

University of Patras

Department of Philology

HERACLES' LION SKIN:

ACTOR AND COSTUME

Efstathia Maria C. Athanasopoulou

Patras, 2012

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	2
Summary.....	3
Introduction.....	4
I. Defining the Context.....	4
II. Texts.....	7
III. Genres.....	18
1. Heracles' Lion Skin as Costume for Theatrical Discourse.....	21
1.1 Heracles' Lion Skin as a Dead Animal Body.....	21
1.2 Heracles' Lion skin as a Theatrical Costume.....	21
1.3 Heracles' Lion Skin as the Attribute of a Transgressive Hero...	26
1.4 Heracles' Lion Skin: A Theatrical Costume in Diachrony.....	28
2. Heracles' Lion Skin in Aristophanes' <i>Frogs</i>.....	30
3. Lucian's <i>On Dancing</i>.....	35
4. Libanius' <i>A Reply to Aristidis On Behalf of Dancers</i>.....	47
5. Choricus' <i>Apology of Mimes</i>.....	53
6. Conclusion.....	56
Bibliography Cited.....	58

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work is the product of many fruitful discussions on theatrical discourse, the role of lion skin in debates about theatre and the dynamics evolved between performer and costume from classical period to late antiquity. Firstly, I would like to thank Nikos Charalabopoulos for acquainting me with theatrical treatises from late antiquity in the context of two seminar courses on late antiquity incorporated in the master program *Modern Approaches to Language and Texts* (Classics) 2010-2012. Secondly, I would like to thank speakers and attendants of AMPAL 2012 at Oxford for their comments and observations on a paper entitled "The Impact of the body on the discussion of Heracles' lion skin". Furthermore, I would like to thank the Blegen Library of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens and the Library of the British School at Athens as well as the departmental libraries of Philology and Classical studies at the University of Patras and Athens respectively for allowing my access to rare books and articles. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Effimia Karakantza for her guidance, support and observations. All in all, I am in debt to Menelaus Christopoulos, Effimia Karakantza and Spyros Rangos for their advices, acute comments and constant encouragement without which the realization of this project would be impossible. It remains without saying that any mistakes of any kind are thoroughly my fault.

SUMMARY

The aim of this essay is to explore the relation between actor and costume in the context of theatrical discourse and using as an axis Heracles' lion skin. The word actor is used to denote the agent of theatrical/mimetic action while the word costume stresses the function and power of a theatrical costume. In the Introduction section the context of the research is being described. The methodological field is that of the recently explored theatrical discourse which derives from metatheatrical studies and is based on critical treatises on theatre. In the first chapter the importance of lion skin as a prominent costume for the articulation of theatrical discourse is being analyzed from different angles. In chapter two the metatheatrical use of Heracles' lion skin is used as a base for the construction of theatrical discourse about the function of theatre in a dramatic text. In the following section, Heracles' lion skin is used to describe actor's relation to his tragic *skeue* and is also reconstructed anew as a pantomime costume indicative of the dynamics developed between performer and costume. In Libanius' *A Reply to Aristidis On Behalf of Dancers* the emphasis on the transformative power of the costume is being discussed (chapter 4). In chapter 5 the emergence of lion skin in the debate around the relation between actor and costume constitutes the epilogue of a long-lasting debate on the dynamics of relation between actor and costume.

INTRODUCTION

I. DEFINING THE CONTEXT

This essay is to examine the costume as a means for talking about theatre and the way it functions. For our study to be more effective we will restrict our research in the examination of the dynamic relations developed between actor and costume in the case of Heracles' lion skin which is considered as an important piece of clothing for the discourse on various theatrical genres¹. The texts chosen for this discussion differ considerably in form, date and geographical origin and include: Aristophanes' *Frogs* (405 BC), Lucian's *On Dancing* (165 AD), Libanius' *A Reply to Aristides on Behalf of Dancers* (361 AD) and Choricus' *Apology of Mimes* (526 AD)². The fact that these texts chronologically extend to a spectrum of ten centuries creates the realistic problem of appropriate handling of an extensive, diverse and multifaceted material. On the other hand, the chronological range of the texts allow us to detect the fluctuations that the relation between actor and Heracles' lion skin subdued through centuries and explore the different perspectives developed around the discussion of costume in different genres.

The unifying starting point for the aforementioned texts is the fact that they constitute important stages in what can be called theatrical discourse. Theatrical discourse can be defined as the discussion of the theatre as an art form, as a discussion in an abstract way of the creation and function of theatre³. Theatrical discourse however does not stand so far as a term on its own and is more often included under the rather enlarged notion of metatheatre⁴. In addition studies devoted to the history of performance theory begin with

¹ See relative chapter.

² Molloy (1996): 50

³ Wyles (2011): 95

⁴ E.g. Lada-Richards (1999): 170, Slater (2002): 1-8. We will discuss the notion of metatheatre immediately afterwards.

chapters on Aristotle's *Poetics* or on the discussion about the ritualistic or not origins of (ancient Greek) theatre⁵. On the other hand, studies devoted to the history of literary criticism, although privileging philosophical treatises, take account of opinions expressed in a variety of genres. Aristophanes' *Frogs* is usually addressed as an important and extremely influential text for the history as well as for the formation of literary criticism⁶. A logical reason for this discrepancy in the approaches to theatrical discourse and literary criticism is the fact that it is easier to discuss appropriate or non-appropriate mythical / fictitious plots or to comment on good and bad style of a concrete literary work rather than comment on what makes a performance good or bad theatrical performance. The history of literary criticism is unfortunately and necessarily a history of gaps due to the lack of textual evidence. The history of theatrical performance is even more elliptic due to lack not only of dramatic texts but also due to lack of data revelatory of performances of dramatic texts. However, the fruits of contemporary research in the metatheatrical aspects of ancient Greek dramatic plays and the recent interest for rhetorical texts from late antiquity on less well known theatrical genres of pantomime and mime stress the need for the reconstruction of a necessarily fragmented but extremely valuable history of performance discourse in early and late antiquity. In this realm and in the context of a dissertation for a master program we will focus our attention to trace instances of the discussion of theatrical performance in antiquity devoted to the relation between actor and one particular costume, that of Heracles' lion skin.

It is now time to address the semantically relative but - not in our opinion- identical concept of metatheatre. Metatheatre was a term firstly coined by Lionel Abel in 1963 and it was used to signify a distinct third theatrical genre emerging in Renaissance in which the presence of play within a play could be detected⁷. In following years and due to the

⁵ Carlson (1993): 15-22, Csapo and Miller (2007): 1-254

⁶ Hunter (2009): 2-3

⁷ Abel (1963): 83

contribution of James Calderwood and Richard Hornby the semantic spectrum of the term expanded so as to denote instances of role-playing, festivals, and self-reference in theatrical plays self-conscious of their very nature⁸. The concept was then transferred to the field of classical studies where it fertilized the studies of ancient Greek theatrical plays with Oliver Taplin's *The stagecraft of Aeschylus* (1977), Niall Slater's *Spectator Politics: Metatheatre and performance in Aristophanes* (2002) and Revermann's *Comic Business: Theatricality, Dramatic technique, and Performance Contexts of Aristophanic Comedy* (2006). Slater even traces metatheatricality, thus self-awareness of theatrical plays in all possible aspects: plays themselves, poetic form, musical form, dance, chorus, costumes, props and stage machinery, theater space, audience and festival. Revermann tries to reconstruct the performance context of ancient Greek comic plays drawing from the semantic pool of theatre semiotics and paying attention to the notions of space, proxemics, comic ugliness and audience.

The notion of metatheatre although being extremely useful for addressing and illuminating the performativity of ancient Greek plays, is limited in scope. Metatheatre signifies the self-awareness of a play that it is a play designed for one particular performance. The emphasis thus lies in the detection of all possible elements and details in the text which hint at this specific performance. The theatrical discourse is interested in the theatre as a work of art as much as literary discourse comments on literature as a work of art. In this direction, theorizing, discussing critically and even evaluating the way theatre works is where the heart of theatrical discourse beats.

In particular, theatrical discourse derives from and is based on metatheatrical instances discovered in texts⁹. This approach exploits the textual metatheatrical elements so as to draw more general and abstract conclusions concerning the function and purpose of theatre.

⁸ Calderwood (1971) and Hornby (1986): *passim*.

⁹ Wyles (2011): 95-106

What is more, except for the emphasis being shifted from concrete to general comments, the notion of theatrical discourse places emphasis on the self-awareness of the text. In old comedy “Cratinus, Eupolis and Aristophanes’ comic personas embodied ideas and strands of Greek literary criticism”¹⁰ whilst “Aristophanes’ *Frogs* dramatizes the emergence of literary criticism and the emergence of the critic”¹¹. In the cases we are interested in the comic texts engage critically with dramatic literary criticism¹². Under this light the critical discourse also addresses crucial aspects of theatrical performance and function. In addition, even when the author of a theatrical treatise responds to anti-theatrical discourse making use of concrete or even cliché rhetorical strategies and arguments, he reflects critically upon the function of theatre of his era. The critical theatrical discourse thus of a specific social, historical era and geographical area is being revealed behind dramatic personas or stylized rhetorical arguments.

In the context of this essay we will address only the theatrical discourse of the relation between actor and costume having as an axis one particular costume, that of Heracles’ lion skin.

II. TEXTS

Another matter which demands our attention is the form of the texts used in our discussion of Heracles’ lion skin. The first text to be addressed is Aristophanes’ *Frogs*. There is no theatrical treatise in the 5th c. BC classical Athens¹³ and as a result traces of theatrical

¹⁰ Bakola (2008): 65

¹¹ Hunter (2009): 2

¹² Literary criticism was probably the subject matter of Cratinus’ *Archilochoi*. However, criticism of epic and lyric poetry is being addressed. However, we should not neglect the performative aspects of this kind of poetry.

¹³ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1403b18-23. In this passage it is said that until that time there was “no study of delivery” since at the beginning poets played the roles. Wiles who makes reference to that passage speaks about absence of a “*techné* on performance” and portrays the philosopher as a stranger to the theatrical culture of Athens who undermined the value of performance in relation to the power of words, Wiles (2000): 168-169.

discourse can be discovered in the surviving theatrical plays themselves¹⁴. However, there seems to be a vivid interest in the evaluation and discussion of theatrical performance in classical period. Surviving titles from comic plays such as Cratinus' *Pytine* (Πυτίνη) and *Productions* (Διδασκαλία), Plato's *Props* (Σκευαί) and *The Poet* (Ποιητής), Nicochares' *Heracles the Producer* (Ηρακλής χορηγός) and Archippus' *Poetry* (Ποίησις) are suggestive of the situation¹⁵. In addition, there seems to be an interest on the part of plays for gods' disguise into human beings even in a tragic context. Except for the well-known disguise of Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae*, it is possible that the institutional god of theatre was also in disguise in Aeschylus' *Edonoi* while Hera must be disguised as beggar in *Semele* or *Xantriai*¹⁶. It is extremely important also that Dionysus' disguise on comic stage for the accomplishment of a specific task is a *topos* of (old) comedy. In Cratinus' *Dionysialexandrus* (Διονυσιαλέξανδρος) Dionysus is being disguised as Paris in order to replace the latter at the Judgement of goddesses¹⁷, in Eupolis' *Taxiarchoi* (Ταξίαρχοι) Dionysus disguises again himself in order to enter the navy under the training and supervision of general Phormion¹⁸ and in Aristophanes' *Frogs* he puts on Heracles' costume in order to go to the Underworld and bring back to Athens the best tragic poet. In their emphasis on Dionysus' dressing up in a costume so as to complete every possible mission the three comic plays enact Dionysus as the institutional god of theatre¹⁹.

However, when we are using the notion of theatrical discourse we are not interested in technical treatises on acting but in hints in plays commenting on the function and purpose of theatre.

¹⁴ Wyles (2011): 95-106

¹⁵ For a short catalogue of these plays see Revermann (2006): 104. Revermann discusses the aforementioned comic plays under the umbrella term metatheatre.

¹⁶ Taplin (1996): 201, note 27.

¹⁷ Afterwards the god seems to be disguised in a ram.

¹⁸ Storey (2003): 250-251

¹⁹ Bakola (2008): 257

On the other hand, heated is the debate on the matter of theatrical performance and its reception by the spectators. Plato and Aristotle's treatise engage with this discussion. Despite the chronological gap between Aristophanes' plays and Plato's dialogues or Aristotle's treatises, the latter philosophical debates on the theatre from a moral angle stem from seeds already in existence in theatrical plays themselves which question their role in society. *Frogs* ask already the question of whether the city needs a poet who questions its moral, societal, religious and legislative boundaries or a poet who functions as the popular educator for the spectators. Plato despite being brought up in the theatrical culture of Athens²⁰ and composing his philosophical treatises in dialogic form²¹, criticizes theatre for the negative impact that performances have on the audience²². Aristotle, on the other hand, underestimates the spectacle- theatrical performance (ὄψις) in relation to literary production (ἰστορία)²³ and associates the ascension of importance of actors in late classical period with the degeneracy of audiences²⁴.

Finally, as far as the successive exchanges of costume between Dionysus and Xanthias are concerned, they have been examined as another role-playing within a play and thus as a strong element of the metatheatrical character of *Frogs*. Compton-Engle discusses the dynamics of costume control in the agonistic framework of comic competition²⁵. Wyles analyses the costume exchange in the context of aspects of the language of costume such as identity and determinism while in her chapter on theatrical

²⁰ Wiles (2000): 168

²¹ Charalabopoulos (2012): passim. In this context metatheatre acquires a new semantic dimension. The dialogues can be perceived by the reader as a drama which is being recreated on an imaginary stage in readers' mind see Emlyn-Jones (2008): 40.

²² Plato, *Republic* 492 B-C.

²³ Aristotle, *Poetics* 1450 b16-20 and 1453b1-10 cf. vulgarity of *opsis* in scholion to Sophocles' *Electra* 1404.

²⁴ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1403 b33

²⁵ Compton-Engle (2003): passim

discourse she focuses her analysis of criticism of theatrical costume on the dialogue between Aeschylus and Euripides in the second half of *Frogs*²⁶. Finally, Lada-Richards discusses the relation between actor and costume in the successive costume exchanges in *Frogs* by using Stanislavski's theory of acting²⁷.

As a result, *Frogs*, being on the verge between 5th and 4th century BC, between dramatic plays self-aware of their engaging with critical discourse about theatre and philosophical treatises commenting on the function of theatre, discusses the nature of theatrical performance. While being one of the first texts of ancient literary criticism (mostly second half), it is also one of the first texts whose first half is deliberately devoted to comment on the theatrical production. In contrast with other surviving comic or tragic plays which simply hint at elements of theatrical discourse, *Frogs* is the only surviving comic play which chooses to devote its first half entirely to engage with theatrical discourse.

Our second text is Lucian's *On Dancing*, "written at Antioch at 162-165 AD and constituting an encomiastic treatise on pantomime written in a dialogic form"²⁸. In its defense of the dramatic genre the dialogue can be read either as an implicit reply to

²⁶ Wyles (2010): 61, 64 and 69 and 100-101 respectively. In the subchapter devoted to identify she analyses how the costume functions in constructing a character and in the subchapter entitled determinism she analyses the effectiveness of a costume in comedy for the accomplishment of a mission.

²⁷ Lada- Richards (1999): 170 and later goes on to stress the similarities between Dionysus and Heracles in the chapter entitled initiation through acting. In 2002 she devotes a whole article to the detection of theory of acting in ancient Greek comic and tragic drama, discussing these metatheatrical hints under the light of Brechtian or Stanislavskian theories on performance Lada-Richards (2002): 395-418. While Brecht was suggesting that the actor should not be identified with the character he plays but always notify to audience the distance between himself and the role, Stanislavski was proposing that the actor has to experience the role and being assimilated to the fictitious character drawing from his/ her emotional memory Stanislavski(1967): passim. In the context of this essay we will try to question the relation between actor and costume in key ancient Greek texts being aware of metatheatrical approaches and acting theories but not superimposing them on our analysis of primary sources.

²⁸ Harmon (1925): 209

Aristidis' negative critique of the genre²⁹ or as a reply to a cultural context in which the dance was conceptualized as the denigrated territory against which the educated imperial subjects defined themselves³⁰. Crato, an old bearded philosopher urges Lycinus- probably Lucian's persona- no to proceed to the defense of a genre which is unworthy (φάυλο) and effeminate (γυναικείο)³¹. This spectacle says, Crato, is inappropriate and even morally corruptive for a man who is literate and converses with philosophy³².

Lada-Richards stresses the fact that irrespectively of their attending or not the spectacle, Greek and Roman elites alike were treating the genre as that of the uneducated effeminate which could also end up into threatening the moral integrity of the educated man³³. Despite the fact that in practice declamators shared a lot in common with pantomime dancers³⁴, in theory the notion of dancer was "coterminous with the unruly rhetor's body"³⁵.

Responding to the dominant cultural climate of his era, Lucian making use of Lycinus' persona, attempts to elevate the genre to the sphere of education by connecting it to the glorious ancient past. Contemporary art of dance is the continuation of dance endorsed and praised by gods, heroes and intellectual authorities such as Socrates. Leaving however aside the "archaeology" of dance Lycinus announces that he will defend the

²⁹ For a short discussion of those who are for and against the assumption that Lucian composed the dialogue as an implicit reply to famous orator of 2nd c. AD Aristidis' treatise against dance and dancers now lost see Molloy (1996): 88. In the Loeb edition of text Harmon argues that Lucian was aware of Aristidis' treatise but decided not to reply to it directly, Harmon (1925): 209.

³⁰ Lada-Richards (2007): 10, 113, 126

³¹ *On Dance* 1

³² *On Dance* 2, 3, 4.

³³ Lada- Richards (2007): 125

³⁴ Both declamators and dancers were making extensive use of hands and impersonation techniques. See Fögen (2009): mostly 18-24 article and Lucian, *On Dance*, 35,36,61,62, 65.

³⁵ Lada-Richards (2009): 119

contemporary pantomime which has now been developed to reach perfection and be an exceptional art form³⁶. In this respect dance is likened to rhetoric and specific to the type of rhetoric, called declamation through the emphasis placed in both cases on the clarity of expression and level of impersonation (36). In addition, pantomime is not only pleasant but also beneficial both for performers and audiences. Performers manage to achieve a harmonic balance of mind and body via hard and disciplined training (69). The audiences on the other hand which attend pantomime spectacles do not only amuse themselves but also learn a lot about the glorious mythological past which dancers narrate via corporeal movements (72). Engaging with the spectacle on stage throughout the performance so as to decode the meaning behind the body language, the audience exercises its intelligence and acuteness of spirit (85). In addition, projecting themselves upon the dancer, using thus him as a mirror, the spectators gain self-knowledge (81). Moreover the spectacle functions as a medicine which erases the problems the audience suffers from (79). Throughout the dialogue and from the point of view of Lycinus it is emphasized the fact that pantomime is a pleasant and beneficial spectacle.

Two centuries later, Libanius composes a rhetoric speech which now directly addresses Aristidis' treatise against dance. Molloy suggests that the motives behind rhetor's decision to reply to a two centuries old rhetorical speech are multifaceted. Libanius, although being sophist and academic whose general stance against the spectacles can be described as negative, he chooses to defend pantomime in what can be viewed as a common practical exercise in which a sophist adopts the opposite stance from another (sophist) so as to prove that his arguments and rhetoric techniques are more successful than those used by his rival³⁷. In addition, the composition of the treatise coincides chronologically with the ascent to the throne of emperor Julian who attempted to re-establish paganism. This historical moment in combination with Libanius' interest in the

³⁶ *On Dancing*, 33

³⁷ Libanius, *A Reply to Aristides on Behalf of Dancers* 4, 5

preservation of mythological past might be another reason in his choice to defend the genre. Other reasons might lie in the sophist's habit to defend and speak for groups of people who experienced unjustified blame by the powerful societal classes. Finally the similarities between the training in rhetoric and the pantomime practices may be another motive for Libanius to compose his speech on dancing³⁸.

In the case of Libanius' treatise the charges against pantomime which constitute the framework of the debate are attributed to a specific persona, Aristidis. The pantomime is a decadent evolution of its noble ancestor, the art form of dance endorsed by gods, heroes and humans (23, 27). Moreover, the pantomime performances are destructive both for cities and households since everybody who watches these spectacles becomes infected and corrupted (31). In this respect the spectacle is being treated as a disease which spreads and threatens with pollution the whole societal body. It is particularly through effeminate gestures (59, 62)³⁹ and music (87, 89, 93) that spectators become polluted.

On the other hand, it is not only the spectacle itself to blame for the moral erosion of public, but also performers' personal lifestyles. Dancers dress their hair (50), adopt an effeminate attitude and also actively involved in the sexual market working as prostitutes (37). It can thus be argued that the anti-theatrical arguments do not distinguish between action on and off stage. The unmanly gestures and the performance on stage were hauntingly influencing the performer's everyday attitudes having a permanent effect on their personal lifestyle. On the other hand the immoral lifestyle of some performers was overemphasized so as to account for all pantomime professionals. In this case the reverse process is being put into action. It is the performers' lifestyle, as an extension of the

³⁸ For a discussion of the reasons- motives behind the composition of Libanius' speech see Molloy (1996): 86-87

³⁹ In 96 Aristidis is said to have complained about performers' feet which broke the stage. Despite the prominence of movements of hands in pantomime performances corporeal movements making use of the feet might also considered as potentially polluting for the audience.

performance on stage, which stands for the corruptiveness of the pantomime art and spectacle.

Libanius in his speech attacks these views, claiming the logical inconsistencies of arguments based on overgeneralization (31). The fact that some dancers live sinful lives does not entail that all dancers are corrupted. In addition the life style of the dancer cannot be indicative of the moral quality of the art. The orator also points out that human nature is unchanged and cannot that be affected by spectacles which are only as form of mimesis an inferior copy of reality (63). Moreover, the identity of the audience can be indicative of the moral quality of the spectacle. Young men (59), politicians and orators (79) attend it, thus advocating implicitly for the moral character of theatre. The pantomime is a form of entertainment which comforts those in grief for personal matters (115). Finally, the educational value of pantomime is raised once more however with spectacle being now a school for the masses (112).

Two centuries later, Choricius of Gaza composes what was meant to be for us the last surviving treatise on the theatre of Late Antiquity⁴⁰. In his *Apology of Mimes*, written probably at 526 AD⁴¹, Choricius composes a defensive treatise for those who work in theatre⁴². The composition of such a defensive speech in sixth century as well as the triple reference to the abolition of theatre in the text⁴³ are closely linked to the legislations and reforms concerning theatres and theatrical activity of the era. In 546 AD Justinian with the Neares, legislations 123, 44 of *Justinian Code* bans performances of Christological mime while at the beginning of his career he had hindered the public funding of mime (Procopius

⁴⁰ Schmidt (1899): 2429

⁴¹ For a discussion of the suggestions concerning the date of composition see Στεφανής (1986): 40-43

⁴² The original title of the treatise was *Υπὲρ τῶν ἐν Διονύσου τὸν βίον εἰκονιζόντων* (*For those who depict life in the theatre of Dionysus*) was then changed into *Ἀπολογία Μίμων* (*Apology of Mimes*).

⁴³ *Apology of Mimes* (21, 25, (43),

of Caesareia, *Secret History*, 26.8) . A century later, the Council of Trullo (691/692 AD rules 51 and 62) abolishes pantomime and mime spectacles from theatres.

The legislative reforms of 6th century were also the result of debates on theatre in previous centuries. Despite the fact that Choricius deliberately avoids referring to objections expressed by Christians against the theatre⁴⁴, anti-theatrical discourse was prominent in sermons delivered by Christian fathers. From their perspective, theatre was treated as a corruptive and evil spectacle. For example, John Chrysostom was specifically speaking of the image of the actress being imprinted upon the mind of the spectator constantly seducing him with corporeal movements long after the end of the spectacle⁴⁵. In this line of thought spectacles were even more sinful and corruptive for the tender soul of children, one of the more vulnerable parts of society. In addition, theatre was considered by Christians to constitute the foil against which the Christian church could define itself⁴⁶ as well as the rival in terms of funding and attraction of audiences⁴⁷.

Rather revealing for the tensions between theatre and church in the final period of late antiquity is a letter addressed by a bishop to the hermits concerning theatrical spectacles. The bishop of Gaza writes a letter to the hermits Barsanumhius and John of Gaza asking for advice on whether a prominent citizen who had moved to Constantinople should attend or not the shows. The letter is important, as Webb stresses, for demonstrating the anxieties of the era⁴⁸. In this case, a citizen asks for advice on whether he should or should not as a Christian go to the theatre, a bishop seems unable to give a concrete answer and hermits “issue the verdict” that going to theatres is a morally forbidden thing.

⁴⁴ The opponent of Choricius is an imaginative figure probably for the aggravation of debate to be averted.

⁴⁵ Webb (2008): 176-178

⁴⁶ Webb (2008): 198

⁴⁷ Webb (2008): 201

⁴⁸ Webb (2008): 195-196

In this cultural framework Choricus composes his treatise for the mimes and their art responding to the charges of an imaginary opponent. The anti-theatrical arguments eluded in the text address either the mime-theatre and its thematic conventions as well as performers' personal lifestyle. Mime-theatre is to blame because its plots evolve around the corruptive themes of perjury (23-25), adultery (29-74) and even prostitution (75-111). In addition, mimes appear on stage to fight each other or have their heads shaved (146-154). The music which accompanies the spectacle is also characterized as corruptive for the audience and especially for young female spectators (130-145). On the other hand, mime performers lead a rather sinful life (18-28) and savour luxuries without being productive (123-129). These last arguments seem to count as testimonies for the moral quality of the art form.

Choricus in his treatise fights against the charges refusing overgeneralization. For example he does not think that all members of the audience get affected in the same way by the spectacle. On the contrary, he seems to maintain the view that everybody responds according to his inner nature (43). The existence of the most precious members of society- women and children- in the audience accounts for its moral quality (53). In the same line of thought, the fact that orators perform mime parts on stage (95) is also used to defend the genre. Finally, a mime performance could alleviate the psychological pain that members of the audience may have experienced (31, 102,113). It is also maintained throughout the treatise that mime-theatre is a non-harmful form of entertainment. Instead, it is an art form which aims at simply entertaining the spectator and provoke laughter to the audience (30, 65, 83).

Behind the diverse points raised in theatrical and anti-theatrical discourse the cultural framework of the ongoing debate was always designated by the belief in the ability of costume to transform its bearer, in the ability of spectacle to transform and affect the audience and by the lack of a "stable notion of fictional play"⁴⁹. Costume since 5th c. BC.

⁴⁹ Webb (2008): 199.

raises questions concerning its effect on the performer. Does costume alter the gender, the status or even the character of the performer? Is the wearing of the costume enough so as to become somebody else? Can costume alternate permanently the nature of the performer thus continuing exercise its transformative power offstage? Aristophanes, Lucian, Libanius and Choricus struggle to either ask or answer these questions implicitly or explicitly. The discontinuity between stage and real life or stage and audience was not taken for granted. The theatrical performance was always conceived to affect the audience either by being an educator for the people or a workshop for corruption. Finally, the lack of stable definition for fiction and mimesis has led to the continuous evaluation of theatre against reality. Theatre was not conceptualized or evaluated as an autonomous category but was trapped in between the axis of truth and falsehood⁵⁰. The rejection by Plato of fiction in books 2 and 3 of the *Republic* and the discussion of mimesis as an inferior copy of truth (*Republic*, 598 B *Sophist*, 265 B) have constituted the framework for both theatrical and anti-theatrical discourse. On the one hand, theatre had a negative impact on spectators and especially on young spectators since it offered them the performance of lies on stage⁵¹. Fictional plots about morally corruptive actions of gods, heroes and humans were themselves harmful, but their performance on stage augmented the inherent danger. The immoral acts were now practiced lively in front of the eyes of the spellbound⁵² audience. On the other hand, defenders of theatre used exactly the same idea of mimesis as copy of truth to stress the fact that the reality is more harmful than its imitation. Libanius distinguishes between real criminals and performers who periodically may represent on stage some offensive actions implying thus that reality is more harmful than fiction for the society (*Against Aristidis on*

⁵⁰ Webb(2008):192, 221

⁵¹ Cf. the implicit charges in Choricus' treatise: « κακείνῃα (= narratives about heroes' adulterous actions that young students have to recite) μὲν ἔργα, ταῦτα (=mime plays whose plot evolves around the theme of adultery) δὲ μίμησις» (and those were literary works, these are mimesis) (38), «ἀλλ' ἀκοῆς ὀφθαμοὶ δοῶσιν τι πλέον» (but the eyes are more effective perception organs than ears) (42).

⁵² An opinion which could be generated by *Republic* 607 C-D

Behalf of Mimes, 33-34). Choricus on the other hand, tends to be one late defender of theatre who treats it as an autonomous category dissolved from the dichotomy of truth and falsehood. For the orator theatre is just a form of entertainment aimed at amusing the audiences⁵³.

III. GENRES

In this section we will briefly address the main characteristics of the dramatic genres involved in the theatrical discourse on the relation between actor and costume either as medium or as subject of the discussion.

To begin with, in comedy the performer was dressed with a costume comprising of a mask and a specific garment. The mask had extravagant and grotesque facial characteristics such as big nose or a wide open mouth. The actor was wearing a short chiton which revealed his genitalia. Flesh-coloured tights, phallus, breasts, padded stomach and buttocks were constituting the essentials of the comic male costume, placing emphasis upon the body of the performer. In comedy the human being is thus portrayed as a single organism defined by his corporeal functions⁵⁴.

Pantomime, which is the dramatic genre addressed by Lucian and Libanius, is reaching perfection under the reign of Augustus⁵⁵ (*On Dancing*, 34) and becomes part of the agonistic framework of theatrical plays in 2nd c. AD. In pantomime a male

⁵³ Webb (2008): 169, 172

⁵⁴ Wiles (2000): 156-157

⁵⁵ The ancestors of this art form can be traced back to classical period and to dance of Dionysus and Ariadne in Xenophone's symposium cf. Webb (2008): 46. In addition as we have seen Lucian is trying to compose an "archaeology" of dance as a practice linked with the beginning of universe, with gods, heroes and important intellectuals of classic period. In paragraph, Lycinus states that from that point onwards he is going to treat only the art of dance as it has been developed after the reign of Augustus.

dancer⁵⁶ wearing a mask with closed mouth performed via corporeal movements stories from mythological past. The dancer was accompanied by a group of singers (*On Dancing* 63, 68) singing the story with aid of flute, pipes and cymbals and possibly by an actor with nice voice (*On Dancing* 68)⁵⁷. However dancer's role was prominent since he should narrate using his body and changing five masks⁵⁸ different mythological events (*On Dancing* 66). The fluidity between one mythological narrative and the successive one was demanding for the spectacle and Lucian goes so far as to suggest the Proteus was an allegory for the dancer (*On Dancing* 19). As far as costume is concerned the evidence is rare and comes from diverse and scattered sources such as apologetic treatises, law codes, legal speeches and theological writings⁵⁹. The costume is reconstructed as a simple long-sleeved ankle-long robe⁶⁰ together with accessories such as a long a scarf and/or a hat⁶¹.

Mime is the dramatic genre defended by Choricus in his *Apology of Mimes*. Mime is a dramatic genre whose creation is attributed to Sophron from Sicily in 5th c. BC. (*Apology of Mimes* 14-17) and which enters the official program of *Floralia* in 173 BC⁶² and the competitions linked to Hellenic festivals during the dynasty of Severii (193-235 AD)⁶³. In mime-theatre actors both male and female perform their roles

⁵⁶ Webb (2002): 282 -303 passim suggests that the existence of female dancers might also be possible, taking into consideration the fact that female mime performers were very prominent throughout late antiquity.

⁵⁷ Harmon suggests that the actor may be responsible for the impersonation of secondary roles such as that of Odysseus in the narrative about the madness of Ajax, Harmon (1925): footnote 3 on page 271.

⁵⁸ Five were also according to Lucian the number of acts of pantomime.

⁵⁹ Wyles (2008): 63

⁶⁰ Clement of Alexandria, *The instructor* 2.11, Libanius, *A Reply to Aristides on Behalf of Dancers*, 52

⁶¹ Wyles (2008): 64

⁶² Tsitsiridis (2011): 30

⁶³ Barnes (1996): 170

without the use of mask. The roles as well as the plot may be inspired either by everyday life⁶⁴, or by mockery of certain religious groups⁶⁵ or by the mythological past itself⁶⁶. As far as everyday life plots are concerned, themes of perjury, adultery and prostitution seem to be prominent. As far as types of productions of mime performances are concerned, Plutarch makes a distinction between *ὑποθέσεις* (*hypothesesis*) and *παίγνια* (*paignia*)⁶⁷. The first category is one with lengthy plots and demanding substantial funding. The second one is used to describe mimes full of filth humour⁶⁸. Finally, as far as costume is concerned, we have almost no evidence. We only know that mime actors and actresses were either famous or notorious for the luxurious external appearance consisting of golden garments and precious jewelry. On stage mimes are said to have either long hair or bold heads so as to fit the stereotypical characters of the aggressive long-haired mime who hits the stupid bold mime (*Apology of Mimes*, 146, 154⁶⁹).

⁶⁴ This type of mime is known under the name “biologos” since it deals with matters of (everyday) life.

⁶⁵ Reich was speaking of the category of Christological mime in which certain rituals, mostly baptism were being mocked and parodied on stage, Reich (1903): 89-100. Webb on the other hand maintains that except for Christians, Jews were also a target theme for mime performances, Webb (2008): 100

⁶⁶ This type of mime is known as mythological mimes. Finally Reich adds the fourth category of water mime in which usually female actors performed half-naked in swimming pools. Webb questions the existence of such category of mimes by referring to a metaphoric nudity of the actors. For a short discussion see Webb (2008): 102

⁶⁷ Plutarch, *Table Talks* VII, 8. 712a

⁶⁸ Tsitsiridis argues that the emphasis given to actors’ memory by Choricus (*Apology of Mimes*, 125) can be read as proof for the existence of mime genre of *hypothesesis* during this period Tsitsiridis (2011): 31-32 . Webb on the other hand, thinks that the reference to memory as an indispensable attribute of mime cannot be considered as evidence for the existence of written or unwritten scripts for mime theatre. And that because memory is important not only for memorization but also for improvisation, Webb (2008): 115. Malineau paying attention to the five references of the term *paignia* in Choricus’ text (*Apology of Mimes*, 23, 25, 29, 41,108) tends to believe that this is the prominent type of theatre during this period, Malineau (2005): 154. In the same direction Στεφανής emphasizes the fact that progressively the term *παίγνιώτης* (*paigniotis*) tends to be identical in byzantine texts with the term mime, Στεφανής (1986):154.

⁶⁹ This seems to continue stereotypical roles existent already in Roman mime.

1. HERACLES' LION SKIN AS COSTUME FOR THEATRICAL DISCOURSE

1.1 HERACLES' LION SKIN AS A DEAD ANIMAL BODY

The lion skin that Heracles wears is on the one hand representative of his braveness exhibited in his very first labour and on the other hand reminiscent of future achievements. The hero actually constructed the costume on his own by skinning the invulnerable skin of Nemean lion with the very claws of the animal⁷⁰. The first labour signals Heracles as an animal tamer whose antecedents can be found in ancient near eastern, Egyptian and even Mycenaean civilizations⁷¹. At a first level the killing of the king of animal kingdom and the wearing of its skin testifies the victory of a cultural hero over bestiality. At a second level the dead body of the animal imposed on a human body blurs the boundaries between man and beast, the corpse and the living.

At this point the dynamics of the discussion of the body as such are being revealed. The body whose very essence is the problematic notion of materiality can be approached both as a being (ontological perspective) and as a social agent (sociological perspective). In the first case the body is a property that stretches across a continuous ranging from divine down to bestial. In the second case the body is the basic unit of the hierarchized according to gender and social status structure of the universe (god, man, beast)⁷². In drama the hierarchies of all kinds are being challenged or even abolished in order to be questioned, reinforced or reinvented. In this respect, there is a deliberate fusion concerning the limits of Heracles' live body and lion's corpse which serves the above mentioned purposes of dramatic creation.

1.2 HERACLES' LION SKIN AS A THEATRICAL COSTUME

⁷⁰ It is possible that in reality the act of skinning necessitated two people. The fact that the hero is portrayed in art to do the skinning on his own is a sign of his physical strength, Cohen (1998): 127.

⁷¹ For the exposition of this approach see Padilla (1998): 217-218.

⁷² Ferrari (2009): 7

So far we have treated the relation between Heracles and the lion skin as an interaction between bodies. From now on we will speak of the lion skin as a costume and of Heracles as a heroic humanlike figure who wears it. It has been noticed that in the middle of 6th century BC the figure of Heracles is subject to an alteration of his image. Iconographic evidence of the era and textual testimonies portray Heracles dressed up in the lion skin holding a club and an arrow⁷³.

In accord with the iconographic sources, Athenaeus, XII, 512 attributes to Stesichorus the invention of the new herculean (vs Homeric) costume. In Homeric sagas the figure of Heracles, named usually with a formula denotative of his prowess and physical strength (βίη Ἡρακλείη)⁷⁴, rarely appears. No reference is made to his external appearance and clothes with the exception of *Odyssey* book 11. In lines 609-614 Heracles wears, except for his holding the arrow (607), a golden fanbelt embroidered with designs of bears, wild boars and lions. The images on the fanbelt, the only item which can count for a kind of garment, resemble the images depicted on Heracles' shield in Pseudo-Hesiodus' *Heracles' Shield* 168-177. It has also been suggested that the Homeric herculean costume, referred by Athenaeus, is the hero's armour described in *Heracles' Shield* 122-138⁷⁵. This armour consists of greaves (122-123), a golden breastplate (124-127), a sword (128), a quiver (129) filled with arrows (130-134), a spear (135) and a helmet (136-138). An inextricable piece of the armour is the magnificent shield whose elaborate description extends from line 139 to line 324. This literary evidence is in accord with the early archaic interest in Heracles as a hoplite soldier⁷⁶.

⁷³ Padilla (1998): 219

⁷⁴ *Iliad* 2. 658, 5.637, 11.690, 18. 117, 19. 98, *Odyssey*, 11.601.

⁷⁵ Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1998): 121.

⁷⁶ Padilla (1998): 218

Re-addressing Athenaeus' comment on the change of Heracles' external appearance, we observe that from Stesichorus' literary contribution Heracles is being established as a figure wearing the lion skin and holding the club and arrows⁷⁷. Strabon also talks of the lion skin as an invention posterior to the narratives concerning the Trojan War and attributed to Peisander of Gamiros⁷⁸. An allusion to Heracles' lion skin is made also in Euripides' *Heracles* 465-466. In these lines the hero is portrayed to arm himself with the lion skin.

This new image of Heracles abundant in iconographic resources from mid-6th century onwards could "drive" the narratives concerning Heracles⁷⁹. It has also been observed that in Homeric epic the expression «θυμολέων»⁸⁰ is used twice to refer to the rarely appeared in the Homeric corpus figure of Heracles. The frequent however analogies drawn between the Homeric hero and the lion are suggestive of the use of image for the depiction of the aristocratic qualities of the warrior⁸¹. It is thus maintained that the interior, the inner self of Heracles is being exteriorized and visualized via the use of the lion skin⁸². In a more bold approach the lion skin does not constitute the visualization of Heracles' character, but of Heracles' figure since Heracles has no character and no interior. He is just an actor constituted by his acts⁸³, a hero inextricably linked with physical strength (at least until Prodicus' elaboration of the crossroad story). The lion skin does not have a functional role placed on hero's shoulders and on the top of his garment, but a symbolic one. It is

⁷⁷«τοῦτο οὖν , φησὶν, οἱ νεώτεροι ποιηταὶ κατασκευάζουσιν ἐν ληστοῦ σχήματι μόνον περιτορευόμενον, ξύλον ἔχοντα καὶ λεοντήνκαὶ τόξα· καὶ ταῦτα πλάσαι πρῶτον Στησίχορον τὸν Ἰμεραῖον. Καὶ Ξάνθος δ' ὁ μελοποιός, πρεσβύτερος ὢν Στησίχορον, ὡς καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Στησίχορος μαρτυρεῖ, ὡς φησὶν ὁ Μεγακλείδης, οὐ ταύτην αὐτῷ περιτίθεισιν τὴν στολήν, ἀλλὰ τὴν Ὀμηρικὴν (Athenaeus, XII, 512).

⁷⁸ Strabon, XV, 1, 9.

⁷⁹ Padilla (1998): 217

⁸⁰ *Iliad* 5. 638, *Odyssey* 11.267

⁸¹ Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1998): 116

⁸² Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1998): 123

⁸³ Loraux (1990): 22-23

there to describe instantly Heracles as Heracles. It is also stated that “Heracles belongs to a theatrical tradition of comic discourse that spans different genres, is broad in geographical distribution and is recycled through the history of Graeco- Roman drama”⁸⁴. And what is more, the image of Heracles as bearer of the lion skin is that which precedes and in a way formulates, determines his narrative roles. Using Padilla’s beautiful expression we could say that “the gateway to Heracles’ comic roles is the lion skin”⁸⁵.

The continuous exchange of the lion skin between the constitutional god of drama, Dionysus and his slave Xanthias in the most metatheatrical of Aristophanes’ comedy⁸⁶, *Frogs* underlines even more emphatically the prominence of lion skin as a theatrical costume. At a first level the drama is metatheatrical because certain elements in it refer to the theatrical performance of the drama itself. For example Heracles acts as an internalized spectator when he comments on Dionysus incongruous disguise in Heracles’ lion skin (*Frogs*, 45-47). In addition another metatheatrical comment is made when Dionysus frightened asks help from his priest promising to accompany him at the dinner (*Frogs*, 297). The word priest can imply the priest of Dionysus who was sitting in the front row watching as a spectator the presentation of *Frogs* on stage⁸⁷. Furthermore, in another instance Dionysus is being told that the fee to Hades is two obols (*Frogs*, 140). As it has been observed the incident constitutes a metatheatrical allusion to the fact that spectators had to pay two obols⁸⁸ and not one⁸⁹ in order to have a seat in the Dionysian theatre.

⁸⁴ Padilla (1998): 221

⁸⁵ Padilla (1998): 227

⁸⁶ Slater (2002): 205: “The *Frogs* is the most metatheatrical of Aristophanes’ plays in the sense that it deals on both a theoretical and a practical level with the problems of creating tragedy and comedy”.

⁸⁷ Slater (2002): 187

⁸⁸ Slater (2002): 187. His comment concerns line 270 when Dionysus pays the necessary fee.

⁸⁹ The traditional “fee” paid to Charon was one obol.

In a more abstract manner, Dionysus' disguise as well as the constant exchange of the lion skin almost throughout the first half of the play constitute a commentary on theatre in general. Or more appropriately they constitute a theatrical discourse. It has also been stated that the "semiotic conceptualization of Dionysus in the sixth and fifth centuries BC facilitated and then supported the audience's understanding of tragic costume as representative of an entire stage identity"⁹⁰. In cultural imagination Dionysus is explicitly associated with the yellow feminine robe he wears while the tragedy itself had its origins in rituals in which performers were dressed in animal skins⁹¹. In this direction we suggest that the first half of the play constitutes a discussion on the theatrical performance just as the second half is a piece of literary criticism on the dramatic text of tragedy. Dionysus, institutional god of drama and a divine being highly associated with the costume is chosen to wear Heracles' lion skin. It is not by accident that Aristophanes chooses to discuss themes of staging and role playing using one and only costume, that of Heracles' lion skin.

On the other hand, Heracles' comic and tragic costume share many similarities. The tragic *skeue* of Heracles is different from the standard one in so far that is not comprised of a thick ankle-length robe which covered the body. On the contrary, the characteristic garment placed beneath the lion skin was a *chiton*, a knee-length garment⁹². In addition, Heracles is not portrayed⁹³ to wear *kothornous*, an important shoe for tragedy⁹⁴. He rather wears plain shoes where his greaves are ending⁹⁵. Finally, another peculiarity of Heracles' costume both

⁹⁰ Wyles (2011): 54

⁹¹ Wyles (2011): 54-55

⁹² Wyles (2010): 238-239 and footnote 21 on page 238.

⁹³ Pronomos vase cf. Heracles' comment upon Dionysus' disguise in Aristophanes' *Frogs* 45-47

⁹⁴ To begin with *kothornoi* in classical tragedy were probably boots (Wyles (2010): 239) and not high-soled shoes as it is the case in Hellenistic period Lightfoot (2002): 213. Wyles also argues that *kothornoi* should not be conceived as a shoe symbolic of tragedy, but rather as only one type of shoe worn by certain characters (e.g. women), Wyles (2010): 239-241.

⁹⁵ Wyles (2010): 237

in tragedy and probably in comedy is the stress upon the unity between mask and garment. Tragic and comic masks of Heracles retain details from the head of Nemean lion⁹⁶ which continues the lion skin which is probably worn around the actor's shoulders⁹⁷. Despite the fact that comic and tragic costumes differ severely⁹⁸ these three factors *chiton*, footwear and the continuity between mask and costume are marking Heracles' costume in its totality as a theatrical costume. We thus suggest that Heracles' lion skin because of a) its materiality, b) its incorporation into the hero's appearance in relation to the creation of drama and c) its prominence in tragic and comic herculean costumes emerges as the costume *par excellence* for theatrical discourse.

1.3. HERACLES' LION SKIN AS THE ATTRIBUTE OF A TRANSGRESSIVE HERO

The mythological figure of the bearer of lion skin can also count for its importance as a theatrical costume. Heracles is an unclassified hero who transgresses boundaries of all kinds: human, ethnic, societal, sexual. The liminal figure of Heracles encompasses almost all kinds of oppositions. He "is the civilized and the bestial, the serious and the burlesque, the sane and the insane the savior and the destroyer, free and slave, divine and human, virile and feminine"⁹⁹. Even more important than the transgressive figure of Heracles are the incidents of transvestism that the hero experiences. Heracles along with Achilles, the supermacho and the warrior, are two excessively virile figures who wear temporarily

⁹⁶ See Herculeian figures on Pronomos vase (400-380 BC), phlyax vases (400-325 BC) from Magna Graecia, Apulian bell krater (former Berlin) 375-350 BC

⁹⁷ Wyles (2010): 236

⁹⁸ For the striking differences see Wiles (2000): 156-159

⁹⁹ Loraux (1990): 24

feminine clothes thus testing their virility¹⁰⁰ or experiencing the feminine in order not to be exhausted by their supermasculinity¹⁰¹.

Four instances of Heracles' transvestism have been traced¹⁰². First and foremost Heracles' stay in the palace of Omphale where he served as Omphale's (erotic) slave. According to a version of this story an exchange of costumes took place between the queen and the hero. Omphale was dressed up in Heracles' lion skin while he wore Omphale's dress. The second instance is found in Plutarch's *Greek Questions* 58 when Heracles' disguise in women's clothes for his survival from Meropes and then for his wedding with the king's daughter is taken as an *aition* for the priest of Heracles of Antimacheia being dressed in a woman's flowery robe. Thirdly, there is John Lydus' narrative about Heracles Victor wearing a long dress and being served by transvestite priests. Finally, we have to mention Diodorus' of Sicily's unique narrative about Athena offering Heracles' a *peplos*, that is a woman's garment as gift.

An interesting point in our analysis is the one brought up by Loraux who underlines the possibility that Aristophanes was aware of the version of myth mentioned by Diodorus. In this perspective when Heracles declares that he cannot help laughing at the awkward combination of lion skin and yellow robe, buskin and club (45-47), he actually challenges the spectator to think and laugh with a known aspect of the myth. The first to make this awkward combination is Heracles¹⁰³. Under this light the lion skin inextricably connected with its bearer from the late sixth century onwards shares the transgressive nature of the hero. This corporeal relation between costume and wearer functions the opposite way, thus

¹⁰⁰ Cyrino (1998): 214

¹⁰¹ Loraux (1990): 39

¹⁰² Loraux (1990): 35

¹⁰³ Loraux (1990): 38

being the hero the one who endows the lion skin with the characteristics of transgressivity, liminality and thus even transformability.

1.4 HERACLES' LION SKIN: A THEATRICAL COSTUME IN DIACHRONY

Finally, what advocates for the reception of Heracles' lion skin as a diachronic costume for theatrical discourse is the evidence itself. Firstly, as we have already seen that the depiction of Heracles as wearer of the lion skin in the mid-6th century BC onwards determined Heracles' presentation in the comic discourse, that is in satyr drama, old and middle comedy and *flyax*¹⁰⁴. In addition, the interplay of the exchange of lion skin between Dionysus and Xanthias extending in the first half of the *Frogs*, the comedy which comments on drama as theatrical performance and literary production, underlines the significance of lion skin as the costume par excellence for all sorts of comic discourse.

Secondly, the visual evidence coming from late Hellenistic period (1st c BC) reaffirms the predominance of the lion skin in the theatrical discourse. The muse of tragedy Melpomene is depicted on smaller and bigger works of art, in private and public contexts to be dressed up in no other tragic costume than that of Heracles¹⁰⁵. She, a female figure representative of the dramatic genre of tragedy wears the lion skin and holds a club. This iconographic evidence in relation with the theatrical treatment of the exchange of Heracles' lion skin between Dionysus and Xanthias suggest that the lion skin was also an important costume for the iconographic "discussion' of tragedy¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁴ Padilla (1998): 220-221

¹⁰⁵ Wyles (2011): 104

¹⁰⁶ I am quoting Wyles' words which denote the importance of the lion skin as a tragic costume, though in a less emphatic way: "This (Aristophanes') theatrical treatment of Heracles' costume added another layer to its meaning and gave it the potential to become a symbol for the process by which costume transforms actors into characters and theatre is created. It is highly surprising then to find Melpomene, the Muse of Tragedy, is shown dressed in his costume. She represents the tragic art and fundamental to that art is the creation of theatre through dressing up in costume. As a way of drawing attention to that statement, she is dressed in Heracles' costume which was already after the *Frogs* a short hand for one of the processes that lay behind

The diachronic use of Heracles' lion skin as point of reference for the theatrical costume emerges from the treatises of Lucian, Libanius and Choricius which cover a span of ten centuries and multiple dramatic genres. In Lucian the use of lion skin in tragedy and the restrictions imposed by it on actor's performance are being discussed (*On Dancing*, § 27). In addition, the use of the lion skin in pantomime is being implied since mythological events concerning hero's life constitute main pantomime plots narrated via corporeal movements (*On Dancing*, § 41, 50). In Libanius Heracles' lion skin is a costume which cannot alternate the lifestyle of the wearer (*A Reply to Aristidis On Behalf of ancens Dancers*, 53). In *Apology of Mimes* Choricius speaks of use of lion skin in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (*Apology of Mimes* 77). However, this allusion is being made in the context of the discussion concerning the relation between mime costume and actor (*Apology of Mimes* 78).

All in all, Heracles' skin seems examined from various perspectives to be the prominent costume for the articulation of a discourse on diverse kinds of dramatic genre from classical period onwards.

tragedy", Wyles (2011): 104 . As we have seen in the case of Heracles, what is important is the heroic figure, the superhuman embodiment of strength and not the character. As a result the costume, the lion skin transforms actors into a heroic figure known for his prowess and braveness.

2. HERACLES' LION SKIN IN ARISTOPHANES' *FROGS*

From now on we will closely examine the theatrical discourse that treats the relationship between actor and the costume of Heracles' lion skin. As we have already mentioned *Frogs* is the most metatheatrical of Aristophanes' plays. This observation also applies to the exchange of the lion skin between Dionysus and Xanthias in the first half of the play. The continuous exchanges of costume between god and slave remind us of the actual performance of *Frogs*. The supposed actors quarrel and even seem to fail¹⁰⁷ to play appropriately their part while on the same time the actors playing Dionysus' and Xanthias are extremely successful and effective as far as the impersonation is concerned¹⁰⁸.

This metatheatrical reading underlines the importance of lion skin as medium through which we can think about the performance of the *Frogs*. However, what we intend to do is to consider the lion skin as a medium with the aid of which we can reflect upon theatre as an artform. As the second half of the comedy can be read as a piece of literary criticism on drama the first half can be considered as piece of theatrical criticism, thus a critical discourse not on literary side of poetry but on its performative aspect. Essential thus for our reading of *Frogs* as a theatrical discourse is the notion of the costume which is the cornerstone of every theatrical performance. The theatre starts to exist when a man wears a cloth other than his and in this way he becomes somebody else¹⁰⁹. The costume already from the constitution of the theatre is considered as capable of transforming the bearer's identity. In this line of thought what Aristophanes wants to challenge is the fundamental

¹⁰⁷ They do not fail actually as we will see despite the fact that such a failure is much anticipated by the preparatory acting scenes.

¹⁰⁸ Slater (2002): 189

¹⁰⁹ There is a huge debate on whether the creation of theatre starts with a man wearing different clothes than his own thus representing someone else or whether it is the dialogue gradually developed between the *koryphaios* and other members of a chorus in the context of ritual festivals. An answer to this question cannot be dealt appropriately in the context of our discussion and for this reason I would treat the use of costume as one of the constitutional acts of theatre which is of extreme importance for the conceptualization of this artform.

for the creation of theatre belief that the costume endows his bearer with certain attributes and qualities.

Having made this distinction we proceed to examine the discussion on the relation of actor to the lion skin, this time being conducted in highly performative terms. In opposition to other famous disguises in Aristophanes' plays¹¹⁰ it has been noticed that in *Frogs* Dionysus appears on stage already in disguise, does not acquire his costume from the (theatrical or not) wardrobe of a tragic poet and does not have to imitate a particular plot or character¹¹¹. Going to underworld dressed in Heracles' lion skin in order to better accomplish his mission¹¹² Dionysus stands still and hesitant in front of a door. His slave Xanthias urges him to knock at the door having the costume and spirit of Heracles: «καθ' Ἡρακλέα τὸ σχῆμα καὶ τὸ λῆμ' ἔχων» (462, 463).

The first half of the play is going to revolve around this ambiguous phrase. Sommerstein commenting upon this line interprets the word «σχῆμα» as “style”¹¹³. Slater on the other hand, broadens the meaning of the word so that it means both “costume” and “stance”¹¹⁴. In our analysis of the phrase the word stands for external appearance in general and costume¹¹⁵ in particular. If it was for *schema* to be a broader term- thing which is not utterly denied- then the word «λῆμα» will not be necessary. This last term means state of being, inner disposition¹¹⁶. For Dionysus to knock at the door in the manner of Heracles he

¹¹⁰ E.g. *Acharnians*, *Thesmophoriazousae*

¹¹¹ Compton-Engle (2003): 524

¹¹² To bring back to life a creative poet (*Frogs*, 72, 96)

¹¹³ Sommerstein (1996): comment on lines 462-463

¹¹⁴ Slater (2002): 14 and note 29 on p. 189

¹¹⁵ Cf. *LSJ* <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ljs/#eid=104741&context=lsj&action=hw-list-click>

¹¹⁶ *LSJ* <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ljs/#eid=64946&context=lsj&action=hw-list-click>

should both wear the appropriate costume and express the analogous spirit. In other words both terms function as presuppositions for the effective impersonation of Heracles.

At this point, we will stop to elaborate on the nature of the costume Dionysus currently wears. In lines 35-47 takes place a confrontation-mirror scene¹¹⁷ between Heracles and Dionysus disguised in Heracles' costume. Heracles laughs at and comments upon the weird combination of yellow garment and lion skin (45), *kothornoi* and club (46). This comment implies that the costume Dionysus wears is a fragmented one which reveals the identity of the bearer. In addition, the yellow robe which is characteristic of Dionysus is in contrast with the ideas of manliness and aggressiveness that the lion skin implies while the buskins/boots either as feminine or tragic or Dionysus' characteristic shoes¹¹⁸ do not much with the club. Furthermore, the masks of the actors who impersonate Heracles and Dionysus respectively or otherwise the "faces" of the characters differ. The masks at least in Aristophanes' surviving plays are not used metatheatrically¹¹⁹. In this respect, the mirror scene draws our attention to the fact that throughout the successive impersonations and debates around effective *mimesis* the disguise is fragmented thus constantly revealing the dialogue between "actor" and costume of the character.

We shall now move on to provide a summary of the successive exchanges of costume between Dionysus and Xanthias. When doorkeeper¹²⁰ gets out of the door starts to characterize negatively and to curse Heracles, Dionysus feels incapable of displaying the appropriate temper of mind suitable for the costume¹²¹. He thus asks Xanthias to dress up

¹¹⁷ Slater (2002): 184

¹¹⁸ For the connotations of *kothornoi* in this passage see Dover (1997): 100

¹¹⁹ Taplin (1993): footnote 2 p. 68 cf. Lada-Richards (1999): 160 who talks about a stable mask and a modified costume.

¹²⁰ There is not concrete and sufficient textual reference which can account for the identity of the doorkeeper see Dover (1997): *ad locum* (although the name of Aeacus features as one of the prominent suggestions).

¹²¹ Cf. emergence of his fear on journey dispute his wearing Heracles' lion skin.

in Heracles' costume (495-496). When Xanthias does so, the maid quite friendly offers him food and the sweet companion of female dancers. Seeing the goods Xanthias will devour, Dionysus interferes and demands that he stops playing the role (521-522) since he is a slave and a mortal and cannot play the part of a god (531). Except for a metatheatrical comment this last sentence is telling of one perspective of the discussion on the relation between the performer and the costume. Just to complete the narrative of the exchange of costume Dionysus dresses up again in Heracles' costume to be severely insulted and cursed by the hostess. He then gives back the costume to Xanthias who is challenging Aeacus to torture his slave, thus Dionysus in order to find out if the Heracles-like figure tells the truth.

Although the encounters with the citizens of the underworld are important for the function of the costume as such the scenes which precede these encounters are more revealing for the relation developed between an actor and his costume. Lines 460-463, as we have seen, constitute a preparatory scene for the first encounter with the doorkeeper and are suggestive for the prerequisites of a successful impersonation. Lines 479-502 precede the encounter of Heracleioxanthias with Perserphone's household slave. Lines 521-548 function as preparatory for Dionysus' impersonation of Heracles in front of two innkeepers while lines 579-604 constitute a comment upon efficient acting just before the start of a small first *agon*¹²².

In particular, in lines 494-496 Dionysus suggests that Xanthias should be dressed up in Heracles' costume because he has the necessary spirit, braveness and lack of fear: «ἴθι νυν, ἐπειδὴ ληματιᾶς κἀνδρεῖος εἶ|σύ μεν γενοῦ 'γώ, τὸ ῥόπαλον τουτί λαβῶν|καὶ τὴν λεοντῆν, εἴπερ ἀφοβόσπλαχνος εἶ». Furthermore, in lines 590-596 the chorus admonishes Xanthias who has received once more the Herculeian attire to adjust himself to the costume and do not display signs of effeminacy which would prove detrimental for the impersonation. Xanthias on his own replies that he is aware that Dionysus is possibly going

¹²² Dover (1997): 151

to deprive him of Heracles' costume and is determined to demonstrate his braveness(598-604).

Despite the fact that Dionysus stresses the importance of costume for impersonation «ὅτιή σε παίζων Ἡρακλέα γ' ἐσκεύασα;»(523) and although the costume is proven effective both on Dionysus and Xanthias in all encounters, the acting directions shared between the two “actors” and the chorus articulate the theatrical discourse of the play. In this way the power of the costume in the construction of theatrical illusion is confirmed while the mechanics that lie behind the creation of theatre are revealed to the audience of the play since the characters of Dionysus and Xanthias merge beneath the fragmented costume. Dionysus' effeminacy and cowardliness (479-492)¹²³ and Xanthias' mortal and servile nature (531) are being revealed during the preparatory acting scenes which are now taking place onstage preceding the successive impersonations of Heracles. The discussion focuses our attention on how a person of certain identity can via costume be another being. As it is shown that can happen on stage if the performer adjusts his spirit and voice to the costume he wears. The character of the performer remains intact underneath the costume and changes deliberately and temporarily onstage and via costume for the theatrical performance to be realized effectively.

¹²³ This observation has led scholars to conceive Dionysus as an “lamentable” (Lada-Richards (2002): 405) or “unsuccessful” performer (Slater (2002): 206)

3. LUCIAN'S *ON DANCING*

In Lucian's *On Dancing*, which constitutes for Lada-Richards "the first ever attempt in western theatrical history to map the somatic and mental qualities of a stage performer"¹²⁴, pantomime is reconstructed as a multilevel spectacle in which a solo male dancer interprets via corporeal language a mythological narrative accompanied by an assistant actor, groups of dancers, a choir or a single singer or narrator¹²⁵. The dancer in opposition to the view attributed to Demetrius the Cynic is not a mere adjunct to the spectacle created by the pantomime costume, the mask, the flute and the choir of singers (63). On the contrary, the dancer is portrayed to be the center of the performance, in whose service a consortium of musical instruments¹²⁶ is subjected (26).

Despite the fact that pantomime is exalted as a performance genre which has achieved a harmonic equilibrium of body and mind (61, 70), body figures as more prominent in the discussion of art form. Mental qualities as a wide range of learning (37), a high level of memory (36, 61) and acuteness of spirit (74) are presented as necessary for the pantomime performer. The performer has to be well aware of a variety of myths from different geographical areas and mythological cycles (37)¹²⁷. In addition, the dancer has to have a good memory of mythological events so as not to confuse in his performance myths which resemble each other¹²⁸. Finally the pantomime performer is likened to Calchas and is

¹²⁴ Lada- Richards (2007): 12

¹²⁵ Hall (2008): 3

¹²⁶ The musical instruments that support pantomime performer can be many and variable. Flute («αὐλός»), pipes («σούριγγες»), lyre («κιθάρα»), cymbals («κύμβαλα») and probably a metal type of heel attached to feet (scabellum) are considered as parts of the technical equipment of the art form of pantomime (26, 63, 68, 72, 83). For a brief discussion of these instruments see also Lada-Richards (2007): 41.

¹²⁷ An indicative catalogue of mythological themes "narrated" on stage by pantomime performers extends from paragraph 37 to paragraph 61.

¹²⁸ An example of this confusion of mythological narratives is given in paragraph 80 where lack of knowledge and memory are listed as vices of pantomime performers. In particular a performer is said to have failed to express adequately in body language the eating of the children by Cronus with the misfortunes of Thyestes.

expected to be aware of the sequence of mythological narratives he has to portray using his body as medium (36). A great variety of myths and mythological characters should be in his disposition all the time (61) while acuteness of spirit is necessary so that the performer can “attune” the rhythm of the dancing body with the musical rhythm that accompanies the spectacle (80).

The aforementioned mental qualities although essential for a harmonious pantomime performance are not irrelevant with constant comments on the pleasant («τεροπνός») and useful («χρήσιμος») character of pantomime performance (6, 71). Thorough knowledge of mythology and adequacy in its physical expression accounts for the educational value of pantomime as a spectacle (6, 23, 72). In addition, the capacity of the performer to recall at each occasion the appropriate mythological narrative from those stored in his mind might be read in relation to the capacity of literate members of the elite to recall at ease fragments from literary works so as to support their statements. All in all, although the mental qualities of a performer are important and indispensable for a successful pantomime performance they can be also read in accord with Lucian’s intention to elevate pantomime to the sphere of high culture¹²⁹.

As far as the body of the performer is concerned, hands are described as the most essential parts that the artist uses in order to articulate successfully the mythological narratives. In *On Dancing* the importance of hands is exalted in the context of two different anecdotes which underline the fact that pantomime uses a new type of language to communicate myths to the audience, the body language. In particular, in paragraph 63, a dancer exceptional in his art asked Demetrius the Cynic to watch him performing without

¹²⁹ Lada-Richards (2007): 87 [It is important to note a typographical error concerning this passage. The phrase “It **cannot** be stressed too strongly that any art aspiring to the prestige of high culture had to make a concerted effort to appropriate a didactic, especially a moralizing function” needs to change into “It **can** be stressed too strongly that any art aspiring to the prestige of high culture had to make a concerted effort to appropriate a didactic, especially a moralizing function”.]

the accompaniment of musical instruments and songs and then issue his verdict on the value of dance. The dancer chose to recite with his body the adultery of Aphrodite and Ares and the discovery of the immoral liaison by Hephaestus. Demetrius amazed at the astonishing performance exclaimed: «Ἀκούω, ἄνθρωπε, ἃ ποιεῖς· οὐχ ὁρῶ μόνον, ἀλλὰ μοι δοκεῖς ταῖς χερσίν αὐταῖς λαλεῖν» (I hear the story that you are acting, man, I do not just see it; you seem to me to be talking with your very hands)¹³⁰. In paragraph 69 Lesbonax of Mytilene is said to call dancers handiwise «χειρισόφους» because of their ability to narrate stories with the use of their hands.

Evidence about the importance of hands in pantomime performances comes also from other sources¹³¹. Artemidorus (2nd c. AD) in his *Interpretation of Dreams* 1.42 describes hands as a necessary working tool for sailors, illusionists and dancers¹³². Quintilian speaks of hands in the context of an orator's skills as common language of the human race (*Institutio Oratoria* 11. 3. 85-7)¹³³. In the same line of thought, an anecdote concerning an event taking place during the reign of Nero places emphasis upon the importance of corporeal movements («νεύματα») in the communication of information to the audience (*On Dancing*, 64). A half-Hellenized royal from Pontus is portrayed to have asked Nero to offer him as a gift his extraordinary dancer. His inability to understand the songs accompanying the dance did not hinder him from grasping the meaning of pantomime's eloquent corporeal performance. As a result the king who had to negotiate with barbarian neighbours speaking different languages, decided that such an eloquent dancer could be his ideal interpreter («διανεύων οὗτος ἕκαστά μοι ἑρμηνεύσει»). Body language used in

¹³⁰ The English translation is by Harmon (1925): 267.

¹³¹ For a short catalogue of passages referring to the importance of hands in pantomime performance see Lada-Richards (2007): 44. For the role of fingers in particular see note 36 page 185.

¹³² The diviner suggests that a dream of not having hands is a frightening sign for sailors, illusionist and dancers for whom hands are indispensable for their work.

¹³³ For comments on this extract as well as for the important role of hands in rhetoric declamations see Fögen (2009): 18-24, Hall (2008): 7

pantomime art and in particular movements of hands are considered efficient in functioning as a new type of language which can meet the needs of multilingual audiences of the first centuries AD¹³⁴.

Feet are also important for the onstage performance but they do not receive the same emphatic treatment in Lucian's *On Dancing*. They are usually associated with the noise that they produce (2) while they are being mentioned together with the musical instruments that are being used during the spectacle (68)¹³⁵. In addition it is not clear whether the sound-provoking shoes belong to the dancer himself or to assistant actor, dancers or singers who accompany the central performer (83)¹³⁶. Finally, another reference to the feet of the dancer is made when the vices of performers are discussed. The feet in this case fail to follow the rhythm of the songs and instruments (80). Although dancer's feet are important for a harmonious result, emphasis seems to be given implicitly to pantomime performer's hands during this period.

The body however as a whole constructs the mythological narratives on stage through various twists («στροφάς»), turns («περιαγωγάς»), jumps («πηδήματα») and back-flung poses («ύπτιασμούς») (71). The body is described in treatises and functions on stage as an active ever moving figure («σχήμα»). The word «σχήμα» and its derivatives are mentioned throughout *On Dancing* and designate this new type of performance which relies on bodily movements¹³⁷. In Plutarch's *Sympotic Questions* 747C an attempt is made to define the figures as follows: «σχήματα δὲ <τάς> σχέσεις καὶ διαθέσεις, εἰς ἃς φερόμεναι

¹³⁴ Hall (2008): 7-8

¹³⁵ Reference to feet is made also during the description of dances representative of certain geographical areas (10, 11, 13).

¹³⁶ A dancer who performed the part of Ajax, experiencing a sudden blow of madness tore apart the clothes of one of the people who were beating time with the iron shoe. The other group of people to be affected by the incident are those who played the flute and the secondary actor who impersonated Odysseus. It can thus be inferred that it is not necessary for the central pantomime dancer to wear the noisy shoes.

¹³⁷ *On Dancing* 25, 28, 34, 36, 83.

τελευτῶσιν αἰ κινήσεις, ὅταν Ἀπόλλωνος ἢ Πανός ἢ τινος Βάκχης σχῆμα διαθέντες ἐπὶ τοῦ σώματος γραφικῶς τοῖς εἶδεσιν ἐπιμένωσι.» In this passage *schemata* are the poses and compositions into which the movements lead and with which they conclude, when the dancers pause, composing their bodies into the pose of Apollo or Pan or a Bacchant as if in a picture¹³⁸. The gestures and postures created by the limbs of the performer constitute the essence of pantomime performance since now the mythological narratives are being articulated via bodily language.

As far as costume of dancer is¹³⁹ concerned the evidence that we have in our disposition are rather meager. In *On Dancing* the only information provided concerning pantomime costume is that it is a soft («ἐσθῆσι μαλακαῖς» 2)¹⁴⁰ and silk¹⁴¹ garment («ἐσθῆτι σηρικῇ» 63). Other evidence which contribute to the reconstruction of the basic piece of clothing of pantomime's costume can be traced into various sources. Wyles reconstructs the dancer's costume as a soft, silk, ankle-length¹⁴², possibly long-sleeved¹⁴³ robe. In addition, it can be inferred from Apuleius' (2ndc. AD) *The Defense* 13. 5 that pantomime costume was saffron-coloured¹⁴⁴. In this passage Apuleius seems to associate every costume with a specific performance genre: "si choragium thymelicum possiderem,

¹³⁸ The translation is the one suggested by Webb (2007): 51.

¹³⁹ The first attempt to reconstruct the costume of pantomime according to the scarce and scattered information provided by passages in apologetic treatises, law codes, legal speeches and theological writings and iconographic data can be attributed to Wyles (2008): 62-84. For the opposite view which wants pantomime dancers to wear elaborate masks and costumes see Beacham (1999): 143.

¹⁴⁰This information is provided by Crato, Lycinus' opponent in the dialogue, who maintains that pantomime spectacles can effeminate both the performer and the spectator.

¹⁴¹ For a brief discussion of association of soft and silk materials with effeminacy see Wyles (2008): 85 note 49.

¹⁴² Wyles (2008): 63-65. The textual information in support of this view comes from passage 2.1 in Clemens' of Alexandria (2nd c. AD) *The Instructor*.

¹⁴³ This information is provided by iconographic evidence such as the Trier ivory 5th c. AD.

¹⁴⁴ Wyles (2008): 65 states that Apuleius is the only source we have in our disposition for this information.

num ex eo argumentarere etiam uti me consuesse tragoedii syrmate, histrionis crocota, torgia, mimi centunculo?" (If I possessed a theatrical wardrobe, would you argue from that that I am frequently wearing the trailing robes of tragedy, the saffron cloak of the pantomime dancer, or the patchwork suit of mime?). Furthermore, a scarf/ mantle ("pallium") can be treated as another part of pantomime costume¹⁴⁵ which due to its transformability succeeds into bridging the gaps created between different mythological narratives. Finally, props indicative of the mythological character represented on stage such as a sword or a hat can be conceived as special supplements to pantomime's costume¹⁴⁶.

Masks were the other important part of pantomime performer's on stage appearance. The mask is described in *On Dancing* as a beautiful artifact with closed mouth (« τὸ δὲ πρόσωπον αὐτὸ ὡς κάλλιστον...συμμεμυκός», 29 cf. 63). The same central male performer was supposed to change up to five different "silent" masks throughout the course of one single performance. The number of masks is described as equivalent to the five parts («μέρη») of pantomime. It is however ambivalent whether the word «μέρη» should be interpreted as five distinctive acts or five distinctive characters¹⁴⁷. Wyles argues against a distinctive character portrayal coinciding with an act division and suggests that there was a natural flow between the precedent and successive on stage character¹⁴⁸.

As far as Heracles' lion skin in *On Dancing* is concerned, it has a double function. Firstly, it is used in the criticism of tragic costume and secondly it can be reconstructed as an element of pantomime costume.

¹⁴⁵ Wyles (2008): 65-66. The literary evidence for the use of scarf as a prop for pantomime is found in Fronto's *On Orations* 5: "As actors when they dance in a scarf represent a swan's tail, the tresses of Venus, a Fury's scourge, so these writers make up one and the same thought in a thousand ways".

¹⁴⁶ Wyles (2008): 66. In our view there is not enough evidence to support the hypothesis that the hat was an indispensable prop of pantomime's costume. Hat can be a part of costume if it is related to one or more specific mythological characters.

¹⁴⁷ Harmon (1925): 269 translates the word as acts.

¹⁴⁸ Wyles (2008): 69-70

Lycinus defends the relatively new performance genre of pantomime against Crato's charges by placing emphasis upon the tragic costume. The passage is revealing: « Τὴν τραγωδίαν δέ γε ἀπὸ τοῦ σχήματος πρώτου καταμάθωμεν οἷα ἐστίν, ὡς εἰδεχθὲς ἅμα καὶ φοβερόν θέαμα εἰς μῆκος ἄρρυθμον ἠσκημένος ἄνθρωπος, ἐμβάταις ὑψηλοῖς ἐποχούμενος, πρόσωπον ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς ἀνατεινόμενον ἐπικείμενος καὶ στόμα κεχηνὸς πάμμεγα ὡς καταπιόμενος τοὺς θεατάς» (As far as tragedy is concerned let us form our first opinion of its character from its outward semblance. What a repulsive and at the same time frightful spectacle is a man tricked out to disproportionate stature, mounted upon high clogs, wearing a mask that reaches up above his head, with a mouth that is set yawn as if he meant to swallow up the spectators! ¹⁴⁹ 27). A similar judgment of a tragic performance in the reign of Nero based on the impact of costume is preserved in anecdote by Eunapius (historian, 4th c. AD). In this fragment a tragic actor exiled from Rome went to a different region with half-barbarian inhabitants so as to demonstrate his art and exceptional voice. However, the people of the area could not endure the frightful spectacle. They accepted to attend the performance only after the actor had explained to the leaders of the community the nature of the mask and high clogs which created such an extravagant spectacle¹⁵⁰.

The actor imprisoned inside this elaborate construct is bending in vain forward and backward having as only tool for his work his voice («μόνης τῆς φωνῆς ὑπεύθυνον παρέχων ἑαυτόν», 27). This terrible spectacle can be bearable as far as the actor is impersonating Andromache or Hecuba. When however Heracles appears on stage the actor inside the costume is unable to support the grandeur of his role with his voice. The actor in this case seems incapable of adequately impersonating a majestic character and does not act in accord with the lion skin and the club he bears. Heracles is again mentioned as an example for the failure of tragic actor to meet with success the needs of his elaborate

¹⁴⁹ The translation is by Harmon (1925): 239

¹⁵⁰ Wyles (2011): 105

costume in paragraph 11 of Lucian's *Wisdom of Nigrinus*: "Time and again when they (= the actors) have assumed the role of Agamemnon or Creon or even Heracles himself, costumed in cloth of gold with fierce eyes and mouths agape, they speak in a voice that is small, thin, womanish and far too poor for Hecuba or Polyxena. Therefore to avoid being criticized like them for wearing a mask altogether too big for my head and for being a disgrace to my costume, I want to talk to you with my features exposed, so that the hero whose part I am taking may not be brought down with me if I stumble"¹⁵¹.

As we have seen in tragedy the glorious mask and the elaborate costume were forming a unity. In the case of Heracles' costume the lion skin was part both of the costume and the mask. In the first centuries AD this unity of mask and costume constitutes a shell into which the actor suffocates unable to use his expressive skills. The costume as a whole hinders rather than enhances performer's effort to impersonate a character. In this case Heracles' lion skin becomes one of the most explicit examples for demonstrating a change in the aesthetic reception of the classic performance genre during this period. In classic drama the actor was expected to assimilate his voice and state of mind to the costume so as to impersonate adequately a character. This assimilation process seems rather difficult during this period. The distance between the actor and its costume has been augmented. The costume instead of contributing to the construction of a character on stage hinders the very process of impersonation for which it was originally created. The voice is not enough for the distance between actor and costume to be abridged. Heracles' lion skin is used to articulate this change and demonstrate the need for a new type of relation between costume and performer to be created.

Except for being used as a comment for the change of relation between performer and costume in classical drama, Heracles' lion skin can help us reconstruct the hero's costume for pantomime performance. Myths related to Heracles seem to be prominent narratives that were designed to be displayed on stage. Hero's twelve labours and

¹⁵¹ The translation is by Harmon (1913).

slaughter of children are included in the myths related with Thebans and the House of Labdacus (41) that a pantomime performer should be aware of. Another mythological theme used by pantomime dancers is the wrestling match between the hero and the river Achelous, which is part of the myths of Aetolia (50). The incident with Nessus and the jealousy of Deianeira which are incidents of the myths related to Heracles are also performed by dancers (50)¹⁵². The golden apples of Hesperidae and the lifting of Geryon's cattle is also a myth prominent in Italy which is linked with Heracles and performed by pantomime dancers (57). The rich mythological material about Heracles transgresses many mythological narratives and expands at many geographical areas. As a result, Heracles is a mythological character who was usually impersonated by the pantomime performer.

If we want to reconstruct the hero's costume so as to better understand the mechanics between the performer and costume we will have to place emphasis upon the changes the theatrical costume has subdued. To begin with the performer who impersonated Heracles was wearing a long saffron silk robe and a beautiful, decent and not frightening mask (προσωπεῖω εὐπρεπεῖ, 63). He would also bear the lion skin and the club and even a bow¹⁵³. If we focus our attention to Heracles' pantomime costume disconnecting it from the mask we observe that the metatheatrical construction of disguised Dionysus in *Frogs* has developed into theatrical reality in the new performance genre. In *Frogs* Dionysus was wearing a long saffron robe, had placed over it the lion skin and was holding a club. In pantomime the performer impersonating Heracles on stage wears a long saffron robe, a lion skin upon it and holds a club. As far as the dressed body of the performer is concerned, the metatheatrical play with the conventions of classical drama has transformed into pantomime spectacle.

This shift in costume is in tune with pantomime being a spectacle which reversed tragedy on fictive and performative level. The mythological incidents "narrated "on stage

¹⁵² The return of the Heracleidae, Heracles' descendants are also a theme for pantomime spectacles (40).

¹⁵³ For the bow as part of Heracles' costume in pantomime see Macrobius' *Saturnalia* 2.7.16-17.

are those which were hidden from the sight of the audience in classical tragedy. Births (37, 38, 39, 48, 50, 80), amorous/sexual acts (59, 63) and extreme violence manifested in slaughters (41, 43, 45) and dismemberments (39, 51, 53) are being performed on stage via bodily movements¹⁵⁴. The reversal also realizes on the performance level. The performer does not disguise him offstage so as to impersonate a different character. On the contrary, the male performer changes the one mask with the other on stage¹⁵⁵ and shifts from one body language to another so as to play diverse mythological characters. The scene of costume exchange on stage in *Frogs* makes the backstage procedure of tragedy explicit in the view of an audience which attended the performance in order to laugh. The new performance genre of pantomime not only discusses the limits of tragedy challenging them but literally reverses them for the sake of a new art form.

In this reversal in the mechanics used in the creation of theatre it is important to reexamine the role of dress, mask and props in the reconstruction of Heracles' pantomime costume as well as the implications on the relation between performer and costume. During the performance the long saffron silk robe remains the same. The elements which change, thus either being removed or added are the graceful "mute" masks and the props suggestive of the identity of the character on stage. It has been suggested that the pantomime costume can be even more minimal¹⁵⁶ with the iconic props being dismissed at least at some cases¹⁵⁷. In our case a passage from Philo's (1st c. BC-1st c. AD) *On the Embassy to Gaius* (79) is instructive: "Then, as in theatre, he (= the emperor) assumed different costumes at different times, sometimes the lion skin and the club, both overlaid with gold, to adorn himself as Heracles, sometimes hats on his head when he made himself up as the

¹⁵⁴ Lada- Richards (2007): 35

¹⁵⁵ Wyles (2008): 69

¹⁵⁶ Webb (2008): 50

¹⁵⁷ Wyles (2008): 73. Wyles suggests that props denotative of the identity of mythological character exist in some cases but not necessarily in every case of impersonation.

Dioscouri, or again as Dionysus with ivy, thyrsus and fawn's skin"¹⁵⁸. The costume is not any more an elaborate *skeue* but is equated with parts and parcels of the tragic costume. Certain parts of the original tragic costume constitute the pantomime costume for Heracles. What exists on stage is a performer with a beautiful mask, a long dress, a lion skin and a club. The pantomime costume, an ensemble of fragmented parts, to be functional, thus character suggestive, has to be reconstructed in the mind of the audience. The pantomime spectator whose acuteness of spirit and engagement throughout the performance is exalted in *On Dancing* 85, has to decode the referents of the costume and infer the identity of the mythological character in a spectacle when a single performer changes successively from one mythological figure to another.

The performer is the other determinant factor of pantomime spectacle. The body of the performer in its materiality remains as well as the long robe the same throughout the performance. In this respect, the undifferentiated qualities of human body such as height and weight are essential for the successful impersonation of a character. For example when a short performer attempted to impersonate Hector at the accompaniment of relative song, the audience reacted calling him as Astyanax (*On Dancing*, 76). In this case the role of costume seems to be less important since it is the dressed body the medium to approach a mythological character. On the other hand, the body has to transform and change in the way that masks and props change. It is not the outward semblance, costume of tragedy («σχῆμα τῆς τραγωδίας», 27) that is important in this new descendant performance genre but the performer's bodily gestures («τοῦ ὀρχηστοῦ τὸ σχῆμα», 29). The performer's body should be flexible and dispose protean like qualities¹⁵⁹ which permit the fluid transition from one character to the next. The performer should be able to impersonate through the body language the might of Heracles («Ἡρακλέους τὸ καρτερόν», 73) and the daintiness of

¹⁵⁸ The translation is mainly Colson 1962 except for some slight variations.

¹⁵⁹ Proteus is interpreted by Lycinus as the dancer per excellence being capable of changing from one form of life to another (19).

Aphrodite («Ἀφροδίτης τὸ ἄβρόν», 73). He should also be able to portray via corporeal movements a diverse range of feelings and emotions (67) changing from one emotional stage to the other using the body as his only medium. The impersonation of a character in pantomime performance is equated with the intelligibility of postures («ἐρμηνείαν δὲ νῦν τὴν σαφήνειαν τῶν σχημάτων λέγω», 37) and failure to meet with such a basic principle renders the artist's performance into a shapeless, thus incomprehensible mimicry «ἀσχήμονα ὑπόκρισιν» (87)¹⁶⁰. The great paradox of this art form is that whilst there is physically one body it acquires on stage many different souls («σῶμα μὲν τοῦτο ἓν, πολλὰς δὲ τὰς ψυχὰς ἔχων», 66), faces (66) and emotional identities (67, 73).

The change in the relation between performer and costume from classical drama to pantomime is important. The artist does not strive to assimilate his voice and state of mind to an elaborate *skeue*. The distance between actor and costume cannot be bridged any more. As Heracles' costume explicitly shows the artist is unable to express himself into a frightening artifact which rather imprisons and hinders creative acting instead of promoting it. The reconstructed pantomime costume of Heracles on the other hand constitutes the artistic realization of a laugh-provoking metatheatrical comment in Aristophanes' *Frogs*. The performer does not try any more to adjust himself to the costume so as to impersonate a mythological character. On the contrary, the costume supports the artist in his attempt to be something else and gives hints to the audience so as to better decode a new kind of language. Whilst iconic props and masks link the performer with the character, the long robe unchanged throughout the performance tends to be identical with the body of the performer. This artistic development will have important implications on the theatrical discourse about the relation between performer and costume in the following centuries.

¹⁶⁰ Webb (2008): 59. Webb emphasizes the fact that the term used to describe a performance which has failed to meet with the standards of the art form is denotative of the preponderance of body in this new performance genre.

4. LIBANIUS' A REPLY TO ARISTIDIS ON BEHALF OF DANCERS

As we have seen, Lycinus in Lucian's *On Dancing* is quoting a barbarian who after being informed that one single performer would impersonate different characters by wearing five masks he exclaimed that even if he (=the dancer) has one body he has many souls (*On Dancing* 66). This comment which is going to be repeated four centuries later in Cassiodorus' *Various Letters* 4 .519 hints at an element which was crucial for the reception of theatre as an art form from Plato onwards. For Plato *mimesis* is formative since in the sense that those who imitate somebody else tend to become what they imitate. In this respect, *mimesis*, although being a third mirror of the true forms (*Republic*, 596c-d, 597e), can have a positive effect on the performer when he chooses to impersonate suitable models. On the contrary, impersonation of women, slaves or villains can change the character of the performer negatively¹⁶¹. Continuing the same line of thought the Christian Tatian (120-180 AD), argues that the actor by impersonating something that he is not, he conducts blasphemy towards the god who has created uniquely every human being¹⁶². Tertullian (160-225 AD), another Latin Christian writer, in his work *De Spectaculis*, that by falsifying his identity the actor commits a deadly sin and he deserves to perish in hell together with other artists¹⁶³.

In this ideological context and responding to Aelius Aristidis' (117-181 AD) rhetoric speech *Against Dancing*, which is lost nowadays, Libanius (314-394 AD) from Antioch composes the theatre discursive oration *A Reply to Aristidis On Behalf of Dancers*. In this treatise Libanius speaks of the prominent theatrical genre of the era, pantomime, but from another angle than Lucian as we will see. Pantomime is defined as "the vigorous motion of

¹⁶¹ For a discussion of the negative power of impersonation on the performer see Barish (1985): 21.

¹⁶² Barish (1985): 44

¹⁶³ Barish (1985): 45-50. Notice that even the shaving of a beard is considered a sin towards the face of God who has created mature men as such, Barish (1985): 49.

the limbs along with certain figures and rhythms”¹⁶⁴ « κίνησιν τῶν μελῶν σύντονον μετὰ τινῶν σχημάτων καὶ ῥυθμῶν τὴν ὄρχησιν εἶναι» (28). Libanius is going to defend not dance in general but the art as it has been developed during this period (19, 30). He refers to the extreme gestures and postures (118)¹⁶⁵ that dancers have to realize using their bodies. He speaks of a special training (104) which aims at preparing performers to bent and twist their bodies (60) forming even extraordinary hoops (104). However, as we will see the importance attached to the analysis of the physicality of dance in Libanius is decreased in relation to the emphasis given by Lucian. As Webb points out in later centuries analyses of performers’ use of body tend to be subdued by a “language of wonder and amazement” which might be explained by the significant diminution of athletic training¹⁶⁶.

Although the word *schemata* («σχήματα») is used many times in Libanius’ speech the meaning of the word is not as fixed as in Lucian’s dialogue. Schemata acquire different meanings ranging from gestures (113) to figure (105), choreography (72), movements (71) and even style (66). Schemata are thus a vague term constituent of the definition. On the one hand, the approaches to dance as an art form are characterized by a vocabulary of amazement which stresses the extraordinary and supernatural nature of performance¹⁶⁷. On the other hand, less emphasis is given on the corporeality of movements and on the body of the performer. A new term, the word *neumata* («νεύματα») is used in the context of Libanius’ speech so as to defend the art against criticism upon its morality.

Neumata are subtle movements, nods which are discussed as both indispensable component of the performance (58) and as an element powerful in corrupting the spectators

¹⁶⁴ The translation is that of Molloy (1996): 149

¹⁶⁵ The change from gestures to postures is described in almost antithetical terms which are indicative of the capacity of performers to maintain absolute control of their bodily movements.

¹⁶⁶ Webb (2008): 150

¹⁶⁷ This is, as we saw, Webb’s suggestion which is partially justified in Libanius’ text in his comments upon extreme postures and movements of artists.

(59). The subtle movements and particularly those which resemble female movements are criticized as especially corruptive (62) both for the performer and the spectator. Libanius in trying to articulate a theatrical discourse against these charges reproduces the long lasting debate about theatre and its relation to reality but from another point of view. Feminine *neumata*, if they have to be corruptive they should be more harmful, when acted by women in real life rather than imitated on stage by pantomime performers (63). Libanius denies the fact that mimesis of such movements can exert a permanent alternation on the sex and behaviour of the performer. Taking this belief for granted he goes on to argue that the feminine nods on stage will not be proved morally harmful for the spectators.

The discussion of onstage movements in relation to real life and the devotion of five paragraphs (50-55) to the power of costume¹⁶⁸ are indicative of the swift in the performer's relation to his costume. As we saw in the previous section rare were the references to pantomime costume in Lucian's dialogue. In Libanius' treatise however a lot of emphasis is given to the impact of the costume. The fact that Libanius fights against the charge that that costume can alternate the nature of the wearer by corrupting or effeminizing him implies that body and costume of the performer were coterminous in some people's thoughts¹⁶⁹. The change of pantomime masks on stage, the fluidity of a fine garment which was following and simultaneously revealing every little movement of the performer were the performative reasons which together with firm opinions on the nature of theatre¹⁷⁰ gave prominence to the transformative power of costume.

In paragraphs 50 to 55 Libanius argues that the dressing code of pantomime cannot change his lifestyle. In paragraphs 50-51 he denies the charges which want performers' long

¹⁶⁸ There is an ambiguity on whether the reference in 52 is to the onstage or off-stage clothes of the performer. Molloy emphasizes the ambiguity, Molloy (1996): 222-223 while Wyles tends to believe that the text refers to the onstage costumes, Wyles (2008): footnote 7 page 64.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Wyles (2008): 83

¹⁷⁰ For those see introduction

adorned hair to change their sexual identity. The hair is to be cut only in honour of Dionysus and so they are presented as another part of the costume which cannot alternate somebody's lifestyle. In the remaining paragraphs the rhetor fights against the corruptive character of the costume discussing examples of priests' golden clothes (52), Heracles' costume (53), athletes' external appearance (54) and finally Achilles' feminine garments (55).

Heracles' costume enters once again the famous debate about the performer's relation to costume. Libanius maintains that if a transformative power is attributed to clothing then it would be sufficient for somebody to change lifestyle if he just wore Heracles' lion skin and was holding his club. In the rest half of the paragraph the orator speaks of the dressing up of a slave into his master's tunic. The slave can be dressed with his master's clothes either in order to deceive somebody or for mere fun with master's condescendence.

The two instances of disguise seem to be connected. The lion skin and the club were conceptualized as constituent of Heracles' costume in Aristophanes' *Frogs*. The successive exchanges of this "costume" were taking place between Dionysus, the master and Xanthias, his slave. When immediately after his reference to parcels of Heracles' costume Libanius is referring to the disguise of a slave in his master's clothes for fun he contextualizes the primary reference of the paragraph. All in all Libanius is using the example of use of Heracles' costume in Aristophanes' *Frogs* in his account.

Libanius uses deliberately Heracles' lion skin and club as a paradigmatic theatrical costume. In Aristophanes' *Frogs* these two things were prominently suggestive of Heracles' theatrical *skeue*. In the context of pantomime lion skin and club are the components of pantomime costume distinctive of the impersonated character. In Aristophanes' *Frogs* the focus of theatrical discourse was revolving-as we saw- around the necessity of performer's assimilation to his costume for the impersonation to be successful. Here, the theatrical

discourse around Heracles' lion skin is revived in order to treat once again the relation between performer and costume but from another point of view.

Heracles' lion skin and club- it is suggested in Libanius' passage- cannot alternate the wearer's lifestyle and thus they cannot transform somebody into a super-masculine and brave figure. That was also the case in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, where throughout the play Dionysus' feminine character remains prominent behind the disguise. In addition, Xanthias does not manage to change his slavery status and savour pleasures destined for Heracles. Xanthias is a slave and the costume is not enough to change his status. Libanius, a well-known man of letters, makes his own rather literal reading of *Frogs* and then reintegrates his own interpretation of Aristophanic scenes as testimony for the non-transformative power of costume.

The difference this costume acquires in the discussion of the impact of costume is significant in relation to the other examples used. In paragraph 52 the argument is about whether the golden garments can be morally corruptive. If it is so, Libanius says, then it can be assumed that priests who are dressed in gold garments are corrupted and live the life of prostitutes. The example comes from the rival theatre of the era, the Christian church¹⁷¹ where the priests were dressed in golden clothes to reenact Christian rituals. Another example comes from the athletic milieu where the covering of the body with oil does not entail the feminization of the athlete. In addition, the other examples come from philosophy (philosophical cloak) and history (soldiers appearing as dressed in feminine clothes) and deny any relation between external appearance and lifestyle. Finally, the mythical incidence of Achilles' dressing up in feminine clothes is referred as a testimony for the inability of costume to change the wearer. The example of Achilles' disguise is compared Odysseus' madness. Both incidents of "alternation" were not capable of exerting a long-time effect on the bearer's lifestyle. Both examples are stemming from myths related to Trojan cycle.

¹⁷¹ Webb (2008): 201

We can thus argue that in a vast series of examples from different milieux Heracles' costume appears as the only theatrical costume whose meta-theatrical use in Aristophanes' *Frogs* initiates its reevaluation in theatrical discourse. In its use as an argument against the morally transformative power of costume Heracles' lion skin and club are indicative of an important shift in the relation of the performer to the costume. Heracles' costume is not used to stress the need of performer's assimilation to the costume, the distance between performer and his extravagant tragic *skeue* or only the tension between the vaguely discerned limits between dancer's body and clothing. It is here invested with authoritarian value and used to stress the fact that theatrical costume, pantomime costume cannot have a long-lasting alienating effect on the wearer's lifestyle.

5. CHORICIUS' APOLOGY OF MIMES

Choricius of Gaza in his *Apology of Mimes* (526 AD) defends the mime and the people who work as mime actors in what was the most popular theatrical genre in Late Antiquity. In this spectacle the theatrical conventions are renewed and that has an impact on the relation of performer to the costume.

To begin with, mime is a theatrical genre in which both men and women can impersonate a variety of roles from contemporary reality and mythology. In this way, the gender for the first time enters in the processes of theatrical enactment of a story. In addition, the absence of mask in this genre reestablishes the dialogue between actor and costume. It is now his or her face that participates in the impersonation of a character. After the energetic involvement of the body in the process of impersonation it is now the facial characteristics and expressions which in connection with a short (patchwork) garment and the revealed limbs contribute to the onstage impersonation of a character. The persona of the performer and the fictitious character now merge in the mind of the audience. For the anti-theatrical discourse this new swift in performance tastes contributes to its articulation. It is characteristic that John Chrysostom (4th c. AD), prominent advocator of anti-theatrical discourse, stresses the fact that the whirling eyes of performers haunt the minds of spectators long after the end of the performance (*PG* 50, 682, 57, 426)¹⁷².

The imaginative opponent of Choricius maintains that *mimesis*, especially in this new performative context- we would add-, can alternate the inner self both of the performer and subsequently of the spectator. Choricius in this prominent anxiety of the era responds that the nature of every person is stable, given, and cannot change¹⁷³. In this context, Choricius discusses the mime plots (30) and main themes (29-111), mime typical roles (109-111),

¹⁷² See also Στεφανής (1986): note on paragraph 124 on page 186

¹⁷³ See «μιμείται μὲν ἅπαντα, γίνεται δὲ τούτων μηδέν» (26), «μὴ τοσοῦτον παίγνια μίμων γενναίας κατισχύσει φύσεως» (72), «πάγιον ἀποφαίνονται πάντες εἶναι τὸ πεφυκὸς» (138), «ὡς ἀμετάστατον ἑκατέρους ἢ φύσις» (140).

mimes' performance (80-82) and costume (75-78). The discussion does not focus on a particular mime costume, but on the capability or not of costume to transform the inner nature of the performer and also the spectator.

Choricus initiates the debate on the power of costume with the following statement: « οὐ γὰρ συναλλοιοῦται τοῖς ἐσθήμασιν ἢ ψυχὴ, καὶν συνάδοντά τις τῷ σχήματι φθέγγεται» (“the soul does not alter because of the garments, even if somebody speaks in accordance with his external appearance”, 77). The examples the rhetor brings to support his argument come from ancient comedy, myth, military attire and mythological mime theatre (77-78). The mythological sphere provides the example of Achilles' disguise in feminine clothes which did not manage to diminish his masculinity. In addition, the orator himself declares that wearing the armour of a soldier will not render him automatically in a capable fighter. In the same direction, the actors who are dressed up in clothes of Hector and Achilles so as to enact on the stage of mime theatre an incident of the Trojan War are not endowed with extra power which accompanies them offstage¹⁷⁴.

At this point lion skin appears once more and this time is clearly discussed in the context of its use in Aristophanes' *Frogs*. Choricus maintains that the lion skin did not transform Aristophanes' Xanthias into a brave man: « οὐτε γὰρ ἀνδρεῖον ἢ λεοντῆ τὸν Ἀριστοφάνους ἐποίει Ξανθίαν» (77). The metatheatrical use of lion skin in Aristophanes is reinterpreted by Choricus so as to function as proof for his argument. In his reading of Aristophanes' *Frogs*, it is the character of Xanthias -and not Dionysus¹⁷⁵- who remains unchanged despite his disguise in Heracles' costume. The center of the debate has shifted and the use of lion skin in the argument is indicative of the change. The costume in its

¹⁷⁴ «ἄμφω δὲ μένουσιν τὴν ἔμφυτον ἔχοντες δύναμιν, οὐ τὴν πεπλασμένην ἰσχύν» (“both of them (mime actors impersonating Hector and Achilles) retain their innate power, not the fictitious one”, 78)

¹⁷⁵ This might be explained by the fact that Dionysus is praised in the treatise as the patron god of mime theatre who wants people to laugh at performances (155-158). A reference to the sustained effeminacy of patron god of theatre despite his wearing Heracles' lion skin would in all probability spoil the construction of an argument against the charge that theatrical costume effeminates its bearer (76).

identification with body and face of the actor is conceived as corruptive for the bearer. The lion skin, a costume prominent in theatrical discourse partly because of the influence exerted by Aristophanes' *Frogs*¹⁷⁶, is used as a proverb with authoritarian value which aims at denying the transformative power of theatrical costume.

¹⁷⁶ Note the fact that as far as the transmission of the text of *Frogs* is concerned there is the rare case of two manuscripts coming from 5th and 6th c. AD (Dover (1997): 2), thus implying a relatively big circulation of the play in the last centuries of Late Antiquity.

6. CONCLUSION

In the context of this essay we have shown how Heracles' lion skin, a latter piece (mid 6th c. BC) of hero's iconographic, literary and theatrical appearance evolved into the prominent costume for the articulation of theatrical discourse from classical period to late antiquity. The transgressive qualities of a bestial skin "invented" simultaneously with dramatic discourse and denotative of its role as an art form, the similarities between comic and tragic Herculeian costume and its diachronic literary or iconographic use for the description of theatre in abstract terms have rendered the lion skin as the primordial costume of theatrical discourse. In this framework, Heracles' lion skin has been the tool which has enabled us to trace instances of theatrical discussion of the relations developed between performer and costume in different eras, geographical areas and theatrical genres. In Aristophanes' *Frogs* the backstage preparation for theatrical impersonation is transferred on stage for almost the first half of the comedy. The metatheatrical use of costume and not of mask exposes the processes that lie behind the creation and function of theatre at common view. Every actor (either Dionysus or Xanthias) is constantly portrayed in dialogue with his costume. The actor is always revealed behind the costume and the costume is at the same time efficient for the realization of theatrical mimesis. However, the actor has to assimilate his voice and inner disposition to the costume for the impersonation to be successful in artistic terms. In second century AD Heracles' lion skin re-emerges in theatrical discourse to denote that the tragic *skeue* has ceased to be functional for impersonation of a character (*On Dancing*, 27 cf. *Wisdom of Nigrinus*, 11). The elaborate tragic costume has been transformed into an impediment for the impersonation process hindering the actor from performing his part on stage. On the other hand, Heracles' pantomime costume can be reconstructed as the realization of Dionysus' metatheatrical costume in *Frogs* as far as performer's dressed body is concerned. In this genre and period the costume acquires a secondary role whilst the performer's material and flexible body is functioning as the main artistic means of expression. Performer and costume tend to be identical. Two centuries later, in Libanius' *Against Aristidis on Behalf of Dancers* the

discussion revolves around the transformative power of costume. The orator argues that lion skin cannot change the bearer's lifestyle. In sixth century AD Choricius, in his *Apology of Mimes*, the last theatrical treatise from late antiquity, denies the ability of costume to alternate the soul of the actor. The lion skin has transformed from metatheatrical costume into comment and real costume and finally into a proverb in late antiquity. The center of theatrical discourse on the relation between actor and costume has been shifted, if not reversed. The performer is not expected to approach the costume for the impersonation to be realized, but the costume has to cease exerting its transformative power on the performer for the theatre to continue to exist.

BIBLIOGRAPHY CITED

- Abel, L., *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form*, Literary Licensing, LLC, 2012 [1963]
- Bakola, E., *Cratinus and the Art of Comedy*, Oxford University Press 2008
- Barish, J., *The Antitheatrical Prejudice*, University of California Press 1981
- Barnes, T. "Christians and the theater" in W. Slater (ed), *Roan Theater and Society: E. Togo Salmon Papers I*, Ann Arbor: The university of Michigan Press, 1996, p. 161-180
- Barnes, T. "Christians and the theater" in I. Gildenhard and M. Revermann (eds), *Beyond the Fifth Century: Interactions with Greek tragedy from the fourth century BCE to the Middle Ages*, Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter 2010, p. 315-334 (revision of 1996 article)
- Calderwood, J., *Shakespearean Metadrama*, University of Minnesota 1971
- Carlson, M., *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey from the Greeks to the Present*, Cornell University Press 1993
- Colson, F., (trans), *Philo, X, On the Embassy to Gaius*. Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge MA: 1962
- Compton-Engle, G., "Control of Costume in Three Plays of Aristophanes", *American Journal of Philology*, Volume 124, Number 4 (Whole Number 496), Winter 2003, p. 507-535
- Csapo, E. and Miller, M. (eds.), *The Origins of Theatre in ancient Greece and Beyond: From Ritual to Drama*, Cambridge 2007
- Cyrino, M. "Heroes in D(u)ress: Transvestism and Power in the Myths of Herakles and Achilles", *Arethusa*, Volume 31, Number 2, Spring 1998, pp. 207-241
- Dover, K., *Aristophanes' Frogs*, Clarendon Press- Oxford 1997

- Ferrari, G., "Introduction" in T. Fögen and M. Lee, *Bodies and Boundaries in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, De Gruyter 2009, p. 1-10
- Fögen, T., "*Sermo corporis*: Ancient Reflections on *gestus*, *vultus* and *vox*" in T. Fögen and M. Lee, *Bodies and Boundaries in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, De Gruyter 2009, p. 15-44
- Foerster, R., *Libanii Opera*, Vol. IV: Orationes LI- LXIV, Lipsiae, Teubner 1903
- Hall, E. and Wyles, R. (eds), *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008
- Hall, E., "Introduction: Pantomime a Lost Chord in Ancient Culture" in E. Hall and R. Wyles (eds), *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 1-42
- Harmon, A., *Lucian*, Vol. I, Loeb Classical Library, 1913
- Harmon, A., *Lucian*, Vol. V, Loeb Classical Library, 1925
- Hornby, R., *Drama, Metadrama and Perception*, Associated University Presses (USA) 1986
- Hunter, R., *Critical Moments in Classical Literature*, Cambridge University Press 2009
- Lada-Richards, *Initiating Dionysus: Ritual and Theatre in Aristophanes' Frogs*, Clarendon Press- Oxford 1999
- Lada-Richards, I., "The Subjectivity of Greek Performance" in P. Easterling and E. Hall (eds.), *Greek and Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession*, Cambridge University Press 2002, p.395-418
- Lada-Richards, I., *Silent Eloquence: Lucian and pantomime Dancing*, Great Britain: Duckworth 2007

- Lada-Richards, I., "Was Pantomime "good to think with" in the ancient World?" in E. Hall and R. Wyles (eds), *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 285-313
- Loraux, Nicole. 1990. "Herakles: The Super-Male and the Feminine," in D. Halperin, J. Winkler and F. Zeitlin, (eds.), *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, Princeton 1990, p. 21–52
- Malineau, V., "L' apport de l' apologie des mimes de Chorikios de Gaza à la connaissance du théâtre du Vie siècle" in C. Saliou (ed), *Gaza dans l'Antiquité Tardive. Archéologie, rhétorique et histoire: Actes du colloque international de Poitiers (6-7 mai 2004)*, Salerno: Helios 2005, p.149-169
- Molloy, M., *Libanius and The Dancers*, Olms 1996
- Padilla, "Herakles and Animals in the Origins of Comedy and Satyr Drama", *Le Bestiaire d'Heracles, Kernos, Supp. 7* (1998): 217-230
- Reich, H., *Der Mimos: Bd. 1.T. Theorie des Mimos. 2.T. Entwicklungsgeschichte des Mimos*, Weidmann 1903
- Revermann, M., *Comic Business, theatricality, Dramatic Technique and Performance Contexts of Aristophanic Comedy*, Oxford University Press 2006
- Slater, N., *Spectator Politics: Metatheatre and Performance in Aristophanes*, University of Pennsylvania Press 2002
- Schnapp-Gourbeillon, A. "Les lions d' Héraklès", *Le Bestiaire d'Heracles, Kernos, Supp. 7* (1998): p. 109-126
- Sommerstein, A., *The comedies of Aristophanes*, Aris and Philips 1996

Στεφανής, Ι., *Χορικού Σοφιστού Γαζης: Συνηγορία Μίμων*, Θεσσαλονίκη: Παρατηρητής 1986

Storey, I., *Eupolis: Poets of Old Comedy*, Oxford University Press 2003

Taplin, O., *Comic Angels and Other Approaches to Greek Drama through Vase Paintings*, Clarendon Press-Oxford 1993

Tsitsiridis, S., "Mimic drama in the Roman empire (P.Oxy.413: Charition and Moicheutria)", *Logeion*, Vol.1, 2011, p. 1-49

Webb, R., "Female entertainers in late antiquity" in P. Easterling and E. Hall (eds), *Greek and Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002, p. 282-303

Webb, R. "Inside the mask: Pantomime from the Performers' Perspective" in E. Hall and R. Wyles (eds), *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 43-60

Webb, R., *Demons and Dancers: Performance in Late Antiquity*, Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press 2008,

Wiles, D., *Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction*, Cambridge University Press 2000

Wyles, R. "The symbolism of costume in ancient pantomime" in E. Hall and R. Wyles (eds), *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008, p.61-86

Wyles, R. "The Tragic Costumes" in O. Taplin and R. Wyles (eds), *The Pronomos Vase and its Context*, Oxford University Press 2010, p. 231-254

Wyles, R. *Costume in Greek Tragedy*, Bristol Classical Press 2011

Electronic sources:

<http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ljsj/#eid=104741&context=ljsj&action=hw-list-click>

<http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/lcj/#eid=64946&context=lsj&action=hw-list-click>