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Ritual Differences : Cutting up and dividing (Gender, Genus, and Genres). What about blind spots in Anthropology?

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Abstract

The aim of this contribution is a flashback on the concept of Difference as it is used by the anthropologists of the so-called Paris-School, starting with one of their inaugurating works, *The Cuisine of Sacrifice*. Actually, it is imperative to question the fact that Difference binds, in an obscure and even blind way, the scientific and impartial discourse on Human Being to the ancient Greek ritual of sacrifice, that constitutes the uncontroversial beginning of all differences (and not their mere coincidence, as one would admit at first sight). One has to notice that those kinds of differences, such as Gender, Genus and also Genre, continue to control and lead the works of the anthropologists nowadays, even of those who fight against genealogical ideologies and ethnocentric prescriptions as well as against dominant categories. What is the meaning and impact of those anthropological blind spots where ritual and science overlap? The originality of this contribution is to make an investigation by focusing on the ancient Greek melic Genres¹.

Résumé

Cette étude a pour objet de revenir sur la notion de différence telle qu'elle est utilisée par l'anthropologie de l'Ecole de Paris, à commencer par l'un de ses ouvrages inauguraux, la *Cuisine du Sacrifice*. Car il est urgent de s'interroger sur le fait que la différence lie, de manière obscure et même aveugle, un discours scientifique et impartial sur l'homme, au rituel sacrificiel, qui constitue le point de départ attesté de toutes les différences, à commencer évidemment par la différence des genres, qu'ils concernent le sexe, l'espèce, ou les formes poético-musicales. En effet, les genres continuent à orienter, encore aujourd'hui, les choix herméneutiques des anthropologues, même de ceux qui combattent les idéologies généalogiques et ethnocentriques ou les catégories dominantes. Quelle est la portée de ces points aveugles de l'anthropologie où science et rituel empiètent l'un sur l'autre ? L'originalité de cette contribution est d'examiner cette question en privilégiant l'angle d'attaque des genres méliques grecs anciens.

1. Some methodological problems

The so called "Paris School" of Anthropology stands upon the inquiry of what Marcel Detienne calls an "incomparable" or "dissonance". "Incomparable" does not mean what defies all comparisons and it does not imply any implicit value judgment, such as for instance,

¹ This paper (under publication) was first delivered at Stanford University (Department of Classics) in a meeting on *Language, ritual, performance : evaluating theoretical approaches to Greek culture* (October 2012). All our gratitude goes to Richard Martin, Giulia Sissa, Ioanna Papadopoulou for their kind comments on that occasion.

the superiority of monotheist religion over polytheism². “Incomparable” is what happens when a category has no equivalent anywhere else, so that it inspires the question of understanding why it is so³. For instance, “foundation” seems a plain and widespread category, appearing with some contrasts in the Rig Veda or in some societies of West Africa. The category functions quite well, until we find out that the Japanese ignore it, because they only have the idea of “restoration” (in the sixteenth century the Japanese gave themselves a new tradition by restoring imperial tombs). “Foundation”, then, is not a relevant category for the Japanese. The confrontation of those “incomparable” (foundation and restoration) amounts to put their “dissonance” into perspective, “Dissonance” being defined as the lack, in some ethnic group, of what seems for us a widespread obvious category, or, conversely, as the existence of some configuration in an other ethnic group for which we have no category.

Thanks to this setting, categories such as foundation and restoration are dismantled in a plural complex of conceptual components that amount to new ‘orientations’. These give shape to new “comparables”:

« The plural comparatist immediately sets about reconstruing the verb *to found*, discovering progressively its complications and raising an ensemble of questions: what is it to commence, inaugurate, make historical, historicize? What does it mean to be born in a place, to have identity through birth, to be native, indigenous, with roots or deracinated? And what is a place or site? The conceptual components into which the comparatist dismantles the category or subcategory become ever more subtle, and the process involves traveling between the cultures and societies at issue in order to put the newly developed components to work. In this experimental phase, the comparatist finds the societies, the cultural ensembles, that react not only to the category being dismantled but also to the series of questions that its dismantling raises (...). Comparables are, finally, *orientations* — they are not “deep structures” and not in principle offensive to contextualist or specialist scruples. Orientations can be brought to light and analyzed only when apparently incomparable societies and cultures are confronted with each other⁴. »

To summarize, the new comparative method consists in looking for dissonances by confronting “incomparables”. Even if this method seems surprising at first sight, its aim is to dismantle the underneath categories and to extract their underlying elements. Here comparison is the tool of an inquiry in the manner of archaeological excavations : it reveals multifaceted aspects that are susceptible to make understand a logic or, more precisely, plural and local logics.

The inquiry about “sacrifice” is perfectly representative of this method.

In his famous study on Greek sacrifice, Jean-Louis Durand emphasizes his reluctance about the word “sacrifice”, highlighting the important features of what creates a methodological revolution in anthropology:

“Looking at others’ practices is already a grid for reading, because of the place from

² DETIENNE recalls what difference of outlooks distinguishes the comparative ethnology of the eighteenth century, capable of making an analogy between red Indians and ancient Greeks without masking it under a value judgment, and the evolutionist comparativism of the nineteenth century with its hierarchical opposition between religions that are considered civilized or not. *Comparativisms have nothing univocal*, 2009, p. 1.

³ DETIENNE, 2002, p. 183.

⁴ DETIENNE, *ibid.*

which you look. The place these propositions start from, and for most of them, also the place of their reception, is the West cultural space, informed by practices that are predominantly Christian. The death of an animal, being religious for others, is completely excluded from religion. The only possible sacrifice being the one where the god is the only victim worthy of itself, the death of animals would not develop a somewhat elaborated net of significations. And that is how, from those theological heights, the religious death of animals amongst others is disqualified. Called sacrifice, this death of the beast, both sublimed and refused in the Holy-Sacrifice, the only one, is designed as an inferior practice, vaguely disgusting, but hardly succeeding in hiding the unspeakable of our slaughterhouses. So, of what we call animal sacrifice we have nothing to say, being disqualified by our own practices. It is paradoxically from a misuse of language, an imperial extension of our own categories, even scientifically elaborated, that we unify under this term the religious forms of the death of the beasts in diverse cultures. In our system, sacrifice exists as an empty class, but as a strategic position too, from where (as contempt vs. fascination) the refusal of the other starts its establishment. Then, are we really disqualified in speaking of Greek *thusia*? Sure, unless we try to extract ourselves from our classificatory machine with the purpose to move closer to others'. It seemed to us that a good technique consisted in listening to living beings systems, where the historian's frustrations are not current, where the word is exchanged. In the sense of the linguist, it is a *contrastive* anthropology which is asked for. And with the aim of bringing into light ethnocentrism as a major epistemological obstacle, it appeared even more necessary to destroy the analyst's system, attempting a temporary negation by the seizure of a third logic, performing on the field. A sort of indirect behavior by which the old comparativism becomes the requirement of concretely understanding coherent worlds of different meanings. The first benefice of it, indeed, was to spot what in our occidental place merges with comparable features as those of the religious killing of animals. So the killing of the pig in our rural societies underlines systems of kinship, and in its proper language tells something on men themselves. Such a round trip from logic to logic might enlighten ranges of meanings, by producing what makes the difference - and equality - of human societies⁵."

One finds in this extract all the distinctive features of the Paris-School anthropology. Sacrifice is an "incomparable" in Detienne's sense, because it constitutes a local category which has no equivalent somewhere else. Sacrifice and Greek *thusia* do not coincide.

The heuristic method goes through the optical metaphor of the "point of view" (*scenographia*), but invested politically and even ethically. "Ethnocentrism" indeed designates the imperialism of West and Christian scientific and logical categories (as are the evolutionist methods, whether Darwinist or positivist). So are "ethnocentrists" those who think that they are, as J. Rudhardt and O. Reverdin put it, "capable of elaborating a theory of blood sacrifice encompassing all millenaries and all civilizations", such as E. Burnett Tylor in his *Primitive Culture* (1871). By applying Darwin to human practices and beliefs, he distinguished primitive religions and advanced religions, like Christianity. From this point of view, sacrifice is an offering ritual to the gods that evolves from a materialist and 'barbarian' offering to abnegation and spirituality. The same ethnocentrism concerns W. Robertson Smith (*The Religion of the Semites*, 1889), a member of the Cambridge School who inaugurated the *Totemistic* thesis, according to which the animal symbolizes the clan: by consuming the flesh and blood of the animal, men participate to the divine vitality and assert their solidarity in a communion ritual that evolves towards atonement and Eucharist (the body of Christ is shared

⁵ (1979), p.133-135.

among the faithful).

For Durand on the contrary, the good method, called a “technique” because it constitutes a manipulation or an experiment, is contrastive : the categories *must* be considered as dissonant according to Detienne’s musical metaphor⁶. We must restore the other’s logic, *his* difference, and, as difference is distance between the I and the Other, it permits to relativize our own logic and to abolish ethnocentrism, with the benefit of a change of point of view on our own logic, as we see ourselves with the other’s eyes. The consequence of this dialectic is political, “democratic”: it is the “equality” of all scenographies. A science of hierarchies gives way to a science of equal and relative differences. Christian logic is accused to relegate the death of animals in the slaughterhouses by reserving the word sacrifice to God’s death, while Greek logic coincides with the *rehabilitation of the religious death of the animal*.

Detienne considers that the concept of sacrifice is out of date (“the notion of sacrifice is indeed a category of yesterday⁷”) and Durand thinks that sacrifice is a lexical illusion⁸, should it be only because the Greek verb *thuein* does not mean to sacrifice (latin *sacrificare*, “to make sacred” as H. Hubert and M. Mauss put it)⁹, but to burn, cremate for a feast, produce smoke (the semantic associates of *thusia* and *thuein* are the feast (*thaliai*, *thoinê*, *Hestia*), hospitality (*euôchein*, *dechesthai*). For instance, in Herodotus, *thusia* may designate the feast and so is right opposite to the notion of passion that saturates the Christian meaning of sacrifice¹⁰.

Such an idea is taken for granted in recent contributions¹¹ that take place in the continuity of M. Detienne’s and J.-P. Vernant’s ideas, above all against W. Burkert and R. Girard, accused to favor an ethnocentric and obsolete category. Of course there are some notes of dissent, but the methodological postulates roughly remain the same, and on some questions as the refutation of the *Unschuldskomödie* (the comedy of innocence) in K. Meuli’s sense, positions have even become tightened, as we shall see later.

2. The logic of the knife

One undeniable positive effect of the Paris-School was, as we have seen, to disqualify a science based on hierarchical differences, by making way for a science where differences are considered being equal and relative. This privilege with its relativistic underlying logic, and its favorite metaphor, “dissonance”, has practical and epistemological consequences that should be welcomed as a major step forward. But there is an unexpected consequence: by emphasizing a science of differences, members of the Paris-School wielded a problematic conceptual tool, if only in the form that Derrida gave to this problem, showing (not without paradox), how history of Western thought, notoriously ethnocentric, is worked by the Differ(a)n¹².

⁶ The choice of this word is not defined but one is tempted to recognize the reminiscence of Adorno’s thesis on the capacity of music for disentangling ideological *clichés*.

⁷ 1979), p. 34.

⁸ (1979), p. 136.

⁹ (1899), p. 29-138. The christian origin of the definition of “sacrifice”, is Augustine’s translation of the word *thusia* used in the Gospels and Paul’s Epistles (PERCEAU, WERSINGER, 2014).

¹⁰ For the real weight of this interpretation and how far anthropologists and linguists (such as BENVENISTE) remain indebted to Christian influence, PERCEAU, WERSINGER, 2014, especially p. 124-127 and 139-140.

¹¹ PETROPOULOU (2008) ; WRIGHT KNUST and VARHELYI (eds.), (2011); FARAONE and NAIDEN (eds.) (2012).

¹² Differ(a)n^{ce} resists the philosopher’s founding opposition between the sensible and the intelligible which inaugurates Metaphysics, it is the process of differentiation (unthinkable in the active or passive form) from which the categorical oppositions are set up (1972, p. 5-13).

The miscalled Greek “animal sacrifice”¹³ is centered on the carving and share, as was demonstrated by J.-L. Durand, G. Berthiaume and J. Svenbro. Such a share has a fundamentally political dimension, since every political act is preceded by a commensal “sacrifice”, according to E. Durkheim’s theory that religion and ritual constitute the infrastructure of society. As J.-L. Durand puts it, the “sacrificial” policy is expressed through the share of meat, and cutting up is reflected in social order. The thesis is subversive, because far from thinking (as one might be tempted to do), that the differences pre-exists as an abstract and innate cognitive structure to ritual practices that would constitute an application along with other practices, it considers difference as a consequence of the embodied category of “sacrifice”:

“Sacrifice (*thusia*), and hunting, more lateral, which provides to the Greeks the bulk of their meat, appears to them as a fundamental activity in which the essential is at stake. A place where all the relationships are set up between gods, men, and animals, and also where the relationship between the men themselves gets articulated, and by which the status of humanity is continuously redefined¹⁴.”

The idea according to which the difference between human beings and gods depends on “sacrifice” is not only a Paris-School thesis. It is also present in the works of J. Rudhardt and C. Kerényi, who maintain that “sacrifice” is “an act of creation of the world”. But clearly, above all, it is J.-P. Vernant and the members of the Paris-School who have elaborated all its implications, by showing that the share of the meat initiates a whole series of symbolic structures all characterized by division, beginning with the division of space, i.e. Topology (as in the title of J.-L. Durand’s contribution in 1979).

The same idea is taken up by Jesper Svenbro¹⁵ who links the arithmetical and geometrical *isomoiria* pattern (that is to say the theory of proportions) to “sacrificial” carving at the beginning of the urbanistic apportionment. After Geometry, Arithmetic and Urbanism, Geography and Anatomy are also concerned. J.-L. Durand has shown that “the route of anatomic description borrows (in Aristotle’s thought) the paths followed by the butcher’s *makhaira*¹⁶”.

Even if it seems astonishing and incredible, one cannot help thinking that “sacrifice” in the Greek sense is the original pattern of sciences: Geometry, Geography, Topology, Urbanism, Anatomy, and of course the origin of distributive Logic.

“One may recognize the sketch of a distributive logic of which it would be instructive to perceive how it is connected with the meat and bone ratio¹⁷.”

In his 1979 article, J.-L. Durand notices that platonic dialectic find its favorite metaphor

¹³ Let us note that anthropologists go on speaking of *sacrifice*, despite their reluctance about this term. Aware that the word induces ideology and belief and that there is no innocent use of a word, we shall provisionally put the problematic term into quotation marks.

¹⁴ DURAND (1987), p. 59.

¹⁵ (1982), p. 954 et p. 961, note 13.

¹⁶ (1979), p. 149 ; also BERTHIAUME (1982), p. 61. It has been wrongly objected that there is no correspondence between “sacrificial” debitage and Anatomy because, in the system of values belonging to “sacrifice”, the liver and spleen are privileged, whereas the axiological hierarchy expressed by the Aristotelian representation of the body, assigns prominence to the heart (CARBONE, 2005, p. 21). But DURAND (1987) considers that the type of cut depends on the organic type selected, heart or viscera. The body is cut up in different ways, the emphasis being made on the heart or on the viscera (p. 61). It is wrong to pretend that in the transition of “sacrifice” to Anatomy, cutting up the heart substitutes to cutting up the viscera.

¹⁷ DURAND (1987), p. 64.

(and even its privileged pattern) in sacrificial butchery. In *Phaedrus* 265e, Plato says without ambiguity that the dialectician must divide by following the natural joints and in *Politics* 287c, he says “it is by their limbs (*kata melè*) that we shall divide them (*diairômetha*), as a holy animal (*hiereïon*), since we are incapable of slitting them in two”.

Such stress on knife metaphors is banal in the operations of logic and consciousness. At the elementary level of logic, division is the first step and constitutes a motor for research. One speaks of a “sharp” understanding, and consciousness or intelligence are commonly associated with the words “incisive” and “piercing”...

Some critics have examined the modalities of the cognitive function of difference and “sacrificial” division in other people than the Greek.

For instance, Dominique Briquel¹⁸ examines the Bronze Liver of Piacenza, model of an ovine liver that has been discovered in the city of Emilia in 1877. It belongs to the beginning of the 1st century when Etruria was integrated to the Roman world. It shows an advanced stage of Etruscan hepatoscopy, with some Greek and Oriental influences that are unthinkable before the Hellenistic period, but which also reflect older elements from the Seventh century before Christ.

The Etruscan haruspex observes the signs in the liver. This is a *disciplina*, a religious science of all types of signs including divinatory examination and signs such as comets or as exceptional and fortuitous phenomena¹⁹. D. Briquel notices the existence of a theological order of the liver, with compartments bearing divine names, and following the structure of the liver, into two halves, divided by the anatomic cut of the *incisura umbilicalis*. A right part and a left part face one another, one positive, *familiaris*, and one negative, *hostilis*. On the right, stand Tin, the Etruscan Jupiter, Uni his paredra, and the Etruscan Juno, and on the left, Vetis, the infernal divinity and Cel the Earth goddess. On the other side of the bronze liver, another division in two halves follows the axis of the *incisura umilicalis*, engraved on the surface, a right and solar part facing a left and lunar part. Besides, as the cut is not geometrical but follows the protuberances of the liver, in the place of the gall-bladder stands Nethuns, the god of the sea, the Etruscan Neptune²⁰. Furthermore, the liver represents the *cosmos*²¹.

Another instance is offered by Charles Malamoud who studies the cutting up in Vedic “sacrifice” as described in the Vedic prose, the *Brahmana*. It is called *vibhaktih* and refers to the fragmenting of the animal body and its distribution in shares. Each portion is defined with regard to its human or divine receiver : this is the division of the victim (*pasor vibhaktih*). It happens that this division entails an anthropological repartition, in the sense that the animal is divided in a way which points out its homology with human being. The number of offerings consists in three series that correspond to man’s 10 fingers, 10 toes, and 10 breathes of life²².

These instances show that “difference” is an ethnologically marked practice, as much Greek as Etruscan or Vedic, characterized by a methodological, instrumental or technical use.

It looks then as if the function of difference in anthropology is not epistemologically neutral, and has to face, so to say, pragmatics of self-refutation: does not it mime an ethnologically marked practice?

Now, such an objection, labelled as “post-modern”, would be unimportant²³, were it not

¹⁸ (2004), p. 145-146.

¹⁹ (2004) p. 139.

²⁰ (2004) p. 147.

²¹ (2004) p. 149. We may notice also that this pattern of difference strangely recalls the Greek pattern of *sustoichiai*, the columns of opposites, which function as a Pythagorean scheme of harmony (WERSINGER, 2008, p. 231-247). But the question of its dependence on sacrifice is beyond the limits of this study.

²² MALAMOUD (1987), p. 251.

²³ In the sense that it is not forbidden to be epistemologically a non-fundamentalist, thinking that it is not necessary to submit science to logic, whether analytically (as in the Vienna logical positivism, or of the

confronted with the arguments of another school of anthropology, rival of the Paris-School, the Morphogenetic school²⁴. According to this School, difference is structurally repetitive, characterized by an abyssal infinite *diastema*, something of a fractal pattern of difference. Difference is the fundamental feature of hermeneutics, incapable of becoming a scientific device, because Anthropology is incapable of recognizing the violent base of all human communities. The heteroclitite and teeming diversity of “sacrificial” rituals could be the warning sign of what happens to hermeneutics when ritual “sacrifice” is at stake. What about the capacity of anthropology for not simply repeating myth and not simply being its abstract translation? For instance, when one explains animal “sacrifice” ritual by the refusal of anthropophagy or says that animal “sacrifice” ritual is a symbolic and civilized substitution to savage violence, we must realize that those ideas go back to Hesiodic myth explaining that human beings, in order to avoid eating each other as beasts do, “sacrifice” them. The apotropaic menace of human “sacrifice” is one of the oldest myth of justification of animal “sacrifice” as P. Bonnechère showed²⁵.

Similarly, the search for differences could prove to be only the illusion of a “sacrificial” substitution. Commenting the famous anthropologist, Françoise Héritier’s prudent preface for the work she directed in 1996 (*De la violence*), B. Lempert writes²⁶:

“If Françoise Héritier is so cautious about protecting sacrificial rituals, it is because she knows that the analysis of political violence can reach, as a backlash, the violence of ceremonies. Torn between her ethical engagement and her epistemological scruples, she would like to establish a line of separation between slaughter and ritual, putting on one side mass crimes and on the other side religious immolations and initiatic trials. Initiation, as a polarity of innocence would remove sacrifice out of the sphere of destruction. It means for the anthropologist to demarcate situations where “violence commitment happens inside the community, corresponding not to a will of destruction but to a will of aggregation of its young members, or, at the other end of those systems of thought, to prevent the world to stop”.

All these observations bring us to the hypothesis that division and difference would function as blind spots for anthropology.

3. The difference of *Genres*: blind spots for anthropology?

Reflecting on difference as a blind spot for anthropology implies to “experiment” in the Paris-School sense, that is to say to bring into relation, even if it might seem surprising at first sight, the cutting of meat not only with sciences, but also with *genres*, and even, as far as the Greeks are concerned, with musical genres.

Such a relation is evident both for W. Burkert²⁷ and for the Paris-School’, starting with Jesper Svenbro’s brilliant contribution concerning the “cutting up of the poem²⁸”. Greek archaic choral Lyric, (or melic poetry in the sense of Claude Calame²⁹), is oriented by religious contexts, especially “sacrificial” rituals. The various poetical and musical genres

Linguistic Turn philosophers as B. Russell), or performatively as in J. SEARLE or K.-O. APPEL. For some people today science is “what works”, and that’s all.

²⁴ The Morphogenetic model of anthropology, initiated under the impulse of the French mathematician René Thom, often meets some of W. Burkert’s and R. Girard’s anthropological theses, as noticed by L. Scubla, 1999, p. 282.

²⁵ 1994.

²⁶ 2000.

²⁷ 1966.

²⁸ 1984.

²⁹ 1998.

such as paeon, dithyrambus, tragedy, correspond to different “sacrificed” animals, the sheep, the bull, and the goat. The case of tragedy is of course questionable³⁰. But a text from Plato’s *Laws* (700a-b) allows us to think that the division of musical genres such as hymn, threna, paeon, dithyrambus, and citharedic nomes, would metaphorically correspond to the division of the *mageiros*³¹. In these lines, Plato complains about the fact that musical genres have been all mixed up by New music, accused to have destroyed their initial separation. Of course, one must not go too far in stressing the historical impact of what seems to be an ideological message, which makes the apology of a Golden age of Music closely identified with cult. But, as soon as 470 before Christ, the Odeon was erected by Themistocles for the festival of music of the Great Panathenais, offering a testimony for the progressive break of music with its ritual origin³². Furthermore, this text must be read in parallel to the *Theatrocracy* passage (*Laws*, 799a4-b4), where Plato demands hymns dedicated to their respective gods and corresponding to their respective “sacrifices”.

The concept of melic genres seems to be closely bound to the distribution of viscera and limbs of the animals in “sacrifice”.

Recalling that music and dance are an essential feature of ritual in all cultures and that music is present in “sacrifices” is a truism. However, works on the subject are scarce. Iconographical representations such as the *Stamnos* of the Louvre³³ show that an *aulos* player was present during the sacrifice. A passage of Hesychius³⁴ mentions a *nomos* reserved for the *pharmakos* “who is beaten with branches of fig trees”. Nothing forbids us to think that the *aulos* had its place also in the animal “sacrifices”. A well-known *scholia* to the verses 856-857 of Aristophanes’s *Birds* seems to give evidence to this idea : “It is said that they played the *aulos* during the *thusiai*³⁵”.

J.-L. Durand supposes that the *aulos* was heard not only during the procession but also during the killing of the animal : the assistants kept silence (*euphêmia*) and the *aulos* sounded, maybe at the same time as the ritual cry of women. He seems to believe also, that the *aulos* was playing according to two different modes, “soft” at the time of the procession and “violent” at the time of the slaughter³⁶.

Concerning this point, there is no opposition between the Paris-School and its opponent W. Burkert who thought³⁷ that during the phase of the slaying of the animal (*sphagê*), the women gave a ritual cry, the *ololugê*. That interpretation was based on an article by L. Deubner³⁸ leaning especially on Homer (*Od.* 3, 450), Aeschylus (*Sept.* 269 ; *Ag.* 595, 1118), and Herodotus (4, 189, 3). F. Graf reminds us however that the *ololugê* is not a lamentation and is semantically opened to any kind of feminine excitement, without excluding enjoyment and ecstasy³⁹. But admittedly, this does not constitute an objection against the sacrificial use of the *ololugê*.

Such an eventuality is all the more plausible as the relation of music with the killing of the animal is confirmed. For instance, in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, the poet openly underlines the contrast between the song, as a symbol of life, and the violence of the slayer of the animal, which is necessary to dispose of its horns and its viscera (in the case of the izard),

³⁰ SVENBRO (1984), p. 219 ; BURKERT (1966), p. 114-116 ; GUEPIN (1968), p. XI-XIII, contra SCULION (2002), p. 117-118.

³¹ SVENBRO (1984), p. 225.

³² SCULION (2002), p. 126-129.

³³ AFR, C. 10754, *ARI2*, 228/32.

³⁴ s.v. *Kradèsitès*.

³⁵ *Scholia in Aristophanem, Scholia in aves (scholia vetera)*.

³⁶ (1979), p. 176-177.

³⁷ (1972), p. 4.

³⁸ (1941).

³⁹ (2012), p. 46.

or of its shell (in the case of the tortoise : “Dead, you would sing better (*aeidois*)” v. 38). The presence of viscera (*splanchna*), vestiges of the sacrificed animal is particularly striking, if we consider their function in the sacrificial rituals as well in music, just as if viscera inaugurated the order of culture⁴⁰. Musical instruments are, so to speak, the reversed replicas of the living : tibias for the *aulos*, tortoise shells for the lyre, skin of oxes for the tympanon. One should not wonder of such an inversion, clearly expressed in the verse of the aforesaid *Hymn to Hermes*⁴¹. It also exists in the Vedic sacrifice, as notes Ch. Malamoud : “The authors of Vedic treaties of sacrifice seem especially worried by the question of how to proceed so to obtain from the tearing into pieces of the victim, that is to say from dead parts, the reconstitution of a living whole⁴²”. This remark also applies to Greek “sacrifice”, as we can deduce it from the passage of Plato’s *Phaedrus*, in which the cutting up of the body has to highlight the “former coherence of life”⁴³. It seems that “sacrifice” pleases itself to divert life of its immediate signification, and, as dialectics do, has the effect of substituting the intelligible being to the sensitive being, so thanks to “sacrifice”, the dead animal sings better than alive.

Besides, the musical vocabulary does not lack “sacrificial” connotations. *Melè* is to be taken in the double meaning of parts of the body and of melodies⁴⁴. In Aristophanus’ *Frogs* are evoked the limbs (*melè*) and sinews (*neura*) of Tragedy⁴⁵, and Euripides is said to cut off the “limbs” of Aeschylus’ work, as much as he summarizes his melodies (*xuntemô*, v. 1262 sq.). A late etymology stipulates that “melody (*melos*) and singing (*ôdè*) come by metaphor from the limbs (*melôn*) of the body⁴⁶”. Svenbro⁴⁷ also shows how, in the sophistic circles of Plato’s time, the metric caesura, and the distinction in any poem or argument, of head, feet, and stomach (*koilia*) are also based on animal “sacrifice”.

Therefore, it is not impossible that the *aulos*, a wind instrument, with a whispering and oboe-like sound made for modulations, had the function of hiding (or transposing aesthetically) the noise of the voices of the slaughtered animals. But we lack of testimonies because of the tendency of the ancient Greek iconography to evade the phase of the slaughtering. However, on a votive monument, maybe of the end of 1st century AD, adaptation of an iconography well known as Roman and dedicated to the *Matronae Aufaniae* (Bonn)⁴⁸, we can clearly recognize an *aulos* playing during the *sphagê*. In the same idea, in Aristophanes’ *Peace* (v. 950-955), the chorus hurries Trygeus to perform the sacrifice, as he is afraid that Chairis “should play (*aulèsôn*, in the performative future) the *aulos* without being invited to”. In this passage, the *aulos* is explicitly linked to the ceremony of “sacrifice” and not just to the *pompè*.

To the Etruscan, the goat was more particularly associated with the *aulos*⁴⁹. Now, the goat is well known for its shrieking during the slaying, and that is why moreover it is privileged as a “sacrificial” animal in some communities such as the Zulus who look forward to hearing the cry of the stabbed animal. In *De defectu oraculorum*, Plutarch says that in Delphi, when the goat is splashed with water to make it tremble, it would shake the head “with a shuddering and singing sound” (*meta psophou tromôdous*, 46, 435B8-C4). This expression is remarkable for its musical connotations: the word *psophos* suggests an

⁴⁰ SCUBLA (2004), p. 61; WERSINGER (2010), p. 104.

⁴¹ CALAME (2012), p. 66.

⁴² (1987), p. 249-250.

⁴³ DURAND (1979), p. 151.

⁴⁴ WERSINGER (2008).

⁴⁵ SVENBRO (1984), p. 221, commenting verse 862.

⁴⁶ *Etymologicum Gudianum*, (*ζείδωρος—ᾠμαι*).

⁴⁷ (1984), p. 222.

⁴⁸ HUET (2008).

⁴⁹ HUGOT (2008), p. 79.

inarticulate sound, often the one of a musical instrument, and the adjective *tromôdos* is formed on the root *ôdê*, the song. Let us not forget that the *aulos* possesses a *voice*⁵⁰. And a peculiarity of this voice is to be able to mime painful moaning. In the twelfth *Pythia*, it is said that :

“The goddess made the various singing *auloi* (*aulôn pamphonon melos*) to mime Euryalus’ resounding moaning (*goon*) that slightly escaped out of its quick jaws, [...] and named it the multi-headed *nomos* (*kephalân pollân nomon*)” (v. 20 sq.).

The Polycephalic nome invented by the Phrygian Olympos⁵¹, is assimilated to a *threna*⁵². The moaning here plays an important role that the *aulos* can best achieve through miming its *pamphônnon melos*. The *pamphônnon melos* was probably meant to be the extended repetition and modulation of some sounds. In Tragedy for instance, the funeral *melos* of the *threna* is characterized by repetitive syntagms such as *aiai, oioi*⁵³. We also find allusions to the “cry” (*boa*) of the *aulos*. Despite its obviously comical undertone, it is worth while noticing the strange formula employed in Aristophanes’ *Birds* : the “Pythian cry” (*Puthias boa*), that the scholiast assimilates to the sound of the *aulos*⁵⁴ (v. 856-857):

ἴτω ἴτω ἴτω δὲ Πυθιάς βοά
 συναυλείτω δὲ Χαίρις ῥῶδῶ
 “rise, rise, rise, Pythian cry
 and let Chairis play the *aulos* during the song”.

Those verses clearly have a performative dimension: the aulist is asked to increase the intensity of the *aulos* at the very moment of the ritual “sacrifice” (notice the sonorous echoed effect of the two verses : itô / itô ; oa / oa, that accentuates the parallelism between the Pythian cry and the sound of the *aulos*).

Suddenly the music and the “sacrifice” are interrupted by Pisthetairus. But a few verses later, the same process is repeated again by the chorus, at the very moment when Pisthetairus uses the performative future to announce his intention to complete the “sacrifice” by himself (“It is I who will complete this sacrifice (θύσω) by myself” (v. 895). The chorus sings insistently:

“Then again must I sing another cry, with a second sacred *melos* for the rite of the lustral water” (v. 895-897).

Such observations indicate a deep relation of “sacrifice” with melic poetry. The works of these last years, in particular Claude Calame’s, have highlighted the fact that melic poetry corresponds to the ritual performance, and that it is related to speech acts. It acts on the situation of enunciation from which the melic poem arises. For instance, *Homeric Hymns* are probably proems with the pragmatic function to inserting epic recitations in religious context⁵⁵. Therefore we may speak here about « melic ritual » the effectiveness of which is enacted by means of tonal and aural emotion (Latin *auris*).

In fact, the melic ritual did more than “accompany” the “sacrifices”. It seems probable that, being divided according to the type of “sacrifice”, the song received its structure from it. When Porphyry declares (*De Abstinencia*, 2) that Empedocles would have “reviewed ‘sacrifices’ and theogonies exhaustively (*peri te tôn thumatôn kai tès theogonias diexiôn*)”, he

⁵⁰ Aristotle, *de Anima*, I 8, 420b5-9; WERSINGER (2008), p. 80-84 (about Empédocles).

⁵¹ Ps.-Plutarque, *De Musica*, 1133d8.

⁵² Scholia in *Pythia*, V-VII, p. 12, 8. 24; Scholia in *Lycophronem*, 838, 48.

⁵³ Eschylus, *Persae*, v. 908-1077; LORAUX (1999) p. 98, and PERPILLOU (1982) p. 238-240; WERSINGER (2008), p. 76. In ritual contexts (oracular or magical), vocal and sonorous emissions are frequent. Servius the grammarian comments a passage from Virgil’s *Aeneid* in which Hecate is invoked by resounding incantations. It may be nonsense words, at least in appearance, but more often it is labial or hissing sounds like a groan or a moaning, a breath that resonates, but also barking, roaring, or neighing sounds, CRIPPA (2009), p. 270.

⁵⁴ Scholia in *Aristophanem*, Scholia in *aves* v. 857.

⁵⁵ CALAME (2012), p. 55.

allows us to suppose that theogonies in the style of Hesiod worked in conjunction with “sacrifices”. Herodotus, who attributes theogonies to Homer and Hesiodus (II, 53, 5-8) says (about the Persian “sacrifice”), that when the animal is knifed, its meat is cooked and then spread on the grass, whereas a mage sings a theogony which is considered a ritual song (I, 132). For Plato, it seems that theogony is always linked to an animal “sacrifice” : in *Republic* (377e), the story of Cronus’ emasculation should be told in secret after a more expensive “sacrifice” than that of a piglet. F. Graf thinks this was even the function of the theogony of the Derveni Papyrus: “a hymn, a ritual song, performed in the course of an initiatory ritual⁵⁶”.

More recently, L. Kurke⁵⁷ turned back to the texts where it is said that one “sacrifices” (*thuein*) paeans or dithyrambs for the *timè* of the gods, or other texts where the poem is mentioned as a meal (*logodeipnon*)⁵⁸. She refutes J. Svenbro’s interpretation⁵⁹ according to which the poem would have a substitutive and metaphoric function for sacrifice and she thinks it is necessary to take the metaphor literally⁶⁰.

“Svenbro’s explanation fails, in a sense, because it conceives metaphor as only a one - way operation, or because it conceives poetry and sacrificial context as two independent autonomous systems. On this model, sacrifice exists in culture as a complex but ultimately static system which is then subsumed into poetic metaphor for poetry’s own purposes. Conversely, I would see sacrifice and choral performance as two co-existing semiotic systems operative within Greek culture, dynamically interacting in a process of ritualization achieved by the Theoxeny festival and the poem in performance”.

Nicole Loraux had already shown (following Jacques Derrida in rejecting the conception of the metaphor as a transfer of sense, or the polarity of material and spiritual), that “certain words can, without division or conflict, have their meaning simultaneously on two registers, that of the *muthos* (or to speak Aristotelian, of the intrigue), and that, unexpectedly autonomized in the text, of the dramatic art or rather the choregy⁶¹.”

Of course, we do not aim to deny that melic poetry served as a metaphor for the “sacrifice”, and that in certain cultures it possesses a substitute function. For instance, in India, what renders the victim apt to be an offering is the fact that “the carving knife makes it analogous to a poem⁶²”. And B. Oguibénine shows that, in the Rigveda, the goddess Usas, “unlike all the other deities that are honored with physical handlings and food offerings, only received verbal sacrifices⁶³”.

⁵⁶ (2008), p. 15.

⁵⁷ (2005), p. 102-103.

⁵⁸ For instance Philodemus of Gadara (*On Music* IV, col. 134-136, Delattre) ; *Vitae Pindari et Varia de Pindaro*, 3, 6, 15t, 18-19; Pindar, *Fragmenta* 86a, 1, Maehler ; *Pean* 6, 127-8 ; *Nemeans* 3, 76-79 ; *Isthmics* 6, 7-9 ; *Prooimion* d’Eustathe (Drachmann III, p. 302, ll. 13–16 ; Callimachus fr. 1 Pfeiffer, ll. 21–24 ; fr. 494 Pfeiffer ; Heliodorus 3.18.1 ; Athenaeus, X, 411 ; Alcman fr. 92).

⁵⁹ Also BARRA-SALZÉDO (2007), p. 94-98.

⁶⁰ (2005), p. 103. See also H. Foley, 1985 : « the independent literary development of the sacrificial metaphor leads Euripides to imply that his tragedies function in a manner analogous to actual sacrifice. »

⁶¹ (1999), p. 256.

⁶² SVENBRO (1984), p. 252.

⁶³ (1968), p. 22, 189, 204. Notice that this substitution function of the poem should not be confused with the more hierarchical types of offerings made by some Neoplatonists like Porphyry: « To the god who rules over all, as a wise man said, we shall offer nothing perceived by the senses either by burning or in words. For there is nothing material which is not at once impure to the immaterial. So not even *logos* expressed in speech is appropriate for him, nor yet internal *logos* when it has been contaminated by the passion of the soul. But we shall worship him in pure silence with pure thoughts about him », *De Abstinencia*, 2, 34. (Quoted in MARX-WOLF, 2010). And Iamblichus who practiced Theurgy thought that, as each cosmic level had its appropriate set of

But Leslie Kurke shows that Pindar's Sixth *Paeon* follows in its structure the performance of a "sacrifice" and that an actual "sacrifice" conditions the melic performance. Pindar's poem is divided according to the ritual phases of the "sacrifice": the procession, the libation (v. 58-61), the *sphagè*, and the feast. The melic genre thus accompanies the "sacrificial" rite to which it corresponds.

We could try to apply the results of this analysis to the passage from Aristophanes' *Frogs* (v. 795-804), that J. Svenbro interprets as a "metaphor" of the sacrifice⁶⁴, in order to bring into evidence the enactment of a performative sacrificial ritual, performed in the comedy, the central character of which is Dionysos. Cl. Calame who has examined the *exodos* of some Aristophanes' comedies has showed that "the melic choral poem must be considered as a real act of cult⁶⁵" and that, in the case of "melic forms brought to the sanctuary-theater of Dionysus through dramatization [...] they contributed to the celebration of Dionysus, the god that was sung on the occasion of dramatic festivals⁶⁶". "The rejoicing cries of the members of the chorus, he writes in his conclusion, lend a ritual aspect to the completion of the comedy, which recalls the Dionysian cult of which the comedy is one of the acts". And « the active participation of the protagonists of the spectacle of the ritual in honor of Dionysos, is realized thanks to melic forms sung by the chorus⁶⁷".

If one follows the thread of the allusions which enamel the text of the *Frogs*, one can disclose between the lines, in the course of dramatic action, the steps of a ritual "sacrifice". The competition between Aeschylus and Euripides seems organized as a sacrificial ceremony: after the passage about which Svenbro shows it is built on the metaphor of "sacrifice" (v. 795-804), connected hints abound : in v. 847, Dionysus asks the children to fetch a « black lamb » (what activates the hint about the "weighing" of tragedies in v. 798, with the same terms that of the weighing of the lambs before "sacrifice" (*meiagogein*) ; then, in v. 862, is the evocation of the splitting up of tragedy in *neura* and *melè*⁶⁸. And so in v. 871, Dionysus performs the ritual, asking to fetch incense and fire (*libanôton kai pur*), olfactory elements known to be very important in the ceremony of *thusia*⁶⁹. Those fumigations are to perform the ritual prayer (*euxomai*, v. 872) that the chorus is asked to accompany with a *melos* (v. 874). Then comes Aeschylus' prayer to Demeter, accompanied with incense's fumigation (v. 885-888), and followed by another hint to the "cutting up" (*komma*) when Euripides' gods are mentioned (v. 890). In v. 1006, Aeschylus mentions his *splanchna*, just before Dionysus hits him with a stick (*tuptein*, vers 1024), in the same way animals are struck in "sacrifice". The scene is followed by the chorus's song in which the two poets are asked to "skin (*anaderein*) ancient and new works" (v. 1106), what Euripides is obviously working on, while mentioning a few later the *merè* (= divided parts) of Tragedy (v. 1120). In v. 1261-1262, one finds the famous passage in which Euripides proclaims, using the performative future :

"Wonderful *melè* ! This will soon be evident
as I shall epitomize (*xuntemô* = cut) all those *melè* in one whole."

Once again, the vocabulary of "sacrifice" is recalled, through the etymological play on the verb *xun-temnein*. It seems (referring to the didascalia in CUF) that this cut is realized

rituals, ritual killing of animals receive their justification to be addressed to the gods of lower rank. But those are late elaborations by which we are not concerned in this paper.

⁶⁴ (1984), p. 219-220.

⁶⁵ (2001), p. 116.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ (2001), p. 137.

⁶⁸ SVENBRO (1984), p. 221 and *supra* p. 00.

⁶⁹ MEHL (2008), p. 175.

during the “sacrificial” performance with an accompanying *aulos*, as in in “sacrifice” of an animal.

From v. 1365, the verses are weighted on the stage (*epi ton stathmon agagein*) and the play ends with a *pompè* of the chorus, dancing and singing (*melesin kai molpaisin*, v. 1525-1527), while Aeschylus makes an exit, having survived from “sacrifice” and cutting.

If we accept Cl. Calame’s conclusions about “the mimetic and Dionysian aspect of the fiction played on the stage⁷⁰”, we might conclude that Aristophanes’ comedy mimics, along its dramatic progress, the steps of a “sacrifice”, by duplicating its elements : on one side, the “sacrifice”- *thusia* of a lamb and of perfumes accompanied with ritual songs, and on the other side, the “sacrificial” splitting up of tragedies in the course of the performance of the comedy.

However, if one admits the example of Pindar's poetry, Melic poetry is not only tied to ritual “sacrifice” of which it would not constitute a mere metaphoric replacement, but there is some reason to believe that the very rhythm of the “sacrifice” falls into the rhythm of the poem.

Such an idea is noticed by Margo Kitts⁷¹. She borrows from Tambiah’s, Rappaport’s and Bloch’s researches who have showed that the ritual has its own rhythm that provokes the body to move in order to enforce adherence to the ritual. But J.-L. Durand had already explained how, in the ritual, the attitudes are organized into a series of sequences more rigorous than those of ordinary gestures of ordinary life, and he considered it as a programmatic constraint of gestures, fixed into specific sequences, which he called a “ritual tempo”⁷². M. Kitts also based her interpretation on M. Jousse, according to whom musical rhythms penetrate the voices and the bodies. She applies those ideas to Homer, showing that behind the rhythm of the dactylic hexameter it is possible to decipher the traces of ritual rhythms:

“Degree of behavioral formalization marks off the rhythms in ritual from the rhythms of ordinary expression and encrypts the ritual as a hallowed event⁷³”.

There is a fundamental distinction in the Homeric poems, between commensal and oath sacrifices, and she shows that the difference is noticeable through the rhythm of the listed actions (quick and lively in the first, slower in the second). Grammatical indices (accumulation, or else scarcity of verbs in the indicative and in the aorist, in an interval of 10 lines) suggest that the ritual scenes of the *Iliad* mime, by their rhythm, the rhythm of each corresponding ritual. In other words, these analyzes show that, in their transposition from life to poetry, the rhythm of a ritual remains impenetrable to any changes. The author agrees with John Miles Foley who says that the entire pattern of a ritual scene idiomatically involves its traditional meaning, “glossing the specific by adducing the generic”, a “Ur-form” emerging through a peculiar performance, what the author calls a ritual “thought-byte”⁷⁴. This is a phenomenon faced by Parry and Lord in Yugoslav bards: while recordings of their songs show a constant variation and modification, the bards reply that the song remains unchanged through performance.

Thus, the rhythm is a pattern of action inherent to “sacrificial” ritual, as is melic poetry, which (using Ch. Malamoud’s expressive words), “carve into the verbal material, as does the priest into the flesh of the animal⁷⁵”. As well as the articulations of the verse are an image of

⁷⁰ (2001), p. 136

⁷¹ (2011), p. 1.

⁷² (1979), p. 169.

⁷³ (2011), p. 18-19.

⁷⁴ (2007), p. 19.

⁷⁵ (1987), p. 252.

the joints of the limbs, and the caesuras a transposition of incisions, the rhythms are like limbs, in both meanings of the word *melos*. As a consequence, it is not absurd to assert that the melic genres could correspond to the divisions of the sacrifices as Plato suggests.

But it is necessary to go furthermore. Aristotle puts us on the track, if it is true that he conceived his *Poetics* from the pattern of the zoological anatomy, as B.R. Rees asserts⁷⁶, what pattern is traced, as we have already said, on the course of the sacrificial knife. The notion of “kind”, both transversal to poetics and anatomy, could be also “sacrificial”. And, because of its performative dimension, the ritual would build support for these categories, so that the distinction between kinds, believed to be purely cognitive, is in fact rooted in the “sacrificial” ritual. To put it more provocatively, the kinds, such as the difference between man and woman (Gender), but also between man and animal (Genus), would be the blind spots⁷⁷ of an anthropology rooted in rituals, i.e. in chains of symbols whose meaning is consensual with a particular group and is transmitted from one generation to another. It follows that the ritual is hermeneutically impenetrable and no individual interpretation is reliable, whether that of an Ancient or of the modern researcher. Thus, one should be careful about what insidiously (and perhaps symptomatically) links anthropological blind spots to melic genres, which are connected to the “sacrificial” ritual.

Indeed, what one neglects considering, is that the melic gender division necessarily entails a division of the *èthos*. For the ancient Greeks, hearing is connected to emotions, characterized and listed, what the ancients called the *èthos* (the “moral character⁷⁸”). By listening to some musical sounds, from high to low pitches, arranged with certain rhythms and certain *harmoniai*, which can be likened to a variety of modes, the auditor changes in mood. For example, the Mixolydian makes you sad and oppressed, the Phrygian makes you enthusiastic⁷⁹, the Dorian would promote dignity⁸⁰, as Iastian would arouse desire and Eros⁸¹. It will undoubtedly be objected, that one must be wary of rigid categorizations, *a fortiori* when elaborated by philosophers, and that it is the musical composition as a whole that arouses such and such emotions ! But it is precisely the obsessive aspect of this categorization that allows us to understand how powerful was in the mind, the consciousness of the separation of affective states related to hearing. In fact it is not a construction of the greek mind: the recent neurobiology shows that the auditory cortex recognizes emotions in relation to voice, regardless of the word⁸².

There is therefore no implausibility to admitting the existence of musical genres, characterized by tones that coincide with the ritual of slaughtering⁸³.

⁷⁶ (1981), p. 28-30.

⁷⁷ Blind spot is the portion of the visual field insensitive to the light because the optic nerve connects to it. But the brain fills in the blanks with the surrounding colours or lines so that the blanks will not be noticeable. By analogy, we may say that a theory is blind to its assumptions, but will fill in its gaps so that they will remain unnoticed.

⁷⁸ See Pseudo-Aristotle, *Problems* XIX 27, 919b26-37.

⁷⁹ Aristotle, *Politics* VIII 5, 1340a39-1340b5.

⁸⁰ Pindar, fr 67.

⁸¹ Plutarchus, *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae*, 822B8-C2.

⁸² For different tones, distinct brain signatures are observed on MRI. The brain is sensitive to variables of prosody, melody, rhythm, timbre, and these variables give access to emotions, ETHOFER, VAN DE VILLE, SCHERER, VUILLEUMIER (2009).

⁸³ There is some evidence of such a connection between musical tones and rituals. Stesichorus is associated with the Chariot Nome (PMG 212) which is identified to the nome of Athena, sung in the Phrygian tone (Ps. Plutarch, *De Musica*, 1133f; scholia of Euripides, *Orestes*, 1384). Lasos of Hermione is associated with a hymn to Demeter and Kore, sung in the Aeolian tone (PMG 702); in the *Laws*, the Athenian complains about the fact that in *thusiai* the choirs endeavor to arouse the tears of the public, by means of *gòdestatais harmoniais* (800d3), that is to say, the Mixolydian and Syntonolydien, i.e. the “tense” tones. In contrast, in symposia or phallic songs, the *aulos* will play in Iastian or Lydian tone, i.e. “relaxed” tones, WERSINGER (2012), p. 211. As a moralist, the

Nobody will deny that, between Tragedy and Comedy, there is a difference of tone, as was already noticed by the ancient musicians. Greek composers of tragedies and comedies scrupulously respected the division of tones while representing on stage the performance of melic genres. Claude Calame rightly points out that in tragedies "choruses make use of musical forms and specific ritual melic poetry diction"⁸⁴. This is also true for Comedy⁸⁵. It means that the fictional contextualization of tragedies and comedies, which, in particular, implies that the ritual killing of the animal, pragmatically associated with the songs, is verbalized and not represented on stage, involves an alteration of the melic genres⁸⁶. Moving from melic performance to its representation in a tragedy or a comedy, entails the modification of its tone, as may be noticed for example in the *Thesmophoria*. In order to make fun of Agathon's theory of *gunaikeia Dramata*, Aristophanes makes a chorus of young girls and its Coryphaeus (v. 101-129) sing a *melos* (v. 99, 130) in the Phrygian tone⁸⁷, a notoriously noble and exalted tone. And this is the tone heard by the audience during the performance. But at the end of the melic performance, Euripides' parent, influenced by the pragmatic context that awakened his sexual appetite, delivers a salacious comment that projects on the *melos* that has been heard, the lascivious tone of the phallic songs. If one loses sight of the double reception specific to theatrical performance, one allows this pragmatic modification to run as a blind spot and let the comical orientation of the intra-scenic comment take over the extra-scenic reception of the song performed in its own tone.

Yet, far from being noticed, the poetical and musical division of melic genres contaminates the scientific argument. In fact, when choosing his sources, the anthropologist is compelled by the tone which conditions his approach⁸⁸.

It is not astonishing then, that such a difference of tone could characterize the two opposite types of anthropological approaches: a "tragic" tone for W. Burkert and a "comic" tone for Vernant and Detienne. F. Graf reports that during an interview at the Hardt Foundation, Jean-Pierre Vernant had said to Wilhelm Burkert: "sacrifice is basically killing for eating. But in this formula, you put more emphasis on killing, as I do on eating"⁸⁹. Now, this difference of accents or tones is far from negligible in that it goes back to Antiquity itself, as A. Heinrichs perfectly notices:

"Animal sacrifice is systematically problematized in Attic Tragedy, and its problems continue to produce repercussions in modern scholarship [...] Burkert's approach to the sacrificial killing of animal is infinitely more indebted to tragic representations of animal sacrifice than to the treatment of sacrifice in epic or comedy. It follows that Burkert's approach to animal sacrifice perpetuates the sacrificial bias of tragedy. By contrast, Jean-Pierre Vernant focuses on the division, cooking and eating of the sacrificial meat and ignores the killing of the victims. In de-emphasizing the sacrificial violence and the moment of the kill, the Paris School follows the sacrificial constructs of the homeric epic, Hesiod and comedy, at the expense of the tragic patterns⁹⁰."

Athenian can't refrain from criticizing these effusions, and by the same time he offers evidence of such practices.

⁸⁴ (2006), p. 64.

⁸⁵ CALAME (2001), p. 117.

⁸⁶ CALAME (2001), p. 124.

⁸⁷ The v. 122 suggests the phrygian Charites.

⁸⁸ Notice the existence of that double tone, in the two anti-symmetrical approaches by A. HEINRICHS (centered on the tragic approach) in "Animal Sacrifice in Greek Tragedy," and J. REDFIELD (centered on the comic approach) in "Animal sacrifice in Comedy: an alternative point of view", (2012), 180-194 and 167-179.

⁸⁹ (2002), 32-55.

⁹⁰ (2012), p. 192.

The division of melic genres undeniably contaminates scientific argumentation and controls the privilege granted by the anthropologist to some sources rather than others, because he depends on the tone or the mode that conditions his approach. However, this melic difference (the close link of which with the “sacrificial” knife must not be overlooked) is a serious objection against the anthropologist’s blindness to the ritual foundations of his methods.

Such an objection also falls against another musically connoted term, used by Detienne’s anthropology, the “dissonance”. Understandably it is a metaphor. But this does not exempt us of examining the implicit ritual hidden behind it.

The existence of blind spots in anthropology can be illustrated by a debate that is not closed yet, as it is reflected in the title of a recent article by Stella Georgoudi,⁹¹ who already participated in 1979 in the “Cuisine of sacrifice”, and as such can be considered a member of the Paris -School. She questions there a central thesis, common to Detienne, Vernant and Burkert, that of the concealment of “sacrificial” violence in Greek rituals.

4. The example of the sacrificial “violence”.

It is worth recalling the main points of the debate about “sacrificial violence”. Everything starts with K. Meuli’s thesis⁹², according to which sacrifice is derived from the Paleolithic period. Focusing on Greek “sacrifices”, where the killing precedes a meal, he proposes to see there a *Unschuldskomödie* (comedy of innocence), in which the “sacrificers” would seek to exonerate their feeling of guilt⁹³. This interpretation is echoed by W. Burkert (*Homo Necans*, 1972), from the model of the biological and behaviourist ethologist K. Lorenz (*Aggression*, 1963). According to him, the sacrifice is a remnant of Paleolithic hunters who ritualized their violence against animals. Caught in the necessity to kill so as to live, hunters relieved their stress by sanctifying violence. Panathenaic festivals, “sacrificial” processions at Sparta, the cult of Dionysus, the mysteries of Eleusis, etc., would be a recollection of primitive hunting and a solution to the paradox of life that feeds on death. “Sacrifice” would be thus an institutionalization of violence in human societies : because hunters were aware of their violence, they sought to minimize it, through a “comedy of innocence”. The animal would manifest its acceptance to be “sacrificed” by bowing and by making a « nod » (*kataneusin*, Aristophanus, *Peace* v. 960 ; *hupokupsei*, on a Cos inscription, *Syll.*³ 1025, l. 20 ; *epineusai* in Plutarch, *Quaestiones convivales* VIII, 8, 729c sq.).

Against such theories, Vernant and Detienne argued that “sacrifice” is directed toward the act of eating meat, and hence should be distinguished from murder. In this perspective, the violence of “sacrifice” no longer needs to be considered:

“Specifically, the sacrifice ceremony might be defined as the set of procedures for slaughtering an animal in such conditions that violence seems excluded and that the killing appears unequivocally distinguished from murder, being located in another category, apart from what the Greeks meant by violent crime, *phonos*.”

However, Vernant’s and Detienne’s position is far more ambiguous. Indeed, coming back to the Athenian ritual of the *Bouphonia* in honor of Zeus Polieus that had already been studied by M. Mauss and H. Hubert, the authors subscribe in fact to the “comedy of innocence”. J.-L. Durand raises the problem of the absence of the *sphagè* in the iconography

⁹¹ (2005).

⁹² (1946).

⁹³ This being already HUBERT and MAUSS’ THESIS (1899).

of Greek vases, and evokes an “ellipsis of death” : “Death has still occurred forever⁹⁴”. He explains that if the violence of “sacrifice” does not appear, we may nevertheless detect it through the ancient Greeks habit to project their guilt on the barbarians, who kill the victim without asking its pardon or consent as in the *Bouphonia*. In his turn, P. Vidal-Naquet⁹⁵ examines the ritual of *Bouphonia* and takes up the standard idea that victims of “sacrifice” shall give a signal of their consent. In fact, the Paris-School accepts Burkert’s theory of the comedy of innocence, but gives to it a radically different motivation. Whereas for Burkert the comedy of innocence serves to calm the emotional stress of the ritual (fear, guilt and anxiety), as “sacrifice” remains the ritual of an initial murder, for Vernant, the concealment of violence is necessary to justify meat consumption during a festive meal.

This is the context of the debate that Stella Georgoudi resumed. She refutes the thesis of the comedy of innocence while accepting the Paris-School festive perspective, that finds itself reinforced in her work by the same way. In a more recent article⁹⁶, she examines the evidence about the consent of the sacrificial victim, and her contribution leads almost to the same conclusions than F.S. Naiden in “The Fallacy of the Willing Victim”⁹⁷, a year earlier.

However, it is important to see that behind the type of arguments these authors use, hides a communicational and conventionalist epistemology. In fact, those arguments implicitly admit that the human practices of communication (poetic, philosophical, and iconographic) obey to their own logic and strategy and must therefore be considered as separate agreements. There are four types of underlying conventions, we shall see, in Georgoudi’s and Naiden’s contributions: ideological conventions, ritual conventions, conventions referred to *Mirabilia* and iconographical conventions.

Ideological conventions

In her 2008 paper, Stella Georgoudi shows that the textual sources mentioning the consent of the victim, are impregnated with ideology: the myth of the *Bouphonia* is narrated by a philosopher, Porphyry, in a work intended to advocate a vegetarian diet (*On Abstinence*, 2, 28, 4-31). It is the same for Plutarch’s passage (*Quaestiones convivales* VIII, 8, 729C) in which Sylla explains the origin of “sacrifice” : because of the proliferation of animals due to the ban on killing a not harmful animal, fruits and plants were being entirely destroyed. That is why a Delphic oracle urged men to come to the rescue of fruits, by “sacrificing” animals. But, as the men continued to experience fear, while “sacrificing” a living being, they used euphemisms to describe “sacrifice” and spread libations on the victim, so that it gives a sign of consent (*epineusai*) before slaughter. In line with the Paris-School, according to which the ideology of marginal groups does not reveal “the truth of sacrifice”⁹⁸, Stella Georgoudi declares that this reference fits with a Pythagorean context, which should prevent generalizations⁹⁹. The same arguments are advanced by F. S. Naiden (2007) who states that Porphyry’s and Plutarch’s Pythagoreanism does not apply to all Greeks. Therefore she accuses Burkert to remain confined to the Pythagorean sources, that is to say, to the reactions of intellectuals who can not be considered as a testimony of the Greeks’ feelings.

This line of argument finds its extension in J. B. Rives and D. Ulluci¹⁰⁰. Rives shows that if Orphism and Pythagoreanism recuse the consumption of meat, it is no because of a repulsion for “sacrificial” violence, but because of their theological beliefs. The little evidence we have, about the Orphic practices

⁹⁴ (1979), p. 137-8.

⁹⁵ (1981), p. 149.

⁹⁶ “Le consentement de la victime sacrificielle : une question ouverte (2008).

⁹⁷ (2007).

⁹⁸ VERNANT (1981), p. 11.

⁹⁹ (2008), p. 146.

¹⁰⁰ (2011).

(Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 952-54; Plato, *Laws*, 782c-d) are not about “sacrifice”, but only about abstinence from meat. As far as the Pythagoreans are concerned, Aristotle's testimony merely says that they refrained from eating only the bowels, heart, and *akalêphê*, and Aristoxenus says that they refused to eat only the plover and the ram, while feasting on piglets and young goats. Similarly, if Theophrastus regarded animal “sacrifice” as unjust¹⁰¹, it is, in fact, because of mere ethical reasons and not because of a repulsion for the “sacrifice”. The author reviews the more delicate case of Empedocles, to demonstrate that he was not really referring to “sacrifice”, but only to the consumption of meat. In fact, references to “sacrificial” ritual would fall under a rhetorical strategy of repulsion, intended to reinforce his teaching through emotion, as did the tragic poets at the same period¹⁰².

As one may notice, the conventionalist epistemology leads to separating discursive logic from the logic of “sacrificial” practice. As D. Ulluci shows, the first would be competitive and agonistic while the second would consist in chains of symbols, the meaning of which is provided by a group consensus, and proceeds according to the automation of ordinary everyday life. This difference implies that there is no interference between the ritual and its theorization. That is why, according to the author, the critique of “sacrifice”, as observed among Greek, Roman, Jewish or Christian writers and philosophers, never stopped them from continuing to practice “sacrifice”. For example, Epicurus says that the gods are indifferent to “sacrifice”, but himself and his own school taught that “sacrifice” is good¹⁰³. This paradox can be explained by the specific structure of criticism : far from being, as is often believed, altruistic or disinterested, criticism would observe agonistic motivations. So, Epicurus criticizes rival interpretations of the “sacrificial” practice but not “sacrifice” as such. We should therefore rethink the notion of “sacrificial” practice, separating it from the critic, because these are two distinct social practices.

Ritual Conventions

Far from indicating the desire to get the consent of the “sacrificial” animal, the ritual of sprinkling would be intended to ensure the conformity of the animal by making it react in order to manifest its good health, its vitality, its *psyche*.

Stella Georgoudi returns to the usual testimonies, such as Aristophanes’ *Peace* (v. 959-960), in which Trygaeus, preparing to sacrifice a sheep to the goddess Eirene, plunges a small brand in water, exclaiming himself, “shake up quickly (*seiou se tacheôs*)”. The author explains that it is Aristophanes’ scholiast, not the poet, who declares that Trygaeus speaks to the *hiereion*, and that, by performing the libation (on the animal) one wanted to bring the animal to shake its head (*epispēdōntes hina seisei ten kephalen*) and acquiesce to its sacrifice (*tois hiereois epineuein*). S. F. Naiden interprets this text a little differently, saying that the scholiast says only that the animal appeared to assent to the sacrifice. But both authors agree on the fact that the Aristophanes’ passage only shows the need to make the animal move (verb *seiô*): it was given a blow to make it move (*diaseîsai*), as F. S. Naiden says on the basis of a passage from Plutarch’s (*On the Withdrawal of Oracles at Delphi*, 46, 435B8-C4) :

“What does it mean when the oracle fails and when the sprinkled (*kataspēdomenon*) beast of sacrifice (*hiereîon*), is not shaken with quivering (*hupotromon*) upwards from the ends of its feet, and does not tremble (*kradanthê*)? It is not enough for it to shake (*diaseîsai*) its head, as in the other sacrifices, but all its limbs (*meresi*), must shiver

¹⁰¹ (2011), p. 194.

¹⁰² (2011), p. 59.

¹⁰³ (2011), p. 59.

(*salon*) and palpitate (*palmon*) simultaneously, with a trembling sound (*meta psophou tromôdous*)”.

The author argues that in all the testimonies that actually show that animals shake their heads or give signs of resistance, it is interpreted as a sign of vitality, a condition of their acceptance by the gods. She reminds us that at Cos, the animal had to bend (*hupokuptô*) before the altar, otherwise the sacrifice was stopped: the Greeks were concerned with the *psuche*, i.e. alertness and physical integrity of the animal, and not with the animal’s sense of its fate¹⁰⁴.

S. Georgoudi comes back also on the texts that emphasize ritual conformity (as the passage of Porphyry, *De Abstinencia* II, 9, 1-3, II, 10, 1-2) to show that the slaying of an animal has no importance and what counts is the permission granted by the god, which is manifested by the consent of the animal, as in the formula in which the sacrifice is said to be “fair”, or, in other words, conform to the rule (*dikaiôs*)¹⁰⁵. In addition, the aforementioned texts as *On the Withdrawal of Oracles* (46-52, 434E-438D) only mean that the animal must not be corrupted or sick. The movements of the goat would not manifest its “consent” to “sacrifice”, but only that Apollo can prophesy¹⁰⁶. There is no question there of guilt in respect of murder but only *eulabeia*, that is to say a sort of attention, caution and awe before an act which may not be compliant¹⁰⁷.

There would be no sense of guilt among the Greeks, but only respect for the cult which is linked to “sacrifice”, and which implies conformity of the animal and acceptance from the god.

The conventions of the *Mirabilia*

Let us move to the arguments within the *Mirabilia* conventions.

A “paradoxographic” literature interested in wonders emerged from the third century BC. Books entitled *Marvels of Sicily* or *Peloponnesian Wonderland* or *Wonder Rivers* and treating of natural curiosities make their apparition in the aristotelian milieu. The Peripatetic school has elaborated such reflections, for example in the booklet entitled *On Wonderful Things Heard* (*Peri thaumasiôn akousmatôn*), and in the Collection of *Extraordinary Stories*, written by Antigone Caryste and devoted to phenomena involving animals. And by definition, these texts do not reflect the ordinary.

It must be the same for texts in which an animal from the sacred herd, left free, suddenly marches voluntarily to “sacrifice”, as report Plutarch (*Lucullus*, 10, 1, 24, 4-5), Appian (*Roman History*, XII, 75); Porphyry (*De Abst.* 1, 25, 8-9), Aristotle (*Mirabilia*, 137, 844b1 ff.) and Elien (*On the Nature of Animals*, XI, 4).

F.S. Naiden accuses Burkert of not distinguishing ordinary cases from *mirabilia*. When the animal goes to the altar by itself, it is an extraordinary case, as the standard norm is that they refuse and must be forced. Scenes of voluntary submission of animals would be simply conform to the style of *Mirabilia* and show no feelings of guilt from the part of the priests.

Conventions of iconography

For some critics¹⁰⁸, the under-representation of killing in the iconography simply

¹⁰⁴ (2007), p. 71. This reflects the current situation: a study of slaughterhouses in the U.S. shows that the animal feels what will happen to him and may fight. However, as in this case the meat is tough, one tries to calm the animal (p. 70).

¹⁰⁵ (2008), p. 144.

¹⁰⁶ (2008), p. 148.

¹⁰⁷ (2008), p. 145.

¹⁰⁸ PIERCE (1993); van STRATEN (1995) (with BONNECHERE’S review, 1998).

indicates the ancient craftsmen' concern with the conventions of festive images for a banquet, without any awareness of a violence inflicted on the animal. If descriptions of *thusia* on vases are idealized, it is because these vessels are intended for banquets.

The vase does not refer to a historical scene (“a ceremony actually enacted”¹⁰⁹) but it offers a synopsis, a typical scene that refers to the convention of style and composition of a certain workshop. Van Straten explains that the function of the votive paintings and that of the vases fall into two distinct categories, and warns us to take into account each artisan's singular style (e.g. the Corinthian vs. Attic Style)¹¹⁰. Similarly, according to J. Gebauer¹¹¹, vases are not the results of a free creation and scenes are ambiguous and imprecise in order to fit with the expectations and projections of the buyer.

The vases do not describe each step of the *thusia*, but artists select some ritual actions¹¹²: the *pompê*, the barbecue of the *splanchna* and *osphys*, the butchery, the decoration of the animal, and the use of the container of the holy water, the *chernips*. The *sphagê* is rarely represented and it is the specialty of certain painters and some traditions of specific workshops¹¹³: the killing appears only on two reliefs (R 75bis, ill. 88 and R 225, ill. 109, Van Straten) and nine vases, with only two showing the slaughter (excluding the Tyrrhenian amphora with the slaughter of Polyxena, because she is a girl). Van Straten believes that the under-representation of the killing indicates a lack of ancient craftsmen' concern for this action.

More so, far to find a trace of anxiety in “sacrificial” scenes, S. Pierce notices the existence of comic and even humorous elements: for example, on the amphora of Viterbo (an Attic black-figure amphora dating from the middle of the sixth century, attributed to the Painter of Louvre F51) which figures a *sphagê*, a bull is carried on the shoulders of a group of naked men, while a man, wearing a short chiton, cut the animal's throat. Far from being tragic, the picture would suggest a *kômos*¹¹⁴ (someone pulls the tail of the animal in some unusual disorder). The bull, perhaps scared at the sight of the young people and the knife, tries to escape and the vase shows some comic aspects of the struggle that ensues between the young people and the bull¹¹⁵. On a cup from the Painter Epeleios, which describes a scene of butchery after a *thusia*, young people are running with the bare legs of the slain animal in their arms, as in a Dionysian *kômos*. Other scenes depict Herakles as a glutton sacrificer¹¹⁶ in presence of satyrs, which naïden says to be interpreted as humoristic signs. On the archaic red-figure vase from the painter Epidromos, a satyr prepares *splanchna*: the presence of Dionysus suggests a feast¹¹⁷. And if some representations show unwilling victims¹¹⁸, for example tied animals for the *pompê*, or young people forcing a bull who wants to escape, and fighting with it, these scenes always contain “comic” elements (as on the cup of Getty where an old man drives an old goat at sacrifice). The vases would describe the *thusia* as a visual metaphor of the feast, without any sense of fault. “Sacrifice” would mean only festive joy (*Charis*).

In concluding her analysis, S. Pierce takes up the Paris School's objection about ethnocentrism: one can not postulate an universal feeling of anxiety with regard to the killing of the animal, as in some cultures nobody feels nothing like that (which Burkert himself

¹⁰⁹ PIERCE (1993), p. 227.

¹¹⁰ (1995), p. 6.

¹¹¹ (2002).

¹¹² PIERCE (1993), p. 228.

¹¹³ PIERCE (1993), p. 234

¹¹⁴ (1993), p. 235.

¹¹⁵ (1993), p. 236.

¹¹⁶ (1993), p. 239-240.

¹¹⁷ (1993), p. 242.

¹¹⁸ (1993), p. 255.

acknowledges)¹¹⁹. One should not project one's own standards on other cultures. As long as we have not identified any traces of fear, anxiety, and guilt among the Greeks when they "sacrifice", we will not have the right to speak of "concealment" that would be linked to the perception of "sacrifice" as a murder. However, the only evidence for "sacrificial" violence being treated on the comic mood, it leads to the inanity of the notion of "sacrificial victim" and also to the "collapse of the model ... of violence"¹²⁰.

What consequences can be drawn from these observations?

Despite their acute and sharp attention to the ethnological differences concerning "sacrifice" and *thusia*, the Paris-School fell into some illusions: the Greek rehabilitation of the religious death of the animal, opposed to Christian practices; the Greek justification of a meat consumption during a festive meal that compelled to separating *thusia* from murder through rituals such as the ritual of sprinkling or the "comedy of innocence". Stella Georgoudi and other scholars have tried to refute those remaining illusions, which is undoubtedly a scientific advantage.

If those scholars limited themselves to refuting those illusions, there would be nothing to complain about. The problem is they failed to take care of another sort of illusion involving a communicational and conventionalist epistemology. This conventionalism leads to a partitioning of the Genres (the philosophical-intellectual one; the tragic one; the comic one; *mirabilia*; iconography). However, in principle, each genre has its own logic and relation to ritual. It can therefore be argued that, when separating the ideological and ritual (as do Georgoudi, Naiden, Ulluci or Rives), it leads to assert, as Rives does, that if Theophrastus considered animal "sacrifice" as unjust, it is in fact because of mere ethical reasons and not because of repulsion for the "sacrifice". But this is tantamount to assuming that ethics can not be inspired by repulsion against rituals. Yet, some ethical scruples are clearly part of the "sacrificial" ritual even if implicitly or unconsciously. For instance, the ritual secretes an ethical difference, in which "sacrifice" is distinguished from murder, as for the Paris-School. However, this distinction is staged in texts, especially in Tragedy, which these authors also reject as irrelevant, precisely on behalf of ideological conventions. For instance, it is on behalf of this distinction that a character such as Polyxena, when being "sacrificed" in Euripide's *Hecuba*, would have her chest (*sternon*) speared rather than her throat (*auchèna*) slit (*temnein* v. 563-567), and it is on behalf of this distinction that Hecuba refuses the "slaughter (*sphagè*) of a human being" when, she says, the "sacrifice" of a bull (*thusia*) would be more appropriate (v. 260-261).

Conversely, the former separation leads to minimize the fact that ideology and ritual constantly overlap (nobody can deny that politics and religion are closely intertwined¹²¹). Thus, "automatic" indifference for the suffering of the "sacrificed" animal can be explained by the set of implicit assumptions that make possible the killing of the animal. When one chooses to kill an animal rather than a man, an unconscious and ordinary (in the sense of Cavell)¹²² hierarchy of categories, genera and species is involved. These categories of "basic level"¹²³ and pre-conceptual status, based on sensorimotor experience, constitute a "scheme of image", a vector of substitute metaphors for missing categories. Now this scheme operates into anthropological discourse while it originates in ideology¹²⁴. We can consider these categories as ritual patterns that operate independently of any distinction between

¹¹⁹ (1987), p. 168.

¹²⁰ PARKER (2008), p. III and VII.

¹²¹ BELL (1992), p.170.

¹²² (1969).

¹²³ LAKOFF and JOHNSON (1985), p.196-240.

¹²⁴ CALAME (2002), p. 70.

anthropological discourse and the Ancient Greek's discourse. Thus, the dichotomy between animal and human, implicit in the scientific analysis falls under the ritual dynamics of the categories bound to animal "sacrifice", as evidenced by Hesiod and Aeschylus¹²⁵.

On the other hand, conventionalist epistemology leads to disqualify the testimony of philosophers such as Plutarch or Porphyry, because they would not be representative of the average Greek: their testimony would be the reaction of intellectuals whose discourse is morally prescriptive, and not a testimony on the Greeks' common feelings. Let us quickly observe that such segregation is wrong. Ritual plays an important role in the thought of famous philosophers, as for instance P. T. Struck has shown¹²⁶. In the *Mysteriis* (VII, 4. 8-18), Iamblichus says that the divine names, especially those of the Assyrian and Egyptian, are mysterious, beyond reason, and that they contain the mark of God. Commenting on an extract from Aristotle's *Philosopher*, quoted by Synesius, the Neoplatonic Bishop of Cyrene¹²⁷ explains how Synesius distinguished immediate access to God based on revelation, and mediate access based on reason. The Papyrus Derveni enables also establishing that the initiation mysteries contained a rational learning phase (*matheîn*). There is therefore no break between ritual and rational thought, between *dromena* and *legomena*.

It should also be noted that such a separation leads to contradictions: thus the desire to highlight the absence of any sense of guilt among the ancient Greeks induces S. Georgoudi to contradict her former disqualification of the testimony of philosophers, when, in order to prove the festive aspect of sacrifice, she relies on a testimony from Plutarch ... who condemns his contemporaries' passion for killing and for *sarkophagia* that succeeded to Necessity (VIII, 8, 730A; from Soll. Anim. 959th). Similarly, Pierre Brulé¹²⁸ relies on Carneades' argument quoted by Porphyry, to justify his thesis that the *hiereion* is not a "victim", without questioning the ironic flavor of a skeptical Academy philosopher's words.

When J.B. Rives states that Empedocles' protests against the killing of animals fall within a communicational strategy of manipulating feelings, and not within the genuine condemnation of blood "sacrifice", he forgets that this interpretation implies the existence of such emotions among the assistants of a "sacrifice", without which Empedocles would not even be able to think about arousing them.

But the most serious objection against conventionalist epistemology is that it assumes that there is a split between the categories of testimonies, and that only one type of evidence is relevant (i.e. the ordinary everyday life). Undoubtedly, C. Bell, T. Schatzki, J. Smith and H. Whitehouse are right to say that it is illusory to seek the *essence* of "sacrifice", because it really is a non discursive practice, a ritual and religious performance which is effected mechanically and unconsciously. Yet, if the ritual is defined as a set of consensual meanings and whose performance is automatic, does this imply that only the ordinary everyday life has the status of relevant evidence about it? Thus, one ends up taking into account only the figure of the ordinary Greek man, a lover of cooked meats, indifferent to the violence of the procession and of the *sphagè*, and even capable of laughing about it, and whose scruples are exclusively oriented towards compliance specific to the ritual and consensual automatisms. But who does not see that this ordinary Greek man, supposed to hold the substance of the authentic ritual, is only the fiction drawn up by an anthropologist who emphasizes the genre of comedy and the symposiac and festive iconography, as if these only held relevant information¹²⁹?

¹²⁵ HEATH (1999), p. 17-18 ; WERSINGER (2012), p. 380.

¹²⁶ (2002).

¹²⁷ Frg. 15 ROSE, Synesius *Dio* 10. GRAF (2008), p. 8-10.

¹²⁸ (2008), p. 112.

¹²⁹ One may prefer the position according to which one may write: "One will not prohibit the use of any document, even those who, in the comparative difference, concern the Roman mothers willingly exemplar. This,

Such exclusivity is however contradicted by the multipurpose reality of ritual, as shown, for example by S. Iles Johnston:

“For any given ritual, there are those who, claiming expert knowledge, orchestrate or sponsor the event. There are also those who perform it (sometimes, but not always, these two groups are the same). Then there are those who witness the performance of the ritual and those who, even if they do not witness it, believe that they benefit from its performance. Especially in societies where particular rituals are understood to be best performed by particular groups (women as opposed to men, virgins as opposed to the married, members of one family as opposed to others), the concerns and the interpretations of the sponsors and the orchestrators, the performers, the observers, and the more distant beneficiaries are likely to diverge. In societies as complex as those of ancient Greece, they might diverge considerably upon occasion. And yet for the system to flourish, the interpretations of each of these groups must be tolerated, even supported, by the others. Someone (perhaps everyone) must always be winking at what other people think that a ritual accomplishes, as well as, in some cases, winking at what they say about it themselves¹³⁰”.

The privilege of the comic mode or of the symposiac tone can lead interpreters to ignore the ambiguity of iconographic characters, such as the Satyr or Heracles glutton, treated exclusively as comic characters. But the figure of Heracles painted in the company of a satyr, also has a reputation to stand at the limits of civilization because of his lust, his gluttony and his treachery. It is the same with the Satyrs. Patricia Easterling, after François Lissarague, has shown their uncanniness, their ambiguous place on the frontiers of wilderness and citizen culture, and especially the essential relation with death¹³¹.

Besides, we must remember that in Tragedy as in Comedy¹³², while the melic ritual genres with their proper *èthos* are scrupulously observed, the ritual killing always remains verbalized and never performed on the stage, in contrast to what happens in traditional melic rituals. For instance, in Aristophanes’ *Peace*, a sheep is led on stage but immediately brought out¹³³ when the ritual killing, which the goddess refuses (v. 1019), should to be be “performed”¹³⁴. What sees the audience is a ritual killing that is not performed on stage, even if all its components are present (the basket, the seeds, the knife, the victim around the altar). The only one to continue to act as if the cutting up of the animal really took place on the stage¹³⁵, despite his acknowledgement of the fact that the meat is already cooked (v. 1057) and the fact he has just advised Trygeus to perform the *thusia* (v. 1016), is Hierocles, the instigator of the war, and the target of Aristophanes’ sarcasms. In his comedies, Aristophanes ridicules the ritual of the killing of the animal, by turning it into a protocol for carnivorous gluttony, an hilarious cruelty, and a ludicrous blindness. This is also showed by a passage of

of course, compels one to work in the heterogeneous and presupposes the respect for the variances and the use of a variety of strategies. I assume the risk. " LORAU (1990), p. 23.

¹³⁰ (2012), p. 235.

¹³¹ LISSARAGUE (1987); EASTERLING (1999).

¹³² CALAME (1989), et SIDWELL (1989).

¹³³ The sheep (*ois*, v. 1018) is invited to go inside (v. 1022) and, as outlined by Trygeus, it will not be slaughtered (or at least not at this time), and the text clearly mentions the *probaton* which the *choregos* will keep for himself.

¹³⁴ V. 1016 *sq.*: “ T. Take the *machaira* and make sure you of the slaughtering in the way of the butcher / S. But it is not permitted / T. Why so? / S. Peace does not agree slaughters / No bloodshed on her altar / T. Take it inside / Perform the *thusia*, divide the thighs, and bring them here / by this way the ewe is preserved for the *choragus*.”

¹³⁵ V. 1060: “the tongue is cut apart”. Let us thank Silvia Milanezi for her insightful remarks about all that.

the *Thesmophoria*, where, in a parody of Euripides' *Telephus*, the Parent threatens to slaughter a child (*apospagèsetai*, v. 750), that it is actually a wineskin (v. 730-758)¹³⁶. Compared to Tragedy where the ritual is undertaken to its anthropomorphic monstrosity, here Comedy performs a *mise en abyme* of the tragic substitution (the animal is substituted to a child which in fact is a wineskin). But the reverse sequence of the substitutions (wineskin, child, animal) would surely prohibit any laughter.

Even worse: the anthropologist who chooses the “genre” of comedy excludes to consider the “genre” of Tragedy, arguing that Tragedy is not relevant evidence. Since Froma I. Zeitlin¹³⁷, critics admit that Tragedy represent corrupted sacrifices, not compliant with ordinary use. What arouses indignation there is the human dimension of the victim and not animal “sacrifice” which is never identified with a murder : instead Tragedies would function as the *a contrario* confirmation of the legitimacy of animal “sacrifice”, since it is the murder of a man which is compared with “sacrifice”, never the reverse. Thus, John Gibert, who claims Nicole Loraux’s influence¹³⁸, explicitly sets the crucial alternative:

« Either animal sacrifice is a savage practice, and the tragedians tapped into a current of revulsion against it, or it is only the abuse or perversion of sacrificial language that causes shock, because of the religious importance attached to the ritual's proper form¹³⁹.”

When she denies the thesis of the concealment of sacrificial violence, Stella Georgoudi excludes extracts from Euripides, yet they describe in *Electra*, the details of a ritual “sacrifice” superimposed in almost exact parallelism, to the murder of Aegisthus (v. 800 ff.)¹⁴⁰. It is the same for the “sacrifice” of Iphigenia, finally replaced by a doe (*Iphigenia at Aulis*, v.1565-9), what substitution confirms the validity of the description of ritual “sacrifice” in this tragedy. J. Heath¹⁴¹ has shown that the *Oresteia* blurs the categories of animal and human, which has the inevitable consequence of focusing on the horror of not only human “sacrifice” but also animal “sacrifice”. The very fact of comparing animal and human “sacrifice”, where the difference is limited to the *genus* of the victim is sufficient to disturb their separation. It is not excluded that this very ambiguity could be at the origin of Empedocles’ thought¹⁴².

One can go even further, by looking back over the way the Tragics conduct these comparisons. For example, when the chorus describes the sacrifice of Iphigenia in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*¹⁴³ :

¹³⁶ V. 730sq. : « Mn. Do roast and burn, you little one in your Cretan dress/. Do split immediately, and of your death/ only accuse your mother amongst those women/ But what is to say ? This girl has become a wineskin, with a persian shoe (...) Mn. That's it ! Burn me/ But she will be slaughtered at this very moment/ The Sixth Women. No, no! I implore you. Do me whatever you like / rather than to her/Mn. You're a mother of a tender nature. / But she will not less be slaughtered./ The Sixth Woman. Alas my daughter! Give me the jug, Mania, so that I can collect my child's blood”.

¹³⁷ (1965), p. 473.

¹³⁸ *Façons tragiques de tuer une femme* (1987). Gibert speaks of « the verbal rigor of Greek tragedy, which twists language only for a very definite purpose » (2003, p. 13-14) ; « the genre of tragedy can easily create and control a confusion of categories, and also knows the limits it cannot cross » (p. 17).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

¹⁴⁰ HEINRICHS (2011), p. 186.

¹⁴¹ (1999), p. 37-38.

¹⁴² WERSINGER (2012).

¹⁴³ PERCEAU (2011) p. 120-121.

Antistrophe 4 (vers 228-236)

<p>Λιτὰς δὲ καὶ κληδόνας πατρῶους παρ' οὐδὲν αἰῶνα παρθένειον, ἔθεντο φιλόμαχοι βραβῆς· φράσεν δ' ἄόζοις πατήρ μετ' εὐχὰν δίκαν χμαίρας ὑπερθε βωμοῦ πέπλοισι περιπετὴ παντὶ θυμῷ προνωπῆ λαβεῖν ἀέρ- δην στόματός τε καλλιπρῶ- ρου φυλακῆ κατασχεῖν φθόγγον ἀραιὸν οἴκοις,</p>	<p>Supplications and appeals to a father, life of a young girl, for nothing they held it, the chiefs enamored of war; and the father intimated to the helpers, after a prayer, according to the norm for a goat, above the altar wrapped in her dress, with all her heart, to maintain her bent forward on high and by the imprisonment of her beautiful prow-mouth, to contain a disastrous sound for the house</p>
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Strophe 5 (vers 237-248) :

<p>βία χαλινῶν τ' ἀναύδῳ μένει κρόκου βαφὰς [δ'] ἐς πέδον χέουσα, ἔβαλλ' ἕκαστον θυτή- ρων ἀπ' ὄμματος βέλει φιλοίκτω, πρέπουσα θ' ὥς ἐν γραφαῖς προσεννέπειν θέλουσ', ἐπεὶ πολλάκις πατὴρ κατ' ἀνδρώνας εὐτραπέζους ἔμελψεν, ἀγνῆ δ' ἀταύ- ρωτος αὐδῆ πατρὸς φίλου τριτόσπονδον εὐ- ποτμον παιῶνα φίλωσ ἐτίμα</p>	<p>by the violence and force of the voiceless bist; pouring out ground a tincture of saffron, she was throwing at each of the sacrificers the throw of lament of her eye, distinguishing herself as on a painting, in her desire for speaking to them; because so often to her father in the men's room with beautiful tables, she sang, and with a pure voice, intact heifer, of her beloved father she honored the blessed paean with love, at the third libation</p>
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Iphigenia, about to be sacrificed, is forced (verb *kataschein*) to mutism¹⁴⁴ and then, the chorus puts her in parallel with a young goat in a formula that needs attention, *δίκαν χμαίρας*: far from expressing a simple comparison as it happens further with the adverb *hōs*, the prepositional expression *Dikèn* + genitive has its full meaning and should not be overlooked. This term, as Nicole Loraux has clearly shown¹⁴⁵, refers to compliance with “a specific standard order”, something like “as it is the rule”. So are we to understand that the ritual, which is exactly the same as if the *hiereion* was a goat, is performed according to the absolute respect of the rules, and that what is performed before the eyes of the chorus, being perceived as a standard sacrificial ritual, is not, therefore, a “corrupted sacrifice”¹⁴⁶. The explicit violence of the muzzling (*bia chalinôn, menei*), the sorrowful glance the “sacrificial” victim throws (*ballein*) on the sacrificers (*thutêrôn*), and even the following comparison with a painted scene, which necessarily refers to the iconographic universe that is familiar to fifth century viewers fond of vases where pictures of *thusiai* are frequent, every thing makes sense when we accept to consider what words actually mean and what actually heard the extra-scenic audience.

Thus, Stella Georgoudi, who uses the argument of ritual conformity (adverb *dikaiôs*) to

¹⁴⁴ About the connection made by the Tragicists between silence and animal, see PERCEAU (2014). The ritual creates an aera of silence where only subsists gesture, bound to a programmatic constraint (the sequence chaining being tighter than ordinary gesture), see DURAND, (1979, p. 169) and KITTS, (2011).

¹⁴⁵ (1999), p. 253.

¹⁴⁶ Which one does not notice when the interpretation is immediately oriented by the dominant idea of “corrupted sacrifice”.

interpret the “sacrificed” goat tremors mentioned by Plutarch¹⁴⁷, misses a testimony concerning the same conformity (*diken*), simply because that testimony appears in a tragedy...

Scholars’ works dealing with the metaphor of “sacrifice” in Tragedies have highlighted that metaphor plays a more ambiguous role, than one is willing to admit. Helene Foley¹⁴⁸ has shown that if Pindar in his *Epinikia* is constantly striving to expel illegitimate violence and transform myths that denigrate the gods, the Tragicists deliberately exploit the violence that lies at the heart of the “sacrificial” ritual :

“Tragic sacrifice makes the participant come face to face with death and with the violence that is required to maintain his social and physical existence, it strips away the veneer of civilization maintained in the civic rite with its animal victim and turns the exploding violence of the participants onto a human victim¹⁴⁹.”

The “sacrifice” of Polyxena in Euripides’s *Hecuba* is even more revealing. Achilles’ ghost, has called for Polyxena’s “sacrifice” and the Greeks have just accomplished it. Talthybios, who attended the scene, narrates to Hecuba the “sacrificial” ceremony explicitly designated by the technical word *sphagè* (*sês korès epi sphagas*, “for slitting of your daughter’s throat”, v. 522). Already in verse 526 (that is to say since the beginning of the description of the ceremony), a metaphor is used to describe the girl as a “sacrificial victim”: the Achaeans were, the herald says to Hecuba, ordered “to contain with both hands the bonds of (your) intact heifer (*skirtèma moschou sês*)”: in a meaningful chiasmic construction, Polyxena who was plainly designated as a girl (*sês korès*) becomes, by its very inclusion in the ritual procedure, a jumping young animal (*moschou sês*), the metaphor (unlike comparison that always emphasizes the distance between comparing and compared) having the effect here of putting before the eyes the animal through the young girl, and the young girl as a “sacrificed” animal. Talthybios then describes the libation and the prayer to Achilles (which occupies the position of the god to whom one “sacrifices”), with the reference to the “black blood of the girl” which is offered to him by this sacrifice. Then Polyxena claims the privilege of being “killed” (verb *kteinein*) as a “free” being (*eleutheran hês eleuthera thanô*, v. 547-550): in front of Neoptolemus, she discovers her chest and asks him to strike her at the chest (*sternon*, v. 564)¹⁵⁰. But he proceeds to “sacrifice” by cutting her throat (*temnei*), strictly conforming himself to the ritual of *sphagè*, a term whose occurrence emblematically frames the whole narrative, in the end of the verses 522 and 571 (πλήρης πρὸ τύμβου σῆς κόρης ἐπὶ σφαγᾶς / ἐπεὶ δ’ ἀφῆκε πνεῦμα θανασίμῳ σφαγῆ).

How can we speak of corrupted ritual, when every detail offers the evidence that the ritual was performed with absolute conformity to rule: what Euripides describes corresponds to the reality of the “sacrificial” ritual he and his audience perfectly know¹⁵¹.

This analysis seems to be confirmed by the presence in the tragedy of another murder, but this time and by contrast, presented as a corrupted “sacrifice”. This murder is represented in a reversed mirror effect, as Hecuba’s response for the ritual “sacrifice” of Polyxena: it is the murder, by the Trojan women, of Polymestor’s son, explicitly equated by Polymestor himself with a *sphagè* (v. 1037, 1078). But unlike the “sacrifice” of Polyxena, it is a wild

¹⁴⁷ Supra p. 00.

¹⁴⁸ (1985), p. 45.

¹⁴⁹ 1985), p. 255.

¹⁵⁰ Symptomatically, in a recent paper, GERCHANOCH misinterprets this gesture, seeing in Polyxena’s naked chest a traditional gesture of supplication (2012).

¹⁵¹ Remind that human “sacrifice” does not exist at Euripides’ time. By describing young people who “consent” to die facing the inertia and the procrastination of the sacrificers (see Polyxena’s words: “I die consenting” (*hekousa thnèiskô*, v. 548), he shows up that this religious practice is an mere economic practice, hypocritical and coward.

sphagè, non ritualized (v. 1020 *sq.*), overturning all the usual codes of ritual: this *sphagè* is accomplished by the will of a mortal woman (Hecuba); it is performed by other women, murderous captives, « Trojan killers of males » (*androphonous*, v. 1062); it goes on secretly and privately (under the tent, v. 1016, 1038); it culminates in the anticipatory vision of the « butchering » of the murdered children (*diamoirâsai*, v. 1077) with the aim of offering a bloody feast (*phoinian daïta*, v. 1078) not to men but to dogs; and this *sphagè* leads to another reversed feast, the one which Polymestor himself calls for, as he proclaims his desire to “fill himself with flesh and bones, to provide the feast (*thoinan*) of wild beasts by mutilating those who insulted him” (v. 1072). Now the word *thoina* also belongs to the “sacrificial” sphere : it is the word for the festive banquet that follows the “sacrifice”¹⁵² (hence the proverb found in Epicharmus, fr. 148 ἐκ θυσίας θοῖνα)¹⁵³.

What do we learn from those tragedy? We learn that what characterizes the bloody “sacrifice” (*sphagè*) is not the kind or the *genus* of the victim but the ritual of killing and its characteristic violence.

In fact, the differentiation between human “sacrifice” and animal “sacrifice” could well be an illusion, the real question being that of domestication: one “sacrifices” what has been submitted, “domesticated”, that is to say the so called “domestic” animals¹⁵⁴, or “tamed” women¹⁵⁵ (Polyxena is not allowed to die as a free woman, which is why she must have her throat cut instead of her chest transpierced as for a soldier; Iphigenia is violently gagged in order to be “sacrificed” without being able to issuing a voice which would remember she is a free human being). The status of “sacrificed” girls is similar to that of “sacrificed” animals who must be pure¹⁵⁶ and intact¹⁵⁷. All those details remain unnoticed by anthropologists who mainly adopt the “comical tone” in their ongoing effort to overshadow the violence of the *thusia*, at the cost of dubious philological distinction¹⁵⁸ or tendentious *ad hoc* translations¹⁵⁹.

Such verbal euphemistical reserve is nothing new, since Euripides seems to stage it in the mouth of his Hecuba (*Hecuba*, v. 260-261): in order to condemn human “sacrifice” while justifying animal “sacrifice”, she uses two different verbs, *bouthutein* (to make the *thusia* = ritual “sacrifice” of an ox) and *anthroposphagein* (to slaughter a human being) the first one euphemizing the blood “sacrifice” with the verb *thuein*, as it concerns an animal, while the second (*sphagein*), concerning an human being, unveils its violence.

All these examples show also that the very definition of violence becomes a problem when the question of *thusia* is tackled. Focusing on *sphagè*, one prefers ignoring the other forms of violence in ritual. What means “violence” for the anthropologist? The only violence would be slaughter? But to compel an animal to move forward during the *pompê* (using whips, sticks, or ropes) or forcing him to kneel (as it is shown on the iconography), isn't it using violence?¹⁶⁰. This restriction seems to lead Durand, perhaps unconsciously, to wrongly

¹⁵² See for instance the use of *thoinasthai*, in Euripides' *Electra*, v. 835 (with DURAND'S remarks, 1979, p. 148).

¹⁵³ REDFIELD (2011), p. 172 et HEINRICH (2011), p. 186.

¹⁵⁴ One does not “sacrifice” wild animals, VERNANT (1979), p. 58.

¹⁵⁵ We must remind the complementary relationship, well established by VERNANT, between the two sides of the Hesiodian myth: sacrifice and marriage.

¹⁵⁶ Iphigenia is *ataurotos* (“untouched by the bull”).

¹⁵⁷ BRULÉ et TOUZÉ (2008), p. 111 *sq.* : « two essential concepts define the *hiereion* : its purity and integrity » (p. 120).

¹⁵⁸ The word *phonos* would not mean “murdering” but “putting to death”, Georgoudi, (2005, p. 143) but what is it to “put to death”?

¹⁵⁹ GEORGOU DI, 2005, p. 134-138. In the context of an animal sacrifice, *phoneuein* is translated as if there was *sphagein* (BRULE, 2008, p. 115).

¹⁶⁰ For instance, small animals (roosters, pigs etc..) are held under the arm, the leg, or with ropes. Now this violence is acknowledged by Stella Georgoudi herself who writes in support of her thesis of the non consent of the animal : “the victim [on these votive reliefs], often a bovine victim [appears] in a very uncomfortable

superimposing the opposition of “sweetness” and “violence” on two modes of music allegedly played by the *aulos* at the moment of the *pompê* and of the *sphagè*.

Conclusion

The original intention of the Paris School anthropologists was to break up with a concept of difference felt to be stiff, general, and hierarchical. That is why, beside their poststructuralist approach, those anthropologists borrowed their tools from the Sceptics. The “difference” as what is far apart or distant from what is felt as a norm (cf. French “*écart*”, “*diastème*”) or what is dissonant, would serve as an instrument producing relativity against genealogical ideologies and ethnocentric prescriptions as well as against dominant categories that had to be deconstructed. Which, at that time, was a necessity.

But today, the method undergoes a backlash. In challenging Claude Levi-Strauss’ structural pattern which consisted in searching unconscious invariants of human societies and in drawing up the anthropological table of Mendeleev, the anthropology of the Paris School has generated a matrix of multiple cognitive and pragmatic differences, with an implicit epistemology, based on pragmatic conventionalism.

Such a conventionalism, far from being capable of eliminating the ideological categories, entails their multiplication, in an infinite fragmentation, as if the anthropologist’s discourse was caught in a sort of exacerbation of the logic of division in which one must detect, unbeknownst to the anthropologist, the logic of the *makhaira*.

From a pragmatic point of view, it looks as if the anthropologist’s discourse merely mimes the Greek “sacrificial” ritual, based on incision and slitting. The situation is similar to that of the anthropologist whose enunciative strategy changes according to the gender of his informant, without noticing that he mimes a gender difference already at work among the people he investigates¹⁶¹. One may propose the concept of *schematism* (in George Lakoff’s sense), to elucidate this confusion of the different levels or stratas in the anthropologist discourse who merely repeats the ritual in an academic way, failing to question the categories of his discourse.

The example of anthropological recent studies on Greek “Sacrifice” (and one should rather say from now on *slaying ritual*) is striking. First of all, it is rightly recognized that the traditional Christian concept of “sacrifice” is distant from the Greek concept of *thusia*. The aim of keeping things apart and reinforcing their dissonances urges to the sharpening of criteria, resulting in an atomization of all differences so that the notion of “sacrifice” reveals itself obsolete. On the other hand, the Genera categories, that are intimately related to the Greek *thusia* (as are, admittedly, the Gender categories and the God / Human dichotomy), seem completely overlooked in the most recent works more or less consciously influenced by the “Paris-School”.

Not only does the difference animal / human work tacitly and pragmatically in all actual anthropological studies, whereas this difference depends on the *thusia* and the representations that Hesiod and Aeschylus have drawn from it, but also the difference between musical modes or melic genres, intimately connected with the *thusia* continues to play its full impact on the anthropologist, as it did formerly on the ancient Greek. It is the “comic” version of the

position : by pulling it by the rope attached to its head (...) by exercising a sort of constraint, and even of violence, the victim is forced to bend on its forelegs and, therefore, to bend its head heavily. These reliefs show the animal often collapsed and fallen on his front paws (...). We do not detect here any care for domestic animals” (2008), p. 150. See also NAIDEN (2007), p. 67. The observation is correct but overly restrict.

¹⁶¹ CALAME (2002), p. 63.

Greek ritual that predominates in all actual studies, all other versions such as the Tragical or the Philosophical ones, being considered irrelevant, at the cost of unconscious amalgams and subreptions, discarded to the level of the range of virtual conventions.

Today, at the time classics and anthropology definitely overlap, it is necessary for those disciplines to question such methodological blind spots. If anthropology wants to achieve the status of a science, instead of repeating a ritual, it has the duty to question its anthropocentric basis also.

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