



Painting, Authority, and Experience at the Twilight of the Grand Siècle, 1688–1721

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Painting, Authority, and Experience
at the Twilight of the Grand Siècle, 1688–1721

A dissertation presented

by

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to

The Department of History of Art and Architecture

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Painting, Authority, and Experience at the Twilight of the Grand Siècle, 1688–1721

Abstract

This dissertation offers a new reading of French painting between the decline of Charles Le Brun and the maturity of Jean-Antoine Watteau, a period long dismissed as a transition to the rococo. Drawing on a constellation of polemical aesthetic debates, it traces how the intellectual and political crises that beset France during the final years of Louis XIV's reign and the Regency destabilized the sources of authority that previously secured painting's meaning and mission. Artists' confrontation with the period's shifting ground of sovereignty transformed the relationship between painting and spectator, making the encounter with art a moment for the formation of a subjectivity independent of royal power. Contrary to the accounts that have portrayed absolutism as the antithesis of aesthetic innovation, this study thus relocates the story of modern art and subjectivity within the heart of absolutist culture.

Each chapter is centered on a different institution of established authority and the paintings that called the legitimacy of those institutions into question, focusing on the era's four most innovative artists: Charles de La Fosse, Jean Jouvenet, Antoine Coypel, and Antoine Watteau. Chapter one, on La Fosse's mythological paintings for the royal retreats of the Trianon de marbre, examines the king's private body as a new site of artistic freedom as it became increasingly alienated from the representational machinery of the absolutist state. Chapter two,

on Jouvenet and La Fosse's frescos for the dome of the Royal Church at the Invalides, investigates how the paintings pitted the precedence of the mystical bond between God and King against the claims of a newly empowered spectator. Chapter three explores how Coypel's *Gallery of Aeneas*, painted for the regent after Louis XIV's death, responded to the crisis of the hero in the wake of the Sun King by putting forward a new idiom of "modern" painting that spoke to the moral and political stakes of spectatorship during the Regency. A coda, on Watteau's *fêtes galantes*, argues that, by eliciting reverie in the spectator, Watteau's canvases challenged painting's new-found authority to promote the primacy of the viewer's private, subjective experience.

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Note on French Texts

Sources in French are quoted in French. For the sake of consistency and readability, I have modernized the orthography for primary sources from older editions, except in the case of *dessein*, since its modern spelling, *dessin*, has a far narrower range of meaning than *dessein* did in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I have maintained original punctuation.

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Introduction

The subject of this dissertation is painting in France during the final years of Louis XIV's reign and the Regency that followed, roughly between death of Charles Le Brun and the maturity of Jean-Antoine Watteau. While Le Brun and Watteau have been thoroughly studied and fully integrated into our narratives of the history of art, the painters who rose to prominence between them remain virtually unknown to the larger public and little understood among scholars. The first, and still indispensable, effort to make sense of the period was made over one hundred years ago by Pierre Marcel in his *La peinture française au début du dix-huitième siècle, 1690–1721*, published in 1906. Marcel recognized that “une transformation profonde” took place during these years.¹ They were, he argued, “un temps de transition” between the “froide, guindée, majestueuse” painting of Poussin and Le Brun and the painting of Watteau, Boucher, and Fragonard, “jolie, élégante, coloriste fervente, admiratrice passionnée de la Flandre.”² As royal patronage waned, a new class of patrons arose, and painting was able to free itself from the oppressive, all-encompassing absolutism of Louis XIV. These trends peaked during the Regency of Philippe d'Orléans, when the court returned to Paris and morals were relaxed. The solemn religious art and heroic history painting that flourished during the reign of the Sun King gave way to lighter, sweeter painting, to sensuous nudes and *galant* mythologies. The rococo was born.

¹ Pierre Marcel, *La peinture française au début du dix-huitième siècle* (Paris: Beranger, 1906), 5.

² *Ibid.*, 6.

Marcel's book helped rescue painters such as Antoine Coypel, Charles de La Fosse, Hyacinthe Rigaud, Nicolas de Largillière from obscurity, and it remained the dominant interpretation of the period for decades. Yet beginning in the 1960s, Antoine Schnapper offered a radical challenge to Marcel's thesis. Though Marcel based his research in a rich trove of archival documentation, he had a limited view of the art of the period and in many cases never saw the paintings he discussed. Schnapper set himself the task of delivering a fuller picture of the period, most notably in his 1974 monograph on Jean Jouvenet, *Jouvenet 1644–1717 et la peinture d'histoire à Paris*. A painter most famous for religious painting in the *grand goût*, Jouvenet deviated from every trend Marcel claimed defined the period and thus provided Schnapper with a base of a new reading of French painting after Le Brun. "Plutôt qu'une transition," Schnapper concluded, "les années 1685–1715 sont une époque qu'on pourrait dire anarchique et qui a son intérêt en soi. Les successeurs de Le Brun sont des enfant perdus qu'embrassent une liberté nouvelle."³ Schnapper amplified his thesis in a number of important article, books, and catalogues, drawing attention to such forgotten artists as Louis de Boullogne, Bon Boullogne, Michel II Corneille, René-Antoine Houasse, and François Verdier, representatives of what he termed "peinture classique tardive."⁴ Since then, his students and other French scholars have continued to fill in the gaps through articles, monographs, catalogues raisonnés, and exhibitions.⁵

³ Antoine Schnapper, *Jouvenet 1644–1717 et la peinture d'histoire à Paris*, rev. ed. Christine Gouzi (1974; Paris: Arthéna, 2010), 40.

⁴ See, among others, Antoine Schnapper, "Peinture classique tardive à Trianon," in *Il Mito del Classicismo nel Seicento*, ed. S. Bottari Messina (G. D'Anna, 1964), 211–225; idem, *Tableaux pour le Trianon de marbre*, ed. Nicolas Milovanovic (1967; new ed., Paris: RMN, 2010); idem, "Le Grand Dauphin et les tableau de Meudon," *Revue de l'art*, no. 1–2 (1968): 57–64; idem, "Antoine Coypel: La Galerie d'Énée au Palais-Royal," *Revue de l'art*, no. 5 (1969): 33–42; idem, "Le Corrège et la peinture française vers 1700," in *Atti del Convegno sul Settecento parmense nel 2° centenario della morte di C. I. Frugoni*, Parma, 10–12 maggio, 1968 (Parma: Deputazione di Stiria Patria per le provincie parmensi, 1969), 341–350; idem, "Plaidoyer pour un

This work has undeniably transformed our understanding of the period. Far from a triumph of *galant* colorist painting and the sweetness and lightness of the rococo, the period was, we know now, one of remarkable diversity. That said, the methods of these scholars have been largely empirical, focusing on archival research, biography, connoisseurship, and the history of style.⁶ The project of interpretation has, for the most part, been set aside. Recently, Clémentine Gustin-Gomez, the author of a monograph on La Fosse, published the first synthetic account of painting between Le Brun and Watteau since Marcel.⁷ Written for a general audience, it acknowledges the diversity of the period and incorporates new research but ultimately falls back on the clichés established by Marcel; its title, *L'avènement du plaisir dans la peinture française*, signals the limitations of its perspective and our still-hazy understanding of the significance of this period.

absent: Bon Boullogne (1649–1717), *Revue de l'art*, no. 40–41 (1978): 121–140; idem and Héléne Guicharnaud, “Louis de Boullogne, 1654–1733, *Cahiers du dessin français*, no. 2 (1985).

⁵ See, among others, Margret Stuffmann, “Charles de la Fosse et sa position dans la peinture française à la fin du *XVII^e* siècle,” *Gazette des beaux-arts* 6^e période, t. LXIV (juillet-août 1964): 1–121; Thierry Lefrançois, *Nicolas Bertin (1668-1736) peintre d'histoire* (Paris, Arthéna, 1981); Nicole Garnier, *Antoine Coypel, 1661-1722* (Paris: Arthéna, 1989); Christophe Leribault, *Jean-François de Troy (1679-1752)*, Paris, Arthéna, 2002; Emmanuelle Delapierre et al., *Rubens contre Poussin: la querelle du coloris dans la peinture française à la fin du *XVII^e* siècle* Antwerp: Ludion, 2004); Clémentine Gustin-Gomez, *Charles de La Fosse, 1636–1716*, 2 vols (Dijon: Faton, 2006); Jérôme Delaplanche, *Joseph Parrocel, 1646-1704: la nostalgie de l'héroïsme* (Paris: Arthéna, 2006); Karen Chastagnol et al., *Nicolas Colombel: vers 1644-1717* (Paris; Rouen: Chaudun ; Musée des beaux-arts de Rouen, 2012); François Marandet, *Bon Boullogne: 1649-1717 : un chef d'école au Grand Siècle* (Paris and Dijon: Réunion des musées nationaux ; Musée national Magnin, 2014); Béatrice Sarrazin et al., *Charles de La Fosse, 1636-1716: le triomphe de la couleur* (Paris: Somogy Editions, 2015).

⁶ On Schnapper's methods, see Christine Gouzi, preface to *Jouvenet 1644–1717 et la peinture d'histoire à Paris*, 5–25.

⁷ Clémentine Gustin-Gomez, *L'avènement du plaisir dans la peinture française: de Le Brun à Watteau* (Dijon: Faton, 2011).

Without an account of why this period might matter to anyone other than specialists, painting between Le Brun and Watteau will continue to be written off as one of transition—or, worse, of decline. The author of one recent survey of seventeenth-century French painting, for example, holds up Antoine Coypel's *Eliézer et Rébecca* (Figure 1), painted in 1701, as illustrative of all that he considers wrong with painting of its time: "In recent years, labels in French museums and articles in exhibition catalogues would have the visitor believe that paintings like *Rebecca at the Well* were the heralds of a new sensibility. If so, we can hardly resist the conclusion that it is a less intelligent and a coarser sensibility."⁸ While it would be undeniable that a painting like Coypel's can appear, to our eyes, mannered, even precious, such a statement reflects a Modernist bias that sees any art produced under an absolute monarch—in the case, the most famous absolute monarch of them all—as *ipso facto* the antithesis of aesthetic innovation. Until we understand the art on its own terms, in light of the values that shaped its making and reception, we can have little appreciation of what the new sensibility it heralded means and why it might be important.

This dissertation takes up precisely that challenge. Doing so requires putting painting in dialogue with the larger culture that it, in part, constituted, in relation to the intellectual and political discourses that helped give its forms and materials meaning—an effort Schnapper rejected outright. As it happens, historians have long recognized the turn of the eighteenth century as a crucial moment in European civilization and the emergence of modernity. In his seminal work *La crise de la conscience européenne, 1680-1715*, published in 1935, Paul Hazard argued that during this period the foundations of the classical order collapsed and the modern outlook of the Enlightenment emerged: traditional culture, based in authority and religious

⁸ Christopher Allen, *French Painting in the Golden Age* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), 196.

dogma, gave way to a culture that was secular, skeptical, rational. “Never was there a greater contrast, a more sudden transition than this!...One day, the French people, almost to a man, were thinking like Bossuet. The day after, they were thinking like Voltaire,” he famously declared.⁹ Since the publication of Hazard’s book, scholars have debated the extent, sources, and effects of the crisis, yet his thesis that a profound transformation took place in Europe during these years has proven remarkably resilient.¹⁰ Since Hazard’s book, a number of scholars have engaged with his ideas to offer new readings of the crisis.¹¹

⁹ Paul Hazard, *The Crisis of the European Mind, 1680–1715*, trans. J. Lewis May (1935; trans., New York: New York Review of Books, 1961), xiii.

¹⁰ For various assessments, Jan Miel, “Ideas or Epistemes: Hazard Versus Foucault,” *Yale French Studies*, no. 49 (1973): 231–245; Jean Mesnard, “La crise de la conscience européenne: un demi-siècle après Paul Hazard,” in *De la mort de Colbert à la révocation de l’édit de Nantes: un monde nouveau?* ed. Louise Godard de Donville (Marseille: Centre Méridional de Rencontres sur la XVII^e siècle, 1985), 185–198; Margaret C. Jacob, “The Crisis of the European Mind: Hazard Revisited,” in *Politics and Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of H. G. Koenigsberger*, ed. Phyllis Mack and Margaret C. Jacob (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 251–271; Jean de Viguerie, “Quelques réflexions critiques à propos de l’ouvrage de Paul Hazard: *La crise de la conscience européenne*,” in *Etudes d’histoire européenne: mélanges offerts à René et Suzanne Pillorget* (Angers: Presses de l’Université d’Angers, 1990), 37–54.

¹¹ Much of this work has focused on *the querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*. See, for example, *D’un siècle à l’autre: anciens et modernes*, ed. Roger Duchene (Marseille: CMR 17, 1987); Joan E. DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Larry F. Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient: Literature and History in Early Modern France* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Dan Edelstein, *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). For other perspectives, see also, Jean Rohou, *Le XVII^e siècle, une révolution de la condition humaine* (Paris: Seuil, 2002) and David Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680–1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009). Jonathan Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity, 1650–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) is perhaps the most direct and thorough revision of the “Hazard thesis,” though it relocates the crisis to 1650–1680.

Painting, I contend, was deeply enmeshed with this crisis.¹² My object being painting, I am not interested here so much in evaluating the merits and problems of the “Hazard thesis” as in working out how the crisis of the turn of the eighteenth century can be related to the visual arts. The broad outlines of Hazard’s thesis provide a useful starting point, but the exact nature and sources of the crisis need to be redefined. In the first place, my scope is limited to France, where Hazard takes a pan-European approach. In the second place, it is unlikely that many (though certainly not all) of the phenomena Hazard discusses—biblical criticism, radical skepticism, empiricism, the Scientific Revolution, among them—had much direct impact on the painters of the time and their audiences, limited as they were to a small intellectual vanguard.

How, then, can we define a context relevant to painting in France at the end of the Grand Siècle? For one, we know that the last years of Louis XIV’s suffered a series of political, military, and economic crises quite independent of Hazard’s history of ideas. In 1683, Colbert, Louis XIV’s chief minister and architect of his absolutist state, died, and no one of comparable ability succeeded him. In 1685, the king made the disastrous decision to revoke the Edict of Nantes and expel all Protestants from the kingdom or have them convert to Catholicism, depriving France of some of its most skilled craftsmen. In 1688, the War of the League of Augsburg commenced, the first in a series of wars that nearly drained the royal treasury. In 1701, almost the whole of Europe came together to prevent Louis XIV from putting his grandson on the recently vacated Spanish throne in the War of the Spanish Succession; Louis ultimately succeeded in his quest, but not on the terms he would have liked and not without massive losses of life and money. In addition, 1692 was unusually cold and 1693, unusually rainy, causing

¹² Christine Gouzi, preface to *Jouvenet 1644–1717 et la peinture d’histoire à Paris*, 7, claims that Schnapper “faisait siennes les conclusions de *Le Crise de la conscience européenne* publié par Paul Hazard en 1934 [*sic*],” but by this she means only that he rejected the notion of the period as one of transition to consider it as its own distinct period. He did not consider Jouvenet in relation to his intellectual context.

widespread crop failures, food shortages, and inflation; economic problems continued to bedevil the kingdom for years afterward. Finally, beginning in 1710, successive generations of the royal family began to die off, leaving Louis XIV's five-year great-grandson as heir to the throne. Discontent began to grow in the provinces, and pockets of the elite began calling for reform. The edifice of Louis XIV's authority was beginning to show cracks, and by the time of the Regency another *fronde* looked like a distinct possibility.

It would be difficult to deny that these problems affected painting in some way. But, unless we resort to the old Marxist model of base and superstructure, it would be even more difficult to pinpoint how exactly they were manifested in painting, beyond noting the periods of decline in royal patronage (a decline often exaggerated, as we shall see) caused by the kingdom's economic troubles. In order to connect painting more concretely to the intellectual and political problems it engaged, I would like to draw on a constellation of polemical debates, or *querelles*, that occupied many of the most prominent minds of the age and that helped structure the intellectual landscape of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France—debates about the merit of color and line in painting, the superiority of the Ancients and Moderns, the place of ornament in religious rhetoric and its effect, and the nature of aesthetic experience. Dismissed until recently as so much pointless navel-gazing, these debates have been the subject of renewed interest, as scholars have shown that they raised fundamental questions that shaped modern understandings of art and history and aesthetics.¹³ For the most part, though, they have been considered in

¹³ See especially Jacqueline Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color: Rhetoric and Painting in the French Classical Age*, trans. Emily McVarish (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle*; Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient: Literature and History in Early Modern France*; Edelstein, *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy*, among other works cited throughout this dissertation.

isolation. Previously, scholars tended to characterize them as symmetrical, as iterations of identical concerns; thus, the *querelle du coloris* was portrayed as the mirror image of the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, with the colorist party corresponding to the Modern party and the partisans of *dessein* corresponding to the Ancient party. Their relationship, however, was more complex. They shared overlapping concerns in many cases but refracted them in different ways, according to the object of the debate, the institutions concerned, and the individual participants.¹⁴ But whatever their individual concerns, together, they brought institutionalized values about the nature and social function of art, understood in its broadest sense, into question.

Looking at the crisis at the end of Louis XIV's reign through these *querelles* adjusts our understanding of it in several ways. In the first place, though they can be seen in part as reverberation of the dramatic intellectual upheavals described by Hazard as well of France's political and economic crises, they were as much cause as symptom, constituting a distinct cultural and intellectual crisis in their own right, a crisis with its own concerns, objects, and vocabulary. This crisis, like Hazard's, revolved around the problem of authority. But where Hazard spoke of a crisis of authority in general, the *querelles* reveal instead a crisis of *certain forms* of institutionalized authority—a reconfiguration of authority more than a contestation of authority itself, a search for new foundations. The *querelles* also bring to light a more complex cultural and intellectual dynamic than one portrayed by Hazard. It is not that a new “modern” order suddenly replaced the “old” order—that everyone, in the space of a few decades, began to

¹⁴ This complexity has been explored in different ways by Christian Michel, “Y a-t-il eu une querelle du rubénisme à l'Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture?,” in *Le rubénisme en Europe aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles*, ed. Michèle-Caroline Heck (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 166–168; and Sylvaine Guyot, “Sur la toile comme en scène, peindre l'amour pour ‘toucher,’” in “Les discours de l'amour,” ed. Kristen A. Dickhaut and Alain Viala, *Littératures Classiques 2*, no. 69 (2009): 35–49.

think like Voltaire—but rather that different, even conflicting, ideas and values coexisted. Consensus turns out to have been as elusive then as it is now.

Painting, I propose, became a site where the *querelles* converged and the problems they posed could be worked out in practice. What follows, therefore, is not a history of these debates or their interrelations. As Antoine Lilti has perceptively noted, “Les controverses sont moins un objet cohérent, dont on pourrait faire une histoire cumulative, qu’une méthode d’analyse, une entrée possible dans le fonctionnement de l’espace intellectuel.” “Pour la période moderne,” he continues, “elles permettent notamment de mettre à l’épreuve les traditions disciplinaires en travaillant sur des objets hybrides où il est difficile de déterminer ce qui relève de l’expertise savante, de la querelle personnelle, de l’orthodoxie religieuse, des relations de pouvoir et des principes esthétiques.”¹⁵ Following Lilti, I am interested in how the *querelles* can help us put painting in dialogue with the “intellectual space” of France at the end of the Grand Siècle.

Painting is a hybrid object *par excellence*, its meaning taking shape in relation to a wide range of overlapping fields, including religion, politics, rhetoric, and aesthetics. The *querelles* have the advantage of allowing us to work from debates specifically about painting, such as the *querelle du coloris*, and trace how the terms of those debates mutated as they entered a larger network of debates about related objects and concerns, thus opening up painting to a larger cultural sphere. In addition, the *querelles* furnish us with a flexible set of opposed values that audiences brought to bear in interpreting pictorial form. They help us see painting between Le Brun and Watteau not as transition or decline but in all its diversity—not just in a stylistic sense, as Schnapper saw it, but in its theoretical, philosophical, and political situation as well.

¹⁵ Antoine Lilti, “Querelles et controverses. Les formes du désaccord intellectuel à l’époque moderne,” *Mil neuf cent. Revue d’histoire intellectuelle* 1, no. 25 (2007): 28.

Put simply, my argument is that these *querelles* provoked urgent questions about painting's point and purview. Why does one look at a painting and what is one supposed to come away with from the experience? At the heart of these questions were anxieties about the source of painting's authority. By authority, I mean what secured painting's meaning and function in society, and to understand its role in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it would be useful first to take a brief detour to survey the relationship between painting and authority prior to this time. To generalize, in the Renaissance, when the modern notion of painting first began to take shape, this authority had been provided largely by religion and classical antiquity. Both lent painting a power that transcended its medium—religion by allowing painting to become an aid to worship and even a conduit of mystical experience, classical antiquity by tying painting to humanist culture and giving it a body of subjects that allowed it to do the same thing as poetry, that is, tell a story. In mid-seventeenth-century France, however, painting still lacked the prestige it had acquired in Italy in the previous century. Painting was considered a mechanical art, and painters, mere craftsmen, ranked in Paris's arts et métiers in the same category as pork butchers, millers, and clockmakers.¹⁶ The Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture was founded to rectify this situation—to assert the dignity of painting as a liberal art through the doctrine of *ut pictura poesis*.¹⁷ Though sacred and profane classical subjects were held up as painting's highest aspiration, the authority of painting became increasingly dependent on a third source: that of the king.

¹⁶ Donald Posner, "Concerning the 'Mechanical' Parts of Painting and the Artistic Culture of Seventeenth-Century France," *Art Bulletin* 75, no. 4 (December 1993): 585.

¹⁷ Rensselaer Wright Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980).

Under the absolutist system constructed by Richelieu and Mazarin and brought to its apogee under Louis XIV, the king was supposed to be the source of all decisions; political actors were meant to be merely executors of the king's will.¹⁸ Thus, in his *Mémoires*, Louis XIV told his son, "Il est constant que dans l'État où vous devez régner après moi, vous ne trouverez point d'autorité qui ne se fasse honneur de tirer de vous son origine et son caractère."¹⁹ Painting, and the religious and classical profane subjects it depicted, was no exception. Though they had long served in the project of princely glorification, the pagan gods and heroes—Apollo, Jupiter, Hercules, Alexander, Augustus—began to lose their autonomy as they were marshaled to bolster the king's claims to absolute power, becoming mere avatars of Louis XIV. Similarly, as Louis XIV came to portray himself as *le roi très chrétien*, Charlemagne and Saint Louis were used to show him as God's deputy on earth, his authority was sanctioned by divine will. Finally, the king's own body and deeds became a subject worthy of painting, with the academy instituting an annual prize for students to paint a subject based on the heroic actions of the king.²⁰ As we shall see later, there was hardly total harmony among these three sources of authority²¹; but what is important to emphasize now is that they yoked painting's authority to the king, who made himself the lynchpin of all culture. It should come as no surprise, then, that in his *Songe de*

¹⁸ See Arlette Jouanna, *Le prince absolu. Apogée et déclin de l'imagination monarchique* (Paris: Gallimard, 2014).

¹⁹ Louis XIV, "Supplément aux Mémoires de l'année 1666," in *Mémoires de Louis XIV pour l'instruction du dauphin*, t. 2, ed. Charles Dreyss (Paris: Didier, 1860), 9.

²⁰ Christian Michel, *L'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture (1648-1793): la naissance de l'École française* (Geneva: Droz, 2012), 37.

²¹ On the relationship between the sacred monarchy and mythology, see Gérard Sabatier, "Imagerie héroïque et sacralité monarchique," in *La royauté sacrée dans le monde chrétien*, ed. Alain Boureau and Claudio Sergio Ingerflom (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1992), 115–129.

Philomate, a dialogue between Painting and Poetry, André Félibien, *historiographe du roi* and one of the most important art theorists of the seventeenth century, frames their rivalry in terms of which is better suited to the project of royal glorification. “N’est-ce pas aussi use chose étrange, ma sœur, que vous preniez tant de soins à traverser mes desseins?” Painting asks Poetry at the beginning of the dialogue. “Quoi, je n’ose rien faire particulier pour la gloire du roi, que vous ne l’imitiez! Si je pense travailler à quelque ouvrage qui ait rapport à ses actions, vous venez aussitôt m’interrompre, et vous tâchez par vos belles paroles à me priver de l’honneur que je puis acquérir par l’excellent de mon invention.”²² In absolutism, everything cedes to the unquestioned preeminence of the king, and painting achieved its highest aspirations in glorifying him. As Jacqueline Lichtenstein put it, “If the world is a painting of divinity, the beauties of this realm are all tangible representations of the king’s grandeur. The royal language, like that of God, is expressed in visible signs that do not merely say the absolute but show it. Louis XIV is the first subject of a kingdom of which he, like God, is the painter and which he has painted in the image of his royalty. The monarch is a *rex pictor*, the author of a painting that serves as both model and subject for all painters.”²³

From its very foundation in 1648, the members of the academy staked painting’s legitimacy on that of the king. In his petition to the four-year old Louis XIV to found the academy, for example, Martin de Charmois wrote that painting needed “recours à la puissance souveraine pour être remis[e] en lustre.” Comparing Louis XIV to Alexandre and his colleagues to the painters of ancient Greece, he declared, “Nous n’avons qu’un seul Alexandre, mais Paris est rempli de plusieurs Apelle et de grand nombre de Phidias et de Praxitèle, qui feront éclater

²² André Félibien, *Le Songe de Philomate* (Paris, 1683), 7.

²³ Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color*, 124.

dans les climats les plus éloignés son visage auguste et révérer les beaux traits et les grâces que le ciel y a imprimé.”²⁴ When Louis XIV reached majority, he and his ministers rallied painting to celebrate him, his actions, and his authority. Under the leadership of Charles Le Brun, premier peintre du roi, painting attained new heights in the decorations for Versailles, which Louis XIV made the seat of government in 1682. Here, in the *grands appartements* Le Brun and his students drew on the gods and heroes of classical antiquity to create the grandest encomium in paint ever offered a monarch. Later, in the escalier des ambassadeurs and the *galerie des Glaces*, these gods and heroes gave way to the portrayal of the king himself in all his majesty. Together, they demonstrated just how far painting had advanced since the founding of the academy decades earlier. As Laurent Morollet remarked in his guidebook to the château:

L’Italie doit céder présentement à la France le prix et la couronne qu’elle à remportée jusques aujourd’hui sur toutes les nations du monde; en ce qui regarde l’excellence de l’architecture, la beauté de la sculpture, [et] la magnificence de la peinture....Versailles seul suffit pour assurer à jamais à la France la gloire qu’elle a à présent de surpasser tous les autres royaumes, dans la science des bâtiments: aussi est-elle redevable de cette haute estime à la grandeur et à la magnificence de Louis le Grand, son invincible monarque.²⁵

With royal support and the royal image as subject matter, French painters could now declare unchallenged supremacy, and they could do so by reflecting the king’s glory. This, I should emphasize, is not to say that painting’s authority was merely a reflection of the king’s or that the academy was simply an instrument of royal power. Painters had their own interests and concerns, and the founding of the academy involved complex negotiations between these and the interests

²⁴ Martin de Charmois, “Une requête au Roi au sujet de ‘l’Académie de peintres et sculpteurs’” (20 janvier 1648), in *Conférences de l’Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, 1648–1681*, ed. Jacqueline Lichtenstein and Christian Michel, t. 1, v. 1 (Paris: ENSBA, 2006), 67.

²⁵ Laurent Morollet, *Explication historique de ce qu’il y a de plus remarquable dans la maison royale de Versailles et en celle de Monsieur à Saint-Cloud, par le sieur Combes* (Paris, 1681), 1–2.

of the state.²⁶ What I am claiming is that, in the first part of Louis XIV's reign, royal authority provided a framework that gave painting dignity and purpose; that painters themselves chose to define this dignity and purpose through royal authority; and that royal authority acted as a kind of guarantee of painting's newly acquired prestige and its role in society.

To return, then, to my main argument: during the 1680s, the *querelles* began to destabilize the sources of authority that founded the king's authority and thus that of painting as well. As a result, I contend, a new space opened up in which the intrinsic authority of painting could be asserted. Painting's power, theorists and painters began to assert, no longer derived from its connection to the king, but from powers that were proper to it—from its visual qualities, which could be the source of irresistible attraction or emotional communion. Painting, in other words, was becoming autonomous, free from its dependence on humanistic culture or religion or the king, or the delicate equilibrium among them that had undergirded royal authority under absolutism.²⁷

This new understanding of painting transformed the spectator's experience of the medium. It is often remarked that absolutism was more of a process than a *fait accompli*, that it was always subject to negotiation and compromise, and that it achieved fullest realization in

²⁶ See Paul Duro, *The Academy and the Limits of Painting in Seventeenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 18–62, though Duro does, I believe, underplay the importance of royal authority in his account.

²⁷ It should be noted that Thomas Kirchner, *Le héros épique. Peinture d'histoire et politique artistique dans la France du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Maisons des sciences de l'homme, 2008), has offered a different reading of the emergence of artistic autonomy in seventeenth century France. His argument is that the state's need for a model of painting suitable for glorifying the king pushed painters to develop more sophisticated artistic strategies that eventually, as adapted by Watteau, led to the automatization of painting. I do not believe my argument excludes Kirchner's, and I agree that Le Brun's innovations set the stage for the emergence of painting's autonomy, but the painters discussed here, I believe, played a far more important role than he allows.

representation, in art.²⁸ According to Jean-Marie Apostolidès, the dynamics of spectatorship under absolutism were defined by a sharp division between active spectacle, formed around the king, and passive spectator. “L’espace s’est scindé en deux aires...parce que la société est officiellement divisée en une société civile et un Etat,” he writes. “L’esthétique et la politique se trouvent soumises à la même séparation: il y a l’espace des acteurs et celui des spectateurs, l’espace du pouvoir et celui des gouvernés.”²⁹ Similarly, Louis Marin has stated that Versailles “develops a visual theatricality which strikes the eye and subjugates the gaze.”³⁰ The developments that took place at the end of Louis XIV’s reign, I am arguing, complicate these notions, showing that painting, too, sometimes despite the intentions of patron and probably of painter, became a place where the claims of absolutism were subject to negotiation, even resistance. The encounter with painting became a moment not just for the formation of royal subjects, for asserting domination over the spectator, but for a new kind of experience in which a new relation of the self to itself and to the world around it could be worked out. No longer dominated by the presence of the king, the experience of painting bestowed on the beholder a new freedom from royal subjugation, where the sovereignty of the spectator’s own feelings and reactions were what counted. In the shifting ground of authority in the twilight of the Grand Siècle, this experience was now shaped by the claims to autonomy of painting and spectator, and

²⁸ Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 1–13. On the compromised nature of absolutism, see William Beik, *Absolutism and Society in Seventeenth-Century France: State Power and Provincial Aristocracy in Languedoc*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Roger Mettam, *Power and Faction in Louis XIV’s France* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988); Jouanna, *Le prince absolu*.

²⁹ Jean-Marie Apostolidès, *Le roi-machine. Spectacle et politique au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1981), 150.

³⁰ Louis Marin, “Classical, Baroque: Versailles, or the Architecture of the Prince,” *Yale French Studies*, no. 81 (1991): 173.

it became a moment for the formation of a subjectivity defined by its independence from royal authority.

The actual beholders whom this shift affected, as we shall see, were largely limited to an elite furnished with the tools to understand the new meanings and values attached to pictorial form. But it was nonetheless the transformations wrought at this time, though limited to a relatively small elite, that mark the modernity of the paintings that are the object of my study. Absolutism is often portrayed as the antithesis of aesthetic innovation: the crown's monopoly on cultural production promoted official styles and artists whose work could amount only to tired bombast. The artists who rose to prominence between Le Brun and Watteau have, as we have seen, been considered as the worst products of this system. My purpose here is to revise this narrative by relocating the story of modern art and subjectivity within the very heart of absolutist culture. I want to show that painting at the end of Louis XIV's reign became a privileged site where some of the key philosophical problems of modernity were worked through, new kinds of perception emerged, and new understandings of the self were defined. Our modern notions of painting did not just emerge as a result of the new public fashioned in the Salon or a commercial culture that created a new audience of art or the development of new kinds of expertise. They took shape from within absolutism itself and, what is more, undermined its claims from within.

What follows is not a comprehensive account of painting in France between Le Brun and Watteau. Given the diversity, or "anarchy" as Schanpper called it, of painting in this period, many stories could be told about it, but not a single, all encompassing narrative. My argument here, then, pulls together a few select threads from the mass of artists, paintings, and trends that characterized the era to bring out what I see as its most important features. As a result, major artists such Noël Coypel, the Boullogne, Rigaud, and Largillière, among others, are absent or

discussed only in passing; key phenomena of the period, such as the rise of a market for painting³¹ and the first public Salons,³² figure only marginally. Instead, I base my discussion on the three most prominent, influential, and, I believe, talented painters of time: Charles de La Fosse, Jean Jouvenet, and Antoine Coypel. My argument, however, is not based in a survey of their work but rather a collection of case studies. The works around which my chapters are structured are in many ways atypical: they represent some of the largest, most prestigious commissions of the time, created either for the king or regent. But given the scale and importance of these works, the artists were able to develop and test new ideas—ideas that set the tone for work that followed. And their intersection with royal ideology meant that they had to engage with higher political and social stakes than in paintings for private patrons.

Each chapter of this dissertation is centered on a different site of established authority and a major commission that, in one way or another, called the legitimacy of those institutions into question. Chapter one, on La Fosse's mythological paintings for the the Trianon de marbre, Louis XIV's private retreat in the park of Versailles, concentrates on the king's body and the changing role of mythology in its representation. The chapter draws on the *querelle du coloris* and the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* to examine the genesis of a new sensual, colorist idiom of mythological painting that inspired a sympathetic attachment between painting and spectator. I argue that as the king's private body became increasingly alienated from the representational machinery of the absolutist state, it became a site of new artistic freedom.

³¹ Olivier Bonfait, "Les collections picturales des financiers à la fin du règne de Louis XIV," *XVII^e siècle* 38, no. 151 (avril-juin 1986): 125-151; Rochelle Ziskin, *Sheltering Art: Collecting and Social Identity in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris* (University Park, PA: Penn State Press, 2012).

³² Dominique Brême and Frédérique Lanoë, *1704, le salon, les arts et le roi* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 2013).

Chapter two, on Jouvenet and La Fosse's frescos for the dome of the *église royale des Invalides*, focuses on the sacred monarchy. It draws on debates about grace, sacred rhetoric, and color to investigate how the paintings pitted the precedence of the mystical bond between God and King against the claims of a newly empowered spectator, showing how, in the process, religious painting became an unexpected site of secularization. Chapter three, on Coypel's *galerie d'Énée*, painted for the regent after Louis XIV's death, focuses on the figure of the hero. It examines the return of mythology to the public spaces of government after its exile from Versailles and explores how the paintings responded to the crisis of the hero in the wake of Louis le Grand. Drawing again on the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, it claims that the paintings forward a "Modern" idiom, based on *sensibilité*, that spoke to the moral and political stakes of spectatorship during the Regency. Finally, a coda reconsiders the relation of Watteau to the artists who immediately preceded him in light of the authority acquired by painting during this time. It examines how his *fêtes galantes* reconfigured the relationship between painting and beholder by eliciting reverie and, as a consequence, granting new priority to the beholder's private, subjective experience of the work of art.

Chapter 1

Mythology, Color, and the King's Body: La Fosse at the Trianon de Marbre

If painting at the end of Louis XIV's reign is known for one thing—if, that is, it is known at all—it is the decline of painting in the *grand goût* and the rise of *galant* mythological painting in the *petit goût*. Le Brun's monumental *machines*, devoted to narrative clarity and royal encomium, gave way to easel paintings awash with sensual nudes and glowing colors, inspired by Venice and Flanders. This, essentially, is the story told by Pierre Marcel's *La peinture française au début du XVIII^e siècle*, and told again, with some variations, in Clémentine Gustin-Gomez's *L'avènement du plaisir dans la peinture française de Le Brun à Watteau*. It is also not entirely accurate. A bewildering array of influences prevailed as the seventeenth century transitioned into the eighteenth: Poussin, Albani, Domenichino, and the Carracci, to name but a few, inspired French painters just as much as Titian or Rubens or Van Dyck. Nonetheless, within this atmosphere of unprecedented stylistic liberty, the emergence of a sensual, *galant*, colorist mode of painting did mark one of the most important artistic currents of the period, and its greatest exemplar was Charles de La Fosse. By general consensus, La Fosse was most original painter of his generation, and, without in any way “foreshadowing” what came after, he exerted the strongest influence on the artists of the next generations—Watteau, Lemoyne, Boucher, and Fragonard, among them. Yet we still know little about the origins and significance of his painting.

In the standard narrative that developed about the period, the emergence of the “new taste” that La Fosse is said to embody is seen as distinct from, and indeed as a form of resistance to, royal power and the academic orthodoxy that was, supposedly, its handmaiden. Marcel, for

example, argued that as the king became more devout, and the treasury was saddled with ever-increasing debt, painters had to turn to new patrons, eager to free themselves from the stifling classicism of Le Brun. “Tandis que Louis XIV, vieux et dévot, vit avec Madame de Maintenon au milieu d’une cour attristée,” he asserted,

un parti d’opposition se forme à Meudon et au Palais Royal: tous les jeunes gens se groupent autour du duc de Chartres et du grand dauphin. Les froides compositions des collaborateurs de Le Brun ne conviennent pas à leurs hôtels; il leur faut des artistes d’opposition: ils les trouvent aisément puisque les jeunes peintres aiment maintenant la vie et la joie répandues à profusion dans l’art flamand.¹

Marcel saw the château de Meudon in particular, the residence of Monseigneur, the Grand Dauphin, around whom one of the three principal factions at the end of Louis XIV’s reign coalesced, as the key site in the shift away from the *style Louis XIV*.² Here, in 1700, La Fosse painted a jubilant *Triomphe de Bacchus* (Figure 2) and a sensuous *Hercule entre le Vice et la*

¹ Marcel, *La peinture française au début du XVIII^e siècle, 1690–1721*, 6-7.

² Madame, princesse de Palatine, *Correspondance de Madame, Duchesse d’Orléans*, trans. and ed. Ernest Jeaglé, t. II (Paris: Quantin, 1880), 35–36, described the situation to the Duchess of Hanover in a letter from September 28, 1709. “Toute la cour est pleine d’intrigues. Les uns veulent obtenir la faveur de la puissante dame [Maintenon], les autres celle de M. le Dauphin, d’autres encore celle du duc de Bourgogne. Car lui et son père ne s’aiment pas, le fils méprise le père, il est ambitieux et veut gouverner. Le Dauphin est sous la domination absolue de sa sœur bâtarde, M^{me} la Duchesse. La princesse de Conti est devenue l’alliée de celle-ci afin de ne pas perdre tout pouvoir sur lui. Tous sont opposés à mon fils: ils ont peur que le roi ne le voie d’un bon œil et qu’il ne fasse le mariage de sa fille aînée avec le duc de Berry. La Duchesse en voudrait bien pour sa propre fille, c’est pourquoi elle accapare le duc de Berry. Mais la duchesse de Bourgogne qui voudrait, elle aussi, gouverner le Dauphin aussi bien que le roi, est jalouse de M^{me} la Duchesse. Elle a donc fait un pacte d’amitié avec notre M^{me} d’Orléans, pour contrecarrer l’autre : c’est une plaisante comédie d’intrigues enchevêtrées et je pourrais dire avec la chanson : ‘Si on ne mouroît pas de faim, il en fauderoit mourir de rire...’ La vieille lance ce monde-là les uns contre les autres, pour gouverner d’autant mieux...” In his *Mémoires* from the same year, Saint-Simon also discussed these cabals. For a sophisticated analysis of factions at Louis XIV’s court, as well as Madame and Saint-Simon’s discussions of them, see Emanuel Le Roy Lauder with Jean-François Fitou, *Saint-Simon and the Court of Louis XIV*, trans. Authur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 121–159.

Vertu (Figure 3), and Coypel, a bawdy, Rubenesque *Silène barbouillé de mûres* (Figure 4)—works that continue to be held up as avatars of the “nouveau goût.” In the 1960s, however, Antoine Schnapper decisively refuted Marcel’s argument, pointing out that in fact there was no stylistic uniformity in the paintings commissioned for Meudon; that the kind of colorist painting that Marcel saw as characteristic of Meudon were also commissioned for the king’s residences, particularly the Trianon de marbre (a fact acknowledged by Marcel but not integrated into his larger argument³); and that Louis XIV himself paid for the Meudon paintings.⁴ The notion of any neat opposition between paintings for Louis XIV and his younger relatives crumbled.

Taking Schnapper’s critiques into account, Katie Scott has attempted to salvage something of Marcel’s argument by placing the paintings created for Meudon and the king’s residences in the context of a more nuanced understanding of factions at the court. “The similarities between Meudon and Louis XIV’s lesser châteaux, particularly the Trianon,” she insists, “suggest that the Grand Dauphin’s efforts of distinction were made specifically in relation to them, and thus, that an understanding of his cultural initiatives is only to be had in the context of a fuller analysis of these *petits palais*.”⁵ Having analyzed Louis XIV’s *petits palais*, she concludes that there is indeed a relationship between the decorations at Meudon and Trianon and that the decorations at Meudon amounted to “an effort to construct for the king-in-waiting an identity at once distinct from and related to that of the father.”⁶ Despite their similarities, she claims, this effort constituted a kind of resistance to Louis XIV’s authority. “Within the enclave

³ Marcel, *La peinture française au début du XVIII^e siècle*, 192-196.

⁴ Antoine Schnapper, “Le Grand Dauphin et les tableaux de Meudon,” 57–64.

⁵ Katie Scott, *The Rococo Interior* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 142.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.

of the state and at the interstices of the court,” she writes, “the Meudon faction...created and disseminated through painting and decoration a *politique du rire*, which placed them beyond the reach of royal enchantment.”⁷ In this way, her intervention expands the purview of Marcel’s: instead of understanding the oppositional character of the Meudon paintings in merely aesthetic terms, she argues for its political dimension. This view is in line with her larger argument about the “eclipse of the heroic decorative mode” in the early eighteenth century, detailed in a later chapter in her book. The emergence of *galant* decorative painting, she contends, was provoked by the crisis at the end of Louis XIV’s reign that “compromised the verisimilitude of history” and thus “cut loose mythology from its mooring at the centre of royal apotheosis.”⁸ As a result, it became a vehicle for resistance to the absolutist state on the part of the aristocracy.⁹

Scott is right to analyze painting at Meudon in the relation to Louis XIV’s *petits châteaux*, and she is also correct, I believe, in asserting that mythology was cut loose from its mooring in royal apotheosis at this time. But despite its promises, her argument does not, in practice, move past a monolithic conception of absolutism centered on an oppressive, all-powerful king. Most problematically, she never satisfactorily explains why, given the acknowledged similarities between the decorations made for Louis XIV and the Grand Dauphin, the paintings at Meudon should have taken on an oppositional character. The tacit assumption

⁷ Ibid., 145

⁸ Ibid., 211.

⁹ Ibid., 177–211.

seems to be that any art not produced for the king *must* express some kind of resistance to him. Yet, in the end, the evidence she actually puts forward undermines her argument.¹⁰

With these observations in mind, I would like to attend more closely to that evidence—to the fact that the sensual, *galant* mode of mythological painting we associate with the period between Le Brun and Watteau, and produced most spectacularly by La Fosse, first flourished in the king’s pleasure palaces, particularly the Trianon de Marbre. Why *did* this new kind of painting emerge from the heart of royal power, and how does the fact that it did change our appreciation of its significance? To ask these questions is not to assume, as Marcel did, that colorist painting dominated at the Trianon. Just as at Meudon, a large array of styles and genres could be found. In fact, René-Antoine Houasse and François Verdier, two of Le Brun’s most loyal epigones, received the largest number of commissions—sixteen and fourteen, respectively, out of nearly one hundred sixty. By contrast, La Fosse was asked to paint only three works, albeit in one of the most prestigious locations in the palace, the *cabinet du Couchant*.¹¹ Nonetheless, we can still interrogate the conditions that made them possible and that shaped their meaning. As I have been intimating, doing so requires taking their status as paintings created for the king seriously. The aesthetic and political import of La Fosse’s paintings is inseparable from royal ideology and the evolution of the king’s image at the end of his reign. They must therefore be analyzed as part of a larger body of painting glorifying Louis XIV, and the origins of their formal innovations must be located within the culture of Ludovician absolutism. Seen in this way, La

¹⁰ Furthermore, she gives little evidence about the motivations and constitution of the “Meudon faction” around 1700, when La Fosse was commissioned. She cites the passage from Saint-Simon’s *Mémoires* in which he describes the factions—but this dates from 1709.

¹¹ For the history of the paintings commissioned for the Trianon, see Schnapper, *Tableaux pour le Trianon de marbre*.

Fosse's paintings open up a new narrative of the origins of artistic modernity, one that took shape not in opposition to Louis XIV's representational politics but from within it.

Painting, Mythology, and Royal Ideology

Given that La Fosse's painting at the Trianon were commissioned by the king, it would be helpful to begin by examining them in relation to the larger place of mythological painting in Louis XIV's iconography. In the tradition of early modern rulers who drew on classical mythology, or what was in France called *fable*, to fashion their image and bolster their authority, images of the gods and heroes of Ancient Greece and Rome, most famously Apollo and Alexander, featured prominently from the beginning of his reign, including in the palaces of the Louvre and the Tuilleries.¹² This trend reached its apogee when Louis XIV moved the court to Versailles. Here, Le Brun, in conjunction with the Petite Académie, elaborated a program of ceiling painting based on the seven known planets and inspired by Pietro da Cortona's *Sale dei planeti* at the Palazzo Pitti in Florence for the *Grands Appartements du roi* between 1671–1681—a project executed with the help of some of Le Brun's most talented pupils, including La Fosse. Each room in the *Grands Appartements* was devoted to a single planet. The god who

¹² Jean Starobinski, "Fable et mythologie aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles," in *Le remède dans le mal*, 233, usefully points out the necessity of distinguishing between *mythologie* and *fable* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: "Pour qui cherche à définir le statut des mythes antiques aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles, deux domaines, extrêmement dissemblables, s'offrent à l'observation: l'un s'établit au niveau de tous les faits de culture (poésie, théâtre, ballets, peinture, sculpture, arts décoratifs) où les *motifs* mythologiques sont repérables ; l'autre est constitué par l'ensemble des textes historiques, critiques, spéculatifs, qui tentent l'élaborer un *savoir* sur les mythes, une science des mythes. Cette distinction est, à l'époque, nettement exprimée par des termes dont la valeur marquait toute la différence que les contemporains établissaient entre la libre utilisation des motifs mythologiques, et la connaissance réfléchie des mythes: la *fable*, la *mythologie*." Nonetheless, in keeping with current usage, when I refer to "myth" or "mythology" I mean what referred to *fable* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

represented the planet was depicted in the central portion of the ceiling, while the voussoirs showed the benign influences had on four heroes from antiquity—among them, Alexander, Ceasar, Trajan, Constatine, Jason, Porrus, even Aristotle—and in the spandrels (and sometimes on the walls) were allegories showing the quality, or qualities, associated with the planet-god.

In the *salon de Diane* (Figure 5), for example, Gabriel Blanchard showed Diana, the goddess associated with the moon, accompanied by allegorical figures of the Hours, the hunt, and navigation; over the chimney, La Fosse painted *Le Sacrifice d'Iphigénie* (Figure 6), which Jean-François Félibien tells us, represents “le temps que Diane, pour sauver cette jeune princesse, fit trouver sur l'autel une biche que Clachas immola au lieu d'elle”¹³; and on the opposite side of the wall, Blanchard depicted *Diane et Endymion*. The voussoirs amplify the themes of the hunt, with paintings of *Cyrus chassant le sanglier* by Audran and *Alexandre chassant le lion* (Figure 7) by La Fosse, and navigation, with *Jules César envoyant une colonie romaine à Carthage* by Audran and *Jason et les Argonautes* by La Fosse. Among other allegorical scenes and ornaments in the room were featured “des piédestaux dans les encoignures du plafond chargé de divers ornements, d'armes, d'instruments de navigation et de chasse, de globes et de couronnes de France.”¹⁴

Despite attempts to find a program that inscribes the king's image in the solar system,¹⁵ it seems that there is in fact no coherent iconographic system in the apartments. Rather, the various

¹³ Jean-François Félibien, *Description sommaire de Versailles ancienne et nouvelle* (Paris, 1703), 129.

¹⁴ Ibid. For a thorough overview of allegory in the *grands appartements* at Versailles, see Virgine Bar, *La peinture allégorique au Grand Siècle* (Dijons: Faton, 2003), 112–169.

¹⁵ See, for example, Robert Berger, *Versailles: The Chateau of Louis XIV* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1985), 41–48, who argues that the rooms are laid out according to a Ptolemaic view of the solar system.

gods and heroes were chosen to illustrate the various virtues and deeds of the king. These heroes were not merely models, or *exemplum*, as they were for other princes in early modern Europe since Louis XIV; instead, they functioned as prefigurations of a king who imitated no one. Each, on his or her own, represented the unrealized promise of a golden age, and Louis XIV, the sum of them all, was its realization.¹⁶ Thus, in the Salon de Diane, Félibien explains of the paintings in the voussoirs,

Il n'est pas difficile de connaître que tels sujets ont été choisis par rapport au roi, qui s'est fait de bonne heure un plaisir de la chasse ; et qui n'a pas plutôt pris en main le gouvernement de son État, que, pensant à tout ce qui pouvait contribuer à la félicité de ses peuples, Sa Majesté commença d'établir le commerce dans les contrées les plus éloignées, et envoya dès lors pour cet effort des colonies françaises à Madagascar, et en divers autres lieux : car c'est là ce qui a véritablement donné lieu à ces peintures, dont la beauté se fait assez remarquer.¹⁷

As Charles Perrault explained the decorations more generally, “Dans les tableaux des quatre faces des côtés sont représentées des actions des plus grands hommes de l'antiquité qui ont du rapport à la planète qu'ils accompagnent et qui sont aussi tellement semblable à celles de S.M. que l'on y voit en quelque sorte toute l'histoire de son règne sans que sa personne y soit représentée.”¹⁸

Together, the gods and heroes of antiquity constituted an allegorical portrait of the king.¹⁹

These allegories had a more profound significance than they do today. The decorations at Versailles were both the high point and last gasp of the tradition in early modern Europe of portraying rulers and powerful nobles in the guise of the classical gods or the heroes of antiquity.

¹⁶ Gérard Sabatier, *Versailles ou la figure du roi* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1999), 142-143.

¹⁷ Félibien, *Description sommaire de Versailles ancienne et nouvelle*, 128.

¹⁸ Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes en ce qui regarde les arts et les sciences*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1692), 116–177.

¹⁹ Sabatier, *Versailles ou la figure du roi*, 100–145; Nicolas Milovanovic, *Du Louvre à Versailles. Lecture des grands décors monarchique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2005), 173–240.

Such representations were seen not merely as a metaphor, a human construction; instead, there was understood to be an organic correspondence, based on a logic of similitude or resemblance, between a ruler and his representation as Jupiter or Hercules or Alexander. Metaphor, as Gérard Sabatier put it, becomes metamorphosis: the ruler *was* Jupiter or Hercules or Alexander, a multiplication of sense that reinforced the mysteries of monarchy.²⁰ Such representations operated in a broader understanding of a universe covered in hidden symbols, what were then called “hieroglyphs,” and its secrets could be unveiled by deciphering. As Foucault famously argued, “Up until the end of the sixteenth century, resemblance played a constructive role in the knowledge of Western culture. It was resemblance that largely guided exegesis and the interpretation of texts; it was resemblance that organized the play of symbols, made possible knowledge of things visible and invisible, and controlled the art of representing them.”²¹ As a result, no conflict existed between the symbolic order and the natural order: the analogy of a sovereign with an ancient hero obtained through invisible correspondences that established real identity between them.²²

In the *grands appartements*, therefore, myth, history, and politics were part of a coherent, interconnected system: the gods, in their role as heavenly bodies, shaped the destiny of the heroes of antiquity, who in turn prefigured the qualities and deeds of Louis XIV, the greatest king

²⁰ Gérard Sabatier, “Imagerie héroïque et sacralité monarchique,” in *La royauté sacrée dans le monde chrétien*, Colloque de Royaumont, mars 1989, ed. Alain Boureau and Claudio Sergio Ingerflom (Paris: Éditions de l’École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, 1992), 121–122.

²¹ Michael Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, (New York: Random House, 1970), 17.

²² See Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 125–134; Gérard Sabatier, “Imagerie héroïque et sacralité monarchique,” 115–129; idem, *Versailles ou la figure du roi*, 550–558; Jean–Pierre Néraudau, *L’Olympe du roi-soleil. Mythologie et idéologie royale au Grand Siècle* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2003), 24–33, 65–72.

in history. The profusion of mythological decoration in Louis XIV's palaces was thus intended not merely as the trappings of power but to found that power in the order of the world. In his description of the paintings at the château de Saint-Cloud, for example, the abbé Morelet advised:

Ménageons tellement les innocents plaisirs de nos yeux, qu'ils ne nous privent pas des délices de l'esprit; reconnaissons que tout ce qui paraît dans cette galerie, n'est pas tout pour l'éclat, mais pour servir de symboles et d'ombres illustres à des grandes maximes; souvenons-nous que la puissance d'un grand prince est une belle image de la puissance de Dieu: que comme l'auteur de l'univers après avoir formé les cieus y plaça les astres, comme des flambeaux pour éclairer et des langues pour nous instruire.²³

The allegorical language of princely representation, the abbé implies, occupies a place in a chain of signification put in place by god himself, inscribing the authority of the sovereign in the cosmos itself.

But even as these decorations were being carried out, the relevance of the gods and goddesses of classical antiquity came under new pressures—a change manifested most clearly by the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*.²⁴ The Quarrel began officially on January 27, 1687, when Charles Perrault read his poem *Le siècle de Louis le Grand* before the Académie française; in it, he argued that French culture, under the aegis of the greatest king in history, had surpassed everything that came before it, setting off a contentious debate with Boileau and his allies about the merit and relevance of ancient Greece and Rome. Every domain was touched up in the Quarrel, but its immediate concerns were literary, and Louis XIV refused to take sides. The

²³ Claude Nègo, l'abbé Morelet, *Traité de morale pour l'éducation des princes, tiré des peintures de la Galerie de S. Cloud. Par le Sieur Combes* (Paris, 1695), 5–6.

²⁴ See Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 126–127; Néraudau, *L'Olympe du roi-soleil*, 84–138; Robert Morrissey, *The Economy of Glory: From Ancien Régime France to the Fall of Napoleon* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 41–43.

Quarrel set off by Perrault's poem, however, took place within a larger discussion about the proper way to represent the monarch. According to a growing consensus among Louis XIV's panegyrists, the deeds of Louis XIV had no analogue in history; he was beyond comparison, and artists were therefore encouraged to abandon themes from antiquity and focus on the king's actions alone. Thus, in his description of Le Brun's *Les Reines de Perse* (Figure 8), André Félibien ended with this exhortation:

[U]n pinceau si savant ne doit pas s'arrêter davantage à honorer les princes de Grèce; ils ont eu leurs Appelles et leurs Zeuxis. Et puis que nous sommes dans un siècle où la France fournit des choses si mémorables, et qui seront sans doute l'admiration des siècles avenir; il faut qu'il s'occupe à des sujets plus nouveaux et plus étendus. Car nous avons le bonheur d'être gouvernés par un monarque qui efface tout ce que ces anciens conquérants ont fait de plus signalé; cet excellent peintre peut-il mieux employer désormais ses veilles et faire paraître ses riches talents, qu'à représenter les hautes actions de Votre Majesté et de tant de vertus qu'elle possède, nous en faire une peinture qui soit à l'avenir le plus délicieux objet de nos regards.²⁵

Louis XIV, Félibien suggests, represented a profound break in history; his achievements surpassed everything that came before. The abbé Esprit echoed the sentiment in a poem celebrating the king's victories in the Dutch Wars:

Toute l'antiquité s'offre mal à propos:
Placer notre vainqueur parmi tous ces héros,
Ce n'est pas s'élever, c'est le faire descendre;

²⁵ André Félibien, *Les Reines de Perse aux pieds d'Alexandre, peinture du Cabinet du Roy* (Paris, 1663), 33-34. Similarly, Charles Perrault gave this injunction to Le Brun in his poem *La Peinture*: "Que je vois de combats, et de grands journées,/ De remparts abbatus, de batailles gagnées,/ De triomphes fameux, et de faits tous nouveaux,/ Qui doivent exercer tes glorieux pinceaux!/ Alors sans remonter au siècle d'Alexandre,/ Pour donner à ta main l'essor qu'elle anime à prendre/ Dans le noble appareil des grands événements,/ Dans la diversité d'armes, de vêtements,/ De pays, d'animaux, et de peuples étranges,/ Les exploits de Louis sans qu'en rien tu les changes,/ Et tels que je les vois par le sort arrêtés,/ Fourniront plus encore d'étonnantes beautés." *La Peinture* (1668), ed. Jean-Luc Gautier-Gentès (Geneva: Droz, 1992), 445-456, p. 123. Later he writes, "Ainsi donc qu'à jamais ta main laborieuse/ Poursuive de Louis l'histoire glorieuse,/ Sans qu'un autre labeur, ni de moindres tableaux/ Profanent désormais tes illustres pinceaux:/ Songe que tu lui dois tes traits inimitables,/ Qu'il y va de sa gloire, et qu'enfin tes semblables/ Appartiennent au prince, et lui sont réservés,/ Ainsi que les trésors sur ses terres trouvés." *Ibid.*, 549-556, p. 131.

Et si ce que j'en dis se peut dire d'autrui,
Soit Hercule, César, ou le grand Alexandre,
L'éloge, je l'avoue, est indigne de lui.²⁶

In response to such entreaties, Louis XIV's representational program underwent a dramatic shift. The new strategy is exemplified most notably by Le Brun's 1672–1679 paintings for the now-destroyed *escalier des Ambassadeurs*, which depicted Louis XIV's victories in the Dutch wars, and the *galerie des Glaces* at Versailles, painted between 1678 and 1684. When Le Brun began work on the *galerie des Glaces*, he proposed, following the precedent of early modern princely decoration as well as of his own previous work at Versailles, to depict Apollo, then the loves and labors of Hercules, but the *Conseil secret* itself intervened and rejected the idea. The gallery, it was decided, would commemorate the deeds of Louis XIV himself, and thus every painting depicted events from contemporary history, with the king, usually in his signature wig, in the starring role.²⁷ The gods and goddesses of antiquity remained, but only as supporting players setting off the king. It was now the actual *portait du roi* that took center stage, Louis XIV's own *corps glorieux*, shown in full majesty.

The Trianon de marbe and the Reemergence of Mythology

Allegorical mythological painting did not, however, disappear from Louis XIV's residences altogether. Instead, it was displaced to the king's more private spaces.²⁸ At Versailles, in 1685, Mignard painted the *petite galerie* with a scene showing Apollo and Minerva protecting an allegorical figure of the Genius of France, and two salons on either side with the twin themes

²⁶ Abbé Jacques Esprit, *Ode pour le roi sur ses conquêtes d'Hollande* (Paris, 1672), 22.

²⁷ Sabatier, *Versailles, ou la figure du roi*, 199–240.

²⁸ Néraudau, *L'Olympe du roi-soleil*, 138, 285–297.

of Prometheus and Pandora.²⁹ During this time, Louis XIV also built two pleasure palaces, where he could escape the strict etiquette of Versailles: Marly between 1679 and 1684 and the Trianon de Marbre in 1687, replacing the Trianon de porcelain. The Trianon, even more than Marly, was a place of escape, surrounded by nature, isolated from the rest of the court.³⁰ The palace consisted of only one floor, and the windows were almost all French doors giving out on to the surrounding gardens. On the inside, the heavy polychrome marble walls and exuberant ornamentation of Versailles gave way to simple light-filled *salons* adorned with white *boiseries*. The Trianon was, as one scholar describes it, “le château de l’intimité royale.”³¹ Here, the court’s strict etiquette was relaxed, and the king could enjoy fleeting moments of relative privacy unavailable to him at Versailles or even Marly, in the company of a select courtiers. Only the king’s immediate family and grandchildren, as well as the captain of the guards and the king’s physician, were allowed to reside there; other members of the royal family and the other lords of the royal household came only for the day.³²

The Trianon was the site of one of the most significant royal commissions in the years after the completion of the *galerie des Glaces* at Versailles. A total of almost one hundred sixty paintings—which, in contrast to Versailles, were mostly easel paintings—were commissioned in 1687 and then through a series of commissions from 1695 to 1706, from France’s leading artists;

²⁹ Ibid., 538–543.

³⁰ Jérémie Benoît, *Le Grand Trianon. Un palais privé à l’ombre de Versailles, de Louis XIV à Napoléon et de Louis-Philippe au général de Gaulle* (Lathulie–Haute Savoie: Château de Versailles and éditions de Gui, 2009), 51.

³¹ Ibid., 115.

³² Hélène Himelfarb, “Versailles,” in *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, ed. Pierre Nora, vol. 1: The State (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 277, 324n37. On life at the Trianon, see also, Benoît, *Le Grand Trianon*. 115–124.

half of these depicted mythological subjects.³³ While Louis XIV was personally involved with the designs for the palace, he seems to have taken less interest in its decorative program.³⁴ Beyond a charge from Colbert de Villacerf, Louvois's second in command, to choose subjects from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, artists had a degree of freedom unimaginable at Versailles.³⁵ Partially as a consequence, the commission marked a decisive moment in French art, allowing the generation of artists that grew up in the shadow of Le Brun to prove their independence.

La Fosse's three paintings for Trianon, completed in 1688, have long been recognized as a turning point in the artist's career, his most original and accomplished up until that time.³⁶ Befitting their setting in the king's bedroom, La Fosse's paintings were dedicated to the theme of the setting sun: *Apollon et Thétis* (Figure 9), which was placed above the fireplace, and *Clytie changée en tournesol* (Figure 10) and *Le repos de Diane* (Figure 11), both hung over the doors. Though no overarching theme unites the painted decorations at the Trianon³⁷ (not surprising given the relative liberties the artists had in choosing their subjects), it would be difficult to

³³ Flower and religious painting accounted for the rest. See Schnapper's catalogue in *Tableaux pour le Trianon de marbre*, 189–222.

³⁴ Bertrand Jestaz, "Le Trianon de Marbre ou Louis XIV architecte," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 74 (novembre 1969): 259–286.

³⁵ Colin Bailey, *The Loves of the Gods: Mythological Painting from Watteau to David* (Fort Worth and New York: Kimbell Art Museum and Rizzoli, 1992), 118. Despite their relative freedom artists did have to present preparatory drawings to him for approval; in one letter, Louvois indicates to the administrator of the Gobelins that the king approved La Fosse's preparatory sketch, but in another instance, Louvois said that Louis XIV rejected Noël Coypel's design for *Apollon couronné par la Victoire* as "trop chargé de figures." Quoted in Jestaz, "Le Trianon de Marbre ou Louis XIV architecte," 286n51.

³⁶ Stuffmann, "Charles de la Fosse et sa position dans la peinture française à la fin du XVII^e siècle," 42.

³⁷ Schnapper, *Tableaux pour le Trianon de marbre*, 41, argued that "Nature" was the dominant theme at Trianon. By contrast, Milovanovic, *Du Louvre à Versailles*, 234, finds the themes of "la Nature, les Plaisirs et le Rêve" predominate, leading him to call it a "palais de roman."

maintain, as Nicolas Milovanovic does, that “le fractionnement de l’iconographie peut également être interprété comme un désintérêt pour le *sens caché* du décor.”³⁸ Something more subtle was at work. La Fosse, among all the painters at the Trianon, seems to have been most attuned to the allegorical potential of the commission, prompting Colin Bailey to note that “La Fosse’s choice of subjects...showed him to possess a courtier’s instinct worth of his teacher Le Brun.”³⁹ Louis XIV’s identification with the Sun and Apollo is well known, and, in fact, Clytie turned into a sunflower and Apollo and Thetis had been painted for the king before. In 1668, Nicolas Loir painted the subjects, along two other scenes showing with Cephalus and Procris and Memnon, for the antechamber in the *appartements du roi* at the Tuileries palace, where, the *Mémoires inédits* tells, “il s’est servi de la figure et des attributs du soleil pour exprimer sous un sens mystérieux les brillantes qualités du roi.”⁴⁰ Representing the four times of the day, these paintings, faux bas-reliefs against gold backgrounds, were meant specifically, as Germain Brice relates, to “marque[r] aux courtisans leurs principaux devoirs.” Apollo returning to Thetis, for example, served to remind them “qu’ils doivent travailler à divertir le prince lorsqu’il est de retour, le soir, dans son palais,” while Clytie turned into a sunflower showed “que les courtisans doivent toujours être prêts à suivre le prince en quelque endroit qu’il veuille aller.”⁴¹ La Fosse,

³⁸ Milovanovic, *Du Louvre à Versailles*, 234. He sees La Fosse’s Clytie as embodying this shift, the withdrawal of reference to the king from royal decor.

³⁹ Bailey, *The Loves of the Gods*, 118

⁴⁰ Guillet de Saint-Georges, *Mémoires inédits sur la vie et les ouvrages des membres de l’Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture*, t. 1, ed. Eudore Soulié, Louis Étienne Dussieux, Paul Mantz, Anatole de Montaiglon (Paris: J.-B. Dumoulin, 1854), 338.

⁴¹ Germain Brice, *Description nouvelle de la ville de Paris et recherche des singularités les plus remarquables*, t. 1 (Paris, 1706), 83–84. Guillet de Saint-Georges, *Mémoires inédits*, 339, give a slightly different interpretation: “Dans la troisième, Clytie sous la forme de fleur de souci, se tourne du côté que le soleil prend son cours pour marquer que nos démarches doivent avoir le roi

who worked at the Tuileries when these paintings were made, surely understood the allegorical potential of the subjects as exhortations of loyalty to the prince.⁴² That La Fosse intended his audience to make a connection between Apollo and Louis XIV is confirmed by the Thetis's robes, which are adorned with *fleurs-de-lys*, and Apollo's crown of laurels, a commonplace allusion to the king's military victories: Thetis is the figure of France receiving Louis XIV.⁴³ The last decorative cycle dedicated to the image of Louis XIV as Apollo,⁴⁴ the allegorical dimension of these paintings is obvious.

Nonetheless, La Fosse's paintings were not simply a return to the kind of painting that graced the *appartement du roi* at the Tuileries or the *Grands appartements* at Versailles. In a shift related to the *Querelle des anciens et des Modernes* and debates about the image of Louis XIV but far broader, by the end of the seventeenth century, the status of allegory and mythology was beginning to change as a result of broad epistemological and cultural shifts—what Peter Burke has characterized as a “decline of correspondences” and Jean-François Groulier, “une crise de la métaphoricité de la représentation symbolique” that led to a discredit of a natural order based in mystical similitude and that maintained mythology's social, cultural, and political roles.⁴⁵

Cartesianism, empiricism, and the Scientific Revolution began to disenchant the world,

pour objet. Et dans la quatrième, le soleil passe quelques moment de sa course auprès de Thétis avec les Tritons, pour signifier les moments de relâche que le roi prend au sortir des affaires.”

⁴² Bailey, *The Loves of the Gods*, 118.

⁴³ Stuffman, 1964, “Charles de la Fosse et sa position dans la peinture française à la fin du XVII^e siècle,” 43; Bailey, *The Loves of the Gods*, 118.

⁴⁴ Adelein Collange-Perugi, “Charles de La Fosse. Les amours des dieux,” in *Charles de La Fosse (1636–1716). Le triomphe de la couleur* (Paris and Versailles: Somogy and Établissement public du château, du musée et du domaine national de Versailles, 2015), 60.

⁴⁵ Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV*, 127–133; Jean-François Groulier, “Monde symbolique et crise de la figure hiéroglyphique dans l'œuvr du Père Ménestier,” *XVII^e Siècle* 158 (1998): 94.

sundering the chain of invisible correspondences that animated the painting in the *Grands appartements*. Analogy became only a metaphor, a construct with no basis in the way things really were, and the literal had dethroned the mystical in people's understanding of the world.⁴⁶ Where medieval and Renaissance semiotic theory, based in Augustine's thought, saw symbols as divinely inspired, part of a larger view of the world as a book to be deciphered, a figure such as the Père Ménéstier saw symbols as purely inventions of the mind, a projection onto the world.⁴⁷

Such a shift drastically changed the role of the pagan gods in French culture. Increasingly viewed as an object of historical and ethnographic knowledge, they lost their purchase on the cultural imagination; they belonged to a more primitive age and offered no access to truth.⁴⁸ "La vérité n'était pas du goût des premiers siècles: un mensonge, une fausseté heureuse, faisant l'intérêt des imposteurs et le plaisir des crédules," Saint-Évremond wrote in 1685.

C'était le secret des grands et des sages pour gouverner les peuples et les simples. Le vulgaire, qui respectait des erreurs mystérieuses, eût emprise des vérités toutes nues: la sagesse était d'abuser. Le discours s'accommodait à un usage si avantageux: ce n'étaient que des fictions, allégories et paraboles; rien ne paraissait comme il est en soi; des dehors spécieux et figurés couvraient le fond de toutes choses; de vaines images cachaient les réalités, et des comparaisons trop fréquente détournaient les hommes de l'applications aux vrais objets par l'amusement des ressemblances.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ In addition to Burke and Groulier's accounts above, see Burke, "The Rise of Literal-Mindedness (An Essay)," *Common Knowledge* 2 (1993): 108–121; and Sabatier, *Versailles, ou la figure du roi*, 550–566.

⁴⁷ Ralph Dekonick, "La philosophie des images. D'un ontologue à une pragmatique de l'image," in *Claude-François Ménéstier, les jésuites et le monde des images*, ed. Gérard Sabatier (Grenoble, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 2009), 103–107.

⁴⁸ Starobinski, "Fable et mythologie aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles"; Julie Boch, *Les dieux désenchantés. La fable dans la pensée française de Huet à Voltaire, 1680–1760* (Paris: Honoré-Champion, 2002).

⁴⁹ Charles Saint Denis, seigneur de Saint-Évremond, *Sur les poèmes des anciens* (Paris, 1685), in *Œuvres*, t. 1, ed. R. de Planhol (Paris: Cité des Livres, 1927), 279.

Saint-Évremond, a Modern, might have represented an extreme viewpoint in his time, but he sums up a growing consensus: that allegories are, essentially, false, contrary to the spirit of reason that characterized the modern age. Even the Ancients began to defend the fables of the classical Greece and Roman for their alterity, for the very foreignness of their values and point of view, rather than their access to transcendent truth.⁵⁰

Le Brun's *galerie des Glaces* was, in many ways, caught in between this shift: it focuses on contemporary, real events, yet Louis XIV is not shown as an actor in these events. Impassive, immobile, and surrounded by classical deities, he exists in atemporal allegorical zone distinct from the events taking place around him. Such representations were becoming increasingly illegible. Writing in 1699, Roger de Piles conceded that Le Brun "a traité ses sujets allégoriques avec beaucoup d'imagination." But, he protested, "au lieu d'en tirer les symboles de quelque source connue, comme de la fable et des médailles antiques, il les a tous presque inventés, ainsi ces sortes de tableaux deviennent par là des énigmes, que la spectateur ne veut pas se donner la peine d'éclairer."⁵¹ No longer the key to higher truths, the allegorical presentation of the king as practiced by Le Brun threatened only to occlude comprehension.

⁵⁰ Larry F. Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient: Literature and History in Early Modern France* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

⁵¹ Roger de Piles, *Abregé de la vie des peintres, avec des reflexions sur leurs ouvrages* (Paris, 1699), 517. Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1693), 139–140, also registered his impatience with allegory: "L'allégorie est une espèce de mascarade, où le vrai sens de ce qu'on veut dire est couvert et comme masqué sous le sens propre du discours : or comme rien n'est plus agréable pendant un quart d'heure, que la visite d'une troupe d'amis habillé en masque, et que rien ne serait plus ennuyeux, que si ces amis voulaient passer toute la soirée sans se démasquer, et même continuer la plaisanterie jusqu'au lendemain, et pendant deux ou trois jours, il en est de même de l'allégorie qui devient aussi déplaisante quand elle dure beaucoup, qu'elle est agréable quand elle ne dure guère."

In La Fosse's paintings, by contrast, emphasis on allegorical meaning seems explicitly to have been reduced. In the first place, the representations of the gods are no longer accompanied by narratives of ancient heroes and allegories as they are at Versailles and are thus unmoored from the dense signifying system that allowed them to transcend the merely visible (the fact that the room became the bedroom of the duchesse de Bourgone rather than Louis XIV himself hints at how little importance the allegorical content of the paintings had). But, even more, it is La Fosse's treatment of his individual subjects that closes off the allegorical potential of his paintings. In *Clytie changée en tournesol*, for instance, the Sun in his chariot, the ostensible cipher for the king, is barely visible—in pointed contrast to the artist's *Lever du soleil* painted for the Salon d'Apollon at Versailles under the direction of Le Brun. What draws our attention instead is the figure of Clytie, in her gentle, dignified grief, with her flesh glowing in the twilight, draped in pink and white robes. Similarly, in *Le repos de Diane*, the figures' slack expressions, signaling their languor at the end of the day, becomes a pretext to exhibit the sensuous forms of the goddess and her companions. Finally, in *Apollon et Thétis*, where we are finally shown the figure of Apollo himself, the stand-in for the king, his pose serves merely to draw the eye's attention to his soft, glowing flesh, the rapt gaze and outstretched hand of Thetis confirming its irresistible pull. In his preface to *Les Conférences de L'Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture pendant l'année 1667*, Félibien placed allegory at the summit of his hierarchy of genres, declaring, "montant encore plus haut, il faut par des compositions allégoriques, savoir couvrir sous le voile de la fable les vertus des plus grands hommes et les mystères les plus relevés."⁵² Yet in La Fosse's paintings for the Trianon, the spectacle of beautiful bodies has taken priority over hidden sense. It is clear that crisis of representation at the

⁵² André Félibien, "Préface," *Les Conférences de L'Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture pendant l'année 1667* (Paris, 1669), n.p.

end of the century has affected the way La Fosse approached his canvases: the *éclat* of flesh, a rhetoric of presentation, has taken precedence over external meaning.⁵³ The chain of invisible correspondences that linked Apollo and his ilk to Louis XIV, and that confirmed his legitimacy in the order of things, has been cut. There is little in the lithe bodies of La Fosse's gods and demigods that would support the king's pretensions to absolute power here; this is pleasure independent of the king's image.⁵⁴

The Querelle du coloris

Clearly, within the larger context of the “decline of correspondence,” La Fosse's paintings are doing something more; the discredit of allegory opened up a space in which the artist could develop a new representational idiom, a mode of painting whose power did not depend on systems of meaning that were fast losing their validity and relevance. To grasp more fully the significance of their formal innovations, I would like to turn to contemporary aesthetic debates about the status of painting—in particular, the *querelle du coloris*, a crisis that gripped the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture in the 1670s. Christian Michel has rightly questioned the existence of the *querelle* described by early twentieth-century scholars, in which a unified renegade colorist faction successfully revolted against a dictatorial Charles Le Brun and

⁵³ Susanna Caviglia, “Life Drawing and the Crisis of *Historia* in French Eighteenth-Century Painting,” *Art History* 39, no. 1 (Feb. 2016): 40–69, observes a similar phenomenon is history painting of the next generation, “the generation of 1700.” She attributes it to the way models were used in academic training. I am offering here an alternative explanation, at an earlier moment, though I do not believe our arguments are mutually exclusive.

⁵⁴ Other scholars have observed that La Fosse's painting for the Trianon represent the decline of royal allegory towards something new. Colin Bailey, *The Loves of the Gods*, 119, for example, notes, “[I]t was La Fosse's great achievement in *Clytia Changed into a Sunflower* to resist sufficiently the presence of the Sun King and thereby create one of the most fluent and moving mythologies in the *ancien régime*.”

his attempts to impose a rigid, doctrinal classicism, based in *dessein*, on the academy.⁵⁵ There was, Michel points out, never any kind of “doctrine” in the academy but rather “une pensée en construction.”⁵⁶ *Dessein* and *coloris* were not fixed poles but corresponded to a variety of positions and commitments; to talk about a “victory” of a colorist “clan” in the academy amounts to a distortion of the situation as revealed by the existing evidence. I am therefore less interested in La Fosse’s direct involvement with the so-called *querelle* or his status as the supposed standard-bearer of the colorist “victory” in the academy than in how debates around color can give us a framework of values in which to analyze pictorial form. As Thomas Puttfarcken and Jacqueline Lichtenstein, among others, have convincingly shown, what was at stake in many of the debates that grew around color, in all of their plurality, was the status of painting: what defined the medium?⁵⁷ Whether or not there was ever a coherent *querelle* in the academy in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, two very different conceptions of paintings and its purview, constructed around distinct understandings of *dessein* and *coloris*, were articulated during this time, particularly by Le Brun on the one hand and the theorist Roger de Piles on the other. La Fosse’s innovations of the 1680s—most spectacularly realized in the paintings at the Trianon, his boldest statements of his independence from Le Brun—cannot be understood in isolation from the possibilities opened by the new understanding of painting articulated by de Piles. Even if color remained stubbornly polysemous, a certain configuration of values accreted around the term that have direct relevance to La Fosse’s paintings.

⁵⁵ Christian Michel, “Y a-t-il eu une querelle du rubénisme à l’Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture?,” 159–171.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁵⁷ Thomas Puttfarcken, *Roger de Piles’ Theory of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Thomas Crow, “The Critique of Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Art,” *Art Criticism* 3, no. 1 (1986): 17–31; and Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color*.

La Fosse began his career under the aegis of Charles Le Brun, who assumed the reins of the Royal Academy in 1663. Though, in practice, Le Brun owed as much to Rubens as to Poussin, he promoted an ideal of painting that had its end not in color, which he derided as its material base, but in *dessein*.⁵⁸ On the one hand, *dessein* referred to drawing, and it was associated with painting that featured distinct contour lines and blocks of color, as well as its compositional clarity. More important, though, was its intellectual dimension. “On doit savoir qu’il y a deux sortes de desseins, l’un qui est intellectuel ou théorique, et l’autre pratique,” Le Brun asserted. “Que le premier dépend purement de l’imagination, qu’il s’exprime par des paroles et se répand dans toutes les productions de l’esprit. Que le dessin pratique est produit par l’intellectuel et dépend par conséquent de l’imagination et de la main ; il peut aussi s’exprimer par des paroles.”⁵⁹ Domain of the mind rather than the hand, *dessein* represented the mental activity behind painting, the *idea*; it thus lifted painting, at a time when it was considered a mere craft, beyond labor and into the realm of reason and thought, asserting its epistemic dignity and its parity with poetry. If narrative and especially allegory, particularly in service of the king, was painting’s *raison d’être*, it was *dessein* that allowed painting to speak so eloquently. *Dessein*

⁵⁸ “L’on peut dire,” Le Brun, “Sentiments sur le discours du mérite de la couleur,” in *Conférences de l’Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, 1648–1681*, t. 1, v. 1, 450, asserted, “que la couleur dépend tout à fait de la matière, et par conséquent qu’elle est moins noble que le dessein, qui ne relève que de l’esprit.”

⁵⁹ Ibid. Earlier, Félibien, “Préface,” *Les Conférences de L’Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture pendant l’année 1667*, n.p., offered a similar definition of painting, but articulated an understanding of *dessein* based solely based in its material and practical aspects: “Comme l’instruction et le plaisir qu’on reçoit des ouvrages des peintres et des sculpteurs ne vient pas seulement de la science du dessein, de la beauté des couleurs ni du prix de la matière, mais de la grandeur des pensées et de la parfaite connaissance qu’ont les peintres et les sculpteurs des choses qu’ils représentent, il est donc vrai qu’il y a un art tout particulier qui est détaché de la matière et de la main de l’artisan, par lequel il doit d’abord former ses tableaux dans son esprit, et sans quoi un peintre ne peut faire avec le pinceau seul un ouvrage parfait, n’étant pas de cet art comme de ceux où l’industrie et l’adresse de la main suffisent pour donner de la beauté.”

represented the promise of the perfect signifier, of a logic of painterly forms, based in imitation of the visible world, that offered a pictorial corollary to language.⁶⁰

In this conception of painting, the body was the privileged site onto which words, ideas, and narrative could be mapped and through which they could be read. As Nicolas Poussin, the progenitor of this ideal in France, is said to have declared, “de même que les vingt-quatre lettres de l’alphabet servent à former nos paroles et exprimer nos pensées, de même les linéaments du corps humain à exprimer les diverses passions de l’âme pour faire paraître au dehors ce que l’on a dans l’esprit.”⁶¹ In response, Le Brun developed his famous typology of the passions in a landmark lecture given to the academy in 1668—and published for the first time in 1698 as *Méthode pour apprendre à dessiner les passions*. Drawing on the work of Descartes, the artist argued that the movements of the face were the external manifestation of the internal movements of the soul; once the mechanisms of the soul’s movements and their resulting effects on the exterior were discovered, the face could become a legible, because universal, sign of emotion. To this end, he produced schematic renderings of the movements of the face that corresponded to various emotions: admiration, joy, sadness, anger (Figure 12).⁶² Le Brun’s eloquent body became the motor behind his *grandes machines* at Versailles, what allowed painterly form to generate meaning that transcended mere appearance, both in the form of narrative and the higher

⁶⁰ Norman Bryson, “Watteau and Reverie,” in *Word and Image: French Painting of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 29–57.

⁶¹ Quoted in André Félibien, “Mémoires. . .,” in Nicolas Poussin, *Lettres et propos sur l’art*, ed. Anthony Blunt (Paris: Hermann, 1964), 196–97. It remains debatable whether Poussin actually said this, but it neatly sums up the position of the partisans of *dessein* in the academy. The assignment of the quotation to Poussin, France’s greatest painter, lends it the weight almost of a fiat.

⁶² See Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions: The Origin and Influence of Charles Le Brun’s Conférence sur l’expression générale et particulière* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994).

allegorical meaning it supported. Thus, in La Fosse's *Alexandre chassant le lion* (Figure 7) in the Salon de Diane, though, it seems, inspired equally by Rubens's *Chasse au lion* and Le Brun's *Batailles d'Alexandre*, the artist has carefully articulated the expression of each figure in order to communicate Alexander's heroic fury.⁶³

It was not long, however, before dissenting opinion arose in academy and beyond, claiming that color, not *dessein*, constituted the essence of painting.⁶⁴ Though these voices embraced various understandings of the term, they largely agreed that it was color that defined the specificity of painting, its difference from other media.⁶⁵ De Piles emerged during this time as the most articulate theorist of color, beginning with his *Dialogue sur le coloris*, published in 1673. In this, and later works, de Piles turned away from the paragons of the old guard, Raphael and Poussin, and embraced new heroes: Giorgione, Titian, Rubens, Van Dyck. He rejected the intellectual definition of painting cherished by the partisans of *dessein*; rejected the notion that painting's end lay in allegory or narrative or discourse. Instead, insisting on powers unique to painting, he staked the essence of the medium on color and its enthralling, properly visual,

⁶³ Thomas Kirchner, *L'expression des passions: Ausdruck als Darstellungsproblem in der französischen Kunst und Kunsttherorie des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1991), 91–92.

⁶⁴ On the specifics of the *querelle*, see Bernard Teyssède, *Roger de Piles et les débats sur le coloris au siècle de Louis XIV* (Paris: La Bibliothèque des Arts, 1957). Its findings, however, must be modified in light of Michel's arguments.

⁶⁵ As the painter Louis-Gabriel Blanchard, "Sur la mérite de la couleur" (7 novembre 1671), in *Conférences de l'Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, 1648–1681*, t. 1, v. 1, 436, put it, "Est-ce assez de dire que la fin du peintre est d'imiter la nature? Non, puisque tous les beaux-arts se proposent la même chose. Tromper les yeux, ce n'est point encore assez ; car il y a beaucoup d'occasions où la sculpture pourrait le faire. Qu'est-ce donc que cette fin de la peinture? C'est bien de tromper les yeux et d'imiter la nature, mais il y faut ajouter que cela se fait par le moyen de couleurs, et il n'y a que cette seule différence qui rende la fin de la peinture particulière, et qui la distingue d'avec celle des autres arts."

effects.⁶⁶ Painting was only *un fard*, he contended, an alluring surface. Its end was seduction, not instruction. Roland Fréart de Chambray, an early critic of color, complained that the colorists “se sont fait une nouvelle maîtresse, coquette et badine, qui ne leur demande que du fard et des couleurs, pour agréer à la première rencontre, sans se soucier si elle plaît longtemps.”⁶⁷ Yet it was precisely the erotic dimension of painting, as an object that generated and gratified desire, that he promoted.

At the heart of color’s allure lay its capacity for illusion.⁶⁸ “Ne savez-vous pas que la peinture n’est qu’un fard, qu’il est de son essence de tromper, et que le plus grand trompeur en cet art est le plus grand peintre[?]” de Piles asked.⁶⁹ Color’s greatest deception was its ability to approximate human flesh, to simulate its luster and texture with such art that the line between the physical thing and its representation in paint melted away. The erotic language employed by de Piles and the other colorists thus did not merely establish an analogy between the sensuality of color and that of flesh: the shock of seeing a body enlivened by the trace of the artist’s brush, of seeing skin that seemed somehow grafted onto the canvas provided such a thrill that the spectator could barely resist reaching out to touch it. Thus, against the old guard’s arguments for the parity of painting and poetry, de Piles would assert in his last work, *Cours de peinture par principe*, that “les autres arts ne font que réveiller l’idée des choses absentes, au lieu que la peinture les

⁶⁶ See Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color*, 117–95; Crow, “The Critique of Enlightenment”; Puttfarcken, *Roger de Piles’ Theory of Art*; and Svetlana Alpers, *The Making of Rubens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 83–84. My account of de Piles here is particularly indebted to the work of Puttfarcken and Lichtenstein.

⁶⁷ Roland Fréart de Chambray, *Idée de la perfection de la peinture* (1662; reprint, Paris: ENSBA, 2005), 192.

⁶⁸ On illusionism in de Piles, see Puttfarcken, *Roger de Piles’ Theory of Art*, 46–54; and Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color*, 178–85.

⁶⁹ Roger de Piles, *Dialogue sur le coloris* (Paris, 1699), 60.

supplée entièrement, et les rend présentes par son essence.”⁷⁰ Painting did not merely represent an absence but produced presence, its own sensual reality.⁷¹

Rubens, for de Piles, was the master of this alchemy. Remarking on the nude woman in the foreground of his *Druken Silenus* (Figure 13), the theorist marveled, “La carnation de cette Satiresse et celle de ses enfants paraissent si véritables, qu’on s’imagine facilement que si l’on y portait la main on sentirait la chaleur du sang.”⁷² Rubens fulfilled painting’s potential to gratify desire by allowing the eye to possess the object of its gaze. Color transformed the canvas into a woman to be admired and adored, and assured its status as an object beyond the reach of language or reason. “Il y a quelque chose qui doit aller devant,” de Piles insisted, “c’est le plaisir des yeux qui consiste à être surpris d’abord, au lieu que celui de l’esprit ne vient que par réflexion.”⁷³ Indeed, painting “doit appeler son spectateur...[et] le spectateur surpris doit aller à elle, comme pour entrer en conversation avec les figures qu’elle représente.”⁷⁴ It solicited

⁷⁰ De Piles, *Cours de peinture*, 33. See Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color*, 178; and Louis Marin, “Representation and Simulacrum,” in *On Representation*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 316

⁷¹ Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color*, 178–79.

⁷² Roger de Piles, *Dissertation sur les ouvrages des plus fameux peintres* (Paris, 1681), 103–4. De Piles gives the following definition of *carnation*: “En général, les chair qui sont peintes dans un tableau. On dit ce peintre a une belle carnation, pour dire qu’il donne aux chaires une véritable et belle couleur: mais l’on ne dit point d’une partie en particulier, qu’elle est d’une belle carnation, mais qu’elle est bien de chair.” *Conversations sur la connoissance de la peinture* (Paris, 1677), n.p.

⁷³ *Conversations sur la connoissance de la peinture* (Paris, 1677), 77.

⁷⁴ Roger de Piles, *Cours de peinture par principe* (1708; new ed., Paris, 1766), 4.

viewers, bypassing rational understanding to touch the heart with its sensual pleasures. Powerless to resist, the spectator was meant nothing less than to fall in love.⁷⁵

The importance of de Piles' theory in the development of a modern conception of painting has long been recognized. Thomas Crow, for example, characterizes it as "the first persuasive manifestation of the autonomy thesis in visual aesthetics, that is, the idea that the work of art reaches its maximum degree of authenticity to the extent that it dramatizes the material possibilities and limitations of its own unique medium."⁷⁶ Yet we know little about its practical implications for de Piles's contemporaries. It is telling that Crow points to Boucher's *Le coucher du soleil* and *Le lever du soleil*, works painted in 1752 and 1753, respectively, as the realization of de Piles's ideas. The painters who knew de Piles, who not only engaged with his ideas but helped shaped them, have not been considered as important as de Piles himself. La Fosse's paintings at the Trianon—a key precedent for Boucher's pendants not only in their colorism but also in their subject matter⁷⁷—invite us to explore a more dynamic relationship between theory and practice at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Of all the artists of his generation, La Fosse has been the artist most closely identified with the so-called colorist party, and with de Piles's ideas in particular, even if he participated only peripherally in the debates in the academy⁷⁸ and avowed a lack of interest in theory.⁷⁹ As Edmé-

⁷⁵ On the erotics of painting in de Piles, see Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color*, 182–95; and Sylvaine Guyot, "Sur la toile comme en scène, peindre l'amour pour 'toucher,'" 39–44.

⁷⁶ Thomas Crow, "The Critique of Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century Art," 27.

⁷⁷ See Stuffmann, "Charles de la Fosse et sa position dans la peinture française à la fin du XVII^e siècle," 44–45.

⁷⁸ La Fosse gave two lectures in the academy early in his career, both now lost. The first, given on November 17, 1674, "Sur la lumière convenable selon les divers sujets," would seem to intervene directly in debates about *coloris*. We do not know the subject of the second lecture,

François Gersaint commented, “Il brillait surtout dans la partie du coloris, et nous n’avons guères de peintre en France qui l’ait poussé aussi loin.”⁸⁰ La Fosse began his career as a protégé of Le Brun, and his early works, as we have seen, betray the younger man’s debt to his master. Yet in the 1680s, due in no small part to Colbert’s death and the subsequent decline of Le Brun’s authority, La Fosse’s style underwent a dramatic shift. He turned to Titian, Veronese, Rubens, and Van Dyck for models, emphasizing the expressive possibilities of color. Around this time, La Fosse and de Piles became close friends—an alliance capped off years later by de Piles’s appointment as *conseiller honoraire* at the academy in 1699, when La Fosse was director.⁸¹ According to the *Mémoires inédites*, “Il [La Fosse] était aussi ami particulier de M. de Piles...qui s’est servi des sentiments de M. de La Fosse, et n’a jamais rien produit qu’après l’avoir consulté et pris ses idées sur les principaux principes que M. de Piles a donné sur la peinture.”⁸²

given on November 9, 1675. On La Fosse’s activities in the academy, see Gustin-Gomez, *Charles de La Fosse, 1636–1716. Le maître des modernes*, vol.1, 206–209.

⁷⁹ “Il disait quelquefois qu’il était dangereux de vouloir trop approfondir son art et de donner trop de temps à la théorie,” Dezallier d’Argenville reports. “Il ajoutait que la peinture a besoin d’un exercice assidu, et que l’opération de la tête doit être soutenue de la souplesse de la main, pour suivre l’enthousiasme, dont les fautes mêmes sont préférables à des choses plus correctes, mais languissantes et faites avec peine.” Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d’Argenville, *Abregé de la vie des plus fameux peintres*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1745), 341

⁸⁰ Edmé-François Gersaint, *Catalogue raisonné des diverses curiosités du cabinet du feu M. Quentin de Lorangère* (Paris, 1744), 31.

⁸¹ The ascension of La Fosse to the directorship of the academy and the appointment of de Piles as its *conseiller honoraire* has been taken as evidence of a colorist “victory” in the academy. Nicolas Milovanovic, “La surintendance des bâtiments et la querelle du coloris,” in *Rubens contre Poussin: La querelle du coloris dans la peinture française à la fin du XVII^e siècle*, ed. Emmanuelle Delapierre, Matthieu Gilles, and Hélène Portiglia (Antwerp: Ludion, 2004), 50–60, however, has convincingly shown that this development owes more to personal and political dynamics under Hardouin-Mansart’s administration than to ideological factors.

⁸² *Mémoires inédits sur la vie et les ouvrages des membres de l’Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture*, t. 2, 6–7.

In their painterly brushwork and warm coloring, La Fosse's work in the *grands appartements* at Versailles betrays hints of his colorist proclivities. The glowing flesh, warm coloring, and the figures themselves in *Le Sacrifice d'Iphigénie* (Figure 6), for example, owe a clear debt to the paintings in Rubens' Medici cycle, yet its overall conception does not stray too far from Le Brun's. As Marget Stuffmann notes, "L'effort d'originalité du peintre français est certain mais somme toute infructueux. Dans certaines parties, il n'arrive pas encore à débarrasser de cette dureté mate caractéristique de Le Brun et de ses élèves, qui travaillent comme lui à Versailles."⁸³ Moreover, even in his works where his colorism comes through most clearly, such as *Le dieu Apollon sur son char*, their meaning and effects are circumscribed within the overall logic of the *appartements*. It was only at the Trianon, free from Le Brun's designs, that La Fosse managed to assert his full independence from his teacher and engage most fully with de Piles' new conception of painting.

A comparison of the *Apollon et Thétis* with Jouvenet's painting of the same subject (Figure 14), created for Madame de Maintenon's *appartements* at the Trianon in 1700, about twelve years after La Fosse's canvases, reveals the parentage between La Fosse's mode of painting and de Piles's ideas. Jouvenet, betraying his partiality for *dessein*, has rendered the subject in predominantly cool colors—pale shades of blue, pink, and green. The lines are crisp, clearly delimitating the boundaries of each object represented. The bodies of the figures are sculptural, their flesh appearing hard and chalky, their poses stiff, and their facial expressions are carefully registered; Jouvenet's debt to Poussin, who de Piles said "n'a vu que l'Antique et a donné dans la pierre," is clear.⁸⁴ La Fosse's canvas, by contrast, is bathed in rich, warm colors, and the

⁸³ Stuffmann, "Charles de la Fosse et sa position dans la peinture française à la fin du XVII^e siècle," 41.

⁸⁴ De Piles, *Conversations sur la connoissance de la peinture*, 260.

brushwork is notably freer and softer—*moelleux*, as de Piles would have put it.⁸⁵ Where the light in Jouvenet's painting seems incidental to the artist's conception, in La Fosse's it is the work's condition: rather than line, it is the gradations of *clair-obscur* that delineate the painting's masses and forms. The light, moreover, seems to emanate from Apollo's flesh, as though emerging from some source within, expressing, far more than his face, his divinity. What is most striking about La Fosse's painting, though, is the physicality and liveliness of the figures. Their forms have an uncommon solidity, and their flesh, a lustrousness unsurpassed by even Titian and Rubens. The painting has a sensuousness and eroticism totally foreign Jouvenet's, where Thetys's breast is decorously covered, and Apollo seems to position himself to reveal as little of his body to the viewer as possible. What interests La Fosse is precisely the display of bodies, the miracle of paint transmogrifying into flesh.

Towards a New Experience of Painting: The Je Ne Sais Quoi and Sympathy

De Piles' theories are particularly helpful in that they provide us with a vocabulary and a framework of values to uncover the meaning of La Fosse's approach to pictorial form. In particular, they allow us to situate the artist's paintings in relation to one of the key social and aesthetic movements of the seventeenth century: *galanterie*. *Galanterie*, of which de Piles's theories in the 1670s and 80s were a prime expression,⁸⁶ was a multifarious, ever-shifting phenomenon, but above all it promoted an ideal based on love and *sensibilité*, spurning

⁸⁵ Idem, *L'idée du peintre parfait* (1699; reprint, Paris: Le Promeneur, 1993), 21.

⁸⁶ By the time he published his *Cours de peinture par principe* in 1708, de Piles moved towards an aesthetic of the sublime, identified closely with the Ancient party. See discussion in chapter 2 and coda.

dogmatism and cold rationalism.⁸⁷ Its adherents prized charms that bypassed reason to appeal directly to the heart, a quality embodied by notion of the *je ne sais quoi*.

As both a term and idea, the *je ne sais quoi* stretches back into the sixteenth century, but it came into its own during the Grand Siècle.⁸⁸ It became especially important after the Jesuit critic Dominique Bouhours devoted the last dialogue in his *Les entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*, a landmark text of *galant* poetic theory published in 1671. The *je ne sais quoi* was, the critic emphasized, a quality almost impossible to describe or understand. “Il est bien plus aisé de le sentir que de le connaître,” he proclaimed. “Ce ne serait plus un je ne sais quoi, si l’on savait ce que c’est; sa nature est d’être incompréhensible, et inexplicable.”⁸⁹ Nonetheless he does attempt a definition: “C’est un agrément qui anime la beauté et les autres perfections naturelles; qui corrige la laideur et les autres défauts naturels. . . un charme et un air qui se mêle à toutes les actions, et à toutes les paroles.” It is, he concludes, primarily through its effects that we come to know the *je ne sais quoi*. “C’est ce je ne sais quoi qui nous surprend, et qui nous éblouit, et qui nous enchante,” he writes.⁹⁰

Although Bouhours did not take sides in the *querelle du coloris*, his ideas provide a key context for de Piles’ theories and La Fosse’s practice, and help us situate them in the larger

⁸⁷ On *galanterie*, see Alain Viala, *La France galante. Essai historique sur une catégorie culturelle, de ses origines jusqu’à la Révolution* (Paris: PUF, 2008) as well as Delphine Denis, *Le Parnasse galant. Institution d’une catégorie littéraire au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Champion, 2001).

⁸⁸ On the *je ne sais quoi*, see Jean-Pierre Dens, *L’honnête homme et la critique du goût : esthétique et société au XVII^e siècle* (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1981), 28–58; Cronk, *The Classical Sublime*, 51–76; Richard Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁸⁹ Dominique Bouhours, *Les entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène* (Paris, 1671), 325.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 341.

culture of Louis XIV's France. While the *je ne sais quoi* was not limited to color—it could be found, Bouhours asserted, in painting as well as sculpture, a medium that, as a rule, excluded color⁹¹—the notion captures the quality of inexplicable, irresistible, surprising pleasure that de Piles admired in painting, and that contrasted with Le Brun's intellectual, narrative-based model.⁹² In particular, it helps us describe, in historically specific terms, what defined the encounter with La Fosse's paintings: sympathy.⁹³ Significantly, it was only towards the end of the seventeenth century that sympathy took on its affective and psychological connotations. Previously, it was primarily connection between various substances, a sense captured by the 1694 edition of *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* first definition of the word: “Vertu naturelle par laquelle deux corps agissent l'un sur l'autre, comme l'ambre sur la paille, et l'aimant sur le fer.”⁹⁴ But already by this time, it had acquired its modern sense as a connection, based on tenderness and feeling, between two subjectivities. It was this kind of sympathy that, according to Bouhours, animated the *je ne sais quoi*, which he characterized at the beginning of his dialogue

⁹¹ “Ce qui nous charme...dans ces peintures et dans ces statues, c'est un je ne sais quoi inexplicable.” Ibid., 340.

⁹² On the relation between Bouhours's ideas and de Piles's, see Puttfarcken, *Roger de Piles' Theory of Art*, 106–114.

⁹³ The literature on sympathy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is vast. For useful overviews, see Ryan Patrick Hanley, “The Eighteenth-Century Context of Sympathy from Spinoza to Kant,” in *Sympathy: A History*, ed. Eric Schliesser (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 171–198; and Kristen Dickhaut, “Touché! La symphathie affectée par la galanterie chez Watteau et Marivaux,” in Dickhaut and Viala, “Les discours de l'amour,” 109–24.

⁹⁴ *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* (Paris, 1694), at Classiques Garnier Numérique: Dictionnaires des 16e et 17e s., <http://www.classiques-garnier.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/numerique-bases/index.php?module=App&action=FrameMain>

as “le penchant et l’instinct du cœur;...un exquis sentiment de l’âme pour un objet qui la touche; une sympathie merveilleuse, et comme une parenté des cœurs.”⁹⁵

Of course, Le Brun’s typology of the passions, beyond their allegorical potential, promised to open the heart of his figures for this kind of sympathetic identification. In his *Reines de Perse aux pieds d’Alexandre* (Figure 8), for instance, every face, every expression, is calibrated to reveal the emotions of the figures to the spectator. In his description of the painting, André Félibien marveled at the way the inner life of each figure was fully legible to his gaze.⁹⁶ Of Darius’s wife, the woman in blue holding her son, for example, he asserts, “On voit dans ses yeux et sur tout son visage, le sensible déplaisir qu’elle reçoit de la condition où elle se voit réduite. . . . Et même l’on découvre dans ses yeux et dans tous les traits de son visage, l’espérance qu’elle a dans la clémence d’un vainqueur si généreux.”⁹⁷ This was the dream of perfect affective legibility. With Le Brun’s rational, universal rules, Félibien implies, the inner state of any figure in a narrative painting could be rendered through the exterior, through the face.

De Piles and La Fosse, however, spurned the idea that Le Brun’s grammar of the passions open up a path to the souls of the depicted figures. It was rather color, in its ability to simulate presence, that created real sympathy: standing between the physical and psychological sense of the term, it made painting call to spectators yet it did so by touching the heart. “[L]’âme de la

⁹⁵ Bouhours, *Les entretiens d’Ariste et d’Eugène*, 323.

⁹⁶ Even though, in fact, he gets the narrative wrong, writing that Sisygambis, in yellow, bows before Alexander after mistaking Hephaestion for him when in fact she is shown in the midst of her error, bowing before Hephaestion.

⁹⁷ Félibien, *Les Reines de Perse aux pieds d’Alexandre, peinture du Cabinet du Roy*), 12.

peinture est le coloris,” de Piles explained. “L’âme est la dernière perfection du vivant, et ce qui lui donne la vie.”⁹⁸ He continued, referring to two paintings by Rubens:

[C]ela est si vrai, que les expressions que vous appelez l’âme de la peinture, ne seraient pas tant estimées dans la *Chasse aux lion*, et dans l’*Andromède*, si le sang qui est retiré de dessus le visage de ceux qui sont attaqués par ces animaux, n’y laissait voir la peur beaucoup mieux imprimée par la couleur que par le dessin. Celle de l’*Andromède*...fait encore mieux voir ce qui se passe dans son âme que les traits de son visage.⁹⁹

Rejecting Descartes, the main inspiration for Le Brun’s theories, de Piles argues that the way to the human heart lies deeper than the outward signs of the face, in the blood that pulses through flesh and gives the impression of life. Le Brun’s expressions carried a fixed meaning, corresponding to a linguistic signified: joy, ravishment, fear, etc. But color signified at a different register. It was a *je ne sais quoi*, bypassing language altogether to open the heart for identification with another. As the decline of correspondence put painting’s expressive powers into crisis, de Piles found in color and its capacity to generate sympathy an alternative source of meaning.

This shift can help us understand the lack of legible facial expression in La Fosse’s paintings at the Trianon. It is not the passions but flesh, pulsing with life, that connects us to them and allows us to enter into the affective world of the painting. Thus, in Jouvenet’s version of *Apollon et Thétis*, the facial expressions and gestures of the two lovers are legible and specific, allowing us to imagine we are witnessing a specific moment in a conversation. By contrast, what passes between Apollo and Thetis in La Fosse’s painting resists our attempts to impose a clear narrative on it. Though Thetis looks at Apollo’s face, their connection unfolds on a stratum prior to language, irreducible to the decidedly cerebral interaction depicted by Jouvenet—through the

⁹⁸ De Piles, *Conversations sur la connoissance de la peinture*, 272.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 273.

poetry of their inclined bodies and the fluttering pink cloth that winds from one figure to the other. We sense the sympathetic bonds between them as a *je ne sais quoi*, as a corporeal attraction—one augmented by the painting’s chromatic harmony. De Piles claimed that “les couleurs s’accordent par sympathie, lors que naturellement elles ne se détruisent point l’une l’autre, que leur mélange fait une composition agréable qui tient toujours de leurs qualités,”¹⁰⁰ and here the delicate gradations of blue and pink, bathed in golden light, express the meeting of hearts more eloquently than the most carefully calibrated facial movements.

In a similar way, the effect of *Clytie changée en tournesol* does not derive from the representation of the nymph’s fury and grief, even though Ovid’s telling of the story is dominated by descriptions of her violent passion:

Enfin comme elle se laissa gouverner par les transports d’une amour qui se changeait en furie, elle ne trouva plus rien dans la compagnie des autres nymphes qui ne lui furent odieux et insupportables; et demeurait jour et nuit assise sur la terre, sans avoir rien qui la couvrit que ses cheveux qui se répandaient sur son corps. Ainsi elle passa neuf jour entiers, et pendant ces tristes journées, elle ne prit point de nourriture, et ne reput que de ses larmes. Elle ne se remua jamais de l’endroit où la douleur l’avait contrainte de s’asseoir; elle tournait seulement la tête selon qu’elle voyait aller le Soleil, afin de suivre au moins des yeux, ce dieu qu’elle aimait encore. Au reste on dit que son corps demeura attaché à la terre, que ses membres furent convertis en feuilles, et qu’une fleur semblable au souci, prit la place de son visage. Mais bien qu’elle tienne à la terre, et qu’elle y soit attachée par les lien de ses racines, elle se tourne toujours du côté où est le Soleil, et Clytie dans ce changement conserve encore son amour.¹⁰¹

Rather than depicting Clytie’s “furie” or “douleur,” La Fosse hardly shows us her face, let alone its expression; only the cloth the nymph raises to wipe her tears and her flushed cheek convey

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 293.

¹⁰¹ Ovide, *Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide, traduites en françois par P. Du Ryer,...* (Paris, 1666), 149–150.

her sadness. What stands out most about the painting instead is Clytie's flesh, glimmering in the light created by her former lover as he begins his descent. We know that this beautiful, radiant flesh will not last, that it will soon turn to leaves and petals—and that, finally, is the source of the painting's poignancy. The spectator is drawn to Clytie through an ineffable attraction, through her body and the chromatic harmonies that set it off—a power that works on the level of vision and sentiment rather than understanding and reason. While Le Brun's allegories were mysteries, their veil was meant to be lifted and their figures filled with language and meaning. In La Fosse's painting, the mystery of the painting is rooted in its materiality, in the *je ne sais quoi* of color transfigured into the flesh of another sensitive soul.

Color and Ideology

The framework of colorist theory, and the values associated with it, brings the ideological charge of La Fosse's paintings at the Trianon into sharper focus. Despite the claims of earlier scholars, the *querelle du coloris* seems to have had no influence on commissions under Louvois or Colbert de Villacerf, and the king himself seems to have been indifferent to it.¹⁰² Nonetheless, the *querelle* was far from politically neutral, whether it was recognized as such or not. Le Brun's model of painting, based in the principals of *dessein*, in the essentially discursive modes of allegory and narrative, were uniquely well-suited to celebrating the royal power. In Le Brun's *Reines de Perse*, for example, the expressions of the figures—the compassion of Alexander, the admiration, or wonder, of the Darius's family, the hope of Darius's wife—had to be carefully

¹⁰² Schnapper, *Tableaux pour le Trianon de marbre*, 41; Milovanovic, "La surintendance des bâtiments et la querelle du coloris," in *Rubens contre Poussin*, 52.

calibrated to offer a clear and legible image of royal magnanimity.¹⁰³ As Louis XIV abandoned allegory in his self-representation, his own body became the privileged locus of meaning, every gesture and expression loaded with significance. “The King,” as Norman Bryson argues, “is a vortex of signification and everything he touches, however humble, acquires the stamp of the historical.”¹⁰⁴ “Nothing around the King can merely exist, everything changes from entity to signal. Materiality vaporises as we near the King’s presence.”¹⁰⁵ As a result, Versailles, the great mirror of the king where his image was reflected back on him first in allegory in the *grands appartements* and through his own likeness on the ceiling of the *escalier des ambassadeurs* and the *galerie des Glaces*, was a hyper-discursive space. Le Brun’s paintings functioned as the pictorial extension of the king, meant to communicate the king’s authority through the body’s signifying capacity. Colorist painting, on the other hand, had a more ambiguous relationship between form and ideology. In La Fosse’s paintings at the Trianon, it is precisely materiality—the indissociable materiality of paint and the bodies it represents—that is celebrated. Extrinsic meaning vanishes before the dazzling presence of flesh.

The *Apollon et Thétis* is a case in point. On first inspection, Apollo’s pose and expression are remarkably similar to those of Louis XIV in many of the paintings in Le Brun’s *galerie des Glaces*. For instance, Apollo’s gesture, extending his left hand, index finger and thumb raised, with the other fingers folded towards the palm, can be found in a number of Le Brun’s scenes, such as in *Le roi donne ses ordres pour attaquer en même temps quatre places fortes de*

¹⁰³ Joël Cornette, “La Tente de Darius,” in *L’État classique, 1652–1715*, ed. Henry Méchoulan and Joël Cornette (Paris: J. Vrin, 1996), 11–16; Thomas Kirchner, *Les Reines de Perse aux pieds d’Alexandre de Charles Le Brun. Tableau-manifeste de l’art français du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Maison des sciences de l’homme/Centre allemand d’histoire de l’art, 2013), 74–78.

¹⁰⁴ Bryson, *Word and Image*, 40.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 41.

Hollande, 1672 (Figure 15) or *La Franche-Comté conquise pour la seconde fois, 1674* (Figure 16). In these paintings, it is a gesture of demonstration and command; even more, it is a sign for taking possession, in the sense of the *longue main*. According to the *Encyclopédie*: “Tradition de longue main, *longa manus*, est une tradition fictive qui se fait montrant la chose, & donnant la faculté d'en prendre possession: elle se pratique ordinairement pour la délivrance des immeubles réels, & pour celle des choses mobilières d'un poids considerable.”¹⁰⁶ This is what Bryson means when he says everything Louis XIV does takes on the stamp of the historical; the mere act of pointing accomplishes the conquest of territory—as a sign, it is the gestural equivalent of J. L. Austin’s “performative utterance.”¹⁰⁷ In La Fosse’s painting, however, Apollo points at nothing particular, towards the top of the grotto—his gesture has no meaning, and it accomplishes nothing.

Much the same could be said of Apollo’s expression. Louis XIV was famous for his inscrutable visage; the curé of Versailles noted, “la mine et le regard sérieux [du roi] qui imposent et impriment du respect à ceux qui le voient et qui ont l'honneur de l'approcher.”¹⁰⁸ It was the source of his imperturbable majesty, a power inherent in his very form. His appearance,

¹⁰⁶ Boucher d'Argis, “Tradition,” in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2016 Edition), Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe (eds), <http://artflsrv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.15:1543:5.encyclopedie0416.5290176.5290182>. The *Encyclopédie* gives the following definition for “tradition”: “La *tradition* est une des manières d'acquérir, ou droit des gens, par laquelle en transférant à quelqu'un la possession d'une chose corporelle, on lui en transmet la propriété; pourvû que la *tradition* ait été faite par le véritable propriétaire, pour une juste cause, & avec intention de transférer la propriété.” Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962).

¹⁰⁸ François Hébert, curé de Versailles, *Mémoires*, ed. Georges Girard (Paris: Les Éditions de France, 1927), 40.

both his panegyrists and critics claimed, compelled deference where ever he went. Saint-Simon, for example, wrote of his “taille de héros, toute sa figure si naturellement imprégnée de la plus imposante majesté qu’elle se portait également dans les moindres gestes et dans les actions les plus communes, sans aucun air de fierté, mais de simple gravité;...un visage parfait, avec la plus grande mine et le plus grand air qu’homme ait jamais eu.”¹⁰⁹ For Bossuet, this innate majesty was equal to the awesome power of the godhead:

Considérez le prince dans son cabinet. De là partent les ordres qui font aller de concert les magistrats et les capitaines, les citoyens et les soldats, les provinces et les armées par mer et par terre. C’est l’image de Dieu, qui assis dans son trône au plus haut des cieux fait aller toutes la nature. Quel mouvement se fait, dit Saint Augustin, au seul commandement de l’empereur? Il ne fait que remuer les lèvres, il n’y a point de plus léger mouvement, et tout l’empire se remue. C’est, dit-il, l’image de Dieu, qui fait tout par sa parole. Il a dit, et les choses ont été faites; il a commandé, et elles ont été créées.¹¹⁰

Such was the image Le Brun conjured up at the *galerie de Glaces*, the slight raise of an eyebrow on the king’s placid face or the movement of a hand were the motors of history.¹¹¹

One could be forgiven for thinking the same phenomenon is at work in La Fosse’s painting: Apollo’s face is immobile, inscrutable, just like Louis’s, and all eyes are directed towards it. Yet on closer inspection, Apollo’s expression is more of a travesty of the king’s. With his heavily hooded eyes looking nowhere, and pursed lips, the god appears to be in a kind of stupor—a far cry from the Louis XIV’s serene looks at the *galerie des Glaces*. Where Louis XIV’s impassive face signified his majestic serenity, his freedom from the mundane passions

¹⁰⁹ Duc de Saint-Simon, *Parallèle des trois premiers rois Bourbons* (Paris, J. de Bonnot, 1967), 85.

¹¹⁰ Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l’Écriture sainte* (Paris, 1710), 274–275. The text was written between 1679–1700 but published only posthumously.

¹¹¹ These observations on the king’s face and gesture at the *galerie des Glaces* summarize Sabatier’s in *Versailles, ou la figure du roi*, 409–429.

that animated other faces,¹¹² Apollo's is merely inexpressive. Furthermore, despite where Thetis and the other figures look, what clearly attracts them—and us, the viewers—is Apollo's youthful body. Thetis's own expression, though derived from Le Brun's drawing of "rapture," has been softened, subsumed into the fleshy expanse of her face; tenderness, more than the awe described by Baudoin, define the goddess here. With the source of the god's éclat, which Baudoin emphasized emerged from the monarch's face, moved to the body, the picture incites desire, even love rather than awe. Tellingly, where in the *galerie des Glaces* Louis XIV stands at a distinct remove from the other figures, here they all incline towards him, driven by some ineffable attraction. The pleasures of color are revealed alien to painting's end in royal encomium, draining it of its power to fashion myths of absolute power. The experience of painting now points towards pleasures unmoored from their political function.

The King's Body and Artistic Freedom

We have examined La Fosse's paintings in relation to absolutist ideology and the royal image as it was developed at Versailles, but we have yet to consider *why* they emerged when and where they did. It is, I want to argue, no coincidence that this kind of painting found one of its earliest and most accomplished expressions at the heart of royal power. It is not simply a question of the king's changing taste at the end of his reign, or a lack of funds to create the kind of monumental decorative schemes painted at Versailles.¹¹³ Rather, there were larger structural

¹¹² Colin Jones, "The King's Two Teeth," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 65 (Spring 2008): 82. The curé de Versailles, *Mémoires*, 41, noted, "Il paraît toujours égal dans quelque temps qu'on le trouve, ou qu'on ait à lui proposer des affaires, ou qu'il ait à donner des ordres, égalité qu'il conserve au milieu de tous les événements, de quelque nature qu'ils puissent être, soit heureux ou malheureux."

¹¹³ Considering the shift towards easel painting at Trianon, Schnapper, *Tableaux pour le Trianon de Marbre*, 18, wondered: "Faut-il tenir compte de la lassitude du roi, qui préfère décidément

transformations at work, creating conditions that made La Fosse's innovations possible. These transformations concern the linchpin of almost all painting made for Louis XIV's residences, the object around which it revolved, both spatially and ideologically: the body of the king.

One of the foundational concepts of kingship in France was the notion of the "king's two bodies." This theory, shaped on the one hand by the concept of the two bodies of Christ in Medieval Christian theology and on the other by the concept of incorporation in Roman law whereby an abstraction becomes legal when it is embodied by a person who represents it, was anchored in the fiction that the king possessed both a natural body of skin and bones, immature in youth and decrepit in old age, subject to desire, disease, and death; and a mystical body that incarnated the state and that lived on as the indestructible, immutable embodiment of sovereignty even when one king died and another took his place.¹¹⁴ In Bossuet's succinct formulation, "Le prince meurt; mais son autorité est immortelle, et l'État subsiste toujours."¹¹⁵ The theory, first elaborated in Medieval England, found its most potent expression in France in royal ritual.¹¹⁶ At the funeral ceremony of François Ier, for example, a coffin containing the king's corpse was exhibited in the palace for ten days. Then, the coffin was moved to a small room and replaced by

aux grandeurs de Versailles les charmes des petits châteaux? Faut-il penser à une évolution du goût qui s'écarterait des grandes entreprises décoratives, présageant ainsi ce qui se passera à Paris dans le courant du XVIII^e siècle? Le manque d'argent a-t-il joué un rôle?" While acknowledging "une trace [de la vérité] dans chacune d'elle," he did not venture any further explanations.

¹¹⁴ Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957).

¹¹⁵ Bossuet, *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l'Écriture sainte*, 31.

¹¹⁶ Ralph Giesey, *Cérémonial et puissance souveraine en France, XV^e-XVII^e siècles* (Paris: Colin, 1987).

an effigy of the king in full regalia made by François Clouet. The hall was decorated with blue drapery adorned with gold fleurs-de-lys, and the effigy was attended to as though it were the actual, living king, even being served three-course meals. François Ier's successor, Henri II, was kept away from the effigy in the various ceremonies surrounding the funeral, since there could only be one sovereign at a time.¹¹⁷

During the reign of Louis XIV, however, the difference between king's mystical and physical bodies began to dissolve; power was no longer an abstraction but inseparable from the royal person, his appearance and flesh. The trend began earlier: Louis XIII held a *lit de justice* even before his father Henri IV's funeral, obliterating the supernatural transfer of power; and when Louis XIII himself died, no effigy was made.¹¹⁸ But Louis XIV brought the personalization of authority to a head. It is doubtful that he actually said *L'État, c'est moi*, but the phrase nonetheless captures the new politics of embodiment under the Sun King: sovereignty became indissociable from his person as the king attempted to abolish the distinction between himself and the state.¹¹⁹ André Félibien's description of Le Brun's now-lost equestrian portrait of the king captures this merger of the king's physical and mystical bodies:

Les Anciens avaient accoutumé de marquer la royauté par un diadème, ou par une couronne, dont ils ceignent la tête des monarques; mais quoique ces ornements fussent la marque de

¹¹⁷ Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 425–427; Ralph Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France* (Geneva: Droz, 1960), 45.

¹¹⁸ Boureau, *Le simple corps du roi: l'impossible sacralité des souverains français, XVe-XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Les Éditions de Paris, 2000), 13; Jouanna, *Le prince absolu. Apogée et déclin de l'imagination monarchique*, 212.

¹¹⁹ Giesey, "The Two Bodies of the French King," in *Ernst Kantorowicz: Erträge der Doppeltagung Institute for Advanced Study, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt*, ed. Robert L. Benson and Johannes Fried (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1997), 239; Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991), 124–132; Jouanna, *Le prince absolu*, 208–223.

leur puissance, ils ne représentent pas les qualités essentielles de la royauté, puisque beaucoup de princes qui ont porté une couronne, n'ont été roi qu'en apparence. Or comme le peintre avait à représenter un roi véritable, un roi, dans le corps et l'âme duquel Dieu a versé libéralement des dons et des talents extraordinaires, il a fallu non seulement qu'il ait trouvé le moyen de bien imiter ce que nous voyons de si parfait et de si accompli dans votre auguste personne, mais qu'il y ait aussi formé des traits et des caractères et qui expriment en quelque façon ce qu'il y a de beau et de grand dans votre âme.¹²⁰

It was not the symbolic trappings of royalty that manifested the king's authority, as they once had, but the perfect beauty of Louis XIV himself, his own quasi-divine body—a shift perhaps best exemplified by another portrait of the king, Rigaud's famous 1701 painting (Figure 17), in which Louis XIV wields his scepter nonchalantly like a baton, its fleur-de-lys tip pressed upside down into the pillow by his knee, emphasizing the source of his authority in the natural grandeur of his body, with his youthful legs and serene face, at the expense of his regalia, the traditional trapping of the symbolic body of the king.¹²¹

Such intense personalization of power was, in part, a consequence of the disenchantment of the world at the end seventeenth century. As Gérard Sabatier, puts it, “Si dans l'escalier, et puis dans galerie, on ne montre que la seule figure du roi, si on a cessé de recourir au processus du portrait à identification, c'est aussi qu'on ne crois plus au système des ressemblances, des analogies, des similitudes, qu'on ne croit plus à une substance idéale du pouvoir qui s'incarnerait temporairement, une substance qui serait forcément plus réelle, dans son éternité, dans son éphémère apparence charnelle. On ne croit plus aux deux corps du roi.”¹²² It was, in addition, a crucial aspect of the evolution of absolutism and the modern state under Louis XIV.

Jurists in Renaissance France often expressed the theory of the king's two bodies as the

¹²⁰ André Félibien, *Le portrait du roy* (1663), in *Recueil de descriptions de peintures et d'autres ouvrages faits pour le roy* (Paris, 1689), 77–78.

¹²¹ Jouanna, *Le prince absolu*, 217.

¹²² Sabatier, *Versailles ou la figure du roi*, 560.

difference between the king's "public person" and the "private person." This distinction acted as a check on royal power: the king's private will, subject to private passions, needed to be vetted and approved by the Council and Courts before it could take on a public character.¹²³ Although French monarchs had always been more visible than their Hapsburg counterparts,¹²⁴ Louis XIV took this precedent to diminish his private body and assert his absolute power. "Il y a des nations où la majesté des rois consiste, pour une grande partie, à ne se point laisser voir..." he declared in his *Mémoires* to the dauphin, "mais ce n'est pas le génie de nos Français, et d'aussi loin que nos histoires nous en peuvent instruire, s'il y a quelque caractère singulier dans cette monarchie, c'est l'accès libre et facile des sujets au prince."¹²⁵ By becoming an entirely public person, whose every gesture became loaded with meaning and authority, he made himself the sole source of all decisions.¹²⁶

Within these transformations, as Jean-Marie Apostolidès has brilliantly shown, the status of the king's physical body, its role within the representational machinery of the absolutist state, was far from stable. In the first part of the reign, the king's two bodies worked in tandem. The king himself participated in a variety of spectacles—entries, ballets, carrousels—in Paris, centered on the display and performance of his own body. He was, in this position, a "*roi machiniste*," fully in control of the spectacle and able to use it to unify the elites around him. "Louis XIV suscite des spectacles à partir de son corps privé," Apostolidès explains. "Le roi

¹²³ Ibid., 212.

¹²⁴ For a comparison of the two courts see Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹²⁵ *Mémoires de Louis XIV pour l'instruction du dauphin*, t. 2., 168–169.

¹²⁶ Jouanna, *Le prince absolu*, 208–217.

machiniste donne l'occasion à la nation, par le contact direct qu'elle a avec le corps privé, d'être incluse dans le corps symbolique."¹²⁷ Previously, the gods and heroes of Ancient Greece and Rome had been identified strictly with the mystical body of the king.¹²⁸ But in these spectacles, myth and history were united in the physical person of the king: he did not merely reincarnate Augustus or Apollo or the other gods and heroes of Ancient Greece and Roman but became an entirely new personage, reviving the old deities and imbuing them new significance as part of the symbolic imaginary of the French state. The distinction between past and present, reality and fiction collapsed into what Apostolidès terms *mythistoire*.¹²⁹

Something changed, however, when the king moved the court to Versailles in 1682. Here, the symbolic body of the king, no longer participating in entries and carousels, became ossified in the palace's elaborate décor, in painting and statues and gardens.¹³⁰ The decision to depict the king himself, rather than represent him in the guise of antique gods, exacerbated this trend. His image repeated on the ceiling of the *galerie des Glaces*—and in the major provincial cities through a series of statues commissioned in 1685¹³¹—he became detached from his own representation, its agency autonomous from his private person. The actual body of the king was coopted into this machinery, becoming the object of strict, quasi-religious ritual. Rising, eating,

¹²⁷ Apostolidès, *Le roi-machine*, 129–30.

¹²⁸ Allan Ellenius, "Introduction: Visual Representation of the State as Propaganda and Legitimation," in *Iconography, Propaganda, and Legitimation*, 2–3; Milovanovic, *Du Louvre à Versailles*, 239–40.

¹²⁹ Apostolidès, *Le roi-machine*, 66–92.

¹³⁰ "La pétrification des décors éphémères donne naissance à Versailles. Émergée du corps particulier, l'image du roi se fixe et se répand à travers les canaux mis en place par le pouvoir dans l'ensemble du pays." *Ibid.*, 155.

¹³¹ Michel Martin, *Les monuments équestre de Louis XIV, une grande entreprise de propogande monarchique* (Paris: Picart, 1986), 63–73; Sabatier, *Versailles, ou la figure du roi*, 561–566.

sleeping, even defecating were now regulated by court ceremonial; all time became ceremonial time, every movement invested with meaning, offering the king no escape.¹³² “Le corps privé,” Apostolidès observes, “se voit annexé par le corps imaginaire; les deux ne forment plus qu’un seul corps glorieux, célébré par les poètes, héroïsé par les peintres.”¹³³ As a result, Louis XIV lost control of the spectacle, becoming a *roi-machine*. Significantly, when the king moved his bedroom at Versailles, the privileged ceremonial space of the court, to the very center of the palace in 1701, the ceiling was painted white; the only images to adorn the space were religious works from the royal collection; it was his actual body, as though having stepped out from the ceiling of *galerie des Glaces*, that gave meaning to the space through the rituals of *levé* and the *couché*. The king had, in a sense, achieved his end of incarnating the state at the end of his reign, but his single *corps glorieux* was now itself only an empty center, an abstraction.¹³⁴ He existed only in representation, having disappeared into the abstract machinery of the state.¹³⁵ The hyper-

¹³² Ralph Giesey, “The King Imagined,” in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture, Vol. 1: The Political Culture of the Old Regime*, ed. Keith Michael Baker (Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, 1987), 55.

¹³³ Apostolidès, *Le roi-machine*, 151.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹³⁵ We can make a reproachment here to Louis Marin’s argument in *The Portrait of the King*, trans. Martha Houle (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 8, that, under Louis XIV, the king is only an absolute monarch in representation: “The king is only truly king, that is, monarch, in images. They are his *real presence*. A belief in the effectiveness and operativeness of his iconic signs is obligatory, or else the monarch is emptied of all his substance through lack of transubstantiation, and only simulacrum is left.” Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, 129, explains succinctly what this shift entailed: “The representational notion underlying the ritual of royal funerals rested on the principle that an image (in this case the effigy, which was also called *représentation* in Old French) can express symbolically an absent object or an invisible entity (here the perpetuation of the dignity—the office and function—of the king). The representational notion underlying the unity of the body politic and the historical body of the king is a totally different one because it supposes the presence of the thing signified in the sign: a coincidence of the representation and the thing represented. Conceived in this manner, as ostentatious exhibition, representation of monarchy founds its model in the Eucharist.

personalization of authority under Louis XIV paradoxically brought about the depersonalization of the state.¹³⁶

These changes are essential for understanding the genesis and meaning of La Fosse's paintings at the Trianon. As the king became the object of ritual at Versailles, denied private existence, his private body was not effaced entirely but rather displaced. Increasingly, Louis XIV sought out retreat in his private palaces and quarters, the Trianon, as well as his *petits appartements* and Marly.¹³⁷ Of course, these were never purely private spaces—they too participated in the mechanisms of power: an invitation to Trianon or Marly was a sign of favor and was assiduously sought out by courtiers.¹³⁸ Yet what matters is what the Trianon represented.

The phrase (doubtless apocryphal) *l'Etat, c'est moi* functioned in a way similar to Christ's 'This is my body'; it made the body of the king into a sacramental body."

¹³⁶ Jouanna, *Le prince absolu*, 208.

¹³⁷ Pierre Verlet, *Le château de Versailles* (Paris: Fayard 1985), 206–207, 225–228.

¹³⁸ Duc de Saint-Simon, *Mémoires complets et authentiques*, vol. VI (Paris: H. L. Delloye, 1840), 92–93, for example, registered his pique when his wife, but not he, was invited to dine at the Trianon: “[I]l fit un voyage à Trianon. Les princesses avaient accoutumé de nommer chacune deux dames pour le souper, et le roi ne s'en mêlait point pour leur donner cet agrément. Il s'en lassa. Les visages qu'il voyait à sa table lui déplurent, parce qu'il n'y était pas accoutumé. Les matins il mangeait seul avec les princesses et leurs dames d'honneur, et il faisait une liste lui-même et fort courte des dames qu'il voulait le soir, et l'envoyait à la duchesse du Lude chaque jour pour les faire avertir. Ce voyage était du mercredi au samedi: ainsi trois soupers. Nous en usâmes, Mme de Saint-Simon et moi, pour ce Trianon-là comme pour Marly; et ce mercredi que le roi y allait, nous fûmes dîner chez Chamillart à l'Étang, pour aller de là coucher à Paris. Comme on s'allait mettre à table, Mme de Saint-Simon reçut un message de la duchesse du Lude pour l'avertir qu'elle était sur la liste du roi pour le souper de ce même jour. La surprise fut grande; nous retournâmes à Versailles. Mme de Saint-Simon se trouva seule de son âge à beaucoup près à la table du roi, avec Mmes de Chevreuse et de Beauvilliers, la comtesse de Grammont et trois ou quatre autres espèces de duègnes favorites ou dames du palais nécessaires, et nulle autre. Le vendredi, elle fut encore nommée et avec les mêmes dames; et depuis, le roi en usa toujours ainsi aux rares voyages de Trianon. Je fus bientôt au fait et j'en ris. Il ne nommait point Mme de Saint-Simon pour Marly, parce que les maris y allaient de droit quand leurs femmes y étaient; ils y couchaient, et personne n'y voyait le roi que ce qui était sur la liste. À Trianon liberté entière à tous les courtisans d'y aller faire leur cour à toutes les heures de la journée; personne n'y couchait que le service le plus indispensable, pas même aucune dame. Le

La Bruyère's quipped that "il ne manque rien à un roi que les douceurs de la vie privée," but the Trianon promised precisely these kinds of "douceurs," the fantasy of escape from the stifling world of Versailles.¹³⁹ That mythological painting reemerged, and that La Fosse's work took the form it did, here is of critical importance. Colin Bailey has suggested that La Fosse's art might best be characterized "as the private as opposed to public face of the *style Louis XIV*."¹⁴⁰ Bailey here is picking up on more than he probably realizes. Louis XIV's estrangement from his own image allowed the pagan gods to take on new roles in his private palaces, especially the Trianon. Sidelined in the project of monarchical glorification, no longer participating in the elaboration of the body politic, they could now be used to celebrate the king's private body. But as Louis XIV's *corps privé* itself became alienated from the representational machinery of the absolutist state, it could no longer secure the meaning and function of this imagery. As a result, it emerged as a site of a new artistic freedom, from which an idiom of painting unencumbered by royal ideology could emerge.

The problem of authority lay at the heart of this shift. At Versailles, painting's authority derived from its status as an extension of the king's symbolic body. By depicting the actions of the king, as Paul Duro has pointed out, "academic painting could participate in an authority that was not...by rights its own."¹⁴¹ But at the Trianon this authority was no longer available. Much of the painting at the Trianon suffers from this lack of center, with its brittle, arid refinement.

roi voulait donc marquer mieux par cette déférence que l'exclusion portait sur moi tout seul, et que Mme de Saint-Simon n'y avait point de part."

¹³⁹ Jean de La Bruyère, "Du souverain ou de la république," *Les caractères, ou les mœurs de ce siècle* (1696), ed. Antoine Adam (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), 215.

¹⁴⁰ Bailey, *The Loves of the Gods*, 115.

¹⁴¹ Duro, *The Academy and the Limits of Painting in Seventeenth-Century France*, 194.

Even in Jouvenet's *Apollon et Thétis*, the exchange between the two figures barely rises above the anecdotal—though, as we shall see in the next chapter, the artist developed a more successful idiom in his religious paintings, he seems to have been unable to invest mythological subjects with much conviction. The paintings by Houasse and Verdier, the painters who received the largest number of commissions for the palace, are even weaker. Many are little more than pastiches of Poussin and Le Brun, as though, in the absence of mythology's mystical correspondence to the king's body and the authority it gave to their enterprise, the artists found themselves clinging desperately to the two great artistic authorities of seventeenth-century France. Even Schnapper, whose stated aim is to rehabilitate the artists of Trianon, finds himself able to offer only tepid praise. Of Verdier, for instance, he admits, "Certes, l'exemple de Le Brun l'obsède: sa technique de dessinateur, ses têtes viriles au nez droit, aux yeux écartés et vides, marquent la limite d'une influence partout sensible."¹⁴² The presence of Poussin is equally discernable. The figure of Jupiter in Verdier's *Jupiter et Io* (Figure 18) and *Junon et Jupiter* (Figure 19), for example, comes directly from the allegorical figure of the Nile in Poussin's *Moïse sauvé des eaux* (Figure 20); Verdier's two paintings themselves differ only slightly from one another in their compositions and in the poses of their figures. Yet, unlike Poussin or Le Brun, the artist shows little interest in the expression of the passions, leading Schnapper to note that "celui-ci reproduit avec désinvolture le même personnage féminin chargé d'incarner avec la même impassibilité Junon courroucée ou Io pleine d'inquiétude."¹⁴³ As a result, there is a disconcerting monotony to the paintings, as though they were constructed from interchangeable

¹⁴² Schnapper, *Tableaux pour le Trianon de marbre*, 58.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

parts, themselves drained of meaning. No longer participating in broadcasting the signs of the king's authority—the curl of a lip or gesture of the hand that could make history—the paintings cease to signify altogether.

La Fosse also neglected the passions, yet found in color a new driving force of expression and a foundation for a new kind of painting whose authority derived from its own mean. Sensitive to the possibilities offered by de Piles' theories, La Fosse, more than any other artist of his generation, was able to find positive value in the reconfiguration of authority that altered the status of mythology. The power of *Apollon et Thétis*, *Clytie changée en tournesol*, and *Le repos de Diane* originates not in their subject matter and its connection to the transcendent, mystical authority of the king but in the sensual, elusive appeal of their forms, grounded in the immanent materiality of color.

Such a shift laid the foundation for a new kind of encounter with painting. According to Louis Marin, "If there is a scene that sums up or condenses all the signs and insignia of a political power operating at the greatest level of efficacy, it must be that of the king contemplating his own portrait." He continued, "In recognizing the icon of the Monarch that he wishes to be, the royal spectator would recognize himself in the portrait and identify himself with it. The secret that resides within the royal act of contemplation is, then, the disappearance of the portrait's real referent, the canceling out of its model."¹⁴⁴ The king, in other words, effaces himself before his own representation, sacrificing his private self as he disappears into his own ideal image. La Fosse's efforts at the Trianon proposed a different kind of relationship between painting and the royal spectator. Ostensibly, the king looking at these paintings was looking at

¹⁴⁴ Louis Marin, "The Portrait of the King's Glorious Body," in *Food for Thought*, trans. Mette Hjort (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 189.

his own representation, his mystical body; but not only had his actual person superseded the pagan gods and allegory had lost its credit, the formal qualities of the works resisted the kind of self-recognition demanded by the king's portrait. For the king was ultimately confronting bodies endowed with life and desire and whose powers of ineffable attraction owed little or nothing to royal authority. Such an encounter was defined by the bonds of sympathy, in which the authority of the heart reigned. In this instant, perhaps, the king was granted the possibility—fleeting, to be sure—of reconstituting his private self, a self subject to the same attraction and allowed to experience the same pleasure that de Piles said painting should elicit in all spectators.

The king's circle was also allowed this new kind of experience. Marin notes that “the King's portrait first and foremost establishes a relation between the painting and the King himself, his subject being doomed always to the position of a third party, of a distant spectator.” In this position, he continues, “the spectator does anything but look at the King's portrait... Instead the spectator is the object of the Monarch's gaze; he or she is constituted by and subjected to this gaze, and thereby transformed into a political subject.”¹⁴⁵ La Fosse's paintings, their subject matter no longer so unequivocally tied to the mystical body of the king, offered Louis XIV's guests to define themselves independently of the royal gaze, to define themselves, in their encounter with the painting, by their own feeling and reactions.

It is not surprising, then, that La Fosse's painting soon brought in a clientele beyond the confines of the court. The artist continued to practice his new idiom of painting in works commissioned for royal *châteaux de plaisance*—most notably in the *Bacchus et Ariane* (Figure 21) painted for Marly in 1699—and then for the *grand dauphin* with the *Triomphe de Bacchus* and *Hercule entre le Vice et La Vertu* for Meudon in 1700. But his work also attracted a new

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 200.

class of art patrons and collectors in Paris and abroad. In 1689, La Fosse traveled to England, where he painted the luminous *Renaud et Armide et Enlèvement d'Europe* for Lord Montagu.¹⁴⁶ In 1692, he returned to France; though royal commission virtually dried up in the 1690s due to the crown's financial difficulties, he quickly found an eager clientele of wealthy *bourgeois* and *noblesse de la robe* in Paris¹⁴⁷—most notably, the financier Pierre Crozat, who displayed two mythological paintings by the artist at his *hôtel*,¹⁴⁸ where La Fosse also painted a *Naissance de Minerve* (now destroyed) on the ceiling of the *grande galerie* between 1706 and 1707 (Figure 70). La Fosse's painting, in its appeal to the authority of spectators' own feeling, spoke to a new class of *amateurs* uninterested in the project of royal glorification. In the encounter with painting, Louis XIV's presence was cut out of the transaction; mythology now provided the ground for an experience defined by the bonds of sympathetic attachment as painting found a new autonomy. This autonomy did not emerge in distinction from or opposition to royal power. Instead, it took shape, at least in part, from within the corporeal politics of the king's image, driven by royal power itself.

¹⁴⁶ On La Fosse's time in England, see Gustin-Gomez, *Charles de La Fosse*, 66–76.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 79–83, 98–100.

¹⁴⁸ Ziskin, *Sheltering Art*, 29.

Chapter 2

The Vicissitudes of Grace: Jouvenet and La Fosse at the Invalides

Louis XIV did not venture to Paris often in his later years.¹ But he made a notable exception on August 28, 1706 to inaugurate the recently completed Nouvelle église at the Hôtel des Invalides. Designed by his surintendant des bâtiments, Jules Hardouin-Mansart, it was the crowning glory of the massive Invalides complex, a home and hospital for injured and retired war veterans, thirty-five years in the making. Pierre-Denis Martin's painting to commemorate the visit gives some idea of its pomp and splendor (Figure 22). Turned out in their finest, the entire court accompanied the king in a procession towards the royal entrance of the church. The sober façade of the building looms over the assembly as its massive golden dome juts into the sky, a heavenly beacon shimmering on the city's horizon.

However impressive the exterior was, an even more dazzling spectacle awaited them inside. As Jean-François Félibien explains in his *Description de l'Église Royale des Invalides*, a propagandistic commemoration of the opening of the church:

Si l'éclat de l'or dont tout le haut du Dôme des Invalides est couvert, attire de loin les regards, et si la grandeur et la beauté de tous les dehors de cette nouvelle Eglise cause de l'étonnement à ceux qui la veulent voir de plus près ; un ravissement qu'on ne peut exprimer surprend en entrant dans cet auguste temple."²

The glittering high altar, with a baldachin modeled after Bernini's at Saint Peter's, would have first drawn Louis and his courtiers' gazes, but their visit would not have reached its culmination

¹ The king's visit to the Invalides was his only trip to Paris between 1703 and 1715. Jean Chagniot, *Nouvelle histoire de Paris. Paris au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 1988), 11.

² Jean-François Félibien, *Description de l'Église Royale des Invalides* (Paris, 1706), 27.

until they stood under Hardouin-Mansart's dome, where heavens seemed to open up before them (Figure 23). "Le grand autel comme la partie la plus sainte du Temple, et en même temps la plus ornée attire tous les regards," Félibien observes.

On ne les détourne d'aucun côté jusqu'à ce qu'on soit arrivé sous le dôme. Mais alors les différentes vues et les nouveaux embellissements qu'on découvre de toutes parts, et plus que le reste les riches ornements du haut du grand sanctuaire, et aussi la hauteur extraordinaire du dôme; ôte à l'esprit toute liberté qu'il faudrait pour considérer avec ordre tout ce que l'on voit d'éclatant dans un lieu si vaste, et qui imprime tout à la fois tant de surprise et tant de respect.³

Bordered by gold and adorned with frescos, the dome marks a supernatural zone distinct from the rest of the church. Contrasted against the church's subdued interior of grey stone, it seems to shine with celestial light—an effect augmented by Hardouin-Mansart's innovative triple-shell cupola that allows light from a hidden middle dome to illuminate the painted lower dome, bringing out the brilliant color of the frescos and the glitter of their gold borders. "Il n'y a personne qui ne se sente comme ravi hors du soi en regardant à la fois, du milieu du dôme, toutes ces peintures," Félibien declares.

Elles paraissent ne former ensemble qu'un même sujet de triomphe pour Jésus-Christ, d'adoration pour la Sainte-Trinité, de gloire pour la sacrée Vierge et de béatitude pour saint Louis, pour les Apôtres, pour les Évangélistes, et pour tant d'esprits célestes qui les accompagnent, et qui, portés par des nuages, semblent s'élever de toutes parts et quitter la terre pour habiter le ciel.⁴

From their earth-bound position, Louis XIV and his courtiers saw above them a vision of a confident Christian monarchy blessed and protected by God, of royal power divinely bestowed and sanctioned.

³ Ibid., 43.

⁴ Ibid., 81.

These *peintures* which so impressed Félibien were the work of Jean Jouvenet and Charles de La Fosse, who, by this time, had become the kingdom's most prominent artists.⁵ In the lower portion, Jouvenet painted the twelve apostles (Figure 24), each placed in his own compartment with trompe l'œil architecture ringing the top, creating the illusion of windows. Seated on clouds and hoisted up by angels carrying their attributes, the apostles ascend to the heavens above them. Bodies twisted, limbs extended, and necks craned, they perform a kind of ecstatic ballet, all the while maintaining a monumental dignity.

Above the apostles, La Fosse painted *Saint Louis environné d'anges musiciens présente ses armes au Christ*, a luminous sky with four linked groups swelling around the perimeter (Figure 25). In the main group, visible from the royal entrance of the church, Saint Louis, draped in ermine robes, presents the arms of France to Christ. Holding out his sword with one hand, the

⁵ The history of the commissions for the *église royale*'s decorations is complex but should be summarized briefly. Charles Le Brun was first chosen to execute the decoration, but, too occupied with the decorations at Versailles, passed it on to his protégé La Fosse. La Fosse's plan, however, was not to come to fruition. Construction encountered numerous delays, and it was not until 1690, when most of the structure had been completed, that the decorations could once again be considered. By this time, however, Colbert had been dead for seven years and Louvois, his successor, replaced La Fosse with Pierre Mignard, recently named First Painter to the King. Mignard soon presented a new program, with sculpted rather than painted pendentives. But the kingdom's already mounting financial difficulties, made worse by the war of the league of Augsburg, forced work on the project to stop between 1693 and 1697. When work began anew in 1698, Mignard had been dead for three years, and this time, the commission was split among various artists. The competition was apparently fierce, as the number of preparatory drawings for various parts of the Church from the state's leading artists attests; and the results, not unexpectedly, were determined by a mix of talent and politics. La Fosse, a longtime favorite of Hardouin-Mansart, now *Directeur des bâtiments*, was given the most prestigious portions: the upper cupola and the pendentives, which he completed between 1703 and 1706. Jean Jouvenet was given the consolation prize of the outer part of the dome, which he painted in 1704. The rest of the commission was divided among other prominent painters: Noel Coypel, seventy-six at the time, painted the assumption of the virgin above the altar. The side chapels, each illustrating the apotheosis of the saints to whom they are dedicated surrounded by scenes from their lives, were given to Bon Boullogne and Michel II Corneille, the latter imposed directly by the Grand Dauphin. These are skilled works, but do not match the ambition of La Fosse and Jouvenet's efforts. On the history of the decorations, see Schnapper, *Jouvenet 1644–1717 et la peinture d'histoire à Paris*, 126–134.

saint gestures with the other towards a cherub who offers up the royal crown. Perched atop a cloud, Christ soars above the assembly, gesturing in benediction towards Saint Louis and the royal arms. The Virgin Mary, resting on her own vapory seat between Christ and Saint Louis, looks down benevolently in her role as intercessor. Around the rest of the dome is a troupe of angels gathered in different groups. They flit and fly across the sky, some playing musical instruments, others holding instruments of the passion. Many strain to catch a glimpse of Christ and Saint Louis, shielding their eyes from Christ's nimbus, while others look elsewhere, apparently distracted by the riotous activity around them. Despite reminders of Christ's suffering all around, this is nothing short of a heavenly *fête galante*.

Félibien's description suggests a unity of effect to the works, but his propagandistic panegyric belies their striking differences.⁶ Where Jouvenet's compositions are clear and unified, La Fosse's is crowded and diffuse. Where Jouvenet's colors are distributed in separate blocks of predominantly cool colors, La Fosse's shimmer with warm tones and delicate gradations of *clair-obscur*.⁷ And where Jouvenet's figural groups, defined by the theatrical extension of arms and legs and hands, jut into the sky like mountains, La Fosse's undulate around the perimeter of the

⁶ Schnapper notes, "[L]es différences de style et de tempérament entre les artistes sont sensibles, particulièrement entre La Fosse et Jouvenet." Ibid., 133.

⁷ La Fosse and Jouvenet's technique, a mix of *al fresco* and *al secco*, was not durable, and the paintings faded soon after they were completed; subsequent restorations further blunted the artists' work. A restoration in 1987 helped restore the paintings to their former glory. In La Fosse's case look at the *modello* (Figure 26) and *ricordo*, with their richer, warmer hues, although painted in oil, give us a better sense of the colors La Fosse intended. Similarly, Jouvenet's sketches for the *Apôtres* (Figures 29–40), a selection of which were displayed prominently at the Salon of 1704 and are found today in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rouen, give us a better sense of the original coloring of his works, richer and more saturated yet still cool. Compared both to La Fosse's portion of the dome, and his *modello* and *ricordo*, they are notable for their coolness and lack of sensual finish. On the artists' technique and the restoration of the dome, see François Poche, *Le Dôme des Invalides: un chef-d'œuvre restauré* (Paris: Somogy, 1995).

dome in masses of flesh and fabric. Though the frescos appear at first to proffer a consistent and unambiguous celebration of a universe founded on the mystical bond between God and King, their formal and morphological disparity compels us to look again.

These differences come down to more than style. To uncover the significance of pictorial form here, I would like to examine the works in relation to the notion of grace. As it happens, Marcel used grace to describe in religious painting at the beginning of the eighteenth century as well:

Par contagion, une nouvelle grâce rajeunit les sujets les plus austères : *Moïse sauvé des eaux*, par exemple, Charles de La Fosse reprend ce thème peint jadis par Poussin. Mais quel chemin parcouru entre les deux œuvres! La composition de Poussin est rythmée, digne, majestueuse....La toile de la Fosse, au contraire, est toute souriante avec ses jeunes filles rieuses à la gorge pleine, aux bras potelés, aux draperies élégantes, aux souples ploiements de tailles....Poussin a travaillé pour une église, La Fosse pour un boudoir.⁸

In contrast to Marcel, however, I use grace in a more historically specific fashion—not just a generic stylistic category but as a religious and aesthetic concept with direct relevance to the painters and their audience. I am particularly interested in understanding the works in light of grace’s double meaning as divine aid and indefinable beauty, captured by the *Dictionnaire de l’académie française* of 1694: “Grâce, signifie...l’aide et le secours que Dieu donne aux hommes pour faire leur salut. *On ne peut se sauver sans la grâce*. Grâce, signifie encore, Agrément, ce qui plaît. *Cette femme est belle, mais elle n’a aucune grâce*.”⁹ A flashpoint in the theological, rhetorical, and artistic debates at the end of Louis XIV’s reign, the multifaceted notion of grace reveals a more complex and far less unified picture of the cupola than Félibien has it. In what

⁸ Marcel, *La peinture française au début du XVIII^e siècle*, 182.

⁹ *Dictionnaire de l’Académie* (Paris, 1694), at Classiques Garnier Numérique: Dictionnaires des 16e et 17e s., <http://www.classiques-garnier.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/numerique-bases/index.php?module=App&action=FrameMain>

follows, I draw on these debates to propose that La Fosse and Jouvenet's frescos put forward different understandings of grace and the relation between its divine and profane registers.¹⁰

In the last chapter, we saw how the changing status of the king's body, and the resulting crisis about the role of the classical gods in its elaboration, gave rise to a new kind of mythological painting. Here we turn to a genre where, arguably, the stakes were even higher: religious painting. Ultimately, Jouvenet and La Fosse's rival visions at the Invalides reveal the frescos to be a field of conflict about the powers and purview of painting, one where a larger crisis of the sacred image and the mystical bond between God and King that it was supposed to sustain came to a head. By the end of Louis XIV's reign, the sources of authority that had undergirded religious art for centuries were becoming destabilized, and the result, at the Invalides, was that the precedence of the King and his Church was pitted against the claims of a newly empowered and autonomous spectator. Religious painting became, as a consequence of this confrontation, an unexpected site for the secularization of art.

Divine Grace

The apostles' apotheosis in Jouvenet's work does not have a precise textual source. But their gestures and expressions were nonetheless freighted with meaning. The key to unraveling this web, I propose, lies in the question of the representation of divine Grace. Grace was one of the central preoccupations of seventeenth-century theology, and discussions about its depiction, though infrequent, entered into art theory as well. The most wide-ranging and influential of these was Charles Le Brun's 1671 lecture on Poussin's *Ravissement de Saint Paul* (1649-1650), a text

¹⁰ Throughout this chapter, in order to avoid confusion, I use Grace with a capital "g" to designate the word's sense as divine favor and grace with a lowercase "g" to designate its sense as indefinable charm.

that, as we shall see, played an important role in the making and reception of Jouvenet's frescos (Figure 27).¹¹ Rejecting the purely formal analysis of the painting delivered to the Academy just one month earlier by Jean Nocret, Le Brun proposed, in the most extensive theological reflection ever offered to the body, to show how the painting embodies "une théologie muette," providing "un exemple de cette partie toute spirituelle où chaque figure cache autant de mystères."¹²

Divided into two parts, Le Brun's lecture dwells first on the representation of the abstract concept of Grace and proposes, with somewhat dubious theological authority, that three angels lifting Saint Paul up to heaven symbolize what he characterizes as "trois états de grâce": "prévenante et efficace," "concomitante," and "abondante et triomphante."¹³

More relevant for understanding Jouvenet's Apostles, however, is the second part, devoted to the figure of Saint Paul and the ways in which the actions of divine Grace work on the body. "Le saint apôtre qui a les bras ouverts, la tête et la jambe droite levées," he marvels, "n'exprime-t-il pas très parfaitement le désir ardent qu'il avait de s'élever à Dieu par des actions

¹¹ On Le Brun's lecture, see Charles Dempsey, "Poussin's *Ecstasy of Saint Paul*: Charles Le Brun's Over-Interpretation," in *Commemorating Poussin*, ed. Katie Scott and Genevieve Warwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 114–133; Marianne Cojannot-Le Blanc, *À la recherche du rameau d'or. L'invention du Ravisement de Saint Paul de Poussin à Charles Le Brun* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris-Ouest, 2012), 161–194.

¹² Charles Le Brun, "Discours sur le tableau du Ravisement de saint Paul, 10 janvier 1671," in *Conférences de l'Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, 1648–1681*, ed. Jacqueline Lichtenstein and Christian Michel, t. 1, v. 1 (Paris: ENSBA, 2006), 395.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 397. Scholars have attempted to find in Le Brun's exegesis a conciliatory middle path between the Jesuit and Jansenist views of grace, and others a Thomist position, but Marianne Cojannot-Le Blanc, *À la recherche du rameau d'or*, 185–188, has argued recently that the artist's reading shows insufficient mastery of theology to merit such an interpretation. For the suggestion that Le Brun's is a Thomist position, see Lichtenstein and Michel's introduction to Le Brun's lecture, 395. In any case, for my purposes, the extent of Le Brun's knowledge of the finer points of Catholic doctrine, and the place of his exegesis within contemporary debates of grace, matters less than Le Brun's interest in grace as a representational problem.

correspondantes aux mouvements de la grâce qui le soutenait...?”¹⁴ Here, Le Brun is concerned above all with the expression of the psychological state that results from the actions of Grace: rapture, which the Premier Peintre defines as “admiration...causée par quelque objet soit au-dessus de la connaissance de l’âme, comme peut être la puissance de Dieu et sa grandeur.”¹⁵ Rapture, as a psychological state, has a corresponding physical manifestation that makes it visible on the body. “Lorsqu’elle [l’âme] est en cet état,” Le Brun explains, “toutes les parties du corps suivent ce même mouvement, et particulièrement celles du visage, comme pour goûter avec elle les douceurs dont elle jouit.”¹⁶ It is, then, the sign of the workings of Grace in human flesh. By depicting Saint Paul in the way he did, he argues, Poussin aimed to portray the apostle’s rapture and, with it, the Grace flowing through him:

[C]’est pour cela que ce saint a les sourcils et les yeux élevés du côté de la gloire, et que tout le reste de son visage suit ce même mouvement, car on voit les coins de la bouche et ses joues qui s’élèvent en haut, et tout le visage qui paraît dans un air tranquille et content; ce saint a les deux bras ouverts et élevés vers le Ciel. Ses mains tout de même sont ouvertes et élevées. Enfin toute son action et tous ses mouvements marquent un parfait ravissement.¹⁷

What Le Brun is elaborating here is nothing short of a visual semiotics of Christian theology: a system of facial and corporeal signs that allows the ultimate mystery, God’s Grace, to become a subject of visual representation—an accomplishment celebrated by a sonnet written by the Père Ménestrier written after the painter’s death: “Il peint les passions, il rend l’âme visible,/ De la

¹⁴ Le Brun, “Discours,” 398.

¹⁵ *Conférence de Monsieur Charles Le Brun sur l’expression générale et particulière*, ed. Picart (1698; new edition, ed. Julien Philipe, Paris: Éditions Dédale Maisonneuve et Larose, 1994), 72.

¹⁶ Le Brun, “Discours,” 399.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

divinité fait un être sensible;/ Représente la Grâce, à la gloire il atteint./ Ce que l'œil ne peut voir son adresse l'exprime;/ Comme Paul il s'élève au Ciel le plus sublime.”¹⁸

To appreciate the distinctiveness of Le Brun's approach we need only contrast it to that of his contemporary Philippe de Champaigne. In his great *Ex Voto* of 1662, which he painted to commemorate the miraculous healing of his daughter, the faces and bodies of Mother-Superior Angès Arnauld and his daughter, Sister Catherine de Sainte Suzanne, are calm, serene, static—almost like effigies (Figure 28). The dramatic contortions which, for Le Brun, mark the actions of grace are nowhere to be found. If, as Louis Marin has argued, Le Brun holds that Grace should be represented as a transitory psychological state, as movement in and on the body, it is revealed here as an ontological transformation, a change in the essential substrate of being: the serenity of the Mother Superior and Champaigne's daughter is a pure expression of the divine in man, separate from the human passions, protean and corrupt.¹⁹ Le Brun found in Poussin's *Ravissement* a counter-model that accommodated the representation of Christian mysteries within those very passions. It fulfilled his lofty ambitions for painting that could capture the miraculous encounter of man with the divine within a rational framework of representation. Outstretched arms, raised eyes, lifted eyebrows—this, distilled from Poussin's example, became the standard code for marking the movements of the soul in the body as it receives God's benediction.

¹⁸ Claude-François Ménéstrier, *La philosophie des images énigmatiques...* (Lyon, 1694), 167.

¹⁹ Louis Marin, “Signe et représentation : Philippe de Champaigne et Port-Royal,” *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 25e Année, no. 1 (Jan. - Feb., 1970): 19. He writes: “Ce qui est l'objet et la fin du tableau...n'est plus le dynamisme psychologique de l'âme, mais la part impersonnelle de la personne, sa part sacré....Alors que Le Brun...s'attache aux actes psychologiques dont il réfracte les nuances à partir d'une situation unique, dans un instant psychologique, Champaigne s'efforcera de traduire des *états* non pas psychologiques, mais ontologiques : dispositions profondes, unique, des états manières d'être essentielles qui sont à la source des actes, comme leur substrat.”

It is hardly surprising, then, that when faced with a similar problem Jouvenet drew on Poussin's painting and Le Brun's teaching on it for his *Douze Apôtres* (Figures 29–40; *esquisses*, which differ slightly from the finished frescos, shown). Certainly, the formal debt to Poussin's painting is clear. The centralized groupings of an apostle borne up by two or three angels, the brightly colored robes contrasted against a muted backdrop of sky and clouds, and the gestures and expressions especially—all are based on the prototype of ascension developed in the *Ravissement*. It is difficult to imagine that contemporary viewers, at least those with any artistic education, could have looked at the frescos without recalling Poussin's painting, one of the most famous in the royal collection.

In citing his illustrious predecessor, Jouvenet proposes a particular interpretation or vision of the *Ravissement*, one inseparable from Le Brun's reading of the work. Though not his pupil, Jouvenet had ample opportunity to absorb the premier peintre's theories.²⁰ As a student in the Academy beginning in 1668, for one, he likely would have heard Le Brun's lecture on Poussin's painting. Failing that, he could also have discussed it with the premier peintre himself, with whom he worked from 1669 through the 1680s.²¹ Finally, he could have read up on the Le Brun's prescriptions in Bernard Picart's 1698 edition of the artist's *Conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière*, where Le Brun explains, in a kind of précis of his lecture on the *Ravissement de Saint Paul*, that, in rapture, “le tête sera penchée du côté du cœur, et les sourcils élevés en haut, et la prunelle sera de même. La tête penchée...semble marquer l'abaissement de

²⁰ On the relationship between Le Brun's theories on the expression of the passions to Jouvenet's art, see Kirchner, *L'expression des passions*, 83–91.

²¹ To appreciate the extent of Le Brun's influence over the young Jouvenet, we need only look at his *Famille de Darius*, painted around 1680, which, with a few notable exceptions, is a more or less faithful copy of Le Brun's famous treatment of the the subject.

l'âme....[L]es yeux...[sont] élevés vers le ciel, où ils semblent être attachés pour découvrir ce que l'âme ne peut connaître."²²

Not surprisingly, given the larger importance of expression over allegory in Le Brun's art theory, what Jouvenet takes from the older painter is not so much an interest in the representation of specific states of grace, the embodiment of abstractions, but rather of the effects of grace on the body.²³ Accordingly, Jouvenet lavished particular attention on gesture: some of the Apostles, like Poussin's Saint Paul, hold out their arms toward the heavens, while others are given related poses—hands clasped to one side of the head or arms down with palms facing up, for example—all of them variations on the theme of rapture.²⁴ The Apostles' facial expressions betray the mediation of Le Brun's reading even more clearly. The faces of Saint Matthew, Saint Bartholomew, Saint Philip, and Saint Peter, in particular, with their mouths agape and heads

²² *Conférence de Monsieur Charles Le Brun sur l'expression générale et particulière*, 72. *Ravissement* is not mentioned in Testelin's redaction of Le Brun's lecture in his *Sentiments de plus habiles peintres sur la pratique de la peinture et sculpture...* of 1680, the first publication of Le Brun's lecture of the passion, but first appears in Picart's 1698 edition of the lecture on *expression particulière*. It seems likely that Le Brun did not discuss rapture when he first delivered the lecture in 1668 but rather added to the manuscript after his lecture on Poussin's *Ravissement de Saint Paul*, where he discusses the expression of rapture in a section entitled "Remarques à faire sur diverses choses qui n'ont pas encore été observées," that is, not discussed in his previous lectures. See Lichtenstein and Michel's introduction to Le Brun's lecture on "l'expression particulière," in *Conférences de l'Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, 1648–1681*, t. 1, v. 1, 260.

²³ While it is unlikely that Jouvenet intended his angels to represent specific states of grace—the sheer variety of their gestures and expressions, lack of strong chromatic differentiation in their robes, and their variable numbers from painting to painting militate against such an interpretation—they are nonetheless clearly agents of divine grace, bearing up the apostles to heaven in exaltation.

²⁴ Félibien appreciated how Jouvenet was able to vary his figures to avoid monotony: "On peut juger combien d'art il a fallu que le peintre ait employé dans les images des douze Apôtres, pour en varier toutes les figures...; et pour leur donner des attitudes et des expressions convenables à chacun en particulier, et à tout le sujet en général: Car il n'y en a pas qui se ressemblent l'un à l'autre." *Description de l'Église Royale des Invalides*, 70

raised towards heaven, look almost directly transposed from Le Brun's drawing of rapture, part of a set of drawings he executed to accompany his *Conférences sur l'expression* (Figure 41).²⁵ Based on Poussin's Saint Paul, the expressions of Jouvenet's Apostles, like Le Brun's drawing, are heightened, even exaggerated, more easily distinguishable as representations of the passion into which Le Brun had pressed them. Understood in the context of Le Brun's teachings, these were not just expressions of a particular passion but signs around which an added theological dimension had accreted.²⁶

The expression of rapture, and the actions of Grace that cause it, could be said to be Jouvenet's special preoccupation. Of all of the painters who rose to prominence in Le Brun's wake, none took it up with greater attention and commitment than Jouvenet, the most in-demand religious painter of his generation. The *Douze Apôtres* is the high point of a career spent in pursuit of the representation of religious experience, of the extremes of the human condition as it comes face to face with the divine. Nearly all of his work, as has often been noted, is characterized by a distinctive corporeal rhetoric, in which his figures always seem to be always straining upward, arms outstretched and faces lifted towards the heavens. We only think, for example, mature works like his *Apothéose de saint Jean de Dieu* at the église Saint-Jean-de-Malte in Aix-en-Provence (Figure 42) or *Saint Pierre guérissant les malades de son ombre* (c. 1699; Figure 43), where extreme gesture comes forward as the works' most notable feature.

The problem of representing the actions of Grace was, of course, not unique to Jouvenet, though his treatment of it reveals special attention to its intricacies. La Fosse's pendentives below the dome, showing *Les quatre Évangélistes*, betrays a similar rhetoric of gesture and

²⁵ Louvois had them integrated into royal collections after Le Brun's death. Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions*, 144.

²⁶ In terms of reception, I am, of course, talking about a spectator interested and educated in art.

expression, though one that is atypical for the artist in his later years (Figure 44–47). Arms reach out, bodies twist, and heads crane upward with an intensity that almost matches Jouvenet’s, revealing the unmistakable influence of his teacher Le Brun. This work and Jouvenet’s *Apostles*, then, are descended from the same lineage, a kinship that becomes even more evident when we compare them to Louis de Boullogne’s rejected proposal for the Saint Luke pendentive, where the Evangelist is shown seated calmly at work as he is borne up to heaven (Figure 48). The transitory psychological and physiological effects of Grace have no interest for the artist here.

Yet La Fosse’s *Évangélistes* and Jouvenet’s *Apôtres* are far from identical. Compared to La Fosse’s frescos, the *Apôtres*—as well as his own proposal the Saint Luke pendentive, in which gesture multiplies in a fugue of out-stretched arms and legs and hands (Figure 49)—are more purely concerned with the corporeal rhetoric of ravishment at the expense of sensual illusionism. Without the coloristic vividness of La Fosse’s figures, these are more *signs* of Grace than living, breathing bodies—the kind of signs by which Le Brun said that the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans were able to represent “toute leur théologie... sous des figures.”²⁷ It is as if Jouvenet has cleared the scene of representation of anything that might distract from the expression of rapture. Receiving grace here is not so much an individual, embodied experience as an abstraction that originates in the body only to transcend it: the Apostles are the state of Grace distilled.

Aesthetic Grace

La Fosse treats grace in an entirely different way from Jouvenet. Félibien praised La Fosse’s *Saint Louis déposant sa couronne et son épée entre les main de Jésus-Christ* for its figures’ “différentes expressions de crainte, de profond respect; et d’un culte rempli d’amour, de

²⁷ Le Brun, “Discours,” 395.

zèle et d'admiration, de joie et d'étonnement."²⁸ But such emotional extremes—similar to the rapture that animates Jouvenet's *Apôtres*, as well as La Fosse's own *Évangélistes*—are in fact difficult to find. On first inspection, the expressions of many of La Fosse's figures seem to conform to the schema of ravishment proposed by Le Brun and adapted by Jouvenet. Saint Louis's lips, for example, are open, and his eyes are raised. Yet the tension that animates Jouvenet's faces is absent; the expression lacks conviction, infused with a *douceur* that saps them of their emotional force.²⁹ If Jouvenet's Apostles are contorted with the force of God's Grace—mouths agape, eyes lifted, nostrils flared—Saint Louis's expression seems, as we look closer, to suggest more light-hearted banter than supplication for the protection of the kingdom (Figure 50). Likewise, the angels around him seem to be able to manage only wan, if pleasant, smiles, much like the figures in his paintings for the Trianon (Figure 51).

In a description written to accompany his proposal for an earlier iteration of the dome, dating from 1677 but now destroyed, La Fosse declares that his fresco was to show "Saint Louis et Saint Charlemagne... dans des actions suppliantes et pleines d'humilité qui par leur prières obtiennent l'effet de leur demande, qui est que Dieu veuille par sa sainte grâce donner aux armes de sa majesté la vertu et la force de vaincre tous les ennemis de la France."³⁰ Even if, by the time he took up the cupola's decorations again, La Fosse toned down the bellicosity of his original proposal, which included warrior saints and allegories of various military victories, the theme in

²⁸ Félibien, *Description de l'Église Royale des Invalides*, 62.

²⁹ On expression in La Fosse's work, see Kirchner, *L'expression des passions*, 91–98.

³⁰ Charles de La Fosse, *Mémoire de l'ouvrage de peinture faite su dôme du moelle de l'église des invalides par moy Charles Delafosse, peintre du roy et des ses bastimens, professeur en son académie royale de peinture sculpture*, Service historique de l'Armée (2Xy, cart. 17, peinture 112), reproduced in Clémentine Gustin-Gomez, *Charles de La Fosse, 1636–1716. Le maître des Modernes*, vol. 1 (Dijon: Éditions Faton, 2006), 245.

the final version is the same: a vision of France blessed and protected by God's Grace. But the forms do not seem entirely adequate to their message. The rapture and astonishment that should come from experiencing God's grace, the kind we do see in Jouvenet's portion of the dome, is nowhere to be found. The emphasis, rather, is on charming arrangements, on sensual colors, on enticing figures. Even if it supplied a pretext, something more than a necessary toning down of the original plan's martial bravado in the wake of France's military defeats, the explanation commonly adopted by scholars, is at work here.³¹

To uncover the meaning of La Fosse's formal procedures, I would like to turn to the *Dictionnaire*'s other definition of grace, the grace of *agrément*. This grace—what we might call, somewhat anachronistically, aesthetic grace—dates back to antiquity and denoted a quality similar to beauty, but somehow more enticing, more mysterious, more moving. If beauty existed as an ideal, abstract and objective—as order, symmetry, reason—grace touched the heart; it was what made beauty charming, lovable, and attractive.³² Since the Renaissance, grace occupied a special place in artistic theory and the criteria it developed to describe and judge works of art. It came in a different of forms—notably, the grace of line, epitomized by the sinuous lines, a smooth touch, balanced compositions, and an overall sense of clarity and harmony of Raphael; and the grace of color, epitomized by harmonious combinations of color, delicate gradations of

³¹ For example, Schnapper, *Jouvenet 1644–1717 et la peinture d'histoire à Paris*, 129.

³² The classic study on aesthetic grace remains Samuel Holt Monk, "A Grace beyond the Reach of Art," *Journal of the History of Ideas* V, no. 2 (April 1944): 131–150. Other useful studies, for our period, as well as before and after it, include Jean Lafond, "La beauté et la grâce: l'esthétique 'platonienne' des 'Amours de Psyche,'" *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 3, no. 4 (May–Aug. 1969): 475–490; Annie Becq, *Genèse de l'esthétique française moderne, 1680–1814* (1984; new edition. Paris: Albin Michel, 1994), 97–114; Richard Spear, *The "Divine" Guido: Religion, Sex, Money and Art in the World of Guido Reni* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 102–114; Katlin Bartha-Kovács, "Figures de la grâce chez Watteau et dans le discours sur l'art de l'époque," in *Watteau au confluent des arts. Esthétiques de la grâce*, ed. Valentine Toutain-Quittelier and Chris Rauseo (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014), 19–30.

clair obscur, painterly brushwork, and luminous flesh of Correggio and Titian. In La Fosse's case, it is, clearly, the grace associated with color, particularly as described by his friend Roger de Piles, that can help us uncover the aesthetic motivations behind his formal choices.

In the canon of early modern art theory, de Piles' discussion of grace stands out for its comprehensiveness and the key place it occupies in his larger system of painting. Over the course of his career, de Piles tried out a number terms to account for the visual and sensual appeal of painting he championed. But by 1699, when he published his influential *Abregé de la vie des peintres*, grace emerged as the conceptual lynchpin of his theories.³³ Grace captured de Piles' vision of painting's irresistible, yet ultimately indefinable, charms—the ideal according to which “la véritable peinture doit appeler son spectateur...et le spectateur surpris doit aller à elle, comme pour entrer en conversation avec les figures qu'elle représente.”³⁴ Grace, he wrote, “surprend le spectateur, qui en sent l'effet sans en pénétrer la véritable cause....On peut la définir, ce qui plaît, et ce qui gagne le cœur sans passer par l'esprit.”³⁵ It also described his ideal of painting that bypassed reason and rules. Grace and beauty, he explained, “sont deux choses différentes: la beauté ne plaît que par les règles, et la grâce plaît sans les règles.” Citing La Fontaine's famous dictum, he concluded, “c'est ce qui fait dire à un de nos plus illustres poètes, *Et la grace plus belle encore que la beauté.*”³⁶ Such grace, he asserted, “doit assaisonner toutes les parties [de la peinture]” and must be felt no matter the subject, “dans les combats comme dans les fêtes, dans les soldats comme dans les femmes.” It thus captured, in the end, his

³³ On the place of grace in de Piles, see Puttfarken, *Roger de Piles' Theory of Art*, 106–115.

³⁴ De Piles, *Cours de peinture par principe*, 4.

³⁵ Idem, “L'idée du peintre parfait,” in *Abregé de la vie des peintres*, 11.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

overriding interest in the overall effect of painting created by pleasing colors and composition, as well as the allure of the bodies and things depicted within it.

Grace has added relevance for La Fosse's dome when we consider the influence of Correggio, whom the artist often turned to for models.³⁷ As the Academy's *Mémoires inédites* reports, La Fosse "connaissait parfaitement bien le mérite du Corrège, qu'il mettait à la tête de tous les peintres."³⁸ During his voyage through Italy from 1659–1664, he would have seen the Renaissance master's *Assumption of the Virgin* (Figure 52) in the Cathedral of Parma and *Vision of St. John on Patmos* (Figure 53) in the Church of San Giovanni Evangelista nearby, among the most famous painted domes in Europe. *Saint Louis*, with its swirling, sensuous forms, owes them a clear debt, one that would have been clear to its educated viewers. By invoking Correggio's precedents, La Fosse was aligning himself with grace. Rubens, the hero of de Piles and his allies, was admired for his coarse nobility, but no one, as commentators since the Renaissance argued, could match the grace of Correggio's color, not even Titian.³⁹ Vasari, for example, writes, "It may, at least, be held for certain that no one ever handled colors better than he, and that no craftsman ever painted with greater delicacy or with more relief, such was the softness of his flesh-painting, and such the grace with which he finished his works."⁴⁰ Later, the poet

³⁷ On the influence of Correggio on La Fosse, see Gustin-Gomez, *Charles de La Fosse*, vol. 1, 144. In French painting at this time more generally, see Antoine Schnapper, "Le Corrège et la peinture française vers 1700."

³⁸ *Mémoires inédits sur la vie et les ouvrages des membres de l'académie royale de peinture et de sculpture*, t. II, 7.

³⁹ Dominique Bouhours said, "[Q]oique il y eut de la vivacité et de la noblesse en tout ce qu'il faisait, ses figures étaient plus grossières que délicates." Bouhour, *La manière de bien penser dans les ouvrages d'esprit* (1687; new ed., Paris, 1715), 213.

⁴⁰ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects* (1568), trans. Gaston de Vere (New York: Everyman's Library, 1996), 646.

Alessandro Tassoni would ask, “Ma chi...agguaglio mai Antonio da Correggio, che in colorire leggiadramente, e in dar grazia, e vaghezza alle pitture, hà meso l’ultimo segno?”⁴¹ His grace, however, was not limited to color. De Piles himself singled out his “airs de tête” as “gracieux” and counseled painters to look to Correggio “pour la grâce et la finesse d’expression.”⁴² With Correggio as a model to emulate and even surpass, La Fosse took up—in a way that would have clear to contemporary viewers—the mantle of grace, an association strengthened by his relationship with de Piles and the conceptual framework provided by his theories. What remains now, then, is to come to terms with the meaning of his engagement with it.

The Secularization of Grace

How do we reconcile the two kinds of grace at work in the cupola of the Invalides, Jouvenet’s divine Grace and La Fosse’s aesthetic grace? The difference between them seems unbreachable—a clear split between the sacred and the secular—but the situation is more complex. It would be reasonable to examine La Fosse’s painting at the Trianon de marbre in relation to a purely secular notion of grace, but the context of religious art painting invites us to consider the porous and contested boundary between divine and aesthetic grace. For much of their history, the two kinds of grace were, in fact, two sides of the same coin: aesthetic grace was seen to have its source in the divine. But the association of aesthetic grace, especially in painting, with theological Grace became increasingly problematic at the close of the Grand Siècle. To understand La Fosse and Jouvenet’s competing visions, then, we must investigate the rupture

⁴¹ Alessandro Tassoni, *Dieci libri di pensieri diversi* (Venice, 1627), 634.

⁴² De Piles, *Abregé de la vie des peintres*, 80

between divine and aesthetic grace—a process in which de Piles’ particular formulation turns out to play a major role.

The link between the two kinds of grace goes back to the very origins of the word. *Charis*, the Greek word for grace, connoted not only elegance, charm, and beauty, but also the idea of favor being given. In ancient Greece, artists and writers implored the favor of the three Graces (the *Charites* in Greek)—the goddesses of brightness, joyfulness, and bloom, as well as the attendants of Venus—for inspiration.⁴³ The leap to divine grace was not far. During the Renaissance and through the seventeenth century, aesthetic grace emerged as the subject of intensive theoretical reflection, notably in the writings of Castiglione and Vasari, among others, and its divine associations received renewed attention. In his discussion on grace in his *Entretiens*, for example, André Félibien declared that the “je ne sais quoi” that gives painting its charm “n’est autre chose qu’une splendeur toute divine, qui naît de la beauté et de la grâce.”⁴⁴ Similarly, Antoine Coypel, in his 1712 lecture to the Academy, affirmed, “Les ouvrage les plus recherchés, les plus réguliers, même les plus savants et les plus profonds, pourront, sans doute, se faire estimer, mais ils n’auront pas toujours le bonheur de plaire s’ils sont dénués de ce charme divin que l’on appelle la grâce.”⁴⁵ The mysterious, ineffable beauty that defined grace was a gift from God. In the early modern period, when no clear boundary between the religious and the

⁴³ Spear, *The “Divine” Guido*, 102.

⁴⁴ André Félibien, *Entretiens sur les vies et les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes* (1666), ed. René Démoris (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2007), 122.

⁴⁵ Antoine Coypel, *Discours prononcez dans les conférences de l’académie royale de peinture et sculpture* (Paris, 1721), 75.

aesthetic had yet emerged, grace's mystical effects existed on a continuum between the two. Aesthetic grace opened up a path to God.⁴⁶

The divinity of aesthetic grace was developed most extensively in neoplatonist thought. For the Platonists, beauty emanated directly from God; it was, in the philosopher Marsilio Ficino's words, "the splendor of God's countenance."⁴⁷ Such beauty—Ficino did not follow the traditional distinction between beauty and grace⁴⁸—was the manifestation of God's most perfect form on earth, descending in a direct chain from God to man, from Idea to form to matter. As the art theorist Giovan Paolo Lomazzo, who applied Ficino's ideas to art theory, explained:

[B]eauty is nothing but a certain lively spiritual grace, which, through the divine ray, first infuses angels, where may be seen the figures of each sphere, called in them exemplars and Ideas. Then it passes into souls, where the figures are called reasons and notions, and finally into matter, where they are called images and forms.⁴⁹

By this account, beauty worked much like divine grace, as an action on the body, received from God—and only by an elect few, by those prepared to receive it. "[C]orporeal beauty," he explained, "is nothing other than a certain action, a vivacity and grace that shines in the body from the influence of its Idea, descending only into extremely well-prepared matter." "[W]hen the body is not rebelling against the formation of the soul from some humoral excess," he

⁴⁶ On the relation between divine and aesthetic grace, see, for various perspectives, Monk, "A Grace beyond the Reach of Art"; Annie Becq, *Genèse de l'esthétique française moderne, 1680–1814*, 97–114; Regina Stefaniak, "Amazing Grace: Parmigianino's 'Vision of Saint Jerome,'" *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 58. Bd., H. 1 (1995): 105–115; Spear, *The "Divine" Guido*, 102–127; Richard Scholar, "'Je ne sais quelle grâce: Esther before Assuerus,'" *French Studies* LVI, no. 3 (2002): 317–327; Alain Michel, "La Grâce et la grâce," *Littératures classiques* 2, no. 60 (2006): 13–25; Bartha-Kovács, "Figures de la grâce chez Watteau et dans le discours sur l'art de l'époque," 20–24. Spear's is perhaps the most complete and nuanced of these accounts.

⁴⁷ Marsilio Ficino, *Sopra lo amore*, quoted in Monk, "A Grace Beyond the Reach of Art," 138.

⁴⁸ Monk, "A Grace beyond the Reach of Art," 137.

⁴⁹ Giovan Paolo Lomazzo, *The Idea of Painting* (1590), trans. Jean Julia Chai (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Press, 2013), 113.

continued, “celestial splendors easily appear in the body like they are in the heavens and in that perfect form of man who possess a spirit in calm, obedient matter.”⁵⁰

Neoplatonic philosophy exerted a decisive, if under-appreciated, influence in seventeenth-century poetic and artistic thought in France.⁵¹ Its influence is nowhere more visible than in the writings of the Père Bouhours. Bouhours’s writing on the *je ne sais quoi* in his *Entretiens d’Eugène et d’Ariste* exerted, as we have seen, a strong influence on Roger de Piles’ conception of painting and, later, became a key source for de Piles’ theorization of grace in his *Abregé de la vie des peintres*.⁵² The *je ne sais quoi*, Bouhours says, is “un agrément qui anime la beauté et les autres perfections naturelles; qui corrige la laideur et les autres défauts naturels... un charme et un air qui se mêle à toutes les actions, et à toutes les paroles.” Bouhours here uses the *je ne sais quoi* as a virtual synonym for aesthetic grace, as writers did for much of its entire history.⁵³ Yet, crucially, he also makes the most explicit connection to divine grace yet proposed. The *je ne sais quoi* is, he maintains, “de la grace elle-même, cette divine grace, qui a fait tant de bruit dans les écoles, et qui fait des effets si admirables dans les âmes; cette grace si forte et si

⁵⁰ Ibid., 113–114. Unlike Ficino, Lomazzo, reflecting the influence of Renaissance art theory, uses both beauty and grace, though often as synonyms.

⁵¹ On the influence of neo-platonism in seventeenth-century France, see Lafond, “La beauté et la grâce”; Nicholas Cronk, *The Classical Sublime: French Neoclassicism and the Language of Literature* (Charlottesville: Rookwood Press, 2003).

⁵² Compare de Piles’ description of grace with Bouhours’ description of the *je ne sais quoi*, “qui surprend et qui emporte le cœur à la première vue.” Dominique Bouhours, *Les entretiens d’Ariste et d’Eugène*, 333. On the relation between de Piles on grace and Bouhours on the *je ne sasi quoi*, see Puttfarcken, *Roger de Piles’ Theory of Art*, 106–114. On the *je ne sais quoi*, see Dens, *L’honnête homme et la critique du goût*, 28–58; Cronk, *The Classical Sublime*, 51–76; Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe*.

⁵³ On the relation between Bouhours’ *je ne sais quoi* and grace, see Dens, *L’honnête homme et la critique du goût*, 28–58; Spear, *The “Divine” Guido*, 113–114; Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something*, 27–52; Bartha-Kovács, “Figures de la grâce chez Watteau et dans le discours sur l’art de l’époque,” 20–22.

douce tout ensemble, qui triomphe de la dureté du cœur.”⁵⁴ He continues, it is “une vocation profonde et secrète, une impression de l’esprit de Dieu, une onction divine, une douceur toute puissante, un plaisir victorieux, une sainte concupiscence, une convoitise du vrai bien.”⁵⁵

Given the firm alliance of divine and aesthetic grace, graceful painting could be entirely appropriate to its religious functions, even augmenting them. Stuart Lingo, for example, has shown how Federico Barocci combined the sensuous allure of *vaghezza* with a profound devotion.⁵⁶ Similarly, Richard Spear has probed how Guido Reni’s work, with its sinuous, sensual forms, exhibits a strong bond between visual and theological grace that mirrors their historical kinship.⁵⁷ In France, too, beautiful form could have a direct connection to the divine. In his description of Le Brun’s *Descente du Saint Esprit* (Figure 54) in his unpublished biography of the artist (written around 1698), for instance, Claude Nivelon illustrates clearly that kinship between aesthetic and divine grace still obtained late into the seventeenth century:

La Vierge est à genoux...regardant en haut, croisant les mains sur son sein comme pour resserrer cette plénitude de grâces qu’elle ressent...Cette influxion de grâce semble même la transformer en une beauté au-dessus de ce qui peut se remarquer de toutes les femmes; de laquelle beauté extraordinaire est surprise et étonnée tout cette sainte assemblée.⁵⁸

Here divine Grace is the source of the Virgin’s beauty, exactly that kind of grace which de Piles says “surprend le spectateur, qui en sent l’effet sans en pénétrer la véritable cause.” There is a

⁵⁴ Bouhours, *Les entretiens d’Ariste et d’Eugène*, 343.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 343–344.

⁵⁶ Stuart Lingo, *Federico Barocci: Allure and Devotion in Late Renaissance Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁵⁷ Spear, *The “Divine” Guido*, 102–209.

⁵⁸ Claude Nivelon, *Vie de Charles Le Brun et description détaillée des ses ouvrages*, ed. Lorenzo Pericolo (Geneva: Droz, 2004), 196.

direct chain that links God's Grace to the Virgin's grace and, by extension, the grace of the painting—a chain that enhances the devotional efficacy of the work.

The alliance between divine and aesthetic grace that Nivelon espouses was by this time, however, becoming less secure, and aesthetic grace's spilt from its divine counterpart is nowhere more marked than in de Piles. In large part, the increasingly troubled relationship between the two kinds of grace is rooted in the heated debates about the nature of divine Grace between the Jesuits and Jansenists. For the Jesuits, God's Grace was available to everyone; through good works and faith, through action in the world, people were free to accept God's favor and attain salvation. Art, in this view, could function as a kind of good work, a bridge between the human and the divine and a means of transcendence. Hence the easy continuum between divine and aesthetic grace that the Jesuit Bouhours found in the *je ne sais quoi*.⁵⁹ Against the Jesuits' more forgiving vision, the partisans of Port-Royal, following the austere theology of Augustine, argued that man was so utterly contaminated by original sin that no human action or institution could mitigate it: only God, through his unbidden, unpredictable, unknowable grace, could save an elect few. Painting, which Pascal famously dismissed as vanity—or any other artificial creation of human hands—could offer no succor.⁶⁰

Bouhours' *je ne sais quoi* became, accordingly, the object of particularly virulent attack.⁶¹ In his outraged response to Bouhours' book, *Sentiments de Cléante sur les Entretiens d'Ariste et d'Eugène*, the lawyer and Jansenist polemicist Jean Barbier d'Aucour vociferated,

⁵⁹ Anne Delehanty, *Literary Knowing in Neoclassical France: From Poetics to Aesthetics* (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2014), 20.

⁶⁰ "Quelle vanité que la peinture, qui attire l'admiration par leur ressemblance." Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, II, 134-40 (Paris: GF Flammarion, 1976), 46.

⁶¹ On the *querelle du je ne sais quoi*, see Scholar, *The Je-Ne-Sais-Quoi in Early Modern Europe: Encounters with a Certain Something*, 63–70.

“Quelle théologie! parler ainsi de la grâce! en faire une bizarre définition qui ne la distingue pas des choses du monde, ni même du péché son mortel ennemi.”⁶² What made Bouhours’ position theologically and morally unacceptable was that it claimed the most base sensuous experiences were at the same level as the most divine, the most transcendent. “En vérité,” he continued, “on ne peut faire trop de reproche à quiconque ose mêler la grâce de Jesus Christ parmi les idées du je ne sais quoi.”⁶³ In support of Barbier d’Arcour, the diplomat and theorist of civility Antoine de Courtin, cited Bouhours’ passage as an example of uncivilized “raillerie,” of insufficient respect for God.⁶⁴ The *je ne sais quoi* was a thing of this world. To link it to God was nothing short of blasphemy.

These polemics did not, of course, decisively alienate aesthetic grace from divine grace. But they did put new pressures on their alliance, forcing even its supporters to revisit and redefine the specific conditions under which the divinity of aesthetic grace was legitimate.⁶⁵ The

⁶² Jean Barbier d’Aucour, *Sentiments de Cléante sur les Entretiens d’Ariste et d’Eugène* (Paris, 1671), 176.

⁶³ Ibem., *Sentiments de Cléante sur les Entretiens d’Ariste et d’Eugène, seconde partie* (Paris, 1672), 89

⁶⁴ “Et même il y a encore un temperament à garder, qui est, qu’en premier lieu, il ne faut jamais faire raillerie des choses pour lesquelles nous devons naturellement avoir du respect; comme pour celles de la Religion quelque délicate que soit la raillerie. Par exemple, si on disait [quoting Bouhours]: *Oui! la grace elle-même, cette divine grace, qui a fait tant de bruit dans les écoles, et qui fait des effets si admirables dans les âmes; cette grace si forte et si douce tout ensemble, qui triomphe de la dureté du cœur sans blesser la liberté du francarbitre...cette grâce, dis-je, qu’est ce autre chose qu’un je ne sais quoi surnaturel, qu’on ne peut expliquer ni comprendre ?*” Antoine Courtin, *Nouveau traité de la civilité* (1671; new edition Paris, 1708), 213.

⁶⁵ The classic account of how the tragic vision of the Jansenists helped lay the fault lines around which the culture of the Grand Siècle was structured, effecting a reorganization of the values that undergirded the work of art and its social function, see Paul Bénichou, *Morales du Grand Siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1948). More recently, David A. Bell, *The Cult of Nation in France*, has argued for the pivotal role of the Jansenists’ evacuation of God from the human sphere in the emergence of nationalism in the eighteenth century in France.

terms in which de Piles couched his account of grace are particularly striking in this context. Because its source is color, de Piles' grace is anchored entirely in the sensible charms of the world. And, for this reason, according to color's critics, it could never offer anything beyond its worldliness. As Philippe de Champaigne, a Jansenist sympathizer and critic of color, declared in his 1671 lecture on Titian's *Virgin and Child*:

Ce n'est pas que cette partie [le coloris] ne soit très nécessaire. Mais l'étudier plus que le principal et en faire sa seule étude, c'est se tromper soi-même, c'est choisir un beau corps, se laisser éblouir de son éclat et ne se pas mettre assez en peine de ce qui doit animer cette belle apparence, qui ne peut subsister seule, quelque beauté qu'elle puisse avoir, parce que la beauté d'un corps ne fait rien à sa vie, si l'âme et l'esprit ne l'anime.⁶⁶

In noting color's power to "dazzle" with its "radiance" Champaigne recognizes its potential to generate exactly the kind of effects championed by de Piles and embodied in his notion of grace. But he also cannot accept the legitimacy of that power because color is painting's supplement, an ornament – extraneous to the moral, intellectual, and religious content of a picture.⁶⁷

What is striking is that de Piles agreed: Color for him is ornament. Yet because, contrary to Champaigne, he declares that it is also painting's "difference," its defining essence, painting is itself nothing but a superficial seduction:

[N]e savez-vous pas que la peinture n'est qu'un fard, qu'il est de son essence de tromper, et que le plus grand trompeur en cet art est le plus grand peintre? La nature est ingrate d'elle-même, et qui s'attacherait à la copier simplement comme elle est et sans artifice, ferait toujours quelque chose de pauvre et d'un très petit goût.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Philippe de Champaigne, "Discours sur *La Vierge à l'Enfant* de Titien, 12 juin 1671," in *Conférences de l'Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, 1648–1681*, t. 1, v. 1, 409.

⁶⁷ Similarly, though no friend of the Jansenists, Fénelon defended the pedagogical and didactic potential of painting and cautioned against the excessive, dazzling color beloved by de Piles. His heroes were Poussin and Raphael, not Rubens. He praises Raphael precisely because his art "ne cherche point un coloris éblouissant. Loin de vouloir que l'art saute aux yeux, il ne songe qu'à le cacher." François Fénelon, *Reflexions sur la rhétorique et sur la poétique* (Amsterdam, 1717), 39.

⁶⁸ Roger de Piles *Dialogue sur le coloris* (1673; new edition Paris, 1699), 60.

That the grace of color derives from a beautiful appearance, from surface and artifice, only speaks to its merits. “Ce que vous nommez exaggeration dans les couleurs et dans les lumières,” he concludes, “est une admirable industrie, qui fait paraître les object peints plus véritables (pour ainsi dire) que les véritables mêmes.”⁶⁹ Embracing *fard* as the essence of painting, de Piles finds in painting charms not bound to the exact replication of nature.

Jacqueline Lichtenstein has pointed to what an extraordinary position this was: a vision of truth independent of any moral or metaphysical criterion, a vision that claimed a new dignity for painting and its proper powers.⁷⁰ Yet de Piles’ position involved a more fraught negotiation than has been recognized. Indeed, it is remarkable that at a moment that, as Volker Kapp has argued, marked the final discredit of rhetoric’s universal pretensions, de Piles reaffirms its values as the foundation for a new vision of painting.⁷¹ It is all the more remarkable in that these values come into direct conflict with painting’s traditional religious foundations. We have in Champaigne’s remarks a hint of the theological difficulties de Piles runs into. The consequences become clearer, however, in the context of contemporary debates about ornament in religious rhetoric that raged around 1700—the *querelle de l’éloquence sacrée*.⁷²

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Lichtenstein, *The Eloquence of Color*.

⁷¹ Volker Kapp, “L’apogée de l’atticisme français, ou l’éloquence qui se moque de la rhétorique,” in *Histoire de la rhétorique dans l’Europe moderne: 1450-1950*, ed. Marc Fumaroli (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Paris, 1999), 767.

⁷² On the *querelle de l’éloquence sacrée*, see Basile Munteano, “Un rhéteur esthéticien. L’Abbé du Bos,” in *Constantes dialectiques en littérature et en histoire. Problèmes. Recherches. Perspectives* (Paris: Didier, 1967), 354–360; Peter France, *Rhetoric and Truth in France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); Bernard Tocanne, *L’idée de la nature en France dans la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1978), 433–444; Volker Kapp, “L’éloquence du barreau et l’éloquence de la chaire. La critique de la prédication mondaine par La Bruyère et l’analyse des problèmes institutionnels et stylistiques de l’éloquence religieuse par Claude Fleury

The *querelle* was, in many ways, the final showdown in the long quarrel between the proponents of “Asian” and “Attic” eloquence—between those who championed highly ornamented rhetoric and those who argued for a rhetoric stripped of any unnecessary adornment—that had simmered throughout the seventeenth century, and even before.⁷³ Fueled by a volatile combination of Cartesian distrust of sensuous experience and Jansenist critiques of art and language (even if the Jansenists themselves did not align neatly with either side of the *querelle*), the debate reached fever pitch at the end of Louis XIV’s reign as it closed in, perhaps inevitably, on the issue with the highest stakes: the conversion of souls.

The protagonists of the *querelle* condemned preaching that was theatrical and pleasing, that used figures, metaphors, devices—in short, ornament, *pard*—to stir the emotions and enliven the senses. “Le discours chrétien est devenu un spectacle,” La Bruyère complained in *Les Caractères*.⁷⁴ Preachers wish only to “plaire au peuple dans un sermon par un style fleuri, une morale enjouée, des figures réitérées, des traits brillants et de vives descriptions.”⁷⁵ These were false graces, incompatible with sacred oratory; rather than drawing people towards truth, they carried them away from it. “Il ne faut pas prétendre qu’on la puisse rendre [la vérité] plus belle en la pardant de quelques couleurs sensibles qui n’ont rien de solide et qui ne peuvent charmer que fort peu de temps,” asserted Nicolas Malebranche, whose views on rhétorique helped shape

et Fénelon,” *Papers on French Seventeenth-Century Literature*, no. 9 (1978): 173–196; Thomas M. Carr, Jr, introduction to *Réflexions sur l’éloquence des prédicateurs* (1695), by Antoine Arnauld, and *Avertissement en tête de sa traduction des sermons de saint Augustin* (1994), by Philippe Goibaut Du Bois (Geneva: Droz, 1992), 11–85.

⁷³ The definitive work on this subject is Marc Fumaroli, *L’âge d’éloquence: rhétorique et “res literaria,” de la Renaissance au seuil de l’époque classique* (Geneva: Droz, 1980).

⁷⁴ La Bruyère, “De la chaire,” *Les Caractères, ou les mœurs de ce siècle*, 358.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 551.

the terms of the *querelle*. “On lui donnerait peut-être quelque délicatesse, mais on diminuerait sa force. On ne doit pas la revêtir de tant d'éclat et de brillant que l'esprit s'arrête davantage à ses ornements qu'à elle-même.”⁷⁶

While rhetorical *fard* had been condemned as the source of false grace since antiquity,⁷⁷ the critiques proffered by the protagonists of the *querelle* took on new urgency from a Cartesian epistemology that denied the senses' access to truth: since ornament worked on the senses, it could have no essential relation to thought and was, therefore, alien from truth, which was the province of reason alone.⁷⁸ For this reason, ornament could only lead away from God, on a perilous path towards falsehood. It is, declared Philippe Goibaut du Bois, one of the chief protagonists in the *querelle*,

une voie d'illusion et d'erreur qui suit l'homme dans son égarement; qui, au lieu de le tirer hors de son imagination, où le royaume de Dieu ne se peut jamais établir, l'y engage de plus en plus; qui l'accoutume à se laisser mener par cette faculté insensée, et la rend par conséquent susceptible de toute erreur qu'on lui présentera d'une manière agréable et insinuante....⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Nicolas Malebranche, *De la recherche de la vérité*, t. 2, 3rd edition (Strasbourg, 1677), 273.

⁷⁷ Cicero, *Orator*, trans. G. L. Hendrickson and H. M. Hubbell (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1939), 362–365, for instance, praised both unadorned women and rhetoric: “For in each case the thing appears more graceful, though the cause is not apparent. When every conspicuous ornament is removed, even pearls...and all medicaments of paint and chalk, all artificial red and white, are discarded, only elegance and neatness will remain. [fit enim quiddam in utroque, quo sit venustius, sed non ut appareat. Tum removebitur omnis insignis ornatus quasi margaritarum...; fucati vero medicamenta candoris et ruboris omnia repellentur; elegantia modo et munditia remanebit.” Similarly, René Rapin wrote in his *Réflexions sur l'éloquence*, in *Œuvres diverses du R. P. R. Rapin concernant les Belles Lettres*, vol. 2 (Amsterdam, 1686), 28, “La varie [éloquence] est forte, vigoureuse qui ne s'amuse point aux fleurettes, et qui ne recherche point de vains ornements: car ce ne sont que les fausses beautés, qui ont besoin de fard, les vraies et naturelles ont leurs grâces d'elle-mêmes.”

⁷⁸ Kapp, “L'Apogée de l'atticisme français, ou l'éloquence qui se moque de la rhétorique,” 709.

⁷⁹ Philippe Goibaut du Bois, *Avertissement en tête de sa traduction des sermons de saint Augustin*, 107.

What was needed in the wake of Bouhours' scandalous account of the *je ne sais quoi* was a vision of rhetorical grace untainted by worldliness. To lead man away from error, what was needed was a different kind of rhetoric, one not based in the material, worldly stuff of words and their artful arrangements, one not dependent on the sensuous illusions of artifice.

A striking consensus thus emerged that only Attic simplicity, devoid of the false graces of ornament, was the most appropriate mode for the elevated ends of religious rhetoric. "La vraie éloquence," affirmed the Benedictine François Lamy, another participant in the *querelle*, "ne se met ni fard, ni mouches afin de paraître agréable... Sa grace n'éclate jamais par des couleurs empruntées."⁸⁰ The truth revealed by "true eloquence" had nothing to do with the mundane charms of *fard*; it could shine only when unadorned. "[N]'attendez pas de moi ces ornements de la rhétorique mondaine," proclaimed Bossuet, "mais priez seulement cet Esprit qui souffle où il veut, qu'il daigne répandre sur me lèvres ces deux beaux ornements de l'éloquence chrétienne, la simplicité et la vérité, et qu'il étende par sa grâce le peu que j'ai à vous dire."⁸¹ This was a simplicity legitimated not only by Cartesian distrust of ornament but by a still more authoritative source: Scripture. Scripture, its source in God himself, offered a model for sacred oratory that no profane rhetoric could surpass. As the influential rhetorician Bernard Lamy (not to be confused with François) wrote:

[L]e Saint Esprit qui conduisait la plume des écrivains sacrés, n'a pas permis qu'ils employassent cette éloquence pompeuse des orateurs profanes qui arrête les yeux, et fait que l'on ne considère que les superbes paroles dont les choses sont revêtues. Les saintes

⁸⁰ François Lamy, *Connaissance de soi-même, suite des éclaircissemens sur ses traitez*, t. VI (Paris, 1701), 453. It is important to note that Lamy took the *querelle* in a new direction. Influenced by Cartesian *Modernes*, he rejected any appeal that was not to reason.

⁸¹ Bossuet, *Sermon pour la vêtture d'une nouvelle catholique*, in *Œuvres complètes de Bossuet, évêque de Meaux*, t. 5 (Paris: Lefèvre, 1856), 214.

Écritures ne nous ont pas été données pour entretenir nôtre vanité, mais pour remplir le vide de nôtre âme.⁸²

The simplicity of Scripture represented the hope for a renewed sacred rhetoric, one free of the vain ornaments of the world.

The rejection of the artificial graces of *fard* in sacred eloquence puts de Piles' theories in new light.⁸³ "Il faut écrire comme les Raphaël, les Carraches et les Poussin ont peint," Fénelon wrote, "non pour chercher de merveilleux caprices, ou pour faire admirer leur imagination en se jouant du pinceau"—referring implicitly to Titian, Correggio, Rubens, and the other colorist—"mais pour peindre d'après nature."⁸⁴ The reformers of religious rhetoric, as Fénelon makes clear, did not hesitate to make direct parallels between color in painting and overabundance of ornament in rhetoric, using one to denounce the corruption and illegitimacy of the other. In this light, the grace of painting in de Piles is in uneasy conflict with the fundamental principles of a reformed sacred eloquence. To become a suitable instrument of divine grace, language could be stripped of the dangerous and worldly charms of *fard*, but if one were to do the same to painting it would, following de Piles' arguments, no longer be painting at all. The confrontation between de Piles' theories and a swelling movement that had rejected the very terms on which he founded

⁸² Bernard Lamy, *La rhétorique, ou l'art de parler* (1675; new edition Amsterdam, 1712), 363. It should be noted, however, that B. Lamy otherwise defended the use of ornament and artifice in rhetoric: "Si les hommes aimaient la vérité, il suffirait de la leur proposer d'une matière vive et sensible pour les persuader; mais ils la haïssent, parce qu'elle ne s'accorde que rarement à leurs intérêts...L'éloquence ne serait donc pas la maîtresse des cœurs...si elle ne les attaquaît par l'autres arms que celle de la vérité." Ibid., 178.

⁸³ Jennifer Montagu argues for a link between the movement against "false rhetoric" and the rise of what she characterizes as the "naturalist" theories championed by Roger de Piles. A closer look at the terms of both, as I have tried to show, in fact reveals a diametrical opposition: de Piles embraces artifice, while the critics of rhetoric condemn it. Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions* 52

⁸⁴ François Fénelon, *Discours de réception à l'académie française* (1693) in *Œuvres choisies* (Paris, 1750), 370.

his model of painting created a crisis about the status of the religious image and the ends of the experience of painting, for so long aligned with those of sacred rhetoric. How should the encounter with painting impact the spectator, and by what means? What kinds of knowledge should this encounter impart? What, in the end, is painting's relationship to the divine, especially a painting that traffics openly in the duplicitous and artificial charms of color?

Painting and the Ends of Experience

These questions must be examined in the larger context of religious painting during the Counter-Reformation. Since the Council of Trent affirmed that, through sacred images, "the faithful should be roused to adore and love God and to practice devotion," the power of religious painting to instruct, convert, and even incite mystical experience had been firmly institutionalized.⁸⁵ Le Brun's discussion of the representation of divine grace in the *Ravissement de Saint Paul*, in which he proclaimed that paintings "eussent une théologie muette et que, par leurs figures, ils fissent connaître les mystères les plus cachés de notre religion," is a prime example.⁸⁶ For the Premier Peintre, painting can reveal the mysteries of divine Grace; it is an instrument of Grace in the world, and the experience of the work of art is akin to the actions of

⁸⁵ There is a large literature on the ways in which artists responded to the challenges to devotional works in an age of reform. All point, to varying degrees, to the ways in which artists were able to accommodate new strictures to maintain the religious efficacy of painting, and negotiate the often competing demands of art and religion. See, for example, Alexander Nagel, *Michelangelo and the Reform of Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); *ibid.*, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); Lingo, *Federico Barocci: Allure and Devotion in Late Renaissance Painting*; Marcia Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011); *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*, ed. Marcia Hall and Tracy Cooper (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). De Piles himself, it should be noted, affirmed "que par cette imitation on peut élever en mille manières le cœur des Fidèles à l'amour Divin," but this, it should be clear, is more lip service to tradition than a conviction backed up by his theories.

⁸⁶ Le Brun, "Discours," 395.

Grace itself. Nivelon's description of Jean-Jacques Olier's reaction to Le Brun's *Descente du Saint Esprit* illustrates the revelatory potential of this experience:

[Il] entra insensiblement dans le sujet en le voyant comme un des spectateurs ou assistants, et presque semblable aux apôtres qui y furent illuminés et enflammés du feu céleste, son âme fut saisie d'une joie spirituelle que l'on remarqua par le silence que l'admiration lui fit observer quelque temps. Enfin il le rompit en étendant des bras vers l'objet qui le tenait en suspension, proférant ces mots en regardant fixement la Vierge: "Hélas, si on la peint ici bas dans une aussi parfaite beauté, que n'est-ce point dans le Ciel!" Il tomba au même temps dans une faiblesse qui se peut nommer extase effective, puisqu'une si belle cause, transportant son âme hors d'elle-même, fit une suspension générale et assez grande de tous ses esprits pour lui causer le plus doux et le plus heureux moment, passant en même temps de cette vie mortelle à la béatitude.⁸⁷

Olier's reaction embodies a certain ideal of religious painting in the Grand Siècle: an experience of rapture and benediction.⁸⁸ It is a quintessentially Jesuit position, in which painting functions for the spectator as a kind of good work, opening up the way to God's grace.⁸⁹

Of course, de Piles' grace describes a similar effect to the one described by Nivelon: an affective response characterized by astonishment and surprise. It is no coincidence that in his *Painting of the Ancients* (1637), an important source for de Piles, the art theorist Franciscus Junius describes the effects of painting's grace in exactly the same terms as divine grace: grace "carries [spectators] into an astonished ecstasy, their sense of seeing bereaving them of all other senses" and "by a glorious conquest doth sweetly enthrall and activate the hearts of men with lovely chains of due admiration and amazement."⁹⁰ De Piles' grace, however, offers no hint of

⁸⁷ Nivelon, *Vie de Charles Le Brun*, 198

⁸⁸ On Nivelon's account of this painting and his description of Olier's rapture, Frédéric Cousinié, *Images et méditation au XVII^e siècles* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2007), 9–28.

⁸⁹ Delehanty, *Literary Knowing in Neoclassical France*.

⁹⁰ Franciscus Junius, *The painting of the ancients, in three bookes : declaring by historicall observations and examples, the beginning, progresse, and consummation of that most noble art, and how those ancient artificers attained to their still so much admired excellencie* (London, 1638), 329, 332. The first latin edition appeared in 1637, and a revised edition in 1694. On de

transcendence. At a moment when the *querelle du je ne sais quoi* threw the divinity of aesthetic grace into doubt, de Piles defines grace, with shocking brazenness, as a thing of this world, anchored in exactly the kind of sensuous, material, mundane stuff which the protagonists of the *querelle de l'éloquence sacrée* argued lead only away from God. While de Piles argues for painting's didactic religious function, he and his allies never take on the religious objections to color or enter into the dangerous theological position that painting could elicit transcendence through a medium that they celebrate for its falseness and trickery. We should not be surprised: morally and theologically legitimate colorist painting is, according to the criteria of the time, a contradiction. Ficino said that grace, "by means of reason and sight, and hearing, moves and delights our minds, and in delighting it ravishes, and in ravishing it inflames with ardent love."⁹¹ De Piles' grace, too, is based in love; but, unlike Ficino's love, which refers to a transcendent, divine love, this love is immanent, corporal. The spectator falls in love with painting in a closed loop between painting and spectator, cutting God out of the transaction. The effects of painting, based in the mundane materiality of color, have no end but surprise and pleasure themselves.

I would like to suggest that here, again, the pressures created by the Jansenist position on divine grace played a crucial role. To be sure, it is not a question of whether de Piles' theories were in any way informed by Jansenist theology (if anything they are anti-Jansenist),⁹² but rather of how, in a larger sense, the Jansenist theology of Grace helped sunder the bond in French

Piles' relation to Junius, see Colette Nativel, "Ut pictura poesis: Junius et Roger de Piles," *XVII^e siècle* 4, no. 245 (2009): 593-608.

⁹¹ Marsiglio Ficino, *Oration*, V. Ch. IV, quoted in Monk, "A Grace Beyond the Reach of Art," 138.

⁹² For a compelling account of what a "Jansenist" model of painting might be, see Louis Marin, *Philippe de Champaigne, ou la présence cachée* (Paris: Hazan, 1995). Marin's thesis has been reevaluated in *Philippe de Champaigne, ou la figure du peintre janséniste*, ed. Marianne Cojannot-Le Blanc (Paris: Nolin, 2011).

Counter-Reformation culture between painting and religion, paradoxically opening up a new, secular space in which meaning could be conceived. By calling into question the authority that had undergirded painting's meaning for centuries, Jansenism created the greatest crisis for the religious image since the Reformation: in a world where God and his Grace were so remote, transcendence was beyond painting's grasp. A rhetoric of unvarnished simplicity, based in the example of Scripture, represented a powerful response to the Jansenist challenge, a final appeal for art's power to access God. But de Piles, seemingly unconvinced by this model's applicability to painting, does not take up the challenge. He accepts painting's limited bailiwick and, embracing its most worldly qualities, finds in it new possibilities: a vision of painting, freed from the theological burdens of conversion and epiphany, that had its end in the sensuous and sensual.⁹³ Painting's grace is the grace of a fallen world, cut off irrevocably from God, but one that has claimed, in its reduced estate, its own order of pleasure. The Jansenists might have won their battle in the long run—few, by the middle of the eighteenth century, would claim that the *je ne sais quoi* had anything to do with divine Grace—but that did not diminish its allure.

The Problem of Grace and Jouvenet's Sublimity

I noted earlier that the difference between Jouvenet and La Fosse's frescos was the difference between the expressive power of the former's figures and the sensual appeal of the latter's forms. Now we begin to see, in light of the contemporary theological controversies around rhetoric, painting, and color that led to the secularization of grace in de Piles, some of the ideological consequences of this difference: at stake was nothing less than the devotional

⁹³ Indeed, de Piles, in his work, seems consciously to have disassociated formal effects from painting's devotional function. He remarks, for example, of the painter Simon François, "On ne voit pas de ses tableaux dans les cabinets; il y en a dans quelques églises de Paris et il n'est pas difficile en les voyant de juger que leur auteur était plus dévot qu'habile peintre." *Abrégé de la vie des peintres...* (Paris, 1699), 502.

efficacy and theological legitimacy of religious painting. To return first to Jouvenet's *Douze Apôtres*, we see, then, that it is bound up inextricably with the problem of grace: the monumentality of its figures and the intensity of their expressions represent not just a different approach from de Piles's grace but reactions against it.

To be sure, it would be difficult to think of a less graceful set of works—no sinuous lines, no harmonious combinations of color, no delicate gradations of *clair obscur*, no shimmering flesh here. This is not by chance: in the face of the theological problems of de Piles' grace, they testify to a search after an aesthetic of divine grace distinct from de Piles' formulation, an aesthetic based in the kind of simplicity demanded by the reformers of sacred eloquence that engaged Jouvenet's interest in corporeal expression. It is no coincidence that the artist's style—with its triangular compositions, its unity and clarity, and its favoring of contrasting blocks of color over *clair-obscur*—is indebted to the so-called “atticism” of the previous generation of painters: Jacques Stella, Laurent de La Hyre, Eustache Le Sueur, and Le Brun. Attic rhetoric represented, as we have seen, a model for a reformed sacred rhetoric; its rejection of ornament and *fard* and illusion could, from this perspective, offer the basis of a similar reform in painting.⁹⁴

But the Attic idiom does not fully account for Jouvenet's stylistic choices. Mid-century atticism, in painting as in rhetoric, was associated often with a cool serenity and delicacy, epitomized in painting by *la belle ligne* of Raphael—not the sensual grace of de Piles, but a related species: the grace of *dessein*. Jouvenet eschews this grace, along with the grace of color.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ On atticism in painting, see Alain Mérot, “L'Atticisme parisien : réflexions sur un style,” in *Eloge de la clarté. Un courant artistique au temps de Mazarin, 1640–1660*, ed. Mérot et al. (Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1998), 13–40.

⁹⁵ Jouvenet did, though, sometimes paint in a more typical attic mode—in his rare mythological works like *Apollon et Téthys* and *La Naissance de Bacchus*, for example—but in his religious

He imbues the attic model of his predecessors with a rough-hewn austerity, an intensity of expression, and a grandeur of scale that is his own. It is an approach that seeks to dazzle rather than charm.

Rather than understanding Jouvenet's style, anachronistically, as an infusion of Le Sueur and Le Brun's "classicism" with "baroque" emotionalism, as scholars before me have,⁹⁶ I would like to explore Jouvenet's style in light of the aesthetic notion that came to dominate rhetoric and literature at the end of the seventeenth century: the sublime. Popularized by Boileau's 1674 translation of Longinus's *Traité du Sublime*, the sublime is closely linked to the debates about sensuousness and ornament in the *querelle de l'éloquence sacrée*. It derived its power not from the false grace of *fard* and ornament but the simplicity and economy of the Bible, "le plus éloquent, le plus sublime, et le plus simple de tous les livres," in Boileau's words.⁹⁷ Based in atticism, this was a simplicity that offered something more than the sterile transparency demanded by rhetoric's most astringent critics, a simplicity of overwhelming grandeur. The sublime, as Boileau put it, was nothing less than "cet extraordinaire et ce merveilleux qui frappe dans le discours, et qui fait qu'un ouvrage enlève, ravit, transporte."⁹⁸ For Boileau, no passage better exemplifies this power than the *fiat lux* from Genesis. "Dieu dit: *Que la lumière se fasse,*

works he eschews it; even his paintings of the Virgin, such as in the *Annonciations* in Rouen and La Flèche, do not emphasize her beauty in the way Le Brun's do.

⁹⁶ Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France, 1500 to 1700*, rev. Richard Beresford (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 261.

⁹⁷ Nicolas Boileau, "Réflexion X," (1710) in *Œuvres de Nicolas Boileau Despreaux*, part one (Paris, 1713), 578. Similarly Fénelon wrote, "Le vrai genre sublime, dédaignant tous les ornements empruntés ne se trouve que dans le simple." Fénelon, *Discours de réception à l'académie française*, 369.

⁹⁸ Nicolas Boileau, preface to *Traite du sublime*, by Longinus (1674, ed. of 1701), ed. Francis Goyet (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1993), 70.

et la lumière se fit. Ce tour extraordinaire d’expression qui marque si bien l’obéissance de la créature aux ordres du créateur,” he marveled, “est véritablement sublime, et a quelque chose de divin.”⁹⁹ Prose like this transcended the mediation of language: it left readers and listeners astounded not by the sensuous and seductive materiality of words but by a fit between word and thing so exact that the difference between them crumbled away.¹⁰⁰

Throughout his treatise, Longinus insists that the sublime offers way to elevate us to the level of the gods; in making the *fiat lux*—only one of a number of examples in Longinus’s original text—the epitome of the sublime, Boileau christianized it.¹⁰¹ It is no coincidence that the effects of the sublime—surprise, elevation, rapture—are also the actions of divine Grace: Boileau laid out a poetic theory by which art could grant access to the transcendent realm of God. In this respect, its powers were not dissimilar to those traditionally ascribed to aesthetic grace.¹⁰² But there was a crucial difference: the sublime forswore grace’s “feminine” allure in favor of a simplicity that struck like a thunderbolt. It was this difference that made it the last line of defense for rhetoric’s theological legitimacy in the face of the mounting crisis facing it. With its source in the Scriptural simplicity demanded by the reformers of sacred eloquence, it promised a revitalized path to God, an alternative aesthetic of divine grace unencumbered by the

⁹⁹ Ibid., 71.

¹⁰⁰ Lawrence Kerslake, *Essays on the Sublime: Analyses of French Writings on the Sublime from Boileau to La Harpe* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2000), 52–53.

¹⁰¹ As Sophie Hache writes, “[L]a fréquence d’emploi de l’expression ‘sublime et divin’ est remarquable, à tel point que l’on peut considérer que s’établit une quasi-synonymie entre les deux termes : le sublime constitue une élévation propre au divin.” Hache, *La Langue du ciel. Le Sublime en France au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Honore Champion, 2000), 136.

¹⁰² On the ambitions of seventeenth-century theorists of the sublime to produce transcendent knowledge, see Delehanty, *Literary Knowing in Neoclassical France*.

tainted charms of *fard*.¹⁰³ Such a sublime, could, in the words of the preacher Laurent Juillard du Jarry, “exprime davantage la majesté de la religion, excite le plus fortement à la pénitence, et laisse dans les esprits une plus haute idée de la grandeur de Dieu, de la sainteté de ses Lois, de la terreur des ses Jugements, et de l’entendu de ses miséricordes.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Though, it must be noted, even the power of the sublime to deliver transcendence was not without controversy. Responding to Boileau’s discussion of the *fiat lux*, Daniel Huet denied that the phrase was at all sublime, insisting that the act itself was sublime but the way Moses (the presumed author of the text) expressed it was perfectly ordinary. In making this claim, Huet was making a distinction, not present in Boileau or Longinus’s texts, between what he called the *sublime de l’art* and the *sublime des choses*. “Le [sublime des choses],” he says, “ne trompe point l’esprit, ce qu’il lui fait paraître grand l’est en effet. Le sublime de l’art, au contraire, tend des pièges à l’esprit, et n’est employé que pour faire paraître [grand] celui qui ne l’est pas, ou pour le faire plus grand qu’il n’est.” Pierre-Daniel Huet, *Examen du sentiment de Longin sur ce passage de la Genèse: Et Dieu dit, Que la lumière soit faite, & la lumière fut faite* (1683), in *Dissertations sur differens sujets composées par M. Huet, ancien évêque d’Avranches, et par quelques autres savants, recueillies par M. l’abbé de Tilladet, augmentées dans cette édition des remarques de M. Benoist...* (The Hague, 1720), 17-18. The cleavage between the *sublime des choses* and the *sublime de l’art* in Huet’s text, thus also questioned language’s status, as well as that of art more generally, as a conduit to the divine. On the *querelle du sublime* between Boileau and Huet, see Gilles Declerq, “Boileau–Huet: la querelle du Fiat Lux,” in *Pierre-Daniel Huet (1630-1721): actes du colloque de Caen (12-13 novembre 1993)*, ed. Suzanne Guellouz (Paris: Papers on French Seventeenth Century Literature, 1994), 237-62; Delehanty, *Literary Knowing in Neoclassical France*, 94–98.

¹⁰⁴ Jarry, *Le Ministère évangélique, ou Réflexions sur l’éloquence de la chaire* (1698; new edition, Paris, 1726), 311. Jarry here is referring to what he calls the “sublime évangélique.” “Le sublime, et le merveilleux évangélique,” he writes just before the passage quoted above, “est fort différent du sublime, et du merveilleux profane.” Ibid. This distinction no doubt is in response to the particularly heated quarrels around sacred eloquence and the need to defend its legitimacy and distinctiveness from other kinds of rhetoric. The need for a distinct Christian sublime and a sacred rhetoric distinct from that of the ancients was widely felt in the seventeenth century. As René Rapin declared: “Ce n’est pas assez que le prédicateur fasse un fonde de capacité par une longue étude de théologie, et une fréquente lecture des Pères, qu’il doit lire avec méthode: il doit encore penser à se faire une rhétorique pour la chaire, dont on ne trouve point de caractère dans les anciens, qui n’en ont eu aucune idée, n’y dans les modernes, qui n’ont copié que les anciens. La majesté de notre religion, la sainteté de ses lois, la pureté de la morale, la hauteur de ses mystères, et l’importance de tous ses sujets doit donner une élévation à l’éloquence sacrée, qui ne peut être soutenue de la faiblesse d’un esprit purement humain. Il y faut de la grandeur, de la noblesse, de la majesté, un style enfin qui réponde à son sujet. Car on ne doit jamais parler de Dieu ni des choses de la religion qu’avec bien de la dignité, et conformément à la grandeur de ces discours, qui ont de la majesté et de la grandeur, dont parle Daniel. Ce fera en vain qu’on cherchera cette éloquence dans la Rhétorique d’Aristote, dans les idées d’Hermogène, ou dans les

A number of Jouvenet's stylistic choices bear witness to various strategies for developing a pictorial idiom with similar powers, for adapting what was an essentially discursive concept to painting.¹⁰⁵ The lucid compositional structures and monumental scale of his work are perhaps the most obvious example, visual analogues of the simple and affecting grandeur Boileau admired in the *fiat lux*. The most central, however, is the artist's representation of Grace and the expression of rapture. *Ravissement*, after all, was the consummate effect of the sublime. What are the painter's ravished bodies, animated by God's Grace, if not visual manifestations of the sublime's effects?

Jouvenet's solution for rendering the discursive sublime in paint, then, is to replace cause with effect: the power of his religious work derives not from the representation of the sublime action or event but from the visual and affective power of bodies experiencing its effects. If language's sublimity lies in a simplicity that has an immediate, overwhelming effect on the reader, such that the distance between signifier and signified is effaced, painting's chief instrument of this power is gesture. Le Brun, following Descartes, was less interested in the emotional impact of gesture on the spectator than in the origin, manifestation, and representation of the particular passions, but the notion that the affective power of the work of art derived from

institutions de Quintilien. Ce genre même sublime que Longin s'est formé de toutes les grandes expressions des anciens, qu'il a ramassées, est foible et rampant, en comparaison de celui que le Prédicateur doit se faire, pour soutenir son caractère. Cet air élevé que demande la dignité du Christianisme, et l'incompréhensibilité de notre foi, ne peut se prendre que dans les grandes idées que l'Écriture sainte donne à ceux qui ont trouvé le secret d'en pénétrer la profondeur. Ce n'est que dans cette source si pure et si féconde, que le Prédicateur trouvera ces magnifiques expressions, dont le saint Esprit est l'auteur: c'est de là qu'il doit prendre ces éclatantes images et cette élévation, qui fait le caractère essentiel de l'Eloquence de la Chaire...." Rapin, *Réflexions sur l'éloquence de la chaire*, in *Œuvres diverses du R. P. R. Rapin concernant les Belles Lettres*, vol. 2, 73.

¹⁰⁵ For a compelling account of how later eighteenth-century painters attempted to translate the sublime into the visual arts, see Eik Kahng, "L'Affaire Greuze and the Sublime of History Painting," *The Art Bulletin* 86, no. 1 (March 2004): 96–113.

empathetic identification with the depicted figures is a foundational tenant of humanist painting.¹⁰⁶ As Alberti asserted, “A ‘historia’ will move spectators when the men painted in the picture outwardly demonstrate their own feelings as clearly as possible...[W]e mourn with the mourners, laugh with those who laugh, and grieve with the grief-stricken.”¹⁰⁷ Nivelon’s account of Le Brun’s *Descente du Saint Esprit* works according to a similar logic. “Les attitudes et les actions des apôtres [dans la peinture]...,” he writes, “lesquels, pareillement étonnés, curieux et admirateurs, portent généralement leurs regards vers l’objet principal, exprimant encore des actions de grâce à l’auteur de celle [la grâce] qu’ils ressentent.”¹⁰⁸ These ravished figures are the heart of the painting’s narrative and affective power, and thus the spur to Olier’s enraptured reaction to the work. Gathered around the Virgin and the Holy Spirit above, they play the crucial intermediary role in the relationship between painting and beholder: providing narrative and affective cues for the spectators, they create a chain of astonishment that extends beyond the picture frame, ending in the ecstatic reaction of the beholder.

The extravagant pantomime of Jouvenet’s figures in the *Douze Apôtres*, and in religious works more broadly, does not therefore, as some scholars have claimed, betoken the degeneration of Le Brun’s idiom into senseless theatricality.¹⁰⁹ Rather it points to a search after a

¹⁰⁶ See Rensselaer Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting*, 23–32

¹⁰⁷ Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting* (1435), trans. Cecil Grayon (London: Penguin, 2004), 76.

¹⁰⁸ Nivelon, *Vie de Charles Le Brun*, 197.

¹⁰⁹ For exemplifying, speaking of Jouvenet’s version of *Les Reines de Perse aux pieds d’Alexandre* (painted after Le Brun’s), Thomas Kirchner writes, “Enfin, comme dans de nombreux autres tableaux de Jouvenet, la tentative d’une accentuation expressive par le biais de la gestuelle contribue davantage à la confusion du récit qu’à son élucidation ou à sa différenciation.” Kirchner, *Les Reines de Perse aux pieds d’Alexandre de Charles Le Brun*, 91.

painterly sublime.¹¹⁰ Contrary to the inflexible rationalism of which it is often accused, Le Brun's codified system became, for Jouvenet, the basis of a new painterly spirituality. His schema of rapture, in particular, provided the artist with a figural vocabulary, based in a narrative conception of painting, that allowed for a translation of the sublime turn of phrase into image. From this base, the painter could heighten, intensify, and elevate the representation of the body: arms reach out further, eyebrows lift higher, eyes open wider. The painter's enraptured figures are narrative signs rendered with a monumental simplicity and affective power that is the foundation for a new aesthetic of divine Grace based in the sublime.

A typical example of this aesthetic is the artist's *L'Ascension du Christ*, of which three signed versions are known (Figure 55). The interest of the painting is not so much the luminous figure of Christ, who is only an ancillary figure in the narrative logic of the work, but the astonished reactions of the apostles and the Virgin below, bathed in the plenitude of God's Grace. Their remarkable intensity of expression is ordered into a monumental triangular composition, almost architectural in its imposing dignity, that leads the eye towards the heavens but keeps it focused on the group itself. They emerge before the beholder as a kind of animated wall, at once establishing distance from the miraculous event above and constituting the only point of entry into the scene; their reactions, so far from quotidian experience, model for spectators their own reaction and allow them to experience, if only obliquely, the mystery depicted in the painting.

¹¹⁰ Following Boileau's translation and commentary, a few writers, notably René Rapin in *Du Grand ou du sublime dans les mœurs et dans les différentes conditions de l'homme* (Paris, 1686), applied the sublime to non-discursive subjects, as did Huet (see note 102 above). But applications to painting were, in the seventeenth century, hesitant and scattered at best, at least in artistic theory; Jouvenet's practice, I hope to have shown, represents a more sustained engagement than the written record attests.

Jouvenet's grand ceiling decorations could follow a similar logic and even augment its effects. His painting for the tribune at the Royal Chapel of Versailles, which portrays the Pentecost, is a case in point (Figure 56). Here the monumental format has allowed Jouvenet to multiply the number of ravished bodies into a great frieze. The Holy Spirit above is the lynchpin of the composition, but the affective and narrative heart of the work—the source of its sublimity—are the figures below it. The balance between these elements, with the ravished figures as the anchor of the work, maintains the composition's unity and coherence.

Examining Jouvenet's decorations for the dome of the Invalides, however, we are faced with a crucial difference: the object of the figures' rapture, within the spatial logic of the dome, is not contained within the frame of Jouvenet's invention but is provided by La Fosse's *Saint Louis environné d'anges musiciens*, the true center of the dome's visual interest. Jouvenet's painting at the Royal Chapel, too, forms part of a larger collaborative ensemble, but the work itself is self-contained; at the Invalides, by contrast, the *Douze Apôtres* and *Saint Louis environné d'anges musiciens* are intertwined in dialogue. Jouvenet's apostles look up, in their rapture, at La Fosse's scene above them, the heavens to which they will presumably soon ascend. The juxtaposition of the two works makes the boldness of La Fosse's colorism even more apparent: in the face of Jouvenet's search for a Christian sublime that could restore the theological legitimacy and devotional efficacy of religious painting, La Fosse presents a vision suffused with de Piles' colorist grace, its sensuousness almost a rebuke to his colleague's austere grandeur.

Grace and La Fosse's Galanterie

How do we understand the relationship between La Fosse's fresco and the larger polemics around aesthetic grace? Though *Saint Louis présente ses armes au Christ* was inspired by a variety of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century precedents—not only Correggio, but

Lanfranco and Mignard as well—the whole set of cultural values and assumptions that had given meaning and theological legitimacy to the forms of those precedents was put under new pressure. *Coloris, fard, tromperie, grâce*—La Fosse’s dome cannot be understood independently of the values to which these terms became attached in contemporary artistic and rhetorical theory. The conceptual framework in which the fresco was understood had been transformed, and the semantic charge of its forms with it. *Saint Louis environné d’anges musiciens* traffics in the kind of grace whose connection to the divine had become precarious at best. The result is a remarkable tension between content and form in the work, between the vision of religious and political orthodoxy that is its subject and the means used to represent that vision.

It would be a mistake, however, to understand *Saint Louis* as a reflection of de Piles’ theories and its fraught discursive context. What makes La Fosse’s fresco exceptional is how it deploys theory in practice; how it pushes the tensions and contradictions in rhetorical, artistic, and religious thought to their breaking point. No element of La Fosse’s dome, I would argue, captures this dynamic relation to theory better than the empty space at its center, an airy void of sky unprecedented in a church dome, or, for the matter, in any dome of this scale. While a few scholars have noted its originality, they have not appreciated what a radical innovation it in fact represents. Anthony Blunt, for example, describes it in entirely stylistic terms. “La Fosse,” he writes, “has based his design on Correggio, but he has greatly lightened his model by putting all the figures near the edge of the circle and by leaving the middle of the field for the open sky. In this way he gives a certain Rococo lightness to what is basically a Baroque composition.”¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Anthony Blunt, *Art and Architecture in France, 1500-1700*, rev. Richard Beresford (1953; New Haven: Yale UP, 1999), 259. Alain Mérot, *French Painting in the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Caroline Beamish (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 286, describes the work in similar terms.

Anachronistic labels like “Baroque” and “Rococo,” however, obscure the larger significance of the shift from an occupied to empty center.¹¹²

By general consensus, filling the center of a dome—or any composition—and focusing attention there was essential for maintaining its visual, affective, and narrative unity: painted domes demanded a single point of view that drew the gaze to a point in the middle. We see nothing in seventeenth-century France like the extreme single-point perspectival illusions of the kind promoted by Andrea del Pozzo, but the importance of a unified center was nonetheless an article of faith held by most painters and theorists (the four smaller domes in the Invalides’ side chapels were no exception). In a plate which he added in 1669 to his influential treatise *Moyen universel de pratiquer la perspective sur les tableaux ou surfaces irrégulières ensemble quelques particularitez concernant cet art et celui de la gravure en taille douce*, for example, Abraham Bosse illustrates what he sees as the error of adopting several viewpoints in the composition of a dome, with the figure at the right showing the wrong way to arrange a dome and the figure at the left showing the correct way to view it (Figure 57).

Even those who did not subscribe to Bosse’s rational, geometric model of painting defended the primacy of a single point of view in the center of the composition. Notably, although he never discussed domes in particular, de Piles insisted that the principal subject of a

¹¹² It is also important to note that even if we were to reconsider this some kind of proto-rococo painting, the space around it is not, architecturally, rococo, but still very much classical—sober, ordered, even severe. The painting functions, unlike in later rococo Churches, especially in Bavaria, largely independently from the sculpted ornament, or is set apart from it. On the relation between painting and ornament in the Bavarian rococo Church, see Karten Harries, *The Bavarian Rococo Church: Between Faith and Aestheticism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983). I share with Harries an interest in the secularization and aestheticization of ecclesiastical art but (not surprisingly, given the difference in chronology and geography in our subjects) approach the question differently, focusing on painting and aesthetic theory rather than ornament.

painting should be placed at the center. As he wrote in his commentary on Dufresnoy's poem,

L'Art de peinture:

Un peintre est comme un orateur, il faut qu'il dispose les choses en sorte que tout cede à son principal sujet : et si les autres figures qui ne font que l'accompagner et qui n'y sont qu'accessoires, occupent la principale place, et qu'elles se fassent les plus remarquer, ou par la beauté de leurs couleurs, ou par l'éclat de la lumière dont elles sont frappées, elles arrêteront tout court la vue, et ne lui permettront pas d'aller plus loin, qu'après beaucoup de temps, pour chercher enfin ce qu'elle n'a pas trouvé d'abord.¹¹³

The eye should immediately be drawn, by every formal means at the painter's disposal, to the center. Proper disposition demanded that the painting's principal figures be grouped in the center and accentuated with proper light and shade, the peripheries becoming progressively less focused and distinct. This effect de Piles termed the *tout ensemble*, "un subordination générale des objets les uns aux autres, qui les fait courir tous ensemble à n'en faire qu'un."¹¹⁴ The *tout ensemble*, de Piles argued, "donne de la force et de la grâce aux choses qui sont inventées" and works "à empêcher la dissipation des yeux, et à les fixer agréablement" in the center of the composition, facilitating one of the painter's chief obligations: to seize the attention of the spectator au premier coup d'œil, or at first glance, and establish an immediate, sensual rapport with the canvas.¹¹⁵

In seventeenth-century Paris, no centripetal dome exemplified these principles better than Pierre Mignard's fresco at Val-de-Grâce, completed in 1666: *La Gloire des Bienheureux* (Figure 58). The most famous painted church dome in France, and the only other major fresco in Paris,¹¹⁶

¹¹³ De Piles, Commentary on *L'Art de peinture*, 154

¹¹⁴ Idem, *Cours de peinture*, 100.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 76.

¹¹⁶ There were smaller frescos by Walthère Damery in the Église des Camres and by Philippe de Champaigne in the chapel of the Sorbonne. Mérot, *French Painting in the Seventeenth Century*,

it is in many ways a foil to La Fosse's dome, undoubtedly the most important precedent for the younger painter and the work to which his own would immediately have been compared. The morphology of Mignard's dome is based closely on Correggio's *Assumption of the Virgin* and *Vision of St. John on Patmos* in Parma and Lanfranco's at Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome. Here the figures and clouds rush and swirl in concentric rings that lead to the center of the composition, drawing attention to its upper point, to the Holy Trinity: Father and Son seated side-by-side, with the Holy Spirit flying over head. As Molière wrote in a poem he wrote to commemorate the dome, *La Gloire de Val-de-Grâce*, which draws from Dufresnoy's *L'Art de peinture*:

Il nous montre à poser avec noblesse, et grâce
La première figure à la plus belle place ;
Riche d'un agrément, d'un brillant de grandeur,
Qui s'empare d'abord des yeux du Spectateur ;
Prenant un soin exact, que dans tout un ouvrage,
Elle joue aux regards le plus beau personnage ;
Et que, par aucun rôle au spectacle placé,
Le héros du tableau ne se voie effacé.¹¹⁷

Everything in the composition is meant to draw the eye irresistibly to the Trinity as it closes, inevitably, on the center. Crucially, such an image makes sense from only one vantage point. Seen from the side, the dome is unreadable (Figure 59). The spectator must stand, immobile, in the correct position for the composition to come together and for him or her to receive the dome's full effect.

Mignard—who, like La Fosse, has Correggio his main source—was praised above all for his grace.¹¹⁸ But this was a grace of an earlier kind. With its sweeping forms and glowing colors,

273. La Fosse had also a couple of smaller frescos himself, notably *L'Assomption de la Vierge* at the *église de Sainte-Marie-de-l'Assomption*.

¹¹⁷ Molière, "La Gloire de Val-de-Grâce," ed. Jacqueline Lichtenstein, in *Œuvres complètes*, t. 2, ed. Georges Forestier. La Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), 79, lines 91-8.

Mignard's dome is a late, great example of the union of aesthetic and divine grace, where form seduces and, in doing so, leads to God. Here, divine grace is coaxed forth not narratively, by ravished figures, but by compositional effects that elicit the active participation of the spectator. Looking becomes an ecstatic experience, drawing the eye upward, towards God.

Mignard's plan for the Invalides was to follow a similar plan, perhaps with an even greater emphasis on the centrality of the protagonist, with placed God squarely in the center (Figure 60). As the abée de Monville reports in his description of the drawing, "Au milieu des chœurs des anges, le dieu des armées paraît dans tout l'éclat de sa majesté : ce sublime objet occupe le centre et toute la partie supérieure du dessein."¹¹⁹ La Fosse himself followed a similar logic in earlier projects. In his *ricordo* for the dome at the église de Sainte-Marie-de-l'Assomption, *L'Assomption de la Vierge* (the original is badly damaged), for instance, or the *modello* for a never-executed *Apothéose de la Vierge en gloire*, Mary is placed squarely in the center of the composition, her importance made clear through pictorial effects (Figures 61 and 62). She is rendered with all the sensuous coloring and beguiling variations of *clair-obscur* that epitomized de Piles' characterization of grace. The connection between divine and aesthetic grace here, though strained by controversy, is defended through a pictorial logic that places the divine front and center and that maintains a thematic and affective unity of effect.

Something different is at work at the Invalides. The sacred subject of La Fosse's composition—the group of God, the Virgin Mary, Saint Louis—is conspicuously absent from the center. They are visible when one first walks into the church from the royal entrance, yet the forms around it are too sharply foreshortened to make sense of. But because the center of the

¹¹⁸ On Mignard's grace, see Lafond, "La Beauté et la grâce," 489–490; Mérot, *French Painting in the Seventeenth Century*, 273.

¹¹⁹ L'Abbé de Monville, *La Vie de Pierre Mignard* (Paris, 1730), 164–165.

dome is empty, there is no position in which every element falls into a unified whole; although Napoleon's tomb now blocks access, a view from the center would radically foreshorten all of the figures. The spectator is therefore invited to move around the dome, and as he or she does, the figures advance and recede in a perpetual dance.

Part of this effect has to do with La Fosse's accommodation to Jouvenet's frescos. If seen from the center of the dome, they would all be illegible; the format of the upper dome encourages viewers to look at each apostle in succession. Yet La Fosse takes this formal constraint to create a new type of religious decoration. The figures seem to have no discernible narrative role: they flit and fly across the sky, strung together to create sinuous curves and sensuous masses of flesh and color. The angel holding the Crown of Thorns and the angel on the other side who holds out his arms as if to catch it are a case in point (Figure 63). Inviting the eye to volley between them, they make little narrative sense. Instead, they create competing centers of visual attention that compel the spectator to discover the dome not by the stationary central position dictated by Mignard's dome but by parallax. Rather than focus attention on the work's narrative and spiritual heart—Saint Louis and Christ—they encourage movement. If Mignard's dome pulls the spectator upward in an ineluctable spiral, towards the heavens and towards God, the dome at the Invalides holds us back: everything about it *seems* to draw the eye upwards—Jouvenet's frescos, its brilliant gold frame, its luminous coloring—but it denies the final moment of elevation. When the eye reaches La Fosse's dome, the beholder is not brought upward, but compelled to orbit around. Transcendence has been replaced with a decidedly immanent experience that reminds embodied spectators, continually and emphatically, of their earth-bound position.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Harries remarks on a similar phenomenon, in different terms, in the Bavarian Rococo Church. Harries, *The Bavarian Rococo Church: Between Faith and Aestheticism*.

Here, then, it is not merely a question of a repertoire of forms and techniques inherited from the Renaissance rendered illegitimate by a changing intellectual context but of formal maneuvers which themselves undermine the work's devotional efficacy. La Fosse not only drapes his sacred subject in the "false" graces of color, but diminishes its visual and affective primacy in a way that further enervates its devotional efficacy: Saint Louis, the Virgin, and Christ capture our attention only obliquely, irregularly—they are pushed, literally, to the side, as the spectator is invited to explore other parts of the dome. De Piles, it is true, foregrounded the animation of the body in his theory. Painting, he maintained, was supposed to call to spectators, pulling them towards it, inexorably: "La véritable peinture est donc celle qui nous appelle...en nous surprenant : et ce n'est que par la force de l'effet qu'elle produit que nous ne pouvons nous empêcher d'en approcher."¹²¹ But this transaction was meant finally to hold the spectator immobile and arrest the eye: "pour plaire à l'œil," he wrote, "il faut le fixer."¹²² Without a seductive center, La Fosse's fresco calls to its viewers and then, in defiance of de Piles' principles, encourages them to move about. La Fosse, clearly, is pushing grace in directions different from those imagined by de Piles.

This innovation must be understood in the context of the larger mutations that aesthetic grace was undergoing at the end of the seventeenth century. As we have seen, although always associated with feminine charm, aesthetic grace was also, for much of its history, associated with effects of surprise and even ecstasy. But with the success of Boileau's *Traité du Sublime*, ravishing effects became increasingly the province of the sublime. Even de Piles abandoned *grâce* as the lynchpin of his system after he published the *Abrégée*. Since the effects of surprise

¹²¹ De Piles, *Cours de peinture*, 3.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 303.

and astonishment, so central to his system, no longer fell under its purview, he adopted a notion more closely aligned with them. Aware of the sublime's attachment to discourse, however, he chose another term, one that allowed him to highlight that painting's power derived from pictorial rather discursive effects: *enthousiasme*.¹²³ *Enthousiasme*, de Piles declared, "transporte l'esprit dans une admiration mêlée d'étonnement; il le ravit avec violence sans lui donner le temps de retourner sur lui-même."¹²⁴ Immediate and overwhelming, it struck viewers like thunder. *Enthousiasme*, like the sublime, had a primarily religious connotation; since antiquity, it denoted divine possession. Yet, as he did with grace, de Piles offered a largely secular understanding of the term.¹²⁵ Boileau's sublime was thoroughly embedded in the Word and thus in the language of the Bible, but de Piles' *enthousiasme* derived its power from the immanent materiality of painting—this was an affinity in *kinds* of effects, not in the *ends* of those effects.¹²⁶

¹²³ On de Piles' abandonment of grace and embrace of *enthousiasme*, see Puttfarcken, *Roger de Piles' Theory of Art*, 106–124.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 107.

¹²⁵ Interestingly, the 1694 *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* leaves out explicit mention of the divine in his definition of *enthousiasme*, indicating that its secularization was not limited to de Piles. "Mouvement extraordinaire d'esprit, par lequel un Poëte, un Orateur, ou un homme qui travaille de genie s'esleve en quelque sorte au dessus de luy-mesme." *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* (Paris, 1694), at Classiques Garnier Numerique: Dictionnaires des 16e et 17e s., <http://www.classiques-garnier.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/numerique-bases/index.php?module=App&action=FrameMain>. On the status of *enthousiasme* in seventeenth-century France more generally, see Marc Fumaroli, "Crépuscule de l'enthousiasme au XVII^e," in *Héros et orateurs : rhétorique et dramaturgie cornélienne*, (Geneva : Droz, 1997), 349–377. On later understandings of *enthousiasme* in the mid-eighteenth century, particularly with respect to creative *enthousiasme*, see Mary Sheriff, *Moved by Love: Inspired Artists and Deviant Women in Eighteenth-Century France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 15–41.

¹²⁶ On the relation of *enthousiasme* to Longinus-Boileau's sublime, see Puttfarcken, *Roger de Piles' Theory of Art*, 106–24; and Kerslake, *Essays on the Sublime*, 139–46. De Piles, *Cours de peinture*, 107–8, describes *enthousiasme*'s relation to the sublime thus: "J'ai fait entrer le sublime dans la définition de l'enthousiasme, parce que le sublime est un effet et une production de l'enthousiasme. L'enthousiasme contient le sublime comme le tronc d'un arbre contient ses

As the aesthetic of force promoted by Boileau and taken up with increasing ardor by de Piles rose in prominence, understandings of aesthetic grace changed too, becoming identified with a more insinuating power. Bouhours, for instance, emphasized in his 1689 *Pensées ingénieuses des anciens et des modernes* that grace was above all defined by its delicacy, its subtlety:

les véritables grâces, celles qui touchent le plus, ne se peuvent que malaisément passer de la délicatesse; et...les grandes choses comme la pompe et la magnificence, sont moins faites pour plaire que pour donner de l'admiration. La beauté même quand elle a tant d'éclat, étouffe plus qu'elle ne plaît. C'est qu'on se lasse d'admirer longtemps, et que ce qui n'est fait que pour cela dégoûte sitôt qu'on ne l'admire plus.¹²⁷

If Junius could claim that grace carried spectators “into an astonished ecstasy,” and if Molière in the middle of century could praise the dazzling impact of Mignard’s dome as an exemplar of grace, by the end of century such effects were alien to it. Grace charmed and coaxed and fascinated, but it no longer sent viewers into ecstasy. And in this way, it became, by the turn of the eighteenth century, a focus in debates about aesthetic effects between the Ancients, known as the *cabale du sublime*,¹²⁸ and the adherents of *galanterie*. If Boileau—and, increasingly, de Piles,

branches qu’il répand de différents côtés ; ou plutôt l’enthousiasme est un soleil dont la chaleur et les influences font naître les hautes pensées, et les conduisent dans un état de maturité que nous appelions sublime. Mais comme l’enthousiasme et le sublime tendent tous deux à élever notre esprit, on peut dire qu’ils font d’une même nature. La différence néanmoins qui me paraît entre l’un et l’autre, c’est que l’enthousiasme est une fureur de veine qui porte notre âme encore plus haut que le sublime, dont il est la source, et qui a son principal effet dans la pensée et dans le tout-ensemble de l’ouvrage; au-lieu que le sublime se fait sentir également dans le général, et dans le détail de toutes les parties. L’enthousiasme a encore cela que l’effet en est plus prompt, et que celui du sublime demande au moins quelques moments de réflexion pour être vu dans toute sa force.” As Puttfarken explains, *enthousiasme*, which is created by visual effects alone, comes before the sublime and is felt with more force. De Piles thus diminished the sublime to a response based on a painting’s subject matter that requires some reflection and subsumed the main qualities of Longinus-Boileau’s sublime into his *enthousiasme*.

¹²⁷ Bouhours, *Pensées ingénieuses des anciens et des modernes*, (Paris, 1689), 412.

¹²⁸ Cronk, *The Classical Sublime* 118–140.

as he aligned himself more closely with Boileau—championed effects that ravished, grace became, for *galant* writers, critics, artists, the epitome of the subtle aesthetic they promoted.¹²⁹

The grace of de La Fosse's fresco is, then, not just de Piles' grace, the sensual appeal of color and the *éclat* of flesh. It is also a reinvented grace—a grace whose effects have been softened, the grace of *galanterie*. And in this sense, the work realizes perhaps the fullest expression of *galanterie* in monumental religious decoration. Though it corresponds to de Piles' ideas in its general orientation, *Saint Louis environné d'anges musiciens* departs from the theorist's prescription for compositional and visual unity: rather than holding the gaze in rapt attention, the work beguiles with forms that invite movement, play. La Fosse, of course, was not the first to void the middle of a dome, despite the dominance of a unified composition focused around a principal and central object. His master Le Brun, for example, painted empty centers in his *L'Aurore précédant le char du Soleil et provoquant le réveil de la Terre* (Figure 64) at Sceaux and his *La France donne la paix à l'Europe* (Figure 65) at Versailles (it is not unlikely that Bosse had Le Brun, his enemy, in mind for his critique¹³⁰). But these were profane subjects on a relatively small scale. La Fosse's innovation was to void the center of a large-scale religious decoration, and to do so in an even more extreme way—if in Le Brun's dome's the narrative center is formally dominant, at the Invalides other groups rival the visual interest of the transaction between Saint Louis and Christ.

¹²⁹ On the competing aesthetics of ravishment and insinuation at the end of the seventeenth century, especially in literature, see Sylvaine Guyot, "Entre éblouissement et 'véritables grâces.' Racine ou les tensions de l'œil classique," *Littératures classiques* 3, no. 82 (2013): 127–42; idem, *Racine et le corps tragique* (Paris: PUF, 2014), 60–68.

¹³⁰ On the rivalry between Le Brun and Bosse, particularly with respect to ceiling painting, see Carl Goldstein, "Studies in Seventeenth Century French Art Theory and Ceiling Painting," *The Art Bulletin* 47, no. 2 (June 1965): 231–256.

In his description of the Invalides, Félibien asserted that, with the church, “on a principalement eu dessin d’instruire les vrais fidèles du culte saint, que l’on doit offrir à Dieu dans ce temple auguste, suivant les pieux sentiments du Monarque qui l’a fait élever.”¹³¹ Yet La Fosse’s dome puts the success of that design into doubt. The artist not only adopted the already theologically problematic colorist idiom but, introducing the sweetness and playfulness of *galanterie*, pushed his fresco even further from the divine. To the sensual illusions of color, he introduced the *galant* grace of an open composition, encouraging an errant gaze that takes pleasure in variety and subtlety at the expense of the narrative and affective primacy of the sacred subject. Antithetical to religious painting’s devotional purpose, aesthetic grace thus functioned as an alien force within the painting, cleaving means from ends.

The modern concept of art had, since its beginnings, existed uneasily with the sacred image’s role in instructing and moving its viewers. Yet as a number of scholars have recently shown, artists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries found innovative ways to negotiate the sometimes conflicting demands of religion and art, forging idioms that satisfied the doctrinal and spiritual ends of painting while embracing artifice to show off their genius and virtuoso skill.¹³² This was always a fraught negotiation, but in the end of Louis XIV’s reign it was becoming, in subtle but unmistakable ways, untenable.

Such a shift, I would argue, was due in part to larger changes in the way people thought of themselves and their relationship to the world in the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, what historians have characterized as a process of disenchantment and secularization.¹³³ In

¹³¹ J.-F. Félibien, *Description de l’Église Royale des Invalides*, 44.

¹³² See bibliography in note 84 above.

¹³³ For useful overviews of the historiographical debate around secularization in the Enlightenment, see Jonathan Sheehan, “Enlightenment, Religion, and the Enigma of

invoking this process, I refer not to the violent clash between an older order of orthodox Christian belief and a new order of secular rationalism chronicled by Hazard in his classic study.¹³⁴ We have little reason to doubt that Jouvenet as well as La Fosse, like most of their contemporaries, were anything but men of deep and abiding faith, untouched by the thinkers Hazard discusses or by the strains of “radical Enlightenment” delineated by Jonathan Israel, the most vociferous defender of the “Hazard thesis.”¹³⁵ Nor do I mean a decline in belief, or “dechristianization,” which historians of the Enlightenment have come increasingly to reject.¹³⁶ I refer instead to the subtler, more profound process described by the philosopher Marcel Gauchet.¹³⁷ Taking a sweeping view that begins in the axial age, Gauchet traces the growing divide between the divine and human realms, arguing that the emergence of a transcendent Christian God led to the steady erosion of God from the field of human activity. In his view, the period in which La Fosse and Jouvenet were painting marked a turning point. “Somewhere around 1700,” he contends, “the deepest ever fracture in history occurred,” in which God had

Secularization: A Review Essay,” *The American Historical Review* 108, no. 4 (October 2003): 1061–1080; and Charly Coleman, “Resacralizing the World: The Fate of Secularization in Enlightenment Historiography,” *The Journal of Modern History* 82, no. 2 (June 2010): 368–395.

¹³⁴ Hazard, *The Crisis of the European Mind, 1680–1715*.

¹³⁵ Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*.

¹³⁶ Michel Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au XVIII^e siècle. Les attitudes devant la mort d’après les clauses de testaments* (Paris, 1978); John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), vol. 2, 94–118

¹³⁷ Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion*, trans. Oscar Burge (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

become entirely “other” and humanity was left to order the world on its own terms, independent of the divine.¹³⁸

From this perspective, the discourses on grace, even if they did not constitute the most radical field of debate, reveal just how deeply this psycho-cultural shift had penetrated French culture, how questions about the presence of the divine affected the way people thought about art and its ends. The importance of La Fosse’s fresco, then, lies precisely in how it took up debates about grace and introduced them into the pictorial sphere, pushing religious painting in new directions. Its legacy can be felt in the open, airy skies of later eighteenth-century religious decoration by artists like Lemoyne and Pierre and in the sensual religious paintings of Boucher. It has been argued that Boucher’s religious paintings in particular evince a new religious sensibility, a new kind of devotion centered on private sentiment that reconciled the desire for *salut* and *bonheur*.¹³⁹ But La Fosse’s work shows that the larger spiritual crisis posed by disenchantment effected deeper shifts. Pleasure, grace, *fard*—these had been firmly opposed to

¹³⁸ Ibid., 162. David A. Bell has elaborated on and historicized this process in the eighteenth century in *The Cult of Nation*, 22–49.

¹³⁹ Martin Schieder “Between *Grâce* et *Volupté*: Boucher and Religious Painting,” in *Rethinking Boucher*, ed. Melissa Hyde and Mark Ledbury (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2006), 61–87; and *Jenseits der Aufklärung: die religiöse Malerei im ausgehenden Ancien régime* (Berlin, Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1997), 315–335. I would like emphasize that while La Fosse’s *galant* idiom no doubt provided a crucial model for Boucher’s religious works, the religious shifts described by Schieder, which date from the 1720s, do not help us understand La Fosse’s fresco, which is anchored in a far different spiritual context. (Indeed, Schieder uses La Fosse’s fresco as an example of the last gasp of Catholic orthodoxy of the seventeenth century. *Jenseits der Aufklärung*, 98–100.) La Fosse’s formal innovations thus put Boucher’s religious painting in a longer historical perspective. While Boucher’s techniques might have represented solutions for a new kind of devotional image if we examine them narrowly, within their own time, La Fosse’s painting shows that such *galant* forms had their roots in values that were already seen as problematically profane. The failure, ultimately, to revive the devotional efficacy that the sacred image enjoyed in the Renaissance and seventeenth century reveals just how problematic these forms were and, as I have tried to show, how *galant* religious painting ultimately played a role in its own undermining.

the sacred, and reintroduced as a positive value in religious art they could, in the long run, only weaken the efficacy of that art.

In a process often rehearsed by scholars, at some point in the modern era, art lost its power to instruct, to convert, to send its viewers into religious ecstasy; lost, in other words, its grounding in theological and ecclesiastical authority.¹⁴⁰ La Fosse's art, in its particular engagement with contemporary art theory, marks a decisive episode in that process. It shows that the secularization of art was not just the product of external pressures but of internal contradictions that unfolded at the level of form. The historian Charly Coleman has pointed out that secularization, in recent thinking on the subject, "no longer refers to a one-sided departure from religion, but rather to a contingent, multidimensional process that originated within religion itself."¹⁴¹ This is precisely the process at work in La Fosse's fresco. As a genre at the very center

¹⁴⁰ See, for various perspectives, Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Age of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Victor Stoichita, *The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Meta-Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); idem, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape*, 2nd ed. (London: Reaktion Books, 2009); Olivier Christin, "Du culte chrétien au culte de l'art: la transformation du statut de l'image (XV^e-XVIII^e siècles)," *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 49, no. 3 (July–September 2002): 176–194. For the eighteenth-century French context, see Olivier Christin, "Le May des orfèvres. Contribution à l'histoire de la genèse du sentiment esthétique," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, no. 105 (1994): 75-90; Martin Schieder, "'Une dépense aussi vaine et aussi superflue': La fin des mays de Notre-Dame et le déclin de la peinture religieuse au XVIII^e siècle," in *Les mays de Notre-Dame et le déclin de la peinture religieuse au XVII^e siècle*, ed. Annick Notter (Arras: Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Arras, 1999), 67–77; idem, *Jenseits der Aufklärung*; Susanna Caviglia, "Du Sacré au Profane: problème de sécularisation de l'image en France au XVIII^e siècle," in *Le Sacré en question. Bible et mythes sur les scènes du XVIII^e siècle*, éd. Béatrice Ferrier (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2015), 141-159." For challenges to the narrative of secularization of religious art in the eighteenth century, see Schieder, *Jenseits der Aufklärung*, which also explores currents of secularization and re-sacralization in the period; and Hannah Williams, "Saint-Geneviève's Miracles: Art and Religion in Eighteenth-Century Paris," *French History* 30, no. 3 (2016): 322–353.

¹⁴¹ Coleman, *The Virtues of Abandon: An Anti-Individualist History of the French Enlightenment* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 12.

of the era's theoretical reflection and cultural practices, religious art emerges here as an unexpected site where painting discovered its proper powers.

Towards a New Spectator

I would like to conclude by investigating the political consequences of La Fosse's formal innovations and the way they engage the viewer. To come to terms with these, it would be instructive, first, to compare its spectatorial logic with that of the other great religious decoration of end of the Louis XIV's reign, the Royal Chapel at Versailles (Figure 66). Like the Invalides, it is the work of several artists, this time in oil: La Fosse painted *La Réssurrection*, Jouvenet, "*La Pentecôte* above the King's Tribune, Antoine Coypel, *Dieu le Père, dans sa Gloire* on the vault, with the *Douze Apôtres* by Louis de Boullogne and Bon Boullogne. But here, unlike at the Invalides, everything is oriented towards one gaze: the King's. In his essay "De la cour," Jean de La Bruyère described a region where no one was permitted to turn his back on the king, not even while worshipping God:

Ces peuples d'ailleurs ont leur Dieu et leur roi : les grands de la nation s'assemblent tous les jours, à une certaine heure, dans un temple qu'ils nomment église ; il y a au fond de ce temple un autel consacré à leur Dieu, où un prêtre célèbre des mystères qu'ils appellent saints, sacrés et redoutables ; les grands forment un vaste cercle au pied de cet autel, et paraissent debout, le dos tourné directement au prêtre et aux saints mystères, et les faces élevées vers leur roi, que l'on voit à genoux sur une tribune, et à qui ils semblent avoir tout l'esprit et tout le cœur appliqués. On ne laisse pas de voir dans cet usage une espèce de subordination ; car ce peuple paraît adorer le prince, et le prince adorer Dieu.¹⁴²

La Bruyère's account is satirical, but it nonetheless captures, with almost eerie accuracy, how the decoration of the Royal Chapel at Versailles relates to the viewer. As La Fosse's Christ rises from his tomb at the apse, we might expect Coypel to have painted God turned to meet his son, but instead he faces the king's box in the tribune. Everything here converges on the immobile,

¹⁴² La Bruyère, "De la cour," *Les Caractères ou les mœurs de ce siècle*, 178–179.

all-seeing royal eye. The seeing royal body is the chapel's hermeneutical key, the only point from which the visual logic of the chapel comes together and makes sense.¹⁴³

This visual logic is perhaps the clearest manifestation in art of the politico-theological fantasy on which absolutism, as least in some of its manifestations, was predicated.¹⁴⁴ As Bossuet, the most vociferous defender of divine right monarchy, declared, “Le trône royal n’est pas le trône d’un homme; mais le trône de Dieu même.”¹⁴⁵ “La personne des rois,” he continued, “est sacrée...Le titre de Christ est donné aux rois; et on les voit partout appelés les Christ, ou les oints du seigneur.”¹⁴⁶ At the Royal Chapel the king saw this vision of the world reflected back at him and amplified: seated in the tribune opposite the altar, as the Trinity converged on his throne, he was nothing less than the manifestation of God, the intermediary between heaven and earth.

At the Invalides, staring up at the dome from the royal entrance, the king, too, saw a validation of his divine status, a world laid out for the pleasure of his eye. Bracketed by the Cross and the Shield of France, the transaction between Saint Louis and Christ confirmed Louis XIV's God-given right to rule, for Louis XIV was not just seeing an image of his ancestor but also his own allegorical portrait. As Félibien remarked, “Ces armes, l’épée et la couronne, marquent celles qui ont passé de Saint Louis aux Roi ses descendants et successeurs, jusques dans les

¹⁴³ Allen, *French Painting in the Golden Age*, 198.

¹⁴⁴ On various debates about the place of the divine in absolutism, see Ellen M. McClure, *Sunspots and the Sun King: Sovereignty and Mediation in Seventeenth-Century France* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 13–67; Roland G. Asch, *Sacral Kingship between Disenchantment and Re-Enchantment: The French and English Monarchies 1587–1688* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2014), 110–118; and Jouanna, *Le prince absolu*.

¹⁴⁵ Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l’Écriture sainte* (Paris, 1710), 94. The text was written between 1679–1700 but published only posthumously.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

mains de Louis le Grand; qui les a toujours employées à la défense de la religion chrétienne, et à maintenir la pureté de la foi.”¹⁴⁷ This identification with Saint Louis here was part of a reaffirmation of religious orthodoxy following the king’s famous “conversion” at the end of his reign and his morganatic marriage to the pious Madame de Maintenon, a return to order in the face of deep challenges to religion’s traditional authority and waning confidence in the accessibility of transcendence. During this period, Louis battled with the pope to assert his over authority of the Gallican Church with new vehemence (with mixed success); Richard Simon’s biblical criticism and Fénelon’s mystical quietism were condemned; the Port-Royal abbey was weakened and finally destroyed; Jansenism was outlawed with the Unigenitus Bull; and most famously, the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685, outlawing Protestantism in the kingdom. As a result of the king’s new piety, his iconography underwent a dramatic change. Though the king’s portrait, as we saw in the previous chapter, increasingly took the place of the pagan gods in the elaboration of the king’s image, Saint Louis was increasingly taken up as a new model and proxy for the king.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ J.-F. Félibein, *Description de l’Église Royale des Invalides*, 58.

¹⁴⁸ On this shift in iconography, particularly with respect to Saint Louis, see Pierre Zobermann, “Généalogie d’une image: l’éloge spéculaire,” *XVII^e siècle*, no. 146 (1985): 79–92; Martha Mel Stumberg Edmunds, *Piety and Politics: Imaging Divine Kingship in Louis XIV’s Chapel at Versailles* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2002), 184–230; Asch, *Sacral Kingship between Disenchantment and Re-Enchantment*, 110–118. These representational maneuvers militate against the view of an unremitting march of secularization and disenchantment of the monarchy, leading inevitably to the emergence of abstract, impersonal state as described in many accounts, such as Quentin Skinner, “From the State of Princes to the Persons of the State,” in *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 2: Renaissance Virtues (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 368–413; Paul Kléber Monod, *The Power of Kings: Monarchy and Religion in Europe, 1589–1715* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 273–328; Bell, *The Cult of Nation in France*. These accounts have been usefully questioned by Asch, *Sacral Kingship between Disenchantment and Re-Enchantment*.

The dome at the Invalides is, with the Royal Chapel, the most prominent manifestation of this iconographic shift. With its invocation of Saint Louis, it was meant above all to celebrate the abundant Grace with which God blessed Louis XIV, *le roi très chrétien*. “[C]e monument,” wrote Félibien,

doit servir à perpétuer les actions de la grâce que Louis le Grand rend au divin Sauveur le Dieu des armées, qu’il reconnaît pour le premier auteur de ses victoires et de ses triomphes; et dont il s’efforce pour lui et pour son peuple de conserver à jamais la protection toute-puissante par l’intercession de la sainte Vierge et de saint Louis.¹⁴⁹

Similarly, in an earlier panegyric for the king, Pierre Cureau de La Chambre, asked, “[P]ourquoi s’étonner que Louis le Grand se soit élevé jusqu’à la hauteur où nous l’admirons, puisque c’est un rejaillissement des grâces infinies que S. Louis a fait découler sur sa personne sacrée ?”¹⁵⁰

Such statements support Bossuet’s assertion that the king’s decisions and actions were the manifestation of God’s providence in human history. Kings are, he said, “sacrés par leur charge, comme étant représentants de la majesté divine, députés par sa providence à l’exécution de ses desseins.”¹⁵¹ Louis XIV’s legitimacy came from his status as the conduit of divine Grace, the vehicle for God’s actions in the world.¹⁵²

But the visual logic of La Fosse’s fresco undermines the primacy of divine Grace and Louis XIV’s role as its conduit. In the succession of viewpoints demanded by the cupola, the sense of mastery at the royal entrance, the viewpoint of the royal eye which sees before it a hierarchical universe founded on a direct line between God and King, is undermined. Divine

¹⁴⁹ J.-F. Félibien, *Description de l’Église Royale des Invalides*, 10.

¹⁵⁰ Pierre Cureau de La Chambre, *Panegyrique de Saint Louis Roy de France* (Paris, 1681), 50.

¹⁵¹ Bossuet, *Politique tirée des propres paroles de l’Écriture sainte*, 95

¹⁵² On Bossuet’s theory of the role of grace and providence in history, see Patrick Riley, *The General Will before Rousseau: The Transformation of the Divine into the Civic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 64–98.

Grace has been replaced with a profane grace, in which the pretensions of the king to quasi-divinity have little place.

There is perhaps no clearer manifestation of this *galant* grace than the cloud that winds through the dome's center. In an essay published in 1667, the Chevalier de Méré, a chief exponent of *galanterie*, wrote, drawing on a long tradition on the serpentine line:

Les plus excellents Peintres veulent que les figures soient sinueuses dans leurs tableaux, et qu'on y remarque une disposition à la souplesse, à peu près comme ces plis et ces replis qu'on voit dans la flamme. Je trouve aussi que la manière de vivre et d'agir veut être libre et dégagée, et qu'on n'y sente rien de forcé."¹⁵³

The sinuous cloud in the La Fosse's are the folds of a flame in another form. In the middle of the composition, in what should be the seat of God, is the abstract form of profane grace, an ornament unburdened by referentiality, a purely visual pleasure. It is the animating force behind the work, the key to its visual and affective logic, echoed in the figures animating the peripheries—not signifying bodies, but bodies that express nothing but their own artfulness, their grace.¹⁵⁴

This displacement signals something important: it is a figure of a new freedom. It sets eye and mind free to range and wander. It allows the spectator to move away from the sacred subject and to take pleasure in sensuous form. If theological Grace is at base a denial of human

¹⁵³ Chevalier de Méré, "Des Agréments" (1677), in *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Charles-Henri Boudhors (Paris: Klincksieck, 2008), 13. Compare to de Piles' commentary on *L'Art de peinture*: "Outre que les figures et leurs membres doivent presque toujours avoir naturellement une forme flamboyante et serpentine, ces sortes de contours ont un je ne sais quoi de vif et de remuant, qui tient beaucoup de l'activité du feu et du serpent." Commentary on *L'Art de peinture*, 143-4. On the serpentine line, see David Summers, "Maniera and Movement: The *Figura Serpentina*," *The Art Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (1972): 269-301.

¹⁵⁴ On the graceful body, see Domna C. Stanton, *The Aristocrat as Art: A Study of the Honnête Homme and the Dandy in Seventeenth-Century French Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 107-174. On its fortunes in the art of the Ancien Régime, see Sarah Cohen, *Art, Dance, and the Body in French Culture of the Ancien Régime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

autonomy, its secularization meant that the autonomy of painting here is tied directly to the autonomy of the spectator from royal power and logic of the gaze that sustained it.

I should emphasize that I am not claiming that La Fosse's dome was intentionally subversive. We will never know how much conviction La Fosse had when he painted his work, but, just as we have little reason to doubt that he was a devout Christian, we should not assume he felt himself anything other than a loyal subject. In creating the dome, his concerns were, we can surmise, primarily artistic. What was changing, however, was the larger context of those concerns. Artistic theory resonated with cultural debates that may have been the further thing from La Fosse's mind but that nonetheless invested pictorial form with new meanings for his elite audience. By engaging with the plastic problems presented by artistic grace, La Fosse was unhinging painting from the powers it was supposed to serve, and the dome became, in this respect, subversive despite itself.

This subversion, then, was subtle, and indeed Louis XIV seems to have been pleased with La Fosse's work, at least initially. Upon seeing the dome, the *Mercure galant* reports, the king proclaimed, "Il faut lui faire peindre la Chapelle de Versailles."¹⁵⁵ In the end, however, he never returned to the Invalides, and La Fosse was given only a portion of the chapel to paint. Did Louis XIV realize that the decorations were not adequate to their message? We cannot know for certain, because it is unclear even how the church was used or what purpose it was supposed to fulfill.¹⁵⁶ But Félibien does tell that this new church, in contrast to the *église des soldats*, was

¹⁵⁵ *Mercure galant*, September, 1706, 269.

¹⁵⁶ Patrik Reuterswärd, *The Two Churches of the Hôtel des Invalides: A History of their Design* (Stockholm: P. A. Norstedt, 1965) and Alain Erlande-Brandenburg, "Louis XIV et la mort: l'hôtel des Invalides," *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français* 2002 (2004): 59-68, have proposed the *église royale des Invalides* was meant as tomb for the royal family, to replace Saint-Denis. Bertrand Jestaz, *Jules Hardouin Mansart* (Paris: Picard, 2008), rejects the claim altogether. Alexandre Gady, "Église royale Saint-Louis des Invalides," in *Jules Hardouin-*

“destinée au public.”¹⁵⁷ It is a telling distinction, just as it is that La Fosse’s most daring work was created not at Versailles but in Paris, where a vibrant aristocratic culture, independent of the court, was already beginning to reemerge. The work institutes a new spectatorial community and, with it, a new hierarchy of embodied vision. At the site of what should be the monarchy’s most confident expression of its divine legitimacy, we find the assertion of a new kind of spectator.

Mansart, ed. Alexandre Gady (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme/Centre allemand d’histoire de l’art, 2010), 164, concludes: “En l’état de documentation, il est téméraire de vouloir trancher un tel débat. Mais on pourrait suggérer qu’il s’agit d’un *portrait du roi*: un ensemble des signes donnant à voir le souverain, physiquement absent depuis de longues années, dans Paris.”

¹⁵⁷ J.-F. Félibein, *Description de l’Église Royale des Invalides*, 4.

Chapter 3

Painting and Politics after Disenchantment: Coypel's Galerie d'Énée

La Fosse's frescos for the Invalides helped form a new public for art, one that emerged largely in spite of the paintings' intended purpose. In this chapter, we turn to another major Parisian decorative project that also engaged an emergent public but attempted, I believe in a far more conscious way, to form that public: Antoine Coypel's *galerie d'Énée*, commissioned by Philippe II d'Orléans for his residence at Palais Royal (Figure 67).¹

Coypel's gallery showed fourteen scenes from Virgil's epic, executed in two phases. In the first phase, between 1702 and 1705, Coypel painted the ceiling of the gallery with seven scenes, each devoted to the gods' interventions in the narrative. Around 1714, the artist was called back to paint seven more along the wall of the gallery, opposite a long procession of windows. It was perhaps the most important commission of the time, but it was short-lived. Around 1784, the duc de Chartres had the gallery, which ran along the rue de Richelieu, raised in order to make room for what is now the rue de Beaujolais and the Théâtre-Français. The wall paintings were removed to the château de Saint-Cloud, but the ceiling was destroyed.² However, an oil sketch of the central portion survives and is currently preserved in Angers. Of the wall paintings, three are in Arras; three others are held in the reserves of the Louvre but, due to Coypel's use of an experimental technique to increase the vibrancy of his colors, have deteriorated so badly that

¹ On Philippe II, see Jean Meyer, *Le Régent* (Paris: Éditions Ramsay, 1985); Jean-Christian Petitfils, *Le Régent* (1986), new ed. (Paris: Arthème Fayard/Pluriel, 2013).

² On the chronology of the paintings, see Antoine Schnapper, "Antoine Coypel: La Galerie d'Énée au Palais-Royal," 40.

they are barely visible. The seventh, *Jupiter apparaît à Énée*, is missing. Even though only part of the cycle has survived, all of the paintings, save two scenes from the ceiling (*Mercuré dissuade Énée de s'établir à Carthage* and *Junon suscite des enfers la furie Alecto*) were engraved in the eighteenth century. They were published and sold separately, the last appearing in 1740, and were later gathered together and sold by Louis Surugue.³

Coytel's ceiling was part of a vogue for galleries with ceilings painted with heavenly mythological scenes in early eighteenth-century Paris.⁴ Large-scale narrative wall paintings, however, were far rarer: usually the walls were reserved for mirrors, or landscape paintings, or for the display of an art collection.⁵ Though begun only eight years after La Fosse's frescos at the Invalides, the walls of Coytel's gallery were executed in a radically altered political and cultural landscape. In 1715, Louis XIV died after 72 years on the throne, and Philippe d'Orléans, his nephew, became regent for the five year-old Louis XV. These circumstances are essential for understanding the conception and reception of Coytel's cycle.

Despite being the largest, most prestigious commission of its day—*Les Curiositez de Paris* reports that “les connoisseurs remarquent que c'est le principal ouvrage de M. Coytel”⁶—the paintings have been the subject of little scholarly interest. Antoine Schnapper reconstructed the commission and placement of the paintings in Palais Royal in a pioneering article, but only Katie Scott, in a few suggestive pages in her *Rococo Interior*, has attempted to discuss its political and

³ *Mercuré de France*, août 1740, 1816–1817.

⁴ Schnapper, “Antoine Coytel: La Galerie d'Énée au Palais-Royal,” 33-34.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 39

⁶ Le Rouge, *Les Curiositez de Paris, de Versailles, de Marly, de Vincennes, de S. Cloud et des environs...*, Volume 1 (Paris, 1718), 147.

cultural significance.⁷ In contrast to decorative schemes of the previous century, Scott argues, the gallery was not intended as a eulogistic glorification of its patron, nor was the figure of Aeneas conceived as a cipher for Philippe.⁸ Rather, in the gallery, “the past, whether history or legend, was effectively depersonalized; it no longer functioned as the privileged mirror or portrait of history-makers (princes, nobles and ministers) but offered a generic and ‘democratic’ discourse whose moral injunctions were there for society at large to heed.”⁹ This was “a new history painting, one of a kind Du Bos could have admired and one whose publicity depended not only on the space it occupied but on its ability to address an audience collectively.”¹⁰ If the gallery had political ambitions, she concludes, they were more nebulous and more general than the glorification of its patron: “The civic oratory of the Palais Royal scheme... construed the gallery as a public space without qualification, indeed as the only public space in which legitimate members of the government could gather.”¹¹

Scott rightly senses that the gallery represents a new kind of history painting, one that could be said to offer a more “democratic” experience for its audience. But she is, I think, too hasty in dismissing the works’ political intentions; too quick to subsume the work into what she sees a larger “eclipse of the heroic decorative mode” in the early eighteenth century.¹² Coypel’s

⁷ Ibid., 33-42; Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 193–200.

⁸ Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 195

⁹ Ibid., 200.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., 177–212. Jean-François Bédard, “Political Renewal and Architectural Revival during the French Regency: Oppendord’s Palais-Royal,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historian* 68, no. 1 (March 2009), suggestively argues that Philippe’s embrace of Louis XIV’s architectural

gallery marks the reentry of *fable* into painting made to celebrate the sovereign, after the evacuation of mythology to the king's private spaces and the ascent of his personal image under Louis XIV. The question was: how to make classical antiquity relevant again? When we understand the *galerie d'Énée* in relation the circumstances that gave rise to its commission, and the cultural debates that it engaged, it becomes clear that the gallery involved a more complex negotiation of the political and cultural landscape of the Regency, and that, in fact, its significance lies in the way patron, artist, and audience responded to these challenges. The period following Louis XIV's death was a perilous time for the monarchy: the nobility was restive, the treasury was empty, and the state was battered by years of war. Philippe had to work decisively to assert his authority and maintain order. The gallery was part and parcel of that effort. It aimed to fashion a new community of spectators, not "a public space without qualification" but a carefully managed stage-set where viewers could become active participants in a reformed absolutist state. We tend to think that a subjectively engaged public is incompatible with the efforts of the state to control its subjects, but here it was not a zero-sum game; the relationship was more complex.

The effort to fashion a new community of spectators at the gallery was deeply engaged with contemporary debates about history, the hero, and their representation in painting. Taking Scott's insight that the paintings were "of a kind Du Bos could have admired" seriously, I draw on Du Bos's *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, as well as Coypel's own theories, which he delivered in a series of lectures to the Academy between 1712 and 1720 and published in 1721, to unpack the gallery's engagement with these debates. Although the *Réflexions critiques* was published in 1719, two years after the completion of the gallery, Du Bos

idiom, as opposed to the *goût moderne*, in renovating Palais-Royal was part of an effort "to make the monarchy Parisian" and "to bridge the increasing divide between court and city," 46.

began developing his ideas earlier in the intellectual orbit of the regent's circle. Coypel and Du Bos's works were the most important art theoretical works of their time and share many of the same preoccupations, and putting them into dialogue helps reveals the novelty of Coypel's approach in the *galerie d'Énée* and its larger significance.¹³ Seen in light of contemporary aesthetic preoccupations, Coypel's gallery not only represents an innovative effort to refashion the image of the hero in the wake of Louis XIV; it also marks a decisive episode in the struggle to define a political role for painting in modernity as it struggled to balance the often-conflicting demands made on behalf of art and the state.

The First Campaign, 1702–1705

Philippe II inherited the Palais-Royal in 1701, after the death of his father, Philippe I, Louis XIV's brother. Originally called the Palais-Cardinal, the residence was built for Cardinal Richelieu between 1633 and 1636 and designed by the architect Jacques Lemercier. Richelieu left the palace to Louis XIII after his death in 1642, and after Louis XIII's own death in 1643 his wife, Anne of Austria, made the palace her own residence. After the Fronde, however, Anne left Palais Royal and returned to the Louvre, and the palace was largely neglected until Philippe I began living there in 1661. In 1692, Louis XIV gave the palace to his brother as part of his appanage, a reward for marrying his son, the Duc de Chartres, the future Philippe II, to the king's illegitimate daughter, Mademoiselle de Blois. Shortly thereafter, Monsieur commissioned Jules Hardouin-Mansart to create a *grand appartement*, a suite of five formal reception rooms

¹³ René Démoris, "La parole d'un 'savant peintre' en 1721: les *Discours* d'Antoine Coypel," in *Estetica et Arte: Le concezioni die "moderni"*, ed. Stefano Benassi (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1991): 25–28, finds Coypel and Du Bos' works almost totally opposed in key respects, but, as my subsequent discussion will show, that, while hardly identical, they share certain preoccupations.

arranged *en enfilade*. Finally, around 1698–1700, Hardouin-Mansart added a *grande galerie* that ran north along the rue de Richelieu, perpendicular to the *grand cabinet* that terminated the *grand appartement*.¹⁴

When Philippe I died in 1701, the new Duc d'Orléans, Philippe II, immediately began renovations at the residence, inviting the Orléans' official painter, Antoine Coypel, to decorate the ceiling of the *Grande Galerie* with scenes from the *Aeneid*. Virgil's poem was one of the most widely read and admired works of the time.¹⁵ During the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, Virgil became a standard bearer of the Moderns—in contrast to the Ancients, who proclaimed the superiority of Homer.¹⁶ The Ancients at this time were associated with the court, aligned especially with the factions around Madame de Maintenon; the Moderns, on the other hand, were the *gens de Paris*.¹⁷ If there was a message behind the ceiling—and it would, I believe, be unwise to read too much into it—it was Philippe's *mondaine* sophistication, perhaps even his independence from the *gens de Versailles*, who were certainly no supporters of his. The subject, though, also had personal significance: years earlier Philippe I had commissioned the painter Jean Cotelle le jeune to decorate his *cabinet des bijoux* at the Château de Saint-Cloud with scenes from the epic.¹⁸ Though Cotelle's paintings have not survived, engravings after them

¹⁴ Bédard, "Political Renewal and Architectural Revival during the French Regency," 34.

¹⁵ On reception of the *Aeneid* during the Grand Siècle, see Ludivine Goupillaud, *De l'or de Virgile aux ors de Versailles. Métamorphoses de l'épopée dans la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle en France* (Geneva: Droz, 2005).

¹⁶ Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient*, 22–23.

¹⁷ Alain Niderst, "Les 'gens de Paris' et les 'gens de Versailles,'" in *D'un siècle à l'autre. Anciens et Modernes*, ed. Louise Godard de Donville and Roger Duchêne. Marseilles: A. Robert, 1987), 159-169.

¹⁸ Guy de Tervarent, *Présence de Virgile dans l'art*, Mémoires de l'Académie royale de Belgique XII, fasc 2. (Brussels: Classe des Beaux-Arts, 1967), 11–13. For an overview of artistic

show that these were relatively modest works, in the delicate manner of Albani, with small-scaled figures (Figure 68). Coypel's gallery was far grander in scale and ambition. Coypel painted an *éskisse* of the central portion for the ceiling, showing *Vénus suppliant Jupiter* (Figure 69), in the summer of 1702 and finished the final version in the fall of 1703. Six scenes surrounding the central portion were completed in 1705: *Junon suscite la tempête*, *Neptune apaise la tempête*, *Mercuré dissuade Énée de s'établir à Carthage*, *Junon suscite des enfers la furie Alecto*, *Vénus fait forger les armes par Vulcain*, *Incendie de la flotte d'Énée*.¹⁹

In 1702, when Philippe commissioned Coypel to paint the ceiling, he was a high-ranking prince, but a key role in governing the state did not seem to be in the cards. This helps explain the appearance of Coypel's ceiling. The large central painting, *Vénus suppliant Jupiter*, shows the moment when Venus, worried that Aeneas will never leave Carthage, beseeches Jupiter to end the Trojans' suffering and to establish a home for them in Italy (I, 312–343). Coypel paints a sky shining through the ceiling of a fictive open-air palace (in this he was aided by his godfather Charles-Louis Chéron and the *quadratura* specialist Philippe Meusnier²⁰), replete with balustrades, caryatids, and captives. Jupiter sits enthroned on a cloud in the center, surrounded by light. Venus, perched on her own cloud, kneels before him. (It is notable that the scene is almost identical to La Fosse's portrayal of St Louis and Christ for the Cupola at the Invalides and may even have inspired La Fosse's design, evidence of the extent to which the profane had penetrated

treatments of the *Aeneid*, see Henry Bardon, "L'Énéide et l'art, XVI^e–XVIII^e siècle," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 37, no. 6 (juillet-septembre 1950): 77-97. On illustration of the *Aeneid*, which seem not have influenced Coypel in any notable way, see Bernadette Pasquier, *Virgile illustré de la Renaissance à nos jours en France et en Italie* (Paris: Jean Touzot, 1992).

¹⁹ Charles-Antoine Coypel, "Vie d'Antoine Coypel" (6 March 1745), in *Conférences de l'Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, 1712–1746*, t. IV, v. 2, ed. Lichtenstein and Michel (Paris: ENSBA, 2010), 536-538.

²⁰ Garnier, *Antoine Coypel, 1661–1722*, 151.

religious art at this time.) The main action, however, only occupies a small part of the composition. Much as at the Invalides, the rest is dominated by the sensual bodies of the celestial beings lounging around the perimeter and tumbling through the sky. They do nothing in particular, there only to add energy and sensuality to the scene; and they make the narrative somewhat hard to make out—perhaps why, since the eighteenth century, the ceiling has been called the *Assemblée des dieux* rather than its more precise title. The four other scenes surrounding it, in *quadro riportato*, each repeat the same visual formula—a god perched on a cloud as a cast of demigods cavort around them.

The ceiling's ostensible source, it seems, had little importance. Its intricate illusionism, inspired by Cortona and other Italian painters of the seventeenth century, was new in France, and it helped spur a fashion for Italianate ceilings in Paris (now mostly destroyed); La Fosse's ceiling for Antoine Crozat's mansion, which we know from what is probably a preparatory sketch, is a prime example (Figure 70). The subject was also new, as the ceiling was the first large-scale decorative scheme based on the *Aeneid* in France. But the connection between the paintings and their subject was tenuous. Coypel has fallen back on generic visual formulas: nothing about the figure's gestures or actions appears specific to the story. Moreover, Aeneas himself, the hero of the poem, is absent, as, indeed, is any assertion of human agency. The ceiling's subject is a pretext for a spectacle of illusion and flesh and color, not a prompt for serious engagement with its aesthetic and narratological challenges.

Given Philippe's status when he commissioned the ceiling, he had need for little else. The gallery was a statement of magnificence and prestige, and of his up-to-the-minute taste, but its significance seems not to have gone far beyond that. In his biography of his father, Charles-Antoine Coypel said that the goddesses in the painting were modeled after beauties at the court,

and that they vied to be featured in the work.²¹ In this sense, a similar analogue can be found in François de Troy's *Festin de Didon et Énée*, painted for the Duc and Duchesse du Maine in 1704, which is actually made up of portraits of habitués of the court at Sceaux (Figure 71). Although different in scale and formal vocabulary, both works revolve around the pleasures of recognition. They amount to a witty game, for an exclusive coterie of high nobility. For both Maine and Orléans, the intense powers struggles before and after Louis XIV's death were far off, and neither had need of painting that addressed, in any serious way, a larger public.

The Second Campaign, 1714–1718

Around 1714, the duc d'Orléans decided to embark on an even more ambitious renovation of Palais-Royal, hiring Giles-Marie Oppenord to transform the palace. For the Grande Galerie, Coypel was commissioned to paint seven additional episodes from the *Aeneid* for the long wall opposite the widows, replacing a row of mirrors. These were executed in three phases: the first three, *Énée portant Anchise hors de Troie* (Figure 72), *Énée et Achate apparaissent à Didon* (Figure 73), and *Mort de Didon* (Figure 74), between 1714 and 1715; two more before the summer of 1717; and the last two painted before 1718. The final four show *Énée aux enfers* (Figure 75), *Jupiter apparaît à Énée* (Figure 76), *Funérailles de Pallas* (Figure 77), and *La mort de Turnus* (Figure 78). Oppenord, it seems, largely respected Hardouin-Mansart's design in integrating the panels in the decorative scheme. But for the far end of the gallery, he designed a spectacular *cheminée à la royale* in the grandest Louis XIV style, taking inspiration from Bernini's Scala Regia in the Vatican Palace and François Blondel's triumphal arch at the Porte Saint-Denis, erected in 1672 (Figure 79). Winged figures of time and fame flew above the

²¹ C. A. Coypel, "Vie d'Antoine Coypel," 537.

fireplace, holding up simulated drapery. Obelisks mounted with *trophées des armes* and framed by corinthian pilasters rose up on either side of the structure.²²

For his second campaign, Coypel took an entirely different tack from his previous work for the ceiling. Gone were the swirling forms, the sensual bodies, the delicate colors, the minimally expressive gestures and faces. By this time, Coypel had shifted his style from the *galant* style of the *petit goût* to the sublime mode of the *grand goût*, fashioning a far more literary and learned painterly idiom.²³ The *galerie d'Énée* furnished him with a prime opportunity to perfect and exhibit his new idiom: no other work better demonstrates the monumentality, vibrancy, and theatricality of his new approach. Massive forms, exaggerated expressions, vivid colors, all carefully arranged—Coypel combined Rubens' coloring, Le Brun and Jouvenet's expressive bodies, and, above all, Poussin's compositional and narrative rigor.

Coypel's major challenge during this second campaign was to integrate the new paintings with the ones he had already made for the ceiling. The ceiling paintings formed, by themselves, a coherent ensemble. In keeping with the demands of *bienséance*, it would have been inappropriate to depict the deeds of men on a ceiling, and so the ceiling showed only the Olympians in their heavenly abode.²⁴ Fittingly, then, when asked to expand the decor onto the walls, Coypel filled

²² Bédard, "Political Renewal and Architectural Revival during the French Regency," 36.

²³ Antoine Coypel's son, Charles-Antoine, explains these influences on his art: "M. Coypel qui sentait à quel point le goût des belles-lettres peut distinguer un peintre dans son art, forma une étroite liaison avec Messieurs Racine, Despréaux et La Fontaine. On s'aperçut bientôt, dans ses tableaux, des avantages qu'il tirait d'une semblable société, la manière noble et délicate dont il exprimait les passions de l'âme et sa scrupuleuse exactitude dans ce qui regarde le costume, firent juger qu'il partageait son loisir entre la lecture et la bonne compagnie, et qu'il avait compris de bonne heure, que pour être un peintre, il fallait savoir plus que peindre." C.-A. Coypel, "Vie d'Antoine Coypel," 531.

²⁴ Olivier Bonfait, "La conquête du ciel," in *Peupler les cieux. Les plafonds parisiens au XVII^e siècle*, ed. Bénédicte Gady (Paris: Musée du Louvre and Le Passage, 2014), 52.

out the narrative with key episodes from the lives of the terrestrial players in the epic, and he arranged them so that all fourteen panels could be viewed in the same order as they occur in Virgil's epic. The result, however, was the spectators were forced to volley between ceiling and wall as they tracked the story, a problem pointed out in the *Curiositez de Paris*: "Il serait à souhaiter pour un meilleur arrangement, que les tableaux fussent distribuez dans l'ordre chronologique de l'*Énéide*."²⁵ Scott makes much of the resulting disorder and the ways viewers were compelled to look at Coypel's ensemble, finding a loss of narrative progression that undermined the hero's achievements and any political messages that those achievements might have contained.²⁶ We should keep in mind, however, that the two campaigns of the project were conceived in two distinct phases, and it would be imprudent to read any kind of intention into narrative effects caused by constraints beyond Coypel's control. The ceiling and wall paintings differ not only in their formal and narrative strategies but also in the circumstances in which they were made. It would be profitable to view them each on their own terms before considering how they do, or do not, work together.

It would be hard to overstate how much the duc d'Orléans' situation had changed between the first and second phases of Coypel's project. If in 1702, no one would have imagined a prominent role for Philippe in the business of the state, by 1714 the unthinkable happened. First, in April 1711, Louis XIV's son, the grand dauphin, known as "Monseigneur," was claimed by smallpox. Monseigneur was soon followed to the grave by his son, the duc de Bourgogne, who succumb to scarlet fever in 1712; the same disease also killed the duc de Bourgogne's son, the duc de Bretagne, aged five. This left the duc de Bretagne's younger brother, the two-year old

²⁵ Le Rouge, *Les Curiositez de Paris...*, 144.

²⁶ Scott, *Rococo Interior*, 197.

duc d'Anjou, the future Louis XV, as heir to the throne. It became clear that there would be a Regency. Constitutional convention dictated that this duty should fall, in the absence of a Queen Mother, to the First Prince of the Blood, the duc de Bourgogne's younger brother, the duc de Berry. On May 5, 1714, however, he died from injuries sustained during a hunting accident. Now the Regency would pass to Philippe, who, in the event of the duc d'Anjou's death, would himself become dauphin.

The prospect of a Regency under Philippe was met with no small amount of apprehension. He was an unpopular figure. Reputed for his debauchery, he thumbed his nose at the orthodoxy of the *dévots* at court and preferred to spend his time in Paris among a coterie of friends and mistresses. With the death of three generations of male heirs, rumors swirled that Philippe, an amateur chemist and alchemist, had poisoned them to ascend the throne. A movement soon emerged to promote the claims of Philip V, the king of Spain and brother of the duc de Bourgogne, to the Regency over those of Philippe d'Orléans, an effort keenly supported by the Spanish king himself, even though he had renounced any claim to the French throne under the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht.²⁷ Since it would likely have triggered another pan-European war, Louis XIV deemed a Regency under the Phillip V an even greater threat to stability than one under Orléans. But the Sun King remained wary of his nephew, whom he dismissed as a “fanfaron de crimes.”²⁸ To limit Philippe's influence, in July 1714 Louis XIV granted his bastards, the duc du Maine and the comte de Toulouse, the status of legitimate off-spring, putting them in the line of succession. The implications of the king's gesture were immediately

²⁷ After the duc du Berry died, he sent his emissary, Cardinal del Giudice, to claim his rights to the Regency, and continued to assert his priority after Louis XIV's death, culminating in the Cellamare conspiracy of 1718.

²⁸ Duc de Saint Simon, *Mémoires complets et authentique*, vol. XXI (Paris: H. L. Delloye, 1840), 140.

understood. As Madame de Maintenon wrote, “On prétend à Paris, où l’on parle encore avec plus de liberté, que le roi élève ces deux princes dans la vue de leur donner plus de part à la régence, et pour balancer le credit de M. le duc d’Orléans.”²⁹ In 1715, he went even further, adding a codicil to his will that promoted the two bastards to full Princes of the Blood. He also decreed that they were to sit on a Regency council and designated Maine the commander of the king’s household regiments and superintendent of Louis XV’s education, thus depriving Philippe II of effective power (the new regent had *parlement* annul his uncle’s will just a day after the king took his last breath, restoring the rights and privileges that were his due).³⁰

Orléans’ problems were not only factional. He was in line to govern a kingdom in crisis. From 1701 to 1714, France was embroiled in the War of the Spanish Succession, sparked by Louis XIV’s efforts to place his second-eldest grandson, the Duc d’Anjou, on the Spanish throne. Louis XIV ultimately succeeded in his quest, but not without massive losses: tens of thousands dead, and a treasury crippled by debt. On top of that, a particularly bad winter struck in 1709, leading to famine and surging food prices in the north and east of the country. Opposition to Louis XIV began to strengthen. Fénelon, the duc de Bourgone’s tutor, promoted reform through a less authoritarian form of kingship. Free-thinkers gathered at the salons of Mme de Lambert in Paris and the duchesse du Maine at Sceaux, asserting the rights of the aristocracy. Instability and unrest was growing; another *Fronde* became a distinct possibility.³¹

²⁹ Madame de Maintenon, Letter to the Princesse des Ursins, le 5 août 1714, *Lettres inédites de Madame de Maintenon et de Madame la Princesse des Ursins*, t. 3 (Paris: Bossange Frères, 1826), 95.

³⁰ On this history, see Petitfils, *Le Régent*, 266–312; Colin Jones, *The Great Nation: France from Louis XV to Napoleon* (London: Penguin, 2002), 28–39.

³¹ Laurent Lemarchard, *Paris ou Versailles? La monarchie française entre deux capitales, 1715–1723* (Paris: CTHS, 2014), 27–38.

As he was about to assume the Regency, then, Philippe II's grip on power was precarious: he not only had to assert his authority but reform a state on the verge of collapse. Scholars are divided about whether the wall paintings for the *galerie d'Énée* were begun in 1714 or 1715, the year of Philippe's ascension to the Regency.³² But even if it was initially conceived prior to the announcement of Louis XIV's will, only the last and most acute of the many challenges facing the Regent, the second campaign for the gallery clearly took part in an effort to shore up his legitimacy, offering a new image for a reformed, regenerated absolutist state. The subject already depicted in the gallery was well suited to the task. Seventeenth-century commentators on the poem, after all, often made explicit reference to its political ends as part of an effort to bolster the legitimacy of the Emperor Augustus. Renée Le Bossu, for example, wrote that the *Aeneid* "devait leur [les sujets d'Auguste] faire perdre cette vieille aversion qu'il avaient pour la monarchie, les persuader de la justice et du bon droit d'Auguste, leur ôter l'envie de s'opposer à ses dessin, et leur donner de l'amour et de la vénération pour ce prince."³³ The parallel with the Regent's desire to persuade his subjects to acquiesce to his new reign is striking, and surely was not lost on him, his artist, or visitors to the gallery. Le Bossu offered this summary of the epic: "Les dieux sauvent un prince de la ruine d'un puissant État, et le choisissent pour en conserver la religion, et pour rétablir un empire plus grand et plus glorieux que le premier."³⁴ What story could better have captured the regent's ambitions? The subject would have been particularly

³² Schnapper, "Antoine Coypel: La Galerie d'Énée au Palais-Royal," 35, argues that they were begun in 1714; Garnier, *Antoine Coypel, 1661–1722*, 170–172, dates the first paintings to 1715.

³³ René Le Bossu, *Traité du poème épique*, first ed. 1675 (Paris, 1708), 70. On the political uses of the epic under Louis XIV, see Kirchner, *Le héros épique*, 201–203.

³⁴ Le Bossu, *Traité du poème épique*, 72.

auspicious, since it was almost totally absent from Versailles and thus could be seen independently of the imagery of the Sun King.³⁵

The visual language of Coypel's first campaign, however, was not suited the regent's new needs. A new kind of history painting, one that engaged more fully with the aesthetic, political, and moral problems of Virgil's poem, was needed. The second round of paintings represents a far more ambitious project that responded to the demands of Philippe's new office. Located in what was now the center of the government, the gallery was to have a primarily civic and political function, establishing, during the precarious period after Louis XIV death, the regent's legitimacy and modeling a new vision of a reformed absolutist state. This is not to say that Coypel's aesthetic innovations were the result of conscious collusion between artist and patron—that he developed his strategies with the regent's reforms explicitly in mind. It is more appropriate to speak of a convergence between the artist's aesthetic project and future regent's political project, which were, it seems, elaborated largely independently. The commission gave Coypel, the most ambitious history painter of his generation, named Director the Academy in 1714 and Premier Peintre du Roi in 1715, an unrivaled opportunity to show his mettle as well. Large-scale, narrative mural paintings were rare in France. The most famous, and most ambitious, was Rubens's *Vie de Marie de Medicis*, a series of twenty-four paintings for the Palais Luxembourg that celebrated the life of Louis XIII's mother, herself a former regent, through an elaborate allegorical program. The gallery, however, had little immediate impact on French art, and another gallery celebrating the life of her assassinated husband, Henri IV, was planned but never executed due to the Queen Mother's deteriorating political situation.³⁶ The

³⁵ Néraudau, *L'Olympe du roi-soleil*, 308.

³⁶ Kirchner, *Le héros épique*, 99–103.

only cycle that could compare in ambition and scope was Le Brun's *Vie d'Alexandre*. The artist's most ambitious project up until that moment, it was supposed to have consisted of four massive military scenes punctuated by five other key moments from Alexander's life. Le Brun completed the military scenes, which became, through engravings after them, among his most famous works, but not the others; and the cycle, which Kirchner convincingly argues was destined for the *Petite Galerie* of the Louvre, was never installed.³⁷ When Le Brun turned his attention to Versailles, mural painting were abandoned in favor of ceiling painting, and narrative wall painting remained out of fashion, replaced by mirrors, or landscape paintings, or art collections in other princely residences throughout the rest of the seventeenth century.³⁸ Coypel, then, could succeed where his predecessors failed, putting forward a series that would not only bolster the legitimacy of the regent but also renew the French school of painting. The question, though, was what such a painting would look like.

The Crisis of the Hero

The most pressing problem confronting Coypel was the image of the hero, which, in the years around 1700, was undergoing dramatic changes. As we saw in the first chapter, in the last years of Louis XIV's reign, the gods and heroes of antiquity were cast aside in order to depict the king himself and events from his reign; mythology was relegated to the private domain, where it took on new meanings. Coypel was painting for Philippe after this shift. Louis XIV, the paradigmatic hero of the modern age, was supposed to be unsurpassable—what image of the hero, then, should the new regime adopt? Since the completion of the *galerie des Glaces*, Louis

³⁷ Ibid., 223–264.

³⁸ Schnapper, "Antoine Coypel: La Galerie d'Énée au Palais-Royal," 39.

XIV's image had tarnished considerably; confronted with multiple crises, Louis Le Grand had become an unpopular ruler, and his image could hardly serve the needs of the new regime. A new imagery was needed, but it was not obvious what this imagery would look like. Though Philippe deployed his own image frequently, both in print and paint (Figure 80), with few accomplishments that could compare to his uncle's, a gallery that commemorated events from his own life would have been difficult to pull off. The example of Marie de' Medici, another regent, must also have loomed large in Philippe and Coypel's minds. The work, so explicit in its political message, did nothing to bolster the Queen Mother's claims to power, and soon she was sent into exile. Representing Philippe as himself on the walls could have resulted in a serious misfire.³⁹

Reinstating the classical hero to in the public representation of the sovereign provided a reasonable solution to Philippe's representational dilemma. But it was not a question of simply reverting to the old order, in which gods and heroes and men were linked by mystical similitude. A work like Pietro da Cortona's painted version of the *Aeneid* in the Gallery in the Palazzo Pamphili at the Piazza Navonna in Rome, which Coypel could have studied during his time in the city, exemplifies the old mentality (Figure 81). Commissioned by Donna Olimpia

³⁹ Louis XIV himself was not immune from accusations in his *Galerie des Glaces*. The architect Leonhard Christoph Sturm, who visited Versailles in 1699, wrote for example, "So sind nun fünf grosse Felder in dieser Galerie zwischen den Ribben eingetheilet, und in allen denselbigen ist der König in den Wolcken als ein Jupiter vorgestellet, und recht schimpflich vor die jenige Nationen mit denen er Krieg gerführet hat, daß man sich kaum genug verwundern kan, wie dieser weise König solche gar zu enorme Vergötteung und Flatterie hat täglich vor Augen sehen können." *Leonard Christoph Sturms durch Einen großen Theil von Teutschland und den Niedelanden bis nach Paris gemachte Architectonische Reise-Anmerkungen, zu der vollständigen Goldmannischen Bau-Kunst Viten Theil als en Anneze gethan, Damit So viel in des Auctoris Vermögen stehet, nichts an der Vollständigkeit des Wercks ermangle* (first ed. 1718; new ed. Augsburg, 1760), 121; quoted in Hendrik Ziegler, *Louis XIV et ses ennemis. Image, propagande et contestation* (Paris: Centre allemand d'histoire de l'art, Centre du recherche du château de Versailles, and Presses Universitaires de Vincennes), 378.

Maidalchini, sister-in-law to Pope Innocent X, Cortona's gallery celebrates the Pamphili family's divinely sanctioned legitimacy. Through a mystical-allegorical reading of the *Aeneid*, the story of Aeneas and the founding Rome is presented as the prefiguration of the history of the Catholic church: Aeneas's journey in the gallery lays the groundwork not only for the foundation of the Roman Empire but for the papacy as well. The Pamphili family are the culminating point of the story, with Pope Innocent X shown as the Christian fulfillment of Aeneas's destiny.⁴⁰ Any incompatibility between paganism and Christianity was only superficial. A deeper order of things linked them in a continuous chain across history.

At the *galerie d'Énée*, the hero would have to play a different role. Though the older mode of mytho-allegorical representation continued—Nicolas de Largillière's *Le Régent vainqueur de la conspiration sous la figure d'Apollon Pythien* (Figure 82) is a case in point—the crisis is evident in the portrayals of the hero in the more ambitious space of the gallery. Aeneas here is not, as Scott observed, an unambiguous cipher for Philippe,⁴¹ because it was in fact becoming impossible to read Aeneas as a convincing cipher for anyone. The values that supported the meaning and function of epic painting in service of the state had changed dramatically. At the time Coypel was painting the walls of the Palais Royal, Madame Dacier was publishing a philological reading of another classical epic, Homer's *Iliad*. The *Aeneid* was not immune from the same shift. No longer an allegorical key to the order of the world, it became only a work of literature, written in a particular time and place, according to values and customs fundamentally

⁴⁰ Rudolf Preimesberger, "Pontifex romanus per Aeneam praesignatus. Die Galerie Pamphilj und ihre Fresken," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* XVI (1976): 221–287; Ingrid Roland, "Vergil and the Pamphili Family in Piazza Navonna, Rome," in *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*, ed. Joseph Farrell and Michael C. J. Putnam (Chichester/Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 253–269.

⁴¹ Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 195.

different from the late seventeenth century.⁴² Already in 1668, Jean Regnault de Segrais remarked in his translation of Virgil's poem:

Mais pour en juger dignement [le poème], il faut aussi entrer dans les sentiments des Romains, et se représenter la gloire et la grandeur des Césars. Car ceux qui jugent d'un auteur ancien, des mœurs et des opinions des siècles passés; et qui les veulent soumettre au goût, aux mœurs et aux sentiments de nôtre siècle, n'en jugent pas mieux que ceux qui reprendraient...quelque vieil auteur français de ne parler pas comme l'on parle aujourd'hui.⁴³

By the eighteenth century, with the *querelle d'Homère*, such sentiments became only more acute.

The old cast of gods and heroes no longer had the same currency they once had.

Given this shift in the status of the hero, Coypel had to devise new pictorial strategies to make Aeneas relevant again. Again, Coypel had to look for alternatives to examples of epic decoration available to him. Rubens' *galerie de Marie de Médicis* and Le Brun's *galerie des Glaces*, as well as Cortona's Gallery Pamphili, relied on a complex language of allegory to communicate their messages, abstractly and indirectly. In Le Brun's *La Franche-Comté conquise pour la seconde fois* at the *Galerie des Glaces* (Figure 16), for example, Louis XIV's face is totally impassive, and though he gestures to direct the action around him, he is not directly involved in it but stands rather outside the temporal logic of the image. In an increasingly literal-minded world, however, such an allegorical treatment of the hero seemed more to obscure meaning rather than reveal deeper truths. We saw in the first chapter de Piles' criticism of Le Brun's allegorical language. Writing twenty years later, the Abbé Du Bos was even harsher, on Le Brun as well as Rubens:

On voit dans la galerie de Versailles beaucoup de morceaux de peinture dont le sens enveloppé trop mystérieusement, échappe à la pénétration des plus subtils, et passe les lumières des plus instruits. Tout le monde est informé des principales actions de la vie du feu roi qui fait sujet de tous les tableaux....Néanmoins, il rest encore une infinité d'allégories et

⁴² Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient*.

⁴³ Jean Regnault de Segrais, Preface to *Traduction de l'Eneïde de Virgile par M. de Segrais* (Paris, 1668), 8.

des symboles que les plus lettrés ne sauraient deviner. On s'est vu réduit à mettre sur les tables de ce magnifique vaisseau des livres qui les expliquassent, et qui donnassent, pour ainsi dire, le net de ces chiffres. On peut dire la même chose de la galerie du Luxembourg.⁴⁴

Though Rubens and Le Brun's galleries depicted modern subjects, their pictorial language was bound to the same worldview that saw a natural correspondence between antique rulers and classical heroes. Now, however, allegory amounted to little more than a pedantic game. And worse, without a well-known source to even make them legible, they risked becoming meaningless. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, preference had shifted decidedly towards a more direct kind of history painting, clear and easily intelligible.

In looking for models for this kind of painting, Coypel could have looked towards another of Le Brun's projects, his incomplete but nonetheless celebrated *Vie d'Alexandre*, of similar scale and ambition to his own project. Though they were clearly intended, in a larger sense, as allegorical portraits of Louis XIV, these earlier works, in contrast to his paintings for the *galerie des Glaces*, emphasized action. They presented a clear narrative of key episodes from the life of the Macedonian king, anchored around three massive battle scenes and a triumphant entry. Thomas Kirchner has argued that Le Brun's series was the high point in the elaboration of a new kind of history painting, "epic painting," that gave visual form to the king's pretensions to be the source of all decisions and actions, the center around which everything else was subordinated.⁴⁵ Thus, in *Le Passage du Granique* (Figure 83), in spite of the chaos around him, Alexander is instantly recognizable; bathed in light and placed at the very heart of the composition, the only clearly visible face in the painting, he directs the onslaught of soldiers flowing around him as they advance towards victory.

⁴⁴ Abbé Du Bos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, t. 1 (Paris, 1719), 191–192.

⁴⁵ Kirchner, *Le héros épique*, 223–265.

Towards a New Hero: Temporality, Theatricality, Subjectivity

But by the time Coypel was painting this model, too, had become unviable. Active heroism was coming under increasing suspicion. A new, pessimistic outlook influenced by Jansenism led to what Paul Bénichou called the “démolition du héros.” The warrior hero celebrated by Corneille, always in pursuit of *gloire*, was, writers like La Rouchfoucauld and La Bruyère repeated, in fact feeding only his own vanity, his *amour propre*.⁴⁶

Coypel’s heroes in the *galerie d’Énée* betray the effects of this shift. As Scott observes, “On the whole, the portrayal of emotion in response to given actions, rather than the execution of the heroic deeds themselves, seems to have preoccupied the painter more nearly.” Aside from *La Mort de Turnus*, one of the smaller, vertical-format paintings, none of the works show fighting; we see nothing like François Perrier’s *Attaque des harpies*, another episode from the *Aeneid* painted almost hundred years earlier at the Hôtel Lambert (Figure 84). Instead of battles, the three large-format paintings in the gallery show Aeneas appearing before Dido, Aeneas in the Underworld, and the death of Pallas. The remaining smaller paintings depict Aeneas carrying his father from Troy, the death of Dido, and Jupiter appearing before Aeneas.

In the absence of action, Coypel devised new narrative strategies to put forward a new kind of hero, and to understand these we must examine their place in early modern debates about narrative and temporality. Le Brun’s model of epic painting was based, as Kirchner has shown, in debates about whether tragedy or epic provided the most suitable model for pictorial narrative.⁴⁷ The most famous of these took place between Andrea Sacchi and Pietro da Cortona

⁴⁶ Bénichou, *Morales du Grand Siècle*, 128–148. See also Morrissey, *The Economy of Glory*, 43–54.

⁴⁷ Kirchner, *Le héros épique*.

at the Accademia di San Luca in 1636.⁴⁸ Against Sacchi's claim that painting should follow tragedy and feature unified action and a small number of figures, Cortonna defended a more complex narrative structure, based on the epic. Compositions, he argued, should be organized around independent but linked episodes that supplement a principal subject. Coypel reflected on the depiction of multiple episodes in his lectures, but his thoughts about them are ambiguous. "Non seulement un grand peintre," he told the Academy, "ne doit rien faire entrer dans son sujet qui ne concoure avec l'action principale de son tableau, mais il faut que tout contribue à en augmenter encore la force et le caractère. Tout ce qu'on ajoute au sujet doit accroître et embellir l'ouvrage, mais le grand ne veut rien de superflu."⁴⁹ What are the limits of an element that "concoure avec l'action principale?" And what kind of element would "contribue à en augmenter encore la force et le caractère?" Not surprisingly, while some of the vertical, smaller-format paintings, especially *La Mort de Didon*, seem to follow Sacchi's position to an extent, others are more complex. In *Énée portant Anchise hors de Troie*, for instance, Coypel shows both the moment when Anchises raises his eyes to heaven in prayer to the gods (II, 896–920) and the moment that immediately follows, when his son hoists him onto his shoulders (II, 921–942), collapsing them into a single scene. There is, however, no apparent tension between the two events—unity of action is preserved. At the same time, the scene is hardly convincing as a single moment in time—the illusion of a single action interrupted, a specific instant, is absent, and the

⁴⁸ See Puttfarcken, *Roger de Piles' Theory of Art*, 16–21; Rudolph Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1600–1750, Vol. II High Baroque*, rev. Joseph Connors and Jennifer Montague (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), 86–88; Kirchner, *Le héros épique*, 141–164; Emanuelle Hénin, *Ut pictura theatrum. Théâtre et peinture de la Renaissance italienne au classicisme français* (Geneva: Droz, 2003), 411–415; Jonathan Unglaub, *Poussin and the Poetics of Painting: Pictorial Narrative and the Legacy of Tasso* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 185–188.

⁴⁹ Coypel, *Discours prononcez dans les conférences de l'académie royale de peinture et sculpture*, 68.

scene seems to exist outside the normal progress of time. The painting betrays a temporal structure that fits neatly with neither side of the Sacchi-Cortonna debate.

The unusual temporality of Coypel's paintings is most clearly on display in *Énée aux enfers*. In composing the scene, Coypel drew heavily from Poussin's *Israélites recueillant la manne dans le désert* (Figure 85). Most strikingly, he has used the figure of Moses, with his finger pointing towards the heavens (itself adapted from the figure of Plato in Raphael's *School of Athens*), for Anchises, placing him, like Moses, in the middle foreground, just left of the center. Similarly, the famous grouping of the old, starving woman suckling milk from her daughter in the foreground on the left has become two lovers enjoying the dulcet sounds of Orpheus's lyre as they lounge on the banks of the Lethe. In fact, Coypel has coopted almost the entire compositional structure of Poussin's painting, constructing his work out of groups of figures linked in a chain that winds back into the middle-foreground of the landscape, leading the eye to the principal figures in the center. That Coypel availed himself of Poussin's example is not surprising, since the painting, one the most celebrated in the Royal Collection, was widely admired in the Academy for the way it coordinated a large number of figures into a complex yet legible composition. As Henry Testelin wrote, echoing Le Brun's analysis of the painting, "Quant à la disposition des figures, divers groupes détachés les uns des autres composaient de grandes parties si distinctes que la vue s'y peut promener sans peine, et pourtant si bien liés l'un à l'autre qu'ils unissent pour faire un beau tout ensemble."⁵⁰ He found it particularly remarkable that "l'auteur de cet ouvrage avait dans un sujet de désordre trouvé le moyen de faire paraître beaucoup de monde bien ordonné et sans aucun confusion, ayant pu surtout placer son héros en

⁵⁰ Henry Testelin, *Sentiments des plus habiles peintres du temps sur la pratique de la peinture et sculpture, recueillis et mis en table de préceptes avec six discours académiques*, in *Conférences de l'Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, 1648–1681*, t. I, v. 2, ed. Lichtenstein and Michel (Paris: ENSBA, 2006), 733.

un lieu éminent où la vue est conduite par les actions de toutes les figures.”⁵¹ Poussin’s picture, as understood in the Academy, provided Coypel with an exemplary model for directing attention towards the central hero.

But even though he adopted the composition of Poussin’s painting, Coypel altered its most notable, and controversial, feature: its narrative structure, indebted, as Jonathan Unglaub has shown, to the epic narrative model.⁵² Famously, the painting shows the state of the Israelites both before and after God delivers the manna from heaven, depicting on the left their hunger and misery and on the right their joy at the deliverance of God’s bounty. The complex temporality of the painting occasioned much comment in the Academy, reviving the Sacchi-Cortonna debate. During Le Brun’s lecture on the work, one of the academicians objected to Poussin’s violation of the unity of time, complaining that it did not represent the biblical narrative faithfully. The Premier peintre, however, came to Poussin’s defense:

À cela M. Le Brun repartit qu’il n’en est pas de la peinture comme de l’histoire. Qu’un historien se fait entendre par un arrangement de paroles et une suite de discours qui forme une image des choses qu’il veut dire et représente successivement telle action qu’il lui plaît. Mais le peintre n’ayant qu’un instant dans lequel il doit prendre la chose qu’il veut figurer, pour représenter ce qui s’est passé dans ce moment-là, il est quelquefois nécessaire qu’il joigne ensemble beaucoup d’incidents qui aient précédé, afin de faire comprendre le sujet qu’il expose, sans quoi ceux qui verraient son ouvrage ne seraient pas mieux instruits que si cet historien, au lieu de raconter tout le sujet de son histoire, se contentait d’en dire seulement la fin.⁵³

It was, he asserted, entirely acceptable to depict multiple episodes in a single painting; because painting, unlike language, cannot represent a succession of events, they must be represented simultaneously so that painting can have a beginning, middle, and, end. Another academician

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Unglaub, *Poussin and the Poetics of Painting*, 172–197.

⁵³ Charles Le Brun, “La manne dans le désert de Poussin” (5 novembre, 1667), in *Conférences de l’Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture, 1648–1681*, t. 1, v. 1, 172.

validated Le Brun's observation by appealing to a poetic concept common to both epic and tragedy, the *peripeteia*, defined by Aristotle as "le retournement de l'action en sens contraire"⁵⁴:

Pour représenter parfaitement l'histoire qu'il traite, il avait besoin des parties nécessaire à un poème, afin de passer de l'infortune au bonheur. C'est pourquoi l'on voit que ces groupes de figures, qui font diverses actions, sont comme autant d'épisodes qui servent à ce que l'on nomme péripéties et de moyens pour faire connaître le changement arrivé aux Israélites quand ils sortent d'une extrême misère et qu'il rend dans un état plus heureux.⁵⁵

In his reworking of Poussin's painting, however, Coypel rejects the dramatic reversal from one state to another in a single scene and instead develops a different narrative structure. The subject is ostensibly the moment when Anchises, having explained how souls are reincarnated, shows Aeneas and Sybil the souls of the future heroes, kings, and emperors of Rome: "Alors dans le milieu de ces heureux esprits,/ Le vieillard conduisant la Sibylle, et son fils,/ Se place sur un tertre, et leur nomme et leur montre/ Chacun selon le rang qu'il s'offre à sa rencontre."⁵⁶ Depicting such a scene, however, was no simple matter. Should he show them before or after they ascend the mound? Which soul should he show coming forward? Coypel solves these problems by depicting this all at once. Anchises's gesture upward indicates he is explaining the ascension of souls as they are reincarnated, yet he, Aeneas, and Sybil are already on the mound where they have moved after he has completed his explanation. Moreover, rather than show one particular soul coming forward, Coypel presents them all. In doing so, he makes it difficult to identify them, since Virgil does not always describe each of them in detail. Some,

⁵⁴ Aristote, *Poétique*, ed. Michel Magnien (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1990), XI, 1452 b, 22–23, p. 101

⁵⁵ Le Brun, "La manne dans le désert de Poussin," 174.

⁵⁶ *Traduction de l'Eneïde de Virgile par M^r. de Segrais* (Paris, 1668), livre VI, p. 257 (lines 1009–1013).

though, are recognizable: Numa, with his “barbe chenue,”⁵⁷ holding the sacred vessels in his hands, nearest Anchises; next to him Ancus, “Le vain Ancus . . . , dont l’âme populaire,/ Aux applaudissements déjà semble se plaire”⁵⁸; and Camillus holding the standards in the middle of the pack. The precise identities of these men, however, are not particularly important. They only set off the most important figures, who are all easily recognizable and connected by a network of gestures. In the center stands Marcellus and next to him, the last figure described in Virgil’s text, the doomed Marcellus the younger, “un jeune guerrier d’une insigne beauté,/ Plus éclatant que l’or dont rayonnent ses armes;/ Mais l’air sombre, et l’œil triste avec tant de charmes.”⁵⁹ Next to them stands Augustus himself, proud and confident, pointing towards the wrestling Romulus and Remus. In Virgil’s text, only Romulus, the founder of Rome, is described, but, likely for the sake of clarity, he adopts the standard iconography of the wrestling twins. In this way, all of the most important elements of the narrative are shown together in one scene, linked together in a chain of gestures that exhibits the most important figures in Roman’s imperial destiny.

Although, like Poussin, Coypel portrays multiple moments at once, they do not violate unity of time in the way that Poussin’s painting does. Rather than narrative progression, he gives us narrative synthesis. Part of this has to do with Coypel’s source: book VI of the *Aeneid* has no peripeteia. Instead Virgil takes the reader through a series of *tableaux*, as though we are walking through the underworld with Aeneas, seeing, through hypotyposis, each scene unfold before our eyes. But it is, I believe, precisely this quality of the text that attracted Coypel and allowed him to develop the painting’s unusual temporality. Here, different moments exist together in the same

⁵⁷ Ibid., 260 (line 1090).

⁵⁸ Ibid., 261 (lines 1097–1098).

⁵⁹ Ibid., 263 (lines 1168–1170).

space, but spatial unity and temporal unity are not in tension. This is because little is actually happening in the painting: the figures line themselves up, as if for our gaze, stopping whatever they were doing.

From this perspective, it is difficult not to see in Coypel's gesture—invoking Poussin's painting so explicitly only to smooth over its most notable feature—as a conscious, perhaps even polemical, repudiation of Poussin's narrative model. Coypel's predecessors Poussin and Le Brun searched for ways to make painting conform to Aristotle's *Poetics* and thus have a plot—a beginning, middle, and end that could be “read.” “Lisez l'histoire,” Poussin told his patron Chantelou in a letter accompanying *Israélites recueillant la manne dans le désert*, “et lisez le tableau afin de connaître si chaque chose est approprié au sujet.”⁶⁰ Around 1700, however, attitudes towards pictorial narrative were becoming more restrictive. Du Bos, for example, stated that “le tableau qui représente une action ne nous fait voir qu'un instant de sa durée.”⁶¹ In response to this change, Coypel created a new pictorial narrative strategy that dispensed with matching a textual plot, either by representing a single or multiple moments altogether, and presented uniquely pictorial scenes that would not exist on stage or in the narrative of a poem. Even in paintings, unlike *Énée aux enfers*, that show action, the action seems to take place outside the normal progression of time; the elements of the painting are made to express as much information about the subject as possible, compressing a complex set of circumstances and emotions, which unravel slowly in text, into a single moment.

Poussin, of course, experimented with a variety of narrative strategies in his painting beyond those discussed in the Academy, and in fact his only paintings depicting the *Aeneid*, the

⁶⁰ Nicolas Poussin, “Lettre du 28 avril 1639,” in *Lettres et propos sur l'art*, 45.

⁶¹ Du Bos, *Réflexions critiques*, 79.

two versions of *Vénus montrant des armes à Énée* (Figures 86 and 87), betrays a strikingly similar temporal structure to Coypel's *Énée aux enfers*. Here, Poussin compresses various parts of a longer narrative into a single image, (Book VIII) showing Tiberinus, but without the kind of emplotment we see in the *Manne*. The effect, however, is entirely different from Coypel's painting. In Poussin's image, the figures are arranged as though in a frieze, static and disconnected from each other, like pieces of a sentence. They are oriented towards us, but are meant to be considered intellectually—according to the kind of seeing that Poussin called the “prospect,” “un office de raison qui depend,” he wrote, “de trois choses, savoir de l'œil, du rayon visuel, et de la distance de l'œil à l'objet: et c'est de cette connaissance dont il serait à souhaiter que ceux qui se mêlent de donner leur jugement fussent bien instruits.”⁶² Coypel's paintings demand a different kind of seeing, predicated on a more visceral face-to-face exchange. These are scenes meant not to be read but beheld; they are constructions *for* a beholder, and it is on these grounds that they seem to take place outside the normal progress of time.

Take, for example, *La Funeraille de Pallas*, which Coypel has based loosely on Poussin's *Mort de Germanicus* (Figure 88). This work by Poussin, unlike the others we have seen, hews to a tragic narrative model, with the unities of time, action, and space preserved as the figures appear engrossed by the death of the general. In Coypel's reworking, however, the subtle, stoical reactions of the figures in Poussin's painting have been transformed into a scene of over-the-top grief; even the horse on the left seems afflicted. Thus, where *La Mort de Germanicus* we seem to be intruding on a private moment, excluded from the affective drama of the scene, the figures in *La Funeraille de Pallas* seem to have stopped to position themselves towards us and amplify their emotions to draw us into the picture. Similarly, *La Mort de Turnus*, which, despite its

⁶² Poussin, “Lettre à Sublet de Noyers,” in *Lettres et propos sur l'art*. ed. Anthony Blunt (Paris: Hermann, 1989), 63.

ostensible subject of the pivotal moment when Aeneas is about to kill Turnus, fails to convince as an instant caught in time. Both Aeneas and Turnus are only nominally engaging with each other. Their gestures and expression are directed not towards each other but at a point outside the picture, as they orient their bodies improbably so that they are parallel with the picture plane. The scene's excess of gesture and expression distills the emotional charge of the episode into an easily consumable spectacle.

Énée portant Anchise hors de Troie provides a final case in point. The rigorous pyramid into which they have arranged themselves is presented deliberately for a spectator facing them. While it would be hard to imagine a group spontaneously arranging themselves this way in real life, the arrangement serves to make the already exaggerated reactions of the figures even more legible and establishes a clear hierarchy of importance. In this light, even though none of the figures in Coypel's painting actually gazes towards the viewer, their interactions and disposition manifest an acknowledgement that they are being viewed. By contrast, in treatments of the subject by Barocci (Figure 89), which Coypel could have studied in the Borghese collections when he lived in Rome between 1671 and 1676,⁶³ and by Simon Vouet (Figure 90), the scene is presented as sufficient unto itself. In Barocci's version, the figures, overwhelmed by melancholy, have retreated into themselves, disconnected from each other as they contemplate the destruction of their city. In Vouet's painting, Aeneas' family are absorbed within each other, as Aeneas, Ascanius, and Creusa gaze tenderly at the weary, defeated face of Anchises. Despite their difference, in both cases, the viewer is unacknowledged, excluded from the scene. Coypel's figures, on the other hand, are performing for the beholder.

⁶³ On Coypel's years in Rome, see Garnier, *Antoine Coypel*, 3–17. The grouping of Anchises, Aeneas, and Ascanius from Barocci's painting was also used for the frontispiece of the 1668 edition of Segrais's translation of the poem.

At the *galerie d'Énée*, what we are dealing with, in other words, are *theatrical* paintings. By this, I mean theatrical not in terms of adapting the temporal structure of the tragedy, as Sacchi did, but in the paintings' address to the spectator, as described by Michael Fried.⁶⁴ The epithet would hardly surprise Coypel, given that the artist advised his colleagues to turn to theater for models⁶⁵:

Les spectacles me paraissent fort nécessaires à ceux qui veulent se perfectionner dans la peinture, et je ne suis pas surpris de ce que les peintres et les sculpteurs de l'antiquité qui voulaient se distinguer par rapport à l'imitation des passions, dans les gestes et les attitudes, allaient toujours étudier dans les spectacles publics.⁶⁶

Above all, Coypel learned from the theater to calibrate gesture and expression for maximum impact for his audience. For Fried, such theatricality, and the artifice it entails, is illegitimate, a betrayal of the very essence of painting. It is an attitude, as Fried himself makes clear, rooted in Diderot's call for greater naturalism in theater and painting in which the presence of the spectator must be denied. Such anti-theatricality has long colored opinion of Coypel's efforts in history painting as epitomizing the decline of Le Brun's classicism into decadence and irrelevance. For instance, discussing history painting around 1700, of which Coypel was the paradigmatic example, one art historian laments that the figures became "like a troupe of actors performing a play whose meaning they do not understand. Unable to find any sense in the whole, they overact

⁶⁴ Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980). On the influence of the theater on painting in general, see Hénin, *Ut pictura theatrum*; for more specific case on the artistic challenges of adopting the tragic idiom to painting, see Thomas Puttfarcken, *Titian and Tragic Painting* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005).

⁶⁵ The influence of the theater on Coypel is discussed in Thomas Kirchner, *L'expression des passions*, 103–107, 121; it also been the subject of an exhibition and an accompanying catalogue: *Le Théâtre des Passions (1697-1759). Cléopâtre, Médée, Iphigénie*, ed. Baldine Chavanne (Paris : Éditions Fage, 2011).

⁶⁶ Coypel, *Discours*, 163.

each episode and each part in an incoherent manner.”⁶⁷ Though it would be hard to deny that Coypel’s figures appear to us as overwrought, to dismiss them this way would be to see them, anachronistically, through the lens of the later Enlightenment polemics, in light of values foreign to Coypel and his contemporaries. Indeed, Coypel was well aware of what he was doing. “Je sais que pour animer ce qui n’a point de vie, et pour donner de l’action et du mouvement à des personnages qui n’en ont que l’apparence et qui sont immobiles, tels que sont les figures d’un tableau” he told the Academy, “on doit quelquefois exagérer.”⁶⁸ Coypel was engaged knowingly and intelligently with the art and theories of his predecessors. Rather than seeing it as a sign of decline or decadence, we would do better to understand his theatricality as seeking to elicit an experience of painting different from the kind demanded by Poussin and Le Brun.

This was an experience based above all on emotion. Though he understood the importance of rendering the corporeal presence and vivacity achieved by Titian and Rubens, Coypel, unlike his friend de Piles and his rival La Fosse, never ceded the primacy of expression to visual effects.⁶⁹ “La perfection de la peinture,” he affirmed, “est de représenter les conceptions de l’âme, et de frapper les sens par les gestes et les mouvements du corps.”⁷⁰ The passions, expressed through the movements of the face and body, remained central to his art, and thus, unlike for de Piles, the concept of *ut pictura poesis* continued to hold sway: “Car quoique beaucoup de personnes croient que la perfection de la peinture ne consiste que dans le rapport et la ressemblance aux objets visibles de la nature, elle ne se borne pas là, elle doit joindre à la

⁶⁷ Allen, *French Painting in the Golden Age*, 191.

⁶⁸ Coypel, *Discours*, 160.

⁶⁹ On Coypel’s treatment of the expression of the passions, see Kirchner, *L’expression des passions*, 98–121.

⁷⁰ Coypel, *Discours*, 154.

fidélité de l’histoire toute l’élévation et le sublime de la poésie.”⁷¹ “Le grand peintre,” he asserted, as Du Bos would later do in similar terms, “doit être poète...; car la peinture et la poésie sont deux sœurs qui se ressemblent si fort en toutes choses qu’elles le prêtent alternativement l’une à l’autre leur secours.”⁷² But where for earlier French artists *ut pictura poesis* meant emulating plot, for Coypel it entailed matching poetry’s affective power. His temporal compression, what we might call his theatrical temporality, heightened the sense of subjective connection between painting and beholder.

Coypel’s narrative strategies are rooted in a new conception of aesthetic experience, articulated most clearly by the Abbé Du Bos. For Du Bos, it was the representation of the passions that fired the experience of art. By substituting fictive objects for real objects, painting and poetry incite in us fantom passions, which, unlike real passions, give us pleasure instead of pain. These fantom passions are created in the spectator (or reader) by identifying with a character and his or her emotions; the more intense and legible the emotions represented, the more intense and pleasurable the experience. Thus, when explaining the superiority of history painting by Poussin and Rubens over genre and landscape, Dubos said it was not the representation of action, as Félibien did, that marked their greatness but their representations of the passions: “ils y mettent des hommes agités de passions afin de réveiller les nôtres et de nous attacher par cette agitation.”⁷³

Coypel’s own thoughts on painting are strikingly similar to Du Bos’ more famous theory. Painting, he said, “doit trouver des ressorts qui remuent les passions, et qui inspirent à son gré la

⁷¹ Ibid., 2.

⁷² Ibid, 62.

⁷³ Du Bos, *Réflexions critiques*, 49–50.

joie, la tristesse, la douceur, la colère et l'horreur."⁷⁴ According to the artist, "Le grand peintre... doit... tantôt inspirer la tristesse jusqu'à tirer des larmes, tantôt exciter les ris, enflammer de colère, et forcer les spectateurs de témoigner leur admiration et leur étonnement, en exprimant non seulement les passions, mais encore en les excitant" This, he proclaimed, was "le sublime de la peinture et le plus grand mérite du peintre."⁷⁵

The wall paintings for the *galerie d'Énée* are perhaps the clearest expression of this new ideal. Rather than aiding the spectator to decipher a story—with which viewers were, presumably, already quite familiar—the representation of the passions here serves primarily to give the spectator access to the emotional content of the scene depicted. Put in terms of the aristotelian poetic model, he focuses not on the peripeteia but the "pathetic event," "une action qui provoque destruction ou douleur, comme les agonies présentées sur la scène, les douleurs très vive, les blessures et toutes les choses du même genre."⁷⁶ By transforming Poussin's "epic" compositional structure into a spectacle in which temporal difference is collapsed, Coypel heightens the affective impact of the scene. He uses Poussin's example not to advance a narrative but to lead the eye towards painting's affective heart. Every gesture in *Énée aux enfers*, for example, helps lead the gaze to Aeneas, standing just off-center; the spectator, invited by the outward gaze of Sybil, sees with him the preview of his people's glorious future, as the eye

⁷⁴ Coypel, *Discours*, 2.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁷⁶ *Poétique*, XI, 1452 b, 13–17, p. 102. Thus, in his lectures, Coypel advised that the *Grand Goût* should, for maximum power, be paired with the *pathétique*: "Quand dans le choix d'un sujet on peut au grand, joindre le pathétique, on en doit attendre un succès heureux. Quoique le grand frappe l'esprit et le goût, il n'est pas permis à tout le monde d'en sentir les beautés; mais quand les passions y sont jointes, et qu'elles sont maniées avec force, elles font un effet general sur tous les spectateurs. Le pathétique gagne le cœur, plus promptement que le grand ne touche l'esprit. Joignez à cela que l'on peut frapper l'esprit, sans toucher le cœur; et qu'on ne peut toucher le cœur sans aller à l'esprit." Coypel, *Discours*, 68.

follows his and Anchises' gestures towards the other heroes below them. The smiling, joyous figures around them do not provide a narrative pivot but instead augment the celebratory mood, modeling for us something of the emotional tenor of the moment. The effect is similar in *Énée et Achate apparaissent à Didon*, which also adopts the chain-like compositional structure of Poussin's *Manne*. Poussin and Le Brun used subsidiary figures to advance a narrative, but Coypel uses them to heighten the spectator's response to the hero's sudden appearance. "Si vous placez, auprès du héros dont vous voulez faire briller la majesté, des gens soumis, dans l'admiration et le respect, vous en augmenterez encore la dignité,"⁷⁷ Coypel advised the Academy. Du Bos, too, approved of using such figures to heighten the emotional impact of the scene. "[L]a peinture," he asserted, "se plaît à traiter des sujets où elle puisse introduire un grand nombre de personnages intéressés à l'action....L'émotion des assistants les lie suffisamment à une action, dès que cette action les agite."⁷⁸ This, according to Du Bos, accounted for painting's greater power than poetry, giving the spectator a larger range of models with which to identify. Far from being a negative value, theatricality's orientation towards the viewer opened up new possibilities of identification and response.

In this way, the gallery amounted to a manifesto of what painting could do, a call for a new kind of history painting. Poussin's development of the *tableau*, as Puttfarken has argued, entailed a certain loss. Poussin presented a self-sufficient world, in which pictorial order is concerned with internal relationships that appeals primarily to the intellect.⁷⁹ Coypel, taking Poussin's pictorial idiom based in the passions, re-orientes painting towards the viewer, eliciting a reaction

⁷⁷ Coypel, *Discours*, 158.

⁷⁸ Du Bos, *Réflexions critiques*, 93.

⁷⁹ Thomas Puttfarken, *The Discovery of Pictorial Composition: Theories of Visual Order in Painting 1400–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 235.

prior to, and more powerful than, the sober response demanded by Poussin's pictures. The *histoire* is no longer closed within itself but now implicates the beholder. In this sense, his work's theatricality has its roots in Racine's tragic idiom, which placed new emphasis on his character's *sensibilité* and his audience's emotional reaction to it.⁸⁰ (It is no coincidence that Coypel painted scenes two of Racine's plays, *Athalie chassée du temple* in 1696 and *L'évanouissement d'Esther* in 1697.) Du Bos, also heavily influenced by Racinian tragedy, asserted that painting affected its audience more powerfully than poetry:

Je crois que le pouvoir de la peinture est plus grand sur les hommes que celui de la poésie, et j'appuie mon sentiment sur deux raisons. La première est que la peinture agit sur nous par le sens de la vue. La seconde est que la peinture n'emploie pas des signes artificiels ainsi que le fait la poésie, mais bien des signes naturels. C'est avec des signes naturels que la peinture fait ses imitations.⁸¹

Only tragedy had greater power, but this, he maintained, was only because of tragedy's greater temporal range:

Une tragédie renferme une infinité de tableaux. Le peintre qui fait un tableau du sacrifice d'Iphigénie, ne nous représente sur la toile qu'un instant de l'action. La tragédie de Racine met sous nos yeux plusieurs instants de cette action, et ces différents incidents se rendent réciproquement les uns les autres plus pathétiques. Le poète nous présente successivement, pour ainsi dire, cinquante tableaux qui nous conduisent comme par degrés à cette émotion extrême, qui fait couler nos larmes. Cinquante scènes qui sont dans une tragédie doivent donc nous toucher plus qu'une seule scène peinte dans un tableau ne saurait faire. Un tableau ne représente même qu'un instant d'une scène. Ainsi un poème entier nous émeut plus qu'un tableau, bien qu'un tableau nous émeut plus qu'une scène qui représenterait le même événement, si cette scène était détachée des autres, et si elle était lue sans que nous eussions rien vu de ce qui l'a précédée. Le tableau ne livre qu'un assaut à notre âme, au lieu qu'un poème l'attaque durant long-temps avec des armes toujours nouvelles.⁸²

Strikingly, what Du Bos admires in tragedy is not the movement of plot, which Aristotle says is the source of its emotional power, but its presentation of affecting *tableaux*, a succession of

⁸⁰ Sylvaine Guyot, *Racine et le corps tragique* (Paris: PUF, 2014).

⁸¹ Du Bos, *Réflexions critiques*, 375.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 384–385.

scenes calibrated to touch the spectator. On this score, Coypel's gallery, each *tableau* of which expands the temporality of the action beyond the "instant de sa durée" to which Du Bos says is limited to painting, could approach the range and power of tragedy. Moving painting from the ceiling to the walls, for the first time in a major French decorative cycle since Rubens' *Vie de Marie de Médicis*, Coypel put forward a cycle that addressed the audience as theater does, in a series of monumental *tableaux*.⁸³ Its seven paintings did not advance a plot so much as offer seven spectacles of heightened emotion in which spectators could absorb themselves, making familiar episodes into visceral experiences.

This was the innovation of Coypel proposed during his second campaign for *galerie d'Énée*: he modernized both an outmoded genre and the figure of the hero. During the first half of Louis XIV's reign the elaboration of a modern, national epic, embodied by such works as Jean Desmarets's *Clovis* (1657), became a priority. But the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* upset the hierarchy of genres. Between Homer and Virgil, the Moderns championed Virgil—with his dedication to *bienséance* and unity, he was the most modern of the ancients. But, the Moderns claimed, the entire genre was outmoded. "Je conviens qu'Homère et Virgile peuvent être regardés comme deux génies supérieurs à tous ceux qui ont composé des poèmes épiques. Je conviens encore que l'Eneïde est à tout prendre le meilleur poème de son espèce," Perrault

⁸³ The *tableau's* address *en face* was key to its definition, both in theater and painting. By contrast, according to Richelet's dictionnaire, the terms for ceiling painting, *plafond*, was defined above all by its address to the viewer from above: "terme de peinture. Ouvrage qui est fait pour être vu de bas en haut, pour être placé au dessus de la vue et dont les figures doivent être raccourcies et vues en dessus." Pierre Richelet, *Dictionnaire françois : contenant les mots et les choses, plusieurs nouvelles remarques sur la langue françoise, ses expressions propres, figurées et burlesques, la prononciation des mots les plus difficiles, le genre des noms, le régime des verbes...*, seconde partie (Paris, 1680), 174. See Bonfait, "La conquête du ciel," 52.

wrote.⁸⁴ But, he added, “Le poème épique ne comprend pas toute la poésie, et supposé que les modernes fussent inférieurs aux anciens dans ce genre d’ouvrage, ils pourraient les surpasser dans tous les autres, comme dans le lyrique, dans le dramatique, dans le satyrique, et dans les autres espèces moins élevées.”⁸⁵ Even Coypel’s friend Boileau, Perrault’s antagonist and the most prominent defender of the Ancients, placed tragedy, modeled on the example of Racine, above the epic.⁸⁶ The difference between epic and tragedy lay in their ends and effects. Where the epic focused on action and the moral instruction it could impart, tragedy focused on emotion and the intense reactions it could provoke. “L’épopée est plus pour les mœurs et pour les habitudes” Le Bossu said. “La tragédie...est pour les passions.”⁸⁷ What made tragedy fundamentally modern, then, was that it made the human heart its primary territory of exploration.

It was, at least in part, the relative modernity of the *Aeneid* that must have attracted Philippe to the subject. Coypel, for his part, resolutely refused to take sides in the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, just as he did in the *querelle du coloris*, but it would be hard to deny that he saw in Virgil’s poem an opportunity to make the epic relevant again. Indeed, Aeneas, as a hero, was already appreciated for his *sensibilité*. Segrais, for example, remarked, “Je ne sais pourquoi on s’est imaginé qu’un héros ne doit être tendre, et qu’il ne peut verser des larmes sans se déshonorer. Les pleurs que Virgile fait répandre au sien sont si louable...que je ne puis

⁸⁴ Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes en ce qui regarde les arts et les sciences*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1692), 151.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁸⁶ Roger Zuber, “La tragédie sublime: Boileau adopte Racine,” in *Les émerveillements de la raison* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1997), 251–254.

⁸⁷ Le Bossu, *Traité du poème épique*, 11.

comprendre sur quelle raison on a pu fonder une objection si faible.”⁸⁸ Theatricality, with its affective address to the spectator, allowed Coypel to bring these emotions to the forefront of representation, to go beyond not only Poussin and Le Brun’s model of narrative painting, itself dependent on the epic, but the kind of painting developed by La Fosse at the Trianon as well.

La Fosse, as it happens, painted two episodes from the Aeneas myth, *Vénus demandant à Vulcain des armes pour Enée* (Figure 91) and *Déification d’Énée* (Figure 92), for an unidentified patron around 1690.⁸⁹ Though the figures are oriented towards us, their soft, sweet expression are not immediately legible. *Vénus demandant à Vulcain* is based on a painting of the same subject by Van Dyck (Figure 93), but La Fosse’s version is distinguished by the intimacy of the exchange between Venus and Vulcan, drawn together as by some invisible force. Here, the spectator can only access the connection between them through the sympathies of color, through the play between Venus’s creamy flesh and Vulcan’s own tanned, muscular skin. Coypel’s engagement with the passions, on the other hand, allowed him to portray a broader range of emotions, in a far more legible fashion, and create sympathy on a more psychological level. It was the key to a new kind of history painting that appealed to his audience’s *sensibilité*, and with it he was able to present to his audience an image of Aeneas whose greatness was based not on his actions but his ability to touch the heart. They could appreciate the tragic consequence of his destiny as they contemplated the spectacle of Dido’s death, his astonishment as Jupiter appears before him, his grief at the death of Pallas.

This was a new hero for a new age—not the outmoded warrior hero of Corneille but a sensitive hero more akin to Fénelon’s Telemachus. La Bruyère wrote that “le héros est un seul

⁸⁸ Segrais, Preface to *Traduction de l’Énéide de Virgile par M. de Segrais*. 40.

⁸⁹ Adelein Collange-Perugi, “Un décor sur la theme de l’Énéide,” in *Charles de La Fosse (1636–1716). Le triomphe de la couleur*, 154–156.

métier,” but that another figure, the *grand homme* “est de tous les métiers”.⁹⁰ Later in the century, Louis de Jaucourt would write in the *Encyclopédie*:

Dans la signification qu'on donne à ce mot [l'héroïsme] aujourd'hui, il semble n'être uniquement consacré aux guerriers, qui portent au plus haut degré les talents et les vertus militaires; vertus qui souvent, aux yeux de la sagesse, ne sont que des crimes heureux qui ont usurpé le nom de *vertus* au lieu de celui de *qualités*....Le *grand homme* est bien autre chose : il joint au talent et au génie la plupart des vertus morales; il n'a dans sa conduite que de beaux et nobles motifs; il n'envisage que le bien public, la gloire de son prince, la prospérité de l'État et le bonheur des peuples.⁹¹

Coytel's Aeneas, a man of *sensibilité* more than action, modeled for the regent's guests an exemplary *grand homme*.

Theatricality and Politics: Towards a New Public

Coytel's theatricality, and its engagement with debates about the hero, was not just abstract but aligned with the political demands of the moment. The *galerie d'Énée* was painted, as we have seen, at a decisive period in French politics, when the state teetered on the brink of collapse. Although the Regency is often seen as period of chaos and excess without a firm hand guiding the ship, Philippe in fact acted decisively to reform the state.⁹² First, faced with mounting dissatisfaction from a restive nobility and threats to his own authority from rival claimants, Philippe broke with Louis XIV's authoritarianism and instituted a system of conciliar

⁹⁰ Jean de La Bruyère, “Du mérite personnel,” *Les caractères, ou les mœurs de ce siècle*, 53.

⁹¹ Louis de Jaucourt, “Héros,” in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.*, eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2016 Edition), Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe (eds), <http://artflsrv02.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/philologic/getobject.pl?c.7:749.encyclopedie0416.1913688>.

⁹² Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, “Réflexions sur la Régence,” *French Studies* 38 no. 3 (July 1984): 286-305.

government, known as the Polysynody, to share power with the high nobility.⁹³ In addition, as Laurent Lemarchand has shown, he also made the radical decision to reshape the state's political geography by moving the seat of government from Versailles back to Paris. After Louis XIV's concerted efforts at centralization, the court was now dispersed, and Philippe allowed several centers of power to emerge: the five year-old Louis XV was installed at the Tuileries; the government was run out of the Louvre, where the Polysynody met; and numerous princely courts, such as the duchesse de Berry's at the Luxembourg palace, sprang up around the city. The most important of these new courtly centers was Philippe's own palace at the Palais Royal, but it was first among many. In this way, the Regent radically opened up the state, at least in this early phase of the Regency, to broader participation of the elites. No longer the passive spectators of royal power, as they were at Versailles, the nobility were allowed to collaborate in government. A public sphere, albeit one carefully managed by the regent and restricted to the elites, began to emerge, and public opinion was allowed a new role in the workings of the state. By bringing together different factions and defending their authority, the regent was able to neutralize them, forging a consensus between the nobles of the robe and épée and making himself chief arbiter in the process.⁹⁴

Philippe knew full well how to draft the arts and letters into his reform efforts,⁹⁵ and it is striking how the effects of Coypel's wall paintings for the *galerie d'Énée*, the regent's most ambitious commission, located in the grandest, most public space in his own palace, the new seat

⁹³ Alexandre Dupilet, *La Régence absolue. Philippe d'Orléans et la Polysynodie, 1715–1718* (Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 2011).

⁹⁴ Lemarchand, *Paris ou Versailles?*

⁹⁵ Lemarchand, "Philippe d'Orléans, la cour et les lettres (1713–1723), *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique* 115 (2011): <http://chrhc.revues.org/2300>. Accessed 4 December 2015.

of government, dovetails with the regent's political aims. Painting after disenchantment, Coypel imagined a new role for painting in the state: through its broad direct appeal to the spectator, without the mediation of allegory, it could move the heart towards virtue. "[E]n représentant leurs images naïves, les fait sortir de l'oubli, les fait, pour ainsi dire, revivre et paraître à nos yeux, et en fournissant des exemples," he told the Academy, painting "anime la vertu et lui donne de nouvelles forces; porte dans le cœur de ceux qui en sont dignes une vive émulation, non seulement pour les imiter, mais pour les égaler, peut-être même pour les surpasser."⁹⁶ In the gallery, as Scott remarks, "the past...offered a generic and 'democratic' discourse whose moral injunctions were there for society at large to heed."⁹⁷ With the mystical bonds between ruler and the historical and mythological heroes of antiquity cut, painting, and its powers over the spectator, was now autonomous from extra-literary meaning. Appealing to the heart, it provided a new foundation for Philippe's authority based in the shared experience of Aeneas's destiny.

As a result, the gallery could speak now to multiple audiences at once—necessary given the multiple, and competing, spheres of influence the regent had to negotiate. The epic was traditionally the genre destined for rulers. "Sa fin," Rapin said, "est d'instruire les princes et les grands."⁹⁸ Coypel, for his part, understood painting's role in inspiring the sovereign. "César," he wrote, "ne sentit-il pas réveiller son courage, et les sentiments glorieux de son ambition, quand il vit en Espagne l'image d'Alexandre le Grand?"⁹⁹ On one level, then, the gallery clearly provided

⁹⁶ Coypel, "Préface," *Discours*, np.

⁹⁷ Scott, *Rococo Interior*, 200.

⁹⁸ René Rapin, *Observations sur les poèmes d'Homère et de Virgile* (Paris, 1669), 12.

⁹⁹ Coypel, "Préface," *Discours*, np.

a kind of *exemplum virtutis* not only for the regent himself but also for the young Louis XV,¹⁰⁰ whose bust sat atop the new mantelpiece designed by Oppenord. This double address was no doubt strategic. As an address to the king, the gallery's placement in the regent's own seat of power, rather than at the Tuileries, made clear Louis XV's dependency on him: it was Philippe who was, after all, in charge of the young king's education. At the same time, the lack of clear correspondence to Louis XV created enough referential slippage that spectators were also invited to identify Aeneas with the regent; Boffrand's trophies of arms and armor around the mantelpiece—discrete references to Philippe's military prowess—further enhances the connection without ever insisting on it.¹⁰¹

More importantly, though, the referential ambiguity of Coypel's paintings opened them to a third party: the public. At the *galerie d'Énée*, visitors were invited to experience the epic on their own terms. In this sense, the gallery visualized the delicate balancing act Philippe had to perform in opening up the government while asserting his preeminence. The model of Racinian tragedy on which Coypel based his approach gave a new social and political role to the theater. As Sylvaine Guyot has argued, "Mais bien qu'irréductiblement exposé à la violence et à la mort dans sa réalité concrète et périssable, le corps sensible [chez Racine] participe à l'établissement d'un espace commun, s'affirmant comme le lieu où se négocient la place de chacun, la relation à l'autre et les formes du collectif."¹⁰² Du Bos understood this well. "Sensibilité," he said, is "le

¹⁰⁰ The use of an ancient epic here seems to be at odds with a move away from ancient history towards recent national history in the education of French princes. See Chantal Grell, "De l'Antiquité aux temps modernes: l'histoire 'utile' aux princes de France au siècle des Lumières," in *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes. Rhétorique, histoire et esthétique au siècle des Lumières*, ed. Marc André Bernier (Lévis, Québec: Les presses de l'Université Laval, 2006), 81–106.

¹⁰¹ Bédard, "Political Renewal and Architectural Revival during the French Regency," 36.

¹⁰² Guyot, *Racine et le corps tragique*, 105.

premier fondement de la société.”¹⁰³ It pulled people out of their narrow self-interest, allowing them to see the other with a tenderness and compassion they would not arrive at through reason or conviction.¹⁰⁴ The gallery, through its theatrical mode of address, was poised to perform such a function. Le Brun’s ceiling paintings at Versailles are largely indifferent to their viewers, addressing them impassively from on high, the narrative difficult to make out and many of the images themselves difficult to see.¹⁰⁵ Coypel made painting dependent again on its address to the beholder. The significance of the location on the wall should not be underestimated. Visitors saw them face-to-face, life-size. They were drawn in and actively engaged with the paintings through the bonds of sympathy. Of course, La Fosse’s paintings at the Trianon, and his own treatments of the Aeneas myth, also elicited sympathetic connection between painting and beholder, but they did so on the level of the *je ne sais quoi*, through a connection prior to the expression of emotion and far more private. The experience of painting here thus defined a new relationship between self and other, providing an immersive experience that sought to form a new, sensitive community of spectators, shaped by the collective experience of emotion.

¹⁰³ Du Bos, *Réflexions critiques*, 36.

¹⁰⁴ “L’amour de soi-même qui se change presque toujours en amour propre immodéré, à mesure que les hommes avancent en âge, les rend trop attachés à leurs intérêts présents et à venir et trop durs envers les autres lorsqu’ils prennent leur résolution de sens rassis. Il était à propos que les hommes pussent être tirés de cet état facilement. La nature a donc pris le parti de nous construire de manière que l’agitation de tout ce qui nous approche eût un puissant empire sur nous, afin que ceux qui ont besoin de notre indulgence ou de notre secours pussent nous ébranler avec facilité. Ainsi leur émotion seule nous touche subitement et ils obtiennent de nous, en nous attendrissant, ce qu’ils n’obtiendraient jamais par la voie du raisonnement et de la conviction.” Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Sabatier, “Beneath the Ceilings of Versailles: Towards an Archaeology and Anthropology of the Use of the King’s ‘Signs’ during the Absolute Monarchy,” 217–242, has addressed the limits of the ceiling’s legibility to its audiences.

This might not have been quite the “public space without qualification” that Scott describes in her reading of the gallery,¹⁰⁶ but it was a space that aimed to fashion, through the medium of painting, the new, participatory form of absolutism for elites envisioned by Philippe. Thomas Crow famously located the emergence of a new public for art during the Regency in the paintings of Watteau, an art, in his view, subversive of absolutist claims to power. Watteau’s older contemporaries, he said—not only Coypel but also La Fosse and Boullogne—did not have a role to play. “It would be difficult,” he writes, “to identify an important element in the work of these preeminent artists of the day which has been seriously modified by exposure to general public scrutiny or by the privilege accorded to such scrutiny in advanced theory and official statements of purpose.”¹⁰⁷

Coypel, however, was in fact deeply interested in the public. “Le public,” he declared, “est toujours le plus fort, et comme il est notre juge, c’est lui que nous devons consulter.”¹⁰⁸ Coypel divided the public into five categories—painters, *gens du monde*, *savants* and *gens de lettres*, *curieux*, and the *peuple*.¹⁰⁹ But the only reliable judges were the *gens du monde*, “personnes d’esprit et de sentiment, qui ne jugent que par un goût naturel et par les lumières de la raison, n’étant prévenus d’aucune impression que celle de la nature.”¹¹⁰ These people—in contrast to the *peuple*, who Coypel said were “prévenu, faible et changeant”—“jugent souvent bien l’imitation des objets; ils sont émus par les caractères et par l’expressions; ils sont touchés de la beauté des

¹⁰⁶ Scott, *Rococo Interior*, 200.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 55.

¹⁰⁸ Coypel, *Discours*, 21.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 6–11

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

idées, des pensées fines et ingénieuses de l'imagination, de la variété et des bienséances.”¹¹¹ As Alain Mérot has argued, Coypel's public was conceived in the image of the regent himself.¹¹² His gallery can, consequently, be seen as addressing them, an elite audience whose judgement on native faculty of judgements and a basic appeal to sentiment. Coypel's cycle thus broadens our appreciation of the emergence of “the public” during the Regency: it did not emerge in opposition to absolutism but from its very heart.

The Gallery and the Problem of Authority

Coypel's gallery reconfigured the relations of authority that structured the production and reception of painting: a model based on the personal glorification of the ruler that communicated a narrative remotely from the ceiling gave way to one that addressed spectators in their own space, with scenes constructed as though for them, in order to heighten their subjective involvement with the experience of the hero. But what kind of political efficacy and aesthetic power could Coypel's visual language really have? Could an outmoded type be revived? On the one hand, Coypel's gallery seems perfectly adapted to its new circumstances: a participatory government, in which the old authority of antiquity had waned. But it was its departure from the model of Louis XIV that made it an awkward political tool. The authority of the paintings was not guaranteed by their reference to Aeneas, whose own authority, no longer identical to the monarch and weakened by the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, had waned. By shifting priority from glorification of the personal cult of the monarch to a more open, subjective

¹¹¹ Ibid., 8.

¹¹² Alain Mérot, “L'idée du public parfait selon Antoine Coypel,” in *Curiosité. Études d'histoire de l'art en l'honneur d'Antoine Schnapper*, ed. Olivier Bonfait, Véronique Grand Powell, and Philippe Sénéchal (Paris: Flammarion, 1998), 115–124.

aesthetic experience, the paintings dangerously ceded authority to the spectator, rendering their ideological content increasingly unstable and slippery. The experience of painting was becoming unmoored from its political ends in the very kind of site where the aesthetic and the political became so closely aligned and, indeed, developed in tandem throughout the early modern period: the princely gallery.¹¹³ Perhaps, then, it is not so surprising that the paintings had little afterlife; they were the last of their kind in the Ancien Régime. In 1718, just as Coypel was finishing the gallery, Philippe dissolved the Polysydony and initiated a more authoritarian phase of rule. Having forestalled revolt and stabilized the government, he was ready to return the state to the form of absolutism practiced by his uncle. The kind of painting represented on the walls of the *galerie d'Énée* no longer had a role to play.

The failure of Coypel's gallery, however, transcends its immediate political context. The entire enterprise is haunted by the shifting authority of the models on which Coypel based his practice, profoundly shaping how the artist developed his vision for a reformed history painting. The question of proper models was central to academic practice in France; the *conférences*, based on analyses of the strengths and weaknesses of masterpieces from the royal collection, were in effect an effort to delineate a proper cannon on which painters should base their own work. But Coypel made this concern the centerpiece of his conception of painting. Painters, he advised, should mine the art of the past for the best qualities of the great painters of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries. Painters could attain perfection, he told the Academy, "en

¹¹³ On the princely gallery as a type, see Jacques Thuillier, "Peinture et politique: une théorie de la galerie royale sous Henri IV," in *Études d'art français offertes à Charles Sterling* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1975), 175–205; *Les grandes galeries européennes, XVII^e–XIX^e siècle*, ed. Claire Constans et Mathieu da Vinha (Paris: Centre de recherche du château de Versailles and Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2010); Gérard Sabatier, *Le prince et les arts. Stratégies figuratives de la monarchie française de la renaissance aux lumières* (Seysse: Champ Vallon, 2011), 232–259; Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, *Fate, Glory, and Love in Early Modern Gallery Decoration* (Surrey, England and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013).

imitant l'abeille et faisant son profit de tout."¹¹⁴ He continued later, "N'est-il pas vrai qu'un peintre qui veut se perfectionner dans son art doit se proposer pour modèles les plus grands maîtres anciens, les étudier, et les imiter chacun dans les parties qui les ont le plus distingués, et toujours par rapport à la nature et à la raison?"¹¹⁵ Along these lines, he advised painters to turn to Poussin and Raphael for drawing; Titian and Rubens for color; Correggio for grace; Le Brun for expression, and so on.¹¹⁶ Far from inhibiting originality, drawing from the past masters allowed artists to be "original" precisely "en imitant ces grands originaux."¹¹⁷

No wonder, then, in looking at Coypel's paintings for the *galerie d'Énée* we are struck by a sense *déjà vu*. Poussin, as we have seen, is the most obvious reference, especially in the compositions and poses of the figures, but other influences can be detected as well. The monumental scale of the paintings, their vivid coloring, and the ruddy complexions of the faces in them, for example, are borrowed from Rubens; the expression of the passions have been transposed from Le Brun. Drawing on a less canonical artist, he copied Sébastien Bourdon's *Mort de Didon* (Figure 94), which he might have seen in Crozat's collection,¹¹⁸ almost exactly for his own painting of the same subject, though we can also discern the influence of Correggio

¹¹⁴ Coypel, *Discours*, 14. On Coypel's eclecticism, see Anne le Pas de Sécheval, "L'abeille et le pinceau. Théorie et pratique de l'eclectisme chez Antoine Coypel," in "La naissance de la théorie de l'art en France, 1640–1720," ed. Stefan Germer and Christian Michel, special issue, *Revue d'Esthétique* 31–32 (1997): 237–252.

¹¹⁵ Coypel, *Discours*, 99.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 99–100.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹¹⁸ The painting was sold as part of the Crozat sale in 1751; we do not know, however, when precisely it entered his collection. Jacques Thuillier, *Sébastien Bourdon. 1616–1671* (Paris and Montpellier: Réunion des musées nationaux and Musée Fabre, 2000), 224.

in the delicate coloring and of Rubens in the dynamism of the composition, with its dramatic diagonals.

Coytel was not alone in promoting an artistic ideal constructed from a canon of diverse models. Poussin, for example, drew frequently and freely from sources ranging from classical Greek and Roman sculpture to the work of later artists like Raphael and even Caravaggio. As Richard Neer has put it, “the reuse and revision of prior images is the very stuff of Poussin’s art.”¹¹⁹ The phenomenon was hardly limited to Poussin; the repetition of past art occupied a central place in early modern art theory and practice. The just citation of the work of other artists and the adaptation of their manners was not stealing but a sure path to the perfection of painting.¹²⁰ Coytel, however, was practicing at a moment when the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* transformed how artists and their audiences related to the past.¹²¹ By asserting the superiority of the present, the Moderns struck a major blow for the authority of the past. The writers and artists of previous centuries were reduced from sage and benevolent fathers to primitive children. “Nos premiers pères,” Perrault asked, “ne doivent-ils pas être regardés comme les enfants et nous comme les vieillards et les véritables anciens du monde?”¹²² Even the Ancients defended antiquity not by appealing to its timeless authority but by celebrating its

¹¹⁹ Richard Neer, “Poussin and the Ethics of Imitation,” *Memoires of the American Academy in Rome* 51/52 (2006/20017): 305. Neer’s article (297–344) is a deeply searching consideration of the meaning of citation in Poussin’s work. See also Christophe Henry, “Imitation, proportion, citation. La relation de Nicolas Poussin à l’antique,” in *Poussin et la construction de l’antique*, ed. Marc Bayard and Elena Fumagalli (Rome and Paris: Académie de France à Rome and Somogy éditions d’art, 2011), 495–529.

¹²⁰ Maria Loh, “New and Improved: Repetition as Originality in Italian Baroque Practice and Theory,” *The Art Bulletin* 86 (2004): 477-504.

¹²¹ On ways in which the Quarrel wrought changes in historical consciousness see, for various perspectives, Joan DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns*; Dan Edelstein, *The Enlightenment: A Genealogy*; Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient*.

¹²² Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, vol. 1, 50.

irreducible otherness.¹²³ The past, whether the ancient past of Greece and Rome or the more recent Renaissance, no longer provided a timeless guide and unassailable model of quality. As Angélique famously tells Thomas Diafoirus in Molière's *Le Malade imaginaire*, "Les anciens, Monsieur, sont les anciens, et nous sommes les gens de maintenant."¹²⁴

For Coypel and his generation, however, confidence in the greatness of the present began to ebb. *Le siècle de Louis le Grand* had passed. Even in 1680s there was a sense that France's greatness had already peaked.¹²⁵ "Peut-être commençons-nous," Perrault worried, "à entrer dans la vieillesse."¹²⁶ Joan DeJean sums up the situation: "If...the greatest modern authors and men were those who were fortunate enough to have been born under the greatest monarch of all time, Louis XIV, as the Moderns were always careful to argue, then the moderns thereby automatically raised the question of the fate of those who would come after."¹²⁷ Coypel's painting manifests the anxiety of this position more than any other of its time. Le Brun, Perrault asserted, had surpassed all previous artists, Appelles as well as Raphael. While he admitted that, in some respects, Raphael's paintings were preferable, he added, "j'ai soutenu et je soutiendrai toujours que M. Le Brun a su plus parfaitement que Raphaël l'art de la peinture dans toute son étendue, parce qu'on a découvert avec le temps une infinité de secrets dans cet art, que Raphaël n'a point connus."¹²⁸ Yet Coypel, Le Brun's heir whose mission it was to revive the *grand goût*, was

¹²³ Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient*.

¹²⁴ Molière, *La Malade imaginaire* (1673; Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1986), Act II, scene 6, p. 68.

¹²⁵ DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns*, 16–20.

¹²⁶ Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, vol. 1, 54

¹²⁷ DeJean, *Ancients and Against Moderns*, 16.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 153.

painting after the golden age of Louis XIV, during a Regency that was struggling to maintain the stability that Louis XIV's panegyrists agreed was the precondition for the arts to flourish. The past no longer exerted the same power it had over the present, yet the best of the modern age had already passed. Coypel was confronting that most modern of conditions: belatedness. "Tout est dit," as La Bruyère put it, "et l'on vient trop tard depuis sept mille ans qu'ils y a des hommes et qui pensent."¹²⁹

This situation had a profound affect on the *galerie d'Énée*. Coypel himself refused to take sides in the quarrel. "Si l'on jugeait toujours par principe et par goût, plutôt par entêtement," he told the Academy, "on trouverait sans doute un milieu raisonnable qui nous éloignerait des deux extrémités contraires. Car si les uns attaquent avec trop de chaleur le mérite des anciens, les autres marquent un mépris trop grand pour les modernes."¹³⁰ Yet the common-sense tone of the painter's *milieu raisonnable* belies the extent to which the quarrel shaped his approach to picture-making and altered the horizon that gave his imitations of past models meaning. Without a stable center, without confidence in the greatness of the present, he returns to the art of the past and elevates it as the centerpiece of his conception and practice of painting: Coypel believed in progress and defended the achievements of the moderns, but he maintained that the path to progress lay in careful study of past art and judicious emulation of its best examples.¹³¹

Accordingly, at the *galerie d'Énée*, Coypel abandoned contemporary history for an ancient epic

¹²⁹ La Bruyère, "Des ouvrages de l'esprit," *Les caractères, ou les mœurs de ce siècle*, 21.

¹³⁰ Coypel, *Discours*, 101.

¹³¹ "Ne cessera-t-on point de prévenir ainsi contre les modernes, par la raison qu'ils sont modernes, et par la facilité que l'on a d'en jouir; car la faiblesse de l'homme est de désirer ardemment ce qui lui est difficile d'obtenir, et c'est ce qui fait aussi l'entêtement que l'on a pour tout ce qui est étranger : c'est une illusion qui règne aujourd'hui chez les Français plus que ailleurs, et qui a cependant été de tous les temps." Coypel, *Discours*, 107.

and drew explicitly from the masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth century to do so. But, just as the past could no longer found the regent's political authority in the wake of the Sun King, these sources no longer had the artistic authority they used to exert. Where, for much of the early modern period, artists enjoyed a fluid relationship to the art of their predecessors, the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* installed an irrevocable break between modernity, which began around the mid-seventeenth century, and everything that preceded it.

The result was that citations from past art referred back to themselves rather than create a base for new meaning—a problem we began to see earlier with Verdier's paintings for the Trianon de Marbre. Coypel must have recognized this danger, at least to some extent. In his lectures to the Academy, he advised that “il faut joindre aux solides et sublimes beautés de l'antique, les recherches, la variété, la naïveté et l'âme de la nature, telle qu'on la voit, Messieurs, dans les monuments que vous avez enrichi la France.”¹³² The *galerie d'Énée* was, of course, precisely such a monument; here the painter sought to refresh a dead past with the vividness and vivacity of nature. Thus, taking Poussin as his point of departure, he animates his paintings with vivid coloring and flushed faces and muscular bodies to compensate for what he saw as Poussin's too strict reliance on the antique, which rendered his work cold and dry.¹³³ Yet, in fact, these “improvements” did not come from observed nature but from Rubens, the artist

¹³² Ibid., 114.

¹³³ “Si le Poussin, si respectable et si profond dans la connaissance de l'Antiquité, avait pu joindre aux grand beautés qu'il a puisées chez les anciens cette imitation naïve de la nature, il aurait été quelquefois moins dur sans son dessein comme dans son pinceau. Son coloris aurait été plus vrai, plus fort et plus harmonieux. Ses draperies auraient été plus moelleuses, d'une plus grande manière, moins sèches et plus variées, aussi bien que ses airs de têtes de femmes qui sont presque toujours les mêmes et qui paraissent toujours tirées des mêmes têtes antiques.” Ibid., 112.

most celebrated for his imitation of nature.¹³⁴ “Que les anciens peintres étaient heureux!” Coypel proclaimed to his colleagues, “la nature s’offrait toujours à leurs yeux avec les plus naïves beautés; ils n’avaient qu’à la voir et l’imiter. Nous ne pouvons pas la suivre fidèlement, parce que nous ne la voyons que contrefaite et masquée. Cependant notre objet est de l’imiter. Cela est triste.”¹³⁵ The idea of antiquity as a kind of lost paradise was not Coypel’s invention,¹³⁶ but his melancholy strikes a new note. Despite his desire to renew history painting by appealing to nature, Coypel suggests that this is finally impossible. Because moderns had access only to a degraded, counterfeit nature, it too became impossibly remote, foreign; the modern artist, he realized, was doomed to a kind of incessant mediation.

Such awareness about art’s historicity spelled the end of an unmediated affective experience of painting based in the examples of the past and any political dream built upon it—looking at art, in a system like Coypel’s, would now primarily be about its status *as* art. As a result, the affective potency of his paintings suffers under the weight of his debt to the past, and his methods stand at odds with his intended effects. Facing a vacuum of authority, he bases his paintings on Poussin, the father of French art, whom Le Brun had praised as “la gloire de nos jours et l’ornement de son pays.”¹³⁷ But in an age when fathers no longer exerted the same

¹³⁴ Coypel’s efforts were not necessarily appreciated by his contemporaries. *Les Curiositez de Paris*, t. 1, 147, reports that “les connoisseurs...remarquent aussi que le trop grand éclat des draperies assomme les carnations, quoiqu’on ait affecté de les tenir plus rouges que naturel. Quant au dessein, le peintre s’y est montré plus imitateur de Rubens, que de l’antique.”

¹³⁵ Coypel, *Discours*, 80.

¹³⁶ René Démoris, “La règle et le fantôme: réflexions sur l’Antiquité dans le discours sur l’art entre Poussin et Diderot,” in *Images de l’Antiquité dans la littérature française: le texte et son illustration*, ed. Emmanuele Baumgartner and Laurence Harf-Lancner (Paris: Presses de l’École Normale Supérieure, 1993), 155–156.

¹³⁷ Le Brun, “*La manne dans le désert de Poussin*,” 157.

authority as they had, his debt to Poussin became a burden on his art. His paintings manifest an “anxiety of influence,”¹³⁸ a new kind of historical consciousness wrought by the *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, that has not been overcome; as a result, they appear as pastiches of Poussin’s. Pastiche, as it happens, emerged as an art critical term only in the late seventeenth century and took on a negative connotation at the beginning of the eighteenth, signaling the final discredit of Coypel’s theory of imitation.¹³⁹ “On appelle communément pastiches,” Du Bos wrote, “les tableaux que fait un peintre imposteur en imitant la main, la manière de composer et le coloris d’un autre peintre, sous le nom duquel il veut produire son ouvrage.”¹⁴⁰ Imitation no longer lit the way to originality.

Coypel’s paintings awkwardly straddled the old and new, employing an outmoded formal vocabulary to create new effects. In a sense, this problem marks the modernity of Coypel’s gallery, the first paintings where the past has become “tradition,” a burden rather than an inexhaustible guide and model.¹⁴¹ But the future for Modern painting, at least in the first half of the eighteenth century, lay elsewhere—not in openly celebrating its debt to the past but in cutting painting off from reference to artistic and literary tradition. In eighteenth-century Paris, it was in the idiom of painting developed by La Fosse at the Trianon that the future lay. Decorative art seemed to speak to the modern elites of Paris only in the kind of sensual, ornamental works produced by Natoire and Boucher, where La Fosse’s innovations were taken in new directions

¹³⁸ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

¹³⁹ Loh, “New and Improved”: 498–499.

¹⁴⁰ Du Bos, *Réflexions critiques sur la poésie et sur la peinture*, t. 2, nouvelle édition revue et corrigée (Paris, 1732), 39. This passage does not appear in the first edition.

¹⁴¹ See Norman Bryson, *Tradition and Desire: From David to Delacroix* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

and where reference was diminished for sensory pleasures of alluring surfaces, and the artifice of color. This new kind of history painting without history signaled the end of the kind of classically-inspired history painting, based in the eloquent, emotional body, practiced and promoted by Coypel. Even the most ambitious princely decorative commission of Louis XV's reign, François Lemoyne's *Apothéose d'Hercule* at Versailles, returns to the sensual model of Italianate ceiling painting used by Coypel in his first campaign at the Palais-Royal, rejecting Coypel's theatrical bodies. Coypel's model of history painting in the *grand goût* would live on, in altered form, in the Salon, but it would not reemerge as such an explicit embodiment of an ideal of the state and a tool of government until it was radically revised by David and his pupils at the end of the century.

Coda

Watteau, Reverie, and Selfhood

For Pierre Marcel, Jean-Antoine Watteau was the end point of all the changes that had taken place in painting in the previous generation. The rise of *galant* mythologies, the triumph of the colorists, the emergence of a new market for easel paintings in Paris—all led the way, inevitably, to Watteau, who, as Marcel put it, “résume tous les efforts tentés depuis la mort de Le Brun.”¹ Marcel’s contention about a vital link between Watteau and the painters of the previous generation, especially La Fosse and Coypel, is a crucial point—one, unfortunately, taken up by few scholars since.² Yet Watteau’s relationship to these older artists is far more complex than Marcel has it: his work is deeply engaged with theirs, but it also represents a radical break. On the one hand, Watteau enjoyed the support of La Fosse and Coypel, one of whom sponsored his membership in the academy.³ From them he not only gained new patrons among the new, art-loving elite in Paris, like Pierre Crozat, but also took inspiration from their fluid, sensual draftsmanship and love of color. On the other hand, unlike La Fosse or Coypel, Watteau never

¹ Marcel, *La peinture française au début du dix-huitième siècle*, 7. Later, he writes in his conclusion, “Si nous avons démontré que Watteau n’est pas seulement un principe, mais une résultante, et que toute la génération d’Antoine Coypel le prépare, si nous avons expliqué pour quelles raisons et par quels moyens les genres et les formes conventionnels et surannés disparaissent devant la fantaisie, la jeunesse et la vie, après la mort de Le Bun, l’art du XVIII^e siècle, au lieu de naître mystérieusement et de se développer comme un paradoxe, devient la suite régulière et normale de l’art du XVII^e siècle.” *Ibid.*, 297.

² An exception is Christian Michel, *Le “célèbre Watteau”* (Geneva: Droz, 2008), which examines Watteau’s art in light of, among other things, Antoine Coypel’s theoretical writings.

³ It has long been thought, based on what Gersaint reports in his biography of the artist, that it was La Fosse who sponsored Watteau. However, Michel, *Le “célèbre Watteau”* 38–42, argues that it had to be Coypel.

worked for the court and, though he did paint some mythologies, he became famous for pioneering a new genre, the *fête galante*—a modern subject featuring amorous aristocrats and melancholy actors cavorting in Arcadian parklands.⁴ All of these factors are essential for understanding the connections between Watteau and the painters of the previous generation, but here I would like to focus on how we might understand Watteau in relation to the question that has driven this dissertation: the question of authority.

The works studied in the previous chapters, I have argued, reconfigured the relationships of authority that structured the making and perception of art. Working at the heart of royal power, La Fosse and Coypel's paintings undercut, from within, the sources of authority that had, for much of the seventeenth century, guaranteed their meaning and function, sources of authority that the paintings were in fact intended to bolster—the ever-shifting triumvirate of God, King, and the Ancients. In its place, these works, in their different ways, promoted the intrinsic authority of painting. Painting's power over its viewers was becoming autonomous of its reference to the body of the king or the mystical alliance between Crown and Church and the epic poetry of Ancient Rome; it gained its powers from its uniquely visual properties, the unmediated representation of *sensibilité* in the case of Coypel and color in the case of La Fosse. If the experience of painting was once shaped by a triangular relationship among painting, beholder, and external authority, now this last point in the triangle was increasingly cut out of the

⁴ The *fête galante* did not crystallize into a recognized genre until decades after Watteau's death, and only later was he credited with its invention. In fact, Christian Michel has shown that Watteau was received into the Royal Academy with the same rank as a history painter. What we call the *fêtes galantes* today, however, form a cohesive group within the artist's body of work, and so I use the term to designate paintings that fall within this group. See Michel, *Le "célèbre Watteau,"* 165–88; and Martin Eidelberg, "Watteau, peintre des fêtes galantes," in *Watteau et la fête galante* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2004), 17–27.

transaction.

It was, as we have seen, Roger de Piles who offered one of the most explicit theoretical account of this new relationship. As the seventeenth century passed into the eighteenth, de Piles's ascent was secured. In 1699, he was named the academy's *conseiller honoraire* and, in 1708, he published his theoretical summa, the *Cours de peinture par principe*. The book develops themes from de Piles's earliest writings, but, while some of these earlier works still balance the relationship between visual effects and subject matter, the *Cours de peinture* gives purely visual effects, at the *expense* of subject matter, pride of place—verbalizing, in many ways, developments already suggested by La Fosse's art.⁵ Most important for him were the illusionistic charms of color and the forms disposition in the overall compositional scheme, what he called the *tout ensemble*, “une subordination générale des objets les uns aux autres, qui les fait concourir tous ensembles à n'en faire qu'un.”⁶ To achieve the *tout ensemble*, a painting's composition had to be rigorously thought out, with the principal figures grouped in the center of the painting and accentuated with the proper distribution of light and shade, brightest in the center and progressively darker toward the peripheries—an effect de Piles illustrated with a cluster of grapes, an analogy made famous by Titian.

As we saw in Chapter 2, earlier in his career de Piles drew on the notion of grace to describe painting's effect on the spectator, but by the time he wrote his *Cours de peinture* he came increasingly under the influence of the Ancient party, which promoted an aesthetic of ravishment over gentle insinuation. Now, according to de Piles, the apex of painting's powers was the production of *enthousiasme*. By pictorial means alone, *enthousiasme* immerses

⁵ See Puttfarcken, *Roger de Piles' Theory of Art*, 38–56.

⁶ De Piles, *Cours de peinture*, 100.

spectators in the painted world, totally and irrationally. If, for the partisans of *dessein*, painting required reason and erudition, and consequently granted authority to viewing subjects who held a painting's hermeneutic key, *enthousiasme* flattened the field of spectatorship. This was a power far greater than the ineffable kind of sympathy described by de Piles in his earlier writings and elicited by La Fosse's paintings at the Trianon. King and commoner alike could not resist painting's sensual jolt, a violent attraction that overwhelmed any resistance. To cite de Piles's famous dictum once again, "La véritable peinture est donc celle qui nous appelle (pour ainsi dire) en nous surprenant: et ce n'est que par la force de l'effet qu'elle produit, que nous ne pouvons nous empêcher d'en approcher."⁷ It ensnared the looking subject, drawing the eye ineluctably to the center.

I have shown elsewhere how Watteau's subverted the twin motors of *enthousiasme*—the illusionistic body and the *tout ensemble*—to elicit a quite different kind of experience in the beholder: reverie.⁸ Taking the *galant* distaste for overwhelming effects to an extreme, the artist foregrounded his fluttery brushwork and opened up his compositions. His two most ambitious *fêtes galantes*, the two versions of the *Le pèlerinage à l'île de Cythère* (Figures 95 and 96), are a case in point. In both paintings, a serpentine ribbon of lovers and putti wraps around a vaporous nowhere of water and mountains and sky. Rather than providing a compositional foil for a Venus or Diana or some other erotic spectacle, the landscapes are conspicuous for their lack of alluring flesh. Not only is *enthousiasme* forestalled but so too is the sympathetic bond created by La Fosse's paintings. Here, open compositions set the eye in motion and their fluttery brushstrokes

⁷ De Piles, *Cours de peinture*, 3.

⁸ Aaron Wile, "Watteau, Reverie, and Selfhood," *The Art Bulletin* 96, no. 3 (Sept. 2014): 319–337. What follows has been adopted and excerpted from that essay.

activate the spectator's imagination through their refusal to deliver the immediate gratifications of de Piles's demand for paint-as-flesh.⁹ The eye wanders the canvas, and the mind, freed from the intense absorption demanded by de Piles, is allowed to wander as well, inviting reverie. De Piles himself captured this spirit of aimless travel when he complained that artists who do not foreground their *figure principale* "sont justement comme ceux qui en recontant une histoire, s'engagent imprudemment dans une digression si longue, qu'il sont constaint de finir par là, et de conclure par toute autre chose que par leur sujet."¹⁰ The *fêtes galantes* encouraged digression, looking without predetermined end. In the place of formal and narrative closure, they substituted the pleasures of open-endedness and imagination.¹¹

In this way, Watteau's formal experiments granted viewers access to the pastoral dreamscapes he depicts. "Il faut être capable d'un certain endormissement des sens, qui fasse qu'on croit presque songer les choses à quoi l'on pense" to enter into reverie, and "les yeux mêmes ne voient pas distinctement la diversité des objets," Scudéry maintained.¹² The parallel

⁹ Vidal, "Style as Subject in Watteau's Images of Conversation," in *Antoine Watteau: Perspectives on the Artist and the Culture of His Time*, ed. Mary Sheriff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006), 83, makes a similar point about how the *non-fini* of Watteau's brushwork activates the spectator's imagination. See also idem, *Watteau's Painted Conversations: Art, Literature, and Talk in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 130.

¹⁰ De Piles, commentary on *L'art de peinture*, 155.

¹¹ Though it would be unwise to presume to know the state of Watteau's mind as he created his art, we should remember that de Piles believed *enthousiasme* affected the artist as well. It is tempting, therefore, to speculate that Watteau, too, was understood to have been in a state of reverie when he drew and painted. Caylus's remark that Watteau "dessinait sans objet" ("La vie d'Antoine Watteau," 78) suggests a manual process parallel to the mental processes of reverie, or thinking *sans objet*. Ewa Lajer-Burcharth has recently highlighted the mechanized, aleatory dimension of Watteau's drawing practice, which brings to mind the semiconscious state of reverie. Lajer-Burcharth, "Drawing Time," *October* 151 (Winter 2015): 3–42.

¹² Madeleine de Scudéry, *Clélie, histoire romaine*, pt. 2 (1655; new ed., Paris: Honoré Champion, 2002), pt. 2, 314.

with de Piles's warning about what happens when the *tout ensemble* is not observed is striking: "Si l'on présente à la vue plusieurs objets séparés et également sensibles, il est certain que l'œil ne pouvant ramasser tous ces objets ensemble, aura dans sa division de la peine à se déterminer."¹³ The *fêtes galantes* produced the lack of focus—and with it, the return to one's own thoughts and emotions—that feeds reverie. They forged an experience defined not by hallucinatory presence and the raptures of *enthousiasme* but by the almost distracted engagement of a daydream, encouraging spectators to move continually between the world of the painting and their imaginations in a way that heightened both. A new kind of encounter with painting, and a new kind of spectator, had emerged.

The advent of this new encounter links Watteau's enterprise with the emergence, as historians have characterized it, of modern selfhood and interiority in the early modern period, particularly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.¹⁴ Until the beginning of the seventeenth century, reverie was defined as a state of delirium, a kind of madness. Specifically, it was understood as a pathology brought about by an imbalance of the body's four humors—as

¹³ De Piles, *Cours de peinture*, 297.

¹⁴ On selfhood in early modern Europe, see, for various perspectives, Tocanne, *L'idée de la nature en France dans la seconde moitié du XVII^e siècle*, 141–65; Robert Muchembled, *L'invention de l'homme moderne: Sensibilités, moeurs et comportements collectifs sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Fayard, 1988); Charles Taylor, *Sources of Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); Roy Porter, ed., *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1996); Rohou, *Le XVII^e siècle, une révolution de la conscience humaine*; and Dror Wharman, *The Making of the Modern Self: Identity and Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). On the rise of interiority in seventeenth-century France, see Bernard Beugnot, "Loisir, retraite, solitude: De l'espace privé à la littérature," in *Le loisir lettré à l'âge classique*, ed. Marc Fumaroli, Philippe-Joseph Salazar, and Emmanuel Bury (Geneva: Droz, 1996), 173–96; Joan DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 78–123.

melancholy.¹⁵ In the *Dictionnaire de la langue française du 16e siècle*, for instance, Edmond Huguet cites the following example by Jacques Amyot: “Les fièvres ardentes qui augmentent l’inflammation jusques à mettre l’homme en rêverie et lui faire perdre l’entendement.”¹⁶ Over the course of the seventeenth century, however, new meanings arose. Reverie maintained its connection with melancholy, but both terms lost their medical baggage. They became instead sources of pleasure, of self-understanding. As Antoine Furetière wrote in his *Dictionnaire* of 1690, melancholy, in addition to its older meanings, “signifie aussi une rêverie agreable, un plaisir qu’on trouve dans la solitude, pour mediter, pour songer à ses affaires, à ses plaisirs où à ses desplaisirs.”¹⁷ Scudéry’s praise for the isolated corners of the Château de Versailles’s gardens, pastoral landscapes not unlike Watteau’s, as “propres pour le moins à la solitude, et à la reverie d’un amant mélancolique” exemplifies this new attitude.¹⁸ Reverie carved out, for the first time in a secular context, a designated space for retreat into the self, where, alone in the seclusion of a *cabinet* or in nature, one could be absorbed in one’s thoughts and sentiments and fantasies. It defined a refuge for self-discovery where dreamers could explore new modalities of feeling—subtle, ineffable, pleasurable. If the *galant* ideals of civility defined a distinctly modern

¹⁵ Robert Morrissey, “Vers un topos littéraire: La préhistoire de la rêverie,” *Modern Philology* 77, no. 3 (February 1980): 270–80; and Florence Orwat, *L’invention de la rêverie: Une conquête pacifique du Grand Siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2006), 43–64.

¹⁶ Edmond Huguet, *Dictionnaire de la langue française du 16e siècle* (Paris, 1925–73), at Classiques Garnier Numérique, <http://www.classiques-garnier.com.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/numerique-bases/index.php?module=App&action=FrameMain>.

¹⁷ Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*. We have here, it might be noted, a basis for rebutting Donald Posner’s claim that melancholy in Watteau is only a nineteenth-century myth, though we would have to be careful about differentiating eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conceptions of melancholy. See Posner, “Watteau mélancolique: La formation d’un mythe,” *Bulletin de la Société de l’Histoire de l’Art Français* (1973): 345–61.

¹⁸ Madeleine de Scudéry, *La promenade de Versailles* (Paris, 1669), 91.

relationship between self and other, reverie helped define a distinctly modern relationship of the self to its inner life.¹⁹

The special mode of looking elicited by Watteau's *fêtes galantes* bound them, more than any other paintings of their time, to this newly instituted form of interiority; designated them as a site of a late, remarkable flowering of one of the great passions of the Grand Siècle. In the *fêtes galantes*, the distance established between spectator and painting by the artist's degradation of *enthousiasme* opened up a new sphere of subjective experience, a kind of interiorized mode of viewing. It freed spectators, in their ocular errancy, to let their minds wander away from the picture, to allow the experience of looking to take them not back to the painting but inward, to the self.

Of course, as I have tried to show at length in this dissertation, there were precedents. Painting's new-found autonomy, as articulated by de Piles, went hand in hand with the autonomy of the spectator: the exchange between the two no longer dominated by external sources of authority, the experience of looking depended increasingly on the viewer's subjective engagement with the canvas. Most notably, we saw how in La Fosse's cupola at the Invalides the artist rejected compositional unity to forestall transcendence to provoke a personal, secular experience. In their own ways, La Fosse's mythological paintings for Louis XIV and Coypel's painting for Philippe d'Orléans diminished the sovereign's omnipotent gaze to forge an

¹⁹ On reverie and the rise of modern selfhood and interiority, see Orwat, *L'invention de la rêverie*, 351–85, 429–75; Robert J. Morrissey, *La rêverie jusqu'à Rousseau* (Lexington, Ky.: French Forum, 1984), 55–76; and Bernard Beugnot, *Le discours de la retraite au XVII^e siècle* (Paris: PUF, 1996), 192–97. On civility and selfhood, see Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenic and Psychogenic Investigations*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, ed. Eric Dunning, Johan Goudsblom, and Stephen Mennel (1939; rev. ed., Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994); and Jacques Revel, "The Uses of Civility," in *A History of Private Life*, vol. 3, *Passions of the Renaissance*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer, ed. Roger Chartier (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1989), 167–206. Of course, reverie is itself inextricable from the emergence of civility; on reverie's relation to civility, see Orwat, 450–69.

experience defined by an inter-subjective, face-to-face exchange—by sympathy. Watteau’s paintings, then, must be understood in relation to these earlier precedents. Moving from monumental decoration to small-scale easel painting, meant to be enjoyed in the spaces of a *cabinet*, they made the experience of looking intimate, thus expanding and refining the precedent set by La Fosse’s easel paintings for the Trianon for an audience beyond the elites of the court. At the same time, in their invitation to reverie, they imposed a new distance between painting and beholder, reconfiguring the relations of authority between the two. La Fosse and Coypel sought to create intense absorption with the subjects depicted, a momentary dissolution of the boundary between self and (painted) other that opened the way for de Piles’ more domineering model of experience in the *Cours de peinture*. Watteau’s paintings, on the other hand, turned the experience of art inward, foregrounding the authority of the beholder against that of the painted world.

An examination of Watteau’s *La perspective* (Figure 97), painted about 1715, the year of Louis XIV’s death, can help us see the ideological consequence more clearly. With its amorous aristocrats and pastoral setting, the work is in many ways typical of the *fête galante*, but it is unique in that it depicts an identifiable site: the Château de Montmorency, country residence of the artist’s patron, Pierre Crozat.²⁰ The location is revealed by the double loggia at the center of the painting, which stood at the end of a reflecting pond in the château’s park. The loggia, though, is no ordinary architectural folly; rather, it is the former country house of Charles Le Brun, which Crozat acquired in 1704 and soon after had gutted and reconfigured as an open-air

²⁰ It is a striking and irresistible historical coincidence that Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the eighteenth century’s most famous champion of reverie, would later seek refuge here in 1756.

maison de plaisance.²¹ Despite its new owner, the site's association with Le Brun endured. An etching by Caylus of Watteau's drawing of the loggia even identifies the subject not as Crozat's garden but as the "House of M. Le Brun, F. P. of King L. XIV" (Figure 99). In an age when the château was inextricable from an individual's larger personal and social identity, the loggia's metonymic relation to Le Brun could not easily be effaced.

Could Watteau's invocation of Le Brun here have been a coincidence? Perhaps, but it can still be appreciated for its evocative potential, as a metaphor for his larger project. Typically, Watteau has structured the composition around a void of sky. And here, in the only recognizable site in all the *fêtes galantes*, the artist has summoned up the ghost of the recently deceased First Painter to the King, the Grand Siècle's most illustrious painter. It is tempting to think that the sophisticated artists and amateurs who frequented Crozat's salon, part of a new Parisian elite that defined itself against Versailles and the court, would have appreciated the gesture: in the hollowed-out ruins of his house, Le Brun's obsolescence has been exposed for all to see. We cannot help but recall the "entombment" of Louis XIV's portrait in *L'enseigne de Gersaint*, which has been interpreted as a *vanitas* emblem of the impermanence of earthly glory.²² Memorial to a bygone order, Le Brun's gutted château, too, is an emblem of impermanence; it is the trace of Death in the kingdom of Eros.

Yet how different this *memento mori* is from its predecessors! In the greatest *vanitas* painting of the previous century, Poussin's *Bergers d'Arcadie* (Figure 98), for example, Death

²¹ Alan Wintermute, "La Perspective," in *Claude to Corot: The Development of Landscape Painting in France* (New York: Colnaghi, 1990), 131–37; and Hans Junecke, *Montmorency: Der Landsitz Charles Le Brun's; Geschichte, Gestalt und die "Ile Enchantée"* (Berlin: Verlag Bruno Hessling, 1960), 20–21.

²² Robert Neuman, "Watteau's *L'Enseigne de Gersaint* and the Baroque Emblematic Tradition," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 104 (November 1984): 154–57.

takes center stage, and each figure freezes in contemplation of its inescapable presence—de Piles, despite his censure of Poussin’s deficiencies in color, would have approved.²³ In *La perspective*, by contrast, Death’s monument is only dimly perceptible in the background. Shielded by a curtain of trees, the lovers and children disport themselves in the foreground, blissfully unaware of the structure’s presence; only the smaller couple in the middle of the painting, stooped with age and already acquainted with the transience of youth and love, turn to confront it. In this new order of pleasure and *galanterie*, Death no longer casts its pall over the proceedings.

The stakes of Watteau’s formal experiments are now coming into focus. As the composition’s structural heart, the hollowed-out château represents, in this new perspective, a rejection of de Piles’s system and the model of authority it embodied. Le Brun here is a figure not just of artistic or political authority narrowly defined, as Katie Scott has argued in her provocative reading of the painting, but of a more encompassing authority over the self and its experience—of the authority of painting.²⁴ It is no coincidence that de Piles adopted political metaphors to explain his theory of composition, describing “la figure principale dans un tableau” as “comme un roi parmi ses courtisans, que l’on doit reconnaître au premier coup d’œil, et qui doit ternir l’éclat de tous ceux qui l’accompagnent,” and the *tout ensemble* as a “tout politique ; où les grands ont besoin des petits.”²⁵ At its heart, his system aimed to establish painting’s absolute sovereignty over the looking subject. Painting, he exclaimed, ne permet à personne de

²³ On the theme of death in Poussin and Watteau, see Erwin Panofsky, “On the Conception of Transience in Poussin and Watteau,” in *Philosophy and History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*, ed. Raymond Klibansky and H. J. Paton (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 223–54.

²⁴ Scott *The Rococo Interior*, 157–59.

²⁵ De Piles, commentary on *L’art de peinture*, trans., ed., and commentary by de Piles (Paris, 1668; 2nd ed., 1673), 154–55; and idem, *Cours de peinture*, 99.

passer indifféremment...sans être comme surpris, sans s'arrêter et sans jouir quelque temp du plaisir de sa surprise."²⁶ The experience of viewing was always dependent on, and determined by, the overwhelming power of the exterior object, an object that continually asserted its mastery over the spectator. *Enthousiasme* represented the apogee of this mastery, for its violence impeded subjective liberty; impeded the freedom to look and react according to the caprices of one's feeling and judgment. "Le spectateur," de Piles affirmed, "...sans entrer dans aucun détail se laisse enlever tout à coup, et comme malgré lui, au degré d'enthousiasme où le peintre l'a attiré."²⁷

If *enthousiasme's* power depended on a fascinating and irresistible center, in *La perspective* that center has been hollowed out—and now, ironically, bespeaks only its inability to impose unity and hierarchy on the image. Le Brun, the king, is dead, and on the ruins of his château the freedom of the spectator is staked out. As the vehicle for the liberation of the painting's compositional architecture, the gutted structure becomes a cipher for the collapse of reality into dream and the ascent of subjective experience. With his formal innovations, the artist upended painting's sovereignty and instituted a new, self-determining order of vision in which eye and mind are encouraged to roam—the order of reverie. Spectatorship emerged as an intimate, private encounter with the canvas, grounded in the pleasures of instability, indeterminacy, restlessness. Where de Piles's model of pictorial effects obliterated the self in the stupefaction of *enthousiasme*, Watteau's pictorial effects allowed for the formation of a new kind of viewing subject. By inviting his contemporaries to dream, Watteau marked out his achievement as a painter of modern interiority. Wrestling with the legacy of the great history

²⁶ De Piles, *Cours de peinture*, 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

painters of the previous generation, he made looking a means of establishing the autonomy of the self.

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Figures



Figure 1

Antoine Coypel, *Eliezer et Rébecca*, 1701, oil on canvas, 125 x 106 cm,
Louvre, Paris.



Figure 2

Charles de La Fosse, *Le triomphe de Bacchus*, 1700, oil on canvas, 157 x 135 cm,
Louvre, Paris



Figure 3

Charles de La Fosse, *Hercule entre le Vice et la Vertu*, 1700, oil on canvas, 120 x 109 cm (formally oval), musée de la Faïence Frédéric Blandin, Nevers



Figure 4

Antoine Coypel, *Silène barbouille de mûres*, 1700, oil on canvas, 157 x 135 cm, musée de Saint-Denis, Reims



Figure 5
Salon de Diane, Château de Versailles



Figure 6
Charles de La Fosse, *Le sacrifice d'Iphigénie*, 1678–1680, oil on canvas, 2230 x 2120 cm, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 7

Charles de La Fosse, *Alexandre chassant le lion*, 1678–1680, oil on plaster, curved format, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 8

Charles Le Brun, *Les Reines de Perse*, 1660–1661, oil on canvas, 298 x 453 cm, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 9

Charles de La Fosse, *Apollon et Thétys*, 1688, oil on canvas, 170.5 x 151.2 cm,
Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 10

Charles de La Fosse, *Clytie changée en tournesol*, 1688, oil on canvas, 128 x 156 cm,
Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 11

Charles de La Fosse, *Le repos de Diane*, 1688, oil on canvas, 128 x 159.8 cm,
Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon

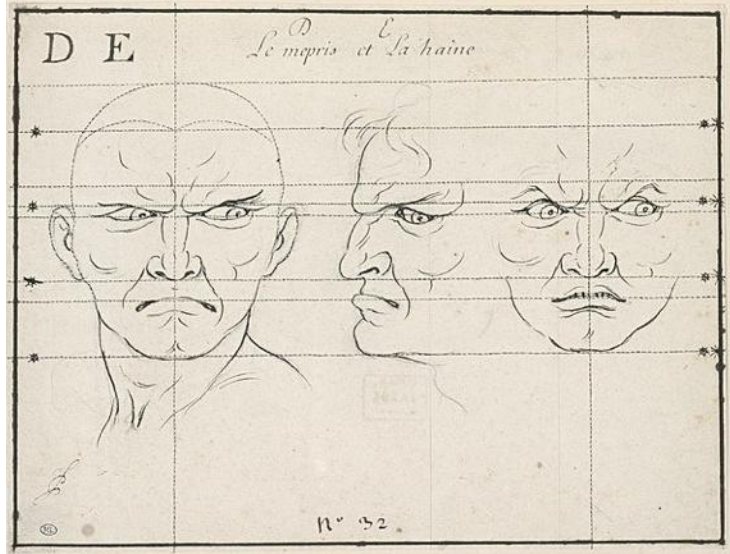


Figure 12

Charles Le Brun, *Le Mépris et la haine: deux têtes de face et une de profil*, pen, black ink, and black chalk on white paper, 19.6 × 25.5 cm, Louvre, Paris



Figure 13

Peter Paul Rubens, *Drunken Silenus*, 1616–17, oil on canvas, 212 x 214.5 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich



Figure 14

Jean Jouvenet, *Apollon et Thétis*, 1700–1701, oil on canvas, 151 x 124 cm, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 15

Charles Le Brun, *Le roi donne ses ordres pour attaquer en même temps quatre places fortes de Hollande*, 1672, 1680–1684, oil on canvas, galerie des Glaces, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 16

Charles Le Brun, *La Franche-Comté conquise pour la seconde fois, 1674, 1680–1684*, oil on canvas, galerie des Glaces, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 17

Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Portrait de Louis XIV*, 1701, oil on canvas, 277 x 194 cm, Louvre, Paris



Figure 18

François Verdier, *Jupiter et Io*, c. 1693–1695, oil on canvas, 79 x 97 cm, oil on canvas, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 19

François Verdier, *Junon et Jupiter*, c. 1693–1695, oil on canvas, 79 x 97 cm, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 20

Nicolas Poussin, *Moïse sauvé des eaux* (detail), 1647, oil on canvas, 120 x 195 cm, Louvre, Paris



Figure 21

Charles de La Fosse, *Bacchus et Ariane*, c. 1699, oil on canvas, 241 x 185 cm, musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon



Figure 22

Pierre-Denis Martin, *Visite de Louis XIV à l'Hôtel royal des Invalides, le 26 août 1706*, c. 1706, oil on canvas, 110 x 160 cm, musée Carnavalet, Paris



Figure 23
Dome, Église royale des Invalides.



Figure 24

Jean Jouvenet, *Les douze apôtres*, 1704, tempera on plaster, 925 x 265 (at the top), 365 (at the base); and Charles de La Fosse, *Saint Louis environné d'anges musiciens présente ses armes au Christ*, 1703–1706, oil on plaster, about 25 m in diameter, Église royale des Invalides



Figure 25

Charles de La Fosse, *Saint Louis environné d'anges musiciens présente ses armes au Christ*, 1703–1706, oil on plaster, about 25 m in diameter, Église royale des Invalides



Figure 26

Charles de La Fosse, *Saint Louis environné d'anges musiciens présente ses armes au Christ*, c. 1703, oil on canvas, 199.5 cm in diameter, musée de l'Armée, hôtel national des Invalides



Figure 27

Nicolas Poussin, *Ravissement de Saint Paul*, 1649-1650, oil on canvas, 148 x 120 cm,
Louvre, Paris



Figure 28

Philippe de Champaigne, *La Mère Catherine-Agnès Arnault et la soeur Catherine de Sainte Suzanne de Champagne (Ex Voto)*, 1662, oil on canvas, 165 x 229 cm, Louvre, Paris



Figure 29 (left)

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint André*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 84 x 38 cm,
musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen

Figure 30 (right)

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Pierre*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 84 x 38 cm,
musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen



Figure 31 (left)

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Mathias*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 84 x 50 cm,
musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen



Figure 32 (right)

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Jude*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 83 x 50 cm,
musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen



Figure 33 (left)

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Paul*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 84 x 37 cm,
musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen

Figure 34 (right)

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Jean*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 83 x 50 cm,
musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen



Figure 35

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Simon*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 84 x 50 cm,
musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen

Figure 36

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Barthélemy*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 84 x 50 cm,
musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen





Figure 37

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Thomas*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 84 x 50 cm,
musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen



Figure 38

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Jacques le Majeur*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 84 x 50 cm,
musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen



Figure 39

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Philippe*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 84 x 50 cm, musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen



Figure 40

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Jacques le Mineur*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 84 x 50 cm, musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen



Figure 41

Charles Le Brun, *Le Ravissement: figure de femme, vue de trois quarts* c. 1668, black chalk, 24.4 x 20.3 cm, Louvre Paris



Figure 42

Jean Jouvenet, *Apothéose de saint Jean de Dieu*, 1691, oil on canvas, 320 x 245 cm, Aix-en-Provence, église Saint-Jean-de-Malte



Figure 43

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Pierre guérissant les malades de son ombre*, c. 1699, oil on canvas, 310 x 260 cm, La Fère (Ainse), église Saint-Moutain



Figure 44

Charles de La Fosse, *Saint Jean l'Évangéliste*, 1702–1706, fresco with oil and tempera, 500 cm x 750 cm (trapezoidal *chantournée* form), église royale des Invalides



Figure 45

Charles de La Fosse, *Saint Matthieu*, 1702–1706, fresco with oil and tempera, 500 cm x 750 cm (trapezoidal *chantournée* form), église royale des Invalides



Figure 46

Charles de La Fosse, *Saint Marc et saint Pierre*, 1702–1706, fresco with oil and tempera, 500 cm x 750 cm (trapezoidal *chantournée* form),
église royale des Invalides



Figure 47

Charles de La Fosse, *Saint Luc et saint Paul*, 1702–1706, fresco with oil and tempera, 500 cm x 750 cm (trapezoidal *chantournée* form),
église royale des Invalides



Figure 48

Louis de Boullogne, *Saint Luc*, c. 1702, private collection, Paris



Figure 49

Jean Jouvenet, *Saint Luc*, c. 1702, oil on canvas, 96 x 141 cm, musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen



Figure 50

Charles de La Fosse, *Saint Louis environné d'anges musiciens présente ses armes au Christ* (detail)



Figure 51

Charles de La Fosse, *Saint Louis environné d'anges musiciens présente ses armes au Christ* (detail)



Figure 52

Antonio da Correggio, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1526-1530, fresco, 1093 x 1195 cm, Cathedral of Parma



Figure 53

Antonio da Correggio, *Vision of St. John on Patmos*, 1520-1523, fresco, 969 x 889 cm, San Giovanni Evangelista, Parma



Figure 54

Charles Le Brun, *La descente du Saint Esprit*, 1654, oil on canvas, 317 x 165 cm, Louvre, Paris



Figure 55

Jean Jouvenet, *L'Ascension du Christ*, 1716, oil on canvas, 167 x 85 cm, musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen



Figure 56

Jean Jouvenet, *La Pentecôte*, 1709, oil on plaster, chapelle royale, Versailles

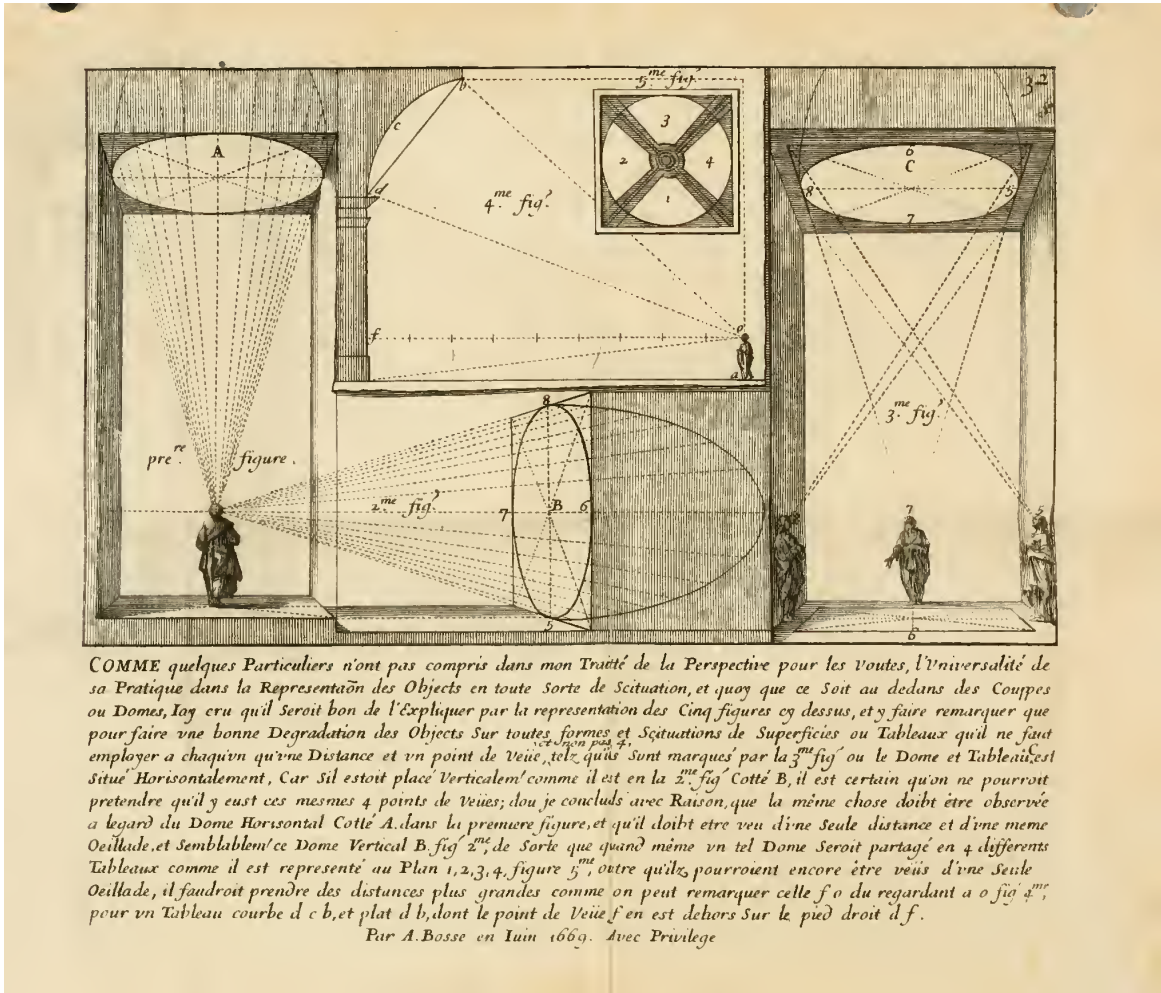


Figure 57

Abraham Bosse, *Moyen universel de pratiquer la perspective sur les tableaux ou surfaces irrégulières ensemble quelques particularitez concernant cet art et celui de la gravure en taille douce* (Paris, 1669)



Figure 58

Pierre Mignard, *La Gloire des Bienheureux*, 1665, fresco, Val-de-Grâce, Paris



Figure 59

Pierre Mignard, *La Gloire des Bienheureux*, 1665, fresco, Val-de-Grâce, Paris



Figure 60

Pierre Mignard, *Projet pour la décoration de la coupole des Invalides*, 1690, black chalk with white chalk, 65 x 69 cm, Louvre, Paris



Figure 61

Charles de La Fosse, *L'Assomption de la Vierge*, 1676, oil on canvas, 91 cm in diameter, musée Magnin, Dijon



Figure 62

Charles de La Fosse, *L'Apthéose de la Vierge en gloire*, c. 1680–1690, oil on canvas, 101 cm in diameter, musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen



Figure 63

Charles de La Fosse, *Saint Louis environné d'anges musiciens présente ses armes au Christ* (detail)



Figure 64

Charles Le Brun, *L'Aurore précédant le char du Soleil et provoquant le réveil de la Terre*, c. 1673, Pavillon d'Aurore, Château de Sceaux



Figure 65

Charles Le Brun, *La France donne la paix à l'Europe*, 1680–1684, oil on canvas, galerie des Glaces, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 66

Charles de La Fosse, *La Résurrection*, and Antoine Coypel, *Dieu le Père, dans sa Gloire*, 1709–1710, oil on plaster, Chapelle royale, completed 1710, Versailles



Figure 67

Antoine Coppel, *Galerie d'Énée*, reconstruction by Katie Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 198–199, based on Antoine Schnapper's



Figure 68

After Jean Cotelle le jeune, Limonsin excudit, *Énée donne l'assaut à la ville des Latins*



Figure 69

Antoine Coypel, *Vénus suppliant Jupiter*, 1702, oil on canvas with grid lines, 94.5 x 32.6 cm, musée des Beaux-Arts, Angers

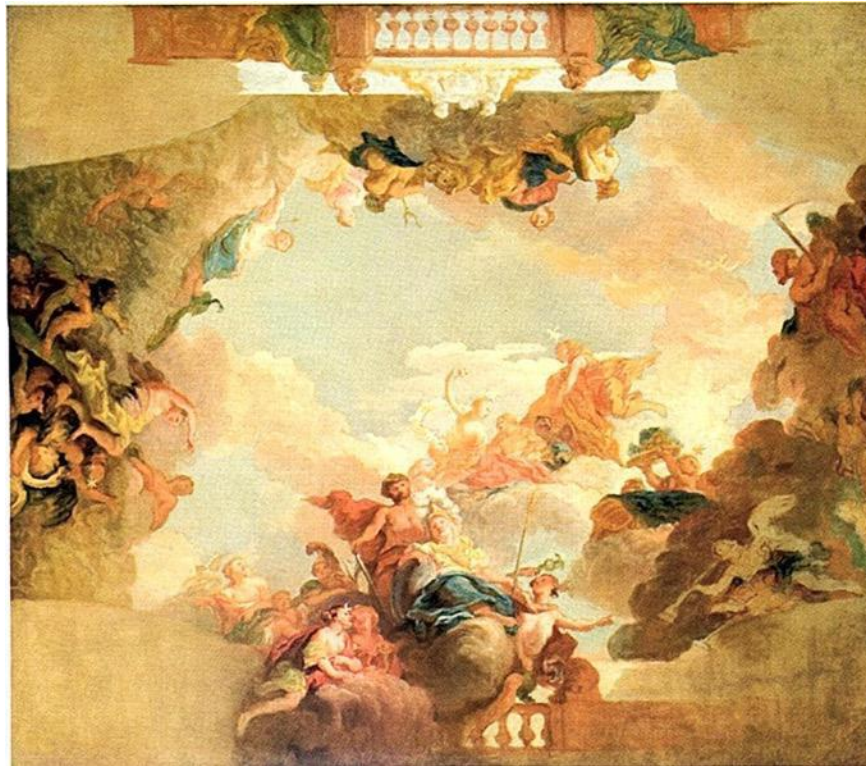


Figure 70

Charles de La Fosse, *La naissance de Minerve*, c. 1706, oil on canvas, 77.4 x 96.2 cm, musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris



Figure 71

François de Troy, *Festin de Didon et Énée*, c. 1704, oil on canvas, 160.5 by 202.5 cm, Musée de l'Ile-de-France à Sceaux



Figure 72

Antoine Coypel, *Énée portant Anchise hors de Troie*, c. 1714–1715,
oil on canvas, 387 x 190 cm, musée Fabre, Montpellier



Figure 73

- Antoine Coypel, *Énée et Achate apparaissent à Didon*, c. 1714–1715, oil on canvas, 390 x 570 cm, musée Fabre, Montpellier



Figure 74

Antoine Coypel, *Mort de Didon*, c. 1714–1715, oil on canvas, 387 x 190 cm,
musée Fabre, Montpellier



Figure 75
Louis Surrugue after Antoine Coypel, *Énée aux enfers*, engraving



Figure 76

Louis Desplaces after Antoine Coypel, *Jupiter apparaît à Énée*, engraving



Figure 77
Louis Desplaces after Antoine Coyvel, *Funérailles de Pallas*, engraving

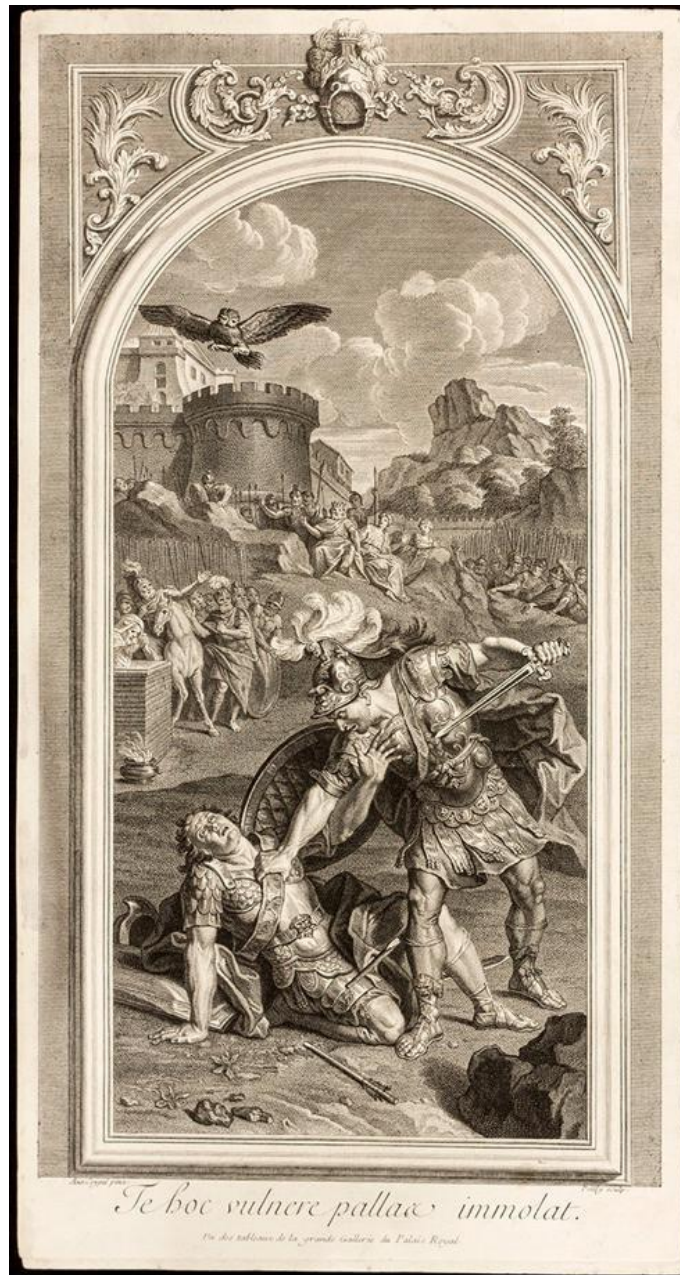


Figure 78

Jean-Baptiste Poilly after Antoine Coypel, *La mort de Turnus*, engraving

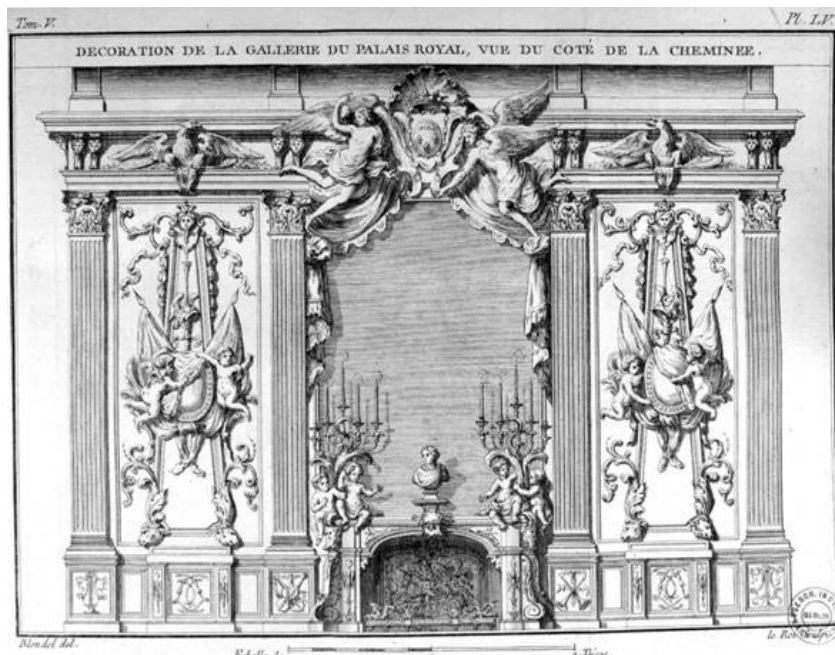


Figure 79

Le Roi, *Décoration de la galerie du Palais-Royal, vue du côté de la cheminée* (cat. P 11), in Jacques-François Blondel, *Cours d'Architecture* (1754), vol. V, plate LV



Figure 80

Antoine Dieu (?), *Allégorie du duc d'Orléans, régent du Royaume*, 1718, oil on canvas, 106 x 77 cm, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 81

Pietro da Cotona, Galleria, 1651–1654, fresco, Palazzo Pamphili, Rome



Figure 82

Nicolas de Largillière, *Le Régent vainqueur de la conspiration sous la figure d'Apollon Pythien*, oil on canvas, 41 x 30 cm, Versailles, châteaux de Versailles et de Trianon



Figure 83

Charles Le Brun, *Le Passage du Granique*, c. 1665, oil on canvas, 470 x 1209 cm,
Louvre, Paris



Figure 84

François Perrier, *Attaque des harpies*, c. 1646–1647, oil on canvas, 155 x 218 cm,
Louvre, Paris



Figure 85

Nicolas Poussin, *Israélites recueillant la manne dans le désert*, 1637–1639, oil on canvas, 149 x 200 cm, Louvre, Paris



Figure 86

Nicolas Poussin, *Vénus montrant des armes à Énée*, c. 1636–1637, oil on canvas, 108 x 134.6 cm, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto



Figure 87

Nicolas Poussin, *Vénus montrant des armes à Énée*, 1639, oil on canvas, 107 x 146 cm, musée des Beaux-Arts, Rouen



Figure 88

Nicolas Poussin, *La mort de Germanicus*, 1627, oil on canvas, 147.96 x 198.12 cm, Minneapolis Institute of Art



Figure 89

Federico Barocci, *Aeneas's Flight from Troy*, 1598, oil on canvas, 179 x 253 cm,
Galleria Borghese, Rome



Figure 90

Simon Vouet, *Énée portant Anchise hors de Troie*, c. 1635, oil on canvas, 140.34 x 110.01 cm, San Diego Museum of Art



Figure 91

Charles de La Fosse, *Vénus demandant à Vulcain des armes pour Enée*, c. 1690, oil on canvas, 179 x 152 cm, musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes



Figure 92

Charles de La Fosse, *Déification d'Énée*, c. 1690, oil on canvas, 179 x 152 cm, musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes



Figure 93

Anthony Van Dyck, *Vénus demandant à Vulcain des armes pour Enée*, c. 1630–1632, oil on canvas, 220 x 145 cm, Louvre, Paris



Figure 94

Sébastien Bourdon, *La mort de Didon*, c. 1637–1640, oil on canvas, 158.5 x 136.5 cm, Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg



Figure 95

Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Le pèlerinage à l'île de Cythère*, c. 1717, oil on canvas, 129 x 194 cm, Louvre, Paris



Figure 96

Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Le pèlerinage à l'île de Cythère*, c. 1717, oil on canvas, 129 x 194 cm, Schloss Charlottenburg, Berlin



Figure 97

Jean-Antoine Watteau, *La perspective*, ca. 1715, oil on canvas, 46.7 x 55.3 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



Figure 98

Comte de Caylus, after a drawing by Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Maison de M. Le Brun*, etching, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris



Figure 99

Nicolas Poussin, *Les bergers d'Arcadie*, c. 1650, oil on canvas, 85 x 121 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris