be a *scenicus* or a *scenica* or marry one and the unhallowed profession had to be abandoned before baptism.[62]

While publicly condemning the theatre, Christian leaders retained, if only in translated and reshaped form, the tragedies of the Greek and Roman comedies. Literacy still separated the elite from the general population. Augustine made a distinction between high and low forms of drama, but he does not condemn the use of tragedies and

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[62] Council of Elvira (306 C.E.), Council of Arles (314 C.E.), third and fourth Council of Carthage (397-398 C.E.) *Cannons of Hippolytus* 67.

comedies in education. However, Jerome protests against priests reading comedies[63] and Orosius, a student of both Christian leaders, sees the sack of Rome as a result of its non-literate and un-holy theatre.[64] It seems obvious that the Greek dramatic texts translated, taught and interpreted in the early religious schools and analyzed by Christian scholars, were viewed as distinct and distant from Roman performance. The numerous writings of the medieval church pertaining to blasphemous performance and the church's embrace of certain Greek texts may be seen as merely a continuation of Roman patrician traditions already ancient by the sixth century.[65]

The sacred ritual of Roman performance, once viewed as an appeasement gift for their gods and people, was now perceived as a product of the devil. Theatre, which questioned the Christian sacred, and those in power, or upheld the benefits of alternative sacred ritual (magic, transformation and healing) to all who attended, was in direct conflict with a faith where the holy was controlled by the few and doled out to those who adhered to their laws of faith. Salvian[66] in the sixth book of his treatise, *De Gubernatione Dei,* written in the fifth century C.E., insists on the definite renunciation of any form of *spectacula* in the Christian baptismal vow.[67] Sacred ritual performance, emerging within the monasteries in the tenth century, was only accepted within the confines of the Church

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[63] Jerome, *Ep.* 21 (*alii* 146) *ad Danasum* written 383 C.E.

[64] Orosius, *Hist. Adv. Paganos (*417), iv. 21. 5.

[65] Joseph S. Tunison, *Dramatic Traditions of the Dark Ages* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1907) 1.
1908)

[66] Salvian was a priest of Marseilles and wrote between 439 and 451.

[67] Salvian, *De Gubernatione Dei*, vi. 31.

walls and all other demonstrations were considered superstitions, evil and an attack upon the souls of men. The prohibitions of the church made no allowance between singer and story-teller, *mimi* or *histriones.* There is a tendency during the early Middle Ages to view all forms of non-Christian entertainment as secular and therefore incompatible with religious life. Politically, Christian fathers retained the Roman view of their rulers and perceive kings as the representations of Christ on earth, anointed by God.[68]

The Christians, who had viewed Rome and her Christian emperors as deriving power through divine right, now viewed the sack of Rome by the Goths as God's will and suitable punishment for Western Rome's immoral acts of lust, greed and blasphemy. The art of the day which had previously depicted Roman emperors close to the hand of God now depicted the once lowly barbarian as divinely chosen. Theoderic II is pictured within mosaics of his time enthroned in majesty with Christ the Pantocrator and the majesty of heaven opposite.[69] Politics and religion were still one and the same. The image of the divine emperor, seated by the hand of God, remained in effect until 1453 when Constantine, the eleventh of that name, died while defending Constantinople, against the Ottoman Turks.[70] The rationale that power was inherited through divine right was already present in the Roman Empire from the end of the first century, but developed during the Byzantium Christian era when the emperor was presented through image and thought as Christ-like and enthroned by God.

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[68]Bertelli 11. In 337, after Constantine's conversion to Christianity, the Roman mint struck a coin with the legend *Divus Constantinus Pater Augustorium* (divine Constantine, father of emperors), showing the emperor ascending the heavens riding in a solar chariot.

[69] S. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) 236-9.

[70] Freeman 60.

The history of Roman theatre and its aftermath is largely documented by Christian historians who loudly proclaimed the death of Paganism and its evil representative: theatre. However, we know that that actors and performers are still entertaining at weddings and private celebrations due to Christian council after council, beginning in the fourth century C.E., requiring clergy to leave the room before the performers are introduced.[71] The emperor Theodosius proclaims in 423 C.E. "the regulations of constitutions formerly promulgated shall suppress all Pagans, although we now believe that there are none."[72] The wide spread and continuous nomadic performances are evidenced throughout the Middle Ages through clerical letters and church decrees banning the harbor of *scenici* within religious houses in the Council of English Affairs in 679, and again at the Council of Clovesho in 747. At the end of the eighth century Alcuin in a letter to Higbald, bishop of Lindisfarne, [73] warns him against the snares of *histriones* and two centuries later Dunstan's writings, attempting to reform the church, perceive religious communities which favor performing troupes as abusers of the faith.[74]

Exclusion was a means of identity destruction and was an important tool of the Christian elite as Augustine cautioned in the early fifth century:

> There is another form of temptation, even more fraught with danger. This is the disease of curiosity . . . It is this

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[71] *Council of Laodicea,* (343-81C.E.), cannon 54; *Council of Braga* (572 C.E.), cannon 60; *Council of Aix-la-Chapelle* (816 C.E.), cannon 83.

[72] *Codex Theodosiuanus* 16,10.22; Chuvin, *Chronicle of the Last Pagans,* 91-92.

[73] Alcuin, *Ep.* 124 (797 C.E.)

[74] *The Vitae of Dunstan* quoted in Chambers 32.

> which drives us to try and discover the secrets of nature, those secrets which are beyond understanding, which can avail us nothing and which man should not learn.[75]

Such statements form the framework of medieval historic writings and can be viewed in direct contrast with a fragment of an unnamed play by Euripides in the fifth century B.C.E.

> Blessed is he who learns how to engage in inquiry, with no impulse to harm his countrymen or to pursue wrongful actions, but perceives the order of immortal and ageless nature, how it is structured.[76]

Despite the dominance of anti-theatrical prejudice, the Northern tribes of Europe continued their reverence towards the *scops* during the early Middle Ages. As the acting troupes streamed from a fallen Western Rome and were driven from the East by persecution, they combined their satires with the ancient tradition of the shaman magicians who carried the history of the Northern tribes in song and dance.[77] Most of these oral entertainments are excluded or given little value in the histories of medieval theatre.

Under emperor Justinian, the full weight of the law was enforced against Paganism as the death penalty was imposed upon those who practiced Pagan cults. Pagan teachers, including philosophers, were refused the license (*parrhesia)* to instruct

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[75] Augustine, late fourth century C.E., Quoted in Freeman.

[76] Euripides, fragment of unnamed play, fifth century B.C.E. Quoted in Freeman.

[77] Chambers Vol.I 25, Taylor 68 and Harris 19.

others and Plato's Academy was forcibly closed in Athens after 900 years of teaching.[78] The abandonment of the Greek tradition of debate and reason became a policy during this period as any search for knowledge was considered itself a heresy. The disappearance of philosophical or classical texts are evident by the time Isidore (seventh century C.E.) was compiling his *Etymologies* for he notes the difficulty of locating texts of classical authors. However, decrees of a universal religion or the threat of death for ritual practices outside of the church does not seem to completely eradicate the Pagan beliefs or theatrical performers which are flourishing under new names: *ioculatores, jongleurs, gleomons, citharistas,* minstrels, jesters, and buffoons. The church made no exception within its prohibitions for musicians, singers or story-tellers, however, the full force of Christian condemnation was upon the *mimae* and *histriones* who danced, sang acted and buffooned.

In 601, Pope Gregory the Great wrote two letters to Ethelbert of Kent, one promoting the suppression of the worship of idols and the destruction of the *fanes* (sacred spaces of Pagan worship) within the Pagan districts and the other reversing his instructions, urging the priests to suppress the worship of idols with continued zeal, but not to pull down the fanes (Pagan shrines).[79] Rather than advocate complete destruction, the method of Christian colonization of Western Europe was that of assimilation. Gregory ordered the buildings purified with holy water, the idols destroyed and replaced with relics of the church allowing the heathen fanes to become temples of the *true* God.

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[78] Freeman 269.

[79] Ibid.

> So the people will have no need to change their places of concourse, and where of old they were wont to sacrifice cattle to demons, thither let them continue to resort on the day of the saint to whom the church is dedicated, and slay their beasts no longer as a sacrifice, but for a social meal in honor of Him whom they now worship.[80]

The process of assimilation, a custom encouraged by Alexander and a proven policy of the Romans, was successfully adopted by many medieval Christian leaders during the conversion of Europe. For example, the church of Saint Pancras, outside of the walls of Canterbury, stands upon the site of a fane and St. Paul's in London replaced a temple and grove of Diana. Reduald, king of East Anglia, maintained an altar for Christian worship and also an *arula* for the sacrifice to Pagan gods. As late as the eighth century in Germany, Christian priests were equally ready to sacrifice to *Wuotan* or to administer the sacrament of baptism and even though the sacred oak of Thor was felled, its wood was used to build a church.[81] The assimilation of the despised methods of the *mimae* and *spectacula* of the Romans is evidenced within the dramatic religious and non-religious forms of performance which grew during the medieval period: pageant, Liturgical drama, the feast of fools, vernacular religious drama, farces, moralities, interludes, royal entries, tournaments, Chambers of Rhetoric, mummings and disguisings.

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[80] A. C. Haddean and W. Stubbs, Eds., *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland,* Vol.1., (Oxford: 1869) 78.

[81] J. Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, Vol. 1., Trans. J.S. Stallybrass, (London, 1880), 8.

The methods of confiscation, assimilation and exclusion, inherited from the Roman patrician class, continue to distort any cultural history of the Middle Ages. Under Christianity's expansion Roman methods of colonization remain pervasive throughout medieval Europe and become standard practices during Renaissance colonialism. Christianity could not abandon the ancient and sacred rituals entirely, for they wished to convert those who cherished them. Gradually, the church recontextualized them for their own ideological use. It seems an unlikely coincidence that the only Roman plays which exist today in their written form are adaptations of Greek plays. This would appear to substantiate the church's acceptance of classical Greek texts. The Christian fathers and a minority of educated Pagans also wrote the histories of their society and shaped the medieval perspective of theatre and its audience. These Christian texts defined what was *sacred*, performance, ritual, and *profane* for generations to come and, like the popular mystery cults of the time, promoted the idea that a priestly elite had privileged access to the cult's secrets and the absolute right to interpret them for others.[82] Any references supported by the writings of this period which pertain to theatrical performance should be viewed with extreme caution.

Historians' reliance upon the ancient written text or the residue of architectural remains as the basis for popular performance forms continues to distort today's view of ancient theatre and suppress the histories of theatrical performance within colonized, nomadic and often oral cultures. The theatre histories of the Romans and the Middle Ages, if viewed through the lens of post-colonialism, depict a far different theatrical atmosphere. Theatrical performance outside of state and church control is both abundant

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[82] Freeman 71.

and prevalent and remains a strong cultural force within medieval Europe. Although marginalized within the histories, banned by the dominant religion, its performers persecuted, the theatrical techniques of the blasphemous were nevertheless assimilated into sanctioned Christian performances. The nomadic troupes' continued performing and their general acceptance throughout diverse populations of the known world during the Middle Ages suggests their importance and impact upon European theatre and its audience. The *mimae*'s appearance at Pagan rituals, religious festivals, processions, and court entertainments are documented by church leaders through a continuous stream of attacks upon the profession, but it was within the villages and rural populations of the medieval European world where they quite possibly retained their mystical status as a conduit to the old gods and carriers of ancient legends.

The Middle Ages

The medieval world was saturated with religion and performance, but not necessarily based upon the Christian faith.[83] Sacredness and ancient Pagan symbols

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[83] The perception of the performer as profane and their product offensive to God was also not exclusive to the Christians during the Middle Ages. *Mimae* performance, persecuted, but still popular continues throughout Egypt and its surrounding regions, despite Islam's condemnation of the profession. Largely ignored or misrepresented, performance after the rise of Islam did exist. Performers are documented in Iraq by its governor in 655 C.E. *Mimae* performance, persecuted, but still with audience, also continues throughout Egypt and its surrounding regions, despite Islam's condemnation of the profession. A full account of a performance of the Jewish mime, *Batruni,* and his persecution by the faithful sheds some light upon the enactments during this period in the Middle East: He heard of a Jew called Bastruni, near the villages of Kufa, who performed various kinds of magic, illusion tricks and acts of buffoonery. Al-Walid b. 'Uqba fetched him. The man showed him various kinds of appearances in the mosque. He represented to him at night a huge Yemenite king on a horse galloping in the courtyard of the mosque. Then the Jew was metamorphosed into a she-camel walking on a rope. Then he showed him the figure of a donkey, which he entered via its mouth and left via its behind. He also beheaded a man and separated his body from his head; then he turned the sword on him, whereupon the man got up, alive. A group of Kufu villagers attended the performance, among them Jundab. It is said that Jundab went to the market, approached one of the swordmakers and took a sword, whereupon he went in and struck the Jew a blow which caused his head to roll from his body, saying 'If you speak the truth, then resurrect yourself.' Moreh pp. 13-14.

permeated every aspect of medieval Europe: bulls were sacrificed at coronations just as they were before the Greek sacred rituals; European kings gave bread and wine freely to their people on festival days just as their predecessors, the Romans, had done centuries before; and women, costumed in green vines, still danced in processions at the coming of Spring in worship of an ancient god of fertility. As late as 1530, the emperor Charles V. entered Naples wearing claws against his chest, representing *the great beast* as a guard against apoplexy.[84]

In a 1979 article G.B. Ladner writes "the symbolic world view of the Middle Ages cannot be understood without reference to a sacred history which was conceived as a coherent sequence of divinely planned happenings from creation through the events of the Old and New Testaments and the salvation-oriented progression of mankind."[85] However, Ladner fails to mention the ancient Pagan symbolism still prevalent in medieval ceremonies and extending through the Renaissance, such as the roasted bull, represented in numerous engravings of coronations,[86] stuffed with the bodies of sacred Pagan animals with the heads protruding: the swan (Apollo), the raven (emblem of Odin), the boar (symbol of Adonis), and the eagle (soul of the Roman emperor). Oats and bread continued to be spread by the king to the crowd as a symbolic return of abundance to the earth, and toasts once drunk to Odin and Freyja (Teutonic goddess of fertility) were transferred to St. John and St. Gertrude as the spring and summer ceremonies once

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[84] Bertelli 5.

[85] Ladner, G.B. "Medieval and Modern Understanding of Symbolism: A Comparison." *Images and Ideas* I. 1979, 239-82.

[86] Bertelli pp. 116-21.

designated to gods of the planting and harvest were renamed as Palm Sunday, Easter and St. Mark's day.[87]

The medieval performers, censored and excluded from Christian sacraments, were still often seen as representative of ancient transformative magic. They proliferated throughout villages and Royal courts spreading legends, tribal histories and enacting ancient rituals. One clear example is the mummers' play which is found in European cultures as divergent as England, Spain, Germany, Greece and Russia. Representative of the ancient Shamans and their ritualistic healing, the mummers' play begins with two characters introduced, who brag about their exploits. "Their identities are topical and variable"[88] and their boisterous swaggering escalates into a mock combat where one is either killed or wounded. The symbolic identity of the injured character, whether hero or foreigner, is secondary to the basic function of the combat, which is to supply someone on who the doctor can practice his or her miraculous cure. A *doctor* enters, brags about his many travels and his healing abilities and then proceeds to cure or bring to life the wounded or dead man. Various minor characters are then presented, (depending upon the size of the troupe) each with a brief speech introducing themselves. The combat and cure can be repeated several times and is dependent upon the audience response. The performance ends with the collection of money from the crowd and a song and dance. [89] The show is comic and magical, local and legendary, sung, danced or spoken and can expand with the talents of the performers.

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[87] Chambers 114.

[88] Ibid 118.
[89] Kirby 142.

The cure, not the battle or who wins it is the basic element in the performance. R.J. Tiddy, in *The Mummers' Play* (1923), perceives the doctor as "the medicine man of primitive races."[90] Some scholars perceive both the plot and content of the entertainment as highly reminiscent of the shaman's healing séance and the final characters introduced as aspects of the Shaman: the fool; Beelzebub, the leader of demon spirits; the Wild Man; and Bessy, a woman or man dressed like a woman. The hobby-horse, a traditional feature of the mummer's play, may also refer to the shaman's ecstatic identity as a "horse, one who is ridden by spirits."[91] The wide spread performances and the use of symbols such as *the hobby horse*[92] are documented by the church's condemnation of the practice. Augustine speaks out against the mummings in 395 C.E. and Bishop Caesarius of Arles in 506 C.E. The council of Auxerre, 573 and 603 decreed: "It is not allowed . . . to perform with a cervulus, a hobby-horse or to observe the giving of presents to demons." Priminius orders in 750 C.E. that those of his faith not associate with hobby-horses or calves on the Kalends.[93] By its condemnations, the church historically marks the mummer's play and other Pagan dramatic rituals over a thousand years before their oral texts were written down in the eighteenth century.[94]

Diverse forms of ritualized death and resurrection are performed throughout medieval Europe and are called *Sword Dances* or *danse des bouffons, guisers* or *Pace-*

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[90] R. J.E. Tiddy, *The Mummers' Play* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923) 76.

[91] V. M. Mikhailovski, *Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia,* 152; M. Eliade, *Shamanism Archaic Techniques of Ectasy,* 469; Taylor, *The Death and Ressurection Show,* pp. 70-71.

[92] The "hobby-horse" is noted in Feast of Fools celebrations well into the thirteenth century.

[93] Taylor 145.

[94] Vince (1984) 120.

eggers. They are presented at Pagan and Christian festivals[95], weddings, royal entries, court entertainments and village gatherings. In 620 Bishop Eusebius of Barcelona was dismissed by King Sisebut "because he had allowed a Pagan play to be performed in his diocese."[96] The ritual plays incorporate minstrels and *mimae*, male and female performers, and are called *matlaccino* in Italy and *matachin* in Spain. These European performances are as ancient as the Roman and are described by Tacitus as a form of German *spectaculum.* All were condemned[97] by the church as Pagan and were similarly assimilated as Christianity usurped many existing festivals where the performances occurred. Clerical denunciations of Pagan performances are one of the main sources of information about medieval secular theatre activity and its assimilation within medieval Christian performance. The continued condemnation of popular entertainment, represented by *histriones, scurrae* and *mimi* and *its* distinction from Christian drama, performed as acts of worship or religious instruction, spans the entire medieval period.

The church's excommunication of the revered *scop* in the 8th century marks its general condemnation of all performance outside of its walls. This excommunication mandate, separate from claims of obscenity heaped upon the *mimae,* labeled the story-teller and the singer as infamous. "Idle dances, songs and tales in public places and at

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[95] In 1508 salaries are noted for sword dances, ten wild women with bows, bells and arrows, and three men and one female black dancer for shows staged for the Corpus Christi.

[96] John E. Varey, "A Note on the Councils of the Church and Early Dramatic Spectacles in Spain," *Medieval Hispanic Studies Presented to Rita Hamilton,* S.D. Deyermond, ed. (London:Tamesis, 1976) 244.

[97] The monastery of Silos condemned and sentenced to one year of penance those who danced disguised as women or pretended to be monsters.

crossroads were forbidden on Sundays."[98] The *scop* was combined with the *scenici* and excluded along with *histriones* from pleading in courts of justice.[99] Their songs, once ancient chants of Pagan myth and tribal legend, were transcribed and transformed into Christian hymns and biblical stories and their dance and dramas are vaguely listed in histories as folk lore and rural customs. The church battled with these ancient ritual performances to lay an exclusive claim to transformative magic. This was manifested through the allowance of State public flogging of performers, the refusal of the church to allow a performer to be baptized, and the excommunication of those of the faith who performed.

Despite their designation as *infamous* there is very little written of actors actually being punished by priests or of performances outside the church being forcefully disrupted by the clergy within Europe except by religious decree. Leonese Martin Perez' *Libro de confessiones* written between 1312 and 1317 is evidence that male and female minstrels, mimes and actors are still prominent within the late medieval culture. Within chapter 137 Perez attacks actors who disguise themselves as devils and animals and also those who perform with gestures and leaps in the marketplace to earn money. In chapter 140 he accepts those who sing and play musical instruments if they articulate the lives of saints and the needs of kings, but condemns male and female minstrels and singers, who jump, dance cavort, and distort their bodies. To support them is to support Satan.[100]

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[98] Benedictus Levita, vi. 205.

[99] This belongs to the reign of Louis the Pious.

[100] Quoted in Stern pp. 82-83.

The outrage of church leaders along with medieval accountant records portrays a wealth of information concerning the performance troupes. The Council of Valladolid condemns and notes the practice of inviting Moorish and Jewish minstrels into the churches on the eve of saint's days to sing and play. Two years later, The Council of Toledo attacks bishops and nobleman who allow female entertainers to dance in their palaces.[101] However, it does not seem that punishment or excommunication was what destroyed the mystical aspects of the nomadic troupes, but rather their assimilation into Christian festivals. "Often a festival was assigned by the church to that area's patron saint and a church honoring him or she was built on a site previously dedicated to some Pagan god."[102]

Liturgical drama, emerging from, and performed within, the Easter service of Benedictine monasteries, is documented in the tenth century C.E. through the earliest found written text.[103] Brockett writes that medieval Liturgical drama has been traditionally traced to the tropes inserted in the Easter Services and the earliest, complete with directions for performance is attributed to Ehtelwood, Bishop of Winchester sometime between 965 and 975 C.E. The keyword is *traditionally* and reflects the modern assumption that *true*[104] drama is written and grew out of the dark ages through sacred church ceremonies. The *acceptable* form of drama by the dominant faith

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[101] Stern, 84. The council refers to the women as little more than prostitutes.

[102] Brockett 75.

[103] Ibid 76.

[104] Tydeman, Simon, "Introduction" *The Theater In the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

documented through their written texts is repeatedly used to document theatrical performance during this period.

Several scholars, such as Hunningher, question that dramatic activity within Europe came primarily from the Liturgical dramas of the church.

> It is very doubtful whether the Easter tropes, and their counterparts at Christmas, could ever have led to the development of drama in any real sense of the term. The severe restrictions on the characters and their actions prevented any real expansion beyond a few tricks of staging and verbal variation.[105]

Brockett also recognizes that, although there are many surviving Liturgical plays due to the spread of Christianity as far east as Russia and as far north as Scandinavia, they were at best annual productions. The majority of the Liturgical performances during the tenth and eleventh centuries was rarely seen by audiences and was confined to monasteries until the twelfth century when large Cathedrals were built. [106]

By contrast Tydeman, in his *The Theatre in the Middle Ages,* goes so far as to call Benjamin Hunningher's suggestion "that it was professional *mimi* rather than clerics who performed the first religious plays and were employed by the church for that purpose" as *eccentric.* Even though Tydeman admits the Latin terms of *sceneci, histriones, mimi* and

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[105] Jackson, W.T. *The Literature of the Middle Ages* (New York: New York University Press, 1960) 283. Kirby, Taylor and R. Pascal also adhere to the view that the modern European modern dramatic forms come directly from folk dramas and shamanistic performance rituals of the Middle Ages.

[106] Brockett 78.

joculatores are used extensively within church decrees and writings during the Middle Ages he focuses most of his book upon the written dramas of the church.

Some scholars have argued that the early Christian Mass is a drama.

> The conclusion seems inescapable that the 'dramatic instinct' of European man did not 'die out' during the earlier Middle Ages, as historians of drama have asserted. Instead, it found expression in the central ceremony of Christian worship, the Mass . . . . Just as the Mass is a sacred drama encompassing all history and embodying in its structure the central pattern of Christian life on which all Christian drama must draw, the celebration of the Mass contains all elements necessary to secular performance.[107]

However, such views of theatre seem obviously based in cultural Darwinism and can be traced to nineteenth century historians. "The tropes were first identified as one of the origins of the modern theatre in 1886 by Leon Gautier, who in his *Histoirede la poesie liturgique* noted that he was tempted to believe that they represented *the* origin."[108] It seems very unlikely that a few lines of chanted dialogue within a medieval Christian service mark the origin of modern Western theatre when Roman and Greek dramatic texts existed *under lock and key* within the monasteries. Brockett states that liturgical drama grew out of the expanding complexity of music within the mass which motivated

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[107] O.B. Hardison, Jr., *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press 1965) Quoted in Brockett 106.

[108] Ronald Vince, *Ancient and Medieval Theatre,* (London: Greenwood Press, 1984) 24.

the introduction of tropes.[109] Such assumptions also ignore the influence of the active medieval performances of the traveling troupes and of continued Pagan festivals outside of the church's control.

Other scholarly points of view are in direct conflict with the assertion that the Christian sacred rituals are in any way drama. "The Mass, then, has never been a drama, nor did it ever directly give rise to drama."[110] What is interesting about such binary debates is that they document a continued battle to divide sacred ritual from theatre without recognizing parallel performance outside of the Christian ideology. Ironically, theatre is perceived by many theatre scholars as emerging from the sacred rituals of a medieval church, while others consider any perception of the *sacred* as theatre in direct conflict with what early Christians designated as profane for centuries. It seems probable that the rituals of Christianity, similar to the Greek festival performances, were both sacred and theatrical. The reliance on written texts by theatre historians has led to the premise that the Christian church was the main source of theatrical performance during the Middle Ages and the only source of the sacred. "Because the number of surviving Liturgical plays is so great, it is sometimes forgotten that a single church probably performed no more than one or two each year and that many never performed plays."[111] Oral performance and its lived and temporal exchange, when regulated by medieval Christian scholars to its written form, are easily distorted by the ideology in both translation and interpretation. Today we know that many of the later Liturgical texts

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[109] Brockett (2003) 76.

[110] Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieveal Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1933) 85.

[111] Brockett, 78.

(1050-1300) long regarded as literary works were by and large performance texts, designed for oral delivery, to be read aloud or sung and brought to life by actors in costume upon a stage.[112] We also know that these dramas played within the church continued in parallel to performances outside of the church for over three hundred years. We know that by the early thirteenth century the Pope denounced theatrical performances within the churches, calling them *ludi theatrales*, performed by masked actors and giving free reign to mimicry, song and dance.

The use of Pagan theatrical forms seems to be part of the church's method of drawing in a congregation in1234. The Decretals of Gregory IX ban the practices by cannon law:

> . . . Nor should priests stage plays of mockery in order to lure the people to the church to watch them, and if other people do these things, the priests should not go to see them, nor should they be allowed to perform in the churches. . .[113]

This particular cannon also specifically exempts religious plays within the church, which were sometimes known to hire the same performers which were enacting secular and condemned popular entertainments.[114] Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, proclaimed a

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[112] Stern, 146.

[113] *Primera Partida,* 160.

[114] Suzanne Byrd, "The *Juglar:* Progenitor of the Spanish Theatre," *The American Hispanist* (Mar.-Apr. 1979): 20-24. And Paul Zumthor, *Speaking of the Middle Ages,* Trans. Sarah White, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986) and Ramon Menendez Pidal, *Poesia juglaresca y juglares,* (Madrid: Publicaciones de la "Revista de Filolofia Espanola," 1957) and Benjamin Hunningher, *The Origin of Theatre* ,(New York: Hill and Wang, 1961) and Stern, Taylor, Lord.

three-year penance on any priest who attended theatrical spectacles (outside of the church) in the ninth century and early in the fourteenth century Thomas de Cabham, Bishop of Salisbury, condemns three types of histriones as sacrilegious and scurrilous.[115] St. Ailred accuses English clerics of unseemly theatrical gestures in *Speculum Caritatis* and as late as 1445 the Faculty of Theology at the University of Paris, in a letter to the bishops of France, complains of this same behavior by priests and monks during the Feasts of Fools.[116] Wickham, in *The Medieval Theatre* (1974), suggests that the church incorporated Pagan ritual within its performance and worship because of like beliefs in death and renewal.[117] Tydeman states that "any account of medieval stage conditions must acknowledge the presence of . . . traditional ceremonies stemming from primitive Pagan rites and never quite assimilated or extinguished by Church or State."[118] We know that assimilation occurred and that songs, dances and religious dramas were performed in Christian churches on feast days by 1207. Pope Innocent III in a letter to Henry, archbishop of Gnesen, Poland, denounces these festive excesses and orders them extirpated from the churches.[119] As late as 1555 Goths and Swedes are still noted as

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[115] Mensi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum,* XI, 943-975; Thoma de Cabham, *Penitential* (printed in Chambers , *Medieval Stages, II,* 262-63; Vince (1984) 111.

[116] Vince (1984) 111-112.

[117] Glynne Wickham, *The Medieval Theatre* (London: 1974) 126.

[118] William Tydeman, *The Theatre in the Middle Ages:Western European Stage Conditions c.800-1576* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) 21.

[119] Charlotte Stern, *The medieval Theatre in Castile* (Binghamton, New York: medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies 1996) 73.

performing sword-dancing at Shrovetide and *The Chronicle of Lanercost* records and condemns priests who join the Pagan dancing.[120]

The proliferation of the belief that performance outside of the church's control was secular and profane during the Middle Ages conforms to the dominant Christian ideology of the period and indicates the separation of sacred ritual and theatre performance into two distinct forms of the lived exchange. The secular was represented as surviving through the seduction of the devil or through popular superstitions in the form of minstrel songs, sword dances, *mimae* troupes and the mummers play. Ritual was claimed as a tool of the Church to educate and reclaim the sacred mysteries of the sacraments. If we are to believe anthropologists and archaeologists, only the medieval Christian church separated the sacred from the profane within performance at a time when the majority of the European population viewed their world as rife with miracles and magic.

It is within this middle era, once called the *Dark Ages*, as feudalism and the Christian church grow in dominance, that what was deemed sacred and what was deemed profane were defined through doctrine and accepted seemingly as a universal concept throughout Europe.

> There are certain people, chiefly women, who on festival, holy days, and saints days, are delighted to attend because of desire for those things by which they ought to be delighted, but are concerned to come in order to dance, to

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[120] Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus septentrionalibus* (1555); Vince (1984) 119.

> sing shameful words, to perform choric dances, behaving just like Pagans.[121]

Such decrees as this delivered in the ninth century by the church, depict not only the continuance of females within medieval performance, but also relate the performance to Paganism.

It is also during these centuries that the tools of exclusion and censorship are heavily employed as many assumptions are formed and documented by later theatre historians as facts, such as: the Arab world did not have live theatre during the Middle Ages; permanent theatres (if they existed) were not used for performance; and women were not performing. We know that the Byzantine Empire continued theatrical performance within permanent theatres,[122] women are mentioned throughout the medieval period as performers (although in many instances the term *actress* is replaced with *whore* or *courtesan*),[123] and the Arab world had an abundance of performance which has been documented by twentieth century scholars despite centuries of exclusion within Islamic and Christian histories.[124] The majority of theatre historians bases their findings on extant Christian written texts and appears to accept that there is little to discuss theatrically for almost eight hundred years while the Greek texts were locked into the newly formed monasteries. The church had gained complete control of the text and

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[121] A decree of the Council of Rome in 826.

[122] Tunison, Brockett , and Freeman

[123] Chambers, Tydeman, and J.W.Harris.

[124] Badawl, M.M. *Early Arabic Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 2-6. Chelkowski, P.J. Ed., *Ta'ziyeh, Ritual and Drama in Iran*, (New York: New York University Press, 1979) and Moreh, Shumel, *Live theatre and Dramatic Literature in the Medieval Arab World,* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992)

education as populations were dispersed by war, famine and disease during the early Middle Ages. Documentary evidence of the remnants of the thriving and diverse Roman forms of theatrical entertainments are as difficult to find outside of the church as the supposedly vanished actress in the early medieval period.

The division between sacred ritual and theatrical secular performance, although firmly accepted by most theatre scholars dependent upon written texts, is complicated by the medieval church, itself, as it absorbed the ancient dramatic rites of Paganism into its own sacred performances in the form of Liturgical drama early in the tenth century while condemning through decrees performance outside of its control. The emergence of the Liturgical drama[125] and the value placed upon the found written text by historians overshadowed the oral sacred folk performances prevalent throughout the medieval era and the *mimae*'s influence upon the Christian theatre. Hugh of St. Victor in the twelfth century combines all forms of theatre into one definition of an ancient entertainment: "*Theatrica* is where people **once** used to gather for the performance."[126] Hugh notes no similarities between the Roman forms of theatre and his own time. The antitheatrical prejudice was so ingrained in the early Christian mind that theologians and Christian philosophers repeatedly struggled to separate contemporary entertainment forms from those activities held in ancient Rome even as these forms were assimilated into Christian drama. The Church goes to great lengths to distinguish its Easter and Christmas plays

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[125] The oldest extant Easter trope dates from about 925.

[126] Hugh of St. Victor, *Didascalicon,* 79.

from the term theatre.[127] However, by the sixteenth-century Christian essays list three categories of performance: spiritual, human, and diabolical. Fray Francisco de Alcocer's 1559 writings categorize three types of drama:

> Religious plays like those depicting the Passion and Annunciation; social pastimes including games of skill and luck; and last, obscene and vulgar plays of a secular nature.[128]

The non-Liturgical plays of Hrosvitha appear in the same century as the Liturgical drama. Hildegard of Bingen, a Benedictine abbess, wrote the play, *Ordo Virtutum* in 1155 C.E. What these non-Liturgical medieval texts tell us is that some women (nuns) were educated, drama was an accepted form of religious expression, and performance had remained a tool of communication within the church during its supposed eradication. The religious drama, which moved beyond the church door[129] in the thirteenth century as a means of spreading a more digestible form of Christian ideology, seems to have little similarity to the monastery tropes by 1350. However, the vernacular religious drama, does utilize many of the methods of Pagan performance, including female performers[130] (banned by religious decree), while simultaneously limiting the content to religious

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[127] Stern, 63.

[128] Ronald Surtz, "Plays as Play in Early Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Kentucky Romance Quarterly* 30 (1983): 273.

[129] Brockett states that religious plays outside of the church walls began during the twelfth century.

[130] Ibid, 86. And Stern, 107. Similar to the "Wild man" the "wild woman" is noted and six ladies dressed in French fashion (1500)in a court masque. Salaries are documented for actors and their lady and mountain girls who dance for a pageant for the feast of Corpus Christi (1503). Women also noted in French, Spanish, Italian and English Cycle plays, masques, and folk drama within this book.

scriptures and church teachings. One of the earliest known accounts of a medieval play is Bishop Albertus's *Gesta Lioniensis* (1204). He marvels at the battles between David and his enemies.

> The *Ludus Prophetarum* 'which the Latin call *Comoedia*', performed in Riga, Lativia, was according to the bishop, useful in teaching the rudiments of the Christian faith to Pagans and neophytes. . . .The action of the play, set in the days of David, Gideo, and Herod, strongly suggests that it was not so much an *Ordo Prophetarum* as an early example of medieval cycle drama.[131]

Early twentieth century historians often relied extensively on a very small fraction of the literate and Christian population of the Middle Ages to document their narrative. These same histories also draw a direct evolutionary line to modern drama through the Middle Ages disregarding the folk performance as sacred or its lived exchange between performer and audience as pertinent to the expansion of theatre within Europe.

> Modern drama arose, by a fairly well-defined line of evolution, from a threefold source, the ecclesiastical liturgy, the farce of the mimes, the classical revivals of humanism. Folk-drama contributed but the tiniest rill to the mighty stream.[132]

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[131] Stern, 92.

[132] Ibid 182.

Contemporary research, such as Catharine Stern's *The Medieval Theatre in Castile*, depicts an alternative and parallel oral traditional form of theatre existing within medieval religious festivals and performance. The outdoor religious theatricals first performed in the thirteenth century, unlike the Latin and chanted Liturgical dramas; seem to have many characteristics of the ancient *mimos* troupes including staging, costumes and singing. The theatrical forms of the mid and late Middle Ages are far more similar in performance to Roman entertainments than to Liturgical drama. The despised techniques of the *mimae* are found in cycle, mystery, morality, saint and mummer's plays, disguisings, minstrelsy, jesters, sword dances, farce and buffoonery. In Stern's description of several medieval enactments on religious festival days in the thirteenth century, she notes the combination of Pagan and Christian forms within performance. However, the methods and buffoonery of the *mimae* are also strongly evident in each example.

> The adversaries pelted one another with several thousand hard-boiled eggs. This mock heroic battle had the earmark of a folk ritual in which the egg was a Pagan fertility symbol, and indeed similar rituals are recorded in subsequent centuries. . . .In another parodic combat, a hundred and fifty men, each wearing a helmet and armed with three or four long dried gourds proceed to clobber one another ferociously. . . .In one battle, the *fool* plays the maestre of Santiago and judges the battles of the knights,

> one has been replaced by most respected nobleman, after three unsuccessful losses, he is attacked by all of his own pages armed with clubs swathed in wool. Finally, on order of the fool, the nobleman has to flee being pummeled as he tries to escape.[133]

Folk ritual and *mimae* comic reversals are found in these eye-witness examples which combine a mix of festival theatrical forms during the height of the Middle Ages (1050-1300) including mock battles, processions, dance, and songs, secular and religious dramas.[134]

The early church's traditions of confiscation, exclusion, and assimilation remain dominant tools of Christian ideology throughout the Middle Ages. The destruction of Pagan texts either through their *reformulations* to support the scriptures and Christian values or through eradication during this period is unprecedented and yet, these distorted histories and dramatic texts remain the dominant form of documentation used by theatre historians until theatre moves through the doors of the church in 1200 C.E. When the religious dramas, once incorporated into the mass, moved outside and into a vernacular language of the people, the general population became responsible for their financial support, direction, and production. Although monitored by the church, and bound by Christian festivals, the religious theatricals expanded gradually through the thirteenth and fourteenth century, assimilating all existing forms of performance. Minstrels are noted within religious festivals as early as the thirteenth century. A professional performer is

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[133] Stern, 106.

[134] Ibid.

recorded as supplying the narrative and musical accompaniment in Barcelona during the 1426 pageant for the feast of Corpus Christi. Records from the town of Salamanca in 1501 list the expenditures for one of their religious productions as new shoes for farm girls (*labradoras)* and salaries for drummers who accompanied the *invenciones.*[135] Represented as a form of popular performance, it should be noted that these outdoor vernacular religious *shows,* like Liturgical dramas, were only rarely produced despite their primacy in later theatre histories of the medieval era.

The pageant, cycle, mystery or saint plays "in most places . . . were not given every year. Even where the plays were well established, the interval between productions ranged from one to ten years."[136] However, when produced by a town council, eye-witness accounts of the religious medieval spectacles depict a theatrical atmosphere similar to the Roman Republic and its *spectaculas.* Galvano Flamma chronicles the Magi play in 1336 and tells a story of an entire city becoming a stage as Milan was changed into the holy city of Jerusalem.

> The three kings paraded through the streets of the city on horseback, accompanied by a retinue of musicians playing drums and horns, also baboons, monkeys and other animals.[137]

Another eyewitness describes a performance in Florence on Pentecost 1379. The theatrical action is played within the church.

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[135] Stern, pp.116-127

[136] Brockett 94.

> The disciples addressed the Virgin and sang the prophesies foretelling the descent of the Holy Spirit, whereupon, to the accompaniment of thunder and lightning, a flaming dove descended to the believers, who, overcome with wonder, fell to their knees and worshipped God with hymns and songs.[138]

The church's complete assimilation of the Roman performance forms is depicted by a Greek traveler's description of the Feast of John the Baptist in Florence in 1439. He chronicles with horror one stage where actors crucify a man in the manner of Christ and another which portrays the resurrection. He writes of another stage which enacts the Nativity with costumed kings of the Magi and exotic animals. He then describes his awe at a procession of statues, crosses, relics and images preceded by many musicians playing numerous instruments, acrobats and dancers. The Greek, in amazement, proclaims oddities such as hermits as tall as giants walking on long wooden legs, a St. Augustine over six feet tall preaching to the audience, and an enormous St. George fighting a frightening dragon. He was actually describing a Cycle play beginning with the cosmic battle between Good and Bad angels and ending with the Judgment complete with graves and sinners burning in hell.[139]

Even though early twentieth century theatre historians are rarely taught today, their books are still used as the sources for much of the documentation of medieval

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[137] Alessandro D'Ancona, *Origini del teatro italiano*, Vol.1, (Torino: Ermanno Loescher, 1891) pp.97-98.

[138] Ibid, I:99.

[139] Ibid. 1:228-29.

performance within contemporary histories. Their writings can also be seen as the cultural markers of a specific era. At the beginning of Chambers' third book of medieval theatre he writes:

> The drama as a living form of art went completely under at the break-up of the Roman world: a process of natural decay was accelerated by the hostility of Christianity, which denied the theatre, and by the indifference of barbarism, which had never imagined it.[140]

He is obviously referring to the written drama as a *living work of art* for his preceding two books document extensive medieval performance following the disintegration of the Western Roman Empire. His use of the word *barbarism* also locks into place the belief or assumption that drama is a civilized creation and all other performance is outside of the realm of art. This tendency to exclude and devalue performance that is not based on written texts lasts until the late twentieth century when theatre historians begin to reevaluate performance as something more than the written. However, assumptions die hard in dominant ideologies or institutions; thus, playwriting is still often regulated to English departments where Shakespeare is studied only in text form. The *lived exchange* of performance, feared by the church, and censored by the State, becomes a secondary concern as the written text is both valued and exposed as *what happened in the past* by theatre historians. Most medieval theatre histories exclude the performances that the majority of the population were watching, and focus instead upon the written dramatic

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[140] Chambers Vol. II., 2.

texts of the elite, the entertainments of the ruling class and performance within the church.

Ronald Vince in his *Ancient and Medieval Theatre* seems to bemoan the fact that there is very little to be found of the written text before the tenth century. He concentrates upon these written texts as if they were all that remain and states:

> The drama produced between the tenth and the sixteenth centuries aegis of the medieval church flourished through out Europe, and the manuscripts containing the plays that are to be found in various church and monastic libraries are sufficiently similar to suggest that Liturgical and literary influences passed freely throughout Christendom.[141]

Vince could also add that the majority of the medieval population was illiterate and such writings that were *passed* restricted to church scholars or the remnants of the educated aristocracy.

Other contemporary historians hypothesize that the residue of Roman theatre transformed into scattered troupes of performers which continued to entertain at feasts, weddings, and festivals throughout the Middle Ages, but these historians remain largely focused upon what they consider *true* theatre. "When true drama re-emerges from the shadows and precise details of its presentation are recorded, it is firmly under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church. . . ."[142] Brockett notes a secular drama evident in the thirteenth century, but like other theatre historians he is tied to the found remains of

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[141] Vince (1984) 132.

[142] William Tydeman (1978) 27.

the Middle Ages and the majority of his chapter is focused upon the theatrical activities of the church.

Within Henry Kelly's *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages* are found such statements as ". . . all the theatrical activity of the ancient world had come to an end by Isidore's time."[143] The Isodore of which he speaks is St. Isodore, a bishop of Seville from 599 to 636, who Kelly considers the most important encyclopedist and lexicographer of the early medieval period. Kelly also assumes that theatre only existed in permanent buildings and supports his view with E.K. Chambers' 1903 *The Medieval Stage*, which rejected Isodore's representation of theatre during his time.

> An alleged mention of a theatre at Barcelona in Spain during the seventh century resolves itself either into a survival of Pagan ritual or a bull fight. Isodore of Seville has his learned chapters on the stage, but they are written in the imperfect tense, as of what is past and gone.[144]

Chambers' disdain for Pagan ritual is apparent as is his focus upon the permanent structures of Roman theatres, but Kelly seems to believe without a building there is no theatre. He disregards the fact that most theatrical performances during and after the Empire were on temporary stages. Kelly also states it was "not only classical drama that had disappeared from view, but most classical literature as well."[145] His evidence for this

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[143] Henry Kelly, *Ideas and forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 36. The book promotes that acting had ceased and was replaced by recitations and poetry readings.

[144] Chambers Vol. 1 pp. 121-22.

[145] Henry 37.

statement is founded in Isodore's lack of direct contact with the ancient authors in his writings. Kelly restricts his definition of theatre and its existence to writings and decrees from the medieval church and refers to the performer as poet.

Tydeman links Byzantine drama to medieval Liturgical drama and suggests that "the habits of public worship created many of the conditions from which drama might develop."[146] Once again, Tydeman assumes that the church is the source of theatre discounting performance which was a constant in the medieval countryside and villages. Ironically, the belief that the earliest known written plays of the medieval period, springing from the nunneries and monasteries, were not performed is written as law within these early histories. Hrotswitha's tenth century plays expose not only a knowledge of the playwright's craft, but also of performance techniques of the time. There has been considerable disagreement among scholars over whether her plays were performed during her lifetime.[147]

This focus upon the scarcity of dramatic texts outside of the assumed dominant religion in the early years of the Middle Ages has led to the conclusion that it was the Christians who were producing the majority of the theatre and ritual performances. The lack of written dramatic texts outside of the Christian tradition is quite possibly due to the fact that all but a small minority of the population simply could not write and this society, much like the Greeks of the fifth century, was an oral and predominately rural culture. A scarcity of dramatic literature does not mean that there was a lack of performance

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[146] Tydeman 27.

[147] Brockett 77.

produced. There was a diverse and continuous ritual and theatrical world in medieval Europe, and the rise of *Commedia dell'arte* and the great English playwrights during the Renaissance resemble the *mimos, sceneci,* and *scops* performances much more than what historians have termed the *true* theatre of the Middle Ages.[148]

The archaeological findings in the form of permanent theatre structures, similar to the found written text, are of major significance to theatre historians as the popularity of performance is often based upon *how many* permanent structures existed and *how large* the audience was. Theatre structures continue to be used within histories as the gauge of whether performance was culturally significant during specific eras without note of *what class was building and for what purpose* and with little or no acknowledgment of the active and diverse troupes which performed upon movable stages or in the streets throughout the Middle Ages. Tydeman finds the fragments from a German abbey glossary problematic because *theatrum* is defined "as a place 'built of wood where men play (present tense) and create spectacles."[149] He views such evidence as problematic because it does not "fit" the majority of church documents, which proclaim the death of theatre, just as they hailed the disappearance of Paganism in the fourth century. Nor does it fit the narratives of centuries of historians before him who accepted the dominant ideology of the era and shaped fact and history to represent constructed Christian *truths*: barbarians did not have theatre, popular Pagan performance was essentially wiped out by

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[148] It should also be noted that Aristotle's *Poetics,* which have had an immense influence upon any modern discussion of theatre or drama, was unknown to the Latin antiquity or the Middle Ages and the term "drama" which is used continuously by later medieval historians often refers to a written text founded in the principles of the *Poetics.* "With the exception of two works of logic, Aristotle vanished from the Western world; his work only reappears in the thirteenth century thanks to its preservation by Arab interpreters." Freeman 316.

[149] Tydeman 47.

the Christian faithful, and no permanent theatre structures were used or built during the medieval era.

These same archaeological remains used as evidence to document the occurrence of performance before the Middle Ages are also used to negate performance for the dominant prevalent ideologies in Western and Islamic histories. Moreh documents pre-medieval performance through its archaeological ruins.

> The *ruins* of several Hellenistic and Roman theatres in Mesopotamia, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Egypt and North Africa testify to the considerable role which theatre played in religious, political, and cultural life of Hellenistic Pagans and to a certain extent also in that of Jews and Christians.[150]

Tydeman uses the "crumbling, overgrown or built over"[151] theatre structures as proof that theatre outside of the church were long dead in the Europe's medieval period.

> That the function of Roman amphitheatres was understood in the Middle Ages seems clear: Giraldus Cambrensis visiting the ruins of Caerleon in South Wales in 1188 recognized theatre-sites (*locatheatralia),* while Alexander Neckham in an elegy of 1211 mourned the ruined

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[150] Moreh 3.

[151] Tydeman (1978) 45

> amphitheatre at Paris . . . Yet there is no evidence that such structures ever housed medieval performances . . .[152]

The interior of the first churches where Liturgical performances were held are documented in detail by both Tydeman and Brockett. Church sanctioned productions pertaining to religious doctrine are considered the main forms of theatrical performance. The survival of their texts, architectural drawings, expenditures and the privilege granted such *leavings* by historians has maintained the medieval Christian ideology that the church and its sacred drama were the predominant forms of theatre and no one *except those few damned by God* performed outside of its sanctions.

Although Moreh is focused upon the Arab world and Tydeman, the European, both theatre historians, document performance by mimes, dancers and actors/actresses during the medieval era. However, Moreh contests the historical exclusions of entertainment by strict Islamic scholars, who reject any tradition of Arabic theatre in the Middle Ages. He sees this as an interpretation which ignores that Muhammad's actions seems to be endorsing entertainment. Tydeman embraces the medieval Christian ideology, accepting that performance was almost non-existent outside of church control and *sceneci* performance was in decline. It is apparent that labeling a performance as *sacred* (pertaining to the scriptures and the word of God) during the period removes it from the profaned Latin term *theatrum* or *khayali* (Arabic for theatre). Performances within the Christian church rites are deemed as *sacred* and become privileged within the Western histories as the dominant theatre culture of medieval Europe. Ethiopian dancing

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[152] Tydeman 46.

troupes and mimes are acknowledged within the Arab world if their performance is interpreted as training for war, an Islamic sacred practice.[153]

The constant restrictions placed upon the performer as well as the religious proclamations that theatre was abhorrent to God do not mean that the secular performers or their theatrical forms vanished from the medieval world. Ideology does not make fact, but it clearly influences traditional histories based upon the written evidence it leaves behind. Today, we have found that *sceneci* existed without and within sacred performance throughout the medieval era, but evidence of their performance comes to us through the anti-theatrical prejudice of Christianity. We also acknowledge that written documents which did not promote church doctrines were destroyed or restricted and that their authors were considered heretics and separated from the protection of the state and church. However, theatre historians often seem to accept Christian definitions of medieval *theatre*, *sacred* and *ritual* and have based their histories on sources that have an anti-theatrical bias. The extensive range of performance forms, often combined and reviewed by many contemporary theatre historians as simply a "medium of sensation"[154] or a site where no "elevated dramatic art could flourish" [155] promote the early Christian attitude that popular forms of Roman theatre were eradicated and of little importance to the development of Western modern performance. Those who once attended such performances were both depraved and crude. It is not noted that this audience which

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[153] Female singers and mimes are also noted in Arab histories because of Muhammad allowing two slave girls to play the tambourine in the presence of *A'isha* (wife of Muhammad) and also a dark-skinned female mime (*Suwayda)*who danced and made them both laugh. Moreh 22.

[154] Beacham 151.

[155] Ibid.

filled the public structures of the Empire were the majority of the population of the cities and many of them were Christians.

Seven centuries of decrees banning performance, confiscation of theatre structures and sacred spaces, and control of the ancient dramatic written texts failed to eradicate performance by nomadic troupes or its oral improvised presentations. Those, who needed no permanent structure nor feared the fires of hell promised by the Christians, continued as the main form of popular entertainment throughout the medieval world. The shaman's sacred ritual of rebirth and rejuvenation within a natural world is the undercurrent in both medieval farce and comedy in which chaos, deceit and reversals are transformed by the renewal of spring promoting a new order founded on love and the promise of fecundity.[156] By the thirteenth century the church had successfully relocated the *sacred* to its own rhetoric. The performers, though considered *infames* by the church still entertained the European aristocracy, were hired for sanctioned guild productions, and retained their place within the folk rituals of the rural population.

Ironically, the nomadic troupes are finally embraced within theatre histories under the term, *Commedia del'arte* (an eighteenth century label) at the same time these professional companies became *fashionable* as an aristocratic entertainment.[157] The historians tell us the traveling troupes emerge in sixteenth century Italy as a popular secular form of theatre, using stock characters and techniques of improvisation, singing,

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[156] Alan Knight, "Magical Transformation: A Folk Tale Motif in the Farce", *Between Folk and Litrugy*, Alan Fletcher and Wim Husken, eds. (Amsterdam: Rodopi 1997) pp 71-72.

[157] Robert Henke, *Performance and Literature in the Commedia dell'arte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002) 8. Historians date the beginnings of *Commedia dell'arte* around the middle of the 16th century by written contracts dated between 1545 and 1553. The Italian courts are also tied to the troupes through written documents beginning in 1570.

dancing, buffoonery, and having both male and female performers. Despite a clear connection to the *scenci*, many scholars refuse to acknowledge *commedia dell'arte's* debt to the *mimae* troupes and they locate the origin of these Renaissance professional troupes within the written comedies of Plautus and Terrence.[158]

Renaissance Europe was a land of many kings and rulers. However, Christianity, if we are to believe theatre historians, had successfully controlled the content of theatrical offerings while pagan performances were assimilated or eradicated by force. If this were true, it is very ironic that the (written) secular theatre, first noted by theatre historians, is based upon pagan myth and the Christian demonized *mimae* farces. *Favola d'Orfeo* (1480), noted as the first Italian secular non-Christian drama is based upon the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. The prologue is delivered by Mercury. A Flemish *mimae* farce of the thirteenth century, *The Boy and the Blind Man*, (1280) depicts the grotesque comedy of the nomadic troupes as a man deceives a blind man through ventriloquism and then robs and beats him. These sources are considered the first founded upon surviving written remains, excluding the generations of non-literate, non-Christian performance, which occurred before these dates.

This shift in cultural power from the gospel to the ancients is evidenced by the use of dominant classical images to describe the population of the Americas. By the fourth century B.C.E., the Greek term *barbaros,* was used to describe cultural or mental

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[158] Some see *Commedia del'arte's* origin within the Roman Atellan farce, others perceive it evolving from the comedies of Plautus and Terence and others have traced it to Italian farce *(commedia erudita)* of the early sixteenth century. Scholars are still attempting to base the improvisational form as originating from the written instead of viewing the written (such as Plautus and Terence, Attellan farce or *comedia erudita*) as growing out of the nomadic *mimae* performances.

inferiors. During the Renaissance the term *paganus* is synonymous with *babaros*[159] and strictly aligned with Aristotle's definition. "A man may sacrifice his right to be called man by behaving in the cruel or savage ways that are characteristic of the *barbaroi,* who, among other things, have a penchant for cutting off heads and for eating human foetus."[160]

The majority of theatre historians focus upon three foundations for the emergence of secular theatre during the Italian Renaissance: humanism, Christianity, and the classics. These *bed rocks* are constructed upon the written remains of the church, patrician Romans, European aristocracy and recontextualized Greek texts. Several historical sites are noted, all focused upon the written: the rediscovery of Plautus' plays (1453);[161] Seneca's tragedies and the emergence of the Greek tragedies (1465); Horace's *The Art of Poetry;* Aristotle's *Poetics* (after 1545);[162] and the Christian sacred drama and religious spectacles "with its number of colorful intermezzi and many characters, incidents, and shifts in place and time."[163] The first pastoral play, a popular theatre form during the Italian Renaissance, is documented in 1471. Brockett states that

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[159] Ibid, 20. "Originally the term, *paganus* meant a countryman or civilian opposed to a soldier. It was first used to describe an unbeliever, possibly because the fiercest resistance to Christianity came from the countryside. But it still retained, for all Christians, the implication of incivility and *rusticitas*. Pagden notes that the term was brilliantly analyzed by Peter Brown's 1977, *Relics and Social Status in the Age of Gregory of Tours,* pp 8-10. Brown concludes that the term, *rusticitas,* amounted to 'a refusal to see the world as intelligible.' "

[160] Pagden (1982)quoting Aristotle, 17. *NE*, 1145 a 31 and *De part. an.* 673 a 25.

[161] He was a member of the *mimae* troupes before becoming a playwright.

[162] First translated to Latin in 1498. Accepted as the primary authority on dramatic form after the Council of Trent (1545-1563) adopted the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas who had drawn heavily on Aristotle as the official position of the Catholic Church.

[163] Luciani 2.

the form possibly developed out of an Italian interest in the Satyr plays of the Greeks.[164] This seems a very forced connection. The pastoral plays were neither burlesque nor depictions of romantic *love* and unless there were many more surviving Satyr texts than we know of today during the Renaissance,[165] it seems very unlikely that pastoral plays evolved from the oral and danced burlesque enacted by costumed beast/humans within the ancient festivals of Greece.

This type of assumption *fits* into the cultural Darwinism model of theatre history which suppresses the play's obvious similarity to the *lovers'* scenes within the *mimae* performances or to the lyrical, romantic tales of the minstrels. This method of historic Darwinism promotes historians' assumptions, based on notions of causality and development, as a means to impose a pattern on the sequence of chronological events. Ronald Vince recommends the approach to an interpretation of the Italian theatre of the Renaissance. "The process of historical change is traceable in these terms from Greece to Rome to Italy to the rest of Europe."[166] However logical cultural Darwinism may appear within theatre histories, it is a class-based history. Vince in his *Renaissance Theatre,* perceives Italian theatre "to a large extent as literary, elitist, and self-conscious."[167] It is as if no theatre existed outside of the aristocracy, the written, and classical Greek and Roman text forms within these evolutionary theatre histories.

Following a direct path from the sacred performance of the Greeks to the court stages of Italy, the story of theatre is told through the voice of a male, privileged class

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[164] Brockett 160.

[165] We have one complete Satyr play by Euripides and fragments of others.

[166] Ronald Vince, *The Renaissance Theatre*, (London: Greenwood Press 1984) 4.

and promotes a belief in the hierarchy of form and the evolution of the sacred pagan performance progressing into a more advanced and *civilized* form of European secular theatre. Evolutionary histories' effect upon our perception of ancient performance and theatre is exposed by historical narratives which marginalize, exclude, and misrepresent class, gender, race, and non-Christian characters found within non-literate popular performance.

This tradition of exclusion or misrepresentation of non-Christian performance within the Empire and the Middle Ages promotes the evolutionary view of a European theatre rising from the sacred ritual of the Greeks or from the sacraments of the early church and *becoming* secular and more complex as ancient beliefs decayed. As we shall see in the next chapter, this type of historical Darwinism will have a profound effect upon how the West views the sacred theatrical performances of Indigenous populations. On the eve of European expansion, early Renaissance elite secular drama was regulated to a formal and restricted form based upon interpreted Roman and Greek written dramatic texts and constructed classical categories and structures. The sacred performance or theatre of the colonized or enslaved was viewed as *savage* curiosities devoid of a theatrical form, if noted at all within theatre history. Often seen as repetitious due to the European lack of knowledge concerning Indigenous mythological content, enactment functions and language, the performances of the Americas are designated *primitive* rituals and shaped to fit the Renaissance colonizers' concept of the Pagan and barbarian. Until the mid-twentieth century theatre histories refuse to acknowledge Native performance as either sacred or theatre. Despite its obvious similarities to ancient Greek, medieval and

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[167] Ibid

Roman unsanctioned performance, Indigenous performance, although recognized today by many scholars, is still placed outside of theatre and dramatic narrative because of its lack of written form.

They ran in among the dancers, forcing their way to the place where the drums were played. They attacked the man who was drumming and cut off his arms.

A description of the beginning of the Spanish Conquest at the main temple by the Aztec Chroniclers, masters of the red and black ink. 1528

CHAPTER 4
FIRST ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN THE EUROPEANS AND THE INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS OF THE AMERICAS

The *Mi,kmaq,*[1] a tribe that lived on the Northern coast of Canada, were the first *Indian*s in the Northeast to encounter the European. The French Breton fishermen, who arrived in 1504, were called *Wenuj* (stranger) by the *Indians*. The French, Portuguese, Spanish and British traders, who visited their shores during the sixteenth century, each speak of encounters with these tribes and mention some form of dance and singing at their meetings. Explorer Jacques Cartier in 1534 writes " . . . all came after our small boat, dancing and showing many signs of joy and of their desire to be friends, saying to us in their language *Napou tou damae a cierto. . .*" .[2] The explorer was actually being hailed with a trade language, a mixture of Portuguese and *Mi'kmaq* words which translates to mean "Man (cock), give me something."[3] The next day as Cartier traveled to the mouth of the Restigouche River and writes, ". . .some of the women. . . danced and sang, standing in the water up to their knees. . . .They joined their hands together and

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[1] A seventeenth century name which is beleived to come from the word *nikmaq* which means my kin friends, These Canadian *Indian*s called themselves *L'nu'k* which means humans or people.

[2] Jacques Cartier, *The Voyages of Jacques Cartier* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) 20.

[3] Ibid.

raised them to heaven, exhibiting many signs of joy."[4] A British captive reported in 1761 his witnessing of a *war ritual* by the same tribe. He states that after a feast of boiled dog the gathering concluded with a great dance.[5]

The Europeans viewed Indigenous *dance* through a Western lens and defined dance without having any idea of what the Indigenous dance dramas actually meant or what was being said by the *New World* communities. Buffoonery was noted in the ritual *Kachina* dances of the Pueblo by the Spanish as early as 1540.[6] However, what was at first seen as farce by 1675 was viewed as blasphemy. Forty-seven ceremonial leaders were punished by the Spanish for their participation in ceremonial dance: three were hung, another was reported to have committed suicide[7] and the remaining men were publicly whipped and released.[8] Dance within the Native American cultures was a language, a dance drama, which spoke to the spiritual world and their tribal members. The Europeans simply did not know the language. A French officer in 1758 viewed the dance of Indigenous men on the Northeastern coast of America as a form of entertainment for his soldiers' benefit. "More speeches were followed . . .by a dance, which to the audience was characterized by the 'singularity of the dancers' postures and cries, the strangeness of their accoutrements.' Their *war paint* added to the colorfulness

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[4] Ibid 22.

[5] Ruth Whitehead, *The Old Man Told Us: Excerpts frp, Micmac History: 1500-1950* (Haklifax, N.S.:Nimbus Publishing, Ltd., 1991)165.

[6] Brockett 152.

[7] Highly unlikely for a Pueblo shaman to take his own life.

[8] Henry Warner Bowden, "Spanish Missions, Cultural Confli8ct, and thePueblo Revolt of 1680". *Church History* 44 (1975) pp.217-228.

of the occasion."[9] "European colonists over time sought to effectively minimize the Natives' freedom in order to reduce the Natives' *otherness* to familiarity, predictability, and control."[10] Many dances and feasts that the European misinterpreted as entertainment for their benefit were often welcoming rituals to absorb the *stranger* into the tribal community.

These forms of culture translation continue for the next centuries as the *stranger* constructs the image of the exotic *other* that either greets the invaders with great joy, awe and supplication or with fierce savage intent. The misinterpretation of Native American performance served the European belief systems already in place and established a hierarchy within the Native communities that did not exist. For the American *Indian*, performance, similar to the traditional stories of a tribe, served to define the people as a whole and represented the entire community without gender, class, or age restrictions. The multiple functions of feasting, ritual, dance, song and story of the Indigenous of the Americas was incomprehensible to the invaders who saw the enactments as simplistic entertainment for their benefit or aggressive behavior against themselves or their God.

Less than forty years before Columbus encountered the Indigenous of the Americas, Greek dramatic texts[11] emerged at the fall of Constantinople (1453) and were immediately claimed by the elite of the Italian Renaissance. The interpreted Greek ideals, Christianity's intolerance toward all other religions and Roman concepts of civilization

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[9] Harald E.L. Prins, *The Mi'Kmaq: Resistance, Accomodtion, and Cultural Survival* (Ft. Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1996) 150.

[10] James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York, Oxford University press, 1985) Chapter 7.

[11] The texts were said to be carried out of Byzantine monasteries after a thousand years of study and taken to Italy by priests at the fall of Constantinople.

(class, *the just war*, and property ownership) combined to *set the stage* for the European colonization of the Americas, Africa and the Pacific. These cultural attitudes, which dominate early Western colonialism, also effect how Indigenous performance is perceived by the conquerors. Performance, if it was outside of the written and established dramatic form of the European aristocracy, in conflict with Christian gospels, and the product of *inferiors*, was not perceived as being theater, art or sacred. The belief in an *ideal* theatre based upon a Christian and constructed classical landscape is the veil through which Indigenous performance in the Americas is initially viewed.

This Christian and Eurocentric view established a rift in theatre history between what is defined as *theatre*, the product of the *civilized* and the product of Europe's *other*, defined as *primitive* Native rituals. African and Asian populations had long been accepted as the European *other*, but this was not the case with the populations Columbus encountered, for which no verifiable reference could be obtained.[12] Cultural Darwinism incorporated into the histories of the nineteenth century merely complimented the earlier European view of the barbarian or Western *other*. The belief that "human institutions (including theatre) evolved through a process in which there was a steady development from the simple to the complex,"[13] promoted the supposition that societies which had separated the arts from ritual were superior. Unconsciously, accounts of Indigenous cultures, were viewed historically through the assumption that the European cultural

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[12] Angel Delgado-Gomez, "The Earliest European Views of the New World Natives," *Early Images of the Americas,* Jerry M. Williams and Robert E. Lewis, eds. (Tuscon: University of Arizona Press 1993)1.

[13] Brockett (2003) 2.

model was the most evolved and all other and less evolved societies were moving (or should move) toward this ideal.[14]

Soon after the first encounters between America's Indigenous and European, the *idea* of the *Indian* found its way to the stages, art work and novels of sixteenth century Western Europe. The first portrait of the Native American is a woodcut frontispiece found in a poetic version of Columbus' letter by Giuliano Dati in 1493. The artwork depicts King Ferdinand II in the foreground with a mass of naked long-haired men and women on the land behind him. The *barbarian* defined before contact with the New World, was usually ugly, deformed and larger than other men. The character of the Wild Man in folk dramas was depicted with long hair, a body covered with hair except for the hands and feet, and usually nude or dressed in animal skins. Vespucci's[15] astonishment within his letters at the lack of body hair upon the *Indian* or Native females without sagging breasts, is directly related to the images of the Wild Woman and Wild Man within his own culture. Proceeding their first encounters with the *Indian*s, Europe's perceived inherent *right* to confiscate in the name of *king,* universal law and a Christian God was based in the barbarous image of the European *other.* Less than a century after this first representation of the Indigenous of the Americas, adventure plays such as Andre' Thevet's *The New Found World* (1568) focused upon the European's heroic encounter with the *savage* as popular forms of entertainment.

Depictions of the Native grew in popularity through the seventeenth and eighteenth century formulating a fixed and accepted stereotype of the Indigenous of

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[14] Ibid.

[15] The explorer who followed Columbus and named the Americas.

America as savage and the European as conqueror. An example of these images can be found in such plays of the period as Thomas Flethcer's *The Sea Voyage* (1622) and Shakespeare's *Tempest* (1611). Fletcher's heroine becomes Native in the final scene as she and her female companions don priest robes in preparation for the ritual sacrifice of a man complete with altar, masks and knife. Shakespeare portrays the Indigenous as an unenlightened, deformed and childlike barbarian. As the colonial population grew and the Native population diminished in America, captivity narratives in the form of sensational fictions or religious sagas such as *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Rowlandson* (1682), grew in popularity in the colonies. By the nineteenth century, the *fierce savage* or noble *Red man* were defined in novels such as *The Last of the Mohigans,* and plays such as *Metamora (1829)* made famous by Edwin Forrest. After the Native Americans were relocated to reservations famous Indigenous warriors, such as Sitting Bull or Geronimo, were hired to play themselves in the Colonists' version of the *Indian.*

Chapter four begins with the first Spanish encounters with the Indigenous population of the Americas and tells a story of assimilation, eradication, and consumption of Native American performance during European colonization. The goal of this chapter is to explore the effect of ancient cultural influences upon the European colonists' perception of *Indian* performance and to discover the residue of these initial perceptions which remains within the *false consciousness* of theatre histories today. The chapter notes the recontextualization of the *savage* found within Western performance and examines the dominance of Greco-Roman influences upon the image of the New World. It depicts the *fabricated* dual image (noble savage or fierce barbarian) of the New World

other as based in classical myths, religious prejudice and also as ruling class propaganda used to disguise aggressive policies within the Americas motivated by material greed. The chapter argues that accepted fictions imbedded within Western ideology create a perception of Native performance which is aligned with the European image of the *barbarian.* This constructed identity of the *Indian* persists in the false consciousness of Western theatre histories and continues the misrepresentation of Indigenous performance within the global theatre narrative. Dance and performances of the Native American are used as *proof* of their *savage* and *primitive* nature. The chapter concludes with an attempt to explore the Native's initial perception of the *stranger.* The conflict of cultural beliefs founded upon the religion, historical social structures, and classical myths of both populations are seen to shape their first encounters. The lack of understanding concerning the function of performance within Native society and the use of stereotypes to generalize the Native American on European and colonial stages restricts our view of the performance of the colonized while establishing a fixed image of the *savage* within Western narratives.

European Perceptions of the *Indian*

Using their interpretations of Greek and Roman writings, Europeans designated what *true* drama was by shaping its necessary forms through restrictions and categories during the Renaissance. The same process seems to be evident with their identification of themselves and the Native American. To be truly human was to be civilized, Christian and governed. Theatre was viewed in Europe, as a product of the *civilized* which promoted the values of *humanism*, therefore it was inconceivable that it might exist in a population deemed as *barbari.* Drama viewed as the written product of an enlightened

and civilized society was completely different from the incomprehensible and non-Christian entertainments of the Indigenous. The barbarian was defined as the non-Christian and monstrous *other.*

In the first decade of the eleventh century Norse explorers landed on the Northern coasts of the Americas. Sagas relating to this expedition tell of the leader's death when he battles with the *Skraelings*.[16] This Norse word, which was used to identify both the Eskimos and the North American *Indian*s that they encountered, roughly translated is equivalent to the Greek *barbaroi* when applied to non-Greeks. In another account[17] of the same incident Thorvald Eirilsson is shot in the groin and killed by an *Einfoetingr* (a monstrous one footed creature). This creature is described in detail in the seventh century *Etymologiae* authored by Bishop Isidorius of Sevilla who calls them Sciopodes of Ethiopia noted for their great speed and one-leggedness. It seems in Scandinavian eyes the *Einfoetingr* and *Skraelings* are a symbol of the same: *Indian*, monster, and barbarian.[18] At the end of the fifteenth century the most distinctive method to classify men was through their behavior. Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo, chief overseer of the mines of Hispaniola and author of the earliest natural history of America categorized the *Indian*s of America as similar to the Ethiopians and Aristotle's barbarians, the Thracians, because of certain kinds of behavior: polygamy, polyandry and matrilineal descent.[19]

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[16] *Groenlendinga pattr*

[17] *Porfinn's Saga*

[18] Mason, 44.

[19] Oviedo quoted in Pagden (1982) 25.

The once revered *mimae* characters of the Wild man and Wild Woman, the fool, and old hag transformed into negative images during the late Middle Ages. Grotesque characters, once viewed as comic, wise, or supernatural within satires and farces, took on more sinister aspects as humanistic ideals mixed with Christian teachings. The old hag became the witch who traffics with the devil, the fool was characterized as sly and manipulative and the Wild man was depicted as the bestial non-Christian, or mad man with unbridled lust. The medieval characteristics given to the Wild man, such as living in the forest far from rational humanity and with companions of fauns, centaurs and satyrs, are found in the Homeric Odyssey. Beggars, gypsies and peasants were added to the mix and were portrayed as illiterate, child-like, *slow-witted* and possibly dangerous. By the early Renaissance these negative images were the standard used by the European culture to define itself. By portraying everything they were *not,* they created an implicit image of what they thought themselves to be.[20] The monstrous, founded in Greco-Roman traditions, was far away in an exotic world and was diffused into the *understood* image of Europe's *other*. The medieval concept of the Wild man and Wild woman perceived as naked, cannibalistic, and savage fighters with voracious sexual appetites was a known category and a suitable fit for the newly discovered population of the Americas.[21] By the time Columbus sailed to America the term *heathen* defined European wild men (the barbarian), peasants, gypsies, beggars and exotic races from abroad.

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[20] Mason, 97.

[21] Ibid. 44.

There is a classical tradition concerning the stranger, barbarian and the marginal person as someone outside of the *civitas.* Homer, Herodotus, Aristotle, Ktesis the Knidian, Megasthenes, Strabo, Pomponius Mela, Pliny, and Ptolemy all describe humans represented as *other* or monstrous. The Hellenistic Greeks bequeathed modern Europe with the concept of a single human species, but they also created the term which signified distinctions within the species: *barbaros*.[22] In addition. the foreigner or stranger was viewed at times as mysterious, powerful and exotic. The scorn for the nomad was coupled with a mystification of the *other* or those outside of the *civitas.* Renaissance Europe explored both views of the *other* as they designated what it meant to be human. The people of the Americas, in contrast to the *monstrous other*, were also seen more positively, to belong to the accumulated past of all humanity.

The myths of the ancient Greeks, filled with their gods and monsters, were well known to Columbus and his Queen. They had also probably read, or knew of, *Travels of Sir Mandeville* (1346).[23] This travel literature was noted for its maps and encyclopedic works and had no equal to its lasting and widespread influence on what lay outside of the European continent.[24] Mandeville gives detailed descriptions of monstrous humans who are to be found in distant regions of the world.

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[22] Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 117.

[23] Some 250 manuscripts of the work exist in ten different languages, Numerous manuscripts and printed copies were in evidence by the end of the fourteenth century. Dramatic texts and literature are found that use examples and images from the text.

[24] Mason, 71.

> They have no tongues[25] and hiss and make signs as monks do. . . .In another isle there are people whose ears are so big that they hang down to their knees. In another, people have feet like horses, and run so swiftly on them that they overtake wild beasts and kill them for food. In another isle there are people who walk on their hands and their feet like four-footed beasts; they are hairy and climb up trees as readily as apes. There is another isle where the people are hermaphrodite, having parts of each sex, and each has a breast on one side.[26]

Michael Palencia-Roth, in a 1993 article, examines the images of the barbarian, stranger and the foreigner during the time of Columbus. He notes that the explorer's medieval and Renaissance maps contained images of the *monstrous other* at the distant margins of countries and territories.[27] The Europe of these ancient maps has no monsters. However, India, Africa and distant Scythia do.[28] Beginning with Homer's work, composed during Greece's colonization of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea,

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[25] Aristotle claimed that only men possess reason and only men pocess tongues which are sugfficiently broad, loose and soft enough to form intelligible sounds. Pagden suggests that at its most fundamental level Aristotle's claim promotes the idea that those who do not speak like us do not conceptualize like us, and those who do not coneptualize like us, are not like us. To be without a tongue would be considered an inhuman form.

[26] John Mandeville, *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville,* Trans. C. D. Moseley, (Hammondsworth: Penguin, 1983) 137.

[27] The exception was Sicily, probably due to the influence of Homer, according to the Waldsperger Map, cyclops were noted. Michael Palencia-Roth, "The Cannibal Law of 1503," *Early Images of the Americas,* eds. Jerry Williams and Robert E. Lewis, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993) 57.

[28] J.B. Harley and David Woodward, eds., *The History of Cartography,* Vol.I. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 331.

Palencia-Roth perceives these descriptions of human *otherness* or of monstrous people far from the European traveler's home as part of a long tradition within the West.[29] His essay argues that the cartographical images of the locations herald the legal and moral practices that would emerge in the sixteenth century pertaining to the Indigenous tribes of the Americas.

At Europe's first encounter with a new and different population, Columbus, in his letters,[30] focused upon a group of Natives that he deems as superior because he recognizes their similarities to his own culture. The explorer immediately began creating his own hierarchy of the humans he found within the Americas. Some are "more handsome and of better quality than the others. . . as white as any in Spain. . .plump and brave and not weak like others (I)have found before. . .and without false religion."[31] On the second voyage, the official physician of the journey, Doctor Alvarz Chanca, corrects Columbus and his impression of Native religion stating that the idols found in many huts clearly prove they are idolaters.[32] Searching for *likeness*, Columbus wonders at the Native pomp and ceremony extended toward their rulers and tells of a king carried everywhere on a litter. He perceives the tribe, which has *cariques,* (similar to European

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[29] Palencia-Roth (1993) 28.

[30] Cecil Jane, *The Four Voyages of Columbus,* Vol.I., (New York: Dover 1988) does not believe Columbus composed his letters or journals of the first encounters. A clerk may have recorded his thoughts or they appeared after much textual and cultural mediation. We have no documents in Columbus's own hand. It has also been suggested that Columbus came to literacy late and could not write at this time.

[31] Freid Chiappelli, *The "Diario" of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage in America. 1492-93* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 1989) pp.225, 233, 234.

[32] Antonello Gerbi, *Nature in the New World: From Christopher Columbus to Gonzalo Ferdanez de Oviedo* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press 1985) pp. 65-66.

nobles or rulers), as unquestionably superior and more civilized than other islanders.[33] The importance of finding some form of historical reference to describe and document the *new* population to the *old* is evident in all of his early correspondence. This shaping of the Indigenous to *fit* into the European hierarchy and classical ideals begins with the written word at the first encounters of the explorers and continues the Roman and medieval Christian methods of confiscation, assimilation, and exclusion of those outside of the *civitas.*

The encounters varied decidedly between Native groups and European nationalities although in fiction or historic fact the encounters are often generalized without concern for specific tribe or colonist. It is largely through the stories, theatrical performances and pictorial representations of the Indigenous *other* that the *facts* of the American Indigenous population were constructed and spread throughout Europe and the colonies. "It makes very little difference whether these stories are true or false; fiction as well as verifiable history provides us with an identity."[34] The *exotic other* found its way onto European stages first through the adventure plays, where the heroic explorer or heroine faces sure death at the hands of savages. Most, such as Andre' Thevet's *The New World Tragedy* (1595), Richard Boome's *The Antibodes* and *The Travailes of the Three English Brothers* (1607) by John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins, featured sea voyages and perilous adventures in the New World. The Native American was first introduced in an American drama by colonist Robert Rogers in his play *Ponteach* in 1766. However, the conflict between the Native *other* and the valiant European was

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[33] Delgado-Gomez 7.

[34] Quoted in Ebersole p.190, Paul Ricoeur.

already being satired on European stages by the early seventeenth century in such plays as *Eastward Ho!* (1606) and Francis Beaumont's *Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1608). The heroic tragedy was the dominant theatrical genre in England until the 1680s and the exotic locals of the Indigenous and Europeanized representations of the *Indian* are found in John Dryden's *The Indian Queen* (1664) and *The Indian Emperor* (1665) as well as in the plays by Robert Boyle such as *The Tragedy of Mustapha.* The American *Indian*, regardless of tribe or similarity to the European, was marked as radically different from the colonizer and quickly became a character in their theatrical landscape.

> No less than five bodies of Shakespearean writing representing 14% of his corpus, extending from the *Sonnets* to *The Tempest* record dramatic metaphors of the colonized racial experience. Taken together, these plays about Moors, Egyptians, American *Indian*s describe the dialectics of colonial inscription and resistance in early modern England.[35]

It is no accident that Shakespeare's deformed human represents the Native within his *Tempest* or that the character's name is *Calliban*. Several scholars note the name as a reference to the cannibal.

Columbus's general belief in these *monstrous men* is found within his writings as constant references to *man-eaters* during his first and second voyage. His conflicted descriptions of *a handsome people* and his belief that he would find "men with, but a single eye and others with dogs' heads who ate men and that on capturing men they

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[35] Imtiaz Habib, *Shakespeare and Race*, (New York: University Press of America, 2000) 11.

decapitated them, drank their blood and cut off their sex organs"[36] are evident within his diary of his first voyage. In a letter to Sant'angel between his first (1492) and second voyage (1494), without ever seeing a cannibal, Columbus writes of them. He identifies the *man-eaters* from his communication with *good* and *handsome Indian*s, who he writes, **tell him** the cannibals live far from them. It is hard to believe these actual conversations between Native and Columbus took place since the explorer did not know the Native languages or they his and he had no translator. This belief in, and horror of, the man-eating beast/human and his view of the *more civilized Indian*s, separates the *good Indian* from the *bad* before his second voyage. The dichotomy within America's population would give both reason and justification for the early slavery of the *Indian*, the war upon America's inhabitants, and also serve the mission of the Holy Catholic Church. Columbus perceived Natives, who were timid and had a *serving* nature, as easier to convert to Christianity. Much of Spain's public rationale for their invasion and confiscation of the Americas was to Christianize and *save* the good *Indians* from the bad.[37]

Michele de Cuneo, a Spanish nobleman, describes the first encounter with the proclaimed *cannibals'* through his depictions of their religious and sexual practices. He gives an extensive account of indiscriminate promiscuity and the wide-spread practice of homosexuality among the cannibals.[38] He also describes the ominous figure of a silent

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[36] Bartolome de Las Casas, *Historia de Las Indias*, Vol I. (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultural Economica, 1951) 228.

[37] Palencia-Roth (1993) pp.42-43.

[38] Michele de Cuneo, *De Novitatibus insularum occeani Hesperii repertarum a Don Christoforo Colombo Genuensi* in *Columbo, Vespucci, Verrazzano,* ed. L.Firpo (Turin: Unione Tipografico Editrice, 1966) 65.

Native priest dressed in white who without speaking conveyed his authority over the entire community.[39] Cuneo's commentary inflamed the Holy Catholic Church in Spain and portrays the Indigenous as bestial, pagan and savage. The tribes, which the explorers encounter and who are mistakenly named by Columbus as *Indians*,[40] were described as separate and distinct Native cultures. Some of the Indigenous groups are noted as handsome, with boats, trading with neighboring islands, generous, and with a language of *very sweet speech*. A member of a noble Savonese family accompanied Columbus on his second voyage as ship's physician and documents in detail his experience with the Natives although he never actually visited one of their villages. "They eat only adult males, keeping females as slaves and raising the young males as castrated servants until they grow up, when they are slaughtered."[41] He also notes that the women were as adept as men in the use of their bows against the Spaniards.[42] In his descriptions, the physician portrays a population which offends Spain's social structure and supports the Renaissance belief of a *monstrous other.*

Artist Phillip Galle's 1580 personification of America portrays the New World as an Amazon warrior, naked, carrying the head of one of her male victims and stepping

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[39] Ibid 65.

[40] Columbus believed he had reached an island off the coast of India.

[41] Gerbi 31. Scholars such as anthropologist W. Arens in his 1979 publication, *The Man-Eating Myth,* asserts that cannibalism did not exist in any part of the world and points to imperialist motives for the Renaissance descriptions. Julio Salas (1920) and J. Fernando Carneiro (1946) also view the claims of cannibalism in the New world as fabrications. However, Arens' absolute statements are refuted by numerous others such as Donald W. Forsyth (1983), and Marshall Sahlins (1985). Palencia-Roth, 22.

[42] Delgado-Gomez 8.

over a severed arm.[43] The inscription at the bottom of the painting identifies America as "an orgresse who devours men, who is rich in gold, and who is skilled and powerful in the use of the bow."[44] The female (classical) image as warrior was exotic, frightening and sexual. By the 1590's the engravings of Theodore de Bry, representing cannibalism enacted by armed naked women wearing masks, and Aztec ceremonies of human sacrifice, depict the widespread and published European opinion of the *Indian*. The dramatic rituals of the Indigenous of the Americas were seen as paganism, bereft of classical form, ideals, or a "language of social exchange,"[45] and steeped in rumors of human sacrifice and cannibalism. The concept of American *Indian* performance as savage idolatry or primitive entertainment for the superior European serves the inversion process of ideology. Oviedo exemplifies this perception of the Indigenous of the Americas in 1535.

> The people of these Indies, although rational and of the same branch of the holy ark of Noah, are made irrational and bestial by their idolatries, sacrifices, and infernal ceremonies.[46]

When religious behavior or exotic rituals are ascribed to the Indigenous it is difficult to separate the European observations from their own beliefs about non-

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[43] Palencia-Roth (1996) pp 40-41.

[44] Phillippe Galle, *Prosopographia.*

[45] Ibid (1982) 21. Defines the barbarian definition before and during the first encounters. The true civil community was made possible through the persuasive power of language. The Roman, Cicero, and his training in the Greek Rhetoric schools, promotes this idea and is an idea reclaimed by Albertus Magnus in the thirteenth century. Barbarians were perceived as having no access to language or laws.

[46] Fernandez Oviedo, *The General and Natural History of the Indias,* Vol III, Chpt. 60.

Christian religious practices. Often within this historical evidence Native actions are misrepresented or religious motives assigned to situations where they do not apply.[47] In the summer of 1605 an English ship visiting what would later be called North Virginia left one emissary, Owen Griffen, to spend the night with the *Abenakis*. He later wrote of a two hour welcoming *dance* by the tribe with much singing which Griffen saw as a religious dance because the *Indian*s repeatedly raised their hands and eyes towards heaven. Many of the ritual ceremonies or traditions reported by the Europeans describe the *Indians* attempt to incorporate the Europeans as honorary members of their group "just as they adopted Native strangers and even enemies captured in battle."[48] The European perception of performance rituals enacted by the Native populations over the centuries of colonization were laden with misconceptions and Christian judgements.

For descriptions of Native performance identified during the first encounters between European and *Indian*, one must look to the first hand accounts of sailors, explorers, priests, court historians[49] and soldiers. The credibility of these writings are questionable.

> We do not have "pure," unmediated accounts of the (first) encounter. By definition, any account of the other culture on either side before the encounter would be speculation and legend. . . .One of the difficulties for pre-conquest

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[47] Bruce G. Trigger, "Early Native North American Responses to European Contact", *Major Problems in American Indian History,* eds. Albert Hurtado and Peter Iverson (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994) 57.

[48] Axtell (1992) 101.

[49] Bernal Diaz was appointed as Royal historian for the Cortez expedition and Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo was the first official chronicler from 1532 to 1556 for Charles V in the Indies.

> Native documents. . . is that even the most informative among them were mostly redone under Spanish influence during the 1540s and after. [50]

However, the authorship of the written remains of the period, surrounding Europe's first encounters with the Indigenous populations of the Americas, is not as important as the culture which created the writings and the almost complete silence of the conquered within this written history. "Few witnesses wrote much about the Indigenous cultures. European colonists cared little about understanding Native ways, organization or language."[51] Peter Hulme in a 1978 article suggests the supposed dialogue between European and Native was in effect a European monologue.[52] This statement excludes the *Indian* perceptions of the European as if there were none. The image of the American Native documented by Spanish texts, explorer correspondence, paintings and royal decrees of the period can be perceived as similar to the continuous reconstructed image of Columbus through history and is a mixture of mythology, iconography and national, imperial or American and European ideology.[53]

Reports of *scary monsters* contrasted with the writings in Latin by the Italian physician Nicolaus Scyllacio (who had never viewed the new world or its population),

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[50] Jonathan Hart, *Columbus, Shakespeare and the Interpretation of the New World* (New York: Palgrave, 2003) 26. The principal author of Columbus's *diario* is not Christopher Columbus "but Bartolome de las Casas, aided and abetted by Columbus and any number of intermediate scribes." David Henige, *In Search of Columbus,* 1991.

[51] John Kicza, *Resilient Cultures,* (Upper Saddle Rive, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003) 40.

[52] Peter Hulme, "Columbus and the Cannibals: A Study of the reports of anthropology in the Journal of Chirstopher Columbus,"*Ibero-Amerikanisches Archiv* (new series) 1978, 4: 119. 1978.

[53] Pagden (1982) 29.

published in 1494 depicting a *noble savage* in the humanistic *ideal,* creating an atmosphere in Spain which separated the good *Indiani* from the bad *Camballi.*

> All things are held in common; there in not even the suspicion of avarice. This is mine, that is thine, the cause of too many crimes, is unknown to them. There is no desire for what belongs to another, no lust of possession; envy is completely banished. They live in great harmony and in the exercise of mutual kindness. They are equally distinguished for good faith and reverential respect.[54]

The distinct difference between the two *types* of Indigenous images transmitted to Europe is further illuminated by Scillacio's description of the painting of the Native body. He views the practice to be a cosmetic protector of their (*Indian*) bodies' symmetry and beauty.[55] Doctor Alvarez Chanca describes the practice scornfully, calling their hair laughable and their living conditions deplorable.[56] These two conflicting views of the Indigenous allowed the European to both support their society as advanced and civilized and also to critique it as lacking through the *image* of the American *Indian*.

> The radical dualism of the European response to the Native, . . . fierce cannibal and noble savage, has such obvious continuities with the classical Mediterranean paradigm that

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[54] Nicolaus Scyllacio, *De insulis meridiani atque indici maris nuper inventis,* Trans. John Mulligan (New York: First published in Pavia (1494) 1859) 85.

[55] Ibid 87.

[56] Gerbi, pp. 23-26.

> it is tempting to see the whole intricate web of colonial discourse as weaving itself in its own separate space entirely unaffected by any observation of or interchange with Native Caribbean cultures.[57]

It is significant that contact between the *Indian*s and Europeans "occurred almost exclusively in the Americas, not in the other *Old World*."[58] It should also be noted that the rulers of Spain did not want the *Indian*s in Spain. After Columbus sent several proclaimed *cannibals* to Spain to be taught the Spanish language and serve as translators in the *New* world, he recommends sending many more to Castille. The Crown responds agreeing with the need for translators, but opposes bringing them to Spain. "He (Columbus) should try to find out how, if possible, he can convert them (the cannibals) to our Holy Catholic Faith over there, and he should do the same with the Natives of the islands where he is."[59] The *Indian*s rarely seen in Spain existed as images created and sustained by writing and painting. The Indigenous of the Americas, limited to a text form, could be read, edited, and revised as needed.[60] As long as the people of the Americas remained in abstract and textual form, their interpretation remained in the *pens,* imaginations, and *gossip* of the Europeans. The distance created by the fantastic and embellished *first hand* accounts of Europe's first encounters with the *Indian*s inspired the

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[57] Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and* Native *Caribbean 1492-1979* (London: Methuen, 1986) 47.

[58] James Axwell, *Beyond 1942,* (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 1992) 99.

[59] Morison, Samuel Eliot (trans.and ed.) *Journals and Other Documents on the Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (New York: Heritage, 1963)

[60] Palencia-Roth (1993) 32.

astonishing speed of the Spanish conquest of the Americas. In the earliest letters sent to the crown from the exploration, the *good Indian* is described: "for they are inclined to serve and to love Your Royal Highnesses and the entire Castilian nation."[61] These romantic and classical visions of the new *barbarian*[62] easily fit into the economic and religious policies of the period.

There was also a basic belief that the Wild man was capable of becoming civilized. This taming of the barbarian was a popular theme before the discovery of the New World.[63]

> This is the paradox of Rousseau's savage Caribs. They are contemporary to the reader, yet they belong to a period of human infancy. . . .They, these *savages*, are not like us as we are now, the argument went, they are like us as we once were.[64]

The conflict between the two distinct views of the American Indigenous erupted in 1550 when King Charles of Spain convened a council of fourteen prominent Spanish scholars to debate what conditions were necessary to conduct the *just war* against the *Indian*s.

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[61] Columbus's letter to Sant'angel, 1492.

[62] Bartolome de Las Casa defines the different types of the barbarian. He supports his definitions by the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and his church. 1.) Any cruel, inhuman and merciless man acting against human reason out of anger or Native disposition. 2.) Those who do not have a written language that corresponds to a spoken one. 3.)Those without ruler, laws, and institutions. They do not buy, sell, hire, lease, make contracts, deposit, borrow or lend. (1548-1550) His links to the ancient Roman "laws" of property are also apparent.

[63] Mason, 46.

[64] Ibid.

Juan de Sepulveda, a leading European authority on Aristotle and secular humanist of his time, argued that civilized men (Europeans) were naturally masters and brute men (American *Indian*s) were by their very nature slaves. He supported his views with the writings of Aristotle and the primary belief of this period: the human species is divided into two kinds of men, the civilized and the barbarian. Bartolome de Las Casa, a Dominican scholar and former Bishop of Chiapas, represented the other side of the debate. He argued that the American *Indian*s were superior to many of the ancient cultures that the Spanish admired and their customs and beliefs were comparable to the rational world of Europeans.[65] These two distinct early images of America's Indigenous populations are substantiated in the literature, theatre representations, and governmental policies of the Europeans (and later Americans) with little or no variation well into the twentieth century.

The correspondence from the new world fed the beliefs of the Europeans in their own superiority, and re-created the historic deeds of mythic heroes. Images of the valiant conqueror battling against the barbarian or *wild man* (or woman) long found in European folk tales and Greek myths are reintroduced in the written dramatic literature of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century.[66] This historical site of forced *isolation* reflects both the need to control the *image* of the *Indian* and the refusal of the conqueror to learn

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[65] Vine Deloria Jr., "A Simple Question of Humanity: The Moral Dimensions of the Reburial Issue," Native *American Rights Fund-Legal Review,* Vol.14, No. 4 (Fall 1989), pp.1-12.

[66] To name a few of the adventure plays which write of the New World and Indigenous : Andre' Thevet's *The New Found World* (1568), *The New World's Tragedy* (1595), John Day, Wiiliam Rowley and George Wilkins, *The Travailes of the Three English Brothers (1607),* Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1611), Thomas S Fletcher's *The Sea Voyage* (1622) The lost play, *The Plantation of Virginia* (1623), is about the massacre of colonists by *Indians* and Richard Boome's *The Antibodes* (1638),

the language of the conquered. Columbus' interpreter spoke Hebrew, Aramaic and some Arabic and little if anything was understood when the explorer spoke to the Native.

> I do not understand the language, and the people of these lands do not understand me, neither I nor my companions understand them; and as for these *Indian*s whom I have with me, I often understand one thing as its reverse.[67]

The recontextualization of the Americas into Spain's image is also evident as Columbus refuses the *words* of the Natives and begins immediately renaming places and people in his own language. Ironically, the one Arawak Native word he chooses to adopt, he translates to mean *man-eaters*.[68] Many of the North American tribes named themselves with words identifying their immediate and most important social group with a term which represented their culture as the center of all things. For example, Iroquois, Navajo, Penobscot, Zunis, mean *the original people, the true men,* or simply *the people.* They called their enemies and neighbors Eskimo, Sioux, Nottoway, Apache. When translated the names are derogatory terms meaning *raw meat eaters, bark eaters, enemy,* and *rattlesnakes.* Columbus died believing that the lands he discovered were islands off the coast of Asia inhabited by the *first men* (men before the dawn of civilization) and *human-eating monsters.* It has been documented through linguistic studies and archaeological artifacts that the people he encountered were decedents of ancient

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[67] C. Colon, *Textos y documentos completos,* 2nd edition, (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1984) 67.

[68] Columbus names the island of the affable and generous *Indians*, *Hispaniola.* Other islands he names are Dominica, Guadalupe, Los Jardines, Granada, Trinidad, ect. It is interesting that the first Arawakan terms to appear in a European language were *canibales* on November 23, 1492, *canimas* on November 26, 1492, and *Caribs* on December 26, 1492. Without knowing their language, Columbus uses the Native terms to represent "man-eaters," which he had never encountered.

migrating Asians. One wonders what these Americas with their ancient Asian inheritance of language and myth would be like today if explorers from India or Japan had landed upon the coasts instead of the Europeans.

The invaders of the *New World* found their encounters with performances of the Indigenous offensive and representations of devil worship or as ludicrous and comical. Eventually Native ceremonies and dances were banned as being vile to God. Punishment to spiritual leaders was handed out in the form of public humiliations such as beatings or even hangings for practicing witchcraft,[69] and if Native writings such as those in Mayan and Aztec populations were found they were perceived as blasphemous and destroyed. European forms of performance were imported to New Spain soon after the initial conquest in 1510 and Spanish missionaries began writing *autos* in the local language to be performed by those they were converting. Native dance, music and dress were often assimilated into these performances. By 1539 *The Conquest of Rhodes* and *The Conquest of Jerusalem* were performed in Mexico (New Spain) incorporating, in European medieval fashion, over a thousand *Indians* as musicians and extras.[70] By 1601 there were three imported acting troupes in Mexico City.

A century after the Spanish priests cast *Indians* to enact a European religious performance, American *Indian* performance was still being confronted by the European. A dozen Frenchmen in Louisiana write of their need of supplies and of their visit to a Colapissa village. They describe the *Indian*s' enjoyment of the music of a violinist

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[69] Kicza 101.

[70] Brockett 153.

among them named Picard and their attempt to teach the minuet to the Natives. The Frenchmen "nearly died of laughter over the savages' attempts."[71] However, the Colapissa also are said to have laughed at their guests' inability to keep time with the drummed rhythms of their traditional dances.[72] In 1603 Martin Pring's crew met some Massachusetts Alonquiana who were interested in the music being played by an English guitarist. The *Indian* response to the music was one of performance and was described through the misinterpretation of the sailors: "They danced around him (the musician), twentie in a Ring . . .using many *savage* gestures and singing Io, Ia, Io, Ia, Ia, Io,"[73] This response represents the century-old perception of Native dance. Little attempt was made to understand Native performance, language or ritual and the image of the *savage* dancing and the sound of unintelligible *war-hoops* is still a mainstay of the stereotypical *idea* of the *other* of North America.

Suffering at the hands of the savage brought one closer to God, became a fashionable narrative theme for Puritans as they encountered the Indigenous of America. Captivity novels of the seventeenth century became spiritual journeys for the kidnapped who published their stories. However, such fictional stories (even if labeled as true accounts) were written more to define or agree with the author's culture and beliefs than to give an objective description of the Native American. Tales of going Native or what Ebersole terms the *white Indians*, also grew in popularity as those captured reported their

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[71]Richebourg Gaillard McWilliams, ed and trans., *Fluer de Lys and Columet: Being the Penicaut Narrative of French Adventure in Louisiana* (Baton Rouge, LSU Press, 1953) pp. 106-7.

[72] Ibid pp. 109-110

[73] Quoted in Axtell (1992) 66. From David Quinn, David, *North American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612,* 3rd Vol. (1979).

experience during colonization of the Americas as contact with the Indigenous became increasingly common. Little is known from the *Indian* perspective of what they experienced when submerged into European captivity. What we do know is that the *Indian* and European were attempting to assimilate and categorize each other into their own worlds.

Assimilation is a process by which the *otherness* of the other is eliminated and the other is reduced to self.[74] It works in both directions, but is rarely balanced. For example, American history finds many instances of *Indian*s adopting the values of their conquerors and very few instances of the reverse.[75] This may be because the conquerors were writing and describing the Natives from their point of reference. We find Europeans characterizing *Indians* on their stages, but we have no record of an American *Indian* performance depicting the European. However, Native myths began to incorporate the *White Man* into their origin stories soon after the first encounters:

> When it was time for Yuan life-giver to let people onto the world, he called the children of White-painted woman before him. 'The people will need weapons to hunt with and live,' he said. He laid before them a gun, and a bow and arrows, Killer of Enemies was older and got first choice. He took the gun. Child of the Water had to take the bow and arrows. Killer of Enemies became the father

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[74] Peter Mason, *Deconstructing America*, (New York: Routledge, 1990) 63.

[75] Ibid, 164.

> of the white-eyes, and Child of the Water became father of the *Indian*s. That's how they got to be different, they say.[76]

To be captured by the *Indian*s and assimilated into a tribe was seen as worse than death by the majority of Europeans. In contrast, the Indigenous who were captured were perceived as being *saved* by their captors. Those who refused to be assimilated and *fit* into their European role as grateful, submissive servant by converting to Christianity were viewed as savages, cannibals, children, or inhuman. Their performance could only be perceived as an extension of their *savageness* and must be stopped. As America is colonized and its Indigenous populations subdued, Native rituals and performances are simultaneously banned or restricted. They are forbidden at *Indian* communities controlled by missionaries and strictly curtailed at government facilities. Christian missionaries saw it as a duty to convert the *savage* and destroy their assumed worship of demons. The refusal of the Christian priests to understand or compromise with Native religions created a parent child relationship. The goals of missions in Spanish and Portuguese colonies were to eliminate idol worship, "inculcate Christianity, a sedentary agricultural way of life, and European values"[77] among the Native populations regardless of particular Indigenous cultural patterns. Most Native uprisings within missionary colonies occurred when mission life was recognized by the population as destroying their culture.[78]

The first Jesuit moved with colonists into the Acazee region (Northwestern Mexico) in the 1580s. Spanish authorities immediately coerced the Acazees to abandon

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[76] Chiricahua Apache Story quoted in Haley, 1.

[77] Kicza 168.

[78] Ibid 169.

their residential patterns and congregate in communities, wear European clothing, cut their long hair and begin to farm the land. The Spanish destroyed their idols and fetishes and banned the Native rituals. Work was separated by gender promoting agriculture and mining among the men and domestic chores for the women. Monogamous marriage and baptism were enforced and the priest acquired the leadership role once held by herdsmen. By 1601, an Acaxee elder organized a revolt to return his people to their traditional way of life. Churches and Spanish structures were burned and over fifty colonists were killed. The elder referred to himself as god, Holy Spirit and Bishop and his rebellion was often led by banners made from ecclesiastical vestments. Mirroring their Christian teachers they attacked members of their own tribe who would not join them.[79] In 1603, the leader of the insurgents was captured by colonial authorities and burned alive, his commanders hanged, and hundreds of his followers either executed or sold into slavery. Revolts against the European continued throughout Mexico during the entire seventeenth century even as the tribes incorporated Christian methods and symbols They were each dealt with in a similar fashion by the invader if the Indigenous refused to conform and convert.

On the eastern coast of America the Puritan struggle with the brutal *savage* created a necessary *enemy* shaping the identity of the United States. The *idea* of the Indigenous of the Americas was placed at the polar opposite of the European colonists and formed one of the foundation blocks of American ideology. By the period of Western expansion the Indigenous of the Americas were locked tightly into the myth and ideology of the *New World.* For example in one of the numerous captive narratives of

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[79] Kicza 171.

the nineteenth century, *Five Years a Captive Among the Black-Feet Indians* (1858), John Dixon's proclaimed factual journal describes an *Indian* performance, not with an intention of interest, but only to create a hostile environment to expose his own superior intelligence and the ignorance of his captors:

> The faggots were now fired in several places, and the savages were performing their circular gyratory dance, with the usual accompaniments of noise and confusion, when on raising my eyes in a suppliant attitude toward Heaven, almost the first object that I distinctly comprehended was a very large panther, lying on the limb of a tree, almost directly above us. . . . Knowing the superstition of these wild people, the thought flashed upon me that if I bring the panther down with my rifle in their midst, they would attribute the report and smoke of the gun, and the simultaneous fall of the animal to a supernatural agency. . .[80]

The American *Indian*s had been dealing with the colonists for over two and one half centuries when this narration was published and yet, the belief that the *savage* had no knowledge of guns and could be easily tricked because of their superstitious nature, remains embedded in the image of the Indigenous.

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[80] Quoted in Ebersole 199. from *The Garland Library of Narratives of North American Indian Captivity,* Garland 74:67,68.

Native performance, devalued through the Renaissance definition of theatre and clothed in the idea of the savage, is excluded entirely during four centuries of theatre history. When theatre is mentioned with the early histories of the Americas, it is a transplanted European form. No notice of Indigenous performance is recorded as theatrical history. The *Indian* as character in European drama is however well documented in American theatre history. James Nelson Barker's *The Indian Princess* (1808) was the first of the romantic Native American dramas which became very popular in nineteenth century American theatres. *Pocahontas* (1830), and *The Indian Prophecy* (1827) are only two of the more than fifty plays produced between 1825 and 1860 about the noble savage. John Brougham burlesqued the stereotype in 1855 with his play, *Po-ca-hon-tas*, but the *good* savage remained a popular *type* until 1870.

An excellent example of the noble but doomed Pagan can be found in the representation of Montezuma by the American playwright, Lewis Thomas' in his five act tragedy, *Cortez the Conqueror* (1857). The European constructed Aztec response to themselves as conqueror is also evident in Act III, Scene two as the Aztec ambassador informs his emperor about the Spanish warriors. The scene takes place in the throne room of Montezuma's palace.

MONTEZUMA: Are these men,
Or are they Gods?

TEUTILE: Or Gods or more than men!
These warriors strange or clad in substance hard
Impenetrable to our keenest flint.
And here observe: upon these monstrous beasts,
They mount at pleasure, and together join
And of the twain make but one animal,
That can outstrip the antelope in speed,
And match the giant tapir in his strength.
Earth trembles at its tread, and the deep vales,

Re-echo far and wide its horrid cries.

MONTEZUMA: Wonder upon wonder; strange and marvelous!
Can all these things be true?

TEUTILE: Most true, dread liege.

MONTEZUMA: O! then, alas! The ancient prophecies,
That did foretell the downfall of our race,
By bearded white men from the Eastern seas,
Are near fulfilment. . .[81]

This particular play even has the Aztecs holding a gladiator entertainment between two imprisoned warriors to decide their fate. Within his preface to the piece, the playwright notes his adherence to the history of the conflict and states that his characters pertaining to the conquest are all real and historical.

Indigenous performers were also incorporated into American entertainment by the mid-nineteenth century. These *Indian actors* represented the early American *idea* of the *Red Man* in performances such as Buffalo Bill Cody's "Wild West Show." In 1871 Augustine Daly presented the American *Indian* as a bloodthirsty villain in his play *Horizon* and returned the Noble Native to his *barbaric* roots. Native rituals were also incorporated without regard to their true function or content into European and colonial dramatic performance even as Indigenous performances, which served to maintain tribal unity and history, were either banned as idolatry or seen as incendiary to the process of Native American assimilation by the colonists.

By the end of the nineteenth century the American tribes were gradually relocated and contained upon reservations as the colonist population grew and moved West. The

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[81] Lewis F. Thomas, *Cortez the Conqueror* (Washington D.C: B.W. Ferguson, 1857) III.ii, pp.46-47.

idea of Native performance was seen as disruptive and blocking the *Indian* from assimilating into the Western culture. Children were forcefully removed from their homes and forbidden to speak their own languages or participate in any traditional performances. The *Indian* schools followed a policy of assimilation in the early twentieth century and many were controlled by missionaries or government agents. As late as the twentieth century restraints were still enforced. Ernest Jermark, superintendent of the Fort Berthold Agency in 1922 wrote down the **rules** for his *Indian* population and their rituals:

1. Permission for *Indian* dances must be obtained in writing from my office and show date and place.
2. Dances are limited to legal holidays.
3. No presents to be exchanged or gifts made at dances.
4. Big feasts and donations of food stuffs for dances to be discontinued.
5. No men under 21 or girls under 18 of age to permitted to dance, or wear dance costumes at the dances.[82]

Restrictions upon Native American performance will remain in place until the late twentieth century when the Religious Freedoms Act is passed.

Performance within the American tribes was a far more essential part of the Indigenous culture than within the European. Serving as both a sacred and functional tool of religion, performance was a marker of social status, a component of transition, a means of healing, a method of communication, and tool to unify the community. The

attempted destruction of Indigenous performance was an assault on the unity and communication base of the oral cultures. To destroy the performance rituals of a tribe was to destroy their history, religious rites, and tribal unity. The knowledge of the Indigenous was interpreted and communicated through dance, song, and story-telling. Similar to the ancient Greeks and early Romans, the world of the *Indian* was sacred. All things and beings within the *Indian* world contained power and performance was a means to achieve harmony and a means to gain power. Performance communicated to the spirit powers and formed a channel to the people. The enactment of origin myths within a tribe allowed all who listened and watched to partake in the journey of the first human. Based upon the ancient myths of each society, the rituals were not static, but rather changed to absorb and answer the upheavals found within their world. The diversity of form and content suggest a complexity of function adaptable to any situation and unimaginable within the restricted theatre of the European elite.

Indian **Perceptions of the European**

Much has been documented of what the Europeans perceived at their first encounter with the Indigenous populations of the Americas. However, the voice of the Native and their view of the European *other* is relatively scarce. Through archaeological evidence many components of Native culture before colonization can be understood. Some Indigenous histories have survived in wood, stone carvings or in scrolled picturizations. After the European arrival there are also recorded colonial commentaries of an Indigenous spokesperson and images of the *Indian.* In some cases the population of the Americas expressed their histories in a written form of their own language or

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[82] Jermark's signed letter quoted in *Major Problems in American Indian History,* eds. Huratado and

eventually through learned European languages gained from their contact with settlers and missionaries.[83] For example, Indigenous accounts of the Spanish Conquest of Mexico are found in the writings of Native priests and wise men (masters of the red and black) who survived and viewed the conflict.[84] It can be generalized that the Europeans viewed the *Indian* as both human (at the base of the *Chain of Beings*) and monstrous (a necessary image for a *just war*), but it is also evident that these early explorers perceived this newly discovered population as *object* to be sold, assimilated, converted or consumed. This does not seem to be the case within many of the *Indian* accounts of their first encounters with the *outsider.*

Axtell states, "while Europeans found *others* to be different and usually inferior, the *others* the *Indian*s knew tended to be similar or superior."[85] Axtell's Eurocentrist view of history has dominated our knowledge of the Indigenous. For centuries the conquered are perceived as benefiting from their encounter with a more *enlightened* culture. However, many tribes viewed the European as the one to be pitied and in dire need of their assistance. The Europeans who washed up upon the shore of Texas in 1528

Iverson (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1994) 380.

[83] Ibid, 2. And Leon-Portilla, *xxvi,* Education in Tenochtitlan was compulsory for all male children. They were taught to read, write and interpret the codices, but they were also required to accurately memorize the tribe's history, traditions, sacred hymns and other texts. This practice made it possible to record many poems, songs, religious laws, customs and histories that would otherwise have been lost forever.

[84] In all the major cities there were groups known as *tlamatinime,* (wise men), scholars who studied the ancient religious thinking of the Toltecs. When the Aztecs came into contact with the advanced populations which retained the advanced Toltec culture, they admired them (similar to the Roman elite's respect for the Greeks). They wanted bonds of kinship with this advanced culture and chose as their first king a nobleman of Toltec origin.

[85] Axtell (1992) pp.32-33.

were not viewed with awe, but rescued and nursed back to health by the Karankawas.[86] David La Vere suggests that the vision of a powerful people conquering a weaker population is inaccurate. He perceives Spain's entry into the American Southwest as merely "the migration of a powerful nation into a region already containing powerful nations."[87] The Indigenous of the Americas were not so different from the Europeans.[88] They were religious, sent and received ambassadors, negotiated alliances and went to war. The communities had slaves and a social hierarchy, and trade was wide-spread.[89] The tribes believed themselves to come from an ancient race and their communities contained wise men, doctors, and spiritual leaders. They also communicated their cultural symbols, myths and histories through performance. The Apache Sunrise ceremony is an example of a dance drama which enacts the tribe's origin and history and is filled with cultural symbols such as beaded circles on the costume, drum and moccasins of the participant. The community's place in this world was of central importance. Sacred space radiated in concentric circles from the center, which was either the local village, or a nearby place of the tribes' emergence.[90] Circles represented this

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[86] David LaVere, "Facing Off: *Indian*-Spanish Rivalry in the Greater Southwest, 1528-1821," *They Made us Many Promises: The American Indian Experience, 1524 to the Present,* Philip Weeks,ed., (Wheeling. IL: Harlan Davidson, 2002) 49. Alvar Nunez de Vaca and several companions were found and nursed back to health by the Karnakawa *Indians* near Galveston.

[87] Ibid 52.

[88] Pueblo religious practices (priests, altars, chants,and ritual head washings) were also familiar to the Spaniards. *Indian Kachinas* were mistaken for *Indian* saints. The tribes did not have saints or the European perception of gods.

[89] Caddo pottery, Pueblo turquoise and blankets, ornamental shells from the Pacific tribes are found spread throughout the American south and southwest. (artifacts have even been found in East Texas originating with the Pacific tribes.

[90] Bowden quoted in *Major Problems in American Indian History,* 100.

reference to the center and the harmony of all things. Cultural symbols such as eagle feathers, buckskin and pollen which represented specific sacred powers to distinct tribes were and are used in the Apache performances.

La Vere sees another similarity between the *Indians* and Europeans describing how each sought status and power within their own communities. However, social status was gained through very different means in each culture. The invaders gained status through birth lineage or the accumulation of ownership: land, livestock, gold, a woman (a good marriage) and money. The Indigenous of the Americas gained status through generosity, the more one gave away, the more debts of gratitude one created. Gift giving was a ritual to be performed during any encounter with those outside of the immediate tribe, unless the encounter was one of conflict. Generosity combined with displays of bravery, strength and wisdom created status and power within the community.[91] Columbus describes the *Indian* practice of giving in one of his earliest letters.

> They are. . .generous with what they have, to such a degree as no one would believe but him who has seen it. Of anything they have, if it be asked for, they never say no, but do rather invite the person to accept it. . . .[92]

While La Vere views these similarities as granting a basic understanding between the cultures, each attempting to manipulate the other, I see the difference in value systems, inability to communicate, and conflicting methods of acquiring status as a formula for massacre. Although rampant disease defeated populations that superior

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[91] La Vere, 52.

[92] Christopher Columbus 1492.

weapons could not, the four centuries of colonization of the Americas was accomplished through one culture's belief in giving as a means to gain power and the other's belief in taking to achieve the same end. By the time the *Indian* refused to give or receive what the invaders offered the great civilizations of the Americas[93] were devastated.

> I heard that long ago there was time when there were no people in this country except *Indian*s. After that the people began to hear of men that had white skins; they had never seen far to the east. Before I was born they came out to our country and visited us. The man who came was from the government, He wanted a treaty with us and to give us gifts. . . . Our Chief said, "You see, my brother, that the Ruler has given us all that we need for killing meat, or cultivating the ground. Now go back to the country from whense you came. We do not want your presents and do not want you to come into our country.[94]

The first encounters with the Europeans established a pattern of the Indigenous behavior of either extreme generosity or displays of valor which were repeated again and again as the two populations confronted each other.

Three thousand years before the arrival of the Europeans, the Olmec civilization developed in the Western Yucatan Peninsula with recognized boundaries and formal systems of justice. Its pyramids, intricate mosaics and complex temples are evidence of a

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[93] To name a few: Azrtecs, Incas, Pueblo, Powhatans, Cherokee, Iroquois, Deleware, Tupi, Algonquins

[94] Curly Chief, Pawnee quoted in *They Made us Many Promises* by editor Philip Weeks, 1.

culture equal to the Egyptians. A thousand years later the Mayans had their own codes of law administered by public officials and political structures. Three centuries before the first English Puritan walked upon American soil the Apacheans migrated into the southwestern area of the Americas from their homeland in the Mackenzie River Basin of western Canada. To put in perspective the pre-Euorpean history of the Americas, some scholars have compared the time before invasion to the medieval and classical age of the Western civilization.[95] What Spain encountered in North America was its Middle Ages, and in Mexico, a post-classic age. For example, "The city of Cahokia in southwestern Illinois, with its huge ceremonial mounds, thrived between 1050 and 1200, numbering over 30,000 inhabitants, and dominating some 50 surrounding communities."[96] In the South West the advanced cultures of the Anasazi, Mogollon, and Hohokam existed in present-day New Mexico and Arizona between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. They cut irrigation canals, built multistoried buildings and worshipped in underground temples. Their ornate pottery rivaled anything produced in Europe. At the same time the Caddos and Wichitas founded large sophisticated cities, ruled by priest chiefs, from the Arkansas river in the north to the Red, Sabine and Neches rivers in the south. Ceremonial centers and cities were abandoned and their people dispersed by the fourteenth century, forming numerous diverse communities. [97]

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[95] This way of breaking down history can also be considered "Eurocentric", for many countries did not have a Middle Ages in the European sense. To believe Europe's history is *everyones* is typical of the Western historian response. However, as a way to bring understanding about those outside of Europe, it may be the fastest and most simplistic means to break down history into a European linear line, which carries its own prejudices. The history of the Indigenous of North America was not linear, but circular.

[96] Kicza, 8.

[97] LaVere 50.

Mexican and Andean civilizations (post-classical stage) had advanced cultures with complex architectural, social, religious and political structures. Similar to the Romans, "rulers were expected to protect and sustain their people, leading defense of their province if necessary and providing food from storehouses during times of shortage."[98] The ancient city of Teotihuacan, was founded some 2,000 years before the first king in Spain and thrived for 800 years as both a spiritual and residential center. Bernal Diaz del Castillo, a member of Cortez's expedition, describes in his history his first view of the city in 1519. "Next morning, we came to a broad causeway and continued our march towards Iztapalpa. And when we saw all those cities and villages built in the water, and other great towns on dry land, and that straight level causeway leading to Mexico, we were astounded. These great towns and temples and buildings rising from the water, all made of stone, seemed like an enchanted vision from the tales of Amadis (a famous late medieval romantic novel). Indeed, some of our soldiers asked whether it was not all a dream."[99]

This *new world* that Columbus and Cortez discovered was viewed by its Indigenous population as ancient. Their known histories dated back hundreds of years and their presence within the Americas extended for thousands. Although divided into various ethnic groups, political structures and distinct religions, there existed between the communities trading networks, political alliances and cultural influences which were

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[98] Kicza, 18.

[99] Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *The Conquest of Spain,* trans, J.M. Cohen (Hammondworth, England: Penguin Books, 1963), 214.

often far-reaching.[100] Indigenous use of ritual subterranean spaces can also be traced from Teoihuacan to the Tenochtitlan through Central Mexico to the North Americas.[101] Many of the caves once perceived as natural are now seen by contemporary archaeologists as having been quarries.[102]

When Columbus first walked upon the Caribbean island he would name Hispanola, he entered the edge of a world with over 200 distinct languages. The Americas were not a vast and unpopulated wilderness, but a land filled with thousands of diverse semisedentary and sedentary communities, some small and others large.[103] The pre-Europe Americas were densely populated even by European standards. Their communities were filled with performance and ancient myths. Each of the tribes encountered, whether Aztec or Pueblo, maintained an active and distinct performance culture.

For example the Spanish began their war on the Aztec during a dance drama where all the warriors laid down their arms and participated in an intricate dance drama telling a story of their accomplishments in battle. The enactment was an annual performance in honor of their god of war, *Huitzilopchtli.* When the Franciscan missionaries in New Mexico encountered masks or performance paraphernalia of the

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[100] Kicza, 1.

[101] Pueblo *Kivas*

[102] Linda Manzanilla, "The Construction of the Underworld in Central Mexico," *Mesoamerica's Classic Heritage,* David Carrasco, Lindsay Jones and Scott Sessions, eds. (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2000) pp.87-116.

[103]Kicza, pp.1-27. The Aztec capital, Tenochtitlan contained over 250,000 residents, the Inca capital, Cuzco, over 60,000. Most of the building are of stone and aquaducts were evident in both capitals bringing fresh water and urban services removed human waste and garbage safely from the urban centers.

Indigenous population they confiscated and burned them.[104] Performance to the *Indian*s of the Rio Grande was a means to speak to their people and the spiritual powers of their world. The masked dances of the Pueblo which told their stories and connected them to the sacred earth were seen as forms of devil worship by the missionaries. Shamans who persisted in continuing the rituals and performances were arrested by the Spanish military and then either whipped or executed. To the Franciscans the *Indian* performers were seen as a menace to this life and an obstacle to the next.[105]

> Pueblo views of the world were diametrically opposed to Western European ones. The underworld rather than heaven or the sky was their locus for sources of life. . . . In the time of beginnings many gods[106] or *Kastina* had lived with the people and taught them how to cope with their new environment. Compared with the Spanish notion of a heavenly creator who guided his people from above, the Pueblo view derived strength from the opposite direction and it was much more explicit about divinely instituted patterns of activity.[107]

Contemporary scholars approximate the population of South and North America at first contact at about 60 to 70 million. In comparison, all of Western Europe in 1500 is

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[104] Henry Warner Bowden, "Spanish Missions, Cultural Conflict, and the Pueblo Revolt of 1660". *Church History* 44 (1975), pp.217-228.

[105] Ibid 100.

[106] What are called gods were spirit powers to the tribes.

[107] Ibid.

established with a similar number of inhabitants, India totaled 75-100 million and Africa at about 72 million. Today, we understand substantial population densities within many areas of the Americas as reflective of inhabitants who were both productive and culturally advanced.

> Central Columbia, the Amazon River basin, the major islands of the Caribbean, and the Mississippi River basin extending into the American southeast, are now understood to have maintained dense populations with sizable communities and religious sites common in many areas.[108]

The Indigenous populations on all of the major Caribbean islands had disappeared by 1550 and the population of central Mexico, probably over 20 million when Cortez entered the area in 1519, consisted of less than 1.25 million by 1650.

J. Jorge Klor de Alva, a scholar of the sixteenth century Aztecs, views disease as the conqueror of the Mexico.

> I believe it beyond question that if widespread diseases and the complex effects of the epidemics had not occurred, the Americas in general, . . . would be very much like India today. If diseases had not taken place I would be speaking with a Nahuatl[109] accent (instead of a Mexican accent) because there would have been millions of people who

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[108] Kicza, 32.

[109] The Nahuatl language, which is known as the Aztec language, is part of the great Uto-Aztec linguistic family. It has been spoken in central and southern Mexico, as well as various parts of Central America, from Toltec (600 C.E.-1200 C.E.) times to the present.

> would have continued their traditional ways in all of the American areas, such as Mexico, that were densely populated for centuries before contact with the Europeans. These areas surely would have undergone some form of colonization and eventually. . .the colonists would have been thrown out. . . .The idea of colonization that is used today to describe the first three centuries after the European-*Indian* encounter is drawn primarily from late nineteenth and early twentieth century notions which have been applied retroactively to a time when the world was extremely different. . . .The Americas were never colonized as we understand the term today.[110]

The isolation that characterized most of the American tribes by the nineteenth century did not appear until after European conquest. "The agricultural and sedentary peoples of the Americas commonly suffered roughly a ninety-five percent decrease in their population over approximately the first century of systematic contact with the colonists."[111]

The Indigenous population separated from the rest of the world for over 10,000 years had developed no natural resistance to the epidemics that had regularly plagued Europe and Africa. As African slaves and European colonists were introduced into the Americas they brought with them malaria, yellow fever, typhus, smallpox, measles,

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[110] J. Jorge Klor de Alva, "Conclusion" in *The Real Discovery of America: Mexico November 8, 1519*, Hugh Thomas, (New York: Moyer Bell Limited, 1992) pp.45-47.

[111] Kicza, 74.

mumps, and influenza. Each of these diseases were fatal to the Indigenous populations. After an active carrier (usually recently arrived from Spain or Africa) was introduced to a community the entire population would fall ill leaving no one to provide even the most basic care for the sick, causing even more deaths.[112] The reaction of the Indigenous to wide spread disease which beset their communities after first contact with the Europeans, in contrast to the Spanish reaction, illuminates the Native perception of the *stranger.* The conquerors and colonists, unaware of their bodies as carriers, viewed the immense Native death toll as divine punishment for their idolatry, (though some believed that the Spanish were being deprived of a labor force because of their own sins). What the Puritans later encountered as the Indigenous *other*, was a population which had already been devastated by disease through many encounters with European traders and was only a remnant of its former self.

The *Indian* reaction to the Spaniard varies from tribe to tribe and like the Spanish, their initial perceptions of the European were dependent upon their own ancient myths. An in-depth examination of the Aztec reaction to the European exposes how Indigenous myths and cultures affected their perceptions of this new and unknown *other.* This is clearly depicted by Central Mexico's Indigenous ruling class's use of ancient Toltec[113] images in order to explain the Spanish. Doris Heyden notes the absorption of numerous diverse rituals and symbols from conquered tribes within the Aztec culture, but

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[112] Ibid.

[113] *Codice Matritense* describes how the royal counselor to the throne and the king Itzcoatl revised their own history. In the new version the Aztecs claim to descend from Toltec nobility and their gods are raised to the same level as the ancient gods of creation Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl. The Aztec people are dedicated to the conquest of all nations during the revised history and called "people of the sun." Here begins their mystical conception of warfare and the highest power granted to their god of war, Huitsilopochtli.

to legitimize their political structure they focused upon the ancient Toltec, incorporating their religion and their symbols into their own governmental system.[114] She perceives the oral myths and rituals as playing an important role in assimilating their proclaimed ancestors' symbolism into their own. This is evidenced within the Aztec civilization by their similar veneration of caves, mountains, birds, trees, streams, and celestial bodies.[115]

Based on recent findings, Ruben Cabrera Castro, curator of the Teotihuacan Archeological Zone, traces the appearance and development of several religious ideas from the classic (Toltec)world to the post-classic (Aztec) of Central Mexico. He perceives many of these similarities in shared methods of astronomical observation.[116] Ten years of celestial warnings of the coming doom are recorded by the codices of the Aztec.[117] The signs were read and studied by those who were scholars of the ancient Toltec myths. The Aztec king and his advisors had interpreted the omens (most were celestial) within their own time frame. Similar, to the Biblical prophesies, the predictions of the ancient Toltec foretold the future of the Aztec. The last event being a whirlwind of dust which rose from the top of a mountain and touched the sky. This was interpreted as the ancient gods descending from heaven. Later, as reports of the Spanish were told to the king: "towers or small mountains are floating on the waves of the sea. . . .the mountains bore a strange people, who have very light skin, much lighter than ours. They all have

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[114] Doris Heyden, "From Teotihuacan to Tenochtitlan," *Mesoamerica's Classic Heritage*, pp.165-184,

[115] David Carrasco, Linsay Jones, Scott Sessions, "Introduction," *Mesoamerica's Classic Heritage,* 8.

[116] Carrasco, "Introduction" 9.

[117] *Codex Florentino*

long beards and their hair comes only to their ears;"[118] Motecuhzoma believed that the ancient god, *Quetzalcoatl*[119] had returned as the codices and Toltec myths had promised.

When Cortez landed on the coast of Veracruz in 1519, the empire of the Aztec ruled a population of many millions and stretched from the Pacific coast to the Gulf coast and from central Mexico to what is known today as Guatemala. However, the king, Motecuhzoma,[120] was afraid because he had been schooled in the Toltec gods and knew the histories of past kings and how they had offended the gods.[121] Old Toltec prayers, most of them dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, were revised to favor a once minor deity: Huitzilopochtli, god of war. This god of sun and war was now called the Giver of Life and Preserver of Life and Quetzalcoatl was demoted and viewed as a lesser deity. Motecuhzoma knew what his people and many of the nobles did not. He knew that an Aztec king had destroyed his own people's history and also shaped a new god to replace an ancient one.

> They preserved an account of their history, but later it was burned, during the reign of Itzcoatl. The lords of Mexico decreed it. The lords of Mexico declared, 'It is not fitting

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[118] Quoted in Leon-Portilla from Native documents 13.

[119] Ancient Toltec myth foretold the ancient god of creation disguised as the god of wind would return to claim his throne at the end of the world. (Similar to the Christian myths of Judgment day where Christ returns to reclaim his throne)

[120] The king was a devoted amateur wizard and a learned man in the ancient Toltec ways. (classical scholar and philosopher).

[121] Leon-Portilla, *xx.* In the fifteenth century the king and his advisor instigated certain reforms. Old Toltec prayers, most of them dedicated to Quetzalcoatl, were revised to favor the sun god of war.. The god of sun and war was now called the Giver of Life and Preserver of Life. Huitzilopochtli, the Sun, had to be fed the most precious food of all, human blood and this shift in supreme deities was responsible for the central importance of human sacrifice to the Aztec.

that our people should know these pictures.' Our people,

our subjects, will be lost and our lands destroyed,

for these pictures are full of lies. . . .[122]

This use of religion, ancient myths, and history to control the general population is reminiscent of tactics used by the Romans. The segregation of the Aztec ruling classes from the general population was also founded in education differences, family lines and property ownership. Using recent archaeological work at Teotihuacan, Saburo Sugiyama suggests that despite the scarcity of war related associations during the classic period, the feathered serpent (representing *Quetsalcoatl*) from its earliest conception was very tightly associated with militarism, rule by force and human sacrifice. In his view, the inheritance from the classical period is evident in the feather-serpent imagery in the post-classic centers and marks the legitimization of an ancient specific religio-political system.[123]

The Spanish arrival was interpreted as the beginning of the Aztec historic period, known as the sixth sun, long foretold as the end of all things. Unlike Columbus, Cortez carried with him several translators, and could somewhat communicate with the Indigenous populations. The Aztec king, ordered human sacrifices to be held in the presence of the Spanish[124] because he believed they were gods and human sacrifice was considered an honorable gift. Motecuhzoma also ordered his artists to create beautiful

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[122] *Codice Matritense*

[123] Saburo Sugiyama, "Teotihuacan as an Origin for Postclassic Feathered Serpent Symbolism," *Mesoamerica's Classic Heritage,* David Carrasco, Lindsay Jones and Scott Sessions, eds. (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2000) pp.117-144.

[124] Documented during Cortez's march to the Aztec capital by the Europeans and the Indigenous.

objects, designated as the god's finery,[125] which he had delivered to Cortez while he was still upon his boat. The king's final orders to the messengers describe a ruler who believed in ancient legends and divine interaction within his world. "Go now, without delay. Do reverence to our lord the god. Say to him that his deputy, Motecuhzoma, has sent you to him and here are the presents with which Motecuhzoma welcomes *Quetzalcoatl* home."[126] When Motecuhzoma finally meets Cortez outside of his city he speaks of an ancient legend.

> No it is not a dream. I am not walking in my sleep. I am not seeing you in my dreams. . . .I was in agony for five days, for ten days, with my eyes fixed on the Region of the Mystery, And now you have come out of the clouds and

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[125] *Codex Florentine*: This is the treasure of *Quetzalcoatl*. This treasure was the god's finery: a serpent mask inlaid with turquoise, a decoration for the breast made of *quetzal* a tropical bird of Central America) feathers, a collar woven in the *petatillo* style (like a rush mat, but with a finer weave) with a gold disk in the center and a shield decorated with gold and mother-of-pearl and bordered with quetzal feathers with a pendant of the same feathers. There was a mirror like those which the ritual dancers wore on their buttocks. The reverse of the mirror was a turquoise mosaic: it was encrusted and adorned with turquoises. And there was a spear-thrower inlaid with turquoise, a bracelet of *chalchihuites* (green stones: jade and jadeite) hung with gold bells and a pair of sandals as black as obsidian. Motecuhzoma also gave the finery of *Tezcatlipoca* (chief god of the pantheon, with solar attributes): a helmet in the shape of a cone, yellow with gold and set with many stars, a number of earrings adorned with little gold bells, a fringed and painted vest with feathers as delicate as foam and a blue cloak known as "the ringing bell," which reached to the ears and was fastened with a knot, a collar adorned with the finest snail shells and a mirror to be hung in back , a set of little gold bells and a pair of white sandals. Then Motecuhzoma gave them the finery of *Tlaloc* (god of rain): a headdress made of *quetzal* feathers, as green as if it were growing, with an ornament of gold and mother-of-pearl, earrrings in the form of serpents, made of *chalchihuites,* a vest adorned with *chalchihuites* and a collar also of *chalchihuites* woven in the *petatillo* style with a disk of gold. There was also a serpent wand inlaid with turquoise, a mirror to be hung in back with little bells and a cloak bordered with red rings. More finery for *Quetzalcoatl*, who often dressed in the disguise of *Ehecatl* (god of wind): a diadem made of jaguar skin and pheasant feathers adorned with a large green stone, round turquoise earrings with curved pendants of shell and gold, a collar of *chalchihuites* in the petatillo style with a disk of gold in the center, a cloak with red borders and little gold bells for the feet. There wwas also a golden shield pierced in the middle with quetzal teathers around the rim and a pendant of feathers, the crooked staff of *Ehecatl* with a cluster of white stones at the crook and sandals of fine soft rubber. The "divine adornments" were placed into great baskets along with gifts of welcome such as a golden snail shell and a golden diadem.

[126] Ibid.

> mists to sit on your throne again. This was foretold by the kings who governed your city and now it has taken place.[127]

He called the invaders "Gods who have come from the clouds and the Africans slaves, retained as servants by the Spaniards, were called soiled gods."[128] Because this period of history was predestined and long awaited,[129] the epidemics, which erupted, within the Aztec population after contact with the Europeans, were later accepted as part of the Aztec ruling class's *end of world* scenario. Kicza, in his *Resilient Cultures,* writes "the peoples of Mexico regarded the Spaniards under Cortez as outsiders in the same way as they considered all Native groups not of their province. . .and regarded the aims of the invaders to be virtually the same as those of the leading Aztec emperors."[130] The Spanish did what they always did, capture the chief or ruler and lead through him for as long as possible. The segregation of the classes within the Aztec society did not allow this control to last for long. The general population did not necessarily retain the same beliefs as the aristocrats within their society. Moteculzoma was rejected and stoned to death by his own people.

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[127] *Codex Florentine*

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ten years of omens foretelling the "end" (similar to the Christian Judgment Day) are documented in the *Codex Florentine* before the Europeans arrive. From the point of view of the Tlazcala (allies of Cortez), the omens are also documented through the writings of Diego Munoz Camargo, a Spaniard married into the nobility of the Tlaxcala. However, the apocalyptic writings agree in their descriptions of the "signs" leading up the Aztec destruction. These signs merely confirm the "end of the world" described in Toltec myths.

[130] Kicza, 51.

Within many Indigenous populations the world was explained through performance. Actions which disrupted their world immediately were incorporated into enacted stories and ceremonies. The importance of storytelling and performance are captured in the words of the Native American.

> 'I will tell you something about stories, they aren't just entertainment. Don't be fooled. They are all we have, you see, all we have to fight off illness and death. You don't have anything if you don't have the stories.' He rubbed his belly. 'I keep them here. Here, put your hand on it. See, it is moving. There is life here for the people. And in the belly of this story the rituals and the ceremony are still growing. The only cure I know is a good ceremony.'[131]

Not until the Spanish disrupted ceremonial performances did the population attack. The king called for his people to put down their weapons and let the *gods* do what they wished,[132] but the population's refusal to listen to their king suggests they believed the Spanish to be just men and not gods. Their reaction to the disruption of a sacred performance, the massacre of unarmed warriors and the defilement of their god, *Huitzilopochtli* was not one of fear, but rage.

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[131] Leslie Silko, *Ceremonies* (New York: Viking, 1977) pp.2-3.

[132] After the massacre, which began at the height of the festival honoring Huitzilopovhtli (the sun god and god of war, deemed the highest god by the Aztec, similar to Zeus). The population took up arms driving the Spanish into the king's palace. Motechuzoma's chief advisor came out of the palace and spoke to the people telling them to "put down their shields and arrows." They refused turning on their king. "Who is Motechuzoma to give us orders? We are no longer his slaves!" *Codex Ramirez* and *Codex Aubin* quoted in Leon-Portilla pp. 70-80.

The disruption of an annual sacred festival was not taken lightly by the Aztec. Preparation for the fiesta of *Toxcatl* and its performance began as women, who had fasted[133] since the last festival, began to grind seeds of the *chicalote.*[134] The seeds were ground at the base of the temple of *Huitzilopochtli.* On the eve of the performance participants modeled a statue of the god with the paste of the ground seeds shaped over a structure of sticks. The statue, realistically human, was dressed in the finery of the god[135] (each piece sacred and symbolic) and then the face was covered. At dawn the statue was uncovered by the young and old warriors who were performing. Gifts of food were placed at the base of the statue. Performance began with the procession of warriors led by the greatest and bravest captains, followed at a distance by youths who had not captured an enemy by themselves.[136] No weapons were carried by any of the

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[133] It is unclear if the Nahuatl term translated as "fast or fasted" means abstaining from certain foods, sex or some form of religious purification. However, the "fast" was for a year and the action seems to proceed all religious actions of any importance.

[134] An edible sacred plant also used in medicines.

[135] *Codex Ramierz.* The statue was dressed in rich feathers, crossbars were painted over and under the eyes and earrings of turquoise mosaic in the shape of serpents with gold rings hanging from them were clipped on the effigy. A nose ring of gold and inlaid fine stones shaped like an arrow was inserted. A magic headdress of hummingbird feathers is placed upon the head. An *anecyotl* (a belt made of feathers) with a cone at the back is placed around the waist. They hung around the neck an ornament of yellow parrot feathers, fringed like the locks of a young boy. Over this they put a nettle-leaf cape, which was painted black and decorated with five clusters of eagle feathers. The statue was then wrapped in a cloak painted with skulls and bones and over this they fastened a vest painted with human parts: skulls, ears, hearts, intestines, torsos, breasts, hands and feet. They also put on a *maxtlatl* (loincloth: wrapped around the waist, passed between the legs and then tied in front, with two ends hanging down in front often decorated with fringe or borders) with images of severed limbs and fringed with *amate* paper (made from the inner bark of the ficus). The *maxtlatl* was painted with vertical stripes of bright blue. A red paper sash was placed on the statues shoulder with a red sacrificial knife. The statue carried a *tehuehuelli* (a bamboo shield) decorated with four clusters of eagle feathers. The penchant of the shield was blood-red. The statue also carried four arrows. Wristbands made of coyote skin and fringed with paper were placed upon the figure as the final step

[136] Ibid. If the hair is gathered into large locks it is a sign that no captives have ever been taken by the warrior and if a headdress is carried to the side, they have taken captives, but only with aid.

participants. The procession ended with the young warriors who had each captured at least one enemy on their own.

The dance that was performed was called the serpent's dance and moved in a similar way as the reptile. The dancers were accompanied by drums and musicians. The performers at the head of the line began the songs (possibly songs of battle escapades) which gradually were replaced by other songs moving through the lines until all the songs were connected and linked. The performance at the base of the temple lasted for ten days and was controlled by the *Brothers of Huirzilopochtli*, known as those who had fasted over a year and those who had fasted for twenty days. They carried wands of pine and struck youths who failed to follow the dance correctly. No one performing was allowed to stop once the songs began.[137] The beauty of the dance and song reached its peak as all were linked. How the ceremony concludes has been lost, however, the energy and form of the dance and song were judged by the audience, priests and scholars who foretold victory or loss in future battles through their interpretation of the skill of the performers.

This annual and sacred performance to their most powerful icon, *Huitzilopochtli,*[138] was what Cortez and his men disrupted. The Aztec considered warfare governed by strict ritual practices and required a traditional etiquette, which the Europeans defiled. Because most of the warriors of the city were participants in the annual dance drama, all were unarmed and many massacred by the Spanish. Cortez and

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[137]Ibid. If anyone wished to urinate, he did not stop dancing, but simply opened his clothing at the hips and separated his cluster of heron feathers.

[138] The name means the left claw of a bird of shining plumage Native to their land. According to their own origin myths this is the god that ordered the Aztec to leave their homeland, promising that he would make them princes and lords of all the provinces which the other six tribes had colonized, a land abounding in gold, silver, precious stones, feathers and rich mantles and all imaginable wealth.

his men entered the walled sanctuary performance space at the base of the God's temple, trapped and killed many of the dancers before those watching could drive the Spanish into hiding. Cortez and his men also destroyed the effigy of the god. In the eyes of the ordinary Aztec population the Spaniards were no longer perceived as gods (if they ever were),[139] for their actions had not been foretold and they had not respected the performance rituals of war.

The Aztec nobility[140] and the wise men, who studied the ancient religious teachings of the Toltecs, only worshipped one god in Tenochtitlan: the Lord of Duality , the Giver of Life, *Quetzalcoatl*.[141] However, the general Aztec population worshipped this god with many different names as well as lower deities who served the god of many names.[142] The Spanish misinterpreted the many names of the one god as separate deities. There was a distinct contrast in Aztec general population beliefs with those of their ruling class. This was caused primarily through separate systems of education based upon class structure. These separate belief systems based upon class and education possibly explain why the general population viewed the Spaniards as simply strange men and the nobles perceived them as gods. The general population quickly drove Cortez and

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[139] "Overall, the peoples of Mexico regarded the Spaniards under Cortez as outsiders in the same way as they considered all Native groups not of their province. They did not stress the exoticness or 'otherness' of these new persons." Kicza, 51.

[140] The *pipiltin* (noble class) were all descendants of the first Toltec king, who fathered many children with many Aztec women. They received a more advanced education at the *calmecac*, (schools for the elite)were allowed to own land in their own names, filled the most important governmental posts and the king could only be chosen from their ranks.

[141] Leon-Portilla, *xxiv-xxv.*

[142] The *macehualtin* (ordinary citizens) were groups of related families (clans) living in specific localities and using communal land assigned to them. The males were required to attend schools, *telpochcalli* (schools for the majority) and educated in agriculture and warfare.

his men out of their city and back to their ship. Cortez was trapped for a while in the Aztecs' island capital and his force was almost annihilated in the mid 1520s.[143] Leon-Portilla perceives the Aztec conception of warfare as motivating their expansion, but also as contributing to their destruction by the Spanish.[144] In short, the performed rituals and etiquette of Aztec warfare were well-established within this society and strictly defined by their scholars, nobility and priests. A battle could not be fought without the many rituals performed between each warring tribe. The traditions of battle were highly ritualized and without them the Aztec god would not favor the warriors and grant them victory. The Aztec population also preferred weapons that were not lethal in nature.[145] The Spanish, far from being perceived as gods, were considered unmannered and ignorant by the general population because they did not understand the rituals and etiquette of battle. To the Aztec, the Spanish were the barbarians and quite possibly would have never gained a stronghold in Central Mexico if the Aztec had not been almost entirely wiped out by disease. Within three days of the Spanish arrival into the kingdom of Motechuzoma, the Indigenous population that had come into contact with them began dying.

Similar to the sacred performances of the Greeks, the Aztec's entire population were involved in their performances as audience and participant.[146] Like the Romans,

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[143] Kicza 52.

[144] Leon-Portilla, *xxv.* The ceremonial aspects of Aztec war prevented them from taking advantage of wiping out the Spanish on several occasions. The delivery of traditional war symbols to populations before an attack also attributed to their surprise at the attacks from the Spanish who delivered no such summons to war.

[145] Kicza 47.

[146] See chapter IV.

their sacred festivals were held periodically throughout the year to unify and placate the population and also to please the gods. Today we have detailed descriptions of many Aztec ritual performances due to the codices of surviving tribe members.[147] It should be noted that war was deemed both sacred and highly ritualistic within this Indigenous culture and the performance that was contaminated by the Spanish was presented at a festival in honor of the war god, *Huitzilpochtli.* The performers involved in this particular festival were the warriors, who danced and sang and whose place in the procession was based upon their skills in the art of war. Similar to the Greeks, the performance was presented to an effigy of the god. To further grasp the *theatre* of the Aztec, separate from the European concept of the barbarian, a description of the actual performance is necessary. What remains after the Christian destructions of Aztec written text are often only pictorial remains and fragments of descriptions. The immensity of the performances with the entire population of the city involved can only be imagined. The spectacle of an entire adult male population of a city the size of Dallas dancing in identical fashion, singing and weaving to create a serpent of moving men is almost incomprehensible. However, many of the aspects of this particular performance were described in later Indigenous codices because of the massacre. The codices were written in the *epic* style of narrative common to the Aztec[148] and represented the philosophy of the nobility. They are similar to those we find in ancient Greece attributed to Homer.

> Nothing but flowers and songs of sorrow are left in Mexico
> and Tlatelolco, where once we saw warriors and wise men.

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[147] However, many of these writings, similar to the European, are from a ruling and educated class or from enemies of the Aztec.
[148] Similar to the style of the *Odyssey* or *Iliad.*

> We know it is true that we must perish. For we are mortal
> men. You, the Giver of Life, you have ordained it.[149]

Similar to the Greeks, the identity of a tribe and the transitions found within their world and lives are designated by performance rituals incorporating their histories, myths and beliefs through song, dance and stories. For example within the Zunis, boys are initiated into a kiva society[150] when they reach the age of five or six to *save them* or *make them valuable.* Girls do not go through an initiation ceremony because they are already believed to be *valuable* to the tribe. The boys are initiated into a *kiva* by their *ceremonial fathers*,[151] who carry them into the sacred space. The boys are then whipped by men dressed in the costumes and masks of *kachinas* (spirits beings associated with ancestors and rain).

Between the ages of ten and twelve the boys are again brought into the ceremonial space and the initial rite is repeated. However, after the whipping, the *kachinas* remove their masks and reveal that they are merely human beings representing gods. The participants reverse roles and the boys whip the men. The boys are told never to reveal the secret of the transformation from gods to men and then receive their own

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[149] Quoted by Leon-Portilla, 149, from the *Cantares mexicanos* composed in 1523 by post-Conquest Aztec poets.

[150] Many rites are oganized by members of the six *kiva* societies, each associated with one of the six ceremonial *kivas* linked with one of the six sacred directions believed to have their origin in the beginnings of time when the Zunis founded their village in the "middle place." Each *kiva* is governed by a ceremonial society that plans its rituals and initiates new members.

[151] A man selected at the child's birth from among men in his father's sister's household.

mask that may be worn during public *kachina* dances held four times a year. Dancers perform in mask at winter solstice, later in the winter, in summer and at harvest time. The performers enter the village at dawn on ceremonial days and dance in open plazas for several hours. Dances are repeated at tribal request if they are particularly beautiful.[152] These masked dancers are only one category of three groups of masked performers within the Zunis performance culture.

The *Shalakos*, gods of rain, fertility, and good fortune, are enacted by performers in costumes with masks impersonating the gods as large as ten feet tall. Their performance is in the late fall. The third group of performers are the *mudheads*: masked *clowns*. They are dressed in multi-colored costumes and mud-colored masks with distorted and foolish expressions. They participate in almost every public dance throughout the year. They satirize the gods, other dancers, priests and spectators. They also break the standards of the tribe's social behavior by shouting obscenities and making lewd gestures to their audience. The description of their antics are similar to anecdotal evidence of ribaldry at the Dionysian festival. These *clown* performers are used in Zuni performance to dramatize the danger of breaking social laws and the lesson that human society can only exist if people follow rules of decency and normalcy. Humor and tragedy are companions in the tribal performances as one enhances and defines the other.

With the disruption of performances and rituals caused by rampant disease, restrictions by Christian missionaries, and displacement of communities due to invasion, there were *communication breakdowns* between the people, their histories of locations, their gods and their knowledge. Performance societies and their traditions were literally

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[152] Bonvillain, 349.

dismembered and the history and identity of a tribal culture were often disrupted, or disappeared altogether. The rituals which were the preparation for war, promising victory and protection for the warriors, were also abandoned as chaos engulfed communities. The spread of disease further fragmented the communities as chiefs, warriors, diplomats, wise men, mid-wives, story-tellers and shamans died before passing on their knowledge.[153] With the advance of Christian missionaries Indigenous transformation rituals, performance of myth, and cultural symbols were often forcefully eradicated as idolatry. The Franciscans, who accompanied most early colonists and Spanish expeditions into the Southwest, systematically campaigned to eradicate the Native religions and this practice, coupled with disease, began the forced destruction of the tribal identity. Missionaries attempted to abolish Indigenous performance forcing the populations to enact Native rituals in underground *Kivas* or far from the invader's view.[154] If a priest learned of a performance, Spanish soldiers were ordered to punish participants by whipping religious leaders and executing those held responsible.[155] Indigenous religious leaders of sedentary tribes were often hung as witches. Because they were central to Pueblo beliefs and perceived as idolatry, *kivas,*[156] sacred performance masks, and *Kachinas*[157] were destroyed by well-meaning missionaries.

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[153] La Vere, 53.

[154] It can also be argued that the sacred caves already existed long before the European missionaries and these underground spaces had always been reserved for secret ritual rituals.

[155] Nancy Bouvillain, Native *Nations* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2001) 319.

[156] Underground chambers where Pueblo males gathered for religious rituals.

[157] Representations of divine figures.

A century after the first Spanish colonists arrived, the 60,000 Pueblos were reduced to a population of 15, 000. Despite their reduced population, attempted assimilation by the Christians, and restrictions imposed by government policies, the New Mexico tribes such as the Pueblo, still retained their Native beliefs and ancient performances.

> We have lived upon this land from the days beyond history's records, far past living memory, deep into the time of legend. The story of my people and story of this place are one single story. No man can think of us without thinking of this place. We are always joined together.[158]

The *Indian*s of California, largely peaceful, did not view the missionaries bearing gifts as the enemy or as gods, but as Shamans, tellers-of-stories or simply unskilled hunters. The Franciscans established some twenty missions in California (containing non-warring tribes estimated at about 300,000) from San Diego to San Francisco by the late eighteenth century. The destruction of Native cultural beliefs and rituals were essential to their mission to convert the Indigenous tribes to Christianity. They also attempted to convert the Indigenous tribes into agriculturists within a landscape which was hostile to farming. The missionaries almost single-handedly and with the best intentions destroyed the majority of California's Indigenous population by gathering (through gifts and food) semi-sedentary and nomadic tribes around their missions in

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[158] Taos Pueblo, quoted by Jeanette Henry in *Indian Voices. The First Convocation of American Indian Scholars* (San Francisco: The *Indian* Historian Press, 1970) 35.

squalid settlements which were ravaged by epidemics.[159] Those who were not killed by disease were left without a cultural identity or assimilated by the European culture as an *inferior* and expendable labor force.

The sacred/secular performance of the Indigenous tribes are excluded entirely within theatre histories of the Americas despite its obvious proliferation and function within all Indigenous societies before, during and after the colonization of the Americas. The absence of Native performance within any theatre history of Europe, North America, South America, or Mexico provides an incomplete and exclusive narrative of theatrical performance. Theatre historians have focused on the theatre of the European elite and its colonizers. Historically, the rich tradition of Indigenous performance or the European general population is largely ignored or misrepresented. Based in Roman class structures, early Christian ideology and a Renaissance adulation of reconstructed Greek texts, such histories of past performance are justified by the classifications of ritual and theatre aligned within the *primitive/civilized*[160] dichotomy. The effect of a label, such as *tribal ritual*, upon our perception of Indigenous performance can not be minimized and continues to shape contemporary theatrical histories.

Reviewing a history of influences upon theatrical scholarship illuminates a discipline often founded in the ideology of its sources. Indigenous performance such as those still surviving today within the Apache, Sioux, and Navaho cultures are still placed *outside* of theatre histories, while the performance of the ancient Greeks is grounded at a *dead* and unmoving theatrical center. The similarities of performance between the ancient

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[159] Kicza, 104.

Greeks and many Native American nations is uncanny. Each are pagan, speaking to a multitude of gods (spiritual powers), each contain a combination of sacred and secular, and each use similar techniques of dance and song to voice their myths. Performance and its function within the tribal community are also closely aligned within the ancient world of Athens and the contemporary tribes. However, despite their use of sacred locations and many similarities, the Greeks are designated as the founders of Western theatre and the Native American as *foreign* pagans engaging in *localized* rituals. A closer examination of fifth century B.C.E. Greek and contemporary Apache performance serves to illuminate how ideology may have transformed one Indigenous ritual into *theatre* and another into *tribal ritual.*

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[160] Even though these terms have been eradicated from current scholarship and claimed to no longer be part of the West's belief systems, the *idea* of each term continues to haunt historical assumptions.

There is a certain tension between the material and the spiritual,
yet never without the impossibility of an embrace between them. . .
art-making is a spirit practice. . .to push the distinction between
art and spirituality emphasizes a weakness in our view of both.
Allison Knowles, 2001.

CHAPTER 5
THEATRE AS SACRED RITUAL IN FIFTH CENTURY ATHENS

Before an examination of performance within any era or society can begin there must be some comprehension of the society where it emerges. This would seem a logical means to understand a performance in the context of its particular culture. Often, this has not been the case and performance histories such as those concerning the City Dionysia festival of Athens frequently are filtered through the ideology of the Western historian's perspective founded in early Christian and Roman cultural influences. Within ideology's process of inversion fifth century Greek theatre's identity *must* be what *primitive ritual* is not, if it is to be defined as a creation of the *civilized* intellect from which Western culture began. However, the inversion process of ideology becomes moot if form and category are viewed as equal and definition is no longer based upon the necessity of opposing binaries.

In his 2002 article "Towards a Reconstruction of Performance Style," Richard Green explains the necessity and problems surrounding any reconstruction of ancient Greek temporal art form.

> Recent scholarship has quite properly put an increasing emphasis on interpreting and evaluating drama in terms of its impact in performance . . .the semiotics of costumes, the

> perception of mask types, the use of gesture and . . .body language . . . involves attempting to understand the conventions of physical appearance, dress and behavior as they evolved through time, doubtless with regional variations, while deconstructing the artistic conventions through which the material evidence was presented.[1]

The libraries are full of scholarly perceptions of Greek theatre, some taking into account the culture which produced the performances and others which do not. All focus upon the dramatic competitions within the ancient City Dionysia festival of Athens as the source of Western theatre. One of the most current and extensive studies of the festival is found within Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood's 2003, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion.* She notes in her reconstruction of the Dionysia festival that the omission of some evidence due to its lack of validation or problematic nature leads to a faulty reconstruction or distortion through omission.

Throughout the scholarship of the twentieth century, Western biases are evident as theatre scholars attempt to separate ancient Athenian performance from its sacred origins. For example, in 1927, Pickard-Cambridge argues that there is no real foundation for positing a direct evolution from Dionysian worship to Greek Drama in his *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy*;[2] Malcolm Heath's *Poetics in Greek Tragedy* (1987) states "the fact that tragedies were performed in the course of a religious festival is not related to

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[1] Richard Green, "Towards a Reconstruction of Performance Style" *Greek and Roman Actors*, Pat Easterling and Edith Hall, eds. (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2002) 93.

[2] Napier, (1986) 33.

what religious content they may have;"[3] and Mikalson's *Honor thy Gods* (1991), explains that the gods within Greek tragedy were literary constructions and not viewed by Athenians as the divinities they worshipped.[4] Divorcing Athenian ancient performance from its sacred context serves the Western belief in a secular theatre, separates the revered classics from a Christian condemned Pagan rite, and locates Athenian performance as distinct from tribal ritual performance. Such statements also seem to rest upon the dual fallacy that secular theatre can only exist in a society deemed *civilized* and that performance within Indigenous tribal communities is always religious and without dramatic structure. Although recognized today, the impact of centuries of this type of *cause and effect* history, often created by the colonizer, has reshaped ancient Greek spiritual performance into the secular Western image of drama.

Patterned regularity, as a means to decipher cultures, has been a mainstay of Western archaeological, historical and anthropological research for many years[5] and serves the evolutionary and patriarchal ideological Western history of theatre. Sian Lewis, in *The Athenian Woman* (2002), brilliantly examines the impact of patterned regularity through the interpretation of the Greek female from her image on found remains. For example, women are depicted as musicians on several pieces of pottery from the sixth and fifth century B.C.E.[6] and yet, because one image shows a female

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[3] Malcolm Heath, *The Poetics of Greek Tragedy* (London: Duckworth, 1987) 48.

[4] Jon Mikalson, *Honor thy Gods: Popular Religion in Greek Tragedy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991) 18.

[5] Charles Orser, *Race and Practice in Archaeological Interpretation*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). 15.

[6] To note a few: Attic red-figure columnkrater: Taranto, Museo Nazionale (470 B.C.E., Female auloi player with a male figure with a purse); Attic red-figure cup: Wurzburg, M.von Wagner Museum (479-490

aulos[7] player being paid for her services, *all* ancient Greek female musicians are interpreted by scholars as prostitutes. When the *purse* appears, in any scene depicting men and women, the images are translated as payment for sexual services even though many of these scenes are of sacrifices, weddings, processions, symposia and dance.[8] This misinterpretation is supported through the writing of later satirical plays such as the *assumed* Menander play, *Perileiromene* and Aristophanes' *Wasps.* In a passage, Menander equates the *aulerides* with prostitutes[9] and Aristophanes has a speaker claim to have rescued an aulos player before a sexual act was required of her.[10] Patterns identified by an ideology founded upon male superiority, gender restrictions, and Christian doctrine, supports this patriarchal view of the ancient world. Athenian ancient images were not an attempt to create reality in myth or life, but a complex construction of symbolic meanings. Sourvinou-Inwood believes that much of the confusion surrounding Greek theatre and its sacred status may be based in the *commonsense* readings of pictorial evidence replacing ancient perceptions with contemporary cultural assumptions.[11]

Within the method of patterned regularity the found images of the mask upon Greek artifacts are perceived as a cultural symbol of theatre. However, if removed from

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B.C.E., female musicians and male dancers); Attic red-figure stammos: Brussels, Musees Royaux (510 B.C.E., female dancer and musician)

[7] A double flute instrument.

[8] Sian Lewis, *The Athenian Woman* (London: Routledge, 2002) 96.

[9] Ironically, the prostitute in fifth century Athens were often the only one within the household who could read and write. The prostitute of ancient times often served as musician, scribe and a sexual partner.

[10] Menander, *Peri,* 337; Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 1345-6.

[11] Catherine Sourvinou-Inwood, '*Reading' Greek Culture Texts and Images, Rituals and Myths* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1991) 8-16.

the restrictions of Western ideology and the method of patterned regularity, the images can also be interpreted as indicative of sacred ritual or a symbol of transformation. If interpretation is released from these imbedded cultural influences, such an idea as *women did not perform in ancient Greek theatre* can be questioned by the same pictorial evidence used to suggest they were prostitutes. Thus, when women appear as musicians with men carrying masks, the images could be interpreted as women performing in a theatrical and sacred context.[12] The belief that Greek actors wore masks and women did not perform contaminates all found pictorial evidence of the fifth century theatre. The limiting of interpretations because of accepted beliefs and traditional assumptions within scholarship excludes information such as: masks were also used in religious rites, celebrations and the riotous *Komos* in ancient Athens; or that many women were noted for their dance, healing powers, acrobatic skills, and music.

Due to scarce and fragmentary written evidence from the Greek world of sixth and fifth century B.C.E. much of the documentation of performances is based on the writings of the fourth century. To put this in perspective, it would be like documenting the nineteenth century by the writings and paintings of the twentieth century. The studies often proceed with disclaimers such as: "few facts about Greek theatre history can clearly be established;"[13] or "the bulk of the written references to theatre date from a much later period"[14] or simply, we cannot possibly be sure. Nevertheless, the histories continue to be based upon the assumption of a secular theatre performance reconstructed in a

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[12] See the Pronomos vase, late fifth century, depicts a female aulos player with a host of male performers carrying masks.

[13]Brockett 15.

Western theatre image. Discarding the fifth century Greek attitude toward writing: "like paintings, written texts cannot answer questions;"[15] or interpreting pictorial evidence of the period to *fit* the constructed identity of the fifth century Greeks, scholars unconsciously continue to distort any clear view of ancient Greek, or contemporary tribal, performance rituals.

Before proceeding in the reconstruction of an Athenian ancient performance ritual it is first necessary to remove the written from its primacy as dramatic evidence. Writing was adapted from the Phoenician script to Greek use shortly before the eighth century B.C.E. However, the Athenian world of fifth century B.C.E., considered the *Golden Age,* was still primarily an oral culture. Any history of the sixth or fifth century Greek performance is riddled with assumptions, educated guesses based upon methods of patterned regularity, and largely supported through the writings of the fourth century. Consequently, the narratives should be viewed as possibilities and not facts. However, when the assumptions and histories are produced unconsciously to serve the existing ideology both meaning and data become misinterpreted and distorted. This is clearly evident when it is recognized that there are no complete remaining written dramatic texts of the period,[16] only fragments, and yet, many scholars assume the plays were written at the time of their oral creation. Even our earliest written source of *Agamemnon* contains

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[14] Vince (1984) 53.

[15] William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) 91. Socrates view of the written.

[16] Sappho, a female poet presumed to be writing in the last quarter of the seventh century, should be regarded as exceptional, though not unique, her family having been a privileged one.

only 190 phrases that could have possibly been created during the lifetime of Aeschylus.[17]

> There is general agreement that the tragic scholia are derived primarily from Hellenistic commentaries (albeit from an accretion of Byzantine learning), with much in particular from the great Alexandrian philologists of the early second century B.C.E. like Aristophanes and Aristarchus, there is little that is certain about the process by which they came to be excerpted by late antique or early Byzantine copyists.[18]

There is no evidence to confirm that the Greek farmer had any knowledge of writing or reading or that any of the early Athenian performances were produced based upon the written text. However, despite the population's illiteracy, the reverence given to the oral creation within the culture, and the lack of written evidence within the period, scholars continue to point to later written dramatic texts as *proof* that the Greek theatre had literary roots. A similar distortion appears if the theatre of ancient Greece is reconstructed outside of its religious context.

Many scholars, who have sought the origins of drama, have believed it was crucial to distinguish intellectually between dramatic convention and ritual practice.[19]

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[17] Dr. Dawes, expert upon the classical texts of Aeschylus, linguistic classic scholar, information obtained through correspondence.

[18] Thomas Falkner, "Scholars versus actors: texts and performance in the Greek tragic scholia", *Greek and Roman Actors*, eds. Pat Easterling and Edith Hall, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 342.

[19] Ibid 32.

Such reasoning creates a fabrication of polar opposites forcing a hierarchy with ancient Greek theatre at its top and Indigenous performance at its bottom. Contemporary scholars do not necessarily agree on the performance of the Athenians as ritual, but all agree that the performances were theatre. Simon Goldhill, views ritual and plays as distinctly separate and perceives their interaction through juxtaposition as a means for the Greeks to challenge their social norms. For him, comedy and tragedy perform the same function within Athenian society: "Tragedy and comedy do not simply reverse the norms of society but inculcate a questioning of the very basis of those norms."[20] Goldhill reflects the twentieth century definition of ritual as a performance form which legitimizes the structural positions of society and claims anything which questions these structures is not ritualistic and therefore secular. This very Western and culturally determined view of ancient performance is an example of *false consciousness* prevalent within theatre history. Goldhill rests his arguments on the traditional evolutionary view that the theatre discarded sacred ritual as it **matured** into the Western form. This implies that theatre is more advanced than what Goldhill views as *primitive* ritual. He perceives fifth century Greek comedy and tragedy as both the residue of, and commentary upon, social rituals.

In contrast, David Wiles does not think you can categorize ritual and theatre on the grounds of such clearly contemporary definitions. "To distinguish *ritual* from *theatre* on the grounds that one is always repeated and the other is always different would be naïve."[21] Sourvinou-Inwood views *unknowability* as fundamental to the ancient Greek

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[20] Simon Goldhill, "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology," *Nothing to do with Dionysus?,* eds. J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) pp.126-9; *Cf* Sourvinou-Inwood, 63.

[21] David Wiles, *Greek Theatre Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 29.

religion and as *questions* instead of challenges. She views the Greek performances as quests for a deeper understanding of the past, present and future. She suggests that the fifth century B.C.E. mature tragedies of Euripides were an expansion of the *ritual matrix,* not its abandonment. Goldhill and Sourvinou-Inwood's scholarly arguments illuminate the difference between accepted inversion patterns found in Western ideology (the either/or definitions of performance forms) and the exploration of performance forms in their cultural contexts. When relocated and reconstructed to fit foreign belief systems and support existing ideology ancient Greek performance is often distorted and shaped into the Western image complimenting the primacy of Western theatre. However, to remove Greek theatre from its religious origin is to negate its place in an ancient sacred performance culture.

If ancient Athenian performance is viewed as the *ideal* from which our modern Western theatre evolved, following the inversion pattern of ideology, this theatre must be everything that the indigenous performance is not: written, secular and dramatically structured. I would argue that fifth century performance at the City Dionysia resembles many indigenous ritual enactments that exist today in both form, method and function. What happens to traditional definitions of theatre and ritual if we describe the Athenian drama as similar to Native American performance: sacred, oral and ritually structured? A closer examination of tragedy as a divine conversation between poet, gods and audience, not as a Western theatre form, but as a sacred performance ritual aligned closely to the foundation myths of Athens, also enhances the performance's similarities to other Indigenous contemporary performance rituals.

Richard Schechner, in his 1988, *Performance Theory,* views Western theatre as predominately entertaining whereas rituals change people. He states that "the basic polarity is between efficacy and entertainment, not between ritual and theater."[22] The fifth century Greek audience in my opinion viewed their theatre as a means to transform their world and connect with their gods, but also as an effective ritual of entertainment suitable for a god. The tragedies were both a gift and a channel to the gods. Within the rite of Athenian *xenismos*[23] (reception of a god) sacrifice was performed, the meat offered to a god and entertainment given. The sacred meal and entertainment were shared by the worshippers.[24] The population believed that the god was present in their city when honored by the *xenismos* ritual.[25]

Herbert Blau and James Peacock perceive the *transformative moment*, "when the rupture appears . . . in the theatre or elsewhere . . . when practice becomes like ideology itself, something other than what it appeared to be,"[26] as the instance when theatre and ritual combine to become one. Chapter Five argues that fifth century B.C.E. Greek performance at the City Dionysia was such a transformative moment, when profane and sacred met through form creating a sacred ritual performance that has been defined as theatre. Brockett states that City Dionysia "was both a civic and religious festival,"[27] and

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[22] Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1988) 120.

[23] The rite involves sacrifice and offering the god sacrificial meat in Greek religion.

[24] Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 75.

[25] Scholiast. Pindar *Olympian* 3, 14-16 Dr.

[26] Herbert Blau, *To All Appearances , Ideology and Performance* (New York: Routlege, 1992) 37.

[27] Brockett, 22..

yet, within this culture, there seems to be no separation between the gods and the State. The division between the sacred and secular is quite possibly imposed upon the ancient Greeks to *fit* the *origin of theatre* evolutionary theory.

> The Greek *polis* articulated religion and was itself articulated by it; religion became the *polis'* central ideology, structuring, and giving meaning to, all the elements that made up the identity of the *polis,* its physical landscape, the relationship between its constituent parts.[28]

Through an examination of ancient Greek performance as a characteristic of the ritual form contained in the City Dionysia, the dead artifact that we have labeled *Greek classical theatre,* transforms into a functioning and living exchange. The use of myth, ritual dance, song, sacred space, and costume suggest that Greek ancient performance resembled many Indigenous ritual enactments that exist today in form, elements and function. By examining the fifth century Athenian culture as fused with both ritualistic and theatrical practices, the cultural influences dominating and effecting theatre historians' perceptions of ritual and theatre become distinctly apparent.

The City Dionysia, long held as the source of Western theatre, "was a ritually simple festival celebrating the establishment of the cult of Dionysus and centered on the reception, entertainment, and honoring of the god."[29] I suggest that the enactment of myths performed before a god cannot be separated from the ancient sacred ritual of *xenismos* or excluded from its foundation in tribal structure. "All elements acquire

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[28] Wiles 187.

[29] Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, *Tragedy and Athenian Religion* (New York: Lexington Books, 2003) 105.

meaning in context."[30] Chapter five examines the procession, sacrifice, ritual dining and performance creating the form of the Athenian ritual, *xenismos,* found in the fifth century B.C.E. City Dionysia. The ritual characteristics used by the West to define Indigenous performance such as sacred space, communal participation, communication with the supernatural, *inversion*, mask and costume are also explored within the performances of the ancient Greek festival. The chapter concludes with the identification of the ritual functions of the City Dionysia for the Greek tribal culture. The purpose of chapter five is to view ancient Greek performance without its imposed Western identity as a historical theatrical icon. Through such an examination it is my hope to expand our view of tribal performance and illuminate the inversion process which has maintained the *false consciousness* of theatre history and restricted our perception of ancient and contemporary tribal performance.

City Dionysia Ritual Form

Athens was one of many tribal city-states forming ancient Greece who prided themselves on their independence from each other. Athenian citizenship was structured by its membership in the *polis*, tribe, *deme*, *phratry*, *genos*, and family. The *polis* was considered a creation of gods and men. "Religion was a significant part of the identity and function of all Athenian social and political groups."[31] In fifth century Athens any action taken in a public forum, whether a meeting, a war, or an oration, was preceded with an invocation to the deities. The gods of this population were always watching, participating, and controlling the fate of men. Any decision in the private life of the

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[30] Sourvinou-Inwood, 67.

[31] Mikalson, 83.

Greek was first preceded with an attempt to communicate with the gods and discover what their reaction would be. The world of fifth century B.C.E. Athens was a sacred place and filled with the whisperings of oracles, rituals and conversations with gods. To make the statement that performance was sacred within a society where all public and private functions were preceded by sacrifices and prayers is a logical assumption.

Athens and its performances were specific to its tribal structure and were not a *Greek-wide* practice during the fifth century B.C.E. Most scholars when speaking of Greek classical theatre are referring to the performances with the City Dionysia in Athens. Myths and cults, as well as political, social and economic structures, varied considerably between the city-states. The Greeks of the fifth century B.C.E. did not have a national religion, sacred written text or a centrally organized priesthood.[32] The religious practices of those who lived in Athens were also decidedly different from the folk religion of the countryside.

Before a scholar can understand the context of performance within a tribal structure, it is first necessary to briefly examine how this culture viewed its own existence and history. The Athenians had their own *golden age,* the age of Kronos and within that ancient world traditionally everyone: gods, animals, men, even nature itself, spoke together.[33] Homer recognized that there were a wide variety of languages, but in his *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* there is no mention that Trojans and the Greeks or Menelaus and the Egyptians resort to interpreters. The gods also speak directly to men. The means of

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[32] Jon D. Mikalson, *Athenian Popular Religion* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina, 1983) 4.

[33] Deborah Levine Gera, *Ancient Greek Ideas on Speech, Language, and Civilization,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 13.

categorizing unknown peoples were in terms that related to their own way of life and were similar to the Europeans and their descriptions of the Indigenous of the Americas. Odysseus suspects he will encounter in the land of the Cyclopes, a great man, wild and without real knowledge of laws and ordinances[34] reflects the Greek *idea* of the barbarian. This utopian age, similar to the Christian Eden, where all living things and deities could communicate, was recognized as a past time before man, the gods, and beasts were separated by language.

In this mythic ancient world, there was no want and all lived in harmony, beast and man alike. There was no need of Plato's *reflection*, only mindless contentment. Aristotle viewed his own *golden age*, where there was no necessity of a political framework, as inhabited by either very inferior or superior men.[35] Animals were incapable of forming a state, while self-sufficient gods had no need of one.[36] He found speech as the characteristic of man which distinguishes him from the animals.[37] Speech, discussion, *conversation* was the means to form the State where both man and his gods played an intricate part.

The City Dionysia festival, where the performances of Satyr Plays and tragedies were presented,[38] was a rural celebration incorporated by the city of Athens to enact the

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[34] Ibid, 9. *Odessey* 9. 215

[35] *Politics.* 1253a 2-4.

[36] *Pol.* 1253a 27-9.

[37] *Rhet.* 1355b 1-2.

[38] Brockett, 22. Plays were **particular** to this festival until 442 B.C.E., almost a century after the first dramatic contests were supposedly introduced.

welcoming of the god, Dionysus, to the city. The five day festival occurring in March symbolically removed a legendary curse placed upon the men of the city because they had once turned Dionysus away. The foundation myth of the festival tells of a disease, permanent erections, placed upon the male population by the wrath of a spurned god and its removal when the citizens of Athens finally welcomed Dionysus into their city.

> The disease was stopped only when the Athenians honored the god by making phalloi, both at public and private expense. The myth is only crude etiology for the ritual of the phallephoria, but it shows that the phalloi were carried to offer honor to the god and to avoid his anger.[39]

The City Dionysia also promoted the Athenian *polis* and its open system that included foreign residents and colonists in an inferior position.[40] Allies' tributes were presented to Athens during the festival and animals were sent for sacrifice from distant tribes. It was a festival which honored the *polis* and celebrated the bounty of foreign and local gods. Male orphans supported by the *polis* marched into the theatre in full armor before the performances and honors and awards were presented to distinguished Athenian citizens. These official presentations occurred before the three days of tragedies and Satyr plays within the theatre.

The reception of the god into the city consisted of four major ritualistic forms: procession (hymns, dances), sacrifice, *komos* (ritual dining), and dramatic performance

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[39] Susan G. Cole, "Procession and Celebration at the Dionysia", *Theatre and Society in the Classical World*, ed. R. Scodel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993) 26.

[40] Souvinou-Inwood 72.

(ritual entertainment). The welcoming of the god through sacrifices, dance and hymns honored the god and humbled the Athenians as their world first reverted to chaos (inversion) and then returned to normalcy through their offerings over the five day festival. The return to normalcy enacted within the tragic performances represented the *polis*' continuation, but only after the god had been received through appropriate rituals. Through *xenismos* the flaws and excesses of men were purged from the city.

The day before the Greek festival in Athens the participants were introduced as were the myths they would be enacting as fitting entertainment for a god. On the eve of the first day all normal activities ceased and at dusk the wooden effigy of Dionysus was escorted by young men into the city by torch light. The next morning the ten tribes would assemble with their sacrificial bulls[41] and skins of wine to begin their ritual procession.

Procession

The symbols of the affliction (the male population of Athens carrying phallic symbols) met the statue of Dionysus at the gates of Athens representing the cursed men of Athens within the ancient myth. Each tribe had created a phallus which was carried by an honored member of their tribe to appease the angry god. The emblem of the erect phallus, a symbol of fertility (and of curse), was a sacred part of the possession and was carved anew by each tribe annually in preparation for the City Dionysia. The erect phallus, long attributed to fertility, might merely symbolize the curse placed upon the

[41] We know this by written evidence which lists the cost of the festival and the number of bulls and pigs sacrificed.

population by Dionysus. In other words, the erect phallus symbolized both continuation of the tribe and also its opposite in excess.

All those in the procession were ritually costumed, carried symbolic objects to designate their status, and were placed in order of Athenian tribal structure and status. Priests, priestesses, and the chosen *poets* led the procession through the city followed by those who would be performing on the final days of the festival and in the dithyramb choruses. Foreigners were robed in purple, carrying basins and water, but never wine. Performers, like priests, were dressed in scarlet.[42] However, who was carrying what and what color they wore is a conflicted area in scholarship. Throughout the two days of procession, the one thousand dancers[43] performed the dithyrambs. The dithyrambic portion of the procession consisted of ten boy choruses and ten choruses of men representing the ten tribes. Scholars acknowledge that the dithyrambs were products of specific tribes and due to their oral nature would only be known by a particular clan. Wiles suggest that "the dithyramb, which combined the processional mode with the narrative mode, was the point of transition when procession gave way to tragedy and participants became spectators."[44] Only fragments remain,[45] possibly because of their distinct use by one particular tribe and their base in ritualized movement and song. Other scholars state that the dithyramb choruses stopped and performed in front of various shrines along the route with special tribute to the twelve gods of Olympus during the

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[42] Wiles states that the foreigners wore red as does Wise. Sourvinou-Inwood states that the metics carried the basins of water.

[43] Wiles (1997) 26.

[44] Wiles (1997) 27.

[45] Pindar, *Dithryramb fragment* 75 S-M.

procession.[46] Xenophon suggests that the procession was intricate and passed by all the shrines of Agora with dances and choruses' honoring all the gods.[47]

> The choruses' dances at the Altar of the Twelve Gods and at other shrines during the procession, was among other things, a physical expression of the cult of Dionysus' arrival and incorporation in the pantheon of the city; of the relationship of this cult to that of the other, already established gods, especially since the Twelve Gods would have been perceived as also a metaphor for the *polis*' pantheon.[48]

The sacrifice of live animals, the meat placed before the shrines and the pouring of wine into the ground as blessings continued throughout the procession according to the traditions and specifications of the priests. Dances were performed depicting the myths of Dionysus, sacrifices made and the entire Athenian male community seemed to be involved as participant.

"Women were also present in the procession and their role as bearers of new life was symbolized by a maiden who walked in front of the others with unripened spring fruit."[49] Most scholars agree that unmarried women (virgins) and foreigners seem to have participated within the processions leading up to the theatrical performances.

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[46] Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 91.

[47] Xenphon, *Hipparch,* 3.2.

[48] Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 92.

[49] Wiles (1997) 26.

Pictorial evidence has also documented female musicians as part of the procession.[50] However, Sourvinou-Inwood suggests that married *respectable* women were involved in the procession and possible members of the audience during dramatic representations.

> There is no unambiguous and clear evidence suggesting that women were excluded from the theatre; only modern scholars' preconceptions, inferences, based on certain preconceived hypotheses (culturally determined perceptions, for example, about how we would expect the Athenian *polis* to be presenting itself), and certain doubtful readings of a few comic passages.[51]

Due to the ritual status of the procession, slaves were not allowed to participate. The effigy of the god led the procession and was taken to the theatre by the *ephebes* on the evening before the theatrical performance and "probably came out of the sanctuary to meet the procession"[52] as it concluded at the sacred performance space near the temple of Athena on the morning of the third day. The figure of the god was then placed within the theatre to observe the enactments.

Sacrifice

The earliest form of the festival within Athens received the effigy at the *Hestia* of the prytaneion where the ritual sacrifices took place. Here the god was received and entertained. On the next day, the statue was taken to the sanctuary at Agora in a

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[50] See Wiles (2002) Figure 17 illustration of pictorial remains 450 B.C.E., p.138.

[51] Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) pp.177-184.

procession.[53] In a later period, dramatic performances took place in the northwest area of the Agora with ritual sacrifices occurring at the *eschara.*[54] The procession walked a sacred path lined with altars and shrines which ended at the inner sanctuary. Sourvinou-Inwood states that this would entail the performances and sacrifices taking place before the procession. "The relationship between the space of tragic performance and the space of sacrifice has great symbolic importance. Sacrifice was in a sense another dramatic mode."[55]

The male goat, the sacrificial animal of Dionysus, is depicted with a human face in the work of several vase painters through several generations. Within fifth century B.C.E. Athens the *tragos* symbolized adult maleness and also lechery.[56] The animal's sacrifice was appropriate for the myth which tells that when Dionysus was spurned by the Greeks he cursed the adult males with permanent erections. The god and a sacrificed goat with anthropomorphic characteristics are depicted in pictorial remains as Athenians receive Dionysus. Through their welcoming of the god and sacrifices to him the city's afflictions were relieved. Within the religious context of fifth century Athens, the goat represented the animal substitute for the human, sexualized, mature male.

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[52] Wiles (1997) 26; Cole, 28; Sourvinou-Inwood, "Something to do with Athens: Tragedy and Ritual", *Ritual Finance, Politics,* eds. R. Osborne and S. Hornblower (Oxford, 1994) pp.269-90.

[53] Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 120.

[54] Sourvinou-Inwood hypothesizes that this area, near the Altar of the Twelve Gods, was where the statue was placed and performances given before an actual theatre space was created. This was before the performances were transferred to the sanctuary of Dionysus where the first theatre was constructed in 500 B.C.E.

[55] Wiles (1997) 58.

[56] Souvinou-Inwood (2004) 116.

During the City Dionysia representatives from the ten tribes took bulls to the sanctuary, sacrificed them and then organized the feast. Wiles suggest that performed tragedy following the sacrifices of the tribes might be seen as a means of dispensing painful justice to the people, "following a symbolic reaffirmation of the god-given structure of the community."[57] The meat of the numerous sacrifices during the festival was distributed equally to participants representing each *deme*.[58] The animals specific to the City Dionysia were bulls, goats and the blood of baby pigs. Bread and wine were added to the meat of the sacrificial animals around the various shrines of the gods along the procession route. The population believed that through the welcoming ritual of *xenismos* and the sacrifices contained within the ritual form the city would rid itself of afflictions and receive the bounty from a placated god. Sharing the food sacrificed to the god was a symbolic act of welcoming the deity into the tribe.

Ritual Dining

The *tragos* (goat), the satyr and ritual dining upon the sacred ivy plant (sacred plant of Dionysus) are noted as early as the sixth century by pictorial remains pertaining to Dionysus' entrance into Greece. A core ritual element of the City Dionysia was the *Komos.* It is described through fragmentary evidence as ritual drinking, feasting, ivy and mask wearing. It was a very different ritual from the solemn proceedings of the tribal dances, welcoming hymns, and animal sacrifices. Plutarch suggests that the public *komoi* in honor of Dionysus occurred at night.[59] Three types of activity seem to constitute the

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[57] Wiles (1997) 3.

[58] Sourvinou-Inwood (2004) 100.

[59] Plutarch, *Moralia* 501F

Komoi of Dionysia all of which are related to the abandonment of normalcy and indulgence. This ritualization may also symbolize Dionysus' arrival as a drunken god found in rural myths. The masks were never worn during the procession by actor or audience and many of the population seem to be wearing *drunken* masks during the *Komos.* Enacting the drunken god and behaving outside of the normal social structures were part of the ritual reclined dining of the *Komos.* The use of an identifiable symbolic mask and inversion behavior conflicting with the harmony of the community represented the chaos of Dionysus.

This reclined dining was a very different dining ritual than the tribal celebration and feast which followed the final performance of the City Dionysia. The *Komos* symbolized chaos in the Greek world and was the polar opposite of the harmony hoped for in the Athenian city. It portrays a world of men forgotten by their god and left to wallow in their own excesses. In contrast the final ritual feast of the *xenismos* celebrated a return to normalcy and a placated god. The feast allowed the population and the god to share a common meal after the city had redressed their offenses to Dionysus. Following the dramatic performances the entire community, men and women,[60] participated in the ritual feast in celebration of their culture. Food and social dancing represented the abundance and happiness promised to the tribes through the successful *xenismos* as the participants abandoned the chaos of Dionysus and his curse until the next year. The ritual feasts found within the City Dionysia represent the two sides of man: the *Komos* (ritual reclined dining), symbolizing man forsaken and offensive to the gods and the celebratory

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[60] Women did not attend the *Komos* ritual dining.

feast, symbolizing a population in harmony and abundance with a welcomed and respected deity.

Performance

The City Dionysia incorporated the principle structure of the rural celebrations: procession with *phallephoria,* followed by sacrifice and a revel (*Komos).* It was not until these rituals had been performed, probably on 10 *Elaphebolion,*[61] that the dramatic performances or entertainment for the god could begin.[62] Following the days of procession, dithyramb performance and *Komos* the dramatic enactments were the climax of the festival and were prepared for almost a year before performance. It seems very unlikely that they were not received as sacred if they facilitated the return to normalcy within the religious festival and were performed upon sanctified ground. Performance's central place within the religious festival suggests its sacred rather than secular status within the fifth century *xenismos.* The tragedies follow all known religious patterns of the period and are based on the sacred Greek myths of gods and heroes.

> Athenians who celebrated the City Dionysia were partaking in a religious ceremony. The theatre in which the plays were presented stood within the sacred precinct of Dionysus; the plays themselves were performed in the very presence of the god and his priests . . .[63]

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[61] Cole notes 11-13 Elaphebolion during the Peloponnesian War and a four day pause in the calendar starting on 9 Elaphebolion before and after the war.

[62] Cole, 27.

[63] Peter Walcott, *Greek Drama in its Theatrical and Social Context,* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1976) 4.

In almost every excavation of a fifth century theatre the close relationship between a temple, an altar and the playing space is apparent.[64] Sourvinou-Inwood argues throughout *Tragedy and Athenian Religion* that

> the performance and content of tragedies were not insulated from their religious framing; it was not a discrete unit, a purely theatrical experience, simply framed by ritual, which included gods simply as theatrical devices, but was itself perceived as a ritual occasion to which ritual mentality pertained.[65]

The libraries are full of recreations of Athenian tragic performance. I can only note that many of these assumptions were fueled by the ideology of the time and place they were created and support Western belief systems. What has been named and accepted as tragedy in the West which was said to have developed from early Athenian ritual can also be viewed as the ritual itself within fifth century Athens. Music, body and voice were revered by the Greeks and considered an appropriate channel to a god. The performances can be read as an intricate depiction of the Athenian world and its civil tensions as communicated to their gods.

The ritual re-telling was performed almost entirely through dance and song with musicians in attendance. "Many songs in tragedy and comedy are derived from an

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[64] Wiles (1997) 27.

[65] Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 50.

existing genre of ritual song and are in the lyric meters appropriate to them.[66] Just as historians have ignored the sacred context and ritual form of fifth century Dionysian performance, they have often reconstructed the performances without acknowledging that most if not all of the words were sung and danced. If the enactments are presented as largely sacred conversations communicated through song and ritual, inherent to the sacred reception of a god, their similarities to the function and methods of Native American performance and their place within the theatrical narrative are expanded. No longer limited by either/or definitions, the sacred choral performances are then closely related to the enactments of indigenous tribal populations previously defined as *primitive ritual.*

Ritual Elements

What is recognized as sacred or weighted with symbolic meaning is localized within a specific tribal culture. The preparation for the ritual performance and the sanctification of the performance space suggest that what we call *tragedies* were functioning rituals in Athenian society. The sacred elements within the Dionysus festival are numerous, but for the purposes of this study I will be focus on the ritual elements of sacred space, ritual mask and dress; communal participation, the poet as channel to the god and inversion. It should also be noted what has been termed ritual and what has been designated as drama shared a symbolic common language bound by the religious beliefs of the tribal culture.

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[66] Edith Hall, "The Singing Actors of Antiquity," *Greek and Roman Actors*, eds. Pat Easterling and Edith Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 6.

Sacred Space

The procession route of the City Dionysia was lined with sacrificial altars, tributes to the tribes, and shrines for gods. The path was purified by priests and sacrifice before the effigy of the god entered Athens. Performances were transferred to the Theatre of Dionysus from the Agora in the seventieth Olympiad (499/6) according to lexicographers.[67] We can also date by archaeological evidence that the theatre structure existed not much later than 500 B.C.E. A notice in Scuda also confirms this date.[68] By reviewing the process which occurred before the performances took place it is possible to acknowledge that the *eschara* of Agora, the *hestia* of prytaneion and the theatre were all considered sacred spaces by the Athenian audience. Wiles notes that in fifth century B.C.E. Athens, the performance space was the end-point of the procession which was the core of rural Dionysia.

We know within such a sacred world as Athens purification was necessary for participants and for performance space.[69] This was achieved through individual sacrifices and prayers as well as physical preparation and chanting. An inscription in the *Peiraeus* includes an assignment to the *agoranomoi* to prepare and make level the streets through which the City Dionysus procession was to pass and also to collect fines from anyone who poured wash water or human waste into the street.[70] Animal sacrifice and the chants of priests made the ground where the rituals were enacted sacred. At Athens

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[67] Sourvinou-Inwood, (2003) 91.

[68] Ibid.

during the City Dionysia "the theatre itself had to be purified by the priests.[71] Wiles states that the performance space was sacralized by sacrificial slaughter and roasting under the gaze of the god and his priests, by the libations of wine poured onto the *thymele* or *orchestra* floor and by the purifying blood of baby pigs.[72] The blood of the pigs was carried around the outer perimeter, marking off the area sacred to the god.[73] Prayers were performed before and during the enactments. Rush Rehm states that "the early theatre was conceived more as a space than as a building."[74] A circular[75] level playing space without separation between chorus, actor, or view of the altar seems evident when the relationship between the individual, the collective, and the god was the fundamental problem of the democratic *polis*. Tragedy served to articulate the Athenian's place in his world and identify his community.

Sourvinou-Inwood's reconstruction of the festival denotes the separation of sacred space within the fifth century as the point of division where ritual evolved into secular entertainment.[76] The acts of purification performed at the location of performance seem to contradict its secular status. Furthermore, like the performance rituals, the sacred space seems to have been changeable within the City Dionysus.

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[70] Cole 27.

[71] Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (Oxford, 1967) 67; Cole, 27.

[72] Ibid 189.

[73] Cole, pp.27-28.

[74] Rush Rehm, "The Staging of Suppliant Plays", *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 29 (1988) pp.263-308.

[75] Ibid. 75. Wiles argues that the Fifth century B.C.E. was circular. "While Christian worshippers stand in front of an altar, Greek worshippers stood in a circle around it."

[76] Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) pp.118-120.

> For the classical period we must visualize a performance space that was temporary, disorderly and constantly changing. The perfect geometric form bears little relationship in its mood and symbolism to Athenian texts that invariably demonstrate how Dionysiac disorder undermines the best human attempts at rational forward planning.[77]

However flexible the performance space was during the fifth century B.C.E., it never appears to be far from the temple of a god, the effigy of Dionysus was present in both the theatre and the Agora. Athena's temple and perhaps even her statue were clearly visible towering behind the performance space for the audience. The circular playing space focusing on its own center relates the Greek ritual performance to Indigenous performances throughout the world. The placing of audience in front of a rectangle performance area similar to the Christian worshippers and their spatial relation to the altar was not typical of Greek ancient worship methods.

Although contested by some scholars such as Clifford Ashby in *Classical Greek Theatre* (1999), it seems likely that an altar for sacrifice was placed in or near the performance space. Numerous plays of the period speak of altars and sacrifices and archaeological evidence lends itself to the *idea* of an altar in the performance space. Sacrifices were known to take place within the theatre and Wiles suggests that the central focus of the theatre was either a hearth or an altar. "Surrounded by the twelve choral dancers of tragedy, it is also possible to see the *thymele* as symbol of Hestia, supplanted

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[77] David Wiles, *Greek Theatre Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 103.

by Dionysus to become the thirteenth Olympian, fixed in eternal immobility."[78] The actual sacrificial altar was probably located off the playing space, but aligned with its center and in view of the effigy of the god. In later centuries there is evidence that the *skene* was also purified along with the playing space through the blood of sacrificed animals and prayers.[79]

Communal Participation

Preparation for the dramatic enactments of City Dionysia involved the entire community as Greek dancers and singers were chosen from the citizenship of the *polis.* The enactment to be presented was chosen eleven months before the Festival and orally retold to participants. It is significant that the chorus members of the tragic and Satyr plays had to be Athenian citizens[80] and that the chorus was at the center of fifth century tragedy. Both Sourvinou-Inwood and Easterling argue that the chorus in tragedy is never simply a group of bystanders or witnesses reacting and commenting; they are also a chorus ready to perform lyrics patterned on ritual song and dance accompanied by appropriate ritualistic music. The choruses were not only perceived as part of the play, but also as choruses for Dionysus in the present. Henrichs observes that "choral dancing in ancient Greek culture always constitutes a form of ritual performance, whether the dance is performed in the context of the dramatic festival or in other cultic and festive

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[78] Ibid. 77. He also notes Rosemary Wright's reference to the temple of Vesta/Hestia in Rome, where the hearth at the center of the circle is surrounded by twelve columns symbolizing the twelve olympians.

[79] *IG* XI (2) 203A.38, 269 B.C.E. Delian inventories, listing expenses for the Dionysia included payment for the purification of the *skene* in the theatre.

[80] Plutarch, *Phokion* 30.

settings."[81] The telling of sacred myth through the group body of a chorus consisting of Greek citizens placed the performance ritual in the present moment and also connected it to ancient melodies, sacred beliefs, and symbolic movements. Stretching between the unknowable past and the present, the world of men and the realm of the gods, the chorus member spoke the words believed to be channeled through the poet by gods, and symbolized not only the special world of the play, but the material world of the Athenian audience.

Dance and musicians are depicted in many of the pictorial remains identified as theatre artifacts. Dance and song within the Greek ritual performed by members of the community, align the tragedies and Satyr plays with Native American performance. The belief that only men performed in the ritual is belied by ample pictorial evidence of the female musician in various rituals and celebrations.[82] The priestesses were also certainly on hand to welcome the god into the city. The all male choruses represented in the City Dionysus were the gender cursed by the god and symbolically must ask forgiveness and this explains their prominence. I believe however that it would have been illogical for women to be excluded from a city-wide celebration.

> Plato has Socrates, in speaking of the theatre, speak of a type of rhetoric directed at a public involving children together with women and men, slave and free. Later in an

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[81] A. Henrichs, "Why Should I Dance?", (1995) *Arion* 3: 56-111.

[82] To name a few: A tomb painting from Ruvo portrays a chorus of women dancing; Attic red-figured cup 490 B.C.E. depicts women flutes, another in 480 B.C.E; Attic red-figure stamnos 460 B.C.E. shows females flute players, Attic white-ground phiale, 440 B.C.E., portrays a chorus of women dancing with one playing a flute.

> imaginary address . . . he speaks of those tragedians
> haranguing women and children and the whole populace.[83]

Preparation for the annual ritual involved the entire community as well as neighboring allies as food, animals and ritual garments were prepared. Playing areas and streets for the processions were leveled and prayers and purification rituals given by those who attended. The ritual served the purpose of unifying the tribes and provided a cultural identification for the community of Athens as its histories and origin myths were enacted for all those who attended the City Dionysia. Plato also proclaims the attributes of tragedy even as he promotes the censorship of foreign performances: ". . . no tragedy is better than ours: for our whole state is framed to reproduce the highest and noblest life, and this we affirm to be indeed the very truth of tragedy."[84]

Poet as Sacred Channel

The expanded ritual of the fifth century and the sacrifice of the poet upon the altar of competition **only** become secular when we define ritual, competition and theatre through Western or Christian terms. Competition within this ancient Athenian culture considered the winner as fated by the gods themselves. Understanding the concept of the poet within the context of Ancient Athens, as well as their ritual placement within the City Dionysia, assists in identifying the ritual status of the performances. In his Socratic dialogue with Ion, Plato describes the place of the poet in the minds of Athenians.

> The gods take away the minds of the poets, and use them as
> his ministers, as he uses diviners and holy prophets, in

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[83] Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 183. Plato *Laws* 817c; The presence of women in the theatre is also suggested in Plato *Laws* 658d.
[84] *Laws,* 700 f.

> order that we who hear them may know them to be
> speaking not of themselves who utter these priceless words
> in a state of unconsciousness, but that a god is the speaker,
> and that through poets he is talking with us.[85]

Thus, the poet, whether the writer of hymns, epics or dithyrambs was considered a channel for the voices of the gods. Ion goes on to tell Socrates that poets do not follow any rules of art but are simply inspired to utter whatever the Muse impels them to. It is difficult for us to imagine a belief in a playwright as a messenger from the gods, but in a world where all things were of the gods, especially the noblest parts of the community, those who brought pleasure to gods and men as the poet did, were as Ion tells us, holy messengers.

The creators of the three tragedies and Satyr play presented at the City Dionysia invented the music, staged the ritual dance and usually performed as well. The poet's creations were believed to be channeled from the supernatural. This is similar to the Northern tribes, who believed that the singer of tales was touched by the gods or the Native American cultures who understood the singer or shaman had obtained spiritual power. The songs, dance and words created by the poet or Indigenous shaman contained the sacred power and formed the bridge between the supernatural and the material world through performance. Considered the climax of the *xenismos*, the poet's creations and those who performed were both of the worlds of men and believed to be transformed by the breath and whisperings of gods.

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[85] *Ion,* 533 f.

Costumes and Masks

Scholars assume Greek masks were used to portray age, gender, and emotion within the competitions. Wiles notes that in contemporary Western theatre the actor's face or mask provides the audience with a secure point of reference and the narrator is understood to be reacting in the present to an experience in the past. However, Wiles argues that if we consider the Athenian chorus simultaneously as actors, onlookers and fellow-citizens within the performance space, the masks of the chorus represent the dancers' fictive role within the story line and identify them as worshippers of Dionysus in the Athenian festival.[86] The masks also signify the performers as ritual participants and channels of both poet and gods.

The similarities of the masks represented in numerous fifth century artifacts, (vase paintings and wall mosaics), regardless of the diversity of myth, suggest that recognizable masks were ceremonial and an important aspect of religious ritual. No Greek masks remain today except those made of clay from the sixth and seventh century B.C.E. We have only images in found artifacts. Napier believes masks were used in all sacred rituals by priests. We have assumed that masks were worn in the performance of tragedies because of the evidence on vases. In fact the pictorial evidence is largely from the fourth century B.C.E. and whether the use of mask was prevalent during the performances within the fifth century is unclear. Our earliest pictorial evidence of the dramatic use of the mask in fifth century Athens is from a fragment of a vase dated 470 B.C.E. The nude figure is assumed to be an actor because he holds a mask. In City Dionysia performance

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[86] Wiles (1997) 18.

the mask can be seen as removing the identity of the citizen and transforming them into a ritual representative of the audience. If masks were worn by performers at the fifth century B.C.E. City Dionysia they were probably perceived as religious symbols and the sacred tool of priests.

The mask practices in sixth century Greek ritual seem to be prevalent in fifth century Greek tragedy. Gender and human status were shifted in an instant by the donning of a mask. The mask served to remove the human actor or priest one step further away from self and closer to ritual symbolism. For example, the pictorial evidence of the fifth century Satyr performance found on the Pronomos vase depicts identical masks for all of the satyrs. This suggests a ritualistic, recognizable, symbolic mask. The mask "is the device used to effect that transformation which is the first requirement of any genuinely dramatic practice,"[87] but it is also a ritual tool to transform an Athenian citizen into a channel for the gods. Transformation was the function of tragedy and the Satyr play for participant and audience within the City Dionysus ritual context. This would align the City Dionysia performance with Scheckner and Turner's definition of ritual as the location of transformance or even transcendence.

The robes of the participants were said to resemble the attire of the Dionysian priests,[88] thus, symbolizing the sacred and ceremonial function of the performer of the myth. However, Brockett tells us that some scholars write of standard dress similar to the priest of the period, while others state that the costumes were realistic, signifying time

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[87] Albein Lesky, *A HIstory of Greek Literature* (London: Routlege, 1966) 223.

[88] Pickard-Cambridge, *DFA*, 189.

and character.[89] Oliver Taplin states "The tragic outfit was much the same for chorus and actor alike. The costumes were lavish and ornate. . . . Special parts called for special costumes: thus warriors wore armor, barbarians had trousers, and mourners were in black and so on."[90] This view is most often supported by pictorial evidence, but most of it is not of the fifth century and Taplin often uses ancient images that have not been proven to be actors or dramatic performance as evidence.[91] Some of our earliest pictorial evidence of Greek performers holding masks depicts them without clothing of any kind.[92] However, the use of distinct masks in tragedy would make different costumes for each character unnecessary and a logistic problem. It seems far more probable that the costumes of the fifth century served a ritual standard and that masks and a possible symbolic hand prop were used to signify deity, character or chorus.[93]

Performers' robes were also noted specifically as red, similar to the color priests would wear. Red, a sacred and symbolic color designating blood as life and necessary in any sacrifice to the gods, seems a more appropriate color for a procession leading to sacrifice. It should be noted that the rare pictorial evidence, mosaics, vases, and stone engravings, do not reflect the sacred blood red color or purple on the performers'

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[89] Brockett (2003) 24-25.

[90] Oliver Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) pp.13-14.

[91] See pages 86-87 in *Greek Tragedy in Action.* For example, he sites a vase created in 490 B.C.E. as depicting a chorus from fifth century tragedy, simply by similar faces and hairstyles of the warriors. (Basel Antikenmuseum BS1415)

[92] Fragment of a vase dated 470 B.C.E. depicts what has been assumed as an actor holding a mask, standing naked without shoes.

[93] Brockett (2003) 24-25.

costumes. Perhaps, this is because of the sacred significance of the color, which could possibly only be used in religious ceremonies or upon sacred objects.

Inversion

Obscenity was part of Athenian sacred ritual. The inversion of the world and its normality were represented during the City Dionysia by the Satyr play and by the *Komos* with reclined ritual dining upon ivy, frenzied dancing, drunkenness, role playing (men were sometimes dressed as women or animals) and the wearing of the ritual mask. The *Komos* revelries were ended on the third day of the festival with the morning light as the participants entered the sacred space of the theatre jeering and yelling profanities at the audience. The *Komos* as well as the Satyr play seem to counter the Western notion of sacred ritual as solemnly maintaining the social structure. The ritual environment of a tragedy and Satyr play created its meaning to the audience.[94] The audience was moved to tears and pity for the journey and nobility of man, but also ridiculed and laughed at the path men and gods take.

At the Dionysia the public bestowing of honors on the most powerful was tempered by traditional use of ritual abuse.[95] *Phallophoroi* jeered at the audience and were part of the pre-performance ritual celebration marking the god's entrance into the theatre.[96] Aristotle speaks of this kind of ritual obscenity and states that no representation of shameful deeds either in word or visual image should be allowed except in those ritual

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[94] Wiles, (2000) 35.

[95] Cole, 34.

[96] Sourvinou-Inwood (2003) 98; Cole 34.

situations where the law permitted them.[97] Role reversal is also a characteristic within the Dionysia rituals. "*Tothasmos,* with the possibilities of theatrical disguise and ritual role reversal, allowed those with less status to mock those with more."[98] Ritual reversals mark the very structure of the dramatic performances. The Satyr play allowed its audience to view tragic circumstance through another lens and provided balance. One side cannot exist without the other. One performance (tragedy) gave only one view of the Athenian world and was balanced by the Satyr play. Laughter and tears, the grotesque and the beautiful were equal commentators upon the Athenian world. Each tragic trilogy filled with the higher values of the community was accompanied by a Satyr play where the flaws of the society and the gods were burlesqued and ridiculed through ritual dance and song.[99]

The Satyr play, which has often been said to follow the tragedy, was a distinct performance form within the City Dionysia and should not be considered an addition to the tragedies. "One of the few facts that are definitely known was that the satyrs in the Dionysus cult comfortably predate the introduction of tragic performance of any kind into the Dionysia."[100] Representative of the opposite of tragedy, the Satyr play seems specifically designated for Dionysus. We know that the performers of the Satyr plays were connected to Dionysus and the ancient Kronos through their depicted costumes of

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[97] Aristostle, *Pol.* 1336b14.

[98] Demosthenes 18.124, associates name calling with ritual abuse. Greek law also offers an opportunity for a metaphorical kind of ritual abuse. Hesychius associates this passage with the ritual abuse customary in the processions found in Dionysia.

[99] Brockett, 17.

[100] P.E. Easterling, "A Show for Dionysus", *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy,* ed. P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 39.

half-man and half-beast. Easterling observes that the performers of the Satyr play were the same as those in the tragedy on their day of performance.[101] The god, as myth tells us, was raised by a satyr. The natural world and ancient myths speaking of halfmen/halfbeast were not fantasies to the Greek audience. Their ancient myths were part of their cultural identity. The scarcity of written remains suggests the plays were orally composed and ceased to exist outside of their ritual context. The plays reflected the *Kronos*, the time before the *polis*, and also reminded the Athenian citizen not to forget the chaos of the natural world which can engulf any man regardless of his station.

Little is actually known of the Satyr plays and their performers and too much is based upon limited written fragments and rare pictorial evidence whose dates are subject to challenge. Only one complete Satyr play remains, Euripides' *Cyclops* and a fragment of another, Sophocles' *The Trackers*. Some scholars have stated that the frenetic singing and dancing within them allowed the performers to be possessed by the god. Although often seen as an extension of the *tragic* performance, or afterpiece,[102] scholar, Peter Wilson, states that the Satyr-chorus "had its own special performance idiom in terms of dance and music. The name *sikinnis* is often used to label a satyr-dance and seems to have involved rapid leaping movements."[103] A type of *aulos* tune, *sikinnotyrbe*, the satyr's whirl, is also mentioned in ancient texts.[104] Traditional music and dance distinct

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[101] Ibid. 38.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Peter Wilson, "The Musicians Among the Actors," *Greek and Roman Actors,* eds. Pat Easterling and Edith Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 57.

[104] Athenaeus 14.618c

to the Satyr play mark it as a ritual performance especially created to entertain the god, Dionysus. The performers of the Satyr play had tribal affiliation, but through mask and ivy wreaths (the sacred plant of Dionysus) they took on the ritual status of the performer. The Pronomos vase, often used as evidence of the Satyr performer attire, shows young beardless men holding identical masks of bearded men with long hair, and wearing fur wraps with tails costuming their hips. They are bare-chested, barefoot, and some are wearing wreaths of the sacred plant. The dating of the vase locates the pictorial remains within the late fifth century.

Inversion was an important aspect of the City Dionysia and represents the symbolic chaos of the god Dionysus in contrast to the harmony of the ancient *polis*. The grotesque located next to the beautiful, the profane next to the sacred, allowed a clearer vision of both. Each was necessary and contained equal powers of transformation within the sacred world of the Greeks and was enacted as symbolic metaphors of their tribal world. During the City Dionysia three evenings of chaos are contrasted by daily sacrifice, ritual dance and song, concluding with a performance of both the profane and sacred as entertainment befitting a god. Placated the angry god returns the city to a harmonic state and promises another year of abundance to the tribes.

Ritual Function

Pickard-Cambridge observes that the transfer from religion to technique began in the fourth century.[105] The activities of the *polis* were bound by the gods and the theatrical offerings at the end of the festival mark a return to normalcy, unification and celebration as the tribes paid tribute to their gods through an enactment of their myths.

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[105] A.W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Theatre of Dionysus in Athens* (Oxford: 1946) 71.

> Ritual is a serious form of play in that its enactments are seen as having an immediate effect on the life of the human community, even if this effect or efficacy is more symbolic-magical than concrete tangible.[106]

Wiles states that "tragedies, under the eyes of the god, were the culmination of a process of communal self-display and self-definition."[107] The performances of the City Dionysus differed markedly from modern Western theatre. Wiles states that "the rites of Dionysus were not something that a citizen could sit back and decode; the theatre of Dionysus was part of what made him what he was: an Athenian."[108] Ben Halm within *Theatre and Ideology* (1995) perceives the dramatic tragic actions found within the fifth century performances as signaling a fundamental shift in elevated norms that once seemed stable. If viewed as ritual actions, the plays themselves could be considered transformation ceremonies, which allow the population to acknowledge their identity and understand changes within their community. The gathering of tribes and allies to witness the myth retelling also repaired alliances, strengthened belief systems and offered a renewal and continuation of the Athenian's place in their known world.

What is the traditional definition of ritual performance? It has been noted by Beacham as repetition, by the early Christians as having to do with the sacraments of the one God, and for twentieth century theorists, Schechner or Turner, as a means of change or transition within cultures and individuals. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz, like Turner,

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[106] Ben B. Halm, *Theatre and Ideology* (London: Associated University Press, 1995) 99.

[107] Wiles, (1997) pp.26-27.

[108] Ibid, 21.

views ritual as a *bridge*. "In ritual the world as lived and the world imagined, fused under the same agency of a single set of symbolic forms, turns out to be the same world."[109] For example, this could mean life changes such as puberty rituals, or community changes, such as one season changing to another. Cultural theorists, George Marcus and Michael Fisher, note that the description and analysis of ritual have been one of the most popular means to organize ethnographic works. Ritual is distinguished as action that provokes, interprets or conforms thought and frames a culture's beliefs through form. "Some commentators on art and ritual have argued that art, especially theatre, is differentiated out of ritual in the wake of demographic expansion, urbanization, and other forms of social change and/or trauma."[110] Performance theorist, David George sees such universal definitions that impoverish the particular[111] as simply producing a classic *hermeneutic circle*. "Any list of items purporting to be 'performances' has been based in its selection on some implicit, latent definition of what performance is but the very definition has been derived from the list."[112] Turner states "to *perform* is to complete a more or less involved process rather than to do a single deed or act."[113] To him *drama* or social drama occurs on all levels of social organization and is initiated when the normalcy of the culture is ruptured by a breach in a rule controlling a relationship within the society. To prevent a crisis within the community or world of the

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[109] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) 114.

[110] Halm 99.

[111] Bell, Catharine, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 70.

[112] David George, "Performance Epistemology", *Performance Research* (1)1(1996) p.17.

[113] Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theatre* (New York City: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982) 92.

population a *redress* is taken in the form of ritual, judicial or military processes. To perform drama induces and contains reflexive processes and generates cultural frames in which reflexivity can find a legitimate place.[114] The ritual performances with the City Dionysia were the Athenians means to redress their relationships within the *polis* and with their gods.

The performances were part of the ritual occasion in the present fifth century festival, but also what happened in the world of the plays was part of the world of its audience. The plays portrayed the heroic past which was the foundation of the *polis*' relationship with the gods[115] and also reviewed the acts of men in relationship to their deities. Through the myth enactments the will of the gods and Athenians' history were examined, questioned and understood. "Ritual as the shaping, or mediation, or patterning of suffering has more power than dialectic or reasoning: its characteristic modes are lamentation and prayer."[116] Easterling perceives ritual and tragedy as almost one during moments of chorus lamentation within the ancient performances such as those found in Euripides' *Trojan Women.*

Contemporary death rituals abound in the tragedies, ritual masks, movements and the songs also suggest known and understood tribal rituals. Current fifth century B.C.E. sacred rituals, such as Electra's enactment of rites for the dead above her father's grave and Orestes cutting locks of his hair to lay upon the burial mound in *The Libation Bearers* appear throughout the performances of the *Oresteia*.

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[114] Ibid.

[115] Sourvinou-Inwood 50.

> ORESTES: Here at the mounded grave I call my father,
>
> Hear me, I am crying out to you . . .
>
> There is a lock for Inachos who nursed me
>
> into manhood, there is one for death.[117]

The third play of the *Oresteia, The Eumenides, "*enacts the founding ideology of Athens"[118] and opens at the door of Apollo's shrine at Delphi. The reverence given toward such rituals when depicted within the performances suggests the ritual nature of the Greek *theatre* and the audiences' understanding of both their symbolic meaning and their importance within the enactments presented in the presence of the gods.

> The performance and content of tragedies were not insulated from their religious framing; it was not a discrete unit, a purely theatrical experience, simply framed by ritual, which included gods simply as theatrical devices, but was itself perceived as a ritual occasion to which ritual mentality pertained.[119]

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[116] Pat Easterling, "Tragedy and Ritual," *Theatre and Society in the Classical World,* ed. Ruth Scodel (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993) 20

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[117] Aechylus, *The Libation Bearers*, trans. Robert Fagles, *The Harcourt Brace Anthology,* ed. W. B. Worthen, 3rd ed. (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 2000) 47. Young men in ancient Greece customarily on reaching manhood dedicated a lock of their long hair to the local river-god, Inachos. Orestes combines this ceremony with the rite of offering a lock of hair to a loved one who has passed. This same rite is portrayed in Euripedes *Trojan Women* as the captive women cut their hair in grief for their fallen husbands, children and fathers.

[118] W.B. Worthen, "Aeschylus, *The Eumenides*", *The Harcourt Brace Anthology of Drama*, 3rd edition, ed. W.B. Worthen (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 2000) 60.

[119] Ibid.

The community received health, visions, and a renewed faith in its continuity through experiencing their heritage of myths and rituals. Such reenactments of current sacred rites within ancient myth re-telling suggest what has been labeled and defined as theatre was not so very different from the performances of the Native Americans which also include a mix of recognizable ancient and current rituals and which functioned to unite the tribe.

Some critics have seen the perversion of ritual norms as the essential function of ritual elements within the performances.[120] For example, Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter, Iphigenia without feast or flute intensifies a sense of moral disorder or Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon with a bull's horn (an instrument used by priest in animal sacrifice) represents the sacrilege of such an action. The blood red fabric ceremoniously placed upon the ground by Greek priests before any sacrifice or religious rite for the gods to stand upon is a subverted ritual as Clytemnestra has the red fabric unfurled for her husband to defame in *Agamemnon*. The rape of a priestess (Cassandra) also speaks to the social chaos which prevails in the first play of the *Orestia.* The final play, *Eumenides*, similar to the structure of the City Dionysia returns the performed mythical world from chaos to harmony. The *lived exchanged* during the performance of rituals and myths allowed the audience to be purified through the performers re-telling, confirm their cultural identity and fulfill the ritual entertainment necessary for a visiting god.

Tribal and sacred, the tragedies and Satyr plays were believed by their audience to be transformative for both participant and audience. Containing all the definitions of a tribal ritual, the enactments within the City Dionysus festival have nonetheless been

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[120] Easterling (1993) 19.

labeled *theatre* and, as the source of a secular Western theatre, they are privileged above Indigenous tribal performances. The ritual performances within the City Dionysia functioned to redress Athenian relationships within the *polis* and with their gods. The welcoming of the god to the city was repeated annually as a function of protection from, and appeasement to a god. The performances within the context of the City Dionysia seem to fulfill all of the Western definitions pertaining to ritual functions and are characterized by the use of ritual elements and localized symbolic actions. Defining the ancient tribal performance as a Western theatre form has limited theatre historians' perception of the performance. Locating the fifth century B.C.E. performance as "Golden Age of Greek Drama," and separate from contemporary and still functioning Indigenous tribal ritual, restricts our knowledge of both cultures and continues the inversion process of ideology.

Herbert Blau suggests this process of diffusion is inevitable within any ideology. "What is absorbed or refused in this prospect (cultural diffusion) is inseparable from the more or less geologic shifts or tectonic slips in the subsoil of ideologies."[121] However, I think that by unveiling what has long been seen through a distorted lens can expand our limited vision of ancient and contemporary tribal performance. Removing definitions constructed in false consciousness, and based upon fictional difference, from performance analysis illuminates the cultural influences dominating and effecting theatre historians' perception of ritual and theatre. Through an examination of an ancient and still functioning tribal performance ritual such as the Sunrise ceremony of the Apache the similarities between ritual function, elements and form with those of the City Dionysia

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[121] Blau (1992) 37.

are far more apparent than are the differences. What has been bound by the definition of Native American *ritual* and placed in opposition to what has been labeled *theatre* can be perceived as constructed *credible fictions*. Examining Apache and fifth century Athenian cultures as equal and viewing their performances fused with both ritualistic and theatrical practices expands our view of historical performance and releases theatre history from George's *hermeneutic circle.*

With Yusn in the beginning was White-painted Woman, She had no mother or father.
She was created by the power of Yusn. He sent her down to the world to live.
From the oral history of the Chiricahua Apache

CHAPTER 6
THE THEATRE OF THE APACHE

The most amazing characteristic of Apache performance is that it still exists and functions as a lived exchange after more than three centuries of enforced bannings, systematic assimilation, genocide and concentrated cultural destruction. Unlike the ancient Greek theatre, the contemporary Apache tribes have continued to enact their ancient myths as a living function within their cultures. If these performances are viewed in the context of Western theatre, their dramatic form and complexities reveal a performance world as rich as that of the fifth century B.C.E. Greeks and each can be perceived as both sacred ritual and dramatic theatrical performance. And yet the Apache performance history is as rare as the fifth century Greek is abundant.

The history of the Apache, an oral performance culture, is documented by the early writings of Christian Europeans. The problem with many of these sources is the overwhelming bias of their descriptions. For example contemporary scholar, James Axwell's description of the contrasting cultures of English colonists and the Indigenous of the Americas: "While the English worshipped the 'true god' in churches with prayer books and scripture, Native shamans resembled 'conjurers' who preyed on the 'superstitious' natures of the dream-ridden, 'devil-worshipping' suppliants."[1] Cultures,

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[1] James Axtell, "Colonial America without the *Indian*s: Counterfactual Reflections", *The American Indian, Past and Present*, 4th edition, ed. Roger L. Nichols (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1992) 12.

like performance, are historically described through difference within ideology. "Because most research on early *Indian*-European relations assumes cultural difference, scholars rarely consider the influence cultural similarities had on *Indian*-European interactions."[2] Much of current scholarship has attempted to bridge these seemingly insurmountable historical problems by focusing upon the Indigenous point of view[3] or through the scholarship of Native Americans such as Donald L. Fixico, Stephen Greymorning, and Henrietta Mann. However, we are still left **without** the voice of the Apache during their first encounters with the Europeans and the invading residue of defined *difference*.

Western ideology's stranglehold on current research in Indigenous ritual and performance is clearly evident as scholars attempt to define ancient ritual and theatre through difference when often none exists. Within the process of ideological *inversion*, Apache performance is still defined as Indigenous ritual. Bound inside the Western belief system, this performance form when defined through the *false consciousness* of theatre history is perceived as repetitious, oral, religious, static and aligned with the fixed identity of the *barbarian, pre-historic,* or *savage.* Through this lens it cannot possibly be seen as a living, dramatic, or an evolving performance form. Describing the early stages of a society's development through performance Brockett states:

> Perceiving an apparent connection between certain actions performed by the group (or its shamans) and the results it

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[2] Nancy Shoemaker, "Categories", *Clearing a Path* (New York: Routledge, 2002) 63.

[3] Interdisplinary approaches blending oral history of the Apache with ethnological data: *Geronimo* (1976) by Angie Debo and Donald Worcester's *The Apaches* (1979) Readings of Indigenous history through cultural treaties, myth cycles, and early interviews: John Haley's *Apaches* (1981)

> desires, the group repeats, refines, and formulates those actions into fixed ceremonies, or rituals.[4]

This ninth edition of *History of the Theatre* then uses illustrations of a Native American ceremonial dance and the costume from a Brazilian Indigenous dance to emphasis the segment of pre-historic ritual as the origin of theatre.

> . . . The traditional view of how theatre developed out of ritual . . . assumes that societies that had evolved such autonomous arts as theatre were superior to those in which the arts had not been separated from ritual.[5]

Traditionally performance definition is created through difference and what the *ritual* is not: *theatre.* The **belief** that Apache performance is ritual *outside* of dramatic form can be re-evaluated through an open interpretation and *freed* from the cultural influences which have manufactured the illusory *idea* of what Apache performance ***is.***

Chapter six examines the ritual complexities of Apache performance through the enactment of the tribal origin myth within the *Na'ii'ees.* Similar to chapter five the theatrical representation is analyzed through its placement within the ritual form, ritual elements and ritual function within the tribal community. The chapter reveals a Western ideology which has continued to restrict theatre historians' view of Native American performance by its contrast to the *ideal* of an ancient Greek secular theatre. "The

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[4] Brockett (2003) 1.

[5] Ibid, 2.

essential and/or most empowered form of theatre is not the same for every culture."[6] If fixed categories such as *ritual* and *theatre* can be shifted and the prototype of each placed upon the other, restrictive definitions formed by difference can be shifted to reveal similarities. Chapter Six explores the similarities of Apache performance to the Greek tribal enactments and finds that each, ancient Greek and contemporary Apache, fulfill the function of sacred ritual and entertainment within the tribal structures. However, similar to the *mimos* performance and its enactments across Greek, Roman and medieval eras, Native American performance and its thousand year history is almost invisible within the Western theatre narrative. Within earlier chapters I argue that, regardless of logic or material evidence, the proclaimed difference of Indigenous performance from ancient theatre within the Western narrative is a necessary construction to *fit* the inversion process inherent in ideology, the cultural Darwinism found within traditional theatre histories, and the concept of a Western cultural identity. However, when analyzed as a dramatic form similar to the Athenian performance, the *Na'ii'ees* can also be perceived as a ritual form welcoming a spiritual power into the body of a young girl and into the tribe for the four days of ceremony. The theatre of the Apache, like that of the ancient Greeks transformed both participant and community. Such an examination allows historians to view the complexity of the dramatic form, social beliefs, as well as the *lived exchange*'s cultural importance to the identity of the tribe.

Through the latter half of the nineteenth, and most of the twentieth century Native American performance was perceived as merely cultural residue of a dead culture, regardless of its ancient or contemporary enactment within the tribe.

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[6] Halm, 101.

> As colonization spread, the British came into contact with a great diversity of distinctive American peoples . . . but these cultures were already under stress from the devastation of epidemics. . . . As Native groups fought Europeans and each other, their cultures declined further. We know little, therefore, about the pre-Columbia performance traditions of these preliterate peoples.[7]

Grounded in the belief that these performances were simply images of the past, tourist attractions, or a primitive or *pre-historic* ritual, Apache performance was viewed as a curiosity, not as a living and functional theatrical performance, and it had little or no impact upon American theatre history. The colonizer's view of the Apache as primitive and savage has prevented theatre historians from seeing Apache performance as a temporal and ever-changing dramatic enactment. The result is an inherent bias within theatre history towards Native American performance, perceived as neither theatre nor an accepted religious practice.

Historian and scholar of the Apache culture, James Haley notes repeatedly in his history of the Apache that often the deafening silence of the Indigenous population within American history is the responsibility of the Native American. He quotes Edward Spicer's *Cycles of Conquests* (1962), the Apache

> are one of the most written-about peoples of the Southwest and yet they remain, in my opinion, the most poorly

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[7] Brockett (2003) 237.

> understood by white men. Apaches complain constantly that all the history which is in print misrepresents them, yet so far no Apache autobiographer or even rough chronicler has emerged.[8]

Haley also sites J.P. Dunn's *Massacres in the Mountains* (1886) "the fact that the Apaches are among the least known of the *Indian* tribes. . . . they maintain a jealous reserve as to their habits, particularly those of a religious character."[9] Haley calls the oral histories of the Apache useful to the historian, but also *personal reminiscences* and states "the cultural aspects of the recounted history are generally implicit and their impact is hence lost on the less expert audience."[10]

This *catch-22* of historical method demands to hear from the colonized and yet, scholars continue to refuse to accept the information unless it is given in the accepted form of the conqueror. Oral histories are localized, specific to a particular location and people. Similar to performance, the historian must have some understanding of the culture to grasp the semiotic meaning behind important symbols and traditions within the oral retelling or enactment. To listen to the voices of the *Indian* is to view a non-generalized or non-universal history. Performance and myth vary widely from tribe to tribe and this multiplicity challenges a history which combines the diverse Indigenous of the Americas under one heavily weighted term: Native *American.* Julie Cruikshank argues "that local voices from North American Indigenous communities provide more

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[8] Edward Spicer, pp.593-594 quoted in Haley, (1997) 8. Edward Spicer, pp.593-594.

[9] J.P. Dunn p.310 quoted in Haley (1997) 8. J.P. Dunn p.310

[10] Ibid, 12. Contained in *Notes.*

than grist for conventional disciplinary paradigms and have the power to contribute to our understanding of historiography."[11]

Silenced until the latter half of the twentieth century, the voice of the Apache was often only heard through the interpretation of missionaries, captives, novelists, playwrights, archaeologists, anthropologists and *historians* and consequently segregated into the categories of non-industrialized, non-literate, savage, primitive, non-Western and Indigenous. The effect of the categories can be found in the writings of the American popular culture as the colonists confronted the Indigenous.

> It can be a phase of the moon that maddens Apaches or a word from the memory of a medicine chief, or a strange flower by the trailside, or an omen of blood in a stone; because the Apaches hate life and they are the enemies of all mankind.[12]

Even though fictional, the romantic or sentimental novels and captive narratives shaped the image of the American *Indian*, but also summarize the cultural beliefs within nineteenth century America.

One of the prime sources of the Apache from the nineteenth century was Captain John Bourke, aide to General George C. Crook[13] from 1870to 1875 and again from 1884 to 1886. His documentation of the Apache and their culture was long believed to be the

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[11] Julie Cruikshank, "Oral History, Narrative Strategies, and Native American Historiography: Perspectives from the Yukon Territory, Canada", *Clearing a Path,* ed. Nancy Shoemaker (New York: Routledge, 2002) 6.

[12] James Warner Bellah, 1850's novelist quoted in Ebersole's *Captured By texts.*

[13] It was General Crook who led the forces that finally subjugated the Apache.

earliest and most detailed study of the tribe. Bourke's analysis of the Apache is found in *The Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology American history* (1892) delivered to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and portrays the Apache as *enemy, savage* and their religion as witchcraft. If history is in the details, Bourke gives us many, unfortunately, his entire analysis attempts to view the religious practices of the American *Indian* as a primitive form of ancient Egyptian or antiquated Hebrew rites and the use of sacred cords and symbolic crosses within tribes as reflective of missionaries. However, contrary to popular beliefs of the period he states that Apache warriors did not mutilate their body in any manner and considered being in the presence of a woman during menstruation a blessing. He also comments upon his frustration while attempting to gather data on their culture. "Probably no tribe with which our people have come in contact has succeeded more thoroughly in preserving from profane inquiry a complete knowledge of matters relating to their beliefs and ceremonials."[14] He further explained that he had to depend upon captive Mexican interpreters during his early explorations and although married into the tribe, their statements, Bourke, remarks, are riddled with their own views and bias, such as: "the Apache has no religion; Apache gods were translated as *santo* (saint) or *diablo* (devil)*;* and sacred Apache ceremonies were designated as *hechiceria* (witchcraft)."[15] The problem of identifying the Apache culture is apparent to even a nineteenth century Army captain although he is unaware of his own participation or his peers in biased reports. For example, he writes: "There are medicine-women as

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[14] John Bourke, "The Medicine-Men of the Apache*", Ninth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1187-88* by J.W. Powell (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1892) 499.

[15] Ibid.

well as medicine-men among the Apache . . . these women devote their attention principally to obstetrics."[16]

Such nineteenth century assumptions and scientific studies are misleading and seem today as antiquated as the 1886 journal of Lieutenant Petit, who writes three centuries after the Apaches' first documented encounter with the European: "Apache scouts seem to prefer their own medicine-men when seriously ill, and believe the weird singing and praying around the couch is more effective than the medicine dealt out by our camp sawbones."[17] However *dated* studies such as Captain Bourke's seem today we need only read the twentieth century publisher's preface to his study, republished as the *Apache Medicine-men* in 1970 to understand the depth of *false consciousness* which still remains within the twentieth century.

> When the Caucasian came to the Western Hemisphere, he found the aboriginal culture of a neo-Indigenous race. The bronze skin of the Natives looked red beside the white skin of the intruders. The Caucasians called these Natives red men, or *Indian*s. Among these simple aborigines the white man discovered eventually the cult of mysticism and witchcraft presided over and exemplified by the Medicine Man.[18]

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[16] Ibid 468.

[17] Lieut. Pettit, *Journal,* (U.S. Military Service Institute, 1886) pp.336-337.

[18] Robert B. McCoy, "Publisher's Preface", *The Medicine-Men of the Apache* by John G. Bourke (Glorieta, New Mexico: The Rio Grande Press, 1970) 2.

Such statements as the culture of the Apache was "steeped to saturation in primordial mysticism"[19] are not the misguided perspective of an early colonizer, but the published musings of a mid-twentieth century scholar.

We can see clearly the patriarchal lens that Herbert Spencer, a noted sociologist of the nineteenth century, was looking through when he states that Apache "women may practice soothsaying, but the higher religious functions are performed only by men."[20] Historically the role of women and their power within an Apache tribe is ignored or misunderstood within a patriarchal culture. This is especially evident if we look at the archiving of historical evidence such as the nineteenth century photographs of the Apache. An example of distortion grounded in cultural influences is evident in a photograph of Geronimo and the remnants of his tribe both male and female sitting outside their prison train. One of the women in the photograph was Lozen, a female powerful *di yin*[21] of the Apache. She was recognized in the photograph and later identified by an Apache scout. However, in contrast to the images of the men, not her name nor any of the women's names in the photograph are archived with the photograph, only their relationship roles to Geronimo such as wife, daughter, ect. Unlike the Christian Genesis myth, the Apache origin myth does not begin with an *Adam* as the first human, but an *Eve.* The significance of female power to the tribe is clarified when it is understood that the *Na'ii'ees,* a female puberty ceremony, was the most important religious and theatrical enactment of the Apache.

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[19] McCoy, 3.

[20] Herbert Spencer, "Descriptive Sociology", *Nos.* I-V, New York: 1875-76.

> It is common enough to find references to a skirmish that took place in late April 1882, during the flight of the Mimbres chief Loco and his following from San Carlos. Descriptions of the firefight assume a richer meaning once it is learned that the warriors had turned and fought to gain time for others in their band to complete an important religious ritual, a Puberty Ceremony, for a girl who had come of age.[22]

The *Na'ii'ees* ritual, which is mentioned during the flight of the Mimbres Apache in the nineteenth century is an ancient performance ceremony still functioning within the Apache tribes today. I have chosen it for this analysis of Native American performance because it is a festival as dense in ritual form, elements, and functions as the City Dionysia. Examining a tribal performance of the Apache and the ancient performance of the Greeks through a similar interpretive lens demonstrates each as a localized and *lived historical exchange.* Through the analysis of a functioning contemporary tribal performance, ancient performance can be explored without the limitations of fixed Western definitions. Recognizing the likeness of the forms also enables theatre historians to examine accepted categories inherent in *false consciousness* and question the validity of definitions based on difference within their theatrical narratives. Through a deeper understanding of performance's place within the ritual function and form our

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[21] Apache shaman, credited with supernatural powers and considered a person to be feared, respected and heeded.

[22] Haley, xi.

understanding of theatrical enactments inside tribal structures can only be expanded. The hierarchy which places the written over the oral or theatre over ritual is diffused as each, the privileged and the excluded, are seen to reveal equally complex dramatic structure, elasticity and semiotic power.

***Na'ii'ees* Ritual Form**

The very concept of a linear history in the West is in conflict with that of the Indigenous of the Americas. American tribal religions are spatially located in contrast to Christianity's temporal dimension and linear history. The *Indian* history and religion is combined with geography creating a *sacred geography*.[23] The landscape is the *history* and is recounted through migrations, revelations and incidents occurring at sacred places. It is not a date, such as 1492, which marks an historic event to the Apache, but the place. For example, no one knows the date or period of time when the Navajo nation was formed; however, everyone can point to the exact mountains where the emergence occurred.[24] In contrast, the distance between two locations for the Apache was not in feet or miles, but time. The combination of history and religion marked by a *sacred geography* is similar to the Greeks who could point to Mount Olympus and say there is where the gods battled and Zeus now reigns. Here, is where Athena stood and gave her gifts of wisdom to our city and this space is for Dionysus, purified by the blood of sacrificed pigs,[25] and designated through ritual performances which occur upon this sacred ground. The sacred locations within and around the city of Athens mark the tribes'

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[23] Deloria, 122.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Wiles, 188.

history and religion, just as the Apache's current condition is told through a history of its own recognized *sacred geography.*

Theatre historians view theatrical or performance texts as a means to understand the source culture's concerns and belief systems of a given period. This same method can be used to understand the performance culture of the Apache. For example, the origin myth of the Apache, far from being fixed, evolved to include the Europeans.

> When it was time for Yuan Life-giver to let people into the world, he called the children of White-painted Woman before him. 'The People will need weapons to hunt with and live,' he said. He laid before them a gun, and a bow and arrows. Killer of Enemies was older and got first choice. He took the gun. Child of Water had to take the bow and arrows. Killer of Enemies became the father of the white-eyes, and Child of the Water became the father of the *Indian*s. That's how they got to be different, they say.[26]

Similar to the ancient Athenians, no phase of the life of an Apache was separate from their spirituality. Just as the City Dionysia formed a cultural identification for the ancient Athenians, the *Na'ii'ees* identified the Apache culture and origin.

Within this culture all things in the universe were believed to have power. A member of the tribe's primary concern was to understand this power that saturated their universe affected them and how they might gain control of it and use it. All things animate and inanimate were believed to have a spiritual duality that could shape the path

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[26] Haley, 1.

of earthly actions.[27] When an Apache approached the earthly form they might obtain a portion of the form's spiritual power and become its *di-yin* (shaman or one who has power). Each *di-yin* specialized in a specific task and created the rituals, dance and songs which were necessary to fulfill the tribe's needs. For example a *di-yin* who could heal the wounds of a warrior was very different from a war *di-yin* like Geronimo or a *di-yin* who performed the birth ceremony. Each shaman's power was unique and their created dances and songs were only known to those they passed them down to as they neared death. A *di-yin* used within a puberty rite such as the *Na'ii'ees* was a shaman who had the specific power necessary for a young girl's transformance into White-painted woman. Dances and songs were continually changing and being shaped anew as *di' yins* found their power and formed the performances that pleased the power-giver and also allowed them to use the power. The rituals of the Apache were anything but *fixed* and there were no restrictions of age or sex pertaining to those who were given power.

The *Na'ii'ees* or Sunrise Ceremony (dance) is symbolic of the ideal state of happiness which Apaches believe existed long ago in their mythological past.[28] In some Apache tribes the source of the people, White-painted woman was created by the power of *Yusn,* the life giver, and through mating with a god, begins the birth of the *Tin ne ah* (the People).[29] In other Apache tribes *Esdzanadehe* (White-Painted Woman) is said to be the only survivor of the great flood and floats inside of an abalone shell.[30] The female

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[27] Ibid. 63.

[28] Tiki Yupanqui, "Becoming Woman: The Sunrise Ceremony", *Ceremonies of the Apache,* Geocities, Google, 5 Nov. 2002.

[29] Chiricahua and Mescalero Apache.

[30] White Mountain and Western Apache (Jicarillas and Lipans)

puberty ceremony enacts the story of the tribe and explains its existence as the participant transforms into White-painted Woman and receives the power of the first human, a female.

Like the Athenians the preparation leading up to the performance is elaborate and filled with ritual, training and traditions. The *Na'ii'ees* ritual form consisted of the reception of the power, performance, spirit dances, and the healing or giving of power. There are also numerous ritual elements within the four[31] day ceremony; however this chapter will concentrate upon communal participation, sacred space, costumes and sacred props, and the singer (*di'yin)* as channel to spiritual power. The ritual function within the tribe denotes performance's necessary place in the Apache culture.

Reception of Power

The preparation for the four day celebration began long before a young woman reached puberty. Haley suggests that even today: "The *Na'ii'ees* is so elaborate . . . that the girl's family might begin making preparations as early as a year before they expected her time to come."[32] All of the ritual and cleansing actions for the *Na'ii'ees* prepared the space, community and the ritual participants for the reception of White-painted Woman and the gifts of her spiritual power. In the past, five fresh buckskins were prepared for the costume of *Esdzanadehe* and a gown-maker of appropriate skill hired for the intricate task. A singer of power was found and contracted to sing over the sewing of the dress.

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[31] Four is a sacred number within the Apache culture representing the four elements (earth, wind, water and fire) and the four directions of the universe. The *Na'ii'ees* ritual took place over four days

[32] Haley, 135.

Symbolic props were created[33] and *ha dintin*[34] gathered. Paints were prepared for the sacred colors of the four directions: black for east, yellow for west, white for north and blue for south. White clays and red ocher were collected for face and body decoration. Food was also prepared for many days before the ritual feast. The family of the ritual participant was responsible for feeding those attending the four day ceremony. Today, many of the tribe brings provisions to share and some of the preparation rituals are abbreviated, but still remain an important part of the process as an Apache tribe prepares for the coming of White-painted Woman.

A suitable attendant of some power must be found and invited to train the young woman and guide her through the performance. A *di'yin,* with power received from the *Ganhs* (mountain spirits) must also be found by the family to choose and prepare those who were to impersonate the spirits through dance. "The one who dressed and painted the *Ganh*s had to stay in a little camp well removed from the festivities."[35] Preparation of she who would become *Is dzan naadleeshe'* (Changing woman) also began in isolation from the rest of her family and community. The young girl's preparation was and is lengthy and physically grueling as she prepares herself to be a receptacle for power. For four days preceding the *Na'ii'ees,* the young girl remains in isolation with her guide, *she who cries out*, as the community gathers and prepares the sacred space and ritual feasts.

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[33] If singer did not have the necessary props the family would supply them: a deer hoof rattle, basket tray with eagle feathers, and plenty of pollen.

[34] The pollen of cattails, corn or other plants. Considered the most potent of the beneficent powers attainable. The good that came through pollen was not specific, but it contained an aura of peace and favor wherever it was used.

[35] Haley, 136.

On the day before *Na'ii'ees,* four important preparation rituals were known to take place. The first was a sweat bath held in the morning and attended by the girl's male relatives. During this time, the shaman (*di'yin*, singer), assisted by two or three elders of tribe created the ritual objects that were to be used in the ceremony. Sacred objects that were often used were a pollen basket, staff, scratching stick, drinking tube, abalone shell necklace, a fringed buckskin serape and large buckskin to dance upon. Specific songs of power were sung as each symbol was created. The second ritual was the *nilaa'ikaa* (food exchange). The event consisted of a substantial gift of prepared food presented to the family of the ritual participant by her guide and sponsor. The third short ceremony, *bikee'ilzee* (she is dressed) occurs at dusk as the *di'yin* presents the girl with the prepared ritual objects. The final stage of preparation, *bidiltii* (night before the dance) is held later that same evening as the girl attracts the power of White-painted Woman through a ritual dance in her prepared costume.

Performance

The participants within the performance consisted of a singer (*di'yin)*, an attendant and a young female. Those performing were costumed, rehearsed their parts and purified themselves through prayers and sacrifices before entering the enactment space for several days. As the sun rose on the first day of the *Na'ii'ees* she who had received the power began the drama of *Esdzanadehe.* The young girl and her attendant enter from the east as the singer announced the flood and survival of White-painted Woman. This is the first time the audience and performers enter the sacred performance space. The audience walked by the transformed young girl who stood as the opening of the area created for her. The participant sprinkles each member of her tribe with pollen

as a blessing as they enter. The audience then sits or stands in a large circle leaving the eastern side of the performance area unblocked. As the story of *Esdzanadehe* is danced and sung each day, the women in the audience are active vocal participants and react with high shrill cries at certain climatic points of the story along with the attendant. The singer (*di yin)*, who directs and performs the ritual, are accompanied by rhythmic drums and chants from the male members of the audience. Each *di'yin* and their songs are distinct and their gestures expansive and visual as the story of the birth of *the people* are danced and told. Four songs were sung by the *di'yin* during each of the eight phases of performance.

The young participant dances around the circle in a flat cleared space and at certain moments upon the prepared buckskin.[36] Each part of the story is presented by a different intricate dance performed by she who had become White-painted woman. The dance and rituals which surrounded each segment are distinctly separate and unique. At the end of the dramatic struggle the young *Esdzanadehe* meets her old self and becomes a woman with the wisdom of age and also the health and beauty of youth. "Changing Woman never died and she will always live."[37] In this way the ancient power of woman was reborn again and again through each new generation. Each transformation of a young girl into the first woman renewed the tribe's power through her wisdom and health.

The myth enacted may vary from Apache tribe to tribe, but all seem to retain the character of White-painted Woman, the birth of her two sons: killer of enemies (slayer of

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[36] *White Mountain Sunrise Ceremony*

[37] An expression of the Apache representing their continuous culture.

monsters) and son of water, and her gift of power in order to instruct and bless the tribe. The story begins with White Shell Woman (*Esdzanadehe)* surviving the great flood inside an abalone shell. She is alone and wanders the land as the waters recede. As she reaches the top of a great mountain, she is impregnated by the Sun, who understands her aloneness. *Esdzanadehe* gives birth to a boy, who she calls, *Killer of Enemies*. Soon afterwards, she is impregnated by the Rain and gives birth to another child, *Son of Water*. However, the world of *Esdzanadehe* is not safe. She must send her sons from her to kill the *Owl Man Giant* who has been terrorizing her People. Her sons return in victory bringing the meat of their kill. Changing woman utters a loud cry of joy and triumph. She is guided by the spirits to establish the rite of womanhood to be given to all daughters born to her people as a means to instruct and empower the tribe. When *Esdzanadehe* grows old she walks east toward the sun until she meets her younger self. Her spirit merges with her youthful self and she retains the wisdom of age combined with the strength of the young.[38] Repeatedly she is reborn from generation to generation replenishing the tribe and giving her power to its newest adult female member.

The Apache *Na'ii'ees* performance ends with the triumph of White-Painted Woman and her children over their enemies. The conclusion of the enactment (the evening of the fourth day) was sometimes signaled by *Esdzanadehe* who led a horse to the spiritual singer as payment. Each evening the performance was followed by a community dance and celebrational feast.

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[38] White Mountain Apache origin myth.

Spirit Dances

One of the characteristics of the *Na'ii'ees* that sets it apart from all other ritual forms of the Apache is the presence of *Ganh* mountain spirits as an evening entertainment befitting White-painted Woman's reception by the tribe. *Ganhs* were the most powerful forces left upon the earth by *Yuan,* and could be called upon by dancers who impersonated them with the assistance of a Ganh *di' yin.* The male Mountain spirit dancers were trained and protected by a *di'yin* that was known to have *Ganh* spirit power. Similar to the other performers, the dancers prepare for days before attempting to dance. They are trained, ritually dressed and costumed by the *di'yin.* As the *Ganh* dancers entertained the tribal members each evening, White-painted woman dances the life dance alone with the *di'yin* (singer) channeling his spiritual powers with hers. Normally these dancers assisted the people by curing disease or ridding a community of dangerous forces through specific ritual dances accompanied by prayers and songs of a *di'yin* of some power. The *Na'ii'ees* is the only Apache ritual form in which the *Ganh* impersonators danced merely to entertain and bring luck to the tribe. Their performances were usually accompanied by a *clown*.[39] "One of the functions of the clown in performance was said to be the punishment of bad children and possibly to kidnap them."[40] A *clown* dancer was told by parents before the performance of any young members of the tribe who had misbehaved and the *clown* would then terrorize the misbehaving children during the

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[39] The Apache clown should not be confused with the West's idea of a clown. Here the clown is sly, sometimes scary and a teacher of lessons, often by their own folly. This clown is a manipulator and much more similar to the wise fool than the buffoon.

[40] Haley, 131.

evening performances. The evening dances of the *Ganhs* were situated to the north of the performance structure and occurred around a large fire some distance from the sacred space of White-painted woman. Every evening after the enactment of the phases of the origin myth the community gathered socially and is entertained by the costumed *Ganh* dancers. The final evening of the *Na'ii'ees*, White-painted Woman joins the festivities. The entire community dances with the Mountain spirits in celebration of their tribe's renewal by the addition of another life-giver invested with the power of the first mother.

The Healing or the Giving of Power

Throughout most of the *Na'ii'ees*, the girl's power is used to benefit herself. However, immediately after her performance it becomes property of the tribe and is available to all in attendance. The Apache believe that one could acquire power in two ways: to be approached by the spirit power of an object, animal or force or to gain knowledge from a shaman on how to approach a power (only rarely was an active seeker judged acceptable). Those who were approached were seen to have the most potent form of power. "One approached by a power was not bound to accept the ceremonial knowledge. . . .and the capabilities of each individual came into play."[41] A Chiricahua Apache explains the difference in power in a comparison of wind and lightning. "Wind said to Lightning, 'See the mountain over there. If I want to I can split it into two pieces.' Lightning answered, 'I also.' They both had power to do the same thing, but the power of the wind is not the power of lightning."[42] The female puberty ceremony "was the least

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[41] Ibid 64.

[42] Morris E. Opler, *An Apache Life-way: The Economic, Social and Religious Institutions of the Chiricahua Indians.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941) 210.

shamanistic of all Apache rites"[43] because the main participant spread the power of *Esdzanadehe* (White-painted Woman) directly to all those who attended. The *di yin* participating in the performance merely assists the channeling of power through the power of their songs and story-telling.

The performer's power is believed to be very strong during the four days of the *Na'ii'ees* and the four days following the ritual. Exhausted, but exhilarated, the young girl transformed into woman spends the final day of the ceremony following the performance blessing her tribe with pollen. The girl who has become woman is believed to have gained the power of White-woman and for a period of time heal the sick. To stand in front of her or be blessed by a Sunrise participant was considered a healing gift. Some ritual participants were believed to have gathered exceptional powers. They were called *baagodiyih* (she can perform miracles).[44] If a sick person felt relief after being in the presence of the transformed girl it often meant that the performer had obtained great power. Sharing her gained spiritual power with the tribe and receiving gifts from its members was an important and climatic element of ritual within the *Na'ii'ees.* For four days following the *Na'ii'ees* the new woman was considered a channel of power and her gift of power given freely to all those in her presence.

Ritual Elements

Before the performance ceremony begins the participant is transformed through a covering of a sacred mixture of cornmeal and clay, which she must not wash off for the four days of ritual. The preparation of the symbolic costume, building the sacred lodge,

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[43] Haley, 134.

[44] *The Sunrise Dance*

purifying the dance areas, training of she who will become White-painted Woman, and the obtaining of the *Ganh* dancers requires all those involved to follow a series of complex procedures and rituals. The ritual elements contained within the Apache ceremony are comparable to the City Dionysia and remain localized within the tribal community. The entire community participates in food preparation, ritual construction of the performance space and the social gatherings each evening. My examples within this chapter are taken from observed performances and documentation from other scholars and depict a performance history which is both ancient and continuous.

Sacred Space

The ritual space was chosen by the *di'yin* hired by the family and was usually close and yet, not part of day to day tribal life. Before the four day ritual could begin, a structure was often built on the south side of a level space cleared for the performance. This structure is for the ritual food preparation. Sometimes another smaller structure was created for the attendant (she who makes the cry) and the young girl some distance from the cleared ground. As the performer was being prepared by her attendant, her male relatives created the staging area in the center of the chosen clearing. The preparation of space and its ritual creation vary as does the performance from tribe to tribe.[45] However, whether constructed or cleared, the space was purified and carefully created through complex instructions from the *di yin*. For example, Haley describes a Chiricahua Apache structure as usually twenty-five to thirty-five feet tall and erected with specific prayers by an appointed *di'yin* and aligned with the four directions in every aspect. The opening to

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[45] Kathleen Whitaker, "Na ih Es: An Apache Puberty Ceremony," *The Masterkey,* Vol.XLV (Jan-Mar. 1971).

the structure was to the east. The singer of the ceremony sang Dwelling songs throughout the building of the appropriate house for Changing Woman. One song was sung for the raising of the poles and another for leaning the poles together and tying them fast. What follows is an example of a Chiricahua Dwelling Song:

> The home of the long-life dwelling ceremony
>
> Is the home of White-painted Woman.
>
> Of long life the home of White-painted Woman is made.
>
> For Killer of Enemies has made it so
>
> Killer of Enemies has made it so.[46]

Two eagle feathers were attached to the top and the entire structure was then sprinkled with pollen. All those who assist in creation of the performance space eat a ritual meal before its completion. The final act of the men is to dig a central hearth in the sacred space which she who has the gift of power will dance around.

No one except those creating the space may enter the prepared area, which has been purified by pollen, chants and specific songs created by the *di yin*, until the young girl has received the power of White-Painted Woman. The way the community approaches the space and their reverence within it expose its importance as the receiving ground for the power of Changing Woman. In the past the space selected to receive White-Painted Woman was different for each performance. Today, the enactments are often performed yearly or quarterly with several young girls participating and the space is often reused, but only after its purification.

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[46] Opler, 96.

Costumes and Sacred Props

On the first day in the early morning the hair of the young girl was often washed in yucca root or soap weed by the attendant.[47] In some tribes she was introduced the evening before in her costume for a ritual welcoming dance to those who had gathered. As the sun rises on the first day of *Na'ii'ees* the celebrant faces the east and as prayers are given and songs sung by her guide, pollen is pressed into the part of her hair and across the bridge of her nose. She is then dressed beginning with her feet in the costume of *Esdzanadehe.* From that moment on, the young woman has transformed into White-painted Woman and is treated by the rest of the tribe as the first woman throughout the *Na'ii'ees* ritual.

Within the Chiricahua tribe of the Apache the traditional costume required five fresh buckskins, one for the moccasins, two for the top (sewn flesh side in) and two for the skirt (sewn flesh side out). However, today the skins are often gathered and saved throughout the year or purchased. A woman who knows the songs of spiritual power was hired to sing during the costume's creation. When the dress was complete it was then dyed yellow to represent pollen and also beaded, fringed and painted with the symbols of White-painted woman: crescent moon, morning star, rainbow and sunbeams. The costume and symbols differ from Apache tribe to tribe, but its preparation and elaborate details are found in all performances. Before being dressed the girl was sometimes

[47] In some tribes the young girl to participate in the rite of passage is introduced the evening before in her costume.

painted from head to toe with the sacred white-clay mixture which made her appear as the powerful spirit of White-painted Woman.

As the stage area nears completion and White-painted Woman has been ritually clothed, fed and painted she is given the ceremonial tools which have been blessed and prepared just for her: a drinking reed (her lips cannot touch water for four days), a scratching stick (her hands cannot touch her own body) and a filled pollen pouch to allow her to give blessings to all who attend the ritual. Some tribes place an abalone shell to hang upon her forehead to represent the great flood and her survival. She also often received an intricately carved wooden staff detailing her journey as a woman and her cosmic relation to her world and tribe. The staff is considered an instrument of prayer and meditation, but also serves to aid the participant as she reaches old age. A white eagle feather was tied into her hair to symbolize a long life or at least until her hair became the color of the feather. Finally, downy feathers were sometimes attached to her costume so that she danced lightly.[48]

Communal Participation

Similar to the City Dionysia the entire tribal community was involved in the preparation for the *Na'ii'ees.* Those who lived outside of the community, but were related by clan were participants as they gathered. All those who performed were members of the tribe or known to be Apaches who retained considerable spiritual power. The entire community began to send gifts to the family soon after the announcement of a ceremony. Gifts were also given by the family of the girl to those who had gathered before the

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[48] All of the detail of costume and adornment vary from tribe to tribe, as well as songs and dances created by different individuals. Reservation life also reshaped performances and structures.

performance and sacrifices in the form of candy and tobacco were offered to the spirits who were mentioned within songs by various members of the community throughout the four days. The male relatives of the participant and the female each had specific rituals to perform before the ceremony and all of the audience participated in traditional chants and calls which were part of the performance. Costume, food, and prop creation were all performed by members of the tribe. Each evening of the celebration was filled with *Ganh* dancing as entertainment for the tribe. The gathering of the people allowed an extended period of social time, renewed friendships and often long awaited meetings between distant family members.

The audiences of the performance were active participants. As they entered the performance area they each dipped their hands in the pollen basket of White-painted woman and sprinkled her with the pollen to bring her good luck and strength in the following four days in return for her gifts of channeled power. White-painted Woman was not to wash off the pollen or paint but allow it to naturally wear off. Feasting was open to all during and after the ceremony and extra food had to be preserved for the occasion. On the final day after almost 12 hours of continuous performance the dramatic retelling ended and was followed by a feast and the entire community dancing. Male and female members of the audience joined in dances the final evening. White-Painted Woman was welcomed into the tribe once again.

The Di' yin as Channel to Power

The *di'yin* was seen as the channel between the source of power and the people within the Apache tribe similar to the way the playwright or poet was perceived as conduit or channel to the gods by the ancient Greeks. The myth enactment and story

varies from singer to singer and no two *Na'ii'ees* are the same. However, the *Na'ii'ees* ceremony came directly from Yuan, the *life giver*, and was given to all the people through the power of White-painted Woman who is reborn through each young women who performs the Sunrise ceremony. The *di'yin* or singer of the performance assisted in the transfer of spiritual power, but also was the director of the ceremony and narrator of the origin myth. The singer of the myth is usually an older member of the tribe who has obtained his or her own power of the songs, but young enough to be able to control the power. Each is paid for their services by the family of the initiate.

When *power* sought out its own shaman, the general terms of the ceremony or ritual were explained to the recipient. The one approached did not have to accept the power for being a *di'yin* was dangerous and also required self-sacrifice. The gift of power was not taken lightly. Ceremonial power was believed to require physical strength and must be performed exactly as the spirit wished for it to be effective. An older *di'yin,* as his or her strength weakened, could pass down their rituals and songs to another, but this did not necessarily mean that the power would accept the new *di'yin.* The relationship between a shaman and his or her power was a personal one. A *di'yin* could perform the power's ceremony, but that did not mean approval. The power could defeat the *di'yin* at anytime. It was believed that once a member of the tribe acquired a power's ceremony he was its keeper and must make sure that no one imitated his songs or dances.[49]

Each *di'yin* was different and their knowledge and ceremony distinct per individual. The ceremonial power of the *di'yin* was a reality to the Apache. Performance

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[49] Haley, 64.

and its functions were pointless without the Apache shaman creating the songs, dances and channeling power to the participants. For the *Na'ii'ees*, two *di'yins* were needed. One to choose, train and protect the *Ganh* dancers and another to sing and train the female participant in the ritual dances of White-woman. The *di'yin* of the Sunrise dance also created the sacred props and sang the dwelling songs to purify the space for performance. Thirty-two songs were sung during the performance and as many dances performed. The *di'yin,* like the ancient Greek poet, was believed to be a channel of the supernatural, and through their performances the audience could communicate with the power.

Ritual Function

The function of the *Na'ii'ees* was three-fold: First as a puberty rite where a girl transformed into a *life-giver* for the tribe, second as a retelling of the tribe's origins through dance, song and entertainment and thirdly as a healing and unifying force for the people. In a performance culture such as the Apache combining function with spirituality and entertainment was not unusual. The Apache also believed that the characteristics presented during the performance were those the celebrant would carry with her throughout her life. If the songs were sung correctly and with art, a *di'yin* found, who knew how to protect those using the power through prayers, and the young girl had rehearsed her part well, both she and the tribe would be blessed with good fortune and health. The intricate dances of White-painted Woman and the young girl's ability to physically endure and artfully perform benefited both herself and the tribe.

Similar to the choruses in the City Dionysia the Apache performers in the dramatic enactment are perceived as both of the tribe and of the spiritual world. Dance

and song are the primary means of telling the story in both cultures and considered gifts of spiritual power. The Apache believed that "the spirituality of any entity is timeless, such that a story is reawakened and moved through linear time."[50] By recreating their beginning they are reborn through the body of a young girl who is transformed through the power of White-painted Woman. Performance was considered a channeling of spiritual power and the audience a reactionary power waiting to be acted upon.[51] Creation stories identify a people and their past and also reaffirm the beliefs of a community as they strengthen their oral history. Changing woman was responsible for the creation of the world with each retelling her story strengthens in power as the tribe grows in unity. The theatre of the Apache transformed its audience, entertained them, and shaped their knowledge of the world.

The participants within the *Na'ii'ees* are both audience and performer, the story told and acted is dramatic, and through performance the history of the tribe is reaffirmed. Within a culture where all things were considered sacred there seems to be a striking similarity between the Apache sacred performance and those of the ancient City Dionysia. The participants in both cultures were members of the community and those who created the ceremonies were skilled in their songs, dances and knowledge of the ritual performance. In both cultures dance and song were considered communications from the spiritual world and the performance each retold ancient myths of the tribe while forming a channel between the supernatural and the participants. It seems probable that if the *Na'ii'ees* was a Christian drama enacting the Genesis story of Adam and Eve there

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[50] Fixico, 27.

[51] Ibid.

would not even be a question of whether the performance was theatre or ritual. If the four day ceremony and gathering were examined without the residue of the civilized/primitive dichotomy the mix of theatricality and sacred performance of the *Na'ii'ees* with its blessings and feasts, like the City Dionysia would be called a festival with dramatic offerings.[52]

Is it anymore believable that a woman could mate with the sun than that Greek warrior is invulnerable except for the heel of his foot or that a god was angry and caused a storm that killed most of the Greek force? Is it anymore primitive for the sons of Changing Woman to eat the flesh of their enemy than for Atreus to serve his nieces and nephews as a main course to his brother? Both myths and rituals speak of visions and accept omens and prophesy and yet, one is considered drama and the other primitive ritual.[53] One protagonist is perceived by Western historians to be a metaphor for all men, but *Esdzanadehe* is seen as a superstition of a primitive people. Both the Greek and Apache myths introduce their communities to their histories as well as their responsibilities within their cultures. When performed, the myths transform both the participants and the audience through a purging of self through mimesis. The Athenians believed that their performances pacified their gods and the Apache saw their performances as *spiritual portals*[54] for both audience and participant. Both cultures perceived their *theatre* to be a means to open a channel between themselves and the

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[52] The ceremony was often held once a year in late summer at harvest time for some tribes. After the Apache were re-located onto reservations the ceremony began to have more than one celebrant. Sometimes up to five young girls would participate as Changing Woman.

[53] Brockett, 4.

[54] Haley 140.

world of the supernatural. The ceremony of the *Na'ii'ees*, like the performances at the City Dionysus is believed to bring fertility and good fortune to the community. Yet, despite its form and function and regardless of the elaborate ceremony, concentrated plot, skilled performers and intricate spectacle, the Apache performance is not included within theatre history's narrative.

The benefit to the theatre historian of unbinding each performance from its ritual/theatre binary is deeper understanding of the tribal, oral cultures and the enactment of myths essential to the religion and well-being of their communities. Theatre, long restricted and bound by dramatic text, can also be reviewed as far more complex and intricate within its oral forms if released from constructed hierarchies. The Apache *Na'ii'ees* is a window to the ancient sacred world of the City Dionysia if we choose to look through it. Theatre history with its focus upon performance as a narrative can tell us much about these two, long veiled and misunderstood tribal performance societies, but only if it is released from its own past cultural influences. Each oral community with their dense and complex ritual structure creates a portrait of a living and functioning performance world. However, until theatre historians shift their gaze from definitions based upon difference their view of the oral sacred world of the Apache and the Greeks will merely be a distorted image based within the *false consciousness* of Western ideology.

Just as a people who oppresses another cannot be free, so a culture that is mistaken about another must be mistaken about itself.
Jean Baudrillard 1975

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSION

There remains an assumption with us since the days of Alexander the Great, that certain values, the values we treasure, are not merely the expression of our desires and preferences but in some larger sense the obvious and necessary values of mankind.[1] Today most historians can see that there are no uncompromised sources only contaminations and that perhaps cultural Darwinism is only considered *progress* if seen through the eyes of the colonists, who envision conquered cultures assimilating to become one with their identity. Just as we cannot analyze medieval theatre without an extensive exploration into what has been called the theatre of the *folk*, we also can not view a history of ourselves without acknowledging the contributions of those conquered by, assimilated into, or within direct conflict to our culture. Nor can we examine Roman theatre by excluding oral performance or limiting our view to the writings of a ruling class or early Christians, who despised what they were documenting, if we wish to see anything that resembles a complete performance history of the population. This study offers an alternative historiography which enriches our knowledge of ancient tribal performance through the lens of contemporary tribal performance and vice versa. Such an analysis enables theatre historians to reclaim the particular and broaden our restrictive categories while also seeing the complex interconnectedness of performance within each oral culture.

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[1] Pagden (2001) 168.

We, as historians, anthropologists, or simply the curious, as audience, can experience the *theatre* of the Apache and ancient Athenians, but never take the journey of performance as those who are within the community because we are *outsiders.* However, a study such as this allows us to review the temporal enactments as *living*, grasp a deeper understanding of performance function within each culture, and expand our knowledge of each through exploration of the other. If Native American performance is to be seen historically and viewed as part of a global performance history it cannot be examined as American or European theatre history, but as a separate and unique form combining both theatricality and ritual specific to a sovereign culture and nation. Similar to the ancient Greek performances it is distinct and its particular power and life lies in its localization and function within the tribe. When I began this dissertation I wanted to explore *why* theatre historians had excluded the performance cultures of the Native American and minimized the entertainment forms of all but the ruling classes within ancient histories. What I have found by placing Western theatre definitions on both the ancient and the Indigenous performance is simply that *we are not them*. We cannot look at the histories of all people or their performances in relationship to ourselves, our theories, or our sciences. To reclaim the particular which identifies each culture we must seek alternative means to explore the histories of diverse peoples or we simply continue the pattern of assimilation, exclusion or restructuring their cultures into our own image.

Stephen Greymorning, a professor in Native American Studies and Anthropology at the University of Montana, uses a *Trickster*[2] model entitled "When Trickster Found

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[2] Within Native American cultures *Trickster* represents a character that is always getting into trouble and creating problems. Trickster tales have often been used by Native cultures to illustrate improper behavior to teach what the tribe perceives as proper behavior.

His Way to Turtle Island", to allow his students to glimpse another culture's perspective and a telling of their history.

> Long ago when Trickster still lived only within the land of his own people, he was very restless and wished to explore beyond the limits of his world. It had come to his attention that there existed a land known as Turtle Island far beyond the great waters, and he became desirous to discover what he could gain from this land. When Trickster finally made it to Turtle Island, he found it to be very different from his own homeland. Trickster thought the climate harsh and unsuitable and viewed the mannerisms and lifestyles of the land's inhabitants to be crude and inferior to his own. Similarly, the people of the land also found the mannerisms of Trickster to be shocking and worth their ridicule. And so it was that they had viewed each other through the ethnocentric eyes of their own culture's values.[3]

As historians we must take into account that our perception is limited by the window we look through and the ideology which envelopes our culture. When we remove performance from these imbedded and invisible belief systems restrictions are weakened and our understanding broadened. Performance as a tool of historians, if freed, becomes a dense source of knowledge for any living or *dead* culture.

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[3] Stephen Greymorning. "Culture and Language: Political Realities to Keep Trickster at Bay", *A Will to Survive,* ed. Stephen Greymorning (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004) 5.

Within this dissertation I have attempted to expose a history of *false consciousness* that has led to Western theatre historians excluding Native American performance and marginalizing the oral theatre of ancient populations. However, musings by Jamake Highwater: "truth is not simply a matter of getting the facts wrong, but of developing a *credible falsehood*;"[4] or Ward Churchill referring to these *credible lies* as the *psychological needs* of the colonizer to reproduce truth that fits what is already believed about themselves and the *other;* do not solve the historical problem, but merely identify it. The path of historical truths, once developed as *credible falsehoods* by the colonizer, have been reinforced over the centuries through our acceptance of them. Once formed the myths become an essential element in shaping the identity of a colonizer culture or its history. The fixed image of the Indigenous has been historically tied to Western identity and, from a Native point of view; the necessary distortion remains current even if disguised. The Athenians, too, are tied to our Western identity and fixed into an unmoving historical icon and yet, both can be re-seen as *living* performance through the recovery of functioning rituals. As a theatre historian I perceive performance as unfixed and, through the study of this lived exchange, diverse contemporary and ancient cultures **can** be examined if we remain aware of the influences shaping our past and current research.

Ironically, this dissertation which began with the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City and its treatment of Indigenous performance within Western ideology concludes with the summer Olympics in Athens and its enshrinement of Ancient Greece. As I

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[4] Churchill, 117.

watched the opening ceremonies of the 2004 summer Olympics in Athens, the Western commentators focused upon ancient Greece as the source of all things: knowledge, humanity, drama, art, ect. While the elaborate spectacle unfolded, I could only wonder what the delegates from Japan, Middle Eastern Nations and China were thinking as their histories were simultaneously erased as inconsequential. The nation of the Apache was not included in this global contest. I rest my case.

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VITA

Marla Dean was born in Sherman, Texas to Patrick and Nadene Egan. After her mother's divorce and second marriage she was raised by her mother and step father, Raymond Dean Jr. At the age of twelve her name was legally changed to Marla Kathleen Egan Dean. She began performing in theatrical productions and creating her own at an early age. She received a tuition scholarship to the University of Texas in Austin from the Drama Department and attended the University for several years before moving to New York City. She appeared in several productions off-Broadway at La Mama and West Beth in NYC. Her first play was produced at Tyson Studies in the same city in 1978. She married, became focused upon writing plays and having babies. She moved back to Austin, Texas. after her third child was born and worked as the playwright-in-residence at Capital City Playhouse. She would later become a resident director and director of new play development at the same theatre She created several workshops for the playwright and added a new play series to the production season. She received the honor of a special day in her name from the city of Austin for her work with central Texas playwrights. Her plays have been finalist at the Eugene O'Neill and National Repertory Festivals. Marla returned to New York in 1987 and worked briefly as a script writer for *Guiding Light*, waited tables and wrote several new plays and screenplays. In 1990, she moved her family (minus one husband) to Seattle, where she began writing grants for *Remembrance Through the Performing Arts*, a theatre group focused upon the development of the original script. In 1994, *Remembrance* moved to Austin and she became their Director of New Play Development. The group continues to develop new plays culminating in

Works-in-Progress productions. By the time Ms. Dean decided to return to the University of Texas and focus upon scholarship, she had spent some twenty-three years as a director, dramaturge and playwright. Marla has directed some fifty plays and musicals, developed over 200 original plays for production and written nine full length plays. From 1997 to 2000 she completed her undergraduate degree and obtained her master's in theatre history and criticism from the University of Texas at Austin. Her thesis was entitled "The Necessary Theatre of Ariane Mnouchkine and Peter Brook". She studied extensively with Dr. Oscar Brockett and Dr. John Brokaw. In 2000, she began a four year doctoral fellowship at Louisiana State University in theatre history, criticism and theory. Her most recent directed plays were Dr. Leslie Wade's original script, *The Purple Bird in the Coler Tree*, produced and developed at Louisiana State University in 2002 and Diane Son's *Stop Kiss*, directed for the fall 2004 season at the University of Montevallo in Montevallo, Alabama. Currently she is an Assistant Professor in the Theatre Division at the University of Montevallo where she directs, teaches acting, directing, playwriting and theatre history. She has recently completed a new play *Politically Active.*