

THE HORIZON OF THE RENAISSANCE

The centuries have acted rather as a warehouse for the idea we harbour about the Renaissance: the age of initiative, the age, above all others, of motivated decision-making provoked by strong images, the age when decisions were taken with ardour and carried through with confidence. If this intuition is not an unreal one, then historians should both stake their claim in it and account for it.*

The fine quality of self-confidence which we attribute to the great figures of the Renaissance supposes the necessary and certain knowledge that one can "change the order of things." And one can have a fairly clear idea from the example of the French how this certain knowledge is formulated and how it operates.

In a well-known panel in the Francis I Gallery at Fontainebleau (the traditional title of which is "*L'ignorance chassée*" [Ignorance driven out]) a confused procession of blind and crippled people has been driven from the radiant temple, which the monarch is about to enter, armed with book and sword. By

Translated by Simon Pleasance.

* This text includes the first two parts of the inaugural Reading of the Chair of "Renaissance Art and Civilisation in Italy" given at the Collège de France on January 20th 1971.

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comparing dates and checking the circumstances it has been possible to establish that the hysterical crowd represents, allegorically speaking, the University theologians who were hostile to the idea of instituting royal readers who were independent of them; this panel, therefore, clearly marks the withdrawal from the Sorbonne in 1534 and the subsequent foundation of the Collège de France (whose statutes and premises, incidentally, were not settled until some time later). This observation was made by a scholarly historian in the 18th century who writes: "The foundation of the Collège de France is verified by a monument which can still be seen at Fontainebleau in one of thirteen frescoes painted by Maître Roux".¹ This indication can thus be added to the valuable research carried out by Abel Lefranc and Marcel Bataillon on the somewhat turbulent origins of the house of royal readers.² Behind the two designs—that of the allegorical frescoes painted by the Florentine, and that of a method of teaching the three scriptural languages without theological control—we find the same men and the same attitude. The far-reaching metaphor shown in the painting—and in the print which has given it a wide diffusion—illustrate for us, better than any words or interpretation, the unique character of an undertaking which was hitherto unprecedented: power intervening in favour of what it considered to be a transformation of customs by knowledge, i.e., if I may call it that, a *cultural revolution*.

Perhaps the greatest problem of the Renaissance lies here, or at least in the imbroglio of generous schemes, political designs, will and chimera which caused a likeable, fickle and showy prince to engage so directly in a course of action in which, for all that, he would be unable to pursue things to their conclusion. Did

¹ C. P. Goujet, *Mémoires historiques et littéraires sur le Collège Royal de France*, Paris 1758, volume I, page 239. In *Pandora's Box, The Changing Aspects of a Mythical Symbol*, New York 1956, p. 41, No. 9, D. and E. Panofsky point out the passage which nevertheless escaped consideration in the study "The Iconography of the Galerie François Ier at Fontainebleau," in *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, July 1958, p. 119. The introduction of Lazare de Baif as the probable author of the design is appropriate: see *Bulletin de la Société nationale des Antiquaires de France*, 1968, pp. 186-187.

² A. Lefranc, "La fondation et les commencements du Collège de France," in *Le Collège de France, 1560-1930*, Paris 1932, pp. 25-58; M. Bataillon, "Le Collège de France," in *Revue de l'Enseignement Supérieur*, 1962, No. 2, p. 7.

people really think that culture would gradually enlighten the whole human order? culture, the third force which had crept furtively between the traditional structures of the West: the Church and political authority; which had started by deciphering Greek, Latin and Hebrew and by resorting to the great texts, now cleansed by philology. Among a small yet passionate group, would it be the appearance of this passion for "Lights" and of this burst forward towards learning which would produce at one and the same time a knowledge of man and an ethic capable of changing the order of things? This attitude and hope, which seem typically French, quite simply invited Paris to go beyond the Sorbonne, and France to exceed Gothic art. And this was not the first time that this country, with its network of inheritance, was to turn against itself to some degree. Guillaume Budé, who was behind the nomination of the readers, and Lazare de Baïf who took *Il Rosso* to Fontainebleau and, in our opinion, played a part in the design of the Gallery, were both convinced that the University needed reform and that this was where modern culture would be born. Customs had to be violated in order to conjugate a blurred need for renewal with an aspiration which took root in Italy at the expense of the "barbarians" from the North. All this was not set down directly in the scholastic debate over the status of the royal lecturers. But the art expresses it. The exuberant cycle of activity at Fontainebleau reveals the deep implications of the movement, thanks to its bizarre and obscure illustration, its nudities, its fauns, its poetic archeology, its wealth of figures, in which everything seems to stem from Italy, although there is not even any precedent for this composition and style in Italy. It is from this knot of relations that a great problem begins to emerge.

The French situation is not an isolated one; it is an episode within a whole complex of reactions and exchanges which affects the sensibility of nations but which has to be approached by going beyond the practice and custom, contracted in the previous century, of unfolding history according to the perspective proper to each country. This is an age in which everything appears to be stirred up by a threateningly active and hectic movement: the State asserts its position and the political frameworks are dulled, the impetus of popular literature takes a hold, and soon, with the Reformation, separate religious acknowledgements occur. And yet Europe with its differences and splits had never been less part-

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itioned; there was general exchange, general circulation of ideas, and at every turn the stamp of Italy cropped up, either as a contradiction, or an extension, or a volte-face. Was this not just a curious accident? What did this multiple provocation conceal? Italy, herself in a state of alarming division, was beset by constant invasions and humiliations; the extraordinary cunning of her policies could not penetrate the stubborn ambitions of the French and the Imperials; she underwent a slow and fatal loss of economic substance and the New World was to distance itself still further from the axis of prosperity. But the fact that, despite this deplorable situation, Italy was paradoxically omnipresent with her men and her models, the fact that she attracted, stimulated and provoked, even by way of contrariness and disguise, was due to her re-introduction of something which must have been forgotten into men's minds and even their hearts. A mirage? Perhaps, but powerful enough to act on the potent structures of the northern world. For this something is more necessary than the intellectual attraction of the ancient world which is so often quoted and which snobs, scholars and philosophers constantly had on their lips. What is needed is the full weight of a richer and more pregnant reality of which antiquity is no more than an extract and a sideshow. I would happily call this immediate and diffuse reality the Mediterranean estate or the Meridional instance. At the moment when the aspect of the world was about to pivot and reduce this reality to a marginal position, Italy projected the South with its entire apparatus of fables, its eloquence, its confidence, its refinement, its quaintness, its irony, throughout a stupefied Europe.

The Mediterranean, therefore, at once evident and secret, historic and actual, should be seen as the horizon of the Renaissance. A hundred details invite this conception. To quote just one, which is well-known: when Charles VIII and his warriors marched in haste northwards from Naples towards the Alps, their baggage—apart from an unfortunate sickness—was bird-merchants, gardeners and fountain-makers.³ The craftsman came before the intellectual. A fine book has been written from an economical and sociological viewpoint about this grandiose and tormented 'historical personage,' the sea within the Renaissance,

³ *Archives de l'art français*, vol. I, p. 108 etc.

with its skies, its contours, its stillnesses, its movement and its dramas.⁴ The task which remains is to account for the powerful ebb from the South which spread across Europe at this time, emanating from Italy. If we were in a position to conceive of the history of the West as a whole, we should be bound to emphasize the easily ascertainable importance of a North/South polarity, rather than the far less consistent East/West which is destined to emerge later on. For reasons of atavism, because of the play of local patriotism, but also because of the innate sense of the universal contained in the Roman definition of the Church and the Empire, Italy pressed ahead with a kind of empassioned process of mustering her forces, as from the 14th century. Situated between Spain, absorbed by the Reconquest, and Byzantine Greece, erecting Ottoman mosques, Italy was something of a melting-pot for resources old and new; travellers visited the Pyramids; manuscripts were brought back from northern monasteries, as were currencies, and steles from the ruins—the former went to Florence, the latter to Ancona, Padua or Venice. The medical traditions and astrological practices of the Jews and Arabs were taken in and extended. All kinds of rediscovered or revived practices came to swell the spectacular element of cults in the sanctuaries and the freeness of festivals in the squares. Italy became the involuntary intermediary towards this sort of heart of the world, and heart of history, beating away in the Mediterranean. If a Corinthian design on a tomb, an invocation to Venus or Apollo round a letter, a medallion of Hercules on a breast-plate assumed a convincing meaning, this was not so much because of an adherence to a positive order of references, or even to a calculated model, as to an allegiance to a marvellous realm, of which Italy acted as a prop. From that time grievance and resistance were frequent, for the engineers, artists and philologists of Milan, Genoa or Florence were hardly shining paragons of modesty. Those who were to be seduced and led to a state of intellectual or poetic shipwreck called it illusory. But it represented an ideal forum to those whom the extraordinary Italian versatility enabled to barter the mirage for all kinds of substantial acquisitions; among these, in passing, must

⁴ F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen au temps de Philippe II*, 2nd edition, vol. II, Paris 1966.

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be included the diplomats, speedily converted into connoisseurs and customers—their role as intermediaries and, in their own way, double agents, deserves close study at some later date.

If this view is correct, we are dealing with a new climate. By a more or less necessary shift of the term, it is precisely the idea of climate which crops up doggedly in the works of old authors concerned with explaining the Renaissance. Abbé du Bos, elaborating an idea of Alberti and Vasari, shows that “the genius of every people depends on the quality of air breathed by that people” and, by coordinating every kind of fact about temperament and custom around such an apparently feeble formula, he valiantly asserts: “*Each single type of soil produces wines with a particular taste... This is why Italians will always be better equipped to succeed with painting and poetry than the peoples on the shores of the Baltic sea.*”⁵ The fact that such convictions were constantly re-echoed and became vital for men like Fauriel or Stendhal proves that in addition to the consequences normally attributed to the Renaissance, the rediscovery of the South left a lasting impression in European consciousness. If one suspected this, it would suffice to recall what the South contributed to the essence of Shakespeare, for whom Italy represented the country of wonderful passions, the country of the romantic, of music, the country where fate took such subtle turns, the natural frame for young love at Verona, for foolish and over-confident shipowners in Venice, the country where all enchantment was gathered into one isle hidden somewhere between Naples and Milan. “Above all else we need the South,” said the man who wanted to ‘mediterraneanize’ music in order to exorcise Wagner. The dreams, the ardours and the amazements of travellers from the North have constantly embraced the factors with which we are concerned with passionate experiences. We shall therefore have to be at once more attentive and more suspicious of their admissions than normal. To the devoted pilgrims to Rome, the cynical tourists to Venice or Naples, to men in torment, men of leisure, men of peace, Italy has handed out an injunction to bring their lives and beings up-to-date, to see their lives more explicitly.

⁵ Abbé du Bos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et la peinture*, Paris 1919, vol. II, p. 288.

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When Augustin Renaudet, in 1947, asked himself "What does the Italian Renaissance mean for the historian?" he found the answer in Machiavelli who had, with considerable accuracy, measured the political weakness and the cultural superiority of the Italian cities; in the final book of *The Art of War* he declared to his compatriots: "I should not like to see you lose either your courage or confidence, for it would seem that this country was created to revitalize dead things, as we have seen in our painting, our poetry and our sculpture..." The civic concept completes the cultural impetus and, to quote Renaudet's concluding words, everything is bound together in a humanism, "if by this word one intends an ethic of confidence in human nature."⁶ This then is the far-reaching energy and consequently the lasting asset of the Renaissance.

This is not altogether our viewpoint. In the course of his otherwise warm and admiring revision of the works of his old friend, Lucien Febvre could not stop himself exclaiming: "What! that old carcass humanism again!"—a jibe which was taken not without a certain bitterness. It was intended to establish the shift towards a philosophy of history which embraces facts at the expense of an analysis of the currents and counter-currents, of man and environments, of which Renaudet gave a memorable example in his masterpiece: *Préréforme et Humanisme à Paris*. Universal meaning or isolated moment? The pure line of an ideal or expansion and conflict? which deserves priority? The essential question had been asked. There is no need for alarm: the divergent interpretations, in one sense, simply reflect the excessive malaise or complexity of situations lived through. Like the idea of classicism, that of humanism has become too current to be used without dissociating its various aspects. One can at once single out three: the first, positive and technical, concerns the philological and archaeological work which recovers fables, forms and figures of antiquity and makes them available today; the second describes the classical inspiration which was to impose itself little by little throughout the development of the arts and

⁶ Augustin Renaudet, "Le problème historique de la Renaissance Italienne (1947)," in *Humanisme et Renaissance*, Geneva 1958, p. 81 ff.

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literature; the third stresses the meeting-point of the Christian tradition and antiquity: the Renaissance allowed both to infiltrate within it, but only felt this as a possible and maybe not too distant conjunction.

To an extent the last point governs the others, and should be dealt with first. Thanks to humanism (in the broad sense) the Renaissance was able to see the fixture of the startling turn of fortune of this "eternal humanism striving to incorporate Christian spiritualism" (Auguste Renaudet) and which, incidentally, ends up by including the highest representatives of Christian thought. This vast perspective stirs up all our Mediterranean fibres. It is true that this conciliation of two wisdoms was the concern of formidable men such as Erasmus and many others in his wake, but to the Renaissance it appeared as the ideal remedy to a situation which refuses it absolutely and which hinders a man like Montaigne from signing off without ambiguity. More serious still: the religious questioning which gathered momentum throughout the 15th century borrowed from every other concept save that of an ethic of simplicity. Ficini based his theology on Plato and Plotinus, as the Fathers of the Church, but he endowed every articulation of the Universe with a uniqueness which was taken from hermeticism. Dante did not miss the chance to include an unexpected face of ancient god in the Poem. Both these men epitomise many others, and one does not try to find the ideal convergence of adopted moral paths, rather the mysterious coincidences of the sacred. Was it not one of these penetrating expositions which enabled André Pézard to show in the weird and charming evocation by Matelda and the nymphs of the earthly paradise a situation from which Dante reproduces that at the beginning of Plato's *Phaedra*?⁷ The connexion slips through one's fingers, but not so the effort to coincide an interval of mystic asceticism with a moment of Platonic meditation on love. Who would believe that this is just a simple poetic detour when one sees this call rebound from the psychic shocks of Eros who tears us away from ourselves, in the exposition in Ficini's *Banquet*, in Léon Hébreu's ecstatic texts, in the ardent, crazed words of Giordano Bruno. Easily nourished by the exaltation of beauty

⁷ André Pézard, "Nymphes platoniciennes au Paradis terrestre," in *Medioevo e Rinascimento, Studi in onore di Bruno Nardi*, Florence 1955, pp. 543-594.

and by talisman images, this 'demonism' hails from the Mediterranean, but it leads not to a prudence but to a unique resurgence of the sacred as soon as one goes beyond the order of metaphors to follow the symbols—as all these authors do. On a more positive and familiar level, how many sanctuaries, ceremonies, cults and festivals deliberately link the two ascendants together? Bramante's Tempietto was erected on the Janiculum at a spot where, according to an erudite 15th century Roman, St. Peter had been crucified, but which, situated halfway between the *meta Romuli* and the *meta Remi*, thus associated the founders of pagan Rome with the founder of the Christian Church.⁸ The two Romes had to coincide for the imagination.

This gives a strange sensation of a twin-hearted reality. The idealistic views of the Renaissance elude this complexity. From the mid-14th to the mid-15th centuries—broadly speaking from the Schism to the Counter-Reformation—there were 82 canonizations in Italy, and—apart from a case such as St. Augustine of Florence, prior of St. Mark's at the time of Angelico—these personalities were clearly not concerned by the new culture, or rather by its critics, like St. Bernardine of Siena. The fact is that life carried on in an atmosphere of prodigies and miracles, and the sensibility of the learned was more often than not in unison with the collective and popular attitude, from which, nevertheless, it claimed its distance.⁹ Indeed, there was a great turning-point in the history of the Church, when, in the mid-15th century, the Papacy rallied to what can only be called: modern art, the art of Alberti, Rossellino, Donatello, Piero della Francesca.

In this decisive movement, Italy made sure of her destiny, but with an increasing ambiguity in the designs of the Church; what its adversaries later called "paganisation" stirred up a certain annoyance followed by marked disgust on the part of Nordic observers. The new St. Peter was projected; this costly undertaking demanded vast collections and an energetic sale of allowances,

⁸ J. M. Huskinson, "The Crucifixion of St. Peter: Fifteenth Century Topographical Problem," in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXXII (1968), p. 135 ff.

⁹ D. Hay, *The Italian Renaissance in its Historical Background*, Cambridge, 1961. Note the preface by F. Saxl: "Historians have something to gain by turning their attention to beliefs which the 19th century rejected as childish," in *Lectures*, London, 1957, p. 94.

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which unleashed the fury of one Brother Augustine of Wittenberg in October 1517. The romanization of the Church provoked the Protestant rupture. "Eternal humanism" does not help us to account for this twisting course. The history of symbols exceeds that of beliefs.

In the second accepted meaning, and by virtue of this return to ancient forms which fascinates Machiavelli, humanism became the basis of an exclusive effort towards nature and truth which was later recognised by the so-called classical civilisation. The traditional interpretation that it will be good for it too to return to its own questioning in order to see the problems and conflicts. This aspiration did exist; it ran through the whole era; but far from recovering the whole, it represented a will to organise, while fighting contrary, different, brilliant and disorderly initiatives. One imagines stalwart chancellors like Titus-Livy heroes and bankers reading Seneca passing beneath the bronze figures which Donatello has just erected in a Corinthian pavilion. If all we have to say about the Renaissance in Italy can be gathered into this scenario, then agreed, the humanism of dignity and glorification implied in this agreement sums it up and exhausts it. But these chancellors appealed to Roman civicism to help propaganda against Milanese expansion; those bankers had scruples and troubles which they were glad to disguise, Donatello had enemies who issued harsh criticisms about him; the sublime agreement had unforeseen faces, a fact which is well illustrated by study of the orders and discussions which seemed to know no end. Little time was needed for the major energies—of power and business—to be ridden by melancholy and hesitancy, which left the Florentines disconcerted in the face of the worldwide denunciation of which Savonarola was the embodiment. During this time, Milan, Naples and Ferrara were evolving a complicated, magnificent art in which ancient themes blended with other functions. Nothing proved more varied and variable than the repertoire of antiquity: fantastic at Padua, decorative at Milan, and for a long time non-existent at Venice.¹⁰ The definition and impact of humanism changed, in accordance with the concerns which kept it up-to-date; it was only through these new concerns that it found worthy interpretation.

¹⁰ A. Chastel, *Le mythe de la Renaissance*, Geneva 1968.

It would likewise be mistaken to think that the theoreticians—all Tuscan in origin—simply had to formulate, in the path of antiquity, one or two principles of architectural construction and pictorial composition for everything which was to follow. One thinks first and foremost of perspective, because this gave concrete form to a new articulation of space, be it to a constructed structure or a painted representation; but any attention given to the texts, and to ancient reliefs, could only present obstacles. The impetus came from elsewhere. In the guise of up-dating Euclid, there appeared a non-ancient discipline. The treatise was not in charge; as ever, the treatise strove to link up the practice with experiences which had to be justified, rationalised or recapitulated. Informed by local traditions, needs of the day, and underlying thoughts not mentioned by theory, the works ceaselessly overflow and belie it. Putting aside the technical recipes, often formulated fairly obscurely or elliptically, which they may contain, the treatises can be divided quite satisfactorily into two groups: those of the 15th century set up a Utopian perspective, which constitutes a stimulant rather than a plan; in the middle of the following century, in response to academic institutions and ecclesiastical surveillance, they have clearly polemical, restrictive and critical ends. In short, the former teach us what we dream of doing but do not always manage to do, the latter what we should not but often do do. The elegance and sensitivity of the painting of Ercole de' Roberti and Cossa in Ferrara represents a deviation from the art of Piero della Francesca, and the latter had deliberately modified the key and the basis of the initial Florentine style. All this escaped Alberti's models. No one had foreseen the invasion of the ornamental painting of the so-called "grotesques" which, starting this time from antiquity, introduced, right into the heart of the South, the classical taste for ornamental hybrids and fantastic space, which had a huge success throughout the whole of the West. The ancient forms were able to nourish every style, because the principle of any given style lay elsewhere.

One should no longer imagine that the whole era was permeated by a constant and confident collaboration between intellectuals and artists; this only happened seldom, and one almost always tended to dominate the other. Literary descriptions of real or imaginary works of art reveal a curious distortion in relation to the plastic object; the artists most attentive to archaeology such

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as Mantegna, Raphael or Il Rosso as it were flood it with their imagination and style. The life, customs, landscape and requirements of the poetic genres and of each art form dispose of learning. Who then, in the strict sense, were the professionals of humanism? Collectors, commentators, and publishers of texts, such people were able to turn things to account for the works of chancellery, the chronicles, the diplomatic epistles, the eulogies and epithalamia. To begin with these learned men were not attached to universities; they were secretaries, pedagogues, wits, in need of protectors and daunted by a life of activity¹¹; they carried on their work which bordered on scholastic instruction, but this work played its part in unsettling such instruction, as we are reminded by the matter of the royal readers. But as this slight French crisis also showed, rigorous philology was quickly superseded and its spirit transformed by gradual conjunction with all the disciplines, including the sciences. Textual criticism, ethics and history, philosophy, natural history... all these directions co-existed and overlapped; the machinery of knowledge was little by little affected, enriched or overturned by those holding back the mass of written things.¹² This process exempts us from choosing between the limitative and the extensive interpretation of the role of humanism: there has been a transition from a discipline of philologists concerned with ethics and civicism to an encyclopaedic ambition conveyed by the single anxious concern to tot up all that has been said about every subject, as if this was the way of being sure of attaining truth. Fate saw to it that, in order to aggravate the extent of this, this sort of intellectual encumbrance coincided with an extraordinary transformation of the means of communication between people. Our inquiry is worthless until we have measured the impact of the new media which upset the order and diffusion of culture: the printed book, and its complement: the engraving, i.e. the book illustration. These technical discoveries were elaborated and developed simultaneously north and south of the Alps. The figures are astonishing: before 1500 there were already thousands

¹¹ P. O. Kristeller, *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters*, Rome, 1956 (among other collections).

¹² E. Garin, *La cultura filosofica del Rinascimento italiano*, Florence, 1961 (among many other studies).

of works in existence. The book had the effect of multiplying anything and everything that struck the mind, all the passions, all the superstitions. The attention given to alphabetical characters and signs led to esoteric speculations and peculiar diagrams which irritated Erasmus and pleased Rabelais, for example. The print accelerated exchanges and consolidated models; but it tended to develop a graphic interpretation in which the forms were exasperated, in which, for example, we were to see the flourishing of fantastic ornament and strange compositions, annulling the solemn effect of classical style. Knowledge, culture and art were being inflected by their own vehicles.

We therefore think it useful to turn round—methodically—the ancient accepted meanings of humanism. If certain Renaissance works run the risk of seeming to us to be at once illumined and incomplete, generous and limited, it remains for us to come to a clear comprehension of the principle behind their radiance, in their special manner of refraction. As E. Cassirer and Eugenio Garin have seen, the superiority of the Italians stems from a constant preoccupation with linking man to the two cosmos to which he belongs: the world of nature and the world of culture, even if this comes about by way of astrological beliefs and the fiction of an infallible antiquity. It is surprising to see how easily and how surely this presence of the stars and constellations, heroes and gods is brought up to date on each occasion, by its association with the most rational and even the most artful calculations. There is a need for imaginative outburst, for fullness and exaltation, which is not easily reinstated but which should not be evaded. For it extends to social life, it colours it and, in many cases, involves it. One of the factors acting throughout the West at that time, like an economic and at once positive and perturbing factor, was this rule of ostentatious expenditure: extravagant presentations, luxurious foundations, spectacular constructions... from which only a few of the seignories, courts and communal societies and not many more chapters and religious orders escaped. No matter what it was, authority had to consent to it, even if it did not like it. Once again we are in a good position to understand the extent of this extraordinary squandering of money and energy which so increased the fortunes of art and which found what was thought to be a good if provisional

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term to describe it: "cultural investment."¹³ The moralists and satirists had a fine time talking about a world gone crazy. The round of implications of humanism would not be complete if one omitted the counterpoint of irony, of the laughter of demystification, of which Robert Klein spoke so judiciously: the junction of clever irreverence and aggressive burlesque, of Luciens and facetious 'follies,' reveals vivid nerves. An original dimension of the era appears in the corrosive manifestations which, though at times disconcerting, were constantly imbued with the humour of sarcasm at the expense of the gravity of the learned, the pomp of the grand, and the absurdity of the universe.¹⁴

All these questions are connected. They shed light on each other in an oblique sense. Their connexion delineates a worldwide situation—the very one which would use the over-flexible but indispensable term: Renaissance. Like the design concealed in the sagittal section of a stalk, we constantly come across an extreme attentiveness to *form*, a perhaps excessive confidence in the *media*, a perpetual shifting from the concept to the *image*, without which one might not be able to grasp how the age of initiative could become the age of discord and disillusion.

¹³ R. Lopez, *The Three Ages of the Italian Renaissance*, University Press of Virginia, 1970

¹⁴ R. Klein, "Le thème du fou et l'ironie humaniste" (1963), in *La forme et l'intelligible*, Paris, 1969.