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THE ORAL METAPHOR IN FRENCH LITERATURE

by

Richard F. Behmoiras

A dissertation submitted to the
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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in French in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

THE ORAL METAPHOR IN FRENCH LITERATURE

by

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We have attempted in this study to demonstrate that the entire spectrum of orality (ingestion, incorporation, digestion, excretion, copulation, etc.), which we have analyzed through the metaphorical language of the subjective process of writing, transcends the confines of its inherent biological functions and can be conceptualized as a dynamic manifestation of a psycho-ontological drive. We have shown that this theme of orality is, in fact, a psycho-historical phenomenon which is in evidence among several of the most visionary writers of literary France through the eighteenth century.

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PREFACE

The nature of the first "sin" remains unknown. While most commentaries will agree that the crime was an act of disobedience, a rebellion, and that the offense was serious, the character of the act itself is still mystifying. Only relatively late, with the introduction of the allegoric or symbolic interpretation, the psychoanalytical equation, was the disobedient offense conceived of as oral-sexual. To arrive at such an interpretation, certain psychological premises have to be assumed. One of the decisive factors leading to that interpretation must have been a tendency to conceal the real character of Adam's transgression. No doubt, the attempt was made to hide the barbaric and crude content of a primal tradition reporting that terrible event of primordial age. The idea that man had once, and more than once, been disobedient and defiant to the Lord-Father-Sky was still imaginable to the ancient Hebrews. The idea of the Father-God-Sky's murder and incorporation had already passed into the subconscious of the people;¹ the deep well of oblivion.

JE "PANSE" DONC JE SUIS

In western philosophical systems, the theory of knowledge, its acquisition and its formulation known as epistemology, occupy a privileged position. The most cursory glance at the mode of expression utilized in epistemology, from the analogy of the concepts and metaphors to the choice of vocabulary, reveals that the theory of knowledge can be understood as an oral interpretation of reality. The term "oral" is used here in its medical and psychoanalytical connotations and implies ingestion rather than utterance. We speak indeed of "nurture", "intellectual nutrition", "assimilation", "incorporation", "digest forms", to name but a few common expressions to describe any experience linking mind and reality. The oral metaphor is also to be understood, if not confused with, the sexual metaphor for we intend to show the extent of the psychodynamic fusion between these two metabiological phenomena. In the light of this concept words and expressions usually ascribed to one biological function are to be understood in both. "Ingestion" or "eating", for example, describe the sexual act as well.

On the other hand, the philosophy of materialism in its diverse aspects, from Heraclitus to Diderot and Karl Marx has singled out with various degrees of insistence, the role of nutrition in the mutation from one stage to the next within the unending cycle of the chain of beings. Marxist dialectical materialism has even placed the oral obsession

to the forefront as a determining factor in the entire historical process. Montesquieu and Rousseau, who cannot be accused of narrow and systematic reductions have, in their attempts at discovering the origins of societies, shown how class systems were born from the availability of food supplies. Montesquieu's legendary Troglodytes as well as Rousseau's fictional "savages" only repeated western mythology.

A serious anthropological and systematic study of the evolution of mankind illustrates the obvious impact of food on man's psychological and physical makeup. We will attempt in this introduction to our subject to consider the phenomenon of food in a psychoanalytical rationale. We have found that man's relationship to food is far more complex and symptomatic than that of a mere physical or nourishing need. Through a complex anthroponomic development man has evolved a largely oedipal relationship with its nourishing mother, the earth. We feel that a thorough understanding of the psychodynamics behind man's pre-occupation with food will help us determine and evaluate its literary value. Indeed, food as a subject matter occupies a very peculiar position in the literary spectrum. For the most part, it has been practically ignored. Most major writers have shunned it like the plague. With the exception of the adventurous few, one would tend to think that the subject, if not forbidden or taboo, was at best not worthy of their art. In the light of historical truth, we

must wait for seventeenth century rationalism, as an attempt at finding rational basis for seemingly irrational phenomena, to classify food as an entity in an historical context. Under the word "repas", Diderot's Encyclopedia, presents the meal in its historical and symbolical values.² Starting with the dawn of civilization, we will outline the psychological development, maturation, of mankind; very much like the succeeding formative stages of a child's development. We will therefore begin our journey with the pre-Homo period when the sun is symbolically and psychodynamically the first and primal male surrounded in the heavenly kingdom by the solar harem. The planets are his horde, his females; the earth is his concubine, a responsive mate whom he nurtures with the heat of his energy, nourishes and inseminates with the generating power of his nutritive rays. It is important to keep in mind that the acts of nourishing and inseminating are considered here as one and the same, or to take the words of Norman O. Brown, "Incorporation, ingestion, penetration, seen with the inward eye are always eating or swallowing".³ With this concept in mind we are free to interpret orality and sexuality as identical processes and state further that, the eating phenomenon, aside from being a biological requirement, is also orally libidinal, making the eating scene allegorical. The fusion of energy and matter, the union of sun and earth, like "two giant cannibals engaged in mutual cosmic manducation",⁴ give birth to man.

A psychoanalytically oriented anthropological study points to the various succeeding developmental stages of mankind. At the onset of the Quaternary period, when man is reported to have made his entry into the world, we find that man's eating habits are those of a scavenger taking food as it is given by Mother Earth. He is a crawling, parasitic infant which roughly corresponds in the Freudian child development stages to the oral, narcissistic age. The climate was mild, post natal but still amniotic. Life was presumable gratifying, food was plentiful and readily available. Man lived safely in the trees and lived from them. It was what we have come to call, the Garden of Eden. The pre-romantic Rousseauistic obsession for the return to nature is truly a regression towards the innocent mother, a return to the womb, so to speak. Bernardin de St. Pierre also presents a picture of a protective, giving mother earth, benevolent towards her children, Paul and Virginie. It is Virginie's civilized, guilt-ridden adolescence, her abandonment of nature, which kills her. Rousseau's evil of a corrupting civilization is a consciousness of guilt, an implication of a loss of innocence or purity, a longing for the Garden of Eden. We will see below that it is only later, during the adolescent stage, and the aggressive sexual stage which follows, that man will develop guilt. Perhaps as a result of the climatic changes of the Pleistocene epoch and other natural phenomena, but certainly within the framework of maturation, there is an increasing drive towards independence from the mother. As the son grows and develops he leaves the mother,

becomes curious, searches for food and knowledge. In order to satisfy his "clandestine interests and subterranean impulses" ⁵, the child explores Mother Earth's body. With the cooling of large areas of the world and the formation of ice zones, man was no longer provided for. The once caring and nutritive, benevolent Mother Earth had become more hostile and rejecting. The nourishing milk of the mother's breast was withdrawn. Man was expelled from its bosom and thrown out into a wild, aggressive world. It was a period of long migrations in search of food and warmth. Psycho-analytically it is a womb-oriented drive, symbolically it is the everlasting search for the Garden of Eden. We can also logically assume that it is precisely during that period that man became aware of the enormous power of the Father-Sun. His primitive mind perceived that heat and food originated from the celestial body. Thus early concepts of satiety or starvation, life or death, good and evil were attributed to the whimsical presence of the Father-Sun. It is also likely that the coming of the Pleistocene epoch, the Ice Age, generated tremendous anger and resentment against Father-Sun. Anyhow, man, like the obedient son, in desperate search for food and heat, followed the Sun, so to speak, to warmer and less hostile climates. He roamed the world and developed the concept of geography. Geography is also the geography of the mother's body, ⁶ or as Melanie Klein put it, "The child epistemophilic instinct... together with its sadistic impulses have been directed towards the interior of the mother's body". ⁷ It is the hunting period, the anal-

genito stages in Freudian theory. It is at that time that man forms groups in a spirit of fraternal cooperation. Together the brothers learn to hunt and kill for the common need to eat. Hence, killing is a biological adaptive process, an oral need; the result of oral deprivation. Oral starvation made man carnivorous, fraternal and then bellicose. There is a division of labor which as Plato says, is the basis of fraternity. In Freud's vocabulary it is totemic brotherhood. In his book, Group Psychology, The Analysis of the Ego, Freud made the distinction between two archetypes of social psychology: fatherhood and brotherhood.⁸ The brotherhood is the new unit which must exterminate fatherhood to take its place, to incorporate it, so as to perpetuate it. The Oedipal son must kill the father to become the father so as to possess the mother who is perhaps the willing accomplice. The myth of Oedipus can be understood as a symbol not only of the incestuous love between mother and son but also of the rebellion of the son against the authority of the father in the patriarchal family. We are reminded here of Cronus, in Greek mythology, who made an alliance with his brothers, the Titans, and with the help of their mother, Gaea, the earth, overthrew Uranus, the Father-Sky. It is interesting to note that Cronos seems to have been originally a god of food, thus a provider. It is in this respect that later on, in many parts of Greece, the harvest month was called Cronion.⁹ In the equality of fraternity, they obtain their liberty, for they are no longer sons, but equal brothers, and "to be a son is truly to be a slave".¹⁰ In existential terms we could say that the

killing of the father is the puberty rites of the son seeking his freedom, basis of his essence. Existential thinking would therefore begin man's existence at that stage of development. In the wisdom of primitive man a boy becomes a man when he has killed an enemy, that is when enemy blood is kindred. Blood becomes kindred by being shed.¹¹ Whoever is killed becomes the father. "Cannibal savages that they were, it goes without saying that they devoured their victim as well as killing him."¹² "Delightful food of the warrior, the well fed warrior's flesh of him who is slain in war,"¹³ says Blake. Thus the boy eats the father which is the truest form of incorporation. Man ist was man isst. Cannibalism, the "gastromnomy of the Old School,"¹⁴ is an incestuous phenomenon which, as we shall see below, will plague man's guilt for millenniums to come. If we follow this train of thought, guilt comes to all the brothers who are equal as sinners with a collective conscience. The social contract between men, says Norman O. Brown, establishes corporate virtue as an asylum for individual sin, making a moral society out of immoral men, men whose natural inclination, according to Hobbes and Freud, is murder.¹⁵ The social contract establishes the general will to counter the will of each. It is that general will which Freud termed the Super-ego. We can say that the super-ego is supra-individual; even as the crime, so also conscience is collective. The Jungian archetype comes here to our mind, a psychoanalytic theory based on the collective unconscious. The sense of guilt, again according to Freud, can be allowed only by the solidarity

of the participants; it is the common crime that creates the solidarity. "Athenian political clubs, for example, which were organized as secret societies, guaranteed their own solidarity by common participation in religious sacrileges."¹⁶ The brothers are fraternal partners in regicide at its worse: an incestuous cannibalism for which man is forever eucharistically guilt ridden. One eats the body of Christ, Lord Jesus, in the symbolical form of bread; "caro sub forma panis operta". Christ, the father, is our daily bread, eaten: the bread worship. "We are fed by the cross of the Lord since we eat his body and drink his blood."¹⁷ His blood is the wine. Jesus is the incarnation of the father and incarnation is impanation and invination. Man moves from killing to eating, from crucifixion to incorporation, "from the bloody to the bloodless sacrifice, from the literal to the spiritual body."¹⁸ Guilt is worship. Ortega y Gasset, like Freud, saw a connection between fraternal organization and exogamy, conceived in the form of marriage by capture.¹⁹ The band of brothers feel the incest taboo, they adopt military organization for the purpose of hunting and raping, becoming and eating.²⁰ "The game is infantile but deadly serious, it is the game of Eros and Thanatos."²¹ The killing of Father-Sky by the brothers is for the possession of Mother Earth. One important discovery of Melanie Klein is the archetypal, primordial, and universal, which she explains as parental coitus seen in fantasy as the process of mutual devouring or oral copulation; cannibalistic in nature, combining in one act the two Oedipal wishes: parental murder and incest.²²

Following the killing of the father is a time when the brothers quarrel among themselves over the paternal inheritance: the mother, the land. We would agree with Freud and assume that after the killing of the father and the end of the patriarchal horde came a long phase of fatherless society, an interregnum during which the sons fought each other. It is during that time that matriarchy took place, of which many traces are preserved in myths and customs, in the form of goddesses and the Holy Virgin. We will discuss below their meanings in relation to our topic. The Swiss anthropologist, Bachofen (Mutterrecht, 1861) found evidence that the religion of the Olympian Gods followed another more primitive organized matriarchial religion in which Goddesses were supreme deities. He bases this conclusion on the logical belief that until the secret of procreation was understood, the sexual role of the male was dubious and unpredictable, if not altogether disregarded. Sexual relationships were most likely promiscuous and only vaguely connected with reproduction. The mother alone, therefore, represented life. Only upon her was parenthood and consanguinity unquestionable. She was thus the authority, the ruler of the family and the social group. On the basis of his analysis of religions, documents of Greek and Roman antiquity, Bachofen came to the conclusion that at one time women were the dominant figures socially, politically (group organization) and religiously. In the story of Adam and Eve the latter is undoubtedly superior to the former. She is the leader, taking the initiative

in eating the forbidden fruit. He is passive defendant. Eve does not consult with Adam, she simply hands him the fruit to eat, which he does. When discovered, he is rather clumsy and inept in his excuses. At this point God says to Eve: "And thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee," quite obviously this establishment of male dominion points to a previous situation in which he did not rule. From another source, the Babylonian myth of creation, Enuma Elish, we have the image of the great mother Tiamat, goddess of the Universe, of whose body the earth is formed. In further support of this hypothesis we have in America, Louis Henry Morgan (1818-81), who in his Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family, found that the kinship of the American Indians similar to that found in Asia, Africa, and Australia, was based on the matriarchial principle and that the most insignificant institution in such cultures, the gens, was organized in conformity with the matriarchial principle. The complicity of the mother and the sons in the killing of the father gave the former enormous power over the later. Undoubtedly at first, the devotion and fear of the mother were extensive. A situation was created, very similar to that in a family, in which the father has died and the mother takes over his authority, including authority over the adolescent sons. It is very likely that when religion evolved the memory of those domineering mother figures helped to shape the great goddesses of early civilization. As a matter of fact, those idols, primeval and very earthy predecessors of the Holy Virgin, were given later on,

as consorts, Son-Gods who were their lovers, Osiris, Attis and Adonis.²³ The first act of the individual, says so correctly Norman O. Brown, is incest with his mother.²⁴ We shall qualify this statement so as to make it read: The first act of the free individual is incest with his mother, for it is not until the father's death that the wish becomes an act. It is a wish for the return to the womb; or as Ferenzli puts it, "Copulation as uterine regression."²⁵ Agriculture is the rape of the land. The digging of the earth, the tilling of the soil are the excavation of the mother's body. Melanie Klein in, The Psychoanalysis of Children, puts it this way: "This desire to suck and scoop out, first directed to her breast soon extends to the inside of her body."²⁶ Several examples drawn from mythology support the evidence of incestuous copulation between the Mother Earth and her sons resulting in impregnation of Mother Earth in the form of fertility of the land. The Son-God Osiris was the male god of fructification. Like Persephone, daughter of the earth goddess Demeter, Osiris introduces agricultural know-how. He causes the Nile to overflow with its fertilizing waters. Like Dionysus, he is the god of life. Adonis was himself a Syrian god of nature and vegetation.²⁷ In all fairness to the clarity of the incestuous act, it is well to assume that in the primitive mind females were considered primarily, if not exclusively, as sexual entities. Early female goddesses were certainly conceived as very earthy, and endowed with abundant bodily curves. "Aphrodite Calipygos is still a voluptuous woman with a hypertrophic derriere and the Venus of Willendorf proves

that this was for Paleolithic man an indispensable attribute of goddesses." ²⁸ As ideal females, these goddesses were first conceived as embodiment and incarnation of sexual desires; Venus, Astarte, Isis, Ishtat were all great Mother-Idols of sexual fulfillment. The whole incestuous act, seen as a rite de passage from hunting to agriculture, is also to be interpreted as an attempt at resolving oral anxiety. That is to say, man assures himself the availability of food by planned husbandry and agriculture in order to satisfy his bio-physical needs as well as to appease his tremendous oral anxiety, result of the terrible childhood experiences of loss of the mother's affection and nurture following, as we have mentioned above, the onset of the Pleistocene period. As Claude Mettrar expresses it, "L'apprentissage de l'agriculture est apprentissage de l'amour" (learning about agriculture is learning about love). The urgent "need to possess and incorporate", ²⁹ as Guntrip describes in his, The Schizoid Personality, food is a very characteristic anxiety of the schizoid personality. Guntrip states further, "One patient says that whenever her husband comes in she at once feels hungry and must eat. Really she is hungry for him but dare not show it."³⁰ Agriculture is another manifestation of the oral need and of a nutritional insecurity which may be the result of the Ice Age which as we have seen above, terminated the comfort and stability of the mild and providing age which preceded it. Like the schizoid who is "hung up" so to speak, on the breast; "embarrassingly preoccupied with breasts",³¹

says Guntrip, the agricultural age manifests a pronounced interest in fertility. It would show very little insight in the mental processes of primitive man to believe that he is likely to plant seeds because he has come to the conclusion that they will bring him a fruitful crop in the future but, as Geza Rosheim shows, the carefree child of the jungle or desert in pre-agricultural society, never thinks of the morrow. He further hypothesises that if they have associated fantasies of destroying the body by taking the fruit out of Mother-Earth, we can understand how the separation aspect of those fantasies might lead to replanting which in turn might lead to an observation of the crop, and so secondarily to a practical result from the endopsychially conditioned activity. In addition to the agricultural Son-Gods mentioned earlier, several mythological legends illustrate the power of mother nature itself which is often represented in the form of a goddess. The goddess Demeter in Greek mythology, whose name signifies Mother Earth, makes the earth barren, so as to threaten mankind with destruction by famine, by not allowing the fruit of the earth to sprout up again until her wish to have her daughter, Persephone, spend two thirds of the year with her is granted. Demeter is also responsible for the spreading of the knowledge of agriculture, which, in fact, gives her power over life and death. Interestingly enough, she is also regarded as the goddess of law, order, and marriage. Persephone, her daughter, is the goddess of vegetable life that comes and goes with the changing seasons. In spring, when the seeds sprout up from the ground, she rises

to her mother, Demeter; when the harvest is over, and the vegetation dies, and the seed is laid again in the dark grave of the earth, she returns to her subterranean kingdom, as the wife of Hades.³² From this notion of the seed buried in the womb of the earth was developed the concept of the myth as an image of fertility and immortality which lies at the base of the Eleusinian mysteries. The Italian goddess, Cerealia, was the same as Demeter, a testimony to that enduring myth, to its attraction, to its sub-conscious veracity; for, what is a myth, but an unconscious truth? Throughout the Mediterranean world, agriculture and fertility are worshipped in the form of goddesses who are symbolical representations of the Earth-Mother. Worshipping a goddess of fertility is an expression of guilt towards fertility itself, i.e. the incestuous insemination of the earth. Therefore, if we are to carry this thought further, the cultivated produce is the fruit of this incestuous union between Man and Earth, Son and Mother. The figure of Oedipus has always been connected with the cult of earth-goddesses. In almost all the versions of the Oedipus myth, from parts which deal with his exposure as an infant to those which are centered around his death, traces of those connections can be found. Thus, for instance, Eteionos, a Boetian city which had a cult shrine of Oedipus and where the whole myth probably originated, also has the shrine of Demeter, the earth-goddess. At Colonus, near Athens, where Oedipus finds his last resting place, was an old shrine of Demeter and the Erinyes which had probably

existed prior to the Oedipus myth. Sophocles in his play, Oedipus at Colonus, emphasizes the connection between Oedipus and the chthonic goddesses. He calls the goddesses "Queen of dread aspect" and "Awful goddesses", a reference which can only be interpreted as an unconscious fear, touching upon something taboo or repulsive, belonging to a much earlier phase of development. This obscure mother taboo is also manifested in a rather mysterious passage of Goethe's Faust. In a spirit very similar to that of Sophocle's Oedipus at Colonus, Mephistopheles says:

Unwilling I reveal to loftier mystery
In solitude are throned the Goddesses
No space around them, Place and Time still less.
Only to speak of them embarrasses;
They are the mothers!

Faust (terrified): Mothers!

Mephistopheles: Hast thou dread?

Faust: The Mothers, Mothers! a strange word is said.

Mephistopheles: It is so, goddesses, unknown to ye,
The mothers names by as so unwillingly.
Delve in the deepest depth must flow, to reach them;
It is their own fault that we for help beseech
them.

Obviously dread and terror is very much in evidence with the mere mentioning of the Mother-Goddesses. According to Eckermann's diary (January 10, 1830) Goethe mentioned that in reading Plutarch he found that in Grecian antiquity the mothers are spoken of as Goddesses. Oedipus, the wanderer, seeks refuge, as a last resting place in the "grove" of these "awful" Goddesses. It is clearly a return to the womb. As Geza Roheim put it "Man is continually striving to overcome the primal separation trauma and to establish new mother-child situation." ³³ Food is thus the forbidden fruit and eating is the

form of the fall of man as it is the form of sex. "Copulation is oral copulation; when the Aranda ask each other: 'Have you eaten?', they mean 'Have you had intercourse?'"³⁴ Anorexia Nervosa, as a psychosomatic disorder, is an unconscious fear of oral impregnation which is characterized by a highly negative attitude towards food, food rejection, inability to ingest, vomiting, etc... Not surprisingly the disorder is "far more common in women than in men and usually occurs during adolescence, in connection with the onset of puberty and sexual relationships."³⁵ In men, it takes the form of impotence. Food is the language of the sacrifice. Sacrifice is consecration; in every sacrifice an object passes from the common into the religious domain. It is the most perfect way of effecting communication. By eating a portion of the victim the sacrificer assimilates to himself the characteristics of the whole. "There are some cases, report Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, where the whole of the oblation is received by the sacrificer".³⁶ As always, the punishment must fit the crime, the sacrifice is the punishment. "According to the law of talion, the oral frustration must be a punishment for eating forbidden food".³⁷ If Prometheus is eaten by eagles and Tityus by two vultures, it is because they have eaten something that was taboo. They are punished by being eaten because they committed a crime in eating what was forbidden. Fear of being eaten is frequent among certain pathological disorders, an ominous manifestation of unconscious material. MacKinnon and Michels, The

FANTASY SKETCH OF MAURICE SENDAK



FANTASY SKETCH BY MAURICE SENDAK



Psychiatric Interview, mentions a case of a "young catatonic (who) said that she was afraid that her mother was going to chew her up and swallow her,"³⁸ In the Prometheus and in the Tityus myth, the original crime or sin is the same as Adam's. Similarly, the victim of the agrarian sacrifice always represents symbolically the fields and their products.³⁹ Robertson Smith, who was really the first to attempt a reasoned explanation of sacrifice, saw in the practice of the totemic cult the root origin of sacrifice. For him, the totem or the god is related to its devotees; they are of the same flesh and blood.⁴⁰ The object of the rite is to maintain and guarantee the common life that animates them and the association that binds them together. Here is Erikson's interpretation of a Plain Indian tribe's rite:

The religious ceremony of highest significance in the life of the Dakota was the Sun Dance, which took place during two four-day periods during the summer, "when the buffalo were fat, the wild berries ripe, the grass tall and green. It started with ritual feasting, the expression of gratitude to the Buffalo Spirit, and the demonstrations of fellowship among fellow men. Fertility rites followed, and acts of sexual license such as characterize similar rites in many parts of the world. Then there were war and hunting games which glorified competition among men. Men boisterously recounted their feats in war; women and maidens stepped forward to proclaim their chastity. Finally, the mutual dependence of all the people would be glorified in give aways and in acts of fraternization.⁴¹

The sacrifice is the return to the brotherhood upon which we have dealt above, the fraternal sacrilege, the haunting unity, as in the food of the body of Christ, the Son, the sacrificial body for the redemption. The true sacrifice, says Norman

O. Brown, is in one body.⁴² "The Slave of the captive represents the master's or victor's body offered to the gods, the former being merely a symbol for the latter."⁴³ The incorporation of bodies through the oral metaphor is the incarnation. It is the ultimate wish of union between humanity and divinity, in other words, the return to the God-Father-Sky.

In today's esthetics, the cannibalistic object of the crime against the father has become so horrendous to our imagination that it is hardly believable. Mosaic Law forbade the consumption of blood. The breaking of this law was considered a heinous sin, even in time of great hardship, as we learn from the account of the battle against the Philistines in the Book of Samuel, when the ravenous men of Israel fell upon the captured sheep and oxen and ate them with the blood "Eat and sin not against the Lord in eating with the blood." (I Samuel XIV:34) Missionaries and anthropologists who lived with cannibal tribes report that such anthropophagic occurrences still exist today. It is, however, remarkable that even with those primitive people dead relatives are often "killed and eaten by a neighboring tribe which is asked to dispose of the old ones."⁴⁴ However, as Theodore Reick says in his book, Myth and Guilt, "the millennial repression of cannibalistic tendencies has become so internalized that outside prohibition is no longer necessary."⁴⁵ Today only a few isolated but psychoanalytically revealing trends of our cannibalistic incorporative ancestry remain. The lover,

for example, who tells his sweetheart he loves her so that he wants to eat her up. The French are fond of calling their love, "Mon petit lapin", or "Mon petit canard", "mon petit chou", which they picture in a sauce rather than on the green. Anglo-Saxons prefer "Honey" and "Sweetie pie". Having compared the early conflicts and guilt provoking happenings within the prehistoric human family with individual and sexual-aggressive experiences of early childhood, we have to assume that they left permanent traces in prehistory, memory traces that were mostly warded off and forgotten, and came back to life and to memory only after a long period of latency at a later phase of man's history. How did the memory of these primeval crimes survive? This question, like so many concerning the psychology of prehistory were answered by Freud in a general manner. He refers to the psychogenetic inheritance keeping memory traces of past experience of the race. Jung bases his notion of the archetypes on the psychogenetic inheritance as well. The assumption we are making in this study is that the masses, as well as the individual, retain impressions of the past in unconscious memory traces that are inaccessible to conscious recollection. However, this repressed material mostly loaded with psychogenetic guilt memory under certain conditions, transgresses the threshold of consciousness in the form of archetypes. The understanding of these psychological displacements of emphasis paves the way to a better understanding of the great importance of eating, not only in the primitive, totemistic systems, but also in the later and more developed forms of religion,

social relationships, the arts and literature. We will attempt in the following chapters, through the writing of certain chosen authors, to show that their interest and cognizance of food are basically archetypal.

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CHAPTER II

THE MIDDLE AGES

MIDDLE AGES

The famous explorer, Dumont d'Urville, upon discovering a new tribe, first examined its cooking utensils in order ascertain its level of civilization and claimed that his method was infallible. Today when the modern researcher or simply the curious reader tries to reconstruct his socio-cultural history, it is in the arts, paintings and literature, that he will find the most valuable and reliable information. When the topic is food, it is reasonable to expect that such an important and vital subject would be easy to investigate. Yet, a frustrating search leads the reader to surprisingly rare mentions of a topic which is dealt with as if it were controversial, esoteric, forbidden or vulgar. In order to cast some light on this peculiar omission, we shall, through a rapid survey of French literature, try to understand the multiple facets and complexities of the literary world of orality. One of the fathers of French literary orality is Venantius Hororis Clementius Fortunatus, born circa 530, at Duplavilis, France. A poet as well as a gourmet and a gastronome, Fortunatus was one of the last reigning Latin poets, these delightful poets of the Latin decadence who gave rebirth and new hopes to the violent songs of their forbearers. After roaming throughout Europe in search of fame, inspiration, and perhaps food, he arrived in Poitiers where he befriended Sainte Radegonde, Queen of France, who, with her friend Sainte Agnes had ran the Montastery of Sainte-Croix. The developing friendship of these two women determined

Fortunatus to remain in Poitiers where later on he was to acquire church dignity. A man of letters, very much like Horace who shared his love for good eating, Fortunatus soon became Radegonde's and Agnes' advisor. The two ladies, obviously enamored of him, soon rivaled in the care and attention for him and saw to it that his gastro-oral needs were gratified by keeping his table always well-furnished. Each day they sent their idyllic lover the samples of the meals they had prepared at the monastery and even concocted special dishes for the "fortuné Fortunatus;" delicious meals composed of all sorts of meats seasoned with the best spices of the Orient, garnished with various vegetables basted according to the fashion of the day, in their own juices and honey. In substitution for carnal gratification, he was often invited to come to the parlor of the monastery to be treated to a savory meal of carnal delicacies consumed in a room whose ornamentation is said to have exalted in a discrete sensuality. In his Récits des Temps Mérovingiens, Augustin Thierry tells us that Fortunatus dined surrounded by walls adorned with ropes of fragrant flowers on a table with rose petals in lieu of cloth with wine flowing in beautifully wrought golden cups; a shadow of the famous suppers of Horace and Tibulle. With Fortunatus, Agnes and Radegonde, the ancient and the modern worlds join together, transmitting to the latter the refined taste of the art of the table and that of letters which usually go hand in hand. It is indeed Fortunatus, who in the barbarian decadence of the 6th Century, gives "poésie gourmande" the refinement which, till then, had traditionally

been reserved for sacred poetry. A prolific writer, he composed several hymns, whose echo in churches throughout the world has never ceased for the past thirteen centuries, two of which are particularly beautiful: Vexilla Regis, and Pange Lingua. As is true of most of the poets of Latin decadence, Fortunatus had adopted an uneven, brief and light rime whose rhythms or assonances often give the work a naive and rather confused quality, which, nevertheless, had the worthy advantage of fixating the poems easily upon the memory.

Tantum ergo, Sacramentu,
Veneremur cernui
Et antiquum documentum
Novo aedat ritui...

The liturgical poetry of Saint Fortunatus has received universal acclaim, probably beyond its true merit. His culinary poetry, on the other hand, has been practically ignored, a victim of biased literary pedantry. Psychodynamically, nevertheless, it is of great interest to us. Let us take, for example, these revealing verses:

Cette crème que tu m'envoies
Est un présent plus doux que ceux des rois;
Sois donc en joie, o ma chère soeur,
Je t'y invite, ainsi que notre amie
Car j'éprouve à l'instant où je t'écris,
Le très doux plaisir d'être à table!

(Epitre à Sainte Radegonde, Livre XI, Epitre 9).

This stanza introduces the carpe diem theme and with it the concern for temporality. The dialectic of time and pleasure which we find abundantly in the erotic Latin poetry of Catullus and later on in the Renaissance lyrical contributions of Robert Herrick, Andrew Marvell, Ronsard, Maurice Sceve, Pontus

de Tyard, the poets of La Pléiade, etc... is here illustrated through the oral metaphor. Fortunatus can be seen as a precursor of the "Cabaret" poetry of Chapelle, Saint-Amant, and Colletet whom we shall discuss in the chapter dealing with seventeenth century orality. The hedonistic experience narrated in this poem is intensified and dramatized through the sense of immediacy. The words "present" (i.e. "offering" as well as "present in time"), "à l'instant", "sois" (imperative suggestion) illustrates the poet's concern for "le plaisir du moment", the reality in time of privileged sensation. The carpe diem leitmotif traditionally associated with the sexual gratification, is related in this stanza to the gastronomic undertaking. A careful structural analysis of the stanza reveals an underlying sexual, perhaps unconscious substratum. Beyond the factual information of the first line lies a subliminal interpretation. In our attempt to elucidate the unconscious message of the first verse we have decoded in the following way: "Cette creme" - female, orgasmic fluid-, "Que tu m'envoies": (Latin - mittere, i.e. to send, to discharge, to release sexually), "Est un présent plus doux", "sois donc en joie", "le très doux plaisir", imply urgency of the "festin d'amour". Jacques Derrida in his De la grammatologie, reveals the repressed sexual component involved in the phenomenology of writing practiced by priests and scribes in the abbeys of Medieval Europe. According to Derrida, the act of writing is an attempt to repeat the procreative act in which the logos (the Word and the word) is engendered. Behind walls, in the loneliness of pristine cells, in the ascetic conditions of

monasteries of Feudal Europe, the art of writing was protected with secrecy, hermetism and esoterism. The spiritual "spasms" of religious souls were discretely couched onto manuscripts. These testaments, these confessions from generations and generations of ardent monks reveal the therapeutic aspect of the written word. In his eleventh book, 14th poem, Fortunatus advises Sainte Radegonde to drink wine to fight the infirmities of the body and mind, exactly the same remedy Saint Paul had recommended to his friend, Timothy, a few centuries earlier. Fortunatus appreciated the charm of food as well as the virtues of wine which he considered to be of divine essence. For Fortunatus food is understood not as a pagan, materialistic substance, but rather as an extension of the spiritual. Far from being profane and heretic, food is associated with the miracle of transubstantiation whose oral interpretation was discussed in the first chapter. Fortunatus was eventually made Bishop of Poitiers and died in the year 609. Having canonized him shortly thereafter, the church celebrates his name on the 14th of December. Although there is no actual account of his participation as a chef, it has often been suggested that he be made the Patron Saint of Cooks.

The literature of the Middle Ages is virtually divided into two distinct categories, that which is written to the "glory of God" (the sublime) and to the glory of earth (the grotesque). Within the second category two subdivisions are in order: The aristocratic literature and the bourgeois oriented literature. The literature written to the "glory of God",

and the spiritual edification of its reader contains veiled reference to worldly matters, and food is, of course, totally omitted, except in its transubstantiated state. However, the profane literature, both aristocratic and popular, does indeed mention food, and several works are even implicitly food oriented, such as the Sermon du Bien Boire, Sermon du Saint-Oignon and the Sermon du Saint-Hareng. The courtly literature, while discreet in its description of meals and more interested in the glorification of stoic abstinence and the consecration of ideal, nevertheless does not totally reject the realities of life. Thus, in Aucassin et Nicolette, Aucassin complains that he has been three days without any food "si je ne mangai ni ne buc trois jors a passes",¹ and Nicolette, captive in a tower, is provided with victuals by the Viscount who "si fist metre pain et chair et vin et uan ue mestiers lor fu."² We acknowledge that this reference to food appears dismal, yet it is one of the first examples to be found in courtly literature. We note moreover, that the author uses the theme of food to reiterate the social and financial status of the Viscount: he is able to afford "quanque mestiers lor fu". We shall see that food is indeed used in courtly literature to describe wealthy abundance and magnanimity. One such example is in one of the earliest Chanson de Geste, the Pélerinage de Charlemagne in the Geste de Roi, written around 1150 which is basically an enumeration of the ostentatious richness of the food served at the royal table.

Nule rien que it demandent ne lur fud deveez
 Asez unt venesun de cerf e de sengler,
 E unt grues e gantes e pouns enpevez;
 A espendant lur portent le vin e le clarez,
 E cantent e vielent e rotent cil jugler,
 E Franceis se desportent par grant nobilitet.³

The accent is on the large quantity of flesh which is the standard oral obsessional preference of the Middle Ages, King Edward the First of England, thought it to be the height of luxury and bon ton to order for his coronation in 1274, a plenteous banquet composed solely of meats: 278 bacon hogs, 450 porkers, 440 fat oxen, 430 sheep and 22,600 hens and capons.⁴ In the following example taken from La Chanson de Guillaume in the Geste de Garin de Monglane, also dating from circa 1150, we see that beyond the representation of wealth, food also serves to emphasize the social and physical state of the individuals.

El (e) li aportad un grant pain a tamis
 E desur cel dous granz gastels rostiz
 Si li aportad un grant poun rosti,
 Puis li aportad (un) grant mazelin de vin,
 Od ses dous braz i out (asez) a sustenir.
 Mangat Willame le grant pain a tamis
 E en apres les dous gasteals rostiz,
 Trestuit mangat le grant braun porcín,
 E a dous traiz but un sester de vin.
 E tut mangad les dous gasteals rostiz
 (E) se qu (e) a Guiburc une mie n'en offrid,
 Ne redresçad la chere ne le vis.
 Veist le Guiburc, crollad sun chef si rist;
 Pur quant (si) plurat d'am (e) dous des oilz del vis.
 Willame apele, en sun romanz (si) li dist:
 "Pur Dev de glorie, qui conuertir me fist,
 (A) qui rend (e) rai l'alme de ceste peccheriz,
 Quant ert le terme al iur di grant iuls,--
 Qui si mangue un grant pain a tamis,
 (E) pur ço ne laisse les dous gasteals rostiz,
 E tut mangü un grant braun porcín,
 E en aproef un grant poun rosti,
 E a dous traiz beit rendre a sun veisin!
 Ia trop vilment ne deit de champ fuir,
 Ne sun lignage par lui estre plus vil!⁵

We are naturally struck by Guillaume's enormous appetite which symbolizes strength and superiority. Guibourc concludes, in a very typical medieval statement, that because her suitor can eat so much, undoubtedly he must be not only valiant but honorable as well: "Ia trop vilment ne deit de champ fuir, ne sun lignage par lui estre plus vil!". We already anticipate the copious exaggerations and gargantuesque strength of Rabelais' work.

In anticipation of Cyrano de Bergerac's metempsychosis, unconscious allusions to the relationship of qualitative attributes between the consumer and the consumed may have been felt. In any case, let us make a brief excursus into some of the culinary peculiarities of medieval cookery. The peacock, mentioned above, played an important role in the gourmet's diet of the Middle Ages. It was endowed with numerous attributes; knights were supposed to draw strength from it. A poet of the thirteenth century attests to the popularity of the peacock with this quip: "rouges enjoy lying as much as knights enjoy a good peacock." It was served at the table garnished with its feathers in a fan shape. Alas, its glory was a passing fad. It appears that by the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries turkey and pheasant had dethroned the peacock. To this list of wild game our ancestors added the swan, heron, crane, crow, stork, comorant and bittern. Among these, the swan, which is reported to have been found in abundance, was a favorite delicacy. A cookbook written about the year 1290 gives this esoteric recipe for the preparation of swans

and peacocks:

First draw the blood then split the back to the shoulders. Skewer them keeping the feet and the heads on; then you crush some saffron on white bread soaked in wine. Then crush some ciccoant and surmontaing and mix them together. Take a feather from the bird, dip it in the spiced wince and baste the bird with the mixture. When the swan and the peacock are cooked and dry, envelop them in a linen and take them to the table and serve your lord the neck, the head, the wings and the drumsticks. Give the remainder to the others .

We are reminded that equality does not start at the table, an alien concept to true gastronomy. Several authors also mention that for a long time young game was discarded for it was considered of little nutritive value and rather indigestible; however, purcupine and squirrels were in great demand while rabbit was unacceptable. As for deer and stag, they were reserved for nobility. Tastes are indeed peculiar, Bruyerin-Chanier mentions as a supreme delicacy slices of young deer, antlers fried in grease and the Ménagier de Paris in the fourteenth century gave instruction on how to prepare beef for it to taste like bear meat "for those regions," he adds appropriately, "where this black beast does not exist". This same work also lists various recipes to accommodate fifty or so different fishes, including the whale (sic), of which the salted meat is picturesquely, if incorrectly, called the "lard of Lent". During the second half of the fourteenth century was written the Grand cuisinier de toute cuisine whose preface reads:

Tres utile et prouffitabile contenant la maniere d'habiller toutes viandes tant chair que poisson et de servie es banquets et festes, avec un memoire pour faire un escriteau pour un banquet;

compose par plusieurs cuisiniers, reveu et corrigé par Pierre Pidouix.

This book was a best seller of its day. It appeared in several forms under various titles: La fleur de toute cuysine, Livre de honneste volupté, and others. Another important work of culinary literature to be published around the same time was the famous Viandier by Guillaume Tirel, also known by the name of Taillevent. This manuel also gives a recipe for swan entitled: "side dish of a swan in it's own skin with all it's plumage".

Floire and Blancheflor, written, around 1170, and considered the best example of idyllic novel, of unknown authorship, depicts a splendid meal:

Daire, L'hote, appelle sa femme Licoris et ils font asseoir entre eux le jouvenceau: il est richement servi dans de la vaisselle d'or fin et d'argent. Vin claiRET, hydromel aux epices, vin epice coulerent largement. Il y eut a manger divers plats fort copieux de venaison: grues, oies sauvages, herons, perdrix, cygnes et paons, de tout cela, autour des tables, petits et grand parent se regaler en laissant des restes. Ensuite, Daire fait apporter les fruits pour le plaisir de la bouche: grenades, poires, figues, amandes, alises, a foison et de la meilleure qualite, aussi des peches et des chataignes, car on trouve en abondance de tous les fruits dans cette ville. Ils en mangent avec joie, apres quoi ils se mettent a boire du vin, souvent. Floire a regarde la coupe qui fut donnee en echange de Blancheflor; devant lui elle etait remplie d'un vin plus limpide que l'eau d'une fontaine. 6

Here again we find the same themes as mentioned above. Floire and Blancheflor emits a certain classical influence, particularly in the minutly detailed descriptions which are well illustrated in this passage and abound throughout the work. In anticipation of the rigorous etiquette of seventeenth century,

PLATYNAE DE HONESTA VOLVPTATE:
 ET VALITVDINE AD AMPLISSIMVM AC
 DOCTISSIMVM.D.B.ROVERELLAM.S.CLE
 MENTIS PRAESBITERVM CARDINALEM
 LIBER PRIMVS.

PRRABVNT Et quidem uehemētes Ampli/
 sime pater.B.Rouerella qui hanc nostram su/
 sceptionem nequaq̄ dignam quæ tuo nomini
 asciberetur putarint:q̄ & uoluptatis & ualitu/
 dinis titulum præferat . Vex quū mihi atq; omnibus
 eruditis spectata sit ingenii tui nis: & acumen moy: &
 honestissimæ uitæ cōstantia: doctrinæ ac eruditionis ma/
 gnitudo: malui te uigiliay meay patronum ac iudicem
 siqd peruerse scriptū inest facere:q̄ alium quempiam.
 Instabūt acriter maleuoli (fat scio): de uoluptate ad u/
 rum optimum & continentissimum non fuisse scriben/
 dum. Sed dicant quæso si stoice: qui elatis superciliis
 non de ui sed de nominum uocibus tantummodo diu/
 dicant: quid mali in se habeat considerata uoluptas? Est
 enim huius ut ualitudinis uocabulum mediū . De uolu/
 ptate quam inte mperantes & libidinosi ex luxu & uarie/
 tate ciborum: ex titillatione reꝝ ueneratū percipiunt .
 Absit ut Platyna ad uix sanctissimum scribat. De illa uo/
 lupate quæ ex continentia uictas: & eay reꝝ quas huma/
 na natura appetit loquor. Neminem enim adhuc uidi
 adeo libidinosum & incontinentem: qui non aliqua tan/
 geretur voluptate: si quando a rebus plusq̄ satis ē cōcu/
 pitis declinauisset. Valet apud hos (ut uideo) Ciceronis
 auctoritas: qui quidem ut Aristoteles Platonem: Pytha/
 goram: zenonem: Democritum: Chryssippum: Parmeni/
 dem: Heraclitum: sic Epicurꝝ segetem & materiam eru/
 nis ac doctrinæ suæ facit: quo cū. n. tutius congruē

*Title page of the first printed cookbook, De Honesta Voluptate, by Barto-
 lomeo de' Sacchi (Platina). Printed in Venice by Aquila and Umber. 1475.*

^{delicatus}
APICII CELII EPIMAELES LIBER PRIMVS.
INCIPIT FOELICITER

CAPITVLA

Connamum in hostrea & conditis
Laseriacum
Cenogaeum in talem
Oxiporium
Hypocrimina
Oxigavum digestibile
Mortaria.

CONDITVM PARADOXVM.

CONDITI Paradoxo composino mellis p. xv̄ i acutu
uas melle' proomissis unū sextarijs dubus: ut i coctum
mellis unū decaquas quod igni lento & arido i
quis calefacti' cōmuni ferula du' coquit. si extirare ce
perit unū vix cōpelat' pret' quod subiecto igni i se
redie cōpoxerit rursus hoc accendit' hoc secundo aut t'io
fit actū. Demū remanem a foco post p'cie despumatur i
piperis v'ncijs quatuor iam t'ra m'ltis scrupulis iii. foli
et croca. Denique singule dactiloz. offili' torridis p'que d'c
tis iē m'ltis i'cedente: prius subitione unū de suo modo
ac numero ut ex hui' lenis habeat. his omi'z parat' sup'ne
tas unū lenis sextaria. xviii. carbones perfecti albedie duo m'lx

CONDITVM MELIXOMVM.

uacuum conditi' mellecomū p'perum quod submittat'
per unū p'oxyimata. piper t'ra cū melle despumato in.

First page of an early XVth Century manuscript attributed to
Apicius. Incipit Foeliciter: begins happily. The two recipes
are: Conditum Paradoxum - Fine spiced wine
Conditum Melixomum - Honey refresher

court exactitude and continuity were already observed during the ceremonial of the twelfth century meal. Let us read William Harlan Hale describe such a meal:

The guests ceremoniously wash their hands before and after the first course, don special robes and slippers, spread napkins which they have brought and embark upon a repast that begins with a drink of heated wine mixed with honey, to be followed by fresh eggs, quarters of beef, mutton, and pork, all highly seasoned with peppers, pickles, caraway, poppy seeds, saffron, aromatic balsam, honey and salt.

The fare, as we have seen in the previous chapter, is rich and the dishes the rarest: venison, fine wines and exotic fruits. Neither fish, nor bread, nor vegetable appear on the gold and silver plates and the writer emphasizes the abundance of the table. The food, however, is not described nor the happy diners. The choice of the menu is important only because it represents the conventional fairy tale luxury one expects in a roman courtois. The same menu always comes forth: cranes, boars, venison, peacocks, etc. It is obvious that these dishes have an elitist value, that they express the ultimate in luxury, the very best money can buy, the unattainable both in variety and quantity. We have to wait for the thirteenth century and Jean de Meun's Roman de la Rose to read an actual description of a meal. This book, considered the most famous and interesting work of the Middle Ages, rich in human and social satire, offers a detailed aperçu on manners and etiquette at the table. In the passage to follow, as in the rest of the work, Jean de Meun's strong misogynic

inclinations, a trait associated with bourgeois literature, versus the idealized woman of the courtly genre, is evident and likely to be shared by practically every one of his fellow men. Anyhow, the standards set by Meun for women are still appropriate today in most conservative homes. The responsibility of the woman for the dinner guests, their satisfaction and well being; the moderation imposed upon her, her expected daintiness are all contemporary to our civilization. Thus only the gross and obvious exaggerations strike the note of satire. Here is the text:

Il convient encore qu'elle se tienne bien à table. Avant d'aller s'asseoir, qu'elle se fasse voir par l'hôtel, donnant à entendre à chacun qu'elle est une maîtresse de maison accomplie; qu'elle circule de tous côtés et s'assoie la dernière, non sans s'être fait un peu attendre. Alors, autant que possible, qu'elle serve tous les convives, tranche et distribue le pain autour de soi; qu'elle fasse honneur au voisin qui doit manger dans son écuelle, qu'elle lui présente une cuisse ou une aile, et tranche devant lui boeuf, porc ou poisson ou telles autres victuailles, et qu'elle ne lesine pas à faire repasser les mets à ceux qui le veulent bien souffrir. Qu'elle se garde bien de mouiller ses doigts dans les brouets jusqu'aux jointures; qu'elle n'ait pas ses lèvres ointes d'ail, de graisse ou de soupe, et qu'elle ne se remplisse pas la bouche de trop gros morceaux. Qu'elle ne touche que du bout des doigts le morceau qu'elle devra tremper dans la sauce, que ce soit sauce verte, cameline ou jausse, et porte adroitement sa bouchée à ses lèvres de façon qu'il n'en tombe une goutte sur sa poitrine. Elle doit encore boire gentiment sans répandre son vin, sans quoi on la tiendra pour gloutonne et mal élevée; qu'elle ne touche à son hanap tant qu'elle a la bouche pleine, qu'elle s'essuie bien la bouche pour n'y pas laisser, au moins sur la levre de dessous, de gouttelettes de graisses qui tachent le vin. Qu'elle boive petit à petit, délicatement, bien qu'ayant grand soif, qu'elle n'engoule pas tout d'une.

haleine coupe ou hanap plein, qu'elle n'enforce pas trop le bord du hanap dans sa bouche, comme font maintes nourrices sans façon qui se versent le vin dans la gorge comme dans une barrique et tant en engouffrent et en entonnent qu'elles en perdent la raison. Qu'elle se garde bien de s'énivrer, car l'ivrogne n'a de secret pour personne, et quand la femme a bu, elle n'a plus aucune retenue; elle bavarde, dit tout ce qu'elle pense et se livre à tous.

Qu'elle se garde de dormir à table: ce faisant, elle ne paraîtrait à son avantage; c'est une mauvaise habitude qui amène beaucoup de désagréments; il est hors du sens commun de s'assoupir dans des lieux établis pour veiller...

In the second part of the Roman de la Rose, the text is bourgeois, satirical and realist. Andre Mary considers it the "premier grand livre que Paris ait vu naître" ⁹ and correctly adds that with Jean de Meun "la littérature de la ville est née, la littérature qui ne s'adresse plus exclusivement à un cercle d'oisifs et de belles dames, friands de récits galants ou romanesques."¹⁰ We no longer serve peacocks and cranes but merely bread, chicken, porc, or fish, soup, garlic and the "écuelle" replaces the silver and gold plates. We are witnessing the beginning of the "cuisine bourgeoise."

Let us now taste some samples of bourgeois literature and examine their consideration and involvement with our subject matter. The rising bourgeois class of the Middle Ages found little interest in the Chanson de Geste or the Roman Courtois, whose heavenly aspirations and idealized romances, although much read and appreciated by all, did not respond to the needs for the simple realism of daily life. Thus, by the end of the twelfth century we witness the emergence into written literature of a new genre, more brisk and jaunty in style, or, as Robert Harrison calls it, a "courtly burlesque."¹¹ The

period of the fabliau, the closing years of the twelfth century through the thirteenth is one of economic progress and realistic aspirations. The Crusades which are the most important manifestation of that epoch, have lost much of their holy spirit at the expense of the more enticing benefits of mundane goals. Although ending in disillusionment and failure, the Crusades enriched the everyday life of medieval Europe. Among the innovations brought from the East, several are food items of which spices are the most famous. Several medieval works mention the brisk commerce of spices with the East. In Le Voyage de Charlemagne, we find the following lines:

Il vendent lur pailles, lur teiles e lur siries,
Coste canele e peivre, altres bones espices
E maintes bones herbes que jo ne vus sais dire.

(Le Voyage de Charlemagne. V. 210-212)

The almost indiscriminate use of spices was so extravagant that all dishes tasted very much the same. Condiments were used mainly to drown the taste of the meat and mask the natural foulness of the animal which was eaten more for its beauty than for its palatability. The development of commerce and trade which led to the rise of the bourgeois class is perhaps one of the most significant outcomes of the crusades. It, in truth, contributed to the socio-cultural movement, and increased heterogeneity in an otherwise very static society.

The fabliau is an excellent illustration of the mirror aspect. "The courtly vein pervades the fabliaux"¹², which gives the feeling of aping in a burlesque fashion, as we have pointed out previously, its more genteel cousin. With the development of this bourgeois literary parody of courtly tradition, the

themes fuse and no longer clearly differentiate the genre. As Jean Rychner observed: "C'est le style, non le sujet, qui jauge le niveau social d'une oeuvre."¹³ This point is most important in understanding the meanings and values of food in medieval literature. We have already seen that the courtly genre, although not ravenous in its interest in food does not exclude it systematically. If we are to compare it with the fabliaux and other works of the bourgeois genre, only the purpose, intantion and style of the work will give the determining clue for its true and meaningful classification. These distinctions help us comprehend, in their proper perspectives such works as Le Roman du Comte d'Anjou, which basically noble of character and style, is at the same time, impregnated with vivid bourgeois realism, presenting the reader with perhaps the most complete descriptive view on culinary matters in the entire medieval literary spectrum. This novel shall be examined further on in the chapter.

We have developed a theme in the first chapter which aims at pointing out the correlation, at several levels, between the psychological and practical, between man's position within the primitive social hierarchy and his involvement with food. This phenomenon is well reflected in the literary spectrum as literature represents more the Zeitgeist of its epoch's inspirations than the true mirror of its reality. The literature of a period offers a positive appreciation of its underlying conscious or subconscious mechanism. The portrait

of medieval society which is described in a chanson de geste or in a fabliau, for example, is a compensatory one at best, a more overt manifestation of the dynamics of its developmental stage, but not a true mirror effect of its epoch's intrinsic reality. Robert Harrison, in his excellent introduction to his book Gallic Salt, comments that "no literary genre of the Middle Ages attempted to describe realistically,"¹⁴ The various genres clearly expressed, however, the interests and wishes and most certainly an attempt at fulfillment of its needs, in the form of a spiritual gazette so to speak, written and published with the expressed intention of being heard, read, and appreciated by as large a number of people as possible. Aimed at pleasing, the fabliau is therefore not the mirror of external reality but rather the real internal need. The definite interest and marked preoccupation which the authors of the fabliaux devote to sex and food are manifestations of orality. We are not surprised therefore to witness the parallel development between these two expressions of the same need. "The word fabliau was already being used in a technical sense to denote a tale of adultery"¹⁵ which represents a clear indication of a rising spirit of liberation and libidinal manifestation against the omnipotent influence of the church, mercilessly bent on repression by driving into the faithful the sinfulness of instinctual pleasure. It is not the church itself which came under attack, as this is not achieved until the eighteenth century, but its more vulnerable local representatives, the village priest and the monk. Harrison views the village priest

as the "universal goat of the fabliau, practically without exception he is depicted as a vain, covetous lecher, ready at the drop of a handkerchief to deflower a virgin, debauché a wife, or plunder a pyx or a poor box." ¹⁶ He goes on to say that "when a monk or friar does find his way in a fabliau, he gets the same rough treatment as a priest. One is beaten to death, hauled to a privy, stuffed into a dungpile, trussed up like a hog, lashed to a horse and pitched into a fosse." ¹⁷ Whereas courtly literature portrayed an idyllic picture of orality, bourgeois literature concentrated on the burlesque and caricatural; both presenting a systematic distortion of reality. As we have mentioned previously in this chapter, the themes are often the same but presented in a distinctive style with a different purpose. Let us take as an example the oral, passive-aggressive theme of the "hunger strike" which is found both in courtly literature as well as in the fabliaux. First in Le Charroi de Nîmes, a courtly chanson de geste from the cycle of Garin de Monglane during the first half of the twelfth century, Guillaume, revengeful and very angry, yelled out to the pagan:

Et tu, Harpins, cuvert desmesure,
 Por qu'as ma barbe et mes guernons tire,
 Saches de voir, molt en sui aire:
 Ne serai mes ne soupe ne digne
 Tant que l'avras de ton cors compare. ¹⁸

The emphasis is on the breach of honor, valor and ascetism. Here is how the same theme is presented in two fabliaux. In Guillaume au Faucon, a charmingly satirical fabliau of unknown authorship, a rejected persuer of love threatens his lady with

"... kill me if you wish, I have asked you for your love; and that gift I will have on these terms: that I shall never again take food until you give me your love, for which I live in such distress."¹⁹ In La Housse Partie, an ungratefully irrate and pretentious wife tells her husband: "Mon ami, par amour pour moi, je vous prie de donner congé à votre père. Sur la foi que je dois à l'âme de ma mère, je ne mangerai plus rien tant que je le [son beau-père] verrai chez nous. Au plustôt donnez-lui congé."²⁰ The threats are obviously too drastic and inappropriate for the situation; creating the comic underlay. It is thus without surprise that the fabliaux contain numerous references to food which, in several cases is used, as the vehicle to convey the moral. Such examples are: Le Bon Cure Qui Mangea des Mures: "Point n'est prudent de dire trop vite sa pensée, il en résulte maint désagrément et mainte humiliation";²¹ and Les Trois Aveugles de Compiègne, which contains several enumerations of food served on a medieval table. Moreover, one of these gives an interesting vignette of local advertisement:

Ils entrèrent dans la ville et purent entendre à travers les quartiers, à la porte des hôtels: 'On trouve ici du bon vin, frais et nouveau, du vin d'Auxerre et de Soissons, du pain, de la viande, des poissons. Ici il fait bon dépenser son argent. L'hôtel est ouvert à tous les passants.'²²

Medieval literature is often rich in details. We are told exactly the number of dishes on the menu: "cinq plats, du pain, de la viande, des pâtes et des chapons, de bons mets et des vins...Les aveugles prirent place autour d'une haute table." Food is used even more directly in several

of the Renard fabliaux. Among those we find Renard et les Marchands de Poissons, Renard et Tiercelin, Comment Renard fit pécher les anguilles à Ysengrin. In these fabliaux, the aim is to expound on the primitive search for food. Renard the fox, forever hungry, is engaged in a perpetual quest for ways and means to obtain food. The accent is clearly not towards the abundant meal, nor the refined morceau choisi but for the simple food of the peasant: fish, cheese, eels, etc. Medieval times clearly distinguished between food suitable to the nobleman's table and the rest for those of humbler origin. Du Vilein Mire, of unknown authorship contains a passage which shows the distinction clearly:

Quant le vilein ot ce pense, se a a mengier
demande. N'orent pas poison ne perfriz, mes
bon frommages et oez friz et peïn et vin a
grant plente que le vilein ot amasse. ²⁴

Bread, eggs and cheese are the staple diet of the lower classes and do not appear on a noble table. A few verses of Le Meunier et les Deux Cleres, also of anonymous authorship, are explicit:

La nuit, qant ce vint au soper, li muniers lors
fait aporter pain et lait et eyes st fromage.
C'est la viande del bochage. ²⁵

It would be futile and unnecessary to attempt to list and comment on every food reference contained in the literature of the Middle Ages. They are often brief, usually describing what the protagonists are eating and reflect, as we have explained earlier, the social and financial position of the latter. As a rule the food items are listed singly by name with little if any elaborations: a goose, a swan, a peacock, a boar for courtly repast and bread, a duck, a hare, eggs for bourgeois

and peasant meals. Only rarely is the preparation or manner in which it is served, such as "pois au lart",²⁶ ever mentioned. Vegetables and salads are noticeably absent, even from the Roman du Comte d'Anjou, by far the most complete reference source for food outside of the actual cookbooks, ever compiled. This work, attributed to a certain Jehan Maillart was completed in 1316. Unique in its genre, it comprises characteristics of the courtly preciosity and bourgeois realism. Mario Roques, in his enlightened introduction to the novel explains that:

Son histoire de comtes et de comtesses,
malgré des descriptions de vie seigneuriale
est bien plus souvent une histoire bourgeoise
ou même populaire .²⁷

The details abound, the accumulation of names is so extensive that it almost goes beyond realism and reminds us of Zola's scientific style. Here is Jehan Maillart's rendition of a fugitive lady reminiscing of her bygone days of plenty.

Et dit souvent: 'Lasse, dolente!
Tel vie pas apris n'avoie,
Quant je chiez mon pere mennoie,
Mes viandes chieres et fines,
Chapons en rost, oisons, gelines,
Cynnes, paons, perdris, fesanz,
Herons, butors qui sont pleasans,
Et venoisons de mainte guisez
A chiens courans par force prises:
Cers, dains, connins, senglers sauvages,
Qui habitent en ces bocages,
Et toute bonne venoison;
Poissons ravoie j'a foison
Des meilleurs de tout le pais:
Esturjons, saumons et plais,
Congres, gournars et grans morues,
Tumbes, rouges et grans barbues,
Maqueriaux gras et gros mellens
Et harens fres et espellesn,

Sartres graces, mulles et solles,
 Bremes et bescues et molles;
 J'avoie de maintes mennieres
 Poissons d'estans et de rivieres
 Atornez chascun par grant cure,
 Selonc son droit et sa nature,
 A poivre, a sausse kameline;
 J'avoie lus en galentine,
 Grossez lemproiez a ce mesmes,
 Bars et carpes, gardons et bresmes,
 Appareilliez en autre guisez;
 Trutttes ravoie en paste misez,
 Lez dars, lez vendoisez rostiez,
 Enverjus de grain tooillies,
 Et grosses anguilles em paste,
 Autre foiz roustiez en haste
 Et les gros beques chaudumes,
 Se com il sont acoustumez
 Des keus qui sevent lez sentences
 De l'atorner; j'avoie tances
 Que en appele renversees;
 J'avoie gauffres et oubleez,
 Gouieres, tartes, flaonciaus,
 Pipes farses a grans monciaus,
 Pommes d'espices, dirioles,
 Crespones, bingnes et ruissoles;
 Si bevoie vins precieus,
 Pymment, clare delicieus,
 Cythouandes, rosez, florez,
 Vins de Gascoingne colorez,
 De Mont Pellier et de Rochelle,
 Vin de Garnace et de Castele,
 Vin de Biaune et de Saint Poursain
 Que riche gent tiennet pour sain,
 D'Auquerre, d'Anjo, d'Orlenois,
 De Gastinois, de Leonnois,
 De Biauvoisin, de Saint Jouen;
 Touz ceulz n'arai je mes ouen,
 Ainz bevrerai yaue a guise double:
 Unne fois clere, autre foiz trouble.²⁸

At the back of his edition of Le Roman du Comte d'Anjou, Mario Roquer has compiled an index of words which is very helpful to us, for it contains a category on foods and related utensils and services. It is from this index which I draw the following list of various aliments mentioned in the novel:

Fur bearing game: venoisons, cers, connin, dains, bengliers

Wild and domestic fowl: butor, cynnes, ennes, fesanz, gelines,
herons, oisons, paons, perdris, oez

Sea Fish and shellfish: barbues, bescues, bremes, congres,
espellens, esturjons, gournars,
harens, maqueriaux, mellens, melles,
plais, rouges, sartres, saumons,
solles, tumbes, morues, mulles.

Fresh water fish: Anguilles, bars, beques, bresmes, carpes,
dars, lemproiez, lus, tances, trutttes,
vendoizez

Breads: Fouace bise, pain a la paille, pain aus
chiens, pain noir

Baking: paste, em paste, paste, bingmes, crespines,
dirioles, flaoncious, gauffres, gouieres,
oubleez, pipes farses, pommes d'espices,
ruissoles, tartes.

Wines: vin flairant et fort, vin grans et fors,
vin d'Anjo, Aucoirre, Bianne, Biauvoisim,
Castelle, Clameci, Franchoiz, Garnace,
Gascoigne, Gastinois, Leonnois, Mont
Pellier, Orlenois, Rochelle, Saint Jouan,
Saint Poursain; clare, cythouandes, flore,
pyment, rosez.

Cuisine and condiments: chaudume, eschaufee, espices, galentine,
haste kameline, moustarde, paste,
paste poivre, renversees, reschaufez,
sain sausse, sure, tooillies,
verjus de grain.

Repast and Service: mengier, dingner, souper, appetit,
bouchie, morselet, pieche, piecette,
soupelecte,

Table: atournez, dois, table, oster
les tables, metre par terre les tables,
tablecte, nape, lever les napes,

Service: corner, prendre l'yaue, mes,
escuelle, donner l'iaue, mains lavez,
escuier, fourriers, heraut, servant,
varlet, trancher,

Beverages: prendre vin, servir
vin, traire, retrait, henap,
henappee, juste, pot, broche.²⁹

A perfect breviary for the student of social history, this incredible display of erudite knowledge, perhaps overdone, even comical, is truly unique in the annals of medieval literature. The vivid bourgeois tone of the Roman, colored with local proverbs and expressions, truffled with precise and biting remarks, accentuated with sharp and candid observations anticipate the great style of Villon, but also the massive accumulation of terms, the ultra realism of profane swearing, cursing and swearing:

"par celi Seigneur qui ne ment" ³⁰
"par les sainz quisant saintis" ³¹
"sus tous les sainz que l'on aheure" ³²
"par les deus ieulz de ma tete" ³³,

Mario Roques counted more than thirty-seven different expressions several of them used repeatedly, and the 8156 verses of the work announce the prolific verve of Rabelais' mind.

FOOTNOTES

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6. Floire et Blancheflor
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9. Ibid.,p.9.
10. Ibid., p.10.
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(Geneva: Droz, 1960), p.58.
14. Harrison, p.19.
15. Harrison, p.8.
16. Harrison, p.21.
17. Harrison, p.24.
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Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1965), p.87.

20. Maurice Teissier and H. Nicolas, Les Fabliaux (Paris Editions Fernand Lanore, 1965), p.42.
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22. Ibid., p.22.
23. Ibid., p.23.
24. Harrison, p. 66.
25. Harrison, p. 58.
26. Harrison, p.334.
27. Jehan Maillart, Le Roman du Comte d'Anjou, edited by Mario Roques (Paris: Champion:1964), p.XV.
28. Ibid., p.36.
29. Ibid., p.295.
30. Ibid., vers. 2688.
31. Ibid., vers. 4967.
32. Ibid., vers. 4354.
33. Ibid., vers. 5180.

CHAPTER III

THE RENAISSANCE:

Montaigne and Rabelais

MONTAIGNE

"Magna pars libertatis est
bene Moratus venter!"
Seneca

Any attempt at delineating Montaigne is quickly frustrated by the evolutionary metamorphosis of his philosophical profile. The complexity of his concept of the "moi" confronts us with the perplexing contrasts inherent to a soul in search of answers. In spite of this difficulty, we shall try to discover the extent of the role of food in his writings. Anti-dogmatic and esoteric, the philosophical essence is nevertheless dominated by two powerful principles: Moderation and truth, which Montaigne seeks in Man and finds in his own nature. Since Montaigne's life's work was to reduce heroes, saints and giants of the past to our common size and to reconcile us with what we still call after him our "human condition", food should indeed be part of the vast inventory of his thoughts and observations, Sleep, music, education, horses, cats, clothes and even cannibals, history and morals are but a few of the subjects treated in the Essays. Yet food, a basic need and daily occupation is, except for a few instances, practically ignored until the last chapter entitled befittingly enough, "De l'experience", where the author keeps the promise of the preface to tell all to the point of offering his own portrait naked, if good taste permitted it.

While the Middle Ages' mind conceived of mankind basically as a unit divided between pagans and Christians with subdivisions into a few hermetic social classes, Montaigne breaks this infernal circle, abandons mankind and rediscovers Man with his own individual characteristics and personal peculiarities. The world for Montaigne is a composite of nations, each with its own nationals who live, eat and drink according to their own mores which, to them, are the best:

La forme de vivre plus usitee et commune est la plus belle: toute particularite m'y semble a eviter, et hairois autant un aleman qui mit de l'eau au vin qu'un françois qui le boiroit pur. ¹

He adds, "L'estomac d'un Espagnol ne dure pas a nostre forme de manger, ny le nostre a boire a la Souysse." ²

As well as, "Nous craingnons les vins au bas; en Portugal cette fumee est en delices, et est le breuvage des princes." ³

Montaigne's attachment to individuality leads him to recognize that social hierarchy and nobility exists at all levels of society, that every individual regardless of his class has his own needs as well as his own magnificence. In this following passage, our author stoically salutes the dignity of freedom at the expense of the security of a good meal.

Je scay avoir retire de l'aumosne des enfans pour m'en servir, qui bien tost apres m'ont quicte, et ma cuisine et leur livree, seulement pour se rendre a leur premiere vie. Et en trouvoy un, amassant depuis des moules emmy la voirie pour son disner, que par priere ny par menasse je ne sceu distraire de la saveur et douceur qu'il trouvoit en l'indigence. Les

gueux ont leurs magnificences et leurs voluptez, comme les riches, et, dict-on, leurs dignitez et ordres politiques.⁴

The same respect for simplicity, purity and naturalness is conferred upon those cannibals described in the 30th chapter of his Essays:

Ces nations me semblent donq ainsi barbares, pour avoir receu fort peu de facon de l'esprit humain, et estre encore fort voisines de leur naifvete originelle. Les loix naturelles leur commandent encoures, fort peu abastardies par les nostres; mais c'est en telle purete, qu'il me prend quelque fois desplaisir dequoy la cognoissance n'en soit venue plustost...Les paroles mesmes qui signifient la mensonge, la trahison, la dissimulation, l'avarice, l'envie, la detraction, le pardon, inouies. Combien trouveroit il la republique qu'il a imaginee esloignee de cette perfection.⁵

This dignity is also expressed in terms of the naturalness and simplicity of the cannibals' diet. For a man who devotes little interest in food, Montaigne gives us a fairly detailed description of these peoples' culinary habits.

Ils ont grande abondance de poisson et de chairs qui n'ont aucune ressemblance aux nostres, et les mangent sans autre artifice que de les cuire... Ils se levent avec le soleil, et mangent soudain apres s'estre levez, pour toute la journee; car ils ne font autre repas que celui-la. Ils ne boyvent pas lors, comme Suidas dict de quelques autres peuples d'Orient, qui beuvoient hors de manger; ils boivent a plusieurs fois sur jour, et d'autant. Leur breuvage est faict de quelque racine, et est de la couleur de nos vins claires. Ils ne le boyvent que tiede; ce breuvage ne se conserve que deux ou trois jours; il a le goust un peu piquant, nullement fumeux, salutaire a l'estomac, et laxatif a ceux qui ne l'ont accoustume; c'est une boisson tres-agreable a qui y est duit. Au lieu du pain, ils usent d'une certaine matiere blanche, comme du coriandre confit.⁶ J'en ay taste: le goust en est doux et un peu fade.

Keeping in mind that the subject of this theses is food and respecting Montaigne's understanding of these peoples' anthropophagic habits as outside the realm of nourishment

but rather to "be taken as an extreme revenge":

C'est ne pas, comme on pense, pour s'en nourrir, ainsi que faisoient anciennement les Scythes; c'est pour représenter une extreme vengeance.⁷

should lead us to discard the passage. However, in support of our thesis formulated in the first chapter regarding the interpretation of the original sin in terms of food and brotherhood, let us consider the following passage:

Chacun raporte pour son trophée la teste de l'ennemy qu'il a tue, et l'attache a l'entree de son logis. Apres avoir long temps bien traite leurs prisonniers, et de toutes les commoditez dont ils se peuvent aviser, celui qui en est le maistre, faict une grande assemblee de ses cognoissans; il attache une corde a l'un des bras du prisonnier, par le bout de laquelle il le tient, esloigne de quelques pas, de peur d'en estre offence, et donne au plus cher se de ses amis l'autre bras a tenir de mesme; et eux deux, en presence de toute l'assemblee, l'assomment a coups d'espee. Cela faict, ils le rostissent et en mangent en commun et en envoient des lopins a ceux de leurs amis qui sont absens.⁸

We have given in the first chapter a psychological explanation for the hanging head of the slain enemy at the door of the victor's dwelling. We refer back to the rituals of the collective guilt of the fraternity to explain the gathering of the great assembly of acquaintances partaking in the slaying with a friend and the eating in common, followed by sending pieces to other members of the brotherhood. Viewed in this light, these elements are self-explanatory. However Montaigne also mentions that the prisoners, before being eaten, which we are to believe is their inescapable fate, are treated with the best of hospitality. This incongruous and ironical behavior can only be explained psycho-

analytically in terms of the dormant guilt resulting from the original sin of the killing of the father. Interestingly enough, Montaigne also mentions that the eating of the body is not for nourishment, thus clearly removing the possibility of physical need arising from starvation or even plain hunger, but pointing to our psychological interpretation.

Let us now leave the psycho-historical process to take a look at some points of Montaigne's incomplete but nevertheless revealing oral autobiography which portrays, in a miniature cosmos, the characteristics of a man who attempted to depict the truth of his self in thirteen lengthy essays. A self in its truest form, such as he saw it, without any intention at philosophising. Although the vignettes on Montaigne's life cannot truly be conveyed as mirror of society, they are nevertheless reflections of the author's personal views on life which at times are likely to be as esoteric as they are candid. In any case, the Essays give us valuable information on customs and mores of his time.

Et sans m'essaier, ne puis ny dormir sur
jour, ny faire collation entre les repas,
ny desjeuner, ny m'all coucher sans grand
intervalle, comme de trois bonnes heures,
apres le soupper, ny faire des enfans qu
avant le sommeil, ny les faire debout, ny
porter ma sueur, ny m'abreuver d'eau pure
oude vin tenir nud teste long temps, ny me
faire tondre apres disner; et me passerois
autant malaiseement de mes gans que de ma
chemise, et de me laver a l'issue de table
et a mon lever, et de ciel et rideaux a mon
lict, comme de choses bien necessaires. Je
disnerois sans nape; mais a l'alemande, sans
serviette blanche, tres-incommodeement: je
les souille plus qu'eux et les Italiens ne

font; et m'ayde peu de cullier et de fourchette.⁹

In this excerpt as throughout the essays we are made very much aware of Montaigne's rather obsessive-compulsive personality, much preferring to conduct his life with order and regularity. Nevertheless, tolerance and adaptation play a key and even dominant role. In this paragraph as in others to follow, absolutes are avoided. Montaigne would feel uncomfortable in certain situations but he does not imply that in no way could he not adapt to them if the need ever arose. Of a noble mind, Montaigne does not petrify in impossibilities. The following clarifies Montaigne's aristocratic penchants.

Je plains qu'on n'aye suyvy un train que j'ay veu commencer a l'exemple des Roys: qu'on nous changeast de serviette selon les services, comme d'assiette. Nous tenons de ce laborieux soldat Marius que, vieillissant, il devint delicat en son boire et ne le prenoit qu'en une sienne coupe particulariere. Moy je me laisse aller aussi a certaine forme de verres, et ne boy pas volontiers en verre commun, non plus que de'une main commune.¹⁰

Montaigne does not represent the typical French Renaissance nobility, but he had much in common with his many friends who did. A country gentleman as he was, his life centered in his home, living close to the soil, personally concerned with his cattle and poultry, vines and other crops.¹¹ Montaigne is erudite, a man of letters, which are characteristics anathema to the beliefs of most nobles of his time, especially of the oldest families who despised learning as fit only for the bourgeois.¹² The positive blend of bourgeois characteristics

in an aristocratic mind, a happy result of Renaissance yearnings, explains Montaigne's careful and measured approach to food. Unlike the aristocratic school of Ronsard, Maurice Sceve, Etienne Jodelle, and other writers of his century who thought of food as totally alien to the literary arts, Montaigne accepts it as part of Man's total experience. On the other hand, we are not dealing with the bourgeoisie of Rabelais, obsessed with the universal processes of bodily functions.

Montaigne, imbued with Aristotle, Plato and Juvenal considers logic and common sense as fundamentals for a sound mind. Rational in his approach to life, he is driven by logical experience as well as by natural inclinations.

Quant a la sante corporelle, personne ne peut fournir d'experience plus utile que moy, qui la presente pure, nullement corrompue et alteree par art et par opinion .¹³

On another occasion he states:

Le vin nuit aux malades; c'est la premiere chose de quoy ma bouche se desgouste, et d'un degoust invincible.¹⁴

Veering away from the Medieval model, he reconnects the mind to the body and extols the total sensual man.

Mon appetit en plusieurs chose s'est assez heureusement accommode par soy-mesme et range a la sante de mon estomac. L'acrimonie et la pointe des sauces m'agreerent estant jeune; mon estomac s'en ennuyant depuis, le goust l'a incontinent suyvy.¹⁵

Montaigne's chit'chat about his body functions is a manifestation of the emerging Renaissance man: "Je donne grande autorite a mes desirs et propensions".¹⁶ However, again unlike

Rabelais, he considers moderation the didactic lesson of experience, to be the basic ingredient of wisdom: "Je tiens que cette sienne temperature a releve miantesfois le corps de ses cheutes"¹⁷ which also applies in terms of nutrition. "C'est indecence, outre ce qu'il nuit a la sante, voire et au plaisir, de manger goulument."¹⁸ By the time Montaigne wrote his last Essay, De l'Experience, he digresses from the stoic position into some form of hedonistic calculus in order to adjust as comfortable and as easily as possible to the painful reality: "Il faut apprendre a souffrir ce qu'on ne peut eviter."¹⁹ Abstinence and deprivation are no longer part of his philosophy and are to be considered only out of strict necessity:

Je n'ayme point a guerir le mal par le mal;
je hay les remedes qui importunent plus que
la maladie. D'estre subject a la cholique et
subject a m'abstenir du plaisir de manger des huitres,
ce sont deux maux pour un.²⁰

In this statement as in others like it, Montaigne shows a definite Epicurian inclination. The following lines could have come from Of the Nature of Things:

Puisque on est au hazard de se mesconter,
hazardon s nous plustost a la suite du
plaisir. Le monde faict au rebours, et
ne pense rien utile qui no soit penible.²¹

And he reiterates further:

Quoy que je receive desagreablement me nuit,
et rien ne me nuit que je face avec faim et
allegresse; je n'ay jamais receu nuisance d'
action qui m'eust este bien plaisante.²²

Opposed to strict dogmatism of any kind and always grasping for the knowledge of experience, Montaigne resumes with his

famous quote: "Que sais-je? his strong reluctance to entrench himself in a finite philosophical position. All too lucidly aware of the contradictions and of the multiple complexities of life, his philosophy is tinted with much skepticism:

Nostre vie est composee, comme l'harmonie du monde, de choses contraires, aussi de divers tons, douz et aspre, aigus et plats, mols et graves. ²³

The variety and contrariness of our life is also manifested in our experience of pleasure:

Il y de la jalousie et envie entre nos plaisirs: ils se choquent et empechent l'un l'autre. ²⁴

and

C'est pitie d'estre alanguy et affoible jusques au souhaiter. ²⁵

Doubt, philosophical questioning and skeptical pondering form a major theme in Montaigne's writing. In his longest Essai, the Apologie de Raymond Sebond, he tries to denigrate man's pretentious and often sclerotic reasoning. All opinions can be interpreted differently if not oppositely. To every conviction is its antipode. Here is what he has to say about the doctor's opinion on diet:

Se vostre medecin ne trouve bon que vous dormez, que vous esez de vin our de telle viande, ne vous chaille: He vous en troveray un autre qui ne sera pas de son avis. ²⁶

Like Epicure, Montaigne suffered in his latter years from calculi which also accounts for his marked preoccupation with medicine, and indirectly, the body and food. Numerous passages in several essays are devoted to the subject. Receiving no relief from medical quackery, he turned to his

own self observation and relied solely on his own experience:

Mais quant a la sante corporelle, personne ne peut fournir d'experience plus utile que moy, qui la presente pure, nullement corrompue et alteree par art et par opination.²⁷

Montaigne anticipates Voltaire and several centuries of enlightened thinkers who, in the Hippocratic and Socratic traditions link food to health, once again extolling moderation and reliance on experience.

L'experience est proprement sur son fumier au subject de la medecine, ou la raison luy quite toute la place. Tibere disoit que quiconque avoit vescu vingt ans se devoit respondre des choses qui luy estoyent nuisibles ou salutaires, et se scavoir conduire sans medecine. Et le pouvoit avoir a prins de Socrates, lequel, conseillant a ses disciples, soigneusement et comme un tres principal estude, l'estude de leur sante, adjoustoit qu'il estoit malaise qu'un homme d'entendement, prenant garde a ses exercices, a son boire et a son manger, ne discernast mieux que tout medecin ce qui luy estoit bon ou mauvais .²⁸

He reiterates further:

Je ne croy s rien plus certainement que cecy: que je ne scauroy estre offence par l'usage des choses que j'ay si long temps accoustumee.²⁹

In spite of his calculi, Montaigne enjoyed eating and appears to have given himself to it heartily both in health and in sickness:

Et sain et malade, je me suis volontiers laisse aller aux appetits qui me pressoient.³⁰

or again:

Ma forme de vie est pareille en maladie comme en sante: mesme lict, mesmes heures, mesmes viande me servent, et mesme breuvage. Je n'y adjouste du tout rien, que la moderation du plus et du moins, selon ma force et appetit.³¹

Montaigne the philosopher puts eating and drinking where it belongs, not as an end unto itself but as an intellectual stimulus to conversations, ideas and pleasures:

Car je dy, comme ce mesme Epicurus, qu'il ne faut pas tant regarder ce qu'on mange qu'avec qui on mange, et loue Chilon de n' avoir voulu promettre de se trouver au festin de Periander avant que d'estre informe qui estoient les autres conviez. Il n'est point de si doux apprest pour moy, ny de sauce si appetissante, que celle qui se tire de la societe. ³²

He lauds the Greeks and Romans for the care and attention which they bestowed on feasting as a perfect catalyst for healthy and productive socializing:

Les anciens Grecs et Romains avoyent meilleure raison que nous, assignans a la nourriture, qui est une action principale de la vie, si autre extraordinaire occupation ne les en divertissoit plusieurs heures et la meilleure partie de la nuit, mangeans et beuvans moins hativement que nous, qui passons en poste toutes noz actions, et estandans ce plaisir naturel a plus de loisir et d'usage, y entresemans divers offices de conversations utiles et agreables. ³³

How contemporary Montaigne sounds as he complains about the fast pace of life and hurried eating of our civilization which prevented him from enjoying "le loisir de parler, qui est un si doux assaisonnement des tables, pourveu que ce soyent des propos de mesme, plaisans et courts." ³⁴ The stress, however, is not on the food, for enjoyment is contingent on a stimulating conversation of short, to the point, and worthwhile ideas.

We have seen that the theme of food, in Montaigne's life, plays an important but secondary role. We gather that he was probably a very "normal" balanced individual whose needs,

of orality in particular, although recognized, accepted and even gratified, were in no way pathological. Food, eating and all the amenities associated with it were considered by him as an intrinsic part of nature's way of keeping us healthy and providing us with an opportunity for fraternization, intellectualization and simple enjoyment and relaxation. Moreover, he did have, as the essay on the "cannibals" and the following exalting passage show, the keen intuition of a symbolic, ritualistic interpretation of food, which, translated into his own society and time, appears close to that of Rabelais' Gastro - philosophical "festin":

Soit par gosserie, soit a certes, que le vin theologal et Sorbonique est passe en proverbe, et leurs festins, je trouve que c'est raison qu'ils en disnent d'autant plus commodement et plaisamment qu'ils ont utilement et serieusement employe la matinee a l'exercise de leur escole. La conscience d'avoir bien dispense les autres heures est un juste et savoureux condiment des tables .35

FOOTNOTES

1. Michel E. Montaigne, Oeuvres Complètes, ed. Albert Thibaudet and Maurice Rat, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1962), p.1084.
2. Ibid., p.1058.
3. Ibid., p.1058.
4. Ibid., p.1060.
5. Ibid., p.204.
6. Ibid., p.205.
7. Ibid., p.207.
8. Ibid., p.207.
9. Ibid., p.1601.
10. Ibid., p.1062.
11. Donald M. Frame, Montaigne (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1965), p.116.
12. Ibid., p.117
13. Montaigne, p.1056.
14. Ibid., p.1064.
15. Ibid., p.1064.
16. Ibid., p.1064.
17. Ibid., p.1077.
18. Ibid., p.1078.
19. Ibid., p.1068.
20. Ibid., p.1068.
21. Ibid., p.1064.
22. Ibid., p.1064.
23. Ibid., p.1068.
24. Ibid., p.1086.

25. Ibid., p.1065.
26. Ibid., p.1065.
27. Ibid., p.1056.
28. Ibid., p. 1056.
29. Ibid., p.1057.
30. Ibid., p.1064.
31. Ibid., p.1057.
32. Ibid., p.1082.
33. Ibid., p.1080.
34. Ibid., p.1085.
35. Ibid., p.1089.

RABELAIS

Emerging from the Middle Ages and thrust into the Renaissance, Rabelais' universe bridges these two distinct periods in an unique continuum. Still faithful to the Middle Ages' concept of representing individuals as metaphors and symbols of mankind's characteristics, Rabelais' use of giants and supernatural protagonists is in reality a denial of the uniqueness of the common individual. A Deus absconditus, the author himself remains largely effaced. Little of Rabelais as a man shows in the work, except for occasional short and furtive glimpses at what appears to be the author's own autobiographical material. Nevertheless, the highly esoteric nature of the Cinq Livres is intended to be interpreted by the reader as a personal message:

C'est pourquoy fault ouvrir le livre et
soigneusement peser ce que y est deduict.
Lors congnoistrez que la drogue dedans
contenue est bien d'aulture valeur que ne
promettoit la boîte....¹

Indeed, a highly philosophical message, regorging of "hautes matieres et sciences profondes"² which, like the "sustantifique mouelle"³ will nourish its reader with a "doctrine (plus) absconce, laquelle vous revelera de tres haultz sacremens et mysteres horrificques, tant en ce que concerne nostre religion que aussi l'estat politicq et vie oeconomique."⁴ Rabelais gives us the method, or should we say the recipe, which he uses to attain those "celeste" heights. It is not through diligent and laborious studying but rather "en beuvant et mangeant."⁵

Wine and food, the keystone of wisdom and the essence of philosophy, provide the "inspiration that reaches the poet from a divine, vinous source." ⁶ The world of food occupies a considerable space in Rabelais' universe. There is hardly "a single page in his book where food and drink do not figure" ⁷ either directly or in the guise of an oral metaphor. In the Rabelaisian verve, food and drink are to be understood as metaphorical entities of divine inspiration which feed Man on physical, mental and spiritual levels. All energy, his world is forever in movement, destroying and creating:

Chez Rabelais la déformation précède la formation
ou plutôt toutes les deux vont ensemble .⁸

In a symbiotic fusion between the practical intellect and the primitive libido, the bursting energy of the Renaissance shines through the scope of his Pan-vision. The medieval microcosmic homo religiosus becomes the humanistic macro-cosmic homo ludens, endowed with a ravenous appetite and a quenchless thirst: the wide open mouth.

The theme of the wide open mouth has its obvious ancestry in the story of Jonah from the fifth of the books of the Minor Prophets of the Old Testament. The episode is famous and needs not be repeated here. Allusions to the story are quite frequent in the Bible: Matthew XII: 39-41, XVI: 4; Luke XI: 29-30; Tobit XIV: 4. Obviously Jonah's oral resurgence from the belly of the whale is a prefiguration of the resurrection of Christ, but it is also a gastro-oral

metaphor of divine incorporation and procreation. In the Second century AD Lucianus of Samosata, an excellent and prolific satirical writer whose influence on Rabelais cannot be doubted, included in one of his satirical sketches The True History, a reiteration of the above-mentioned allegory. Rabelais' episode of the swallowing wale is found in the Fourth Book, chapters 33 and 34.

The wide open mouth is also exemplified by Gargantua's first words: "A boyre, a boyre! a boyre!"⁹ It is also the leading theme of Pantagruel whose birth, an omen of good luck, was accompanied by an abundance of provisions spouting from Badebec's vagina during a merciless drought.

Car, alors que sa mere Badebec l'enfantoit,
et que les sages femmes attendoyent pour le
recepvoir, yssirent premier do son ventre
soixante et huyt tregeniers, chascun tirant
par le licol un mulet tout charge de sel, apres
lesquelz sortirent neuf dromadaires charges de
jambons et langues de boeuf fumees, sept chameaulx
chargez d'anguillettes, puis xxv charettes de por-
reaulx, d'aulx, d'oignons, et de cibotz...¹⁰

The Pan-vision of Rabelais is noted here in this symbolic representation of the most significant manifestation of Rabelais' cosmic universality. Nature is viewed as a narcissistic process which delights in its own absorption of itself. Spinoza's pantheistic line: Natura naturata, Natura Naturans, finds here a relevant application. The theme of the open mouth is, as we have mentioned in the first chapter, oral and vaginal; for the vagina, in psychological terms, is a "biting, rending, chewing mouth"¹¹ which invaginates intussusceptively. Badebec who, in the throes

of childbirth, expulsions from her womb the caravan of wagons loaded with food symbolizes on the one hand the vaginal gaping mouth, the open gate to the mysterious inferno of the bodily innerworld; but also the heavenly gate of procreation. Badebec is seen as Anima Mundi, the Jungian female archetype, the Mother Earth from whom everything originates and pours forth. The aliments enumerated by Rabelais have their own symbolism. It is obvious that collectively they represent the foul and salty odor of the amniotic discharge. Salt, the most important food stuff to emanate from Badebec's vagina, is a vital biological component of the body. It is also historically endowed with psycho-mythological symbolism whose exploration may cast some light into Rabelais' oral vision. Much of the material to follow on this brief excursus into the symbolism of salt is derived from Psycho-Myth, Psycho-History, a comprehensive and erudite study on the subject by Ernest Jones who first points out the universal symbolism of this substance which historically and geographically "has been invested with a significance far exceeding that inherent in its natural properties",¹² whose chief characteristics are primarily those of conservation and preservation. Salt thus became "regarded as emblematic of immortality" and by extension, wisdom, and divinity.¹³ Homer referred to salt as a divine substance and "Plato described it as especially dear to the Gods."¹⁴ Sal Sapientiae, the Salt of Wisdom, is still a formality in the Latin Church.

Salt has also been regarded as containing the "essence of things, particularly of life itself." ¹⁵"Ye are the salt of the earth." ¹⁶ In alchemy salt represented the body with sulphur representing union. "In Ancient Egypt salt and a burning candle represented life ." ¹⁷Naturally associated to the life preserving quality of salt is that of life giving. It is also associated with the sea whose extraordinary procreative quality is attributed to its saline composition. Salt is generative and medicinal. The Latin word "salus" may be related to "sal". In the Bible, Elisha throws salt into the fountain of Jericho to cure barrenness and impotence: "Il alla vers la source des eaux, et il y jeta du sel, et dit: Ainsi parle l'Eternel: J'assainis ces eaux; il n'en proviendra plus ni mort ni sterilité." ¹⁸ These curative and life giving properties of salt further explain Badebec's procreative gifts during the life consuming draught. The most representative geometrical symbol of the Rabelaisian enterprise is the last letter of the Greek alphabet, omega whose cylindrical form represents the oral and anal sphincters which constitute the psychological coordinates of Rabelais' periploos (Greek: roundtrip journey). This cycle is also represented by the death of Badebec who "mourut du mal d'enfant" ¹⁹after having given birth to a son who "esort si merveilleusement grand et se lourd qu'il suffoquer sa mere": ²⁰the birth of the new and the death of the old. Man's biological system is conceived as a canal or conduit delineated by the two functions of absorption and excretion

which metaphorically demonstrate the cyclical process of the universe.

Eating and drinking are interpreted by Rabelais as an ever renewed prise de conscience, an awakening, an encounter with the world where Man triumphs by ubiquitously incorporating its mystery. He tastes the world, swallows it, makes it part of himself and substantiatively becomes it. It is only in this psycho-analytical context that Rabelais' famous statement "rompre l'os et sugger la sustantificque mouelle"²¹ can be fully understood. We have already discussed, in the first chapter, the regenerative power of the anthropophagous act. Furthermore, the bone, "being a rigid, hollow tube containing a vital marrow is a very frequent phallic symbol in anthropological data and in the unconscious mind generally."²² Conception and impregnation are often related to eating of bones. Ernest Jones, Psych-Myth, Psych-History, mentions that in Egypt:

A bone thrown on a dung-heap, [a symbol which we will discuss later on in this chapter] grew into so fine a tree that no one had ever seen its like. The daughter of the man who had thrown the bone was desirous of seeing this wonderful tree; when she witnessed its beauty she was so entranced that she embraced it and kissing it, took a leaf into her mouth. As she chewed it she found the taste sweet and agreeable and swallowed the leaf,²³ at the same instant she conceived by will of God.

Another example on this same theme is found in Hugarian folklore which "holds that a dead man's bone shaved into drink and given to a woman will promote conception, or if given to a man will enhance his potency."²⁴ In his bacchic world,

wine drinking means the actual entry of the divine presence into the drinker, very much in the same way as that of the ancients who believed that they were actually swallowing Bacchus or Apollo²⁵ with the ceremonial beverage.

Jadis un antique Prophete de la nation
Judaique mangea un livre, et fut clere
jusques aux dens .²⁶

Rabelais' humanism conceives of eating and drinking as pro-creating. The oral incorporation is the birth of wisdom, the cradle of civilization, and the transcendency of mortal limitations. Wisdom is an insight of divine inspiration whose essence is distilled in wine and food. Like Plato, he associates the philosophical dialogue with wine. Rabelais' convivium, modeled after Plato's Symposium, serves as market place of intellectual bartering in the pursuit of truth. "The illustrious boozier is much more than an ailing sinner: he is a seeker, thirsty, for knowledge"²⁷ who engeminates the words "A boyre! a boyre! a boyre! with the passion of a desperate lover. Rabelais equates the drinker with the philosopher with Pantagruel's amazed reply to Panurge's wisdom: "depuys les dernieres pluyes tu es devenu grand lefrelou, voyre diz je philosophe."²⁸ The "philosophers" at Plato's symposium are true seekers of wisdom and wise drinkers of wine whose first order on the agenda, before deliberation, is to establish how to drink best.

Alors on se préoccupa de boire.... Quelle est
pour nous la façon de boire la plus inoffensive?²⁹

They opted for moderation:

Au lieu d'employer a s'enivrer la reunion de ce jour, on se reglerait pour boire sur le seul agrement . 30

Drinking wine is seen as an imbibition of worldly wisdom, a return to fundamental truth, a purely positive and therapeutic process. Rabelais sees in inebriation a breakdown of defenses, a peek at what we would call the unconscious. Drinking wine as well as other exercises of bodily needs at the Abbey of Theleme play an important part in the daily enjoyment of freedom:

Toute leur vie estoit employee non par la loix statuz ou reigles, mais selon leur vouloir et franc arbitre se levalent du lict quand bon leur semblaient, beuvoient, mangeoient, travailloient, dormoient quend le desir leur venoit; nul ne les esueilloit, nul ne les parforceoit ny a boyre ny a manger.... 31

We come now to Rabelais' famous quote: "Notez, amys, que de vin divin on devient", 32 which can be interpreted literally and psychosymbolically whereby "devient" takes the meaning of existing as well as existential becoming. Inspiration has its essence in the wine, symbol of the holy spirit which unleashes the genius and inspires the poet. Rabelais believes that Man's creativity is his existence; that one becomes, in all meanings of the word, through one's genius. Creativity is in the orally incorporated divine essence of wine.

The metaphorical God who govern Rabelais' universe is Proteus, deity of change and metamorphic agent of the mind. In the symbolism of this esoteric allegory wine fills the function of the angular stone and keystone of the alchemic becoming.

Creativity is thus a divine inspiration (from the Latin in - spirare: to breathe in) of becoming whose essence is found in the oral metaphor. Oral intoxication breaks the boundaries of identity and opens Pegasus' stables, the liberation of the poetic self. Rabelais rejects the stoic notion of sensual deprivation and physical alienation for intellectual production. He advocates wine at the expense of oil, "L'odeur du vin, o combien plus est friant, riant, priant, plus celeste et delicieux que l'huile."³³ Wine is God in liquid form, a catalytic agent in the transubstantiation of the spirit. Oil with its strictly clerical holiness implies the hateful clergy of an institutional and decadent church. Influences, perhaps more valuable to Rabelais than those of the church, inspire him to divine insight. As Florence M. Weinberg pointed out: "Alongside the classical poetic tradition, which values inspiration as much as techne, runs the tradition of Jewish wisdom literature that presents the wise man as recipient of sudden insight... The perfect nature is exemplified in the Old Testament by Issac who, from his birth, was graced by divine wisdom, and who therefore was able to skip the stages of mental growth which the ordinary mortal must struggle through."³⁴ It is also to liberate mankind from the sanctimoniousness of oil, as a symbol of systematic and syllogistic scholasticism that Rabelais values and glorifies the inspiration which stems from eating and drinking.

A la composition de ce livre seigneurial,
je ne perdez ne employay oncques plus, ny
aultre temps que celley qui estoit estably
a prendre ma refection corporelle, scavoir

Is it "celeste" inspiration or just coincidence? Was he aware that present participle "mangeant" is syllabically divisible in "man" (homo) and "geant" which semiotically reiterate the central theme of his universal dialogue? Moreover, the infinitive "manger", a syllabic aggregate of "man" (homo) and "ger" (from the Greek gea - earth, land) corroborates the liaison between homo and Chthonios (Χθόνιος).

Through the introjection of food a link is established between homo and matter, or "gaster" and "mater". Eating and drinking nourish the spiritual body of his writing. Indeed, one should focus on medieval understanding of the functioning of the body and specifically of its reproductive organs to comprehend more fully the meaning of wine in relationship to the body. The great medical authority of his time, Galen, (Rabelais' medical dissertation was a translation from the Greek of a text by Galen), still believed that wine was almost instantly transformed into blood. Therefore drinking wine is tantamount to a transfusion and the Eucharist is to be explained as divine incorporation.

The whole transubstantiative process believed by the ancients is expounded by Galen in his On the Natural Faculties. Here is a passage extracted from Florence F. Weinberg's The Wine and the Will giving a synopsis of the concept:

The ancient Greeks considered the brain to be a large reservoir of semen, the spine a conduit through which this "grey matter" flowed to the reproductive organs. Through this conduit, too, the souls or

animal spirits pass on to the future fetus in the act of generation. This is the original marrow implanted by the Demiurge which is passed on "to be a universal seed of the whole race of mankind." This "ailment elaboure a perfection de nature", "food refined to the peak of natural perfection," "First principle" and habitation of the soul, may be eaten, and thereby may transfer its properties to the consumer. As nutriment, Galen compares marrow (which feeds and sustains the bones which enclose it) to the blood which feeds the organs, and to the wine, which he believes is transformed almost instantly into blood. ³⁶

The divine power of blood is expressed by Rabelais in the first chapter of Pantagruel:

peu apres que Abel fust occis par son frere Cain, la terre embue du sang du juste fut certaine annee si tres fertile en tous fruictz.... ³⁷

The blood of the "juste" Abel fertilized the earth which produced fruits which were also endowed with supernatural essence for, he continues,

qui de see flans nous sont produytz, et singuliere-ment en mesles, que on l'appella de toute memoire l'annee des grosses mesles, car les troys en faisoient le boyseau. ³⁸

Those who ate the fat and juicy medlars developed amazing appendages and some grew to be giants, from whom came Pantagruel:

Mais accidens bien divers leurs en advindrent, car a tous survint au corps une enfleure tres horrible, mais non a tous en un mesme lieu. Car aucuns employent par le centre, et le ventre leur devenoit bossu comme une grosse tonne... Les aultres employent par les espaulles, et tant estoient bossus qu'on les appelloit montiferes.... Les aultres employent en longueur par le membre, qu'on nomme le laboureur de nature, en sorte qu'ilz le avoyent merueilleusement long, grand, gras, gros, vert et acreste a la mode antique, si bien qu'ilz s'en servoyent de ceinture, le redoublans a cinq ou six foys par le corps... Aultres croissoient en matiere de couilles si enormement

que les troys emplissoient bien un muy. D'iceulx sont descendues les couilles de Lorraine, lesquelles jamays ne habitent en braguette: elles tombent au fond des chausses. Aultres croyssoient par les jambes et a les veoir eussiez dict que c'estoyent grues ou flammans... Es aultres tant croissoit le nez qu'il sembloit la fleute d'un alambic...Aultres croissoient par les aureilles... Les aultres croissoient en long du corps. Et de ceulx la sont venuz les Geans... 39

We are presented here with the rejuvenative cycle of life through blood and food which feed on each other in a most primitive and acute synoptic relationship; for food is needed for the body to produce blood which, in turn, as is exemplified in Abel's death, the first one in biblical history, fertilized the land "as a seed buried in the earth, rising for another life."⁴⁰ This same theme of incorporation and Eucharistic mystery is clearly expressed in this Biblical reference:

He who eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. ⁴¹

Drinking the blood of Christ and eating His flesh were very popular themes of early Christian mysteries. The Eucharistic transubstantiation was taken literally and in reverse whereby the blood of Christ became the pure wine of wisdom and His flesh the food of wisdom. It is from this basic theme that Rabelais weaves his metaphorical imagery. Again, as Florence F. Weinberg pointed out:

In representing the Eucharistic mystery as he does, Rabelais may well have had recourse not only to hermetic and Christian writing but also to contemporary and near-contemporary Church art.

The symbolism of the wine had become increasingly important in the Church of the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries, a preoccupation which expressed itself in particularly bloody representations of Christ on the Cross. Christian art became obsessed with the implications inherent in the shedding of divine blood; the crucified Christ was painted in gory detail, covered with wounds... But this bloody imagery still did not satisfy the Christian imagination in late medieval and Renaissance France. In order better to express the horror of the crucifixion and to illustrate more graphically that Christ gave his last drop of blood for the sinner, artists began to picture him in the grip of an enormous cruciform wine press; his blood jets out like the juice of a grape, and flows into the waiting vat. 42

The implication is clear. Christ's blood turns into wine, the transubstantiation in reverse. The happy festivities of the harvest symbolize the drinking of the blood of Christ, the Father, supporting the Rabelaisian imagery of wine drinking as an incorporation of the divine presence. Obsession with wine and wafer is well manifested throughout Rabelais' work. One bloody battle and a succeeding war result directly from some form of interference with the availability of wine and stealing of "fouaces". In the first instance, Frere Jean des Entommeures mercilessly defends his abbey's vitis vinifera from being ravaged by the enemy, singlehandedly killing 13,622 men in the vineyard itself which served as battlefield. We notice the primitive ceremonial cruelty of the massacre:

"il chocqua doncques si royement sus eulx, sans dyre guare, qu'il les renversoyt comme porce, frapant a tors et a travers, a vieille escrime. Es uns escarbouilloyt la cervelle, es aultres rompoyt bras et jambes, es aultres deslochoyt les spondyles du coul, es aultres demouloyt les reins, avalloyt le nez, poschoyt les yeulx, fendoyt les mandibules, enfoncoyt les dens en la gueule,

LE PRESOIR DE NOSTRE SAVVEUR IESVS CHRIST.



De la Presse qui presse le Christ, par de la Presse, par de la Presse.

. *Le Pressoir Mystique.* Engraving from the Cabinet des Estampes, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

descroulloyt les omoplates, sphaceloit les greves,
 desgondoit les ischies, debezilloit les fauciles.
 Si quelq'un se vouloyt cascher entre les sepes
 plus espes, a icelluy freussoit toure l'arestes du
 douz et l'esrenoit commen an chien. Si aulcun saul-
 ver se vouloyt en fuyant, a icelluy faisoyt voler
 la teste en pieces par la commissure lambdoide. Si
 quelq'un gravoyt en une arbre, pensant y estre en seurete,
 icelluy de son baston empaloyt par le foundement.
 Si quelqu'un de sa vieille congnoissance luy crioyt:
 Ha, Frere Jean, mon amy, Frere Jean, je me rend!
 Il t'est (disoit il) bien force; mais ensemble tu
 rendras l'ame a tous les diables. Et soubdain luy
 donnoit dronos. Et, si personne tant feust esprins
 de temerite qu'il luy voulust resister en face, la mon-
 stroyt il la force de ses muscles, cae il leurs trans-
 percoyt la poictrine par le mediastine et par le cueur.
 A d'autres donnant suz la faulte des coustees, leurs
 subvertissoyt l'estomach, et mouroient soubdainement.
 Es aultres tant fierement frappoyt par le nombril qu'il
 leurs faisoyt sortir les tripes. Es aultres parmy les
 couillons persoyt le boiau cullier. Croiez que c'estoyt
 le plus horrible spectacle qu'on veit oncques.⁴³

A furious slaughter to save the new crop of wine, a holy war against the sacriligious infidels undertaken ceremoniously and gloriously. The blood of the dying victims gives life to the procreating grapes. The whole scene is a gigantic and chthonian sacrifice in which young, able bodies are slaughtered to quench the thirst of Bacchus. "This is the vineyard of Dionysus, the feast of the harvest."⁴⁴ The battle symbolizes the revenge of the crucifixion. Frère Jean uses "son baston de la croix"⁴⁵ as his weapon to give us "a glimpse of the vats of that puree septembrale",⁴⁶ for it is precisely during the harvest that the massacre takes place; a common Rabelaisian image: "Blood is changed into wine."⁴⁷ Rabelais appears drawn to the more primitive aspects of Christianity, to Christianity in the raw. He makes

us aware of the ancestral body of mankind, its historical immortality, which is the nucleus of the entire system of one of his favorite themes, the popular festive imagery, in which the concept of the biological functioning is interwoven not only with the cosmic but also with the social and historical processes. Carnival was the true feast of wine and reincarnation. It was the feast of change, renewal and becoming, the modern civilized re-enactment of the sacrifice. At carnival time, the brethren got together in the spirit of equality, a temporary liberation from the prevailing social order and from the established hierarchy. Only during such festivities would the brothers shed distinctions of rank, privilege, wealth and birth rights. All had to partake equally in the ensuing sacrifice, in the symbolical patricide. They had to share as kin in the exalted frenzy of the guilt and deification. At this point, we must digress slightly to return to our first chapter in order to comprehend, in conjunction with our psychoanalytical interpretation, the dynamics behind class differentiation. While class distinction has historically and socio-economically been determined by its access to food, class consciousness has resulted from its own relationship to the soil. "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."⁴⁸ Class distinction is used in this context as a socio-materialistic concept which distinguishes between the superior classes who owned the land which, toiled by the lower classes, provided for the nutritional and material needs of the former and the latter

bound to the land. It implies, on the other hand, that poverty is the inherent condition of the landless peasants or serfs who work the land but do not own it. One of the earliest known references to class distinction is found in the Rig-Veda, a compilation of early Aryen hymns recounting the beginning of the world. Interestingly enough it tells how the tribes were divided according to the cast system of which the lowest ones were subjugated to the tilling of the land. Inequality was thus a by-product of the phenomenon of territorial imperative, itself ensuing from the agricultural age or what we might describe as a gastro-incestual complex of Man towards the land. In other words, the tiller of the land becomes the pariah of society, forever chained by his superior brothers to the raping tiller, "le membre qu'on nomme le laboureur de nature"⁴⁹, doomed to eternal guilt and slavery. The Eternal Himself looks down on Cain the tiller when the latter offers Him the produce of his labor while He accepts gratefully the offering of Abel the shepherd:

And in process of time it came to pass,
that Cain brought of the fruit of the
ground an offering unto the Lord. And
Abel, he also brought of the firstlings
of his flock and of the fat thereof.
And the Lord had respect unto Abel and
to his offering; but unto Cain he had
no respect.⁵⁰

We are to conclude that from the onset, the first two sons of Adam and Eve, a social distinction was established by divine choice between the gatherer and keeper of the land and the tiller-laborer of the earth. Psychoanalytically we interpret this as the condemnation of Man, the son, raping

mother earth to eat from her torn body. Distinctions of Good and Evil are now established from which class distinction and hierarchy between the brethren infallibly ensue.

The carnival and the banquet, favorite themes and imagery of Rabelais, are seen as concretizations of basic drives at reunification of the ancestral fraternity. If we follow this psychological interpretation we understand that the suppression of the hierarchial procedures during carnival time was of great significance, in contrast to official feasts where rank was particularly evident as the superior orders, in a consecratory display of inequality, made a point of appearing in full regalia particular to their calling rank. During the festive carnival time, however, all participants were considered equal. Only during these rare moments did a restricted communication and familiar contact occur among those who at all other times were separated and divided by all the boundaries imposed by birth. Carnival was therefore a rebirth of fraternal relations, an enactment of pre-natal as well as post-mortal equality. An especially rich idiom of forms and symbols evolves that, from the primitive Saturnalias on through the centuries, has expressed the extraordinary experience of the carnival. The mood of these popular festivities was a symbolical happening, an unconscious process, a joyous, exhilarating exanthema of repressed primitive forces. What is generally referred to as the grotesque realism of the carnival is psychodynamical acting out of sublimated energy. Mikhail M. Bakhtin made

an excellent study of the popular festive forms and images in Rabelais' work: Rabelais and His World, in which he discusses in detail the underlying psycho-anthropological meaning of the various symbolisms related to carnivals and banquets. We will quote here a paragraph dealing with the popular thrashing of the "king", a popular event at all carnivals.

...thrashing and abuse are not a personal chastisement but are symbolic actions directed at something on a higher level, at the king", and he adds, " In such a system the king is the clown. He is elected by all the people and is mocked by all the people. He is abused and beaten...just as the carnival dummy of winter or the dying year is mocked, beaten, torn to pieces, burned, or drowned even in our time .⁵¹

The "king", the father figure, is to be understood simply as the father or father-son who is "thrashed", torn to pieces and, as we have already seen, eaten by the collectivity of the brothers. Popular festive traditions as well as antique traditions of the Saturnalia presented several examples, probably known to the erudite Rabelais, of such debasements, mutilations, killings and incorporations of father-king figure. These happenings are often followed by resurrections which marked the rebirth of the new after the death of the old. Rabelais utilizes this syncretic theme in the episode of the Chiquanous who are at once killed and regenerated back to life. The ritual thrashing of the Third Chiquanous at Lord Basche's house is also a reenactment of the forbidden sexual act with all the usual symbols, i.e. phallus (Baston de mariage or baton à un bout, "to stroke", "to strike" and others.) The episode of the thrashing presents the character

of popular festive comic performance but, underlying its appearance of gaiety and free play, lies its true psychological meaning whereby the old world Father-King-God, is killed while the forbidden sexual act, which we have already analysed as the rape of the Mother Earth, gives birth to the new.

We shall now examine briefly, through his literary imagination, Rabelais' conception and interpretation of the banquet imagery in the carnival phenomenon. Carnival, from Medieval Latin "carne vale", "O flesh farewell", is, as the etymology of the word indicates, specifically related to food, or more explicitly to meat. It is a festival and revelry before Lent, that is the last opportunity for eating meat, as in the French Mardi Gras, before the lean season, when meats are prohibited. The banquet is the coda of the carnival; it celebrates its death. It is the orgy before the repentance, the delirious celebration of the sin in anticipation of the guilt which explains the meatless days of Lent. The ultimate banquet, the Last Supper, has a tradition which goes back to ancient times and mention of it is made in the Bible (See Luke XIV: 15-24). Death is followed by rebirth, while carnival symbolizes death, Lent symbolizes birth. Rabelais underlines the phenomenon by pointing out the inordinate consumption of aphrodisiac foods during Lent.

aussi par les evidentes raisons produites
de tous bons et scavans medecins, affermans
en tout le decours de l'annee n'estre viandes
mangees plus excitantes la personne a lubricite

QVARESIMA



Per il Natale

D. N. Enzoppe

G. R. N.

CARESME, per Branbilla

qu'un cestuy temps: febves, poix, phaseols,
chiches, oignons, noix, huytres, harans, saleures,
garon, salades, toutes composees d'herbes veneri-
que, comme eruce, nasitord, targon, cresson, berle,
response, pavot cornu, haubelon, figues, ris, raisins. 52

The banquet highlights the carnival; it recreates the triumphant victory and celebration to which everyone is invited. Rabelais' Pan-vision of the world is fascinated by the social transgressions and explosive interaction of the crowd, the inherent tendency towards abundance and toward the all-embracing popular element of the festivity. His genius recognized that the cohesive element which bonded his heteroclitic company together was food. As Mikhail Bakhtin correctly pointed out, food is related to work. It is the conclusion of the work struggle. "Work triumphs in food."⁵³ Man's encounter with the world is Sisyphus' encounter with his stone. He works at pushing his rock up the mountain, a task which hopefully will reward him with enough to eat to back down alone to get his rock. It is a lonely, tiresome, discouraging, almost punitive process. However, the carnival is collective eating. It is the universalism of mankind, the togetherness of the fraternity in re-enactment of life's struggle, triumph, death, the vestiges of the collective living followed by the collective feasting, the remains of the oral stage. As the banquet highlights the carnival, the sacrifice highlights the banquet. It acts as its underlying motif behind its raison d'être. Rabelais mentions a sacrifice in one of the games "au beuf viole" enumerated in the 22nd chapter of Gargantua. In that passage he describes the sacrifice of an ox in a cere-

mony also called "boeuf viole" in which the said ox was slaughtered and its meat was chopped up and made into sausages. On its way to the sacrificial site, the ox, decorated with multicolored ribbons, passed through the streets of the town amidst pomp and circumstance to the tune of violas (hence the name Boeuf viole).⁵⁴ The ox clearly symbolizes a father figure, an ithyphallos, a procreator representing "The city's fertility", thus a procreating victim. The sacrificial killing of the father permits the oral incorporation of the procreating phallus by the multitude in the form of phallic sausages. The ox as a symbol of fertility and fecundity has been widely utilized in most civilizations throughout history. Erik H. Erikson tells us in his book, Childhood and Society, of a ritual ceremony among the Dakota Indians who, following the ritual killing and eating of the ox-buffalo, and while gazing directly at the sun, rip "the flesh of their chests open" and thus "through their suffering assure the continued benevolence of the sun and the Buffalo spirit, the providers of fecundity and fertility."⁵⁵

Wine and food, as nourishment, are incorporated into the body by following a determined itinerary, going from the mouth to the stomach, then through both intestines, finally ending their dark journey through the inner world of the body out of the anus into the outer world. Rabelais points out the itinerary in a short passage which does not appear in the standard Pleiade edition edited by Jacques Boulanger, Rabelais, Œuvres Complètes, or the Garnier edition of Pierre Jourda which we have used throughout this chapter (see bibliography). It figures

in the English translation of Jacques Le Clercq. Here is the quote:

Now the digestion of food is a most important matter. There is the first stage which occurs in the stomach where the viands are changed into chyle, the second, in the liver, where the chyle is transformed into blood; the third, in the body, where the blood is finally converted into the substance of each part.⁵⁶

Rabelais concludes a few lines further with: "la digestion parachevee, se purgoit des excrements naturelz..."⁵⁷ Symbolically, food is seen as pilgrims of the digestive tract in quest of their destiny like the medieval monks who treaded southward to Saint James of Compostella. Rabelais' system is cyclical. Death is a transition in the perpetual circle of regeneration. This image, found in the Greek theater and in the Bible, "Tout va dans un même lieu; tout a été fait de la poussière, et tout retourne à la poussière",⁵⁸ was, no doubt, familiar to Rabelais. It is the reason why we find the hermetic metaphor at the center of Rabelais' writing. Since Hermes is the god of alchemy and the psychopompus, the god of metaphor, he represents the interior pilgrimage undertaken by Rabelais' heroic giants. This cyclical death-life generating phenomenon is also represented in the "pint of tripe", a frequent theme in Rabelais novel. The tripe, as the lining of the stomach and intestines, was believed to retain some fecal matter, even after thorough washing and cooking. "Celluy a grande envie de mascher merde, qui d'icelle le sac mangeue."⁵⁹is his statement reiterated a few lines further, in connection with Gargamelle's gro-

tesque consumption of "seze nuiz, deux bussars et six tupins"⁶⁰ of the said tripes: "O belle matiere fecale que doitvoit boursouffler en elle!"⁶¹ The point is that the tripe, which was consumed in large quantities during carnival times retained animal dung which was eaten with the rest of the meal. The tripe is also the belly, the very life of man. The devouring, swallowing belly of the cow is swallowed and devoured into the belly of man to be expelled as excretia. In these words, the belly doesn't only eat and swallow, it is eaten as well in the form of tripe which represents death, slaughter, murder, disembowlement and life as nourishment. In the image of tripe, life, death, birth, excrements and food are all tied together in one knot. Excrement, like blood is endowed with divine power. In the sixtieth chapter of the Quart Livre, Master Gaster sent his men to "veoir, considerer, philosopher et contempler quelle divinite ils trouvoient en sa matiere fecale."⁶² Gargamelle consumes the tripes when she is in labor which, of course, symbolizes life, but she overeats of tripes which causes her intestine to fall out symbolizing destruction, disembowlement and death. "Gargamelle's labor and the falling out of the right intestine link the devoured tripe with those who devour them."⁶³ This image represents the center of bodily topography in which the upper and lower stratum penetrate each other. The intestines are the site and residence of the existential axis of the individual. Moral fortitude and temerity which are indispensable compo-

nents for any form of heroism are incarnated in an organ endowed with ontological significance. This sinuous coil symbolizes the nucleic center of the individual, the immutable self, the chthonic virtue. It is the metaphore of the uroboros, a graphic archetype of the theme of orality-anality, a symbol of infinity in the unending dialectic of nutrition and excretion.

Rabelais and The Oral Tradition

Rabelais' understanding of the world, his cosmic vision of Man are influenced by several classical and medieval writers who also sought to reach a metaphysical unity of the world. His enormously erudite knowledge of history, religion and literature is impressive and overwhelming.

We will endeavor in this study, to point out the important works and legends related to the oral tradition which Rabelais may have known and utilized to formulate his own concept of Man's orality. The influence of the ancients is clearly visible in the medieval concepts of multiple symbiotic relationships between Man's body and the earth via the medium of food. We have previously mentioned The True History of Lucianus of Samosata (second century Ad). This work appears to be the most direct and global influence on Rabelais' inspiration. Although considerable shorter than our author's opus magnum, several episodes of the two books bear a striking resemblance. We will, in the course of this chapter, draw comparisons between the two works. In the Middle Ages, one important work dealing with orality is a French comic drama, Le Jeu de la Feuilllee, dating 1276 or 1277 of Adam de la Halle who presents in the last part of the work a description of the triumphant feasting marking the end of the May Day Carnival. The partakers are seen consuming large quantities of food and drinking profusely in an atmosphere of complete freedom of speech, action and gaiety liberated from

the constraints of the church. Le Jeu de la Feuillée, written some three centuries before Rabelais is, like so many other medieval works, such as Boccaccio's Decameron, and Cervantes, Don Quixote, influenced by still earlier important works.

One of these ancient literary monuments is the Rig-Veda which offers a description of the birth of the world from the body of a certain Purusha, sacrificed by the Gods and cut up according to the laws of sacrificial dismemberment. "From Purusha's body, as well as from certain cosmic phenomena, was the universe created. The sun came from his eyes, the sky from his head, the earth from his feet, but from his mouth came man", ⁶⁴ an interesting variation of the oral interpretation of the origin of Man. The influences on the medieval grotesque literary vein are multiple and varied. Macrobius, Plutarch, Pliny, are just a few of the very powerful, influential, masters of that trend. It is, however, Hippocrates' influence which is probably the most pronounced. Scattered and ill-defined, far from being homogeneous, ⁶⁵ the Hippocratic notion is nevertheless essentially cosmic, emphasizing the symbiotic phenomena of Man and earth. In the following excerpt from the work entitled, De Platibus (The Winds), Hippocrates draws together cosmic life and that of the body; a process which takes place via the elemental or substantial oral intake:

Now bodies, of men and of animals generally, are nourished by three kinds of nourishment, and the names thereof are solid food, drink and wind. Wind in bodies is called breath, outside bodies it is called air. It is the most powerful of all and in all, and it is worth

while examining its power. A breeze is a flowing and a current of air. When therefore much air flows violently, trees are torn up by the roots through the force of the wind, the sea swells into waves, and vessels of vast bulk are tossed about. Such then is the power that it has in these things, but it is invisible to sight, though visible to reason. For what can take place without it? In what is not present" What does it not accompany" For everything between heaven and earth is full of wind. Wind is the cause of both winter and summer, becoming in winter thick and cold, and in summer gentle and calm. Nay, the progress of sun, moon, and stars is because of wind; for wind is food for fire, and without air fire could not live. Wherefore, too, air being thin causes the life of the sun to be eternal. May, it is clear that the sea, too, partakes of wind, for swimming creatures would not be able to live did they not partake of wind. Now how could they partake except by inhaling the air of the water? In fact, the earth too is a base for air, and air is a vehicle of the earth, and there is nothing that is empty of air. How air, then, is strong in the case of wholes has been said; and for mortals too this is the cause of life, and the cause of disease in the sick. So great is the need of wind for all bodies that while a man can be deprived of everything else, both food and drink, for two three, or more days, and live, yet if the wind passages into the body be cut off he will die in a brief part of a day, showing that the greatest need for the body is wind. Moreover, all other activities of a man are intermittent, for life is full of changes; but breathing is continuous for all mortal creatures, inspiration and exiration being alternate. ⁶⁶

The symbolical representation of air or wind as elements of orality has several historical antecedents. In Mexico, for instance "le prophète Quetzalcohuall divinisé, était représenté par les Précolombiens, avec une tête d'oiseau dont la langue sortait du bec. C'était là le hiéroglyphe employé pour désigner le Vent". ⁶⁷ The concept of air as vital and substantial food is utilized by Rabelais in the chapter entitled

Comment Pantagruel descendit en l'isle de Ruach where the inhabitants of the island live entirely on wind, eating and drinking nothing but wind:

Ils ne vivent que de vent. Rien ne beuvent, rien ne mangent, sinon vent. Ilz n'ont maisons que de gyrouettes. En leurs jardins ne sement que les troys especes de anemone. La rue et aultres herbes carminatives ilz en escurent soingneusement. Le peuple commun, pour soy alimenter, use de esvantois de plumes, de papier, de toille, selon leur faculte et puissance. Les riches vivent de moulines a vent. Quant ilz font quelque festin ou banquet, on dresse les tables sous un ou deux moulins a vent. La, repaissent, aises comme a nopces. Et durant leur repas, disputent de la bonte, excellence, salubrite, rarite des vens, comme vous, beuveurs, par les banquets philosophez en matiere de vins. ⁶⁸

Air and wind are rather common metaphors of life or symbolical representations of life giving powers throughout antiquity and the medieval burlesque genre. Homer's Odysseus' passage at the court of Alcinous, for example, contains a grotesque story dealing with wind bags. Lucianus of Samosata's work, The True History, a definite afflatus for Rabelais' verve,

makes note of the fact in the author's preface. Lucianus himself makes extensive use of the wind metaphor. Rabelais' passage just mentioned above is an exact duplicate of the following imagery from The True History; in reference to the Moon People who "to quench their thirst just squeeze some air into a glass and drink that ⁶⁹ The metaphor of wind as a life giving element is even more directly expressed in the following passage:

In due course they do a Caesarean, and the baby is taken out dead; but it is then

brought to life by being placed in a high wind with its mouth wide open. ⁷⁰

The wide open mouth as the oral metaphor of birth is again illustrated. The cyclical system of excretion and absorption, the narcissistic process of the universe are described in the following oral metaphor:

When they blow their noses, what comes out is extremely sour honey, and when they have been working hard or taking strenuous exercise, they sweat milk at every pore. Occasionally they turn it into cheese, by adding a few drops of honey. ⁷¹

Rabelais uses a very similar imagery in his chapter entitled:

Continuation des contences de Quaresmeprenant:

...S'il mouchait, c'estoient anguilletes salee...S'il suoit, c'estoient moulues au beurre frays... ⁷²

These two examples of excretion-nutrition (oral absorption) are found among a long list of bodily manifestations of which at least seventeen belong to this category.

This basic relationship between the cosmic elements and Man is also represented in Rabelais' work by the giants whose very existence is a communion with the universe. We find in Hippocrates' essay entitled, Airs, Waters, Places, an article where the author finds a similarity between the earth's topography and peoples' temperaments, a representation of man's ⁷³ differentiating as well as differential conditions. In another essay entitled, The Number Seven, the earth is equated to a "huge human body whose head is the Peloponnesus, the spine is the Isthmus, and so on. Each geographical part

of the earth corresponds to a limb; the physical and spiritual features and life styles and the populations depend on their anatomical localization."⁷⁴ We have already mentioned Rabelais' quasi-obsession with bodily eliminations. Hippocrates also lists the various forms of eliminatory wastes as "stoole, urine, sputa, vomit, sweat,... winds, caugh, sneezes, hiccoughs, breathing, belching,... hemorrhoids",⁷⁵ "wart, tumor, womb, carcinoma..."⁷⁶ Rabelais may well have been directly influenced by these Hippocratic excrementitious lists when he composed Chapter thirty-two mentioned above, itself preceded in the previous two chapters by a grotesque enumeration of some one hundred-twenty anatomical organs of the human body as well as the following biological extravaganza:

de legiere concoction, de facile diges-
tion, laquelle vous esbanoist le cerveau,
esboudist les espritz animalx, resjouist
la venue, ouvre l'appetit, delecte le goust,
assere la coeur, chatouille la langue, faict
le tainct clair, fortifie les muscles, tempere
le sang, alliege le diaphragme, refraischist
le foye, desoppile la ratelle, soulaige les
roignons, assoupist les reins, desgourdist
les spondyles, vuide les ureteres, dilate
les vases spermaticques, abbrevie les crem-
asteres, expurge la vissie, enfle les geni-
toires, corrige le prepuce, incruste le
balane, recitfie le membre; vous faict bon
ventre bien rotter, vessir, peter, fianter,
uriner, esternuer, sangloutir, toussir,
cracher, vomiter, baisler, mouscher,
haleiner, inspirer, respirer, ronfler,
suer, dresser le virolet, et mille autres
rars adventaiges.⁷⁷

Rabelais's preoccupations however are mainly urine, feces and winds. We have already touched upon the excremental symbolism of the tripes. There are numerous others, for excrements "were conceived as an essential element in the life of the body"

and of the "earth in the struggle against death",⁷⁸ a concept very much in the Hippocratic line of thought. Coprophagous rituals have been reported among several Indian tribes. Others, while not ingesting the dung, revere it for its magical power. Strabo's famous Geography (first century BC), a work which must have been known to Rabelais, tells of the Nabataeans, an Asiatic tribe, who "have the same regard for the dead as for dung" and "bury even their kings beside dung-heaps."⁷⁹ On three different occasions Rabelais uses urine as a weapon, part of the natural body arsenal, to inundate the enemy. In the first book, Gargantua's mare urinates and floods the enemy:

sa jument pissa pour se lascher le ventre; mais ce fut en telle abondance qu'elle en feist sept lieues de deluge, et deriva tout le pissat us gue de Vede, et tant l'enfla devers le fil de l'eau que toute ceste bande des ennemys furent en grand horreur noyez....⁸⁰

In a passage from the 38th chapter, it is Gargantua's turn:

Lors pissa se copieusement que l'urine trancha le chemin aux pelerins, et furent contrainctz passer la grande boyre.⁸¹

In the second book, Pantagrue does the same:

Soubdain print envie a Pantagrue de pisser, a cause des drogues que luy avoit baille Panurge, et pissa parmy leur camp, se bien et copieusement ue'il les noya tous; et y eut deluge particulier dix lieues a la ronde, et dist l'histoire que, se la grand jument de son pere y eust este et pisse pareillement, qu'il y eust eu deluge plus enorme que celluy de Deucalion: care elle ne pissoit foys qu'elle ne fist une riviere plus grande que n'est le Rosne et le Danouble.⁸²

Psycho-analytically, urine, semen, sputum and saliva are related through obvious characteristics. To a child, "the corresponding potent fluid (of semen) is urine." Psycho-anthropological evidences of the procreative and magical properties of urine are as numerous as those of salt which we have discussed earlier. It is evident that urine and sweat, both being very salty excretory substances, are psycho-analytically connected to salt. "Pliny describes the aphrodisiac properties of the urine voided by a bull immediately after copulation; it may either be drunk or used to moisten earth which is then rubbed into the groin."⁸³ Other examples of the procreative properties of urine are found in various cultures:

At Hottentot weddings the priest urinates over the bride and bridegroom, and the latter, receiving the stream with eagerness, makes furrows with his nails so that the urine may penetrate farther.⁸⁴

In Algiers a woman seeks to cure barrenness by drinking sheep's urine.⁸⁵

In Siam, a man urinated daily on a certain apple tree, with the result that it bore especially large fruits. A princess ate one of the apples and thereupon became pregnant.⁸⁶

Preoccupation with the body's vital functions as an integral part of the life cycle of the cosmic organism was prevalent throughout the Europe of the Renaissance. Medicine, in the Hippocratic image, anatomy and dissection, was the center of the natural sciences and the humanities. Medicine and philosophy were interrelated as philosophy and mathematics were to become centuries later. ⁸⁷

Wisdom, philosophy, and medicine were linked into a scientific system whose aim was to demonstrate the harmony of the human body with the cosmic world. Paracelsus' basis of the entire medical theory was the complete concordance of the macrocosm (the universe) and the microcosm (Man). He believed that philosophy and astronomy were the foundations of medical theory, that "all the elements of the universe are found and are connected in the sphere of the individual body"⁸⁸ Know thy sky and thou shall know thy body! When in the Renaissance the medieval concept of the Aristotelian cosmos, based on the concept of the Aristotelian cosmos, based on the precept of the hierarchial position of the four elements was abandoned and the accent was placed on the horizontal plane, the human body became the relative center of the cosmos. It is perhaps Pico della Mirandola's famous oratio, Oratio de hominis dignitate, which most strikingly expressed this Renaissance ideal by asserting, in quasi existential terms, Man's superiority to all beings, including the celestial spirits, by stressing Man's quality of not only being, but also becoming. Pico della Mirandola's battle to free Man from the closed,

pre-determined, pessimistic concept of Man's destiny, is reminiscent of Kierkegaard's criticism of the whole corpus of post-Christian philosophy from Spinoza to Hegel, what he termed the Goetheo-Hegelian world. That world which was diametrically opposed to the individual freedom of existence. Kierkegaard's rejection of the Hegelian completed system, his defense of the open, limitless future, "Life must be lived forward, but understood backwards", is, of sorts, the second breaking of the medieval circle, Pico's historic becoming of mankind.

It is this new awareness of man's universality, the belief that the human body is a compendium of the elements and forces of the universe, drawing together the most remote phenomena and forces of the cosmos, which has reunited the clan of Mankind. Only in this light, with these principles in mind, can we understand the true meaning, the Zeitgeist of the festival tradition and the Rabelaisian feast. The festival tradition must be seen in the light of the psychodynamic elements which we have developed in the first chapter. Festival images have a universal meaning, in relation to the unconscious past. They symbolize in a sublimated form the eclectic primitive concepts of togetherness, dismemberment, devouring and death. It also celebrates victory. "The universal banquet is always a triumph of life over death",⁸⁹ of the brothers over their parents. Death in the form of the sacrifice, the reenactment of the crime, never marks the end of the celebration. Life must start anew. Death is the essence

of man, containing the potentialities of the rebirth which is expressed in the act of swallowing as a symbolical incorporation of the old body. The perpetuation of the body's essence is expressed in the recycling of its flesh.

An understanding of the festival tradition will help us further in shedding some light on the Rabelaisian concept of the banquet. Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais and His World, has made a brilliant study of the antecedents to Rabelaisian banquet imagery which we will use as our main source of information. One of the oldest examples of this tradition is found in a work entitled, Coena Cypriani, which is a compilation of various eating, drinking and other festive scenes from the basic Christian works incorporated into one gigantic banquet attended by a host of biblical figures, from Adam and Eve to Christ. The Coena itself is presented with all the symbols pertaining to each individual. When the merriments are over, including the symbolic gifts presentations, a theft is discovered and every one is accused but Hugar is executed in atonement. All the characteristics peculiar to our theme are present: An incongruous group, excesses, merriment, equality and sacrifice are all evoked in a Saturalian atmosphere but as Bakhtin points out, it also

brings together persons from the most diverse periods of Biblical history. It is, as it were, the gathering of all history, represented by the protagonists around the festive table. The banquet acquires a grandiose, universal character .⁹⁰

Using an anachronistic compendium of biblical personages, the author offers a cosmic, Pan-vision of history. The

sacrificial death of Hugar followed by the parodic funeral is obviously a sublimated act for it is atoning. The guilt is indirect and projected. The Coena Cypriani interestingly enough enjoyed tremendous success until the sixteenth century, even among the clergy. Pope John VIII even put it to verse.

Another important work from the eleventh century which may have influenced Rabelais is The Treatise of Garcia of Toledo, representing a Bacchic papal banquet, a satirical exaggeration of the litany, a grotesque parody of the Last Supper, during which, to use the words of Bakhtin, the "Pope's insatiable appetites acquires cosmic dimensions."⁹¹ His august prelate entourage joins in this gastro-cosmic redemption. The atmosphere of this treatise is of satirical exaggeration, but yet free, debonair, if not joyful. The accent, as in all banquet and feast imagery, is on the affirmation of the living process, a glimpse at the cosmic phenomenon of orality. The bodily images of the banquet are stereotyped: the fat paunch, the gaping mouth, the giant ithyphallus; and, of course, gratified lust, satiety, satisfaction. The image, however, is split, for it is also that of the knife, the teeth, greed, voraciousness, ruthlessness and aggression, as characteristics of Man's oral ambiguity. The theme of the Dionysiac curia is also present in Rabelais writing in the form of the gluttonous monkery who, having nothing better to do, "observent diligemment un proverbe claustral, de missa ad mensam."⁹² In the same chapter from where this motto ekkleisiastikos appears, Rabelais describes a series of purging cabalistic

rituals, preambles to entering the "Sainte chappelle":

Fiantouient aux fiantouoirs, pissoient
aux pissouoirs, crachotent aux crachoirs,
toussotent aux toussouoirs melodieusement,
resvoient aux resvoirs, affin de rien immode
ne porter au service divin. Ces choses
faictes, devotement se transportoient en la
saincts chappelle (ainsi estoit en leurs re-
bus nommee la cuisine claustrale) et devotement
sollicitoient que des lors feust au feu
le beuf mis pour le desjeuner des religieux
freres de Nostre Seigneur. Eulx mesmes sou-
vent allumoient le feu sous la marmite.⁹³

The cycle which we have previously mentioned is reiterated in the form of excretion and ingestion. We also notice that the "cuisine claustrale" is referred to a "sainte chappelle" which, beyond the mere interpretation of the contextual satire, denotes a connection between liturgy and orality. In the Fourth Book, the chapter entitled, Why Monks Love Kitchens, Friar John asks the rhetorical question:

Que signifie, demanda frere Jan, et que
veult dire que tousjours vous trouvez
moines en cuysines jamaie n'y trouvez
Roys, Papes, ne Empereurs?
Est ce, respondit Rhizotome, quelque ver-
tus latente et propriete specificque ab-
sconse dedans les marmites et contrehastiers,
qui les moines y attire comme l'aymant a soy
le fer attire; n'y attire Empereurs, Papes,
ne Roys? Ou c'est une induction et inclin-
ation naturelle, aux frocz et cagouilles ad-
herente laquelle de soy mene et poulse les
bons religieux en cuisine, encore qu'ilz
n'eussent election ne delivration d'y aller?⁹⁴

Pantagruel, unfortunately, doesn't answer the question but the mere fact that he considers it too ticklish to answer:

Je vous diray, respondit Pantagruel, sans
au probleme propouse respondre, car il est
un peu chatouilleux et a peine y toucheriez
vous sans espiner .⁹⁵

is an indication of the forbidden and unmentionable nature of the question. What key to what mystery are the monasterial frater holding? What is the drive behind daily, eternal, ontological ritual, psychologically interpreted as an oral obsession, of prayers to God-Father (Christian) and God-Father-Sun (Pagan antiquity), excretion and oral ingestion? Like Pantagruel, and perhaps for the same reasons, we will not venture to give an answer but we will say that it is indeed food for thought and thought of food!

During the twelfth century Walter Mapes, an English poet and churchman, wrote a work entitled, Magister Goliath de quodam abbate, yet another example of orgiastic eating and drinking among the monastic orders containing the usual excremental imagery. The literary illustrations of the theme throughout the Middle Ages are numerous and need not be explored in this study for they are merely variations on that same theme. Bon vivant and gourmand are proverbial attributes to the ruling, clerical hierarchy. Abundance, gluttony, and waste are characterized in this following list of victuals ordered for the enthronement of George Neville, Archbishop of York and Chancellor of England in 1467. It included three hundred huge loaves of bread, seventy-five thousand gallons of ale, twenty-five thousand gallons of wine, one hundred-five oxen, six wild bulls, one thousand pigs, three hundred-four calves, and four hundred swans. It took sixty-two cooks to prepare the meal. Monkism is seen as procreative⁹⁶ forces ad absurdum, destined to ascetic life but devoted to

bodily pleasure. The gluttonous monks are not portrayed by their authors in a totally negative light, rather the accent is on bonhomie and the universal pleasure principle of food. The theologico-oral themes of abundance, procreation and fertility are synthesized in a natural psychobiological weakness which paradoxically forms the core of Man's hidden greatness. Another oral theme which Rabelais uses on several occasions and for which we find literary antecedents is the metaphor of the kitchen paraphernalia as weaponry. It appears to have been a popular theme throughout the Middle Ages and before. Again, we return to The True History, which offers a beautiful and delicious example of this literary phenomena. We will notice in the extract below the striking resemblance to Rabelais' imagery as much in terms of imagination and exaggeration as in style:

The expeditionary force numbered a hundred thousand, exclusive of transport, engineers, infantry, and foreign auxiliaries, eight thousand being mounted on vultures, and the other twenty on salad fowls. Salad fowls, incidentally, are like very large birds, except that they are fledged with vegetables instead of feathers and have wings composed of enormous lettuce-leaves. The main force was supported by a battery of Pea-shooters and a corps of mercenaries from outer space. These were only light-armed infantry, but were very effective long range fighters, for they bombarded us with colossal radishes, which inflicted foul-smelling wounds and caused instantaneous death...Next to the mercenaries were about ten thousand Mushroom Commandos, heavy-armed troops trained for hand-to-hand fighting who used mushrooms as shields and asparagus stalks as spears; and next to them again were five thousand Bow-wows from Sirius. These were dog-faced human beings mounted on flying chestnuts. ⁹⁷

Interestingly enough, Bakhtin points out, these images are not typically French nor European, as he found them in his

native literature as far back as the twelfth century in a Russian epic poem: Song of the Campaign of Igor*. In Italy, Luigi Pulci, a fifteenth century poet, precursor of Ludovico Ariosto, wrote Il Morgante Maggiore another long epic poem in which the battlefield of Ronceveaux is compared to a kitchen stew. The French tradition is typified by the well known Aucassin et Nicolette which contains a passage where, in the mystical kingdom of Torelore, a war is fought with eggs, cheeses, mushrooms etc...

et trouverent la bataille de poms de bois
waummones et d'ueus et de fres fromages;
et Aucassin les commenca a regarder, se
s'en esmerveilla molt durement

--or se chante
Aucassin est arestes,
sor son arcon acoutes,
se commence a regarder
ce plenier estor champel:
il avoient aportes
des fromages fres asses
et poms de bois waummones
et grans champignons chanpes;⁹⁸

Rabelais use of the theme comes in the IVth Book where we witness a literary war of food whereby frere Jan, emerging from the belly of his saw, fights bellicose and savage sausages with an army equipped with "broches de fer,...Landiers, contrehastiers, paelles, pales, cocquases, grisles, fourguons, fenailles, lichefretes, ramons, marmites, mortiers, pistons,"⁹⁹ The consuming oral obsession with food is evident in Rabelais' writing. The themes which we have examined in these preced-

*Song of the Campaign of Igor may well be a literary hoax written some 600 years later.

ing pages fuse together to reach a climactic apex in the saga of the Gastrolatres, worshippers of Gaster, the Belly:

Ilz tous tenoient Gaster pour leur
grand Dieu, le adoroient comme Dieu, luy
sacrifioyent comme a leur Dieu omnipotents,
ne reconnoissoient autre Dieu que luy; le
servoient, aymoient sus toutes choses, honoroient
comme leur Dieu .¹⁰⁰

Gaster encompasses all the functions of the cosmic universe: ingestion, digestion, absorption, excretion, destruction and procreation. As such it is endowed with divine powers. It implies, furthermore the divine power of the body and of the self:

Je ne sacrifie que a moy (aux dieux point)
et a cestuy mon ventre, le plus grand de
tous les Dieux.¹⁰¹

The universality and gigantic function of Master Gaster is symbolized by the list of foods which he receives as offering, an incredible menu, which unfortunately too long to reproduce here, offers a variety of dishes and culinary know-how of preparation, quite unlike other enumerations of Gargantua's and Pantagruel's diets. It may well constitute the first "gastronomical" list of this magnitude ever recorded in the literary history of French bourgeois cuisine. Here are just a few samples:

...Longer de veau rousty froides,
sinapsces de pouldre Zinziberine...
Andouilles capparassonnees de moutarde
fine...
Venaison sallee aux naveaulx...
Espaules de mouton aux cappres...
Chous cabutz a la nouvelle de boef...
Croustes de pastez fricassees...¹⁰²

The Gastrolatres' offerings are divided between lean foods and non-lenten foods, a literary phenomenon which finds its antecedents in Jean Molinet's La Querelle du Poisson et de la Viande, a fifteenth century poem which may have been influenced by another one of the thirteenth century, La Dispute de Gras et Du Maigre, which portrays a war between two armies divided between meat and fish eaters, where the soldiery is made up of food-stuffs. It is a battle between the venial and the mortal, the ethereal and the grotesque which must be interpreted in psycho-analytic terms as the duel between the id (meat) and the super-ego (lean), a by-product of the incestuous cannibalistic age.

Another obvious and sure source is Theophile Folengo, a near contemporary of Rabelais whose macaronic literature, very popular in his time, made use of food as oral metaphor.

Olympus en macaronic literature is a fat land with mountains of butter, seas of milk, and pates and dumplings floating in them. The muses are cooks. Nectar is a thick brew of bacon and spices. Folengo describes the kitchen of the gods in all detail, filling 180 verses. 103

Incidentally, Folengo is also the author of Horrible Bataille des Mouches et des Fourmis, a piece of disbowelment between the upper and lower forces.

In this chapter we have seen that the symbolism of food in Rabelais' opus magnum is expressed through a large variety of themes. We have attempted to demonstrate that these themes are all related to each other through an unconscious re-enactment

as well as conscious "acting out" of repressed and wishful material which we have referred to as the oral metaphor, an inexhaustible and daring symbol in the never ending search for the fundamental self.

FOOTNOTES

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37. Rabelais, p.221.
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THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The Libertines, Cyrano de Bergerac

A cursory presentation of the seventeenth-century French literature could simply follow indications of place or a method based on localization, and thus divide the world of letters in two main genres: the literature of the court, and the literature of the street. The first is called the genre noble, or genre précieux, or littérature de Cour, or de Salon, or even de Ruelle; the other is the genre bourgeois, affiliated esthetically and philosophically with the independent movement of the libertines whose writings became known as littérature de Cabarets. There are, of course, a few notable exceptions to this very general classification, and they will be mentioned later on.

This seemingly benign and ephemeral disparity represents nevertheless the cleavage separating the intrinsic and irreducible values of the two - higher and lower - socio-political orders. The Age of Reason translated these opposite tendencies into esthetico-philosophical terms, and it is this subtle but important shift in the nature of the split which led to a psycho-social alienation, and ultimately to the psycho-political confrontation of the French Revolution. This is a vast and complex question which concerns this study only within the limited perspective we have chosen i.e., the literary conceptualization of orality, which in the Age of Classicism is psycho-dynamically connected to its socio-political infrastructure, itself embroiled in the gigantic, yet basic and fundamental conflict which tore the seventeenth century asunder: Determinism vs. Free Will.

From the pedestal of religion, this controversy reached out its tentacles to philosophy, political structure, social organization, arts and sciences, and finally literature. Its presence is felt everywhere in the general struggle opposing Jansenists and Jesuits, geocentricism and heliocentricism, divine rights of kings and parliamentary prerogatives, and in the overt literary manifestation of the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes. We will however focus our attention on the psycho-dynamic impact of the conflict.

Seventeenth century European determinism, influenced by men like St. Augustine, Luther, John Knox, Calvin and Jansen, was religious in essence and founded on the condemnatory precept that Man, having lost the Grace of God as a result of the original sin, had lost his innate freedom of will. It is a harsh and punitive concept calling for total condemnation of the pleasure principle which psychodynamically leads to repression and sublimation, thus intellectualization and control, away from nature, imagination, spontaneity, joie de vivre and sexuality. In the words of René Bray, "Il y a là un acte de volonté, initial, anti-naturel, anti-instinctif."¹ Oral manifestations, being of the very nature of the original sin, are disapproved of and condemned. Orality itself becomes sinful and must be repressed. It is the century of Malherbe, Honoré d'Urfé, Corneille, Pascal, Racine, and Bossuet and Fénelon in whose writings food and sexuality, the staple diet of orality, are conspicuously lacking. Glorified repression is Corneille's and Racine's

tour de force, Bossuet and Fénelon preach it, Pascal strives for it. Repression leads to sublimation. Sexuality becomes sensuality. Oral taste becomes *gout esthetique*. It is the age of Baroque and soon of Rococo, of the Bassin de Neptune at Versailles with its graceful fountains of the tantalizing Fêtes Champêtres and of the suggestive Cupids and Venus. Orality becomes oration (Bossuet, Fénelon, Corneille, Racine). Repression leads to denial. While immorality was virulently condemned by the ruling hierarchy of the nobility and clergy, lasciviousness among them was notoriously rampant; food was prepared lavishly, consumed in abundance and wasted, yet the literary milieu rejects it; Vatel kills himself, but utters no word.² Such is seventeenth-century Upper Class morality that Mme de Sevigné herself, the raconteur of Vatel's spartan conscience de métier, shows no surprise, even less emotion at the suicide. She, one of the most prolific chroniclers of faits divers as well as faits accomplis of her time, the epistolary scribe of French Literature, devotes in a life span of writing fewer words to the subject of food than would be necessary to compose a single one of her letters. Molière the Comedian, most adept at satirizing the oral bourgeois, makes only scant and minimal allusions to aliments. The passage below from Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme is one of the rare exceptions where food, an excellent vehicle for satire, Boileau demonstrated in his 3ième Satire, is used in that capacity:

Il (Damis) ne manquerait pas de vous exagérer lui même toutes les pièces du repas, qu'il vous donnerait, et de vous faire tomber d'accord de sa haute capacité, dans la science des bons morceaux; de vous parler d'un pain de rive à biseau doré, relevé de croute partout, croquant tendrement sous la dent; d'un vin a sève veloutée, armé d'un vert qui n'est point trop commandant; d'un carré de mouton gourmande de persil; d'une longe de veau de rivière, longue comme cela, blanche, délicate, et qui, sous les dents, est une vraie pâté d'amande; de perdrix relevées d'un fumet surprenant; et pour son opéra, d'une soupe à bouillon perlé, soutenue d'un jeune gras dindon cantonné de pigeonneaux, et couronné d'oignons blancs mariés avec la chicorée.³

This episode is followed by some Chansons à Boire which are very popular among Free Will poets, otherwise known as poetes libres-penseurs, authors of that literature which we referred to in the opening sentences of this chapter as Litterature de Cabaret. These poets as well as other Free Thinkers belong to the next part of this chapter. Before opening the door, however, into the world of the Cabaret and to the littérateur indépendant, let us reiterate and conclude that the Aristocratic Genre of the seventeenth century French literature, deterministic in essence, repressed and sublimated, only allowed for intellectualized and highly controlled literary creativity. It is this artificial genre which is so well symbolized by Rabelais' discarded oil lamp. Antithetical to non-cerebral inspiration which condones impulses of a free will, it rejected Man's involvement with his own biological world, the genius of his universe of orality.

In this second part of our chapter on the seventeenth century literature we will study the poets of the libertine movement who, in their own but too often meager way, have defied, along with other "mavericks" whom we shall mention later in this chapter, the repression and religious sublimation of Pascal as well as the schizoid logic of Descartes (Harry Guntrip - Schizoid Phenomena). In opposition to the mainstream orthodox philosophical orientation of seventeenth century France, the Indépendants partook in this general philosophical movement which was referred to earlier as a "Free Will" orientation to life. They opposed the contrition of their time and sought relief, and most of all solace, in the Cabarets. There, in the relative safety of their reveling friends and companions, they could abandon themselves to Bacchic inspiration (breathing in) and to the whimsical fantasy of their poetical mistresses: the Muses. The Cabaret, a precursor to that French invention, the restaurant, began its popularity in the seventeenth century. One of the most famous, La Pomme-de-Pin, located on the Rue de la Juiverie near the Pont Notre-Dame had already been celebrated by Villon and Rabelais. Francois Colletet (1628-1680), the first on our list among the several wretched creatures who hung around the cabarets of the Latin Quarter in the vain hope of finding a decent meal, wrote a poem to it, "La Pomme de Pin sur le Pont Notre-Dame". Mediocre author of several oral poems, such as le Pain de Gonêse, he is probably remembered, ironically only because of Boileau's satiri-

cal verve: "Tandis que Colletet, crotté jusqu'à l'échine, s'en va chercher son pain de cuisine en cuisine..."⁴

Other cabarets of some renown are A la Croix de Fer celebrated by Guillaume Colletet, father of François, in a poem depicting a festive meal. La Croix-Blanche is mentioned by Chappelle, the most ardent gourmet among them. The Cabaret served food as well as wine. Unlike the eccentricities of the aristocratic table, the meals were simple but hearty, an anticipation of nineteenth century cuisine bourgeoise. Victor Fournel (La Littérature indépendante) gathered some of the aliments mentioned in their poetry: salami, meats, melons, pâtés, saveloy, carbonnades, hams, smoked beef tongues, petit - salé, etc. Melons, we wish to intromit, introduced in France only during the sixteenth century quickly acquired a tremendous popularity, a fact which may have been spurred by Jacques Pons, Professor of Medicine, whose Sommaire Traité des Melons suggested 50 different ways of serving them. Saint-Amant praised this "fruit en Parnasse élevé" in a poem appropriately entitled Le Melon. We will return to this great poet, one of the leaders of the movement, after mentioning some of the other secondary poets of the time who unsuccessfully but nevertheless courageously endeavored to defend the threatened existence of oral literature. Several among them wrote Chansons à Boire or Odes Bachiques such as Claude de l'Estoile (1597-1652), who, according to Tallemant, died as he lived, defending orality:

Sa maladie fut bizarre, car tout est bizarre en lui. Il s'était mis en fantaisie de ne manger que des confitures et cela lui causa une indigestion étrange: il rendait les choses comme il les prenait et ne sentait point la douleur. Il en trépassa pourtant. 5

Charles Beys (1610-1659), who also wrote a sonnet celebrating a pastry chef: A Monsieur Adam le Menuisier pour Ragueneau le Pâtissier; Vion Dalibray (1600?-1650?), a dissipated man who wavered between libertine and religious poetry; Charles de Pyard, sieur d'Infrainville et de Trouvant, whose life remains much of a mystery but whose Ode Bachique is influenced by Malherbe's style; Adam Billaut (1602-1662), the Virgile au rabot as he was designated by some in reference to his trade as a cabinet maker. To these we could add Maricourt, noble yvronque, Bardin, of the French Academy, de Marigny-Mallenoë; Gilot, a notorious debauchee; le Carpentier de Marigny, author of Le Pain Bénit and also known as cuistre de Saint-Amant; Belot, Chateaupers, la Flotte, de Latre, Dufour, Grandchamp, etc...⁶ These Poètes crottés, as Boileau and Saint-Amant called them, are defined by Victor Fournel as:

"meurt-de faim, maigre hère passant l'été sans manteau, battant du matin au soir le pavé de Paris et, pataugeant dans la boue pour colporter une dédicace ici, toucher là un quartier de quelque chétive pension dont il donne la quittance en sonnets, attraper ailleurs un dîner à l'office..."⁷

We also wish to mention that Charles Sorel gives an excellent aperçu of these poetasters' lifestyle in the Fifth Book of

his Francion.

Perhaps the most interesting and representative of these poets is Marc de Maillet whom we shall discuss in more detail. Born in Bordeaux around 1568 he spent eight years of his life as a semi-official poet to the court of Queen Marguerite de Valois who wrote delicate poetry herself. Unfortunately, being of an execrable personality and having excessive vanity, he readily made enemies and was eventually banished from court. Maillet, oral in his poetry, was no less a glutton in his life, which substantially contributed to his eternal pecuniary wantage. Favel describes his culinary habits as follows:

il était doué d'un solide appétit, ayant surtout pour les gigots, à ce que nous apprend Colletet, une passion incommode et ruineuse. Il en gardait toujours dix ou douze pendus, comme des jambons de Mayence, au plancher de sa chambre, ou il les laissait mortifier pour les manger plus tendres, ce qui ne l'empêchait point de s'arrêter dix fois par jour devant les rôtisseries de la rue de la Huchette, et d'en humer les parfums d'un air reveur et concentré. 8

Marc de Maillet died in 1628, after having published two volumes of his poetry: Poésies à la louange de la reyne Marguerite (1612) and Epigrammes (1620).

Before coming to Saint-Amant, the king of the Free-Wills, we must mention Claude Emmanuel Lullier, better known as Chapelle, the tragi-comic hero of the group. Equal friend of both the nobility and the commonality, he spent his life

as a bohemian, squandering his paternal inheritance in the back room of some sleezy cabaret, drinking and riming. Being very lazy in nature, he left little to posterity: Le Voyage d'Encausse, Description de Saint-Lazare, and the Lettre au Marquis de Jonza constitute the bulk of his literary legacy.

Now we come to Marc-Antoine Gérard, sieur de Saint-Amant, the true Bohemian par excellence, the king of the Clan, the pillar of cabaret life; a man whom Victor Fournel called, "le premier buveur du monde et le plus grand poète des cabarets."⁹ Having spent a mediocre childhood receiving only an elementary education, he turned to poetry which he nurtured his whole life. His style, a delightful combination of Regnier, Rabelais, Malherbe and his own talent, always pleasant to read, demonstrates a degree of poetical ability which, at another epoch in time, would perhaps have earned him a position of honor in the pantheon of Literature. Saint-Amant wrote for one and all: satirical, religious, bucolic, lyrical and sublime. It was, however, the grotesque style which captivated his interest and truly harnessed his genius. We feel him only genuinely at ease writing bacchic verses in the form of Caprices, songs, epigrams, odes and Gallic satires, seated at a table in a cabaret, in the midst of an orgy. Vulgarities and obscenities are his forte. Among his grotesque works, inspired by the inseparable companionship of Faret and the comte d'Harcourt who called themselves, in the intimacy of their own company, le Gros (Saint-Amant),

le Vieux (Faret), and le Rond (d'Harcourt), we find the following: La Crevaille, Les Goinfres, L'Ode au Fromage, Le Melon, Le Cidre, Les Cabarets, Pourveaux Bachiques, La Vigne, La Chambre du débauché, etc.

His interests were truly oral and were acted out in the form of drinking, eating and poetizing (the written word as an oral manifestation. See Jacques Derrida De la Grammatologie and L'Écriture et la différence). Here is Victor Fournel's vivid description of Saint-Amant's passions:

La bouteille était le Pégase de Saint-Amant, le vin lui tenait bien de muse et d'inspiration... plus fidèle au vin qu'à ses maîtresses, il ne l'a jamais trahi pour une autre liqueur. Il ne fait pas fi du grenache ni de l'ermitage; mais, au fond, c'est le piot qu'il préfère. Quelques bouteilles de ce divin piot, en compagnie d'un jambon, d'une carbonade, d'un melon savoureux, voire d'un exquis fromage de Brie, et la verve du poète va s'allumer bien vite et éclater en hymnes d'extase et d'attendrissement. 10

Saint-Amant, like other libertines, mentioned throughout this chapter, owe a good measure of their reputation to Nicolas Boileau-Despreaux whose satirical writings touched upon everything and everyone advocating "mauvais goût." He is the "irréconciliable ennemi du burlesque"¹¹ who unwittingly perhaps contributed to the popularity of the genre. His own literary position is ambiguous and somewhat ambivalent. While portraying himself as a satirical enemy of the burlesque, we find him seeking friendship, amusement and perhaps inspiration in the company of the Poètes Crottés with whom he is often seen prowling around the cabarets.

If Condé, Mme de Lafayette, and Racine were among his best friends, so were Chapelle, Saint-Amant, and Colletet. Louis XIV himself secretly supported his election to the August Academy. Successor of Malherbe, but also inspired by Villon and Rutebeuf. Boileau can be placed among those few exceptions who, through the power and insight of their own genius, have managed to ride astride the literary schism of the Classical Age. Let us now give a quick glance at his well known "oral" masterpiece: Le Repas Ridicule. Published in 1665 but of probably much earlier composition, this Third Satire is a rich and seductive parody of Plato's philosophical banquet. Borrowing from Horatius and Regnier, for the concept, it nevertheless shows all of Boileau's satirical facility and biting virulence. As an appetizer to Molière's Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme which was to be presented five years later, Boileau ridicules the ostentatious bad taste of his host whose primordial interest is to impress his guests with a quantitative display of aliments at the expense of qualitative bon goût and savoir-faire. The array of repulsive provision de bouche is symbolical of provision d'esprit, antithetic parody to the well-balanced simplicity of l'Art poétique. The satire is often direct, names are mentioned, such as in the following lines attacking Mignot:

Qui vous semble, a-t-il-dit du goût de cette soupe?
Sentez-vous le citron dont on a mis le jus
Avec des jaunes d'oeufs mêlés dans du verjus?
Ma fois, vive Mignot et tout ce qu'il apprête! 12

or disguised and veiled such as the social criticism directed at the bourgeoisie.

In Boileau, as in the other writers previously mentioned in this chapter, the theme of orality is strictly limited to the celebration or, in this case, the satire of food or wine. The oral phenomenon, if subconsciously experienced, is not expounded. The cabaret esthetes may have acted out their orality but they did not attempt to develop a phenomenological understanding of its nature. It is Cyrano de Bergerac who, among the towering figures of seventeenth-century French Literature, will explore the cosmicity of orality and to whom we have consecrated the last part of this chapter.

CYRANO DE BERGERAC

The most important literary contribution of Cyrano de Bergerac might well be his masters. Indeed, he may well have been able to express their ideas and philosophical tenets more effectively and with more precision than they could themselves. As such, he innovates little in terms of originality, but he builds, develops and makes additions. Thus he represents the best literary spokesman for Gassendi in Les Etats de la Lune, Campanella in Les Etats du Soleil. His philosophical inspirations, however, are not limited to these two thinkers. Montaigne, La Mothe Le Vayer, Alexandri d' Aphrodisias, Pomponazzi and other naturalist philosophers have also been integrated in the encompassing anthology of his erudite mind. A devout libertine, his self-proclaimed mission is aimed primarily at destroying the then prevalent narcissistic anthropocentrism of the traditional dogma. One important literary vehicle which Cyrano adopted in his reformatory crusade was Gassendi's atomistic concept of the universe which Antoine Adam summarizes in the following words:

Une matière homogène, qui se dilate et se restreint dans le vide, des atomes solides, incorruptibles, constitués d'une même matière, mais de formes variées et par conséquent se mouvant, à des vitesses inégales. L'ordre du monde résultant en réalité du hasard. Mais l'infinie quantité de matière détermine un nombre infini d'essais. Or, les combinaisons viables sont en petit nombre. Il faut donc nécessairement que toute combinaison viable se produise. 13

Cyrano does not utilize atomism in its raw, static original form. Very much influenced by the relatively recent Copernican system and probably imbued with the thoughts of that most brilliant Italian metaphysician and philosopher of the sixteenth century, Giordano Bruno (Del Infinito, Universo e Mundi and Della Cause, Principio ed Uno: 1584), he conceives of the universe as infinite. "Il le voit dans son unité d'être vivant et organique."¹⁴ It is a living and evolutionary organism, "Toute forme tend vers une forme plus parfaite. Du végétal à l'animal, de l'animal à l'homme, il y a effort et ascension."¹⁵ The universal development of matter is conceived as evolutionary metempsychosis, a concept which certainly anticipates Diderot's own vision which we will discuss in the next chapter. It is not the object of this study to develop Cyrano's entire philosophical spectrum and we recognize that this is only a limited and partial understanding of this multifaceted and complex philosophical universe. We will concentrate our efforts on the theme of orality as conceived by Cyrano de Bergerac and we will attempt to show that the author's rich metaphorical imagery represents another link, a continuum, in the oral tradition as defined in the first chapter, and further developed with Rabelais. Rabelais's philosophical influence is obvious. Several episodes of L'Autre Monde, and particularly Les Etats de la Lune contain striking resemblances to Rabelais' magnum opus. The following example, whose theme we have discussed at length in the previous chapter, is the oral metaphor

of wind used as food which Cyrano de Bergerac utilizes in connection with the Moon peoples' diet which consists of smoke:

L'art de la cuisinerie est de renfermer dans de grands vaisseaus, moullx exprez, l'exalaison qui sort des viandes et en ayant ramassé de plusieurs sortes et de différents gousts, selon l'appétit de ceux que l'on traite, on desbouche le vaisseau ou cette odeur est assemblée, on en descouvre après celci un autre, puis un autre ensuite, jusqu'à ce que la compaignie soit tout à faict repue. 16

It is important to note that the French word "viande" or the English one "meat" had not yet acquired the specific import of flesh which only comes about in the eighteenth century. They are used to designate food in general, a good indication of the primitive preponderance of Man's carnivorous instinct which we have already equated to the original sin. In a clever and subtle way Cyrano establishes the link between Man's carnal needs and carnivorous instincts. He does it in a passage dealing, not surprisingly, with the original sin. Eve's tempting snake is clearly defined as the penis: "J'ai remarque que comme ce Serpent essaye toujours de s'eschapper du corps de l'homme, on lui veoit la teste et le col sortir au bas de nos ventre." 17 Frédéric Lachèvre (Les Oeuvres Libertines de Cyrano de Bergerac) does mention that the image of the snake/penis was encountered before in several sources. Among those is Rabelais, who called it "Andouille" and Henri-Corneille Agrippa (1486-1535) who wrote in his De Philosophia occulta the following

citation:

Hunc serpentem non alium arbitramur quam sensibilem, carnalemque, affectum, uno quem recte dixerimus ipsum carnalis concupiscentiae genitale viri membrum, membrum reptile, membrum serpens, membrum lubricum, variisque anfractibus torsuosum, quod Evam tentavit, et decepit, cui recte serpentis nomen similitudoque congruit.¹⁸

The snake-phallus, says Cyrano, was incorporated into Man as a punishment for the original sin: "Dieu, pour punir le serpent qui les avoit tentez, le relegua dans le corps de l'homme."¹⁹ If we were to accept our introductory postulate on the nature of the original sin, we would construe that the incorporation of the phallus is the incarnation of the Father-God, with the phallus symbolizing the Supreme-Divine power of insemination and reproduction. The rape of the mother (sexual drive) which motivated the original patricide is perpetually re-enacted subliminally through oral ingurgitation:

Quand vous entendez crier, c'est le serpent qui sifle et qui, suivant ce naturel gloutton dont jadis il incita le premier homme a trop manger, demande à manger aussy; car Dieu qui, pour vous chastier, vouloit vous rendre mortel comme les autres animaux, vous fit obséder, par cet insatiable, affin que vous luy donniez trop à manger, vous vous étouffassiez; ou si lors qu'avec les dents invisibles dont cet affamé mord votre estomach, vous luy refusiez sa pitance, il criast, il tempestat, il dégorgeast ce venin que vos docteurs appellent la bile, et vous eschauffast tellement par le poison qu'il inspire à vos artères que vous en fussiez bien tost consume. ²⁰

Helie, the Mooner and spokesman for Cyrano, discloses that he has found the Tree of Life whose fruit he eats centennially to insure himself of eternity: "Je ne taste du Fruit de Vie que de cent ans en cent ans."²¹ This life-giving fruit, the forbidden fruit: "cette pomme qu'Adam avoit mangée qui fut cause que nos premiers pères vécutent si longtems,"²² is endowed with divine and supreme life-giving essence thus "fut cause que nos premiers pères vécutent si longtems, pour ce qu'il étoit coulé dans leur semence quelque chose de son énergie."²³ Is it the fruit of divine flesh, is it the sperm, or is it the blood of the Father? We can only speculate but Cyrano gives us one more piece of information about this "Fruict de Vie": "son jus a pour le goût quelque rapport avec l'esprit du vin."²⁴ Cyrano's metempsychosis is a materialistic transubstantiation: the forbidden fruit is the Fruit of Life. Eating of it is incorporating the divine, life-giving power. Several references are made to the preparation and choice of food. A remark is made that, before the Fall, Man's imagination was not yet "corrompue, ny par les desbauches, ny par la crudité des aliments,"²⁵ which we may interpret as an allusion to the murder ("desbauches") and oral incorporation ("crudité des aliments"). Several sources, both Christian and Pagan, point to the collective aspect of the nutrimental transubstantiation: the feeding of the brothers from one body. Georges Lanoë-Villene made an excellent study of symbolism throughout history which he collected in his work entitled

Le Livre des Symboles. He mentions a number of examples from disparate provenance dealing with the miraculous multiplication of food. The Bible, the Koran, the Romance of the Round Table, even the Maha-Bharata, are rich in such imagery.²⁶ In another passage the virtues of total abstinence from eating anything not dead from natural death are considered. After informing the reader that vegetarianism has long been practiced by anchorites and Pythagoreans, Cyrano exposes a strong metempsychotic defense of the vegetal kingdom, a philosophical position whose argumentation follows closely that of Rabelais' universal cycle which we discussed in the previous chapter. Metempsychotic transubstantiation is Cyrano's central theme of orality. Ingestion is seen as the necessary and obvious link in the metamorphic chain of evolution from the mineral to the zoological, a hyperbolic curve of nature's endless search for perfection.

Tous les estres en la Nature tendent au plus parfait, qu'ils aspirent à devenir hommes...Que ces métamorphoses arrivent, il faut estre pédant pour le nier: Ne voyons-nous pas qu'un Pommier par la chaleur de son germe comme par une bouche, succe et digère le gazon qui l'environne; qu'un pourceau dévore ce fruict et le faict devenir une partie de soy-même et qu'un homme mangeant le pourceau reschauffe cette chair morte, la joint a soy, et faict enfin revivre cet animal sous une plus noble espèce? Ainsy ce Grand Pontife que vous voyez la mitre sur la teste estoit, il n'y a que soixante ans une touffe d'herbe en mon jardin. ²⁷

This is a concept of universal manducation, a materialistic

metempsychosis. In his illustration of the great cannibalistic process of organic nature, Cyrano extols the animus of the guzzler. Through digestion the author establishes the theme of continuity and of the infinite progress of matter. This theme is central throughout both parts of L'Autre Monde. In the following passage of Les Etats de la Lune, the focus is on intellectual advancement achieved through oral metempsychosis:

C'est qu'estant mangé, comme tu vas estre, de nos petits oiseaux, tu passeras en leur substance: Ouy, tu auras l'honneur de contribuer quoy qu'aveuglement, aux opérations intellectuelles de nos mouches, et de participer à la gloire, si tu ne raisones toy-mesme, de les faire au moins raisonner. ²⁸

The same process is applied to the evolutionary genesis of the world and of mankind which is explained in terms of digestion (coction) and procreative confinement. The following excerpts from Les Etats du Soleil exemplify the point:

De ces torrens d'humeur assemblez, il s'est forme la Mer, qui témoigne encore par son sel que ce doit estre un amas de sueur, toute sueur estant salée... Elle receut une autre coction; et cette coction la rectifiant encor et la perfectionnant par un meslange plus exact, elle rendit ce germa qui n'estoit en puissance de végéter, capable of sentir... et après une troisième digestion, cette matrice estant si fort échauffée que le froid n'aportoit plus d'obstacle à son accouchement, elle s'ouvrit et enfanta un homme. ²⁹

Campanella's La Citta del Sol, possibly inspired by Hippocrates, also makes a reference to the sea as the sweat of the Earth.

In his earlier work Les Etats de la Lune, Cyrano bravely attacks the question of the resurrection which he attempts to explain in terms of metempsychotic orality. More questions are raised regarding the validity of the Christian dogma than are answered:

Pour commencer donc, je suppose que vous mangiés un mahométan; vous le convertissés, par conséquent, en votre substance! N'est-il pas vray, ce mahométan, digéré, se change partie en chair, partie en sang, partie en sperme? Vous embrassés vostre femme et de la semence, tirée toute entière du cadavre mahométan, vous jettes en moule un beau petit chrestien. Je demande: le mahométan [dans la résurrection] aura-t-il son corps? ³⁰

The essence of Cyrano's metempsychotic evolution is reproduction through incorporation. Faithful to the cyclical notion of the universe he celebrates death as a rebirth of the new. It is a joyous occasion, an opportunity to celebrate the process of life, and to solemnize the Feast of Orality.

The ensuing ritual, a true ode to Orality, represents a quasi-rendering of the steps outlined in the introductory chapter. First, there is purgation and abstinence from food, a symbolical cleansing for purity, innocence and need; followed by a sacrifice to the Sun, an atonement for the guilt for the original sin soon to be re-enacted. Then ensues the death, in the sublimated form of suicide by stabbing, a sexual metaphor which we will discuss below. From the wound, the company, the brothers at arm,

all drink the blood of the deceased to repletion:

Il advertit ses plus chers, et du jour et du lieu: ceux-cy se purgent, et s'abstiennent de manger pendant vingt-quatre heures; puis arrivés qu'ilz sont au logis du Sage, et après avoir sacrifié au Soleil, ilz entrent dans la chambre, où le Généreux les attend appuyé sur un lit de parade. Chacun vole à son rang aux embrassements; et quand ce vient à celui qu'il ayme le mieux, après l'avoir baisé tendrement, il l'appuye sur son estomach, et joignant sa bouche à sa bouche, de la main droite qu'il a libre, il se baigne un poignard dans le coeur. L'Amant ne destache point ses levres de celles de son Amant, qu'il ne le sente expire; alors il retire le fer de son sein, et fermant de sa bouche la playe, il avale son sang et succe toujours jusqu'à ce qu'il n'en puisse boire davantage. Aussi tost un autre luy succède et, l'on porte celui-cy au lit; le second, rassasié, on le mène coucher pour faire place au troisième. 32

The modus operandi of the incorporative process is furthermore viewed by Cyrano in a sexual context. The sexual-oral imagery is obvious. First, the dagger which Cyrano himself in a latter passage compares to the phallus: "Scaches donc que l'escharpe dont cet homme est honore, ou pend pour medaille la figure d'un membre viril..."³³ We notice Cyrano's clever use of the symbolism of the dagger/sword/phallus. As a destructive weapon the sword takes life away which is necessary as a step in the universal cycle for the new to be reborn. Thus the killing sword-dagger is also viewed by the author as positive, regenerative, and life-giving in the form of the phallus. This dagger-phallus imagery is exemplified in the passage above. Symbolically the dagger-phallus opens the wound-womb to allow the sucking of the blood-sperm which will regenerate-impregnate with

life. Another sexual act, performed "tendrement", is the kiss of death between the "Amants" at the expense of "Amy" which appeared in the earlier Munich edition. The kiss, as all imagery which follows, symbolizes oral conception in a kind of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation in reverse. The ingestion of the blood is also performed "au lit" where one "mène coucher" the lover. Sexual copulation, vaginal orality, and anthropophagy are the dominant themes of this ceremonial ritual which culminates in extensive orgiastic activities involving copulation with young maidens and ingurgitations of the body's raw and sanguineous flesh:

"enfin, toute la troupe repue on introduit a chacun, au bout de quatre ou cinq heures, une fille de seize ou dix-sept ans; et pendant trois ou quatre jours qu'ils sont a gouter les delices de l'Amour, ilz ne sont nourris que de la chair du mort, qu'on leur fait manger toute crue."³⁴

We will end our thematic analysis of orality in Cyrano's L'Autre Monde at this point. We realize that the subject matter is in no way exhausted and more could be said which would increase our understanding of his philosophical mind. However, we believe that we have sufficiently developed the topic so as to appreciate the nature and the product of his cosmic vision which ranks him as the foremost precursor of eighteenth century French materialistic thought.

FOOTNOTES

1. René Bray, La Préciosité et les Precieux au XVIIIème Siècle (Paris: Librairie Nizet, 1945), p. 139.
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3. Jean-Baptiste Molière, Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme, 1670, Act IV, Scene 1.
4. Nicolas Boileau, Satire I.
5. Maurice Allem, Anthologie Poétique Française du XVIIIème Siècle, 2 vols. (Paris: Garnier Flammarion, 1965), P. 367.
6. Victor Fournel, La Littérature Indépendante au XVIIIème Siècle (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1968), p. 155.
7. Ibid., p. 140.
8. Ibid., p. 144.
9. Ibid., p. 133.
10. Ibid., p. 134.
11. Ibid., p. 265.
12. Boileau, verses 62-65.
13. Antoine Adam, Les Libertins au XVIIIème Siècle (Paris: Editions Buchet/Chastel, 1964), p. 161.
14. Ibid., p. 161.
15. Ibid., p. 161.
16. Cyrano de Bergerac, Les Oeuvres Libertines de Cyrano de Bergerac, ed. Frédéric Lachèvre, vol. I (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1968), p. 41.
17. Ibid., p. 28.
18. Ibid., p. 28.
19. Ibid., p. 27.

20. Ibid., p. 28.
21. Ibid., p. 29.
22. Ibid., p. 29.
23. Ibid., p. 29.
24. Ibid., p. 29.
25. Ibid., p. 23.
26. Georges Lanoë-Villène, Le Livre des Symboles, Lettre A (Paris: Editions Bossard, 1927), pp. 68-70.
27. Bergerac, p. 90.
28. Ibid., p. 162.
29. Ibid., p. 130.
30. Ibid., p. 94.
31. Ibid., p. 86.
32. Ibid., p. 88.
33. Ibid., p. 86.
34. Ibid., p. 86.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Diderot; de Sade

The Eighteenth Century

The two major trends observed thus far in French literature — the noble, spiritual, and sublime world of epic and tragic genres, and the daily material life described in satire and comedy—remain clearly separated in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Thus food appears on several occasions in popular novels and comedies as temptation, means of seduction or simply as pleasure.

In Gil Blas (1715) Lesage places his hero before a meal when he wants him to choose the wrong path. In his first day of freedom, Gil Blas feeds a flatterer and learns to his dismay the lesson of La Fontaine's raven.

Enfin, après avoir bu et mangé tout son soul, il voulut finir la comédie. Seigneur Gil Blas, me dit-il en se levant de table, je suis trop content de la bonne chère que vous m'avez faite pour vous quitter sans vous donner un avis important dont vous me paraissez avoir besoin. Soyez désormais en garde contre les louanges. Défiez-vous des gens que vous ne connaîtrez point. ¹

Marivaux in La Double Inconstance (1723) uses food to seduce Arlequin. Trivelin manages easily to detach him from Sylvia by promising him delicate, well prepared meals. "Imaginez-vous, ce qu'il y a de meilleur, de plus friand en viande et en poisson; vous l'aurez, et pour toute votre vie." (Acte I, Scene IV). Sylvia succumbs to the temptation of rank and fancy clothes, but never seems to even think of food. The same convention is found in the character of Jacob (Le Paysan parvenu) and Marianne (La Vie de Marianne). Jacob is very sensitive to creature comforts and a good table while Marianne's only concern is glory.

The Père Labat, the undefatigable voyager and chronicler of the Isles de l'Amérique does relate in great detail and precision the exotic culinary customs of the natives of the Antillies. He includes in his reports recipes, techniques of seasoning, preserving, and consuming foods unknown to his readers. While his writings enjoyed a vast success and were mentioned by almost every major writer of the eighteenth century, he was not imitated. Montesquieu's Persans have no discoveries to communicate concerning the French cuisine and Prévost's Manon, seen presiding at richly served tables, never eats. In Prévost's case the novel still hesitates between the noble genre and the popular picaresque tale. Both Manon and her chevalier, ideal figures without physical attributes other than charm and beauty, remain unsullied by their degrading circumstances. In spite of the minute precisions of topography, time, calendar, budget, legal procedures, the tale never offers any mention of a particular food.

The tragic theater of Crébillon and Voltaire remains faithful to the classical tradition of the séparation des genres, and excepting the horror situation, typical of Crébillon, where poison or blood are drunk by unknowing victims, no food is ever mentioned.

In the middle of the century, The Spirit of Laws gives to food and drink an important role in customs and regulations according to climate. As usual, Montesquieu does not make any judgment,

but only tries to explain tastes and preferences. Ten years later, Candide settles for a bourgeois life afforded by a food vegetable garden and the talents of Cunégonde who had learned how to bake pastries. Voltaire, who was a very choosy eater, mentions the corn eaten by Indians, less for the corn itself than for the wooden bowls set on the bare ground under the burning sun in revolting contrast to the golden plates of the priests. Since the happy time of the Mondain (1736) where champagne sparkled in crystal, Voltaire had become acutely aware of the economic and political power of food, be it the sugar of Surinam "justifying" slavery, or the free exchange of wheat between provinces and even nations to eradicate famines. This preoccupation with agriculture and production of food briefly sketched in the tale of the Troglodytes (Persian Letters, Letters 11 to 14) became an all-important topic to Rousseau's first and second Discourses, in the Encyclopédie, and among the Physiocrats. Yet food is seen as a general commodity, an economic factor, a part of the material progress the Enlightenment philosophers are trying to bring to mankind. Rousseau who admits his fondness for wine prefers, as a good Swiss, bread and cheese or a simple chervil omelet.

Thus food remains a subject foreign to "pure" literature and appears only in didactic or economically oriented writings as an external commodity and a power tool of civilization.

The demise of tragedy, of séparation des genres, of the rules of art poétique, occurred in the middle of the century. The

phenomenon became evident in the drame bourgeois and in Diderot's Discours sur la poésie dramatique which blended the two currents that had remained separated through the centuries. His literary innovation is the natural and necessary manifestation of Diderot's philosophical evolution. It is therefore a fitting consequence and even a perfect demonstration of our thesis that Diderot who achieved this fusion was precisely the philosopher of food, remembering Montaigne who had written: "Entre nous, ce sont choses que j'ay toujours veues de singulier accord: les opinians super-celestes et les mœurs sousterraines." ² For Diderot both super-celestial beliefs and sub-terrestrial morals are aberrations born from the rejection of nature. "Tout ce qui est selon la nature est digne d'estime"³says Montaigne in the same chapter, quoting Cicero.

Diderot's philosophy is a materialistic monism or Plato's idealistic monism in reverse. Ideologically speaking, Diderot belongs to the materialist movement which blossomed in the eighteenth century but, unlike d'Holbach, Helvetius and the other French empiricists who crowded the intellectual pantheon of the Enlightenment, his form of materialism, unique in its plebeian scope and down-to-earth realism, does not revolve preponderantly around the ontological wheel of philosophical prime matter. Rather, Diderot's modus operandi leans towards humanistic naturalism or a more down-to-earth and scientific conceptualization of Man's biological phenomenon. Still faithful to that philosophical concept whereby "La cosmologie et la biologie ne faisaient qu'un même sujet d'étude," ⁴ he integrates and synthesizes Man's complex universe. For Diderot, Man represents the beginning and the end of the met-

amorphic cycle of matter, an idea which is often reiterated throughout the Encyclopedia and literary essays. This uroboric concept of Man whose principles we have repeatedly developed in earlier chapters, and which constitutes the fundamental tenet of orality, underscores Diderot's pan-vision, his cosmic universalism.

Orality is the omnipresent theme of Diderot's bio-cosmological vision. A true believer of that fundamental precept of orality: "You are what you eat" he perceives the whole system of Nature as a giant cannibalistic process of continuous manducation. His world is one in which food, sublimely triumphant, determines our essence ("Je pense donc je suis") and dictates our will. Influenced by Pythagorean metempsychosis and the score of succeeding materialistic philosophies which derived from it, Diderot conceives of alimentation as a transmutative process through which the body acquires the physiological characteristics imposed by the ingested organism:

Si vous nourrissez continuellement un homme de chair, vous le rapprocherez du caractère de l'animal carnassier: même estomac, même sang, même chyle, même fluides, même nutrition générale des parties du corps. ⁵

This orally metamorphic concept of the metabolic Self can be interpreted ad infinitum. Each organism is viewed as a complete ontological entity with its own functional requirements which dictate to the whole.

... comme les animaux qui ont chacun leur nourriture; leurs aliments propres ils ont aussi leur faim... Examinez ce qui se passe en vous, ce n'est jamais vous qui voulez manger ou dormir, c'est l'estomac; pisser

c'est la vessie, et ainsi des autres fonctions. Veuillez tant qu'il vous plaira, il ne s'opérera rien si l'organe ne le veut aussi. Vous voulez jouir de la femme que vous aimez, mais quand jouirez-vous? Quand la verge le voudra. ⁶

Diderot does not consider this tyrannical manifestation of our oral needs to be solely biological in nature. Anticipating Freud, he views them as repressed primary drives of patricide and maternal incest, a theme which we have analyzed in extenso throughout the previous chapters:

Si le petit sauvage était abandonné à lui-même, qu'il conservat toute son imbécillité et qu'il réunit au peu de raison de l'enfant au berceau, la violence des passions de l'homme de trente ans, il tordrait le col à son père, et coucherait avec sa mère. ⁷

These most consumming primary drives which Diderot views as a psycho-biological imperative of orality are expressed in the philoliterary format, as hunger and sex. Several references to food as the most basic need of the individual are offered. Here is an implicit one from Le Neveu de Rameau:

Son premier soin, le matin quant il est levé est de savoir ou il dinera, après diner, il pense ou il ira souper. ⁸

Rameau's nephew, a bit further into the novel, philosophizes that eating, drinking, copulation, and sleep are the only real needs:

Boire de bon vin, se gorgier de mets délicats; se rouler sur de jolies femmes; se reposer dans des lits bien mollets. Excepté cela, le reste n'est que vanité. ⁹

In the second satire allusions to food, digestion and defecation reach the number of seventy in a book of one hundred nine pages. Food is the basic theme of the tale and Diderot reminds the

reader "Il faudra revenir au geste du doigt dans la bouche béante,"¹⁰ "C'est un motif qui excuse tout,"¹¹ "Car c'est toujours à l'appétit que j'en reviens."¹² The ultimate aim in life is survival, and survival is accomplished through food and digestion "O stercus preciosum." Following the theme of the importance of food for survival which had been treated in more general terms by the "philosophes", Diderot tears the trappings of gracious social life to expose the basic drive of the most sophisticated and civilized personalities of his time. Parisian society appears as a jungle where classes devour each other as animals: "Dans la nature, toutes les espèces se dévorent; toutes les conditions se dévorent dans la société."¹³ Through the analogy of human, animal and even vegetal behavior Diderot conceived the vision of an eternal cycle reminiscent of the Pythagorical metempsychosis or the Lucretian De Rerum Natura or even Cyrano's garden.

In Entetien entre d'Alembert et Diderot, written a few years after Rameau's Nephew, Diderot tries to explain the passage from potential energy to kinetic energy, or from marble to flesh. For the new Pygmalion the method is most ordinary: "C'est un phénomène commun... Cela se fait toutes les fois que vous mangez."¹⁴ How does one become a writer, a mathematician? By eating:

Mangez, digérez, distillez in vasi licito, et fiat homo secundum artem. Et celui qui exposerait à l'Académie le progrès de la formation d'un homme ou d'un animal, n'emploierait que des agents matériels dont les effets successifs seraient un être

sentant, un être pensant, un être résolvant le problème de la précession des équinoxes, un être sublime, un être merveilleux, un être vieillissant, dépérissant, mourant, dissous et rendu à la terre végétale. 15

Through the absorption of food a manner of progressive metempsychosis at the cell level takes place and assures the eternal cycle of inert matter to sensitive matter, thinking beings, growing and dying bodies returning to the earth.

While eating (incorporation) and copulation (excretion) represent the two extremes of the oral cycle, they are also symbolical of a positive movement towards life: preservation of the species and perpetuation of the cycle. They both symbolize Man at his most material and yet represent also Man's attempt to triumph over his materiality and over death itself. They are the expressions of Man's will to live and to perpetuate himself and his kind. 16

Oral assimilation is for Diderot a totally regenerating act. It nourishes by providing the cellular nutrient for life but it also animates the incorporated substance:

Oui, car en mangeant, que faites-vous? Vous levez les obstacles qui s'opposaient à la sensibilité active de l'aliment. Vous l'assimilez avec vous-même; vous en faites de la chair, vous l'animalisez, vous le rendez sensible. 17

This metempsychotic quality of the oral process of assimilation as well as Diderot's categorical emphasis on the primordially of eating within the whole cycle of being are greatly influenced

by Gassendi's and Bergerac's atomistic materialism. The following quote almost duplicates Cyrano de Bergerac's reference to the prune tree which we have mentioned in our previous chapter:

Je sème des pois, des fèves, des chous, d'autres plantes légumineuses. Les plantes se nourrissent de la terre et je me nourris des plantes... Je fais donc de la chair ou de l'âme comme dit ma fille, une matière activement sensible... 18

Diderot's physiological imagery also testifies to his global concept of orality. On several occasions our author establishes a connection between the genital and the buccal.

Toutes les maladies vénériennes affectent le gosier. La castration a un nombre infini d'effets qui constatent la liaison des parties de la bouche avec les parties génitales. 19

In another paragraph Diderot illustrates our own metaphor of orality: "L'accouchement est une espèce de vomissement."²⁰ Imagery of blood is expressed in the following terms: "Le sang est de la chair coulante." ²¹

It is in the cosmos of Man's oral nature that Diderot discovers the principles of freedom. Influenced by the Earl of Shaftesbury's vindictive and reconciliatory philosophy of orality and morality, he becomes the first of the French Philosophers to formulate what Freud later defined as the "pleasure principle" which he conceives as a universal impulse for oral gratification.

It has been widely accepted that a civilization exists and asserts itself through intermittent releases of quantum of energy which are manifested through bellicose acts of provocation, revolution, and wars. These outbursts of energy, similar to our own psychological drives (hence the French term pulsion indicating the sporadic manifestation of the drive) are excrementitious in nature. The French Revolution represents the ultimate manifestation of oral deprivation, e.g. dearth and famine which resulted far more from corruption, mismanagement, inefficiency and inadequate distribution of foodstuff than from natural and unavoidable causes. It can be symbolized by an acute blockage of food production and distribution, a strangulation of the vital organs of a dying organism. But the Revolution is also the waste product of a combusive aristocracy which because of its socio-economic-political development came to disfunction in a quasi-closed, static, and acyclic system which could neither permit nor sustain flux and movement. Functional obsolescence of the aristocratic system started when the First Estate began in the seventeenth century to relinquish its regulatory responsibilities which had kept the bio-economic system operable. In the process it forewent its privileged parental status of protector, regulator, moderator, and provider which had formulated its psycho-social raison d'être. Unlike the bourgeois

system which is functionally biological, that is to say, cyclical and circulatory, thus self-providing, feeding on itself and leaving no waste, the aristocratic, modus operandi had become solely consumptive and exploitative but no longer productive. Like a dying colossus, eighteenth-century aristocracy, having lost its rejuvenating powers, lapsed into sterility and came to sublimate its impotence by stuffing itself and loading its tables with excess food in a catharsis of conspicuous consumption vis-a-vis a deprived Third Estate of famished and haggard individuals.

The French revolution is an oral phenomenon and can be psychoanalytically conceptualized in terms of orality as we have defined it in the previous chapters. The psychodynamic Zeitgeist of the Revolution is the emancipatory oedipal rebellion of the sons against the all-powerful autocratic but no longer protective, benevolent father. The first words of the Marseillaise, "Allons enfants de la patrie..." testify to the kinship between father-king and son-citizens. The insurrection against the King-Father-Sun (Louis XIV, the Sun King, symbol of royal power and magnificence) is acted out as a manifested result of oral needs which were described above. The true stake is the land, Mother-Earth. The brothers fight for possession of the land, for the equalizing redistribution of its body and the repartition of the nourishing offerings. Mother-Earth becomes paramount. She is extolled in the new revolutionary calendar which names its months in honor of her fecundity and prodigality. It is

an oral regression towards labourage and paturage, les deux mamelles de maman.* The glorification of the mother by the sons is further symbolized by the emergence of nationalism, an Oedipal manifestation of unity and protectionism towards Mother-Earth-Mother-Country, and by the creation of Marianne, the bare-breasted mother of its citizens. The regicide-patricide is accomplished in an atmosphere of extreme anticlerical secularism involving tortures and murders of priests, defilements and burning of churches which are obvious psychological manifests of the struggle between primal guilt and superego. The Bastille, whose fall is celebrated yearly amidst rejoicing, feasting, and displays of military might symbolizes the phallic strength as well as the absolute, capricious authority of the father. Another dynamic element of orality is the new revolutionary red flag, symbolizing strength, murder, and renewed life (blood). The second flag of red and blue surrounding the white, symbol of royal-paternal authority, could be interpreted as triumph and engulfment, the incorporation and castration of the father. The uproar of the French revolution, one of France's most profound movements of provocation, was extinguished by Napoleon's reign. Napoleon, a commoner, a fraternal companion and a supreme warrior, becomes the fraternal father. He is however deprived of psycho-historical authority which condemns him Oedipally to continuous absorption of ego-threatening father-heads, an oral manifestation of the existential imperative.

*"Labourage et paturage sont les deux mamelles de la France."(Sully)

It is perhaps in this light that several of his enemies, notably the British, spoke of him to their children as a devouring ogre. France, after the catharsis of twenty-five years of aggressive acting out and a massive exhaustion of her libidinal energy, became monomaniacal. A spent bourgeoisie sat down with Louis XVIII to restore itself in an hedonist, bon vivant concept of life; a period appropriately called: La Restauration. Is it then ironical that the nimble and dynamic son of the Revolution whose alimentary frugality was well known, was replaced by a hardly ambulatory, pear-shaped, obese king, and a placid guzzler to boot, plagued with chronic gout? We must stop here in our exploration into the dynamics of the history of the period for fear of straying too far in time from our next writer, Donatien-Alphonse-François de Sade who died in the insane asylum of Charenton shortly before Napoleon's demise. We have introduced this writer with a brief conceptualization of the oral phenomenal concept of the French Revolution and of the era during which it took place in order to facilitate and integrate our understanding of his own theme of orality. We are immediately taken by the similarity between Rabelais and Sade. The crudity of Rabelais' overt, grotesque imagery, prepared us for Sade's obsession ("obsexion", were the word to exist, would be more appropriate) with the oral metaphor. A true lexicon of Psychopathia Sexualis, his opus depicts the entire spectrum of perversions, aberrations and sexual crimes imaginable. A product of his age, it embodies "the dissolution and

corruption of the end of the age of Louis XV, and the blood thirstiness and cruelty of the Revolution".²² De Sade expresses the cruel and destructive libidinal energy of his age in an oral manifestation of bio-sexual drives. He understands the world sexually. "He made of his sexuality an ethic", ²³said Simone de Beauvoir. His work reads like a biological science of sexual criminology, an edifice of supra-nature of Man which seems to find meaning in the darkness of his unconscious.

Sade's central theme is, as Georges Bataille has so adroitly pointed out, that of "dépense" (Dossier de la polémique avec André Breton)e.g. excretion, defecation, micturition, etc..., a tonitruous eruption of excrementitious forces. His developmental stage is obviously anal, a characteristic which is expressed in his literature both sexually and symbolically. "De Sade's heroes worship the anus: "tous quatre se faisaient enculer régulièrement, et tous quatre idolâtraient les culs".²⁴ Also his "obsessions with the size of his heroes' members... relate to the anal-erotic satisfaction when the rectum is distended with a large stool." ²⁵ This propensity was psycho-analytically "confirmed by his strong attachments to money. Theft appears in his work as a sexual act and the mere suggestion of it is enough to cause orgasm." ²⁶ His orgies are as luxurious as the orgiasts are fabulously wealthy. It is logical therefore that sodomy, coprophagy and coprophilic algolagnia represent his most passionate and consuming drives.

While Rabelais' emphasis was on ingurgitation, Sade's is on excretion, a phenomenon which can be interpreted metaphorically as the completion of the bio-philosophical circle which we will discuss further into the chapter.

In her excellent study, Must we burn de Sade, from which we have already quoted above, Simone de Beauvoir mentions that:

"We are struck by the fact that the two fantaisies which he tries to explain most fully are cruelty and coprophagy."²⁷

Indeed, these formulate the basic thematic elements of de Sade's pathology. Cruelty, the psychological manifest of crime, is the binding force to totemic brotherhood. Proceeding systematically with our original hypothesis, coprophagy is interpreted as a guilt ridden act of orality, a frantic attempt at concealing the remaining traces of the patricidal crime by swallowing the ubiquitous remains. Simone de Beauvoir hints at this oral process of the collective unconscious in existential psycho-dynamics terms:

The man who has relations with filth, like the man who wounds or is wounded, fulfils himself as flesh. It is in its misery and humiliation that the flesh becomes a gulf in which consciousness is swallowed up and where separate individuals are united.²⁸

De Sade conceives of sexuality and crime as a group endeavor between men. It is not only a "biological matter, it is a social fact",²⁹ a collective enterprise of debauchery and murder which produces genuine communion and strength. L'union fait la force. The ideal sexual crime a la Sade is also incestuous. In Les 120 Journées de Sodome, the most compre-

ensive treatise of sadism in its original form, the four protagonists' wives are also filially related to one of them: Constance is the Duke's wife, and Durcet's daughter; Adelaide is Durcet's wife, and the President's daughter; Julie is the President's wife and the Duke's eldest daughter; Aline is one of the Duke's wives and the Bishop's daughter. The incestuous act of the totemic brothers with their own daughters doubling as each other's wives, constitutes a binding act of communion, re-enacting the common Oedipal crime. The gravity of the original crime is so devastatingly powerful that no earthly criminal act is supreme enough to gratify the drive and appease the guilt for which appeasement and reprieve lie above and beyond man's potential and imagination. In the words of Joseph de Maistre, regarding the original sin, "les châtements sont toujours proportionnés au crime et les crimes sont toujours proportionnés aux connaissances du coupable: de manière que le déluge suppose des crimes inouis et que ces crimes supposent des connaissances infiniment au dessus de celles que nous possédons."³⁰ Pierre Klossowski, in his insightful introduction to Les 120 Jours de Sodome, views correctly this frantic and hopeless drive as an aspiration towards the supra-natural: "Sade sort résolument de sa condition humaine pour chercher à s'intégrer dans une cosmogonie mythique."³¹ Deprived of our Freudian Logos, Sade vents his Oedipal Promethean urge in the following words: "attaquer le soleil, en priver l'univers, ou s'en servir pour embraser le monde! Ce serait des crimes cela..."³² which we interpret as a

manifestation of primal unconsciousness. Unbound by the natural limits of gratification, pathological and obsessional cruelty becomes for de Sade a compelling libidinal act:

Il n'y a pas de libertin un peu ancré
dans le vice qui ne sache combien le
meurtre a d'empire sur les sens et com-
bien il détermine voluptueusement une dé-
charge. ³³

As in ritual sacrifice, gratification is only ephemeral. In the words of Simone de Beauvoir: "If de Sade's heroes commit endless massacres, it is because none of them gives full satisfaction," ³⁴ a statement which psycho-dynamically elucidates the Sisyphean obsession of 120 orgiastic days as well as the author's comment on the Bishop "qui ne commettait jamais un crime sans en concevoir à l'instant un nouveau." ³⁵ Sade's most consuming drives, as we have mentioned above, are cruelty and coprophagy. This later oral obsession is obviously linked to sodomy which is the anal-phallic manifestation or counterpart of the coprophagous act of oral gratification.

Sodomy, like coprophagy, is an obvious psycho-sexual regression whose phenomenon we now wish to examine briefly in its psycho-historical perspective. We all know that sodomy, far from being considered an aberration in ancient times, has enjoyed a glorious and respectable past. "The Grecian tradition of sodomy was rendered acceptable to the culturally minded by its association with lofty homosexual tenderness between high-minded philosophers, poets and warriors. It was never hetero-sexual. Pederasty, could be presented as a transcending communion, a triumph of mind over matter." ³⁶

Freud maintained that sodomy is a universal "aberration" which exists since the beginning of mankind. We also know that the Romans "were frequently ardent sodomites".³⁷ In literature, Petronius' Satyricon glorifies it joyously, and in the Golden Ass of Apuleius there is a moment of heterosexual sodomy...when the serving girl, Fotis, after a long interlude of love-play with the hero, entices him to possess her as if she were a boy."³⁸ Our Western civilization however, influenced by the old Testament's ferocious attack upon the Sodomites: Genesis XII: 13, XVIII:20, IXX: 4-24, etc., etc., and by "the repressive philosophy of St. Paul, St. Augustine and other early Christian propagandists"³⁹ reprobated it venomously. Only during a brief period of the Renaissance, fortified with the influence of Grecian esthetics, did pederasty waver between condonation and condemnation. Leonardo da Vinci's trial is an example. We have digressed to this cursory historical perspective of sodomy to show that, if given free reign, a hypothesis which in itself implies guilt-sin-taboo connotations, it enjoyed a commendatory appeal among the most advanced civilizations, a testimony, to use Jung's terminology, of its archetypal collective unconscious.

The symbolism of sodomy is best illustrated by the uroborus (the tail-eating serpent), a narcissistic and obviously circular psycho-biological concept of the Self as a non-procreative, independent, and autonomous system which feeds on its own circular abnegation. Experience for the Sadian hero starts and ends with the Self:

In demanding that his partner mistreat him, he tyrannizes over him; his humiliating exhibitions and the tortures he undergoes humiliate and torture the other as well. And, vice versa, by befouling and hurting the other, ⁴⁰ the torturer befouls and hurts himself, etc...

The circular imagery of sodomy is intensified by Sade's own sexual predilections.

While being sodomized, he would whip a prostitute. It was a favorite fantasy of his to be penetrated and beaten while he himself was penetrating and beating a submissive victim. ⁴¹

The circle is obviously endemic and ab-nature. Sade abhors Nature's entire phenomenon of reproduction. Again in Pierre Klossowski's words, (Preface to Les 120 Journees de Sodome):

En se multipliant, l'homme, ne suivant qu'une loi inhérente à lui seul, nuit donc décidément aux phénomènes naturels dont la Nature est capable...La multiplication n'est donc plus considérée comme une loi à laquelle la créature ne sauroit se soustraire, elle n'est qu'une faculté faisant concurrence à la faculté originelle de la Nature...Sade dit expressement que l'homme, en se propageant ou en ne se détruisant pas, lie la Nature aux lois secondaires de l'espèce, et ⁴² la prive de sa plus active puissance.

Sadian sexuality is non-reproductive. Even vaginal intercourse, a relatively rare occurrence in Sade's world, is performed solely with the intention of procuring immediate gratification of a sadistic, punitive, and destructive nature. It is in no way linked to procreation. The generative aspect of coitus is utterly condemned. The female sexual organ is considered abhorrent:

En général, offrez-vous toujours très peu par devant; souvenez-vous que cette partie infecte que la nature ne forma qu'en déraisonnant est toujours celle qui nous répugne le plus. Et relativement à vos culs mêmes y a-t-il encore des précautions à garder, tant pour dissimuler, en l'offrant, l'autre odieux qui l'accompagne, que pour éviter de nous faire voir dans de certains moments ce cul dans un certain état ou d'autres gens désireraient de le trouver toujours. 43

The Sadian hero is not only different from other men, he is super-human and deific. He is beyond the good and evil of Nature's laws. Free from enslaving reproductive needs the Sadian hero is Prometheus. (It is interesting to note here the connection between Prometheus' myth of the theft of fire from the heavens and de Sade's wish to attack the sun in order to steal it so as to set the world ablaze, a fact which we have mentioned above. Moreover Prometheus' myth of his liver consumed and regenerated daily in an endless cycle recalls Sade's perpetually insatiable and ungratifiable psychosexual needs.) To the Sadian hero, "no aphrodisiac is so potent as defiance of the Good"⁴⁴ and of God. In this pathological narcissism where the "self is the center and totality of being, the ego totally identified with the Self experiences itself as a deity." 45

Gods of evil, Satans, his heroes are atheistic and utterly blasphemous. God is an anathema. Here are some excerpts from Les 120 Journées de Sodome which exemplify the point:

Le plus petit acte de religion de la part d'un des sujets, quel qu'il puisse être, sera puni de mort. Il est expressement enjoint aux amis de n'employer dans toutes

les assemblées que les propos les plus lascifs les plus débauches et les expressions les plus sales, les plus fortes et les plus blasphématoires. Le nom de Dieu n'y sera jamais prononcé qu'accompagné d'insultes ou d'imprecations, et on le répète le plus souvent possible... 46

"Vous avez vu à quel point on vous défend tout ce qui peut avoir l'air d'un acte de religion quelconque; je vous préviens qu'il n'y aura peu de crimes plus sévèrement punis que celui-là. 47

The violent abjuration of the Almighty Father is concurrent with the narcissistic deification of the omnipotent and absolute Self:

Je dois donc vous recommander de l'exactitude, de la soumission et une abnégation totale de vous même pour n'écouter que nos désirs... 48

[and,] En un mot, frémissez, devinez, obéissez, prévenez, 49

and the cruel and incestuous rape of the woman by the fraternal order performed in quasi-cabalistic rituals testify to the ancestral-incestuous origin of the pathological unconscious.

In this oral-anal world of Sade, oral ingurgitation plays a primordial role. Most sexual acts are performed in conjunction with or are confined to swallowing. In conjunction with the uroborus circle mentioned above, every conceivable biological excretion is swallowed:

1. Urine: Enfin ses lèvres se collèrent hermétiquement sur celles de mon con, je reçus le signe convenu, et débordant aussitôt dans la bouche du bonhomme le superflu de mes entrailles, je l'inondai des flots d'une urine qu'il avala avec la même rapidité... 50
2. Feces: Il se place, je monte à califourchon sur lui; en opérant, je le branle; il soutient mes hanches de ses mains et reçoit, mais

en le rendant morceau par morceau, tout ce que je lui dépose dans le bec." 51

3. Intestinal Wind

Eh bien! pète, pète donc petite coquine! puisque tu ne peux te retenir, pète tant que tu voudras et tant que tu pourras. De ce moment je ne me contiens plus, rien ne peut exprimer le besoin que me donna de lâcher ces vents la drogue que j'avais avalée; et notre homme en extase, tantôt les reçoit dans sa bouche et tantôt dans ses narines. 52

4. Mucus:

Se courbant alors sur ma tête et mettant mon nez tout entier dans sa bouche, non seulement il dévora toute cette morve.... 53

5. Sperms:

mais le duc ..., répandit comme un vilain toute sa semence dans cette jolie petite bouche..." 54

6. Eructations:

Aurore, d'une main, reçoit l'outil mollassé du docteur, de l'autre elle lui saisit la tête, colle sa bouche sur la sienne, et la voilà à lui dégorger dans la machoire une soixantaine de rots, l'un sur l'autre. 55

7. Vagino-genic Fluids:

il avala le sperme de cette délicieuse enfant sans que le sien voulut couler. 56

8. Vomit:

je lui lance à brule-pourpoint dans la bouche toute la digestion imparfaite d'un diner que faisait dégorger l'émétique. 57

9. Saliva:

Il collait sa bouche sur celle de ce bel enfant, il pompait l'air de sa poitrine, il en avalait la salive, 58

10. Sweat:

Pendant ce temps la, par l'attitude, il jouissait de la vue et de l'odeur de l'autre aisselle; il s'en empare, y fourre son groin tout entier et décharge en lèchant, dévorant cette partie qui lui donne autant de plaisir. 59

Food is an integral part of Sadian orgy. In a Bacchic display of abundance and magnificence (drunkenness was a law), reminding us of Medieval and Renaissance feasts, the orgiasts abandon themselves to consumption ad nauseam. Here is de Sade's

concept of the menu befitting an orgiastic inauguration:

Il y eut d'abord un service de potage au jus de bisque et de hors-d'oeuvre composés de vingt plats. Vingt entrées les remplacèrent et furent bientôt relevées elles-mêmes par vingt autres entrées fines, uniquement composées de blancs de volailles, de gibiers déguisés sous toutes sortes de formes. On les releva par un service de roti où parut tout ce qu'on peut imaginer de plus rare. Ensuite arriva un relevé de pâtisserie froide, qui céda bientôt la place à vingt-six entremets de toutes figures et de toutes formes. On desservit et on remplaça ce qui venait d'être enlevé par une garniture complète de pâtisseries sucrées, froides et chaudes. Enfin, parut le dessert, qui offrit un nombre prodigieux de fruits, malgré la saison, puis les glaces, le chocolat et les liqueurs qui se prirent à table. A l'égard des vins, ils avaient varié à chaque service: dans le premier le bourgogne, au second et au troisième deux différentes espèces de vin d'Italie, au quatrième le vin du Rhin, au cinquième des vins grecs de deux sortes avec deux différents services . 60

Reminding us strongly of Rabelaisian imagery, the atmosphere of Sade's orgies, burlesque and repulsive, reaches to the core of Man's oral drives. His world is his fantaisie, a literary excretion of his unconscious. Too many readers of Sade have made the grave mistake of interpreting his work as a didactic manual of debauchery and corruption. We look at it as socio-sexual fantasies from a psycho-therapist's file of a sadistic, phallic-narcissistic patient. As the unfortunate victim of misunderstanding and bigoted ostracism which has prevailed until near contemporary years, the Marquis de Sade has not received the full share of the literary credit which he deserves. It is only since Freud and Apollinaire that we are witnessing a true and justified renaissance of Sadian studies. Today many consider this writer as the foremost contributor to the aesthetical and intellectual movements of post WWI: dadaism,

surrealism, futurism and orphism. Indeed, a large number of intellectual thinkers from Freud to Deleuze and Foucault, including Ellis, Blanchot, Bataille and Barthe, have recognized in him the stigmata of a true prophet of our civilization.

Our last author in this literary pilgrimage into orality has been the Marquis de Sade in whose writing we have found the ultimate manifestation of this psycho-dynamic genre. We also conclude with the French revolution which, in a formidable explosion of psycho-biological forces opened up the oral fluidity of the French nation whose libidinal energy was, for the next century, to manifest itself in its most civilized form of sublimation: gastronomy. In his desperate attempt at quenching his insatiable oral needs, Man sways helplessly between the guillotine and the carving knife. Let us read Louis Sébastien Mercier's description of gastronomy's preponderantly psycho-sexual role during the Reign of Terror.

Avez-vous entendu parler de l'Adephagie? C'est un mot grec qui signifie déesse de la gourmandise. Parmi et pendant les horreurs révolutionnaires, l'Adephagie n'avait rien perdu de son empire. Ses nombreux autels n'en furent pas moins dressés tout à côté de la guillotine et des larges cimetières qu' encombraient les victimes. Le Parisien enfin n'en perdit pas un coup de dent... Les victimes, dans les prisons, sacrifiaient à l'estomac, et l'étroit guichet voyait passer les viandes les plus exquisés pour des hommes qui touchaient à leurs derniers repas et qui ne l'ignoraient point. Du fond d'un cachot, on faisait un traité avec un restaurateur, et les articles étaient signés de part et d'autre avec des conditions particulières sur les primeurs. On ne visitait point un prisonnier sans lui apporter pour consolation la bouteille de Bordeaux, les liqueurs des Iles et le plus délicat des pâtés. De son côté, le pâtissier, qui sait très-bien que la bouche va toujours, faisait descendre ses cartes jusqu'au fond des prisons... Lorsque le sang coulait à grands flots, le pâtissier, plus audacieux dans ses conceptions que l'Arétin, se mit à pétrir la pâte en priapes, et à donner à des gâteaux la forme du sexe virginal. Tous les excès se touchent: Jamais l'on ne vit plus de propension à la gourmandise que dans ces jours de calamité et d'horreur: J'en atteste les six prisons où j'ai été plongé. ⁶¹

With the Revolution, gastronomy took on a religious dimension. Respected by most, it was worshipped by an impressive motley of zealots who literally lived to eat. One of those guzzling gourmands who left his mark on the literary tableau d'honneur is Grimod de la Reynière who eulogized gluttony in his Almanach des Gourmands. The most glorious defense and illustration of that epoch's reverence for the culinary arts is expressed, however, in Anthelme Brillat-Savarin's Physiologie du Gôût which brilliantly attempted to define the primordial position of food in the total economy of the human cycle.

FOOTNOTES

1. Lesage, Histoire de Gil Blas, Vol. I, ed. M. Bardon (Paris: Editions Garnier Frères, 1962), p. 10.
2. Montaigne, op. cit., "De l'expérience", p. 1087.
3. "Omnia quae secundum naturam sunt, aestimatione digna sunt"-
Cicero
4. Fernand Paitre, Diderot Biologiste (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1971), p. 3.
5. Denis Diderot, Oeuvres Complètes, ed. J. Assezat, Vol. IX (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1875), p. 380.
6. Ibid., p. 302.
7. Denis Diderot, Le Neveu de Rameau (Paris: Garnier Flammarion: 1967), p. 166.
8. Ibid., p. 31.
9. Ibid., p. 84.
10. Denis Diderot, Le Neveu de Rameau, ed. Jean Fabre (Geneva: Droz, 1950), p. 102.
11. Ibid., p. 66.
12. Ibid., p. 103.
13. Ibid., p. 37.
14. Denis Diderot, Oeuvres Philosophiques, ed. Paul Vernière (Paris: Editions Garnier Frères, 1957), p. 261.
15. Ibid., pp. 265-66.
16. Emta Hill, Materialism and Monsters in Le Rêve de d'Alembert ed. Otis Fellows and Diana Guiragossian (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1968), p. 78.
17. Denis Diderot, ed. J. Assezat, Vol. II, p. 115.
18. Ibid., p. 115.
19. Denis Diderot, ed. J. Assezat, Vol. I, p. 324.
20. Ibid., p. 406.

21. Patre, p. 52.
22. C. R. Dawes, The Marquis de Sade (London: Robert Holdent Co. Ltd., 1927), p. 215.
23. Simone de Beauvoir, Must We Burn de Sade?, trans. Annette Michelson (London: Peter Nevill, 1953), p. 13.
24. D. A. F. Sade, Oeuvres Complètes du Marquis de Sade, Vol XIII (Paris: Au Cercle du Livre Précieux, 1967), p. 20.
25. Norman Gear, The Divine Demon (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1963), p. 212.
26. Beauvoir, p. 38.
27. Ibid., p. 38.
28. Ibid., p. 39.
29. Ibid., p. 45.
30. Sade, p. LVIII.
31. Ibid., p. LIX.
32. Ibid., p. 165.
33. Ibid., p. 114.
34. Ibid., p. 44.
35. Ibid., p. 14.
36. Gear, p. 209.
37. Ibid., p. 209.
38. Ibid., p. 209.
39. Ibid., p. 209.
40. Beauvoir, p. 40.
41. Ibid., p. 41.
42. Sade, p. LX.
43. Ibid., p. 59.
44. Beauvoir, p. 42.
45. Edward F. Edinger, Ego and Archetype (Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc., 1974), p. 7.

46. Sade, p. 55.
47. Ibid., p. 59.
48. Ibid., p. 57.
49. Ibid., p. 59.
50. Ibid., p. 82.
51. Ibid., p. 183.
52. Ibid., p. 145.
53. Ibid., p. 84.
54. Ibid., p. 167.
55. Ibid., p. 139.
56. Ibid., p. 115.
57. Ibid., p. 140.
58. Ibid., p. 128.
59. Ibid., p. 131.
60. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
61. Louis Sébastien Mercier, Paris pendant la Révolution (Paris: Poulet-Mallassis, 1862), Vol. II, pp. 140-142.

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