The Public Body and the Rhetoric of Status in the Early Modern Culture

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Résumé: *Cet ouvrage se propose d'expliquer les mentalités, les discours et les pratiques culturels au début de l'âge moderne liés au corps prévus par le nouveau canon apparu au début de l'âge moderne et aux valeurs représentées par celui-ci. Les historiens sont tombés d'accord sur le fait que le début de l'âge moderne a marqué un changement dans la pensée, les mentalités et les valeurs, cette période étant considérée la plus importante dans la formation de la pensée moderne. Dans cet ouvrage le changement des mentalités est souligné par la comparaison entre les valeurs médiévales et celles soutenues au début de l'âge moderne. C'est dans cette période que l'homme devient conscient de ses possibilités, mais aussi le centre de son intérêt. C'est l'époque où l'individualisme devient la plus importante caractéristique de la personnalité humaine. L'individualisme introduit la préoccupation pour le moi public, pour les apparitions publiques. Les valeurs tellement louées pendant le Moyen Age ne sont plus valables; l'accent n'est plus mis sur le moi intérieur, mais sur le moi public. Au début de l'âge moderne l'homme essaie de faire de son mieux afin d'améliorer son image extérieure, de faire preuve de ses qualités et de cacher ses défauts. Par conséquent, les vertus du moi public ne représentent plus le but de l'existence humaine, mais elles deviennent une modalité par laquelle l'homme obtient l'ascension (qui au début de l'âge moderne est horizontale, pas verticale comme au Moyen Age), le succès dans le domaine publique. Le moi intérieur est mis au service du moi public. Cette nouvelle mentalité est reflétée à tous niveaux, dans tous les domaines de l'activité humaine: politique, vie sociale, économie, art, costumes et décorations.*
Mots-clés: *public, privé, corps, individualisme, mentalités*

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Introduction: Early modern material culture and mentalities

In the early modern times man becomes aware of his possibilities and focuses all attention upon himself. This is the epoch when individualism emerges as a major characteristic of man's personality. Individualism brings about the concern for one's public self, for appearances. The most praised virtues of the Middle Ages are no longer valid; the stress no longer falls on the inner self; what matters is the public self. In the early modern times man tries his best to improve his external image, to exhibit his qualities and to hide his flaws. The virtues of the inner self, therefore, are no longer the aim of man's existence; they become the means for man's ascent (which in the early modernity is horizontal, not vertical as in the Middle Ages), for his success in the public realm. The inner self comes to serve the public self. This new mentality is reflected at all levels, in all fields of human activity: politics, social life, economy, art, costumes, and decorations.

The social force that transformed rest into movement, inertia into activity, apathy into ambition, the force that replaced a static order with an essentially dynamic one, the force that blew up all the medieval restrictions and prejudices was capitalism. The formation of the capitalist mentality marked the beginning of the early modern times and has important, bringing about an important shift in mentalities.

The medieval mentality of sustenance was replaced by a new mentality, which praised work, economy, caution, exactness (which were seen as moral values). The development of city-life, of trades and industries, of commerce led to the appearance of a new social figure – the merchant – of a new mentality – that of profit, and, as a result, of a new value – time. Time no longer belongs to God; it is no longer subordinated to the Church. The exceptional, episodic time of the Church is replaced by a regular time, the merchants' time. Time is no longer collective, it acquires an individual dimension and value becomes increasingly obvious. Wasting time comes to be seen as a sin, a spiritual scandal. The proper and wise use of the time becomes a virtue [1].

At the end of the 15th century a new form of political organization emerges in Western Europe: the modern state, characterized by the concentration of all national forces around the monarch. Centralized monarchy puts an end to feudal anarchy, it abolishes the political rights of the nobility and the autonomy of the cities. The monarch is the vivid embodiment of the state, the representative of the nation's will and aspirations. The English centralized monarchy reaches its

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glory during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, when a real art of power develops. This power consists in its visibility, in the visible presence of its glory. Royal power is not based on a stable army, on police forces or on bureaucracy, but on 'theoretical celebrations of royal glory and theoretical violence visited upon the enemies of that glory' [2]. Power thus becomes an art, which will be studied and taught in a whole series of books dedicated to princes and courtiers. However this aspect of absolute power is present not only in centralized states, but also in states like Italy. The development of tyrannies in Italy led, according to J. Burckhardt, to the development of the modern mentalities, of Italians' self-awareness and individualism.

All the political and economic changes brought about a transformation in the structure of the society and in the individuals' approach to society. In the Middle Ages, according to Jakob Burckhardt [3], the two sides of the human consciousness – one oriented outwardly, towards the exterior world, the other – towards the inner self – were veiled in religious faith, childish naiveté and illusions. The world was seen in miraculous colours through this veil, and the individual had little self-awareness, seeing himself as part of a community, be it race, nation, corporation or family. The early modern man will tear this veil, and subjectivity and individualism will become the key ingredients of the (early-)modern mentality. The 14th century Italian doesn't want to know about modesty and humility any longer; he eagerly seeks to catch the eye or strike the others, and, even more than that, he does his best to be different or at least to seem different from others (difference as individualism). Burckhardt attributes the emergence and rise of individualism to despotism [4]. According to him, despotism increased and rendered more visible the individuality of the tyrant, as well as the individualities of his protégés, of the private secretary, of the civil servant, of the poet. These people were forced and became accustomed to explore all their inner resources and to speculate on them in order to accumulate power and to preserve it (in the tyrant's case), or to get the tyrant's favours and appreciation. But, although Burckhardt speaks about the Italian tyrannies, his theory is also valid for other monarchies. Elizabethan England is one good example.

Therefore, the early modern man uses both his inner and his outer resources in order to reach glory and to be a winner in the power game. He is fully aware of his own resources and exploits them, bringing them to his advantage. Typical of the early modern man is his quest for fame, since fame is no longer solely the attribute of saints and heroes, as it was the case in the Middle Ages, when glory could be equated with legend. N. Berdiaev discusses this shift in terms of the dialectics of the sacred and the profane, with the medieval times standing for the sacred and the early modern standing for the advent of the profane, brought about by individualism. In the same manner, other authors speak of representative figures or images of the two epochs. G. Duby attributes the image of the cathedral (spirituality, vertical ascent) to the Middle Ages and the image of the palace to the early modern times (*Le Temps des Catedrales*). Similarly, the emblematic medieval clerical figure is the monk [5], while the leading figure of the early modern religious life is the cardinal [6].

Revaluating the "public" and the "private": the rise of individualism
The changes that took place in the human consciousness and in mentalities are best illustrated by the changes in the private life and by the new approaches to "privacy". This change in mentalities, the appearance of self-awareness, of self-centredness are consequences of the emergence of the concept of "privacy" in the late Middle Ages and of the definite, clear-cut distinction between the public and the private.

This is not to say that there was no privacy in the Middle Ages. But privacy was understood in a much broader sense than later on in the early modern times. Because in the Middle Ages there was no absolute individual privacy; there was a collective privacy, the privacy of the community. The individual envisaged himself as part of the community, sharing everything with the community in which he lived. The medieval privacy is, as G. Duby [7] calls it, a "gregarious privacy". Individuals shared a collective privacy, they were bound to the community and submitted to collective discipline, which constrained them. Even if private, individual life remained in the shadow, its secrets were soon discovered and shared by all members of the community; even if private life meant independence, that independence had a rather collective character. Any individual who tried to isolate himself was regarded with suspicion or, on the contrary, with

admiration. The individual was either a rebel or a hero; he was, anyway, placed in the sphere of the "strange" – as opposed to the familiar private [8].

So in the Middle Age the stress was not an individual privacy, but a form of privacy within the community. The individual had no private life as we conceive it today; he was characterized by humility, obedience, and self-effacement within the framework of the community he belonged to and was a part of. The early modern epoch marks a radical shift of perspective: this feeling of belonging to a community gradually disappears, together with the collective, "gregarious" privacy, which makes room for genuine individual privacy. The stress is laid more and more on the individual, who becomes increasingly independent and powerful.

Early modernity witnesses the emergence of a new model of society. People start making the difference between the public and the private, between work and family life. They start protecting themselves from the others' sight. Independence and privacy can be traced in the individual's free choice of his condition and way of life and in the individual's retreat in the middle of the family, which becomes a refuge, the centre of the private life.

Ph. Aries [9] speaks about several stages in this process of individual emancipation, starting with the development of the taste for solitude and the new approach to freedom, and culminating with the emergence of the literature of civility and of the autobiographies, which are examples of individual development.

The approach to and experience of the body is connected with the early modern man's approach to the public and the private. The human body is no longer seen as a source of temptation, which should stay hidden, or as an unimportant part of the human being (as opposed to the soul), which should be neglected. The body becomes a value, which should be taken care of and made visible. The visibility of the body triggers the visibility of status. The individual, however, as David Le Breton [10] remarks, is imprisoned within the confines of this public, limited, isolated body.

The public body and the rhetoric of status

The bodily deportment and demeanour come to be regarded as significant aspects of status, and this is clear from the many texts of the time dedicated to this theme. One of the most influential texts of this kind was Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*. The ideal constructed by Castiglione was one of verbal and physical grace, with rather more emphasis on the social attractiveness of the courtier than on his ethical and political substance.

The book is written in the form of the dialogue, which is typical of the early modern pluralism, suggesting freedom of expression. These dialogues take place at the Court of Urbino, where the greatest personalities of the time used to gather around Duchess Elizabeth Gonzaga. The Court of Urbino is envisaged as the ideal Renaissance court, where cultivated men and women gathered and spent their time in a pleasant way, playing games, talking, exchanging opinions. The absence of prejudices makes men and women talk about all sorts of things, such as love or women's place and role in society). Games also stand for a typically early modern attitude – the ludic one – having a double function: to provide entertainment and to challenge the intellect. In Castiglione's book the debate, whose topic is 'the perfect courtier', starts from a game. The topic is debated upon for four consecutive nights, and, in the end, from the presentations and disputes on this topic, the participants construct the portraits of the perfect courtier and the perfect court-lady.

The medieval values are no longer praised and new values emerge. This is obvious in the very introduction to the book, where Castiglione describes the Court of Urbino as the ideal Renaissance court and its founder, Duke Federico, as the epitome of the Renaissance courtier. The palace is the image of its founder: through its comfort, richness and aesthetic taste, it communicates status and greatness. Greatness is discussed at large in the Fourth Book of the Courtier: the prince has to show greatness in order to be loved and respected; greatness is what legitimizes him and gives him authority. However this greatness and the authority it legitimizes shouldn't bring about the subjects' hate, and in order to avoid such a thing, the prince should organize festivities, performances and games [11]. Festivities and performances were thus conceived as a safety valve, a form of releasing the negative social energy and the latent forms of resistance and rebellion.

At the end of the four nights the image of the ideal courtier is constructed. The courtier is invested with a new set of values, which do not correspond to the medieval code. Charity, for example, which was one of the most important medieval values, disappears in the early modern

times. It is replaced by caution and temperance. The qualities of the warrior (strength, valance) are preserved, but their importance is diminished, and they are gradually replaced by diplomacy and courtesy. The perfect courtier should be a diplomat and an improviser.

The courtier should be of aristocratic origin, but origin alone does not make a perfect courtier. A perfect courtier should be endowed with intelligence, with a beautiful body and with charm. Appearance is again overemphasized. The appearance, the public self is important as it contributes to preserving and strengthening one's status. The public self becomes more important than the inner self. All virtues should serve the public self, because, for the early modern man, virtues are a means of getting fame and they should be shown ostentatiously.

This preoccupation with one's public image proves the individualism, egocentricity and narcissism of the Renaissance man: all the early modern virtues – intelligence, education, knowledge, taste, beauty – are only means that serve the public self and the individual's (horizontal) ascent. This is even more obvious if we think that one of the most important virtues praised in the book is shrewdness. Shrewdness should be present in the display of one's virtues. In other words, virtues have no value if they are not properly displayed. This art of constructing one's public self includes dress, gesture, demeanour.

Concern with the manners of the noble or gentleman was not a new phenomenon of the sixteenth century, and it can be traced in a number of late medieval sources. Chivalric romances give some idea of the code of behaviour expected of a gentleman in love or war, but much more technical information about manners is to be found in medieval books of courtesy. Usually quite brief and written in verse form for easy memorization, fifteenth-century courtesy books were directed at the child or gentleman serving in the noble or royal household. Though this literature reconstructs some of the basic norms of bodily behaviour, it shows, however, no consistent focus on bodily courtesy as an ideal in itself. Instead, attention is overwhelmingly directed to one sort of social occasion and to the relationships which are to be expressed in the rituals of that occasion: this is the main meal or banquet, the expression of the solidarity and hierarchy of the noble household and its relation to the outside world in the obligation of hospitality. In the description of these rituals the stress is always on the relations of lordship and service dramatized in the banquet procedures. If the precepts about physical behaviour often seem to indicate a remarkable crudity to the modern man, they are embedded in complex ceremonial rules about when, how and to whom the courteous child should offer food, wine and water. Moreover, even the rules forbidding messy eating (there are stern warnings against plunging one's hands into dishes of food, fighting at table or blowing one's nose on the table-linen) are related less to an overt bodily aesthetic than to the need to show due deference to the lord or host [12].

By contrast, sixteenth and seventeenth century writings on gentlemanly manners show the emergence of the body as a central topic and organizing principle in the ideal of courtesy or, a significantly new term, 'civility'. Therefore, this new regulation of the body in the early modern writings is not simply an effect of the humanist revival of rhetoric; it needs to be understood in the context of a shift in economic power and in the social and political values associated with appearance, public self and 'civility'. The word 'civility', in the specialized sense of 'good manners', best illustrates the close connection between the ideals of personal social conduct and the values of public order and hierarchy. The sixteenth century concept of civility, while looking back towards classical definitions of civic virtue and order (for example, in the notion of 'civil law'), increasingly acquired meanings which looked forward to the modern concept of 'civilisation'. According to Anna Bryson, 'the classical opposition between the 'civil' and the 'barbarious' was elaborately glossed and indeed transformed in early modern writings into a basis for asserting the wholesale superiority of European elite cultures over the 'savage' societies discovered elsewhere and over the barbarious thought to dwell at home or even nearby in Ireland. It was used to create not only a comparative, but an historical perspective, as writers identified 'savagery' of communities in Americas with the hypothetical primitive state of their own societies' [13].

The term 'civility' carried with it the connotation of order based on reason, as opposed to the undisciplined animal instinct and a lawless primitive nature. But, according to Bryson, 'the notion of the creative development of reason in the arts and sciences, which is so important a part of the modern concept of 'civilisation' was in the early modern image of civility somehow secondary to the notion of proper regulation and hierarchy both in the individual and in society' [14]. Sometimes

civility is emphasized by contrast through the representation of savagery. The early modern representation of the savage is best illustrated by Shakespeare's Caliban, who was defined less by simple ignorance than by'brutish' predominance of instinct. The distinction between the 'civil' and the 'savage', especially in the definition of manners, plays an important part in the interpretation of the social hierarchy. This distinction was based on the assumption that the elite was more obliged to exemplify civility, and more responsible for civil order, than the brutish lower classes (and this is obvious in Castiglione's approach to disguise – the courtier should conceal his identity when involved in less appropriate practices for his status and position). A hint of this assumption is given in the characterization of Caliban, whose savagery is inscribed on his deformed body and his subjection to passion, as 'a savage and deformed slave' (the last word being a frequent derogatory term for a servant). Alongside animal metaphors for bad behaviour, the advisers on gentlemanly manners used negative examples associating the plebeian with the brute.

This conception of good manners is clearly to be related to the overall change in the pattern of aristocratic ideals and ideology. The extensive literature on proper behaviour, education and duties of the gentleman or nobleman suggests that a substantial shift was gradually taking place in the cultural values and practices whereby the elite expressed and justified its power.

In the new image and education of the gentleman, which developed during the sixteenth century, one element had a peculiar relevance to the idea of deportment and demeanour as 'representations' of the self, designed to make a favourable impression on an audience. Therefore, alongside the concern with ceremonial deference, the early modern writings of conduct emphasize another function for the rules of manners: that of presenting or re-presenting personality, rather than simply acknowledging a relationship. All codes of manners involve the representation of idealized character traits in a general way. As the sociologist Erving Goffman states, they are 'conventional means of communication by which the individual expresses his character or conveys his appreciation of other participants in the situation' [15]. The presentation of self is, according to Goffman, very much staged so as to achieve the intended goal. This involves hiding the negative aspects of the personality by means of defensive and protective practices (dramaturgical loyalty, dramaturgical discipline and dramaturgical circumspection), avoiding 'unmeant gestures, inopportune intrusions and *faux pas'*, which are 'sources of embarrassment and dissonance' [16] through self-control, and emphasizing the positive aspects of personality.

An increasing concentration on rules of bodily control becomes intelligible in this context, because the body is the natural 'object' shared with the beasts and therefore the idea of human experience most threatened by descent. According to sociologist Mary Douglas, 'the social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of physical experience so that each reinforces the categories of the other. As a result of this interaction the body itself is a highly restricted medium of expression. The forms it adopts in movement and repose express social pressures in manifold ways' [17]. And it is precisely during this period that the language of social hierarchy which made 'civilised' care and control of the body a sign of superior humanity clearly emerged. In the social milieu of the nobility and of the court personal dress, address and demeanour could become a more urgent control as the real or aspirant gentleman sought to gain social recognition. Extravagant dress (more profuse at the court) was one element in this attempt to gain social recognition; the gestures and deportment symbolizing noble 'virtue' were another. Indeed, one of the most striking features of the early modern codes of manners is a vocabulary that continually refers to them as 'representations' and makes of demeanour and deportment an almost theatrical art, or 'staging of the self', as Goffman calls it.

Shakespeare's plays are replete with examples of this theatrical art and with stagings of the self. In *The Merchant of Venice*, for instance, Graziano explains to Bassanio how the appearance of civility can be achieved by dissembling: 'Signor Bassanio, hear me./If I do not put on a sober habit,/Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,/Wear prayer books in my pocket, look demurely - /Nay more, while grace is saying hood mine eyes/Thus with my hat, and sigh, and say 'Amen'/Use all the observance of civility,/Like one well studied in a sad ostent/To please his

grandam, never trust me more.'[*] (II.4.182-189) Bassanio's public self is thus a construct, an image that he created for himself, but which is not a reflection of his inner self. Bassanio's civility is 'well studied', staged and performed by himself.

Through his manners the gentleman was supposed to proclaim his 'natural' virtue or entitlement to authority, but such manners were obviously the product of education, effort and artifice. Castiglione was frank in defining the courtier's task as that of projecting a 'natural' ease and grace through self-concealing artifice. 'Renaissance writing on manners, in presenting deportment and demeanour as a rhetoric of status which 'represented' inner noble virtues and 'civil' distance from plebeians and brutes, showed the acting of 'natural' superiority to be the essential principle of the 'port and countenance' of the ideal gentleman' [18].

Disguise is another important ingredient in the early modern approach to society. Disguise is a means of preserving one's status and public image. Thus, if a courtier wants to get involved in activities which are not allowed by his status, he should wear disguise. Also, disguise, by concealing one's true identity, offers a certain degree of freedom, together with the possibility for the courtier to study and to know the others without being identified by them. But disguise is also a way of having fun, of playing with identities – a theatrical performance. So disguise is a perfect combination of early modern diplomacy, wit and playfulness.

Disguise is employed by the early modern individual for different purposes, as it is proved by the literature of the time. Shakespeare's plays abound in examples of disguise: many of his characters, be they comic, tragic, or historical, choose this strategy for concealing their identity: Prince Hal in *Henry IV* wears disguise in order not to be recognized in the company of such 'low' characters as Falstaff and his crew, incompatible with his status and position; Rosalind in *As You Like It* pretends to be a boy named Ganymed; Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* plays the role of a judge in order to save Antonio; Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and Viola in *Twelfth Night* both cross-dress as pages. It is obvious from these examples that the incidence of women disguising (and especially cross-dressing) is much higher than of men disguising. Disguise, therefore, as a form of power strategy or power game, also has a lot to do with gender. Women are associated with weakness, and in order to feel safe they have to assume male identities. This is Julia's case, who disguises in order to travel safely, not to be attacked by 'lascivious men': 'Not like a woman, for I would prevent/The loose encounters of lascivious men.' (II.7.30-1)

Masculinity however does not consist mainly in men's physical strength, but rather in their power and authority to make decisions and profess personal opinions. Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* disguises as a judge in order to make herself heard and believed and thus to save Antonio: her authority depends on her judge's robe. We may derive from these examples that the early modern canon is masculine. However, E.A.J. Honnigman argues that Shakespeare's women are powerful and self-asserting, strong and witty: 'In his comedies Shakespeare taught women how to sparkle: he encouraged them to see themselves as intellectually equal to men, frequently more perceptive, more quit-witted in repartee. Far from restricting woman to a single man-pleasing stereotype, he delighted in those who shatter male expectations (Kate the Shrew, Beatrice in *Much Ado*)…' [19].

Other authors associate cross-dressing with the underprivileged position of women (as opposed to the male canon). Speaking of the early modern practice of using boys on stage to perform women's role, Dympna Callaghan argues that the Renaissance canon is male, and femininity is only defined 'in and as a relation to masculinity': 'A representational schema that understands sexual difference completely within the parameters of masculinity does not require women: it occurs entirely within a material economy of males. Visible and audible sexual difference, that is, femininity, on the early modern stage comprised a subspecies of masculinity' [20]. The idea that the female identity is constructed in relation to the male identity is also advanced by S. Greenblatt: 'If a crucial step in male individuation', Greenblatt explains, 'is separation from the female, this separation is enacted inversely in the rites of cross-dressing; characters like Rosalind and Viola pass through the state of being men in order to become women, [they are] the projected mirror images of masculine self-differentiation' [21].

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[*] All references to Shakespeare's plays are to Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (eds.), *Shakespeare. The Complete Works*, Oxford University Press, 1988.

We find an excellent description of the feminine canon in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. The play offers a description of the perfect court-lady (Bianca). Bianca's portrait is achieved by contrast: her image is opposed to her sister's deviant character. Bianca perfectly fits the canon – modest, balanced, sweet, as Lucentio describes her: 'Tranio, I burn, I pine, I perish, Tranio/If I achieve not this young modest girl' (I.1.153-4); 'Tranio, I saw her coral lips to move,/And with her breath she did perfume the air./Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her.' (I.1.172-4). Besides beauty, Bianca is endowed with the qualities required of a court-lady, 'mild behavior and sobriety' (I.1.71). She respects the norms and this makes her desirable as a woman. Her sister Kate, on the other hand, does not obey any rule and doesn't fit any standard. She is seen as a lunatic: 'That wench is stark mad or wonderful forward.' (I.1.69) Because of her lack of manners and civility, she is rejected by all possible suitors and even by her own father: she 'is so curst and shrewd/That till the father rid his hands of her,/Master, your love must live a maid at home,/And therefore has he closely mewed her up/Because she will not be annoyed with suitors.' (I.1.178-82). Thus, Bianca, the ideal, the model, the embodiment of the canon, is a treasure – desired by all men, but forbidden to marry until Kate finds a suitor willing to marry her. Kate, on the other hand, is the deviant, the embodiment of the anti-canon – rejected by everybody. However, in the end she will be defeated with her own weapons, and order will be restored: Kate will become an ideal court-lady and especially an ideal wife.

A similar description of the perfect court-lady, beautiful and virtuous, belongs to Bassanio in The Merchant of Venice: 'In Belmont is a lady richly left,/And she is fair, and, fairer than the word,/Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes/I did receive fair speechless messages. Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued/To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia;/Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,/For the four winds blow in from every coast/Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks/Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,/Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchis' strand,/And many Jasons come in quest for her.' (I.1.161-72) Besides the Renaissance beauty canon (fair, sunny locks like golden fleece), Bassanio also mentions Portia's virtues. Portia is not described by contrast to an anti-canonic figure, but in her case too both her beauty and her virtues bring her many 'renowned suitors'. Therefore social inclusion and acceptance and eventually marriage are only to be achieved by observing social norms, by inscribing oneself within the confines of the canon.

In Castiglione's Courtier, too, the court-lady is the mirror image of the courtier, his feminine counterpart. I won't insist at this point on the differences between the masculine and feminine representations, since a discussion of gender is outside the scope of the present paper. Therefore I shall insist on the differences between the public and the private body in the new, individualist early modern mentality. And the norms prescribed by this new canon equally apply to both men and women: moderation, diplomacy, emphasis on appearance(s).

The typical early modern diplomatic attitude is to be found in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, where Polonius follows the above described model in his advice to Laertes: 'And these few precepts in thy memory/See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue,/Nor any unproportioned thought his act./Be thou familiar but by no means vulgar./The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,/Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel,/But do not dull thy palm with entertainment/Of each-hatched unfledged comrade. Beware/Of entrance to a quarrel, but being in,/Bear't that th'opposed may beware of thee./Give every man thine ear but few thy voice./Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgement./Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy./But not expressed in fancy; rich not gaudy;/For the apparel oft proclaims the man,/And they in France of the best rank and station/Are of all most select and generous chief in that./Neither a borrower nor a lender be./For loan oft loses both itself and friend,/And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.' (I.2.58-77).

Moderation ('Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy') – as opposed to the medieval generosity, diplomacy ('Beware/Of entrance to a quarrel', 'reserve thy judgement') – as opposed to the medieval taste for fighting and proving one's valour, individualism ('Give thy thoughts no tongue', 'But do not dull thy palm with entertainment/Of each-hatched unfledged comrade') – as opposed to the medieval close link to the community, and care for appearance ('Be thou familiar but by no means vulgar', 'rich not gaudy'). These are the values praised by Polonius, and they are typical of the ideal image of the courtier. This is also the image promoted by Castiglione, and it is mainly characterized by two attitudes: *sprezzatura* (concealing power, not being aggressively ostentatious, being graceful) and

desinvoltura (concealing weakness, trying to seem self-confident). Both attitudes involve the construction of the public (social) self through theatricality, dissimulation.

In *All's Well*, we witness the shift from the medieval value of humility to the early modern concept of grace. The term used by the King to describe Bertram's father is 'humility', but its implied meaning is 'grace' (or *sprezzatura*), since 'humility' and 'bowing his eminent top' are meant to be praised by the 'low ranks': 'Who were below him/He used as creatures of another place,/And bowed his eminent top to their low ranks,/Making them proud of his humility,/In their poor praised he humbled.' (I.2.41-5) However, the King insists that 'humility' and 'honour' are values which no longer exist: 'Such a man/Might be a copy to these younger times,/Which followed well would demonstrate them now/But goers-backward'. The new values are for the king a sign of involution, of going backwards. This idea is also expressed by Lafeu, when he characterizes Paroles as vain and lacking substance: 'Yet the scarves and the bannerets about thee did manifoldedly dissuade me from believing thee a vessel of too great a burden.' (II.3.204-6); 'The soul of this man is his clothes. Trust him not in matter of heavy consequence.' (II.5.43-5). The excessive preoccupation with and overemphasis on the exterior appearance as manifested by Paroles come to replace the medieval virtues, which are more connected to the inner self. However, Paroles is a mock-image of the Renaissance courtier, since, indeed, his interest in clothes and garments and appearance is not supported by the wit which should also be an essential feature of the perfect courtier.

The dialogues between Lafeu and Paroles stand for the battle between the old (medieval) and new (early modern) values. This 'battle' is present in all Shakespeare's plays, since the shift between the old and the new was a gradual one. The same battle is to be found in Henry IV Part 1 and Part 2. Hal is the typical Renaissance prince, who masters the arts of diplomacy, strategy, and calculation, as he is fully aware of the importance of self-fashioning: 'So when this loose behaviour I throw off,/And pay the debt I never promised,/My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,/Shall show more goodly, and attract more eyes/Than that which hath no foil to set it off' (I.2.168-75). In opposition to such calculation, Hotspur is a romantic figure, impulsive and valiant, embodying all that is glorious about feudal chivalry – its code of honour, its passion for heroic achievement in arms. Hal's victory over Hotspur signify the victory of the new values. Theatricality is one of them, as one of power's essential modes. In lines that anticipate Hal's promise, the angry Henry IV tells Worcester, 'I will from henceforth rather be myself,/Mighty and to be fear'd, than my condition' (I.3.5-6). 'To be oneself' here means to perform one's part in the scheme of power as opposed to one's natural disposition, or what we would normally designate as the very core of the self' [22] 'By how much better than my words I am', Hal declares, 'By so much shall I falsify men's hopes' (I. 2. 210-11). To falsify men's hopes is to exceed their expectations, and it is also to disappoint their expectations, to deceive men, to turn their hopes into fictions, to betray them. 'Not only are the competing claims of Bolingbroke and Falstaff an issue but our own hopes, the fantasies continually aroused by the play of absolute friendship and trust, limitless playfulness, innate grace, plenitude' [23]. And although both Hal and Hotspur belong to the dominant class and represent the 'high' discourse, each of them stands for different values. Thus, Hotspur is the epitome of the medieval values (honour, valiance), Hal is the emblem of the Renaissance prince (the values he promotes are skill, talent, reserve, improvisation, diplomacy).

The same ideas about education, appearance, and the distinction between the private self and the public self are to be found in Machiavelli's Prince: the typical Renaissance prince is described as a great diplomat, a dissembler and an improviser. The key-words, which are recurrent in Machiavelli's discourse, are related to acting and to creating an appearance: *to seem*, *to appear*, *to show*, *to convey an impression of himself*, *to gain renown*, *to have the reputation of*, *to disguise*, *to pretend*.

Both Castiglione and Machiavelli propose the same strategies and attitudes. Both the courtier and the prince should employ strategies of conquering the world and gaining power through dissimulation, obliqueness, repressing their private self in order to create a convenient public self. Both Castiglione and Machiavelli propose a new attitude – that of hiding the inner self behind a public mask – and this will characterize all early modern life, because the early modern model is public. Portraits of the Renaissance princes communicate the same thing: power and

authority. Henry VIII is famously portrayed by Holbein as an icon of masculinity and power. But probably the most remarkable are the portraits of Elizabeth, making up a new type of iconography.

In Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* we find the perfect characterization of the Renaissance prince. His image is public and publicized. The image is even more powerful and suggestive as it represents the meeting of two Renaissance princes, Henry VIII of England and Francis I of France: 'Then you lost/The view of earthly glory. Men might say/Till this time pomp was single, but now married/To one above itself. Each following day/Became the next day's master, till the last/Made former wonders its. Today the French,/All clinquant all in gold, like heathen gods/Shone down the English; and tomorrow they/Made Britain India. Every man that stood/Showed like a mine. Their dwarfish pages were/As cherubim, all gilt; the Mesdames, too,/Not used to toil, did almost sweat to bear/The pride upon them, that their very labour/Was to them as painting. Now this masque/Was cried incomparable, and th'ensuing night/Made it a fool and beggar. The two kings/Equal in luster, were now best, now worst,/As presence did present them. Him in eye/Still him in praise, and being present both,/'Twas said they saw but one, and no discerner/Durst wag his tongue in censure. When these suns – /For so they phrase 'em – by their heralds challenged/The noble spirits to arms, they did perform/Beyond throught's compass, that former fabulous story/Being now seen possible enough, got credit/That Bevis was believed./[…]/As I belong to worship, and affect/In honour honesty, the tract of ev'rything/Would by a good discourser lose some life/Which action's self was tongue to. All was royal./To the disposing of it naught rebelled./Order gave each thing view. The office did/Distinctly his full function.' (I, 1, 13 – 44).

The model presented in Shakespeare's *Henry VIII* stands for more than mere civility and courtly manners. This model conveys the idea of power and authority. Power is represented and communicated visually, by means of an ostentatious display and by the use of artifice: the kings' bodies, costumes and material luxury objects associated with status make up the discourse of power, imposing order and obedience. This theatre-state describes the Renaissance taste for magnificence: a ritualized form of attraction exercised over the subjects.

Conclusions

The Renaissance marked the beginning of modern times, hence its more recent terming as 'early modernity'. The Renaissance/early modernity marked a significant shift in mentalities, so that there is a huge gap between the medieval and the early modern values. This shift in mentalities affected all social, economic, and political life, all fields of human activity, all perception and experience. The new mentality was also reflected in the early modern treatment, representation, and dramatization of the body, as well as of the material objects and codes of conduct associated with it, as an element of the self in between the revaluated realms of the public and the private.

In the early modern times, the bodily canon is part of the discourse of power. The new canon is public, since appearance becomes increasingly important. The body, material objects like dress and garments, as well as the norms of civility connected with the body become increasingly important for the early modern individual, since they represent the individual's status. The models of this new epoch are the courtier and the prince – the representatives of the dominant discourse.

Notes:
[1] Le Goff, Jacques, *Pentru un alt ev mediu*, Meridiane, Bucureşti, 1986, p. 124-129.
[2] Greenblatt, Stephen, *Shakespearean Negotiations. The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*, Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 64.
[3] Burckhardt, Jakob, *Cultura Renaşterii în Italia*, Editura pentru literatură, Bucureşti, 1969, p. 161.
[4] Burckhardt, Jakob, op. cit., p. 163.
[5] Le Goff, Jacques (ed.), *Omul medieval*, Polirom, Bucureşti, 1999, p. 52.
[6] Garin, Eugenio (ed.), *Omul Renaşterii*, Polirom, Bucureşti, 2000, p. 80-83.
[7] Aries, Philippe & Duby, Georges, *Istoria vieţii private*, Meridiane, Bucureşti, 1995, vol. 4, p. 4.
[8] Aries, Philippe & Duby, Georges, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 240-242.
[9] Aries, Philippe & Duby, Georges, op. cit., vol. 5, p. 6.
[10] Le Breton, David, *Antropologia corpului şi modernitatea*, Editura Cartier, Chişinău, 2009, p.64.
[11] Castiglione, *Curteanul*, Editura pentru literatură, Bucureşti, 1967, p. 30.
[12] Aries, Philippe & Duby, Georges, op. cit., vol. 3, p. 347-348.
[13] Bryson, Anna, *The Rhetoric of Status: Gesture, Demeanour and the Image of the Gentleman in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England*, in Gent, L. and Llewellyn, N. (eds.), 'Renaissance Bodies – The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660', Reaktion Books Ltd., London, 1994, p. 148-149.

[14] Bryson, Anna, op. cit., p. 149.
[15] Goffman, Erving, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Penguin, London, 1990, p. 242.
[16] Goffman, Erving, op. cit., p. 205.
[17] Douglas, Mary, *Natural Symbols*, Routledge, London and New York, 2003, p. 72.
[18] Bryson, Anna, op. cit., p. 153.
[19] Honnigman, E.A.J., *Myriad-Minded Shakespeare*, Macmillan Press, London, 1989, p. 130.
[20] Callaghan, Dympna, *Shakespeare Without Women. Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage*, Routledge, London and New York, 2000, p. 51.
[21] Greenblatt, Stephen, *Shakespearean Negotiations. The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*, Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 92.
[22] Greenblatt, Stephen, op. cit., p. 45.
[23] Greenblatt, Stephen, op. cit., p. 42**.**

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