

THE PERFORMING SELF IN TWELFTH-CENTURY CULTURE

●
by Martin Stevens

In recent times, critics have used the term “performing self” as a way of identifying the artist whose work is centrally concerned with the act of his own creation. Using as his principal models the works of Frost, Hemingway, and Mailer, Richard Poirier in the title essay of his book *The Performing Self* observes that all three of these writers “treat any occasion as a ‘scene’ or a stage for dramatizing the self as performer,” that for each “performance is an exercise of Power,” which “presumes to compete with reality itself for control of the minds exposed to it.”¹ In essence, Poirier sees the performing self as struggling with “language and literary shape” to gain self-awareness, the writer as realizing all along that *he* is “part of what needs to be clarified.”² Although Poirier never directly claims that the performing self is exclusively a mode of the modern consciousness, he does imply that the stance of self performance and self creation is one of the hallmarks of contemporary technique. His context is American literature and his historical range extends back to Herman Melville, though he occasionally alludes as well to poets of the seventeenth century, notably Andrew Marvell. Disregarding the political implications that Poirier sees in the performing self, I would like to suggest that this figure is, in fact, not at all the creation of our time but that it already existed in the Middle Ages and particularly that its use is associated with the Renaissance of the Twelfth Century. I hope to demonstrate that, indeed, the performing self is one of the most important stylistic innovations of that fruitful time in the art of narration both in literature and in the visual arts. It is to these roots that we can eventually trace such noted performing selves as the created first-person characters of Gottfried, Dante, Chaucer, and even Rembrandt.

I

It is important at the outset of this paper to distinguish between the first-person narrator-persona and what I am calling the performing self. The term “persona” has

¹ Richard Poirier, *The Performing Self* (New York 1971) 86-87.

² *Ibid.* 11.

for some time been in vogue among literary critics to describe “the fallible first person singular”³ who serves as storyteller and who is what Leo Spitzer has called the poetic and empirical “I” in medieval authors.⁴ The Pilgrim Dante or the Pilgrim Chaucer are good examples of the type from the Middle Ages, while Lemuel Gulliver can serve as an example from a later time. The problem with the use of “persona” as a descriptive term for these literary characters is that it suggests fully-drawn characters who have an existence outside of and almost independent from their literary creators. Historically, a persona was first a mask used by a player, a term that eventually became generalized to refer to the character behind the mask. This metonymic usage of the term still occurs in the phrase *dramatis personae*, which of course singles out the people in a play as sentient beings who, for the time of the play – at least in an age of realism – have an existence of their own. For those who deny the applicability of the canons of realism to Chaucer or other writers of the Middle Ages,⁵ this usage, whether it be *dramatis personae*⁶ or just “persona,” is objectionable. While, as I have said elsewhere, it may have been necessary for a time to separate the Poet Chaucer from the literary persona known as the Pilgrim Chaucer because critics like John M. Manly wanted to make real historical personages out of the Canterbury Pilgrims,⁷ I believe we have now reached the point where the two – that is, the Poet and the Pilgrim – have achieved separate identities, and that way of seeing them is surely as wrong as the one that the persona was invented to correct.⁸ The point is that neither the Pilgrim Dante nor the Pilgrim Chaucer are autonomous, free-standing figures. Yet sometimes I feel that criticism has moved to the position in which any views we may wish to form of the poet are invalid if they are based on what we learn from his persona. It is in such a situation that the term persona becomes a hindrance rather than an aid, for we do learn much about Dante and Chaucer as well as other artists from their fictional spokesmen. The fact remains that our biographical information, especially about a medieval artist’s character (and, after all, that is what we are really interested in), usually rests not upon historical records but precisely on what he tells us about himself in his role as performer.⁹ I would like, therefore, to suggest that we use the term “performing self” as a replacement for persona. What we witness in all medieval works of art containing a self-representation of the artist is a facet of the man as performer of his craft. He plays a role much of the time but he is also himself, since he is poet and actor or

³ See, for example, E. Talbot Donaldson, “Chaucer the Pilgrim,” *PMLA* 69 (1954); repr. in *Chaucer Criticism* 1, ed. Richard Schoeck and Jerome Taylor (Notre Dame 1960) 9.

⁴ Leo Spitzer, “Note on the Poetic and Empirical ‘I’ in Medieval Authors,” *Traditio* 4 (1946) 414-422.

⁵ See Martin Stevens, “Chaucer and Modernism: An Essay in Criticism,” in *Chaucer at Albany*, ed. R. H. Robbins (New York 1975) 193-216.

⁶ G. L. Kittredge considered the pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales* “*dramatis personae*”; see *Chaucer and his Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass. 1915) 155.

⁷ See John M. Manly, *Chapters on Chaucer* (New York 1926).

⁸ See Stevens (n. 5 above) 210-212.

⁹ Donald Howard makes this point in his valuable discussion of “Chaucer, the Man,” *PMLA* 80 (1965), repr. in A. C. Cawley’s *Chaucer’s Mind and Art* (Edinburgh 1969) 31-45.

painter and subject at once. In this respect, the term “performing self” is an especially apt way of speaking about the medieval artist, for he was, indeed, a performer or craftsman, and his immediate role before a living audience can never be totally separated from his less intimate relationship with the general reader. When William IX of Aquitaine begins one of his lyrics by addressing his companions, and exclaims,

Farai un vers de dreyt nien:
non er de mi ni d’altra gen
(I will make a verse of exactly nothing:
there’ll be nothing in it about me or anyone else)¹⁰

we know instantly that the poem is concerned with the dialectic between performance and text. It must be read, first of all, as an address to those companions, as a performance in self-profession. Our reading is conditioned by our understanding of that performance; there is added humor in our perception that the poem is indeed very much about William and that his primary audience knows that fact.

An additional word must be said about the relationship of the medieval and the modern performing self. I disagree with Leo Spitzer’s view on the matter, namely, “that in the Middle Ages, the ‘poetic I’ had more freedom and more breadth than it has today . . . [because it] dealt not with the individual but with mankind.”¹¹ To the contrary, when the so-called poetic “I” is a performing self, it is invariably concerned with the individual, and it very much resembles the modern personae of such writers as Norman Mailer and Vladimir Nabokov. I would insist that it is precisely in the artist’s struggle as performing self with “language and literary shape,” to borrow Poirier’s phrase once more, that we find a close artistic affinity between the medieval and modern periods. I wish, therefore, to suggest that the first-person figure of the artist who emerges in the autobiographical and prefatory writings of early twelfth-century authors and who later inhabits such widely divergent works of art as romances, chronicles, lyrics, plays, manuscript illuminations, sketches, sculptures, and portraits is the beginning of an important new artistic vantage point. I should emphasize that I do not claim the performing self as an invention of the twelfth century; a more primitive type certainly existed earlier, and the first person voice of classical literature surely helped give rise to the figure. What I am claiming is that the figure gains a fully-realized identity in the twelfth century, and that the mode of the artist speaking *qua* artist is a signal departure in the literature and art of Western civilization.

Before looking more closely at the rise of the performing self in the twelfth century, I would like briefly to examine two illustrations of the type from later periods of medieval literature to demonstrate their artistic function. First let us take Gottfried von Strassburg as we encounter him in the *Tristan*. What we realize right

¹⁰ Frederick Golden, ed., *Lyrics of the Troubadours and Trouveres* (Garden City, N. Y. 1973) 24-25.

¹¹ Spitzer (n. 4 above) 415.

from the start is that Gottfried is the central character of his own fiction, and Tristan, the hero as artist (or poet of love) as W. T. H. Jackson has so perceptively shown,¹² becomes a surrogate for his creator. At various crucial moments in the narrative, Gottfried interposes comments of his own (usually misnamed “digressions” by the critics) which focus on the craft of writing or on his own limitations as observer and commentator. Take, for example, the passage describing Tristan’s investiture, a point at which Gottfried writes his celebrated literary excursus. In effect, the passage is one of the finer moments of untrustworthy self-deprecation in medieval literature, for Gottfried tells us that his language simply will not do justice to the splendor and significance of the scene while creating just the opposite impression:

For during my lifetime and earlier, poets have spoken with such eloquence of worldly pomp and magnificent trappings that had I at my command twelve times my inspiration, and were it possible for me to carry twelve tongues in my one mouth, of which each could speak as I can, I should not know how to begin to describe magnificence so well that it had not been done better before. Knightly pomp, I declare, has been so variously portrayed and has been so overdone that I can say nothing about it that would give pleasure to anyone.¹³

There follows a long excursus of literary criticism discussing the styles of such contemporary men of letters as Hartman von Aue, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Bligger von Steinach, Heinrich von Veldeke and Walter von der Vogelweide. What is remarkable about this passage is that one of the highest moments in the career of the romance hero – his investiture as a knight – a moment treated reverentially in the convention of romance, here gives way to artistic introspection. As Jackson has pointed out, Gottfried has in effect given his hero “invisible clothes,” so that the *edele herzen* for whom the poem is intended will recognize the special quality, the literary dimension which elevates Tristan above the mere knight of chivalry.¹⁴ In the process, Gottfried, of course, highlights himself. At all climactic moments we are reminded of the poet and his struggle to create his unique vision. In this passage, as in the other so-called digressions, we are thus brought face to face with the performing self.

Geoffrey Chaucer will provide my second example. To my knowledge there is no work of the Middle Ages which gives a fuller insight into literature as performance than *The Canterbury Tales*. The whole of the work, as I read it, is concerned with storytelling generally and with Chaucer as literary critic specifically. It ranks among the very few works that create their own audience, and thus for once and in a limited sense allow us to see the medieval reader/listener as something other than a fiction of

¹²W. T. H. Jackson, “Tristan the Artist in Gottfried’s Poem,” *PMLA* 77 (1962) 364-372.

¹³*Gottfried von Strassburg’s Tristan*, trans. A. T. Hatto, (Baltimore 1960) 104-105.

¹⁴W. T. H. Jackson, “The Literary Views of Gottfried von Strassburg,” *PMLA* 85 (1970) 1000-1001.

the modern critic, as Robert O. Payne and Father Ong have in recent times separately and persuasively argued.¹⁵ Harry Baillie is the perfect embodiment of the medieval “Common Reader,” and through such stratagems as the so-called “Marriage Controversy,” we get audience response as a generative device of Chaucer’s fiction. At the center of this fiction stands Chaucer himself, speaking behind his mask or being spoken about by fictive narrators. What we are never allowed to forget is that Chaucer, rather than Harry Baillie, is the real impressario of the Canterbury journey; and he reminds us of his centrality to his fiction by emerging on several important occasions either as storyteller or as his own “auctorite.” The tale of “Sir Thopas,” while not attributed to Chaucer by name (except in the rubrics), is told by the performing self. Here Chaucer emerges, *in medias res*, from the anonymity within the group of twenty-nine, and subtly shows that the main concern of *The Canterbury Tales* is, indeed, with literary topics and perceptions. What the Common Reader rejects with the statement, “Thy drasty rymyng is nat worth a toord,” is in reality a tour-de-force critique of the most popular middle-class mode of medieval narrative literature, the metrical romance. Thus, ironically, Chaucer manipulates his own audience to reject what traditionally it likes best. “Sir Thopas” is therefore the most direct warning we have from Chaucer as performing self that we must read all the tales as something more than the fictions of their literary tellers. It is for this reason that “Sir Thopas” stands at the critical center of *The Canterbury Tales*. At the periphery, in turn, the self-performer appears in another guise. I speak of the reference to Chaucer by the Man of Law in his introduction:

But nathelees, certeyn,
I kan right now no thrifty tale seyn
That Chaucer, thogh he kan but lewedly
On metres and on rymyng craftily,
Hath seyde hem in swich Englissh as he kan
Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man;
And if he have noght seyde hem, leve brother,
In o book, he hath seyde hem in another. (2.45-52)¹⁶

This single reference by Chaucer to himself *in propria persona*, followed by the Man of Law’s rehearsal of Chaucer’s bibliography, is a deft touch of self-advertisement.

And the humorous self-reference, here as elsewhere, serves to highlight Chaucer as a “man of gret auctorite” in the realm of literature. Surely we are meant to remember this allusion as the Man of Law, who confesses that he is “right now of tales desolaat” (2.131), plods wearily through his exhausting tale of Constance. What the passage does is once more to bring the author in the forefront. Here as elsewhere in *The Canterbury Tales*, we are concerned with the performing self.

¹⁵See Robert O. Payne, “The Historical Criticism We Need,” *Chaucer at Albany* (n. 5 above) 180-183, and Walter J. Ong, “The Writer’s Audience is Always a Fiction,” *PMLA* 90 (1975) 9-21.

¹⁶Quotation from F. N. Robinson, ed., *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. 2 (Boston 1957).

II

The intellectual source for this style of self-allusion and incorporation lies in the twelfth century. As Ernst Robert Curtius has observed, it is in this century that “we find unadulterated pride of authorship.”¹⁷ For the first time in the literature of the Middle Ages, artists either insist on making themselves known by name or on including themselves by first-person reference in their works. Authors begin their works with personal allusions, and artists either name themselves in signatures or make portraits of themselves, even in the holiest of contexts. It is this age which brings to fruition autobiographical writing and the letter as a rhetorical form (as R. W. Southern tells us, “nearly all important writers kept copies of their own letters”).¹⁸ Colin Morris points out that autobiography

was almost unknown in the ancient world. Classical self-expression did not take this form until the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine, which deserve to be called the first autobiography, if by that word we understand an account of the author’s life written to illuminate the development of his beliefs and character. For a long time Augustine had no successors, except for some brief accounts written by monks of their conversion to the monastic life (that by Odo of Cluny was incorporated, still in the first person, into John of Salerno’s life of him), and for the reminiscences of Ratherius of Verona in the tenth century. From the late eleventh century there is a great increase in the autobiographical content of books on a wide variety of subjects.¹⁹

Examples abound, as for instance, Abbot Suger’s account of his political activities and his recollections of his design of Saint Denis; or Aelred of Rievaulx’s personal remembrances of his friends; or Otloh of Saint Emmeram’s *De doctrina spirituali* and *De tentationibus suis* which brood upon questions about the value of classical literature and about the reliability of Holy Scripture. One of the more remarkable autobiographical books of the Middle Ages is the volume of memoirs of Abbot Guibert of Nogent, completed about 1116. This very frank and personal account, often focusing on the frailties of its writer, is cast very much in the form of Augustine’s *Confessions*, which must have been a spiritual source if not a direct model for Guibert. It begins as a book of personal confession and a prayer to God for his patience:

To Thy Majesty, O God, I acknowledge my endless wanderings from Thy Paths, my turning back so oft to the bosom of Thy eternal mercy, prompted by Thee in spite of all. The wickedness I did in childhood and in youth, I acknowledge, wickedness that yet springs up in ripened age,

¹⁷E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. Willard Trask (New York 1963) 517.

¹⁸R. W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (New York 1970) 87.

¹⁹Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200* (New York 1972) 79.

my ingrained love of crookedness, that in a body sluggish and worn yet lives on.²⁰

One such wickedness, clearly, was Guibert's love of learning and his pride of authorship. He tells us how, in his youth, he steeped his "mind unduly in the study of verse-making, so as to put aside for such worthless vanities the serious things of the divine pages."²¹ He read Ovid and the *Bucolics* of Virgil, aimed at "the airs and graces of a love poem in a critical treatise," and even wrote a series of letters.²² He took great joy on one occasion to write out a sermon based on the Book of Wisdom at the request of his abbot, Garnier of St. Germer de Fly. Later, however, the abbot was annoyed by his writings and even forbade him to compose his commentary on the book of Genesis, which Guibert nevertheless continued in secret. There is, thus, in the very existence of the *Memoirs* a reminder of Guibert's self-confessed sin of "frivolous writing," as well as the vanity of authorship for which he berates himself repeatedly. The quest of identity and the power of self-revelation are simply too large to be contained within the prescribed pieties of the day.

But autobiography is a step removed from the full emergence of the performing self. I am arguing that the author appeared *in propria persona* as a first phase in the evolution that led to his absorption in works of fiction. Seen from this perspective, autobiography is one such preliminary form; the auctorial preface (or sometimes dedication) is another. It is once more in the twelfth century that the personal preface becomes popular. Indeed, virtually every major work, whether fictional or philosophical, begins with the author's allusion to himself and his book. Bernardus Silvestris's *Cosmographia* furnishes a useful and uncomplicated example of the type:

To Thierry, doctor most renowned for true eminence in learning, Bernardus Silvestris offers his work. For some time, I confess, I have been debating with my innermost self, whether to submit my little work for friendly hearing or destroy it utterly without waiting for judgment. For since a treatise on the totality of the universe is difficult by its very nature, and this the composition of a dull wit as well, it fears to be heard and perused by a perceptive judge I have decided that a work so imperfect should not declare the name of its author until such time as it shall have received from your judgment the verdict of publication or suppression. Your discernment, then, will decide whether it ought to appear openly and come into the hands of all. If meanwhile it is presented for your consideration, it is submitted for judgment and correction, not for approval.²³

This opening passage is marked by the topos of humility, which we have come to associate with the dedicatory epistle; the "dull wit" of Bernardus is incapable of

²⁰*The Autobiography of Guibert, Abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy*, trans. C. C. Swinton Bland (London 1925) 5.

²¹*Ibid.* 67.

²²*Ibid.* 67

²³From the translation by Winthrop Wetherbee, *The Cosmographia of Bernardus Silvestris* (New York 1973) 65.

grappling, as he tells us, with “the totality of the universe.” In the treatise itself, we never again encounter the person of the author; nevertheless, our reading of it is shaped by the personality we meet in the preface – it becomes an informing presence for all that follows in the way of speculative comment about the megacosmos and the microcosmos. We are, moreover, assured by the preface that the work carries the implicit approval of Thierry of Chartres, “the foremost philosopher of all Europe,”²⁴ for, as Bernardus tells us, he will suppress publication and refrain from naming himself as author if Thierry does not approve of the work. Bernardus does name himself; the treatise was published; and so the ethical proof gives it substance as a work worthy of the reader’s attention. It is thus that the authorship of Bernardus obtrudes in an otherwise impersonal work.

When we come to the *De amore* by Andreas Capellanus, we alight upon a much more difficult auctorial presence, revealed in part by the preface and in part by interspersed direct address to the putative reader throughout the work. The *De amore* is allegedly a handbook on love addressed to a certain Walter, who remains otherwise unidentified for posterity. He is there as a naive reader who lends directness and perhaps cause for irony to the pages that are dedicated to his welfare. Andreas’s preface is straightforward enough: as a result of his friend Walter’s continual urgings, he will teach him in the treatise that follows “the way in which a state of love between two lovers may be kept unharmed and likewise how those who do not love may get rid of the darts of Venus that are fixed in their hearts.”²⁵ We know nothing more about Andreas than the fact that he writes in the first person (mostly in the form of the royal “we”), wherein he represents himself as a voice of experience and compassion desirous of imparting good counsel to his friend who has been pierced by Cupid’s arrow. The voice is persistent; it emerges over and over again in the pages that follow. What is most significant about Andreas’s presence is the “double lesson” (*duplicem sententiam*) that he imparts. Unlike the preface, which promises the anatomy of worldly love, the conclusion – as well as the last main chapter on “The Rejection of Love” – urges Walter to forsake the vanities of the world and to devote himself to the Bridegroom who “cometh to celebrate the greater nuptials.” Andreas, in effect, tells Walter that he should disregard his earlier teachings:

If you wish to practice the system, you will obtain, as a careful reading of this little book will show you, all the delights of the flesh in fullest measure; but the grace of God, the companionship of the good, and the friendship of praiseworthy men you will with good reason be deprived of. (p. 211)

One is put in mind here of Chaucer’s *Troilus* which similarly departs from its readership posing as a “litel bok” with a double lesson. The divided message of the

²⁴ According to Clarembald of Arras in a prefatory letter to Thierry’s *De sex dierum operibus*; see Wetherbee 144 n. 1.

²⁵ From the translation by John Jay Parry, *The Art of Courtly Love* (New York 1959) 27.

author thus brings into question the whole meaning of his writing. Are we to read the introduction and all that follows in the first two books ironically, as D. W. Robertson has suggested?²⁶ If so, Walter becomes an innocent in mind as well as body, and Andreas emerges as a humorous sophisticate and prototype of the unreliable narrator. This is not the place to adjudicate the elusive problem of Andreas's intent, but one nevertheless cannot disregard the questions that he raises for the reader with the double vision that he brings to his treatise. The effect is that Andreas himself is as much the focus of his book as his lessons on love. By raising the double perspective, he becomes omnipresent even in those passages – and there are many – which lack the first-person reference. He is, then, a far more complicated first-person author than any we have thus far encountered in the twelfth century, though yet not a true performing self.

III

As we move into the domain of fiction, the auctorial preface becomes even more distinct as a literary device. This is so because the author exists, at least in early works, on a different plane from his fictive setting. He is the voice of reality, the device that links the present with the past, the “here” with the “there.” To examine the incipient performing self in the fiction of the twelfth century, I want to focus on two examples of the type: Geoffrey of Monmouth and Chrétien de Troyes. I do not claim that these two writers are necessarily models for their time, but they do illustrate, each in his own way, the new personality that infuses the world of fiction. Both make self-references and both, at least occasionally, reappear in the midst of the narrative with first-person observations.

Geoffrey of Monmouth has been called a great “faker of history” and his most famous work, the *Historia regum Britanniae*, “one of the world’s most brazen and successful frauds.”²⁷ The reason for this playful disparagement (for “fraud” must here be read as a synonym for “fiction”) rests in the uncertainty over Geoffrey’s veracity in the citation of the source for his *magnum opus*. Three times in his work he cites his own name, Gaufridus Monemutensis, and begs indulgence from his patrons, Robert, earl of Gloucester, and Alexander, bishop of Lincoln.²⁸ The first of these occurs in the prefatory dedication to Robert where he reveals that Walter, archdeacon of Oxford, presented him

with a certain very ancient book written in the British language. This book, attractively composed to form a consecutive and orderly narrative, set out all the deeds of these men, from Brutus, the first King of the

²⁶ See the brilliant chapter on “Some Medieval Doctrines of Love” in D. W. Robertson, *A Preface to Chaucer* (Princeton 1962) 391-448.

²⁷ Roger Sherman Loomis, *The Development of Arthurian Romance* (New York 1963) 38, 35.

²⁸ See the translation by Lewis Thorpe, *The History of the Kings of Britain* (Baltimore 1966) 51-52, 170-171, and 257-258.

Britons, down to Cadwallader, the son of Cadwallo. At Walter's request I have taken the trouble to translate the book into Latin, although, indeed, I have been content with my own expressions and my own homely style and I have gathered no gaudy flowers of speech in other men's gardens. (p. 51)

There is great doubt that Walter's book ever existed, and the question of Geoffrey's real sources is one of the great unsolved mysteries in literary history. Some go so far as to say that the alleged book of Walter was really a first draft of the *Historia* written by Geoffrey himself.²⁹ The doubts extend as far back as the twelfth century itself, when Geoffrey's first known critic, William Newburgh, made the following disparaging comment:

It is quite clear that everything this man wrote about Arthur and his successors, or indeed about his predecessors from Vortigern onwards, was made up, partly by himself and partly by others, either from an inordinate love of lying, or for the sake of pleasing the Britons.³⁰

But William notwithstanding, the next three centuries read Geoffrey's book as history, and so for the time, at least, the authenticity of the self-professed chronicler prevailed.

In striking his literary pose, Geoffrey succeeded so well that he has become inextricably entwined with his own fiction. His *History*, which begins with the mythical Brutus, thus extends from the twelfth century before Christ, as tradition has it, not to Cadwallader of the seventh century after Christ, with which the narrative ends, but to the very time of Geoffrey himself. As purveyor of the mythic history, he is the intruder of the present who gives definition to the past. The book thus rounds out human history for twelve centuries before and after Christ. Like Chaucer who depended on a spurious Lollius to tell the history of Troy, Geoffrey disclaims his authorship and poses simply as translator. But his presence is unforgettable, and there are times, as during the description of the Whitsun feast at Arthur's court, when he forgets his fictional role and intrudes as author: "If I were to describe everything, I should make this story far too long" (p. 229). So, too, we cannot forget the claim he makes in his preface that he "has gathered no gaudy flowers" when he allows Arthur to deliver a speech "with Ciceronian eloquence" (p. 233). The *Historia regum Britanniae* gains much of its interest from the many games that Geoffrey plays with his reader. The act of writing mythic history is in itself part of its subject matter.

²⁹ Robert A. Caldwell, "The Use of Sources in the Variant and Vulgate Versions of the *Historia regum Britanniae* and the Question of the Order of the Versions," *Bulletin bibliographique de la Société internationale arthurienne* 9 (1957) 123-124.

³⁰ R. Howlett, ed., *Historia rerum Anglicarum in Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, Rolls Series (London 1884-1885) *Proemium*, i, ii, Translation by Thorpe (n. 28 above).

Chrétien de Troyes begins four of his five extant romances by mentioning his name. He also frequently intersperses comments in the first person within his tales. In the prefaces, he tells us a good deal about himself and his interests in storytelling. We know, for example, that he writes for two patrons, Countess Marie de Champagne, whom he mentions at the beginning of the *Lancelot* as having commanded him to write the story and who provided him with the *matiere* and the *sens*, and Count Philip of Flanders, “the worthiest man in the empire of Rome” (p. 8), to whom he dedicates the *Perceval*.³¹ By referring specifically to Count Philip’s generosity (“only they know his largess who receive it” p. 8), Chrétien implies that he sought material reward from his patron and that, therefore, he was a professional writer.³² The one note that rings loudly throughout his personal allusions is his pride in authorship; not only does he write to please his patrons, but he wants to improve upon the narrative craft of those who earn a living by mutilating and spoiling stories “in the presence of kings and counts” (*Erec*, p. 1). He venerates the past, and poses always as one who recounts his tales with great fidelity to his sources: his source for the *Cligés*, for example, is a book in the library of Saint Peter at Beauvais; it is described as “very old,” a fact that “adds to its authority” (p. 91). This insistence upon fidelity leads him to intersperse comments showing him as controlled by his narrative, as for example in the scene describing the coronation of Erec when Chrétien tells us: “So it is a mad enterprise I undertake in wishing to describe it. But since I *must make the effort, come what may*, I shall not fail to relate a part of it, as best I may” (p. 87; italics mine).

What is perhaps most interesting to this study about Chrétien’s references to his role as author is the implicit analogy that he draws between the craft of writing and knight errantry, between himself and his literary subjects, between learning and chivalry. At the beginning of the *Cligés* he is quite explicit on the latter correspondence:

Our books have informed us that the pre-eminence in chivalry and learning once belonged to Greece. Then chivalry passed to Rome, together with that highest learning which now has come to France. (p. 91)

The equation of chivalry and learning makes clear that Chrétien is writing as much about himself as he is about the world of Arthur and his knights. Let me demonstrate my point by taking a closer look at the preface of the *Lancelot*. Here he speaks no longer simply as author but virtually as the knight who will perform errantry for his lady. The countess Marie thus becomes the informing spirit of the romance, and

³¹ All citations from the *Erec*, *Cligés*, *Lancelot* and *Yvain* are to the translation by W. W. Comfort, *Chrétien de Troyes: Arthurian Romances* (London 1965); citations from the *Perceval* are to the translation by Roger Sherman Loomis and Laura Hibbard Loomis, *Medieval Romances* (New York 1957).

³² We are reminded by Curtius that the rewards of authorship in the twelfth century are sparse. One poet writes: “How many poems have I written for prelates, and received empty words as my only reward. A buffoon is prized more highly than such as we” (n. 17 above) 472.

Chrétien, by telling the story she commands of him, does service for her much as Lancelot will for Guinevere. He begins as follows:

Since my lady of Champagne wishes me to undertake to write a romance, I shall very gladly do so, being so devoted to her service as to do anything in the world for her, without any intention of flattery. But if one were to introduce any flattery upon such an occasion, he might say, and I would subscribe to it, that this lady surpasses all others who are alive . . . I will say . . . that her command has more to do with this work than any thought or pains that I may expend upon it. (p. 270)

Interestingly, there may even be an organic significance to Chrétien's self-reference by name in the preface of the *Lancelot*. As Bruce Finnie has shown, "in *Lancelot* . . . the hero's name is not given until the middle of the romance."³³ The first half constitutes a search for Guinevere in which the hero is known only as the "Knight of the Cart," a name that Chrétien himself uses as the title of his story in his preface. It is Guinevere who bestows his name upon him when she calls it out during the fight between Lancelot and Meleagant. At this point, then, Lancelot sheds his false, shameful identity and becomes the honorable and renowned protector of the queen. If we carry the Lancelot/Chrétien analogy into this context of names, we can only conclude that the writer is, in fact, superior to the knight of his story, for he has his identity from the very outset.

The romance of *Yvain* is generally thought to have followed that of the *Lancelot*.³⁴ This is the only one of Chrétien's tales that does not begin with a reference to his name. But it does begin with storytelling by the knights themselves. Calogrenant, who is identified as "a very comely knight" (p. 180), embarks upon a tale of his shame. He is interrupted by the intemperate Kay, who accuses the storyteller of acting superior to the other knights because he was the only one who jumped to his feet when Guinevere joined the circle. The queen then commands Calogrenant to "begin the tale anew" (p. 181), to which he replies, with obvious displeasure at Kay's loutish interruption: "Surely, lady, it is a very unwelcome command you lay upon me. Rather than tell any more of my tale today, I would have one eye plucked out, if I did not fear your displeasure." Then, in the resonances of Chrétien himself, he excoriates those who hear only with their ears, who lack understanding, who fail to let the word be carried to the heart. He finishes his remark as follows:

Now, whoever will heed my words, must surrender to me his heart and ears, for I am not going to speak of a dream, an idle tale, or lie, with

³³Bruce Finnie, "The Structural Function of Names in the Works of Chrétien de Troyes," *Names* 20 (1972) 93.

³⁴It is interesting to note that the three romances of Chrétien's which begin in the court of Arthur – *Erec*, *Lancelot*, and *Yvain* – start with the celebration of a religious feast. The order of the tales may thus be established by the liturgical sequence of the feasts. *Erec* begins on Easter Day; *Lancelot* on the Feast of the Ascension; and *Yvain* at Pentecost.

which many another has regaled you, but rather shall I speak of what I saw. (p. 182)

The tale of *Yvain* is thus generated by an internal storyteller. Chrétien has faded into the background but he has clearly transferred his voice to Calogrenant, a storyteller with a sense of mission who, in refusing to let Kay “mutilate and spoil” his story “in the presence of kings,” echoes the sentiments of Chrétien himself. In the tale of *Yvain*, then, storytelling itself becomes part of knight errantry, and Chrétien approaches a narrative voice not unlike that of Gottfried von Strassburg in the *Tristan*.

IV

The analogue to literary self-reference in the visual arts is, of course, the artist’s self-representation in whatever medium or form he chooses. In the works of the twelfth century, especially by monastic artists, we encounter frequent self-representations and signatures. They appear in drawings, sketches, miniatures, reliefs on church walls, sarcophagi, manuscript illuminations, carvings on choir stalls, stained glass, and sculpture. Examples abound. There are numerous attempts at self-portraiture by manuscript painters within their own illuminations, frequently accompanied by inscriptions to make sure that the figure within the capital or in the margin is recognized by the reader. The famous self-representation labelled *Hugo pictor* in a marginal sketch of an Anglo-Norman *Commentary on Isaiah* by Saint Jerome, dated about 1100, is regarded by some scholars as the first attempt of a manuscript painter at self-portraiture (see fig. 1).³⁵ Hugo here shows himself holding a pen, dipped into an inkhorn, in one hand while holding a knife to sharpen his quill in the other. To his right is a representation of a book he is illustrating, and the whole scene is accompanied by the inscription: “Imago pictoris et illuminatoris huius operis.” Here, clearly, the artist intrudes upon the content of his own work, momentarily diverting attention from his decorations to himself. A similar and even more direct self-reference is found in the miniature at the end of the famous *Canterbury Psalter* (dated ca. 1150) where a monk named Eadwine, apparently the supervisor of his workshop, calls himself the “prince of writers” – a reference to his skill as illuminator (see fig. 2). I call this portrait more direct because it appears as a regular miniature in the manuscript rather than as a marginal addition. As such it becomes part of the illustrative scheme of the psalter proper, and it stands climactically at its end to call special attention to its maker. Beginning in the twelfth century, one also frequently finds self-portraits of illuminators within capitals, as is the case in the Passion of Saint Martin picturing the monk who calls himself Rufilus (see fig. 3). In this self-representation, there is a noticeable effort at realism with the

³⁵ Andrew Martindale, *The Rise of the Artist in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (New York 1972) 12.

monk showing himself at work ornamenting the descender of the very capital *R* on which he is presently at work. Such illuminations add a strong personal quality to the splendid ornamental work of the manuscript painter in the twelfth century. They also give evidence of the new humanism wherein the abstract and impersonal are brought into touch with the subjective. It is in such ways that medieval art begins to advertise itself and to humanize and even contemporize its subjects.

Of special note is the humor contained in the new self-referential style. Just as the performing self in literature is, at his best, a caricature of his maker with the humor mockingly directed at the self (the obtuse Dante or the inept Chaucer), so is the artist's self-reference most interesting when it develops a comic perspective upon its maker. A fine example of such humor is in a drawing found unaccountably and surprisingly in a text of Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (see fig. 4). Here we see the artist, identified as Hildebert, throwing an object in exasperation at a mouse which is feasting on his lunch. To his side, the manuscript on which he is working rests on a stand and an apprentice named Everwinus is patiently painting a rinceau in the foreground. An intimate sketch of this sort, while totally unconnected to the serious content of the work in which it appears, nevertheless does much to depict not only the setting in which the artist does his work but the mood in which that work is accomplished. Above all, it depicts an impulsive joy in creativity; the artist simply bursts out of the constraints placed upon him, even if only for a vignette, and represents himself at play while at work.

A different kind of humor, wherein, however, the artist still depicts himself as victim, occurs in various renderings of miracles. Of special interest is the sequence in which the artist portrays the devil as an ugly grotesque who, then, suddenly appears in "life" to attack the artist in revenge. Usually, the Virgin Mary, whom the artist had depicted reverentially, comes to the rescue and, in her traditional role as Empress of Hell, defeats the devil. In a thirteenth-century manuscript of the *Cántigas* of Alfonso X, we thus see the devil destroying the scaffold on which the artist had painted his unflattering portrait (see fig. 5). By intervention of the Holy Virgin, however, the artist adheres to his painting and is saved from a fall, while the devil flees and a crowd gives thanks to Mary for having performed her miracle. What is especially interesting in such scenes is the intermixture of "reality" and depiction. The image of the devil is identical with his appearance putatively in the flesh. The artist, by taking part in the scene, is thus not only given dramatic prominence but he is, by implication, as "real" in his setting as the devil. Almost literally, then, the artist "adheres" to his work, and the boundaries between the worlds of myth and reality (on several planes) are obscured.

The sculptor and architect, much as the painter, frequently appear as figures in their own work. An early example occurs on a twelfth-century tomb in Saint Vincent of Avila, where the sculptor is shown working with his chisel on one of three sarcophagi in a setting that very much resembles the tomb on which the scene is depicted (see figs. 6 and 7). Another even more direct self-reference occurs on a capital in the Liebfrauenkirche at Maastricht where we see the Virgin Mary accepting

a capital, much like the one on which the depiction occurs, from the sculptor who is identified above the scene as Heimon (see fig. 8). The master mason, conventionally depicted as wearing the skull cap which identifies his trade, is similarly shown in a presentation scene on the tympanum of the door leading into the Saint Gallus Chapel of the Basel Münster (see fig. 9). Here the mason holds a replica of the doorway that he has made for presentation to Christ and thus stands in the center of his own creation as a visual token of his artistic achievement.

While examples of such self-portraits could be multiplied, let it suffice here to refer to one more instance of a dramatic self-inclusion by the artist from a later work, to demonstrate how fully he could become incorporated in the design of his own work. In what is otherwise a fairly typical Last Judgment scene on the main portal of the west facade of the Frauenkirche at Rottweil, we see the architect with his masonry hammer stepping out of his grave in accompaniment of two bishops, holding their mitres, to be led as the first of the saved into heaven, which characteristically is represented as a Gothic cathedral (see figs. 10 and 11). This comic self-representation of the artist accentuates the special place he has reserved for himself in his created universe, and it emphasizes once more the merging of the profane and the sacred to which the new style of self-inclusion inevitably led.

While this is not the place to enlarge upon the significance of the self-referential in the art of the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance, we can, I believe, conclude that the emergence of the artist in his own work during the twelfth century was a revolutionary event. It leads eventually to the art of self-portraiture, to donor scenes, and to other commonplaces in which mythic subject matter is refracted by the vision of the contemporary. Two recent books, Virginia Wylie Egbert's *The Medieval Artist at Work* (Princeton 1967) and Kurt Gerstenberg's *Die deutschen Baumeisterbildnisse des Mittelalters* (Berlin 1966), provide ample documentation to justify the conclusion that self-representation in the visual arts is a new and important development of the twelfth century which leads to what can only be called a new style in the art of western Europe.

V

It remains yet to make a preliminary inquiry into the reasons for the remarkable upsurge of the artist's self-representation as a cultural phenomenon of the twelfth century. As is true of most new directions in the history of a culture, this stylistic departure was not sudden, and I am sure that any explanation of its causes will be inadequate. Nor will it be possible to establish direct or singular influences on a movement as diversified in character and widespread in its applications. Nevertheless, there are some reasonably plausible possibilities that may offer an initial explanation.

Certainly one of the developments responsible for the performing artist if not the performing self was the sudden rise in the early twelfth century of a cultivated society which expressed itself in the vernacular. As Erich Auerbach has pointed out in his important study, *Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and*

in the Middle Ages, between the years 600 and 1100 there was in all measurable terms no cultivated society in Europe.³⁶ Giving credit to the monastic reforms of the tenth century for an atmosphere in which new ideas and intellectual conflict could take place, Auerbach sees the rise of a “high society” that expressed itself in the vernacular, replacing the languages of antiquity “which served no longer as a means of expression but only as models and prototypes” for the emerging art and thought of the times. But, because the vernacular was still a relatively unused instrument for written communication, “none of what was written down in a vernacular language before the end of the twelfth century was addressed to readers, and even in the second half of the twelfth century readers in the vernacular were very rare; those who were sufficiently educated to read with ease read Latin.”³⁷ In effect, this meant that the vernacular literature, including many of the texts to which I have made reference, were essentially intended for readers but presented to listeners, and their only mode of conveyance was therefore oral performance. It was inevitable under these circumstances that the writer and speaker identified himself with those he was addressing and, further, that he would in the course of time make remarks about his role as artist to his audience. The really important point to note is that the twelfth century is an unusual, perhaps unique, time in the history of authorship. It was a time in which performance was a necessary part of literary life, a time when non-dramatic literature was written for a listening audience, and when the author was, of necessity, a public figure. Self-consciousness is easily bred under such circumstances. In our age of television, as McLuhan has shown us, such self-consciousness surfaces again; however, the present-day creative artist is customarily represented by the media as a celebrity apart from his works. In the twelfth century he incorporated himself in his works, and thus created the public presence that differentiated him from his predecessors and that helped to initiate the mode of the performing self.

But the circumstances of authorship were only one reason for the emergence of the performing self. We must realize that the tendency of the artist to speak *in propria persona* and eventually to put himself at the center of his creation are acts of human identification with and control over the works of the mind. In this attempt, the artist expressed a dominant concern of his time – a renewal of interest in human causes and in nature as an earthly reality of which man was an integral part. He thus partook of the movement that Chenu has called the “desacralizing of nature.”³⁸ The autobiography, the self-portrait of the sculptor, the romance in which the author identifies himself – all these assert that art is man-made and that the realm of the imagination is the outgrowth and even the territory of a particular human sensibility. In the most general terms, then, the new mode of self-representation was a develop-

³⁶ Erich Auerbach, *Literary Language and its Public in Late Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages*, trans. Ralph Mannheim, Bolinger Series 74 (New York 1965) 262.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 284.

³⁸ M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century*, ed. and trans. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago 1968) 14.

ment of the so-called Twelfth Century Renaissance, a period that Southern sees as the beginning of "one of the great ages of humanism in the history of Europe, perhaps the greatest of all."³⁹ It was, in fact, the product of that humanism in both of its senses: the popular, or what Southern calls the "scientific," according to which "man . . . understands himself as the main part, the key-stone, of nature"; and the "literary," which maintains that a renewed study of the ancient classics inculcated a deeper understanding of human qualities and concerns.⁴⁰ In the latter sense, the cosmology of Plato's *Timaeus*, which stood as a model for Chartrian thought, led to the perception of the universe as a unified whole, which stood as "the copy to an ideal exemplar."⁴¹ According to this view, "the ultimate object of cosmological study is the orientation toward human life," and it becomes the function of poetry to bring "the subjective and the philosophical together."⁴² This attitude toward the literary unquestionably elevated the place of the artist and allowed him new freedom in self-definition. He thus emerges as a palpable figure from the shadows of anonymity in the heroic past. It might even be said that in its literary contexts this new subjectivity is the really essential difference between the perspectives of epic and romance.

There is yet another aspect of literary humanism, the stylistic influence of Boethius's *De consolazione*, that may have contributed to the emergence of the performing self in the vernacular literature of the twelfth century. The overwhelming presence of Boethius in the culture of the twelfth century is a widely acknowledged fact. While I would not argue that the *Consolation of Philosophy* was necessarily a direct source of inspiration, it was so widely known and so much part of the literary heritage of the age that it cannot be disregarded as a potential shaping force on the literary consciousness of the age. As a Platonic dialogue between the author and Lady Philosophy, it contains a first-person character. The Boethius of the *Consolation* is, in fact, a prototype for the impercipient narrator whom we encounter later in Dante and Chaucer. As one who is brought from ignorance to knowledge by the wisdom of Lady Philosophy, he is, from one point of view, a fictional character; for the "real" Boethius knew from the start what his literary counterpart gradually comes to learn. Characterizing himself as an apt student, Boethius is nevertheless frequently perplexed by his mistress's fine logic, as, for example, in the following instance: " 'You are playing with me,' I said, 'by weaving a labyrinthine argument from which I cannot escape. You seem to begin where you ended and to end where you began.' "⁴³ Here, as elsewhere, Boethius playfully disfigures himself, and the Platonic dialogue becomes a dramatic fiction and a potential model for the self-referential mode of twelfth-century art.

³⁹ Southern (n. 18 above) 31.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 30, 32.

⁴¹ Winthrop Wetherbee, *Platonism and Poetry in the Twelfth Century: The Literary Influence of the School of Chartres* (Princeton 1972) 30.

⁴² *Ibid.* 143.

⁴³ From the translation by R. H. Green, *The Consolation of Philosophy* (Indianapolis ca. 1962) 72.

Still a further possible source – one intimately allied to the “scientific” humanism of the age – was the depiction of the Creator as artist and the artist as creator. God is frequently pictured as architect, circumscribing the world with a large compass.⁴⁴ He stands in the same relation to his handiwork as the artist to his work of creation. The concept of the poet as creator is, of course, an old one, as the Anglo-Saxon word *scop* sufficiently demonstrates. But the idea becomes graphic in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and the equation is pressed home analogically by the foremost thinkers of the age.⁴⁵ Here, for example, is a statement from Hugh of Saint Victor developing the point:

This entire perceptible world is a book written by the finger of God, that is created by divine power, and individual creatures are as figures within it, not invented by Human will . . . but instituted by divine authority to make manifest the invisible things of God.⁴⁶

Here God is clearly seen as author; the obverse of the writer perceived as creator logically follows. When, therefore, we encounter the artist in his own person, we are entitled to see him as the inspiring force, the “maker,” of his works. The concept of “creation” was of central concern to Chartrian humanism and to the twelfth century at large. For an age that equated the macrocosm and the microcosm, it takes only a slight leap of the imagination to see the artist as analogue to Creator building his own universe. And that is manifestly what the artist’s self-representation did for the work he informs.

But if there were good theoretical reasons for the rise of the self-referential in the art of the twelfth century, there were equally good practical reasons. While this is not the place to examine in any detail the social conditions that spurred the rise of the artist in the period, we must nevertheless bear them in mind. Surely, to some extent, the writer’s self-reference is in part the effect both of his uncertain patronage and the conditions of oral performance which governed the dissemination of his art. As G. G. Coulton tells us in his enlightening chapter on medieval “Literary Life,” the man of letters “was often a hanger-on about the household of great men.”⁴⁷ He therefore was forced to advertise himself, and Coulton is no doubt right in suggesting that the first-person prologue served that purpose.⁴⁸ It also served to get the listening audience’s attention and to forestall interruption and questioning. In a similar manner, the rise of autobiographical reference can no doubt be partially attributed to

⁴⁴ See especially John Block Friedman, “The Architect’s Compass in Creation Miniatures of the Later Middle Ages,” *Traditio* 30 (1974) 419-429. The idea of God as artist is also recognized by Kurt Gerstenberg: “In mittelalterlichen Handschriften, in Moralbibeln und Weltchroniken des 13. Jahrhunderts erscheint der Schöpfer aller Dinge als der Weltbaumeister, ausgestattet mit einem Riesenzirkel, so dasz sie in der Tat nichts anderes sind als lebendige Steine in seinem Weltenbau”; see *Die deutschen Baumeisterbildnisse des Mittelalters* (Berlin 1966) 8.

⁴⁵ See Curtius (n. 17 above) 319-326.

⁴⁶ Hugh of St. Victor *Eruditionis didascalicae*, 7.4 (PL 176.814).

⁴⁷ G. G. Coulton, *Medieval Panorama: The English Scene from Conquest to Reformation* (New York 1955) 580.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 577.

the *trouvere* and the *troubadour* who traditionally recited his verse as first-person poet-performer and who inspired a style of lyric poetry that was to sweep all over Europe.

The visual artist must similarly have been influenced by the conditions of his professional life. Art historians generally agree that “before the fifteenth century there is no evidence for any of the *mystique* which has since grown up around the Great Artist.”⁴⁹ And yet, what we know about the conditions of the artist’s life is precious little. One must, therefore, agree with Andrew Martindale’s view that “it would be misleading . . . to suppose that medieval artists were essentially different creatures from those of the Renaissance.”⁵⁰ Although personal prominence seems to have been rarely achieved by the artist in the twelfth century, concern with reputation (especially in the form of inscriptions and self-portraits) occurs especially among monastic manuscript painters and architects and sculptors. For the monastery, of course, the production of manuscripts was not only an important labor but it quickly became a source of institutional pride. We know well enough from the treatise *De diversis artibus* by Theophilus, a practicing monastic artist of the twelfth century, that artistic endeavor was a labor pleasing to God and necessary for the welfare of the monastery. Yet, while Theophilus upholds the Benedictine tradition against the artist’s ambition for personal fame, he nevertheless leaves us a document of self-profession, no matter how humble his declarations to the contrary.⁵¹ We also know that accomplished monastic artists were in short supply and were therefore much sought after. The praise heaped upon such fine artists as Master Hugo of Bury Saint Edmunds by the Bury chronicler is sufficient proof that really outstanding craftsmen were a source of institutional pride.⁵² Small wonder, then, that artists began to identify with their works in the form of personal inscriptions and self-portraiture.

The same observations apply to architects, sculptors, and other artisans engaged in the proliferating art of church-building during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Here, however, an added fact must be taken into account, that of patronage. With the advent of the great cathedrals, much medieval art came to be supported by the rising bourgeoisie, who, as part of the price for their support, insisted on becoming the subject of the artist’s work. Thus, to cite one example, the sculptors themselves became donors of a stained-glass signature window in the ambulatory of Chartres Cathedral featuring a scene of their craft (see fig. 12). As a result of such incorporation of donors in cathedral art, there developed a great admixture of sacred history and the present-day world in the art of the Middle Ages.⁵³ The same principle was at work in the production of mystery plays, in which

⁴⁹ Martindale (n. 35 above) 9.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 106.

⁵¹ Theophilus, *The Various Arts*, trans. C. R. Dodwell (London 1961).

⁵² Martindale (n. 35 above) 70.

⁵³ For a development of this point, see Henry Kraus, *The Living Theatre of Medieval Art* (Bloomington 1967) 91, and the chapter on “The New Classes as Donors and Subjects” 63-99.

the craftsmen, like the Carpenters presenting the Crucifixion, drew on their skills to depict Biblical scenes. This process, called "the rationalization of the mystery" by Otto Pächt,⁵⁴ yields a similar effect to that of the artist's self-incorporation in his work. It is a reaching out for contemporary representation in subject matter that is otherwise remote in setting, and it leads to a new interpretation of traditional subject matter within a frame of reference that is immediate and alive.

I have tried to show in this paper that the rise of the artist as a subject of his own work is a signal development of the twelfth century. It must rank as one of the important artistic innovations of medieval culture, and in the area of stylistics it stands as a significant contribution to the history of Western art down to our own day.

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⁵⁴Otto Pächt, *The Rise of Pictorial Narrative in Twelfth-Century England* (Oxford 1962) 41.

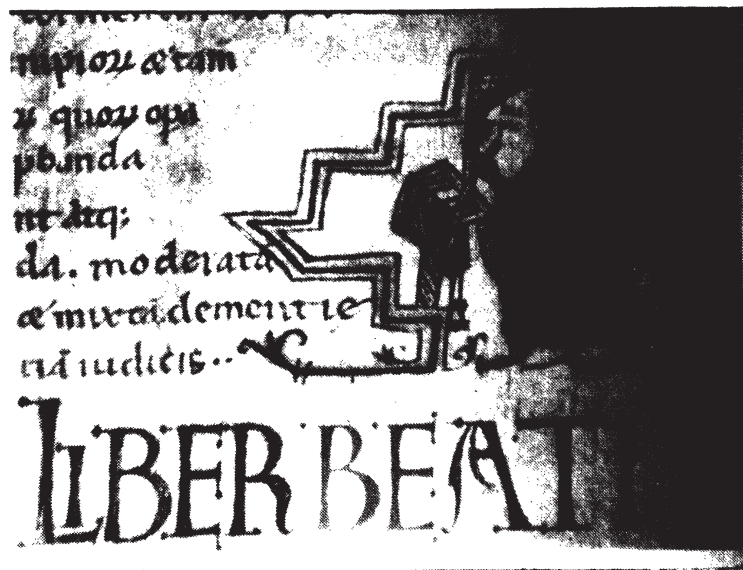


FIG. 1. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 717, fol. 287v.



FIG. 2. Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.171.1, fol. 238v.

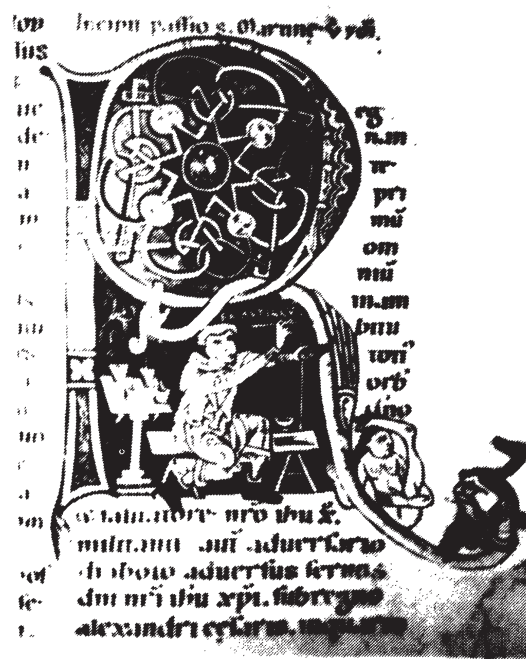


FIG. 3. Formerly in Sigmaringen, Hofbibliothek, MS 9, fol. 244.



FIG. 4. Prague, University Library, MS Kap.A.xxi, fol. 133.

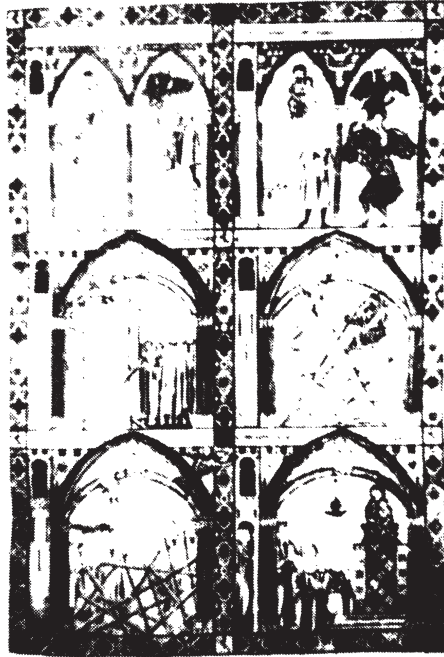


FIG. 5. Escorial, Biblioteca Real, MS T.i.i., fol. 109.



FIG. 6. Avila, Church of San Vicente, tomb of Vincent, Cristeta, and Sabina.



FIG. 7. Upper left-hand corner of fig. 6.



FIG. 8. Maastricht, Liebfrauenkirche.



FIG. 9. Basel, Munster, St. Gallus Chapel, tympanum.



FIG. 10. Rottweil, Frauenkirche.



FIG. 11. Lower left-hand corner of fig. 10.



FIG. 12. Chartres, Cathedral of Notre Dame, north apse window.