

TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE IN RABELAIS'S
'PANTAGRUEL' AND 'GARGANTUA'

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The basic contentions of Truth and knowledge in Rabelais's "Pantagruel" and "Gargantua" are, first, that the theme of truth and knowledge underlies, unifies and gives meaning to all the disparate episodes of Books I and II and, second, that Rabelais went to great lengths to communicate his ideas on the theme of cognition in as tangible a way as possible to his general readers.

This thesis is, thus, in effect, an attempt to restore the "incompatible" elements of Pantagruel and Gargantua to a status of equality. I hope to demonstrate that they are all interlocking and indispensable parts of a fictional pattern by means of which Rabelais stimulated his readers into exploring two broad areas of thought (the first mainly in Pantagruel, the second principally in Gargantua, though they overlap) basic to his conception of truth and knowledge.

Unless it is derived from empirical information, from primary sources, knowledge is invalid. Second-hand, received "knowledge" --no matter how impressive-looking, plausible or authoritative-- cannot be trusted to lead to the truth. One's senses are the foundation on which cognition is constructed.

Omniscience and hence absolute truth are fatuous concepts. Their monolithic perfection is only tenable when critical reason and individual judgement are suppressed. They are ultimately --in those who profess them-- the offspring of self-love. Partial knowledge and relative truth are, however, accessible to the individual who exercises his critical reason (which means unbiased by "philautie") on the raw material of first-hand information. This implies the mutual co-existence and compatibility of many relative truths --for the divergence in judgement stems from the infinite variety of temperament. For Rabelais the absolute, unilateral assertion does not do justice to the multifariousness of

reality. To it he opposes a philosophy of duality : by operating a reconciliation or fusion of opposing but relatively true viewpoints --thus transcending the purely individual judgement-- Rabelais attempts to arrive at a closer approximation to Truth.

The thesis comprises an introduction and five chapters :

Chapter 1 : The humanist-inspired episodes of Pantagruel and Gargantua ;

Chapter 2 : The disruption of the status quo in Pantagruel ;

Chapter 3 : Form and content in Pantagruel ;

Chapter 4 : Absolute and relative in Gargantua ;

Chapter 5 : The concept of duality in Gargantua.

TRUTH AND KNOWLEDGE IN
RABELAIS'S "PANTAGRUEL" AND "GARGANTUA".

R.G. FERGUSON.



"Chercherons la résolution jusques au fond du
puis inespisable auquel disoit Héraclite
estre la vérité cachée".

Pantagruel, 18

"bien seurement et plaisamment parfaire le
chemin de la congnoissance divine et chasse
de sapience".

Cinquième Livre, 47

NOTE ON EDITIONS AND REFERENCES.

All chapter and line references to Pantagruel and Gargantua are to the 1542 F. Juste editions known respectively as (M) and (E) in A. Lefranc's classification of editions published in Rabelais's lifetime. When earlier variants are cited, the date and edition are indicated in the footnotes. For (M), (E) and all variants the modern edition used was

Oeuvres de Francois Rabelais, édition critique publiée par Abel Lefranc, Jacques Boulanger, Henri Clouzot, Paul Dorveaux, Jean Plattard et Lazare Sainéan.

- t. I Gargantua, Prologue, I-XXII, Paris, Champion, 1913.
- t. II Gargantua, XXIII-LVIII, Paris, Champion, 1913.
- t. III Pantagruel, Prologue, I-XI, Paris, Champion, 1922.
- t. IV Pantagruel, XII-XXXIV, Paris, Champion, 1922.

In my quotations "e" acute and "a" grave have been accentuated as in modern usage.

All references to the Tiers Livre, the Quart Livre and the Cinquième Livre (1564 edition) as well as to the Pantagrueline Prognostication, the almanachs and the Latin and French Correspondence are to

Rabelais, Oeuvres Complètes. Edition établie, annotée et préfacée par Guy Demerson---, Paris, Seuil, 1973.

References to the Isle Sonante are to vol. II of

Rabelais, Oeuvres complètes, éd. par Pierre Jourda, Paris, Garnier, 2 vol., 1962.

Following the original order in which they were published I shall refer to Pantagruel as Book I and to Gargantua as Book II. In footnotes the editions will be known respectively as Lefranc, Demerson and Jourda.

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INTRODUCTION.

Like many important writers, Rabelais returned time and time again to a limited number of fundamental ideas. He explored these from different angles and illuminated them by adopting diverse fictional forms. We find his serious ideas couched disconcertingly in the framework of such unlikely genres as the almanach, the prognostication, the romance of chivalry, the explorer's tale. Within the covers of Pantagruel and Gargantua, Rabelais juxtaposed the lofty seriousness of Gargantua's humanist education and his passionate letter to his son, the subtle ambivalence of his narrator's dialogue with the reader, social satire and parody expressed in the coarsest language and the full range of verbal and situational comedy.

The central contention of this study is that at the deepest level the theme of truth and knowledge underlies and gives meaning to the often disconcerting and apparently disjointed episodes of Pantagruel and Gargantua.

In the early 1530's, Rabelais, a respected humanist with a number of erudite publications to his name¹, suddenly began to publish, in French, imaginative works which were, for a humanist, of a most startling and unexpected kind. Almanachs, mock-prognostications, Pantagruel, Gargantua. These works were published by printers who catered for a wide audience. They were, in many ways, of an obviously popular nature and were meant to make the reader laugh. They were, however, also intended to make him think.

No contemporary reader of Rabelais could have mistaken his almanachs or his Pantagrueline Prognostication for

anything other than, in the case of the former, basically serious denunciations, and in the case of the latter, a parody of popular astrological predictions. It seems likewise certain that Rabelais's readers recognized in the almost contemporaneous Pantagruel a parody of another extremely popular genre : the romance of chivalry.

But what was it precisely about these popular genres which incited Rabelais to subvert them comically and even, in the case of the almanach, to contest their message in a polemical way ? Obviously Rabelais derived pleasure from satirising popular but rather foolish genres. There was more to it than that, however. In their different ways their authors all tried to make the reader believe the most fatuous things which neither author nor reader could verify at first hand. Their authors claimed transcendental knowledge for themselves and Truth with a capital T for their works. Rabelais took a different view of their "infinis abus"² whose aim was clear to him :

"abuser le pource monde curieux de sçavoir choses nouvelles"³.

In his anti-predictions and his parodies of romance-clichés (this is the subject of an extended analysis in the third chapter of the thesis) he opposed to these mystificators --whose very techniques he adopted the better to expose them-- a lucid, healthy scepticism of human claims to transcendental knowledge⁴. He encouraged his readers to concentrate on what they knew concretely through their own senses, to trust God and get on with the business of living⁵. I shall try to show that these themes underlie not only those episodes of Pantagruel and Gargantua which burlesque romance techniques

but inform these works as a whole. The importance of Rabelais' attachment to and fictional advocacy of these attitudes is of course underlined when we consider it in the light of the crucial religious struggle, at that point of time, centred not only on the question of what to believe but on the criteria (on the Catholic side it was the authority of the church on the Protestant side, the judgement of the individual enlightened by Grace) to establish truth. At the very moment when Rabelais began to write fiction, both sides in the religious quarrel were seeking to establish a new criterion of knowledge and truth which would be watertight and transcendental.

Pantagruel and Gargantua have, as has always been recognized, a whole range of implications --religious, political topical. However, as I see it, underlying most of these is the central theme of truth and knowledge. The essence of what Rabelais had to communicate to his readers on this theme can be expressed as follows.

Unless it is derived from empirical information, from primary sources, knowledge is invalid. Second-hand, received information --no matter how impressive-looking, plausible or authoritative-- cannot be trusted to lead one to the truth. One's senses are the foundation on which cognition is constructed.

Omniscience and hence absolute truth are, in a human context, fatuous concepts. Their monolithic perfection is only tenable when critical reason and individual judgement are suppressed. They are ultimately --in those who profess them-- the offspring of self-love⁶. Partial knowledge and relative truth are, however, accessible to the individual who exercises critical reason (which means unbiased by "phi-

lautie") on the raw-material of first-hand information. This implies the mutual co-existence and compatibility of many relative truths --for the divergence in judgement stems from the infinite variety of temperament. For Rabelais, the absolute, unilateral assertion does not do justice to the multifariousness of reality. To it he opposes a philosophy of duality : by operating a reconciliation or fusion of opposing but relatively true viewpoints (thus transcending the purely individual judgement) Rabelais attempted to arrive at a closer account of existence.

This study does not pretend to cover every episode of Books I and II. I do not suggest that every aspect of Pantagruel and Gargantua --whether it be comic, serious or somewhere between the two-- is directly or consciously, on Rabelais's part, derived from the theme of truth and knowledge. What I do hope to demonstrate is that many episodes of the two books are directly inspired by this theme and that other and important features of the novels reflect Rabelais's attitudes on these ideas and thus enhance the works' message.

In the course of the thesis I shall be led to bring up and discuss many points which are part of the common currency of Rabelaisian criticism. Rabelais's work has received so much critical attention that this is, of course, inevitable. In rediscussing these topics, however, I hope to show how they relate to the theme of truth and knowledge. I hope, for instance, to analyse Rabelais's background, his career, aspects of his parody, satire and irony in such a way as to shed new light upon them. The originality of this thesis resides, in fact, not so much in the provision of new material as in its

attempt to provide a new synthesis of the varied and often disparate elements of Pantagruel and Gargantua.

I would like, in this context, to acknowledge my indebtedness to a number of recent critics who have either suggested new lines of thought or who have worked on lines parallel to my own. I owe much to Dorothy G. Coleman whose pioneering work on the relationship between reader and created author⁷ helped me to clarify my ideas and who confirmed me in my idea that the prologue of Pantagruel was essentially a parody of an archetypal romance of chivalry⁸. Mickhail Bakhtin's revolutionary study⁹ of the popular elements of Rabelais's work made a contribution to my thinking which is clear from chapter II of the thesis. François Rigolot's analysis¹⁰ of the nonsense languages of Pantagruel helped to undo a knot which prevented my full appreciation of how all-pervasive was Rabelais's desire to make his readers think for themselves. Although I do not agree entirely with G. Iosipovici's account of the prologue of Gargantua¹¹, he perceived, as I had intuited from the outset, that the apparently opposing elements of that prologue are not mutually incompatible.

I have mentioned only a few writers belonging to one branch of the generation of Rabelaisian critics who have succeeded the great positivist critics centred around Abel Lefranc. Focusing fundamentally on the text itself, this branch has given up the idea of trying to locate what "Rabelais" has to say, or to extract his political or religious opinions. It has attempted to restore the "incompatible" elements of Rabelais's work to a status of equality by analysing his fictional techniques and placing them in their historical context. If one can criticize M. Screech and

A. Krailsheimer, who represent another current in modern Rabelaisian criticism which tends to concentrate its erudition on the "serious" elements of Rabelais's fiction, it is that, in spite of their valuable work, they have (as I shall show in chapter I) tended to neglect the bulk of Rabelais's work which lies outside the humanist-inspired episodes.

Throughout this study I shall insist on Rabelais's desire to communicate his ideas to his ordinary readers, to the common man --from merchant to artisan-- of the third estate (a common man who might not necessarily have to read Rabelais's work, given the frequency with which books were still read aloud)¹². I am well aware that Rabelais was read by members of the other estates right up to Marguerite de Navarre and François I. Nevertheless I shall argue in chapter I of the thesis that there are features of Rabelais's early work --his adoption of French, his espousal of popular genres (romance of chivalry, prognostic, almanach), his use of popular language and imagery, the concern he constantly displays to disabuse "le povere monde", the dozens of editions these books went through in the years immediately following their publication-- which seem to make Rabelais's (successful) intention overwhelmingly clear. A number of factors outside the works themselves point to the plausibility of this conclusion : the very popular and sometimes primitive nature of Rabelaisian pastiches which assume a knowledge of Pantagruel and Gargantua among the most basic class of readers¹³ (although nobles read these works too, of course), the comments of Du Bellay on Rabelais's intentions¹⁴, the shocked condemnation of Nicolas Bourbon¹⁵.

The very necessity of such a study raises, from the outset, a vital question. Why is it that, if such a nexus of important ideas exists in Books I and II, the theme of truth and knowledge --the epistemological enquiry-- has not hitherto been acknowledged by Rabelaisian criticism to be an overriding factor of unification? Whereas there is no challenging the importance of the quest for wisdom through truth begun by Panurge's two queries in the Tiers Livre and carried on through the Fourth and Fifth Books¹⁶ by the literal-metaphorical journey of exploration, there is no such unanimity about the importance of this theme in Pantagruel and Gargantua. Indeed there has been no attempt to see both novels in the light of these ideas.

Unlike the later novels, Pantagruel and Gargantua do not possess a clear-cut homogeneity: that closely-knit and linear interaction of plot, characterization and ideas which gives the Tiers Livre, Quart Livre and Cinquième Livre their unmistakable structural and thematic unity. No such regularity is to be sought or expected from Pantagruel and Gargantua. The plot, in a strict sense, is of little importance and does not provide the "fil conducteur". Words, in these first books, serve a different purpose: they are, for much of the time, not in themselves a medium to convey ideas directly. Pantagruel and Gargantua bristle with verbal parody, word-lists, puns, spoonerisms, malapropisms, inverted proverbs and comic coinages.

Ideas --as M. de Grève has remarked¹⁷ à propos of this very question-- do not necessarily have to be expressed overtly and in a formal and logical way. In the early novels

Rabelais makes use, as I hope to show, of entirely different fictional techniques, the effect of which is cumulative and suggestive rather than linear, to treat the specific aspects of the problem of cognition which he raises. In chapter I of the thesis we shall see how Rabelais, in the scattered humanist-inspired episodes of both novels, focused the readers' attention on the idea that in the central disciplines only information acquired by one's senses is trustworthy ; that it is only by using critical reason, by exercising informed judgement on primary sources that partial knowledge and relative truth can be attained. In chapters II and III, I intend to show how Rabelais indirectly reinforced these notions in Pantagruel by operating a comic disruption, in his fictional world, of the seemingly immutable status quo of society and by disrupting fallacious fictional techniques by means of which authors try to achieve verisimilitude. In chapter IV, which concentrates on Gargantua, I shall attempt to describe how Rabelais, in a whole range of comic episodes, expresses his belief that omniscience and absolute truth are inadequate concepts which do not produce a valid account of the multifariousness of reality. In Gargantua, and this forms the substance of chapter V, Rabelais proposes (or rather allows his readers to infer) a conception of duality in which individual relative truth is transcended by the bringing together and juxtaposition of opposing but relatively true stances which turn out to be complementary.

On account of the very attitudes to truth and knowledge which he was combatting and which he desired his readers to re-appraise and reject, Rabelais's own ideas on the subject

are expressed implicitly, never explicitly. The direct exposé was out of the question for Rabelais. His goal was to solicit his readers' participation, to encourage them to make use of their personal judgement and critical faculties. Rabelais suggested, his readers had the freedom to infer.

CHAPTER ONE.

THE HUMANIST-INSPIRED EPISODES OF "PANTAGRUEL" AND "GARGANTUA"

It is now clear that Rabelais's fiction is worthy of our attention because of its contribution to the history of ideas. By any standards Rabelais was a considerable scholar. As near as possible to being the renaissance "uomo universale" he had a firm grounding in those disciplines which stood at the heart of humanist concern : theology, law, medicine, Graeco-Roman languages and literature and --the linch-pin in the study of all these-- textual exegesis.

Rabelais spent a good part of the decade preceding the publication of Pantagruel and Gargantua as a monk --first Franciscan then Benedictine¹. From these "années de moineage" he acquired a detailed knowledge of Scripture as well as of the way of life, habits of thought and religious practices connected with these orders.

Rabelais's high reputation as a medical practitioner among his contemporaries², his pioneering work in medical research³ and the important posts, both public and private, he held in his lifetime⁴ make it clear that he must have been a practising doctor of great skill. The publication dates of Pantagruel and Gargantua (1532 at the earliest for the former and 1535 at the outside for the latter)⁵ fall almost exactly between the two years --1530 circa and 1537--⁶ which mark the beginning and end of Rabelais's formal studies in medicine.

The bitter critique of the aims and methods of the legal establishment to be found in the later books⁷, as well as
the intimate

acquaintance with legal detail and with the jargon and verbal mannerisms of lawyers which Rabelais displays in these, are already present in Pantagruel and Gargantua. It was in the pre-1532 period spent in Poitou that Rabelais --a lawyer's son --was admitted into the humanist circle of "le docte Tiraqueau" for whose "...de legibus connubialibus" he wrote some prefatory verses in Greek.⁸ He was also introduced at this time to the legist Amaury Bouchard ("Almarice clarissime")⁹ to whom he dedicated his publication of what he thought was an original and unknown Roman legal document and "le tant bon, tant vertueux, tant docte et équitable praesident"¹⁰ Eriand Vallée.

Among his contemporaries Rabelais enjoyed a deserved reputation as a first-rate Latin and Greek scholar.¹¹ At a time when the hostile attitude of the ecclesiastical authorities to Hellenistic studies is comically summed up in the satirical Farce des Théologastres¹² Rabelais was not only fluent in Latin; he had learned Greek, under trying circumstances, as a monk at Fontenay-le-Comte. His understandable pride in this feat shows in the frequent literary references in Greek scattered abundantly through his Latin correspondence with his fellow humanists Budé, Tiraqueau, Erasmus.¹³ Before he had published his first novel Rabelais had already undertaken a partial translation of Herodotus,¹⁴ had published his own Latin translation of Hippocrates and Galen¹⁵ and in his 1531 public lecture at the University of Montpellier expounded these two authors from the Greek.¹⁶

Rabelais's medical lecture, his learned translations of Hippocrates and Galen (based on a very old Greek manuscript in his possession)¹⁷ bespeak his concern --voiced in his prefatory letter to his patron Geoffrey d'Estissac¹⁸ --to consult and trust primary sources alone and to strive to establish the most accurate versions possible of important classical texts. It was this concern which led Rabelais to publish, almost contemporaneously with Pantagruel and with the excited

enthusiasm which is unmistakable in the preface, the "will" of Lucius Cuspidius.¹⁹ A similar preoccupation on Rabelais's part occasioned his publication of the letters of the Ferrarese doctor Manardi,²⁰ for the latter's method (an example of the direct approach which Rabelais championed in all the branches of learning and the "idée" or archetype of which he depicted in Pantagruel 8 and Gargantua 23 and 24) was to examine and comment upon manuscripts of Greek and Latin medical works. Rabelais found Manardi exemplary in his own field: eminent

"inter eos qui nostra tempestate ad restituendam nitore suo priscam germanamque medicinam, animi contentionem adpulerunt".²¹

The breadth of Rabelais's intellectual interests, the first hand manner in which he acquired his knowledge, his desire to learn Greek, his work on establishing correct versions of classical texts and his enthusiasm for the publishing of important source material for scholars—all of these make it plain that even before turning to fiction Rabelais was a committed and fervent (witness the tone of his letter to Erasmus)²² humanist dedicated to the renewal of all the essential disciplines by means of the direct examination of primary sources. Through interlocuters, he expressed this dedication in Pantagruel and Gargantua. For Gargantua the careful study of the ancient languages is a precious tool allowing direct access to Scripture: the New Testament (in Greek) and the Old Testament (in Hebrew)²³ and to the medical works of Greek, Roman, Jewish and Arab doctors.²⁴ Allied to a personal acquaintance with classical literature and philosophy, knowledge of these languages permits one to read and understand Roman law.²⁵ Such a method engenders practical consequences for the present. Pantagruel will only sanction the preaching of the Gospel (the direct word of God)²⁶; in the field of medicine he was among the first to carry out public dissections on corpses²⁷ (the direct examination of the human anatomy);

in the sphere of jurisprudence^{Pantagruel} recommended that the plaintiff and defendant be heard simply by the judge²⁸ (a direct appraisal of the facts).

The corollary of this empirical approach was necessarily the rejection and condemnation of secondary sources, of non-empirical information, of additions of all kinds. As Rabelais's trustworthy interlocutors see it, not²⁹ only Biblical commentaries, learned works on theological debates³⁰ and popular lives of saints,³¹ but also Church doctrine such as the Lent fast,³² practices like the worship of "healing" saints,³³ the encouragement of pilgrimages³⁴ and the selling of indulgences,³⁵ even the establishment of the monastic orders³⁶ --all were superfluous and false codicils to the word of God.³⁷ Similarly^{Pantagruel} regarded the "barbarorum glossemata"³⁸ of the constantly-cited legal commentators whose words were the supreme authority as ignorant and false "subversions de droict"³⁹ reference to which not only failed to clarify the issue in hand but made the attainment of truth infinitely more difficult.⁴⁰ The way to knowledge and hence truth --in medicine, religion, law, textual exegesis --lay for Rabelais in direct contact with the source material of these disciplines.

Inevitably Rabelais's rejection of these prestigious secondary sources (both in the narrow and wide sense of the term) brought him into conflict with the prevailing views of the establishment in these fields --an establishment whose methods were deeply entrenched (even in his own field, medicine, as Rabelais comments ruefully to Tiraqueau)⁴¹ and which continued to wield power. A point about Gargantua's optimistic picture of France in the early 1530's which is often forgotten is that it was written from Utopia. No commentator has remarked that in the chapter which follows this description of the total rebirth of learning Carpalim is astounded to hear Panurge speaking Greek. His exclamations⁴² are an eloquent and ironic comment on the actual state

of Greek studies in France when Rabelais was writing Pantagruel.

Throughout his life as a scholar and creative writer Rabelais felt the hand of the upholders of the old learning upon him. While he was a student of the classical languages, but also a member of the Order of St. Francis, Rabelais, in company with his friend and fellow-student Pierre Amy, had his Greek books confiscated by his superiors.⁴³ Soon after its publication, Pantagruel was condemned by the Sorbonne.⁴⁴ In order to avoid being troubled by the ecclesiastical authorities Rabelais had often to practise self-censorship where his first two novels were concerned --replacing, for instance, "Théologiens" and "sorbonnicoles" with "sophistes",⁴⁵ omitting, among others, critical references to the criterion of faith as defined by the Faculty of Theology,⁴⁶ to belief in the intercession of saints⁴⁷ or a simple allusion to the translation of the Gospel into French.⁴⁸ Notwithstanding these concessions Rabelais was hounded and criticized⁴⁹ to such an extent that at one stage he may have been on the point of abandoning fiction altogether.⁵⁰ Fortunately during most of his career as a writer Rabelais had influential benefactors to protect him.⁵¹ In the early 1550's rumour had it⁵² that Rabelais -- no longer shielded by his powerful patrons --had been imprisoned. Whether this rumour had any foundation or not we cannot say; what it is indicative of is the climate of intolerance in which Rabelais had to conduct his polemic.

However, what Rabelais had to say on the subject of truth and knowledge in the humanist context did not end there. His argument developed in Gargantua in a way which was even more subversive to the establishment and which explains even more clearly the hostility and intolerance shown to his work. For Rabelais the road to knowledge did not stop at a given point. The learning process as exemplified

in the educations of Pantagruel and Gargantua was open-ended. Pantagruel attacks a blinkered attitude to knowledge in the Tiers Livre:⁵³

"Que nuist sçavoir tousjours et tousjours apprendre,
feust-ce d'un sot, d'un pot, d'une gedoufle,
d'une moufle, d'une pantoufle?"

The notion of perfect knowledge is dismissed by Bacbuc when he describes the philosophers' quest for truth:

"Infailliblement aussi trouveront tout le sçavoir et d'eulx
et de leurs prédécesseurs à peine estre la minime partie
de ce qui est, et ne le sçavent."⁵⁴

As Rabelais asks, à propos of man's knowledge of the workings of the celestial bodies:

"Cela que peut-ce estre? Moins certes que néant, car
Hyppocrates dit, Aph.I. Vita brevis, ars longa."⁵⁵

Man's life is short and time is

"père de Vérité".⁵⁶

Without omniscience, which can belong only to God:

"Rien n'est, sinon Dieu, parfaict",⁵⁷

absolute truth is denied to human beings. The well at the bottom of which, according to Heraclitus,⁵⁸ the truth lay hidden --and which Rabelais cited on a number of occasions --was "inespuisable".⁵⁹

Rabelais knew Democritus and understood Pyrrhonism,⁶¹ but he did not take the sceptical attitude towards knowledge. While, like the sceptics, he denied the idea of omniscience he did not, as they did, refute the possibility of any knowledge whatsoever. The consequence of the sceptics' rejection of knowledge was that, no judgement was nearer to the truth than any other.⁶² For them, correct judgements were out of the question. As he showed in Pantagruel and more fully in Gargantua Rabelais vigorously maintained the validity of partial knowledge based on direct contact with primary sources, with empirical information. In book II he makes clear that for him all judgements are far from being equally valid or invalid and that it is possible

to arrive at relatively true judgements derived, if not from the bottom of Heraclitus' well, at least from its water:

"ex antro illo horrido videretur in quo dixit
Heraclitus veritatem latitare".⁶³

Of course the source material in itself does not constitute even partial knowledge. Rabelais was not a pure empiricist; primary sources are the building bricks, the raw material, but for Rabelais perception and conception are inseparable: the intellect must be involved in the process of acquiring knowledge. Everything depends on how it is interpreted.⁶⁴ In Gargantua in his humanist-inspired contribution to the renewal of the "orbiculata series disciplinarum", Rabelais debates the criteria for such an appraisal. For a judgement to be valid, the source material on which it rests must be interpreted independently and freely, using critical reason:⁶⁵ it must be devoid of prejudice, which Pantagruel saw as self-love.⁶⁶ Judgements which respect these criteria, yet differ may be equally true.⁶⁷

Transcribed baldly without reference to manner and framework, --with the complexity of the concepts involved and the scholarly context in which it evolves, this epistemological enquiry appears highly intellectual; it would seem to be restricted to an interested elite, to be inaccessible to the ordinary reader and to be detached from the popular remainder of the two novels. Yet this was not Du Bellay's opinion:

"Je te veux bien avertir que tous les savants hommes
de France n'ont point méprisé leur vulgaire. Celui
qui fit renaître Aristophanes et feint si bien le
nez de Lucien en porte bien témoignage."⁶⁸

A number of observations point to the correctness of Du Bellay's appraisal. First of all we have seen that a genuine humanist of considerable standing such as Rabelais thought fit --and in this he was alone amongst his fellow humanists (c.f. the shocked reaction of a respectable scholar such as N. Bourbon to Pantagruel.)⁶⁹ to express

his ideas most comprehensively not in works of erudition, but in popular, humorous best-sellers which reached a more varied public than any scholarly edition. Rabelais was also unique among contemporary humanists in employing the vernacular to voice his views.⁷⁰ Both of these facts point strongly to Rabelais's desire to communicate with as wide a readership as possible.

Rabelais was a humanist in both the scholarly and moral senses of the word. His intellectual interests were never divorced from considerations of practical usefulness. Ultimately they were for the benefit of people. The fact that Rabelais had not only an erudite interest in medicine, but used his studies to relieve the suffering of his fellow men (rich and poor)⁷¹ --as he acknowledges with humility in the "Epistre Liminaire" to the Quart Livre⁷² --is in itself instructive. If the handy pocket version of Manardi he had published was appreciated by Rabelais's fellow doctors then its correctness was also invaluable to the patients in these doctors' care. For Rabelais's preoccupation with establishing and publishing accurate medical texts was not simply theoretical; a mistranslated, added or deleted word was always to be condemned in an ancient text --but in medicine it was unforgivable for it cost lives, as Rabelais explains to Geoffrey d'Estissac:

"id quod si usquam alibi vitio verti solet, est etiam in medicorum libris piaculare, in quibus vocula unica, vel addita, vel expuncta, quin et apiculus inversus aut praepostere adscriptus, multa hominum milia haud raro neci dedit."⁷³

Rabelais believed that learning had to be made available to the people: hence his passionate interest in the practical application of learning - education - which he expressed in his first two novels.⁷⁴ Learning led to the moral enlightenment of people and Pantagruel's mission was to

"enrichir et réformer (les humains)".⁷⁵

It is significant when we recall that Rabelais's serious ideas were presented within a popular fictional framework in Pantagruel and Gargantua that in the ideal France of Pantagruel education is not confined to a tiny élite; it is for the common people too:

"Je (says Gargantua) voy les brigans, les boureaulx, les aventuriers, les palefreniers de maintenant, plus doctes que les docteurs et prescheurs de mon temps. Que diray-je? Les femmes et les filles ont aspiré à ceste louange et manne céleste de bonne doctrine".⁷⁶

Given the above considerations, the notion that Rabelais intended his debate on the theme of truth and knowledge to remain purely theoretical, to be for the consumption of a highly educated minority seems distinctly implausible.

A glance at Rabelais's background, its importance to his creative work and his attitude towards it as expressed in the humanist-inspired episodes of Pantagruel and Gargantua will reveal Rabelais's sympathy with ordinary people and will, I hope, confirm my suggestion that he had their material and especially their moral welfare at heart. This brief outline will explain why Rabelais was vitally concerned to communicate his ideas about truth and knowledge to "le povere monde".⁷⁷

Eminent humanist though he was Rabelais was a man of the people and was profoundly attached to his roots. Of Chinon, Rabelais's fictional persona boasts:

"ville insigne, ville noble, ville antique, voyre première du monde".⁷⁸

No-one could be prouder than Rabelais of his country origins:

"je suis né et ay esté nourry jeune au jardin de France: c'est Touraine",⁷⁹

he proclaims through Panurge. The fertile region of his childhood with its picturesque main town on the Vienne, its gently undulating relief, vineyards, walnut trees, willow-meadows, villages and peasants nourished Rabelais's creative writings from his first to his last

publication: from the narrator's visit to his "païs de vache" in the prologue to Pantagruel through the setting of the Picrocholine war in Gargantua, the background to the narratives of both Gargantua and the Tiers Livre, the "ancien prologue" of the Quart Livre⁸⁰, to the concluding words of the final novel in which Touraine is compared to the beautiful land where the key to truth and knowledge has finally been handed over to the "Pantagruelistes" at the end of their quest.⁸¹

Not only Panurge, but all the "Pantagruelistes" --including Rabelais's humanist princes --come from Touraine. Gargantua's headquarters in book II are the Rabelais's farm, "La Devinière"; both the narrator Alcofribas and Pantagruel are intimate with Chinon:

"Ceste entrée me révoque en souvenir la Cave peinte de la première ville du monde: car là sont peintures pareilles, en pareille fraischeur, comme icy.

-Où est, demanda Pantagruel; qui est ceste première ville que dites?

-Chinon, dis-je, ou Caynon en Touraine.

-Je say, respondit Pantagruel, où est Chinon, et la cave peinte aussi, j'y ay beu maints verres de vin frais..."⁸²

Upon disembarking in the "Royaume de la Quinte Essence" Rabelais's heroes are asked their country of origin: Panurge answers simply for all of them:

"Cousins ... nous sommes Tourengaux".⁸³

Rabelais's fictional persona --while as learned as Rabelais the humanist --conducts his dialogue with the readers, from novels I to V in the salty language and with the earthy humour of a peasant (as Rabelais himself could do in his familiar correspondence).⁸⁴ His good kings (unlike the monarchs of popular contemporary novels such as Jean de Paris⁸⁵ who move in a magical, rarefied atmosphere bearing no relation to the lives of the common people) are often almost indistinguishable from the ordinary people who are their subjects. The description of Grandgousier in Gargantua 28 is unforgettable.⁸⁶

Steeped from his early years in the life of the country-side, of its inhabitants and their occupations, the mature Rabelais's fascination and affection for his heritage imbues the whole texture of Pantagruel and Gargantua. He was brought up on these smallholdings dotted round Chinon whose names crop up in the unlikeliest places in his novels --La Devinière, la Pomardière, Gravot, Chavigny.⁸⁷ He played beside the family dovecots (and learnt the usefulness of carrier-pigeons)⁸⁸ and upper-storey stables (which many years later he incorporated into Gargantua)⁸⁹. He must have romped in all the nearby fields whose names became engraved in his memory⁹⁰ and prised open the husks of the rock-hard walnuts on his father's tree⁹¹ with the local form of pocket-knife⁹²--the term for which he never forgot.

He retained the colourful speech of the ordinary people around him⁹³

"--si Dieu me sauve le moulle du bonnet: c'est le pot au vin comme disoit ma mère grand"⁹⁴

the local dialect, idioms, sayings⁹⁵ and popular beliefs.⁹⁶ He knew what is now the Indre-et-Loire by heart. Perhaps it was in that

"belle charrette à boeufs (faicte) par l'invention de Jehan Denyau",⁹⁷

that he first visited all the hamlets surrounding his father's properties and which form the decor of his novels. It is astonishing that so many years later Rabelais recalled the names of even the tiniest villages scattered far and wide over a region of few roads which even today retains an exceptionally rural character. When as an adult he situated the "guerre Picrocholine" round La Deviniere he placed all the villages and landmarks as accurately as if he had had a modern large-scale map in front of him.⁹⁸

As a child Rabelais had observed the peasants at work in the meadows and among the vines. He knew their names⁹⁹ and the names of their tools¹⁰⁰ and understood what each was for.¹⁰¹ He had joined in the popular Christmas singing at which his uncle's own "Noëls", composed in

"patois", were sung.¹⁰² He had participated in the merry-makings to which all the neighbours were invited:

"voisins, tous bons beuveurs, bons compagnons
et beaulx joueurs de quille..."¹⁰³

where there was the typical peasant food --"saulcisses", "andouilles", tripe --in abundance after the toil in the fields, where the jokes flew thick and fast¹⁰⁴ as at a peasant "gueuleton" even today and where, as in a painting by Bruegel,

"sur l'herbe drue, dancèrent au son des joyeux
flageollez et douces cornemuzes tant baude-
ment que c'estoit passe-temps céleste les veoir
ainsi soy rigouller".¹⁰⁵

He knew where the best local produce of all kinds came from,¹⁰⁶ had learned to distinguish the various breeds of cow,¹⁰⁷ types of meadow¹⁰⁸ and varieties of grapes grown in the neighbourhood.¹⁰⁹ Like his fellow country-children he enjoyed his bun and grapes eaten together.

"Car notez que c'est viande céleste manger
à desjeuner raisins avec fouace fraîche".¹¹⁰

He had been with his father to town and watched with wide-eyed fascination all the tradesmen at work, full of admiration for their skill.¹¹¹

Such was the influence of his background that later when he travelled all over France --to Gascony, the Midi, Poitou, Picardy, Lorraine --and even to Italy, Rabelais showed the same sympathy and curiosity for the common people and their mode of life. His fiction --as Sainéan describes fully --bears witness to his astounding knowledge of local speech and sayings, of popular beliefs and legends, of the activities of the people, of local trades and their precise terminology, of regional and culinary specialities.¹¹² For Rabelais this knowledge and understanding of the lives and activities of non-cultivated people was in no way incompatible with his humanism. Both had equal status. Familiarity with the products of nature and with the activities of the common people was an integral element of the educational programme of Rabelais's philosopher-kings.¹¹³

The effect on Rabelais's thinking of the values and qualities he learned to appreciate in his background was capital. His utter repudiation of the idea that secondary sources, received interpretations, and non-empirical information constitute knowledge can plausibly be derived from his admiration for the ^{good sense} of the common people; for theirs was a knowledge based on direct contact with the soil --in the case of the peasant --and direct contact with materials --in the case of the craftsman. It was bereft of the defect of "resverie".¹¹⁴ Rabelais's determination that his studies should not remain theoretical but should be of practical value to people stems in all likelihood from his appreciation of the usefulness of the people's labour to all the community. If Rabelais loved the communal table with its abundance of salty food and wine, it was because good company and these good things engendered the dialogue (Gargantua 39 et 40 are excellent examples of this). At table ideas are exchanged, not forced upon others; the monologue, with its single, absolute truth --which Rabelais abhorred --are banished from it.

Rabelais's humanist-inspired criticism of the central disciplines as practised by the establishment was intimately linked to this concern for the people and their material and physical welfare. Rabelais exposes for his readers that the manner in which these were practised --and Rabelais concentrates on law and religion in Pantagruel and Gargantua¹¹⁵ was prejudicial to their interests. Twenty years before the "Chats-fourrés" chapters of the Cinquième Livre Rabelais pointed in his first two novels to the fact that the ways in which the law was practised not only wasted people's valuable time but fleeced them of their hard-earned money. Because of their incredibly complicated procedures based on secondary sources, those

"complainctes, adjournemens, comparitions, commissions, informations, avant procédéz, productions, alléguations, interdictz, contredictz, requestes, enquestes, répliques, dupliques, tripliques, escriptures, reproches, griefz, salvations, recollemens, confrontations, acarations,

libelles, apostoles, lètres royaulx, compulsoires, declinatoires, anticipatoires, évocations, envoyz, renvoyz, conclusions, fin de non procéder, apoinctemens, reliefs, confessions, exploictz ..." (Tiers Livre 39),

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which for Rabelais were nothing but "allongement de procès", lawyers drew out their cases indefinitely, filling their coffers and impoverishing people:

"Les articles de Paris chantent que Dieu seul peult faire choses infinies. Nature rien ne faict immortel, car elle met fin et période à toutes choses par elle productes: car omnia orta cadunt, etc; mais ces avalleurs de frimars font les procès davant eux pendens et infiniz et immortelz. Ce que faisans, ont donné lieu et vérifié le dict de Chilon Lacédémonien, consacré en Delphes, disant Misère estre compaignie de Procès et gens playdoiens misérables, car plus tost ont fin de leur vie que de leur droict prétendu".¹¹⁷

Thanks to their sophism, their false knowledge (what Rabelais later calls "la sexte essence"),¹¹⁸ by which they blind people,

"ils grippent tout, dévorent tout".¹¹⁹

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For this reason, Rabelais condemns men of law as "mangeurs du populaire" and banishes them from Thélème.¹²¹

The ways in which religion had been perverted by man-made additions and interpretations led to practices, beliefs and establishments detrimental to people. Rabelais lays bare for his ordinary readers that they, who sweat to maintain themselves and the community, have also to maintain the numerous parasitic religious orders unknown to Scripture and whose religious usefulness, perverted as it is, is nil:¹²²

"un moyne (j'entends de ces ocieux moynes) ne laboure comme le paisant, ne garde le pays comme l'homme de guerre, ne guéríst les malades comme le médecin, ne presche ny endoctrine le monde comme le bon docteur evangélicque et pédagogue, ne porte les commoditez et choses nécessaires à la républicque comme le marchand. Ce est la cause pourquoy de tous sont huéz et abhorrys".¹²³

Through Panurge, Rabelais shows that the non-biblical practice of selling indulgences is an empty fraud, dishonestly sanctioned by an out-of-context quotation from the Gospels,¹²⁴ whose goal is to separate

people from their money. The real worth of these indulgences is suggested by Rabelais through the offhand offer in dog-Latin of Janotus - a member of the theological establishment:

"Vultis etiam pardonos? Per diem vos habebitis et nihil payabitis".¹²⁵

Grangousier condemns pilgrimages as useless.¹²⁶ These distant and costly journeys took people, for no good reason, away from their vital daily business. Grangousier opens the pilgrims' eyes:

"Allez-vous-en, pauvres gens, au nom de Dieu le créateur, lequel vous soit en guide perpétuelle, et dorénavant ne soyez faciles à ces ocieux et inutiles voyages. Entretenez voz familles, travaillez, chascun en sa vocation, instruez voz enfans, et vivez comme vous enseigne le bon apostre saint Paoul".¹²⁷

The practitioners of the central disciplines were guilty, in Grangousier's eyes of an even more serious offence, moral deception:

"abuser le pouvre monde".¹²⁸

By blinding people with their false science based on secondary sources, by using their authority to impose their claim to possess the unique and unalterable Truth in their subject, they deceived them (in such important fields as religion, governing man's moral life and law, governing his civil conduct) into believing their pronouncements.

Gargantua, referring to the religious authorities who persuade people to leave their homes and families to undertake pilgrimages by making them believe that saints can cause illnesses and thus have to be placated, eloquently expresses Rabelais's indignation at this deception:

"plus sont à punir que ceulx qui par art magicque ou aultre engin auroient mis la peste par le pays. La peste ne tue que les corps, mais telz imposteurs empoisonnent les âmes".¹²⁹

As this "abus" rested on a fallacious conception of what constitutes knowledge and of the nature of truth, Rabelais chose to open people's eyes by allowing his ordinary readers to infer a different conception of truth and knowledge from his humanist criticism of the establishment.

In Pantagruel Rabelais was vitally concerned to show his readers that the "knowledge" of these imposters was founded on received interpretations, impressive secondary sources --which did not count as knowledge and which could not be trusted to lead to truth. Rabelais suggests to them on the other hand that only by direct contact with source material can they acquire knowledge. He made clear how important he considered this task of opening the eyes of the "plebs indocta", à propos of the authorities' "art de façade" based on secondary sources, in his letter to Tiraqueau:

Nam quos plebs indocta aliquo in numero habuit hoc nomine quod exoticam aliquam et insignem rerum peritiam prae se ferrent, eis si personam hanc, *καὶ ΛΕΟΝΤῆΝ* detraxeris, perfecerisque, ut cuius artis praetextu, luculenta eis rerum accessio facta est, eam vulgus meras praestigias, inepti-ssimasque ineptius esse agnoscat, quid aliud quam cornicum oculos confixisse videberis?."130

It goes without saying that in Pantagruel through his advocacy of primary sources in the fields of learning and his rejection of received interpretations, Rabelais implied that his readers were unwise to believe blindly; suggested they should exercise individual initiative. In Gargantua Rabelais brought these implications to his readers' attention even more strongly in the episodes centred on the reform of the essential disciplines. It was this emphasis on Rabelais's part which, above all, provoked the hostility of the authorities towards his work. In Gargantua Rabelais demonstrated that knowledge was finite and that Truth with a capital T belonged to no one man or body of men. But partial knowledge and relative truth were possible: this partial knowledge had to be acquired directly and be interpreted using reason in an unbiased way. Rabelais encouraged individual judgements based on these criteria which could reach valid if partial truth. He emphasized his point by denigrating the conception of truth and knowledge of the authorities --and more especially of the most hallowed and extreme example, the religious establishment. He

mocked the Catholic Church's method of imposing fixed interpretations without reference to individual judgement; of imposing a single, absolute truth (which was only tenable because it bore no reference to critical reason); of employing information and learning uncritically and for its own benefit: a blatant example of Gargantua's belief that:

"Science sans conscience n'est que ruine de l'âme."¹³¹

When we consider that the authorities claimed absolute authority, claimed to speak the indivisible and absolute Truth on religious matters; that they not only encouraged but insisted upon blind belief in their truth, uncritical acceptance of the "knowledge" they purveyed,¹³² we can grasp just how subversive Rabelais's dis-abuse of his readers on the theme of truth and knowledge was.

In effect Rabelais conducted his argument in a way which rendered his ideas eminently accessible to the ordinary reader. The most important passages and references in Pantagruel dealing with the central disciplines are: Pantagruel 5 (the opposition of the beauty of the Pandects and the uselessness of the mediaeval glosses added to it, which deface it); Pantagruel 7 (the ridiculing of the works of the "librairie de St. Victor") Pantagruel 8 (Gargantua's letter to Pantagruel); Pantagruel 10 (the criticism of the methods of the legal establishment); Pantagruel 17 (the striking of the sellers of indulgences); Pantagruel 18 (the attack on the Sorbonne's method of argumentation); Pantagruel 28 (Pantagruel's prayer). Basically Rabelais employs two techniques of great directness. On the one hand a parody of the methods and pronouncements of the authorities (Pantagruel 7, 17, 18). In these satirical burlesques, Rabelais demonstrated that the impressive-looking science displayed by the authorities was in fact hollow. Their content belied their outward appearance: it was all forme, no fond (to make this point effectively Rabelais retained

the original form and undermined it with a downgrading content). To ordinary people it looked so impressive that it ought to command belief. Rabelais however, suggests to his readers that without a direct knowledge of what is said, one can easily be duped. No matter how impressive appearances are they cannot ipso facto be trusted to provide genuine knowledge. One cannot know the truth about them on that basis alone: in fact, Rabelais reveals that their science is abuse and that it is not directed towards the truth but towards the gratification of:

"la petite fragilité de leur humanité".¹³³

Thus the "theological" preoccupations of the religious authorities are (as was the case with the monks of Pantagruel 34 and Gargantua 45) --beneath the impressive and pseudo-learned façade they use to disguise themselves --directed towards their stomach and for their genitals. The, at first sight, erudite and pious works of the "librairie de St. Victor" reveal, upon closer examination a highly non-scholarly and non-pious content:

"Decretum universitatis Parisiensis super gorgiasitate muliercularum ad placitum" (as Rabelais adds saucily)
"L'Apparition de sainte Geltrude à une Nonnain de Poissy (and again the sting is in the tail) estant en mal d'enfant"

.../...

"De brodiorum usu et honestate chopinandi. per Silvestrem Frieratem, Jacospinum."

.../...

"Bricot, De differentiis soupparum".

.../...

"Reverendi Patris Fratis Lubini, Provincialis Bavardie, De croquendis lardonibus libri tres".

.../...

"M. n. Rostocostojambedanesse, De moustarda post prandium servienda lib. quatuordecim, apostilati per B. Vaurillonis."

.../...

"Cullebutatorium confratriarum, incerto authore."

.../...

"La marmite des Quatre Temps".

The most pious quotation from the Gospel according to St. Matthew --"Centuplum accipies",¹³⁴ while it looks perfectly in its place in the context of the activities of a religious order, is in fact upon closer scrutiny applied by Jesus to describe the reward given to those who in their life have sacrificed¹³⁵ for Jesus's sake. It does not refer to the (non-existent) reward accorded to those who have filled the pockets of sellers of indulgences (a non-evangelical practice).

As Thaumaste says, and as Rabelais demonstrates,¹³⁶ the Sorbonne's dialectic has not Truth but itself as its goal. The impressive language of their scholastic disputes in fact gets nowhere; it is a variation on a theme, as Rabelais illustrates. He twists the word Sorbonnard in all direction to describe the self-centred convolutions of the theologians' reasoning:

"Sorbillans, Sorbonagres, Sorbonigènes, Sorbonnicoles, Serbonniformes, Sorbonisècques, Niborcisans, Borsonisans, Saniborsans".¹³⁷

However, while these three examples of the methods and pronouncements of the religious establishment, were, to an educated Humanist like Rabelais, clearly false and unjustifiable additions to the word of God, to ordinary people they bore the sanction of the most revered authority, and their outward appearance was too "learned" and complicated for them to question. By his grotesque transposal of these hallowed forms onto a grossly downgrading level, Rabelais de-mystifies this impressive appearance, shows it to be a mere façade. He warns his readers that outward appearances cannot be trusted to provide real knowledge. Only upon clear scrutiny --which Rabelais allows his readers --can they know the truth about them.

In order to undermine them the better with his down-grading content Rabelais was at pains to reproduce the high-flown outward forms of these methods and pronouncements as accurately as possible. Thus in chap. 7 he transcribed the typical titles of works dealing, on the one hand, with scholastic disputations, teachings and edicts, and on the other hand, of other devotional works, eg. lives of Saints, aimed at a mass audience. What is more, the authors to whom Rabelais attributed these works were in the main real members of the theological and ^{judicial} establishment (both past and present) who were either opponents of the humanists or who stood for what the humanists condemned. In the first group of titles Rabelais deliberately exploited the typical pseudo-learned Latin terminology of such works: "magister noster (M n.); works beginning with "De ...", "De modo...", "Ars...", "Quaestio..."; followed by the epithets "cum commento", "incerto auctore", or the number of volumes written. The effect on Rabelais's trivial content makes the emptiness of these forms glaring. To the Aristotelian commentator Pierre Tarteret-- whose name is latinized to Tartaretus to evoke scatological associations --is attributed a not-so-learned:

"De modo cacandi".

The obese, anti-humanist "Sortonnard" Noël Beda¹³⁸ (in whose name Rabelais sees an echo of "bedaine") has appropriately drafted a:

"De optimitate triparum",

while another principal of the notorious College de Montaigu, Meyer ("Majoris") employs his intelligence on a not dissimilar theme which no amount of linguistic window-dressing can disguise:

"De modo faciendi boudinos".

The virtuous, unimpeachable inquisitor Jacob Hochstraten's¹³⁹ secret interests (beneath his outward zeal for tracking down heretics) are exposed in his

"Callibistratorium Gaffardie, auctore M. Jacobo Hochstraten hereticometra".

The value of the opinions of Erasmus's adversary Hardouin¹⁴⁰ are laid bare for all to see in his preoccupation with the

"Ars honeste pettendi in societate",

where the closeness of the pun on "petere", to ask, and "péter" once more allows Rabelais's readers to understand the revelations which a closer, direct examination of impressive appearances reveals. Another example in which Rabelais provokes his readers into a closer examination of a learned-looking façade, by the effect of a sound association, is

"Marmotretus de Baboinis et Circois, cum commento d'Orbellis".

The worth of Mamothreptus's biblical commentary is implied by the pun on the title ("Marmotretus" recalling "marmot", a monkey) as before indicating the trivial preoccupations underlying an important-seeming exterior and which direct scrutiny reveals. Rabelais's target is a double one in this instance for Nicolas des Orbeaux¹⁴¹ is shown to be capable of providing a scholarly gloss on a work to do with baboons and monkeys.

The lack of substance which a "learned" exterior can conceal, the basic untrustworthiness of appearances alone is perhaps most comprehensively demonstrated by Rabelais to his readers in a certain:

"Antipericatametanaaparbeugedamphicribationes merdi-centium".

This incredibly complicated and unpronounceable title is bereft of meaning and substance; it is nothing more than wind, learned bluster. Rabelais demonstrates the utter discrepancy between fond and forme by simply tacking the best-known Greek prepositions together (Anti-peri-cata-meta..etc) to form an impressive front -- capable of browbeating an ordinary reader -- which he then applies to the subject of excrement.

A particularly insidious form of deceit, in Rabelais's eyes, was that practised by the producers of popular devotional works. What Rabelais thought of the worth and effect of such writings may be gauged from his humanistic and ironic references to the therapeutic efficacy

of the life of St. Margaret in Fantagruel Prologue and Gargantua 6. Nevertheless those who issued such tracts fostered absolute belief in them, not only by the piety of the subjects dealt with and by their own ecclesiastical authority (both of which would naturally tend to produce belief) but by linguistic trickery. They made these irrelevancies more alluring and seemingly relevant by their titles in which a symbolism based on concrete, everyday objects was associated with a pious, abstract concept (eg. "L'Eperon de discipline"). Once more, Rabelais undermines these misleading and impressive-looking titles, whose typical forms he reproduces, with a trivial content which remains linguistically close to the original. In so doing, while he lays bare the futility of these persuasive exteriors Rabelais again implies that knowledge and hence truth are the products of direct scrutiny. Consequently:

"L'Aiguillon divin",

recalling St. Bonaventure's "Aiguillon de l'amour divin", undergoes a slight phonetic change which provokes a radical shift in register:

"L'Aiguillon de vin".

This suggests to the readers the real value --beneath the learned exterior--of religious speculation, even by the church fathers (cf. Rabelais's oblique dig at St. Thomas Aquinas in the title:

"La Pelleterie des Tyrelupins extraicte de la bote fauve incornifistibulée en la Somme Angelicque").

Antoine de Saix's¹⁴²

"Esperon de discipline"

is transformed into

"L'Esperon de fromage".

The (in itself) already trivial symbol of the slipper takes on an unexpected, supplementary and even more trivial significance in

"La Savate de Humilité",

(recalling Frère Jean's comic warning to the pilgrims in Gargantua 45 .

about what the local monks were liable to do to their wives during their absence). Taking this alluring symbolism to its extreme, Rabelais points to the real substance of the works going under the hypothetical titles of

"Le Moutt Tardier de Pénitance"

and

"Le Trépied des bornes pensées"

by transforming them into their near-homonyms:

"Le Moustardier de Pénitence"

and

"Le Tripied de bon Pensement".

In Chapter 17 Rabelais is similarly concerned to reproduce faithfully the framework in which the sale of indulgences takes place: a framework of great authority and piety conducive to inciting people to accept the practice as a genuine manifestation sanctioned by God. The indulgences are sold in front of churches --Alcofribas and Panurge do the rounds of churches whose names are correct:

"Saint Gervays... Nostre Dame ...Saint Jean ...
Saint Antoine...".

The penitential prayer to St. Brigitte was genuinely popular.¹⁴³ The kissing of the relics is the correct practise, while the abusive formula employed by the pardoners to sanction their activity and exhort the faithful: "Centuplum accipies" is biblically exact.¹⁴⁴ As in chapter 7, however Rabelais undermines the impressive façade presented to people, shows it to be untrustworthy, by the trivial context in which it is shown to the readers. Panurge dupes the pardoners and takes their money. The way he achieves his deception is presented by Rabelais as a direct reflection of the way the pardoners themselves dupe ordinary people and take their money. Panurge justifies his stealing by taking hallowed words out of their context and twisting them to serve his own ends, giving them a meaning they did not originally have --all in the most

erudite and plausible fashion. This he then backs up with learned authorities. He has merely followed the example of those he has stolen from. The sellers of indulgences have taken a Gospel precept, used it deliberately in a non-Evangelical context in order to grease their own palms (justifying it, Rabelais implies, with the same sorts of authorities as Panurge and Janotus in Gargantua 19):

"...vous vous dampnez (protests a "faux-naïf" Alcofribas to Panurge --voicing the view of a believing reader) comme une sarpe, et estes larron et sacrilège".

Panurge proceeds to draw away the veils of verbal sophistry to reveal what lies underneath:

"--Ouy bien (dist-il), comme il vous semble; mais il ne me semble, quand à moy: car les pardonnaires me le donnent, quand ilz me disent en présentant les reliques à baiser: Centuplum accipies, que pour un denier j'en prène cent: car accipies est dict selon la manière des Hebreux, qui usent du futur en lieu de l'impératif comme vous avez en la loy: Diliges Dominum et delige. Ainsi quand la pardonnigère me dict: Centuplum accipies, il veult dire: Centuplum accipe, et ainsi l'expose Rabi Kimy et Rabi Aben Ezra et tous les Massoretz, et ibi Bartolus".

The impressive-looking erudition is as brilliantly plausible and hollow as Panurge's own justification of debtors and lenders and of his own extravagance in the Tiers Livre, 2, 3 et 4.

"ces maraulx sophistes ... en leurs disputations ne cherchent vérité, mais contradiction et débat",

accuses Thaumaste in chapter 18. However their "ergotz et fallaces" appeared so learned, their jargon inaccessible as to be beyond criticism from the ordinary people. In the pre-1542 editions of Pantagruel¹⁴⁵ Rabelais replaced the above direct accusation with a parody - a concrete example of Thaumaste's indictment, in which the high-sounding words of the Faculty of Theology's debates were made accessible and shown to be hollow shells by having their form subverted.¹⁴⁶ The words were high-sounding but devoid of meaning. Rabelais defuses the words which might have mystified his readers into accepting the pronouncements of the

Theologians at face value, into believing that the content was as impressive as the form. The Sorbonne is depicted not as the haven of Knowledge and Truth but as the

"Badinatorium Sophistarum".¹⁴⁷

In his parodies Rabelais warned his readers against blind belief, against uncritical acceptance of unverified if impressive secondary sources and non-empirical information. He permitted his readers to perceive that appearances, no matter how authoritative, do not provide, in themselves, real knowledge. Far from leading to truth they are so untrustworthy as to lead the unwary wide of the mark. Yet this uncritical acceptance of authoritative secondary sources was the very basis of the method employed by the authorities to acquire their learning; it constituted their "knowledge". In Pantagruel 5, 8, 10 and 28 Rabelais made use of another technique of great directness to show his readers that in the central disciplines --where the goal itself is knowledge and hence truth --the uncritical acceptance of non-empirical information as "knowledge" is disastrous. This "knowledge" is an impediment to truth. At the same time, Rabelais advocated a return to primary sources and empirical information; he made it clear that truth lay in the direction of a personal, direct appraisal of first-hand material. In these four passages --two completely serious (Pantagruel 8 and 28), and two semi-serious (Pantagruel 5 and 10) --Rabelais made use of his most sober and trustworthy interlocuters (in three cases Pantagruel and in one Gargantua) to directly and forcefully express his humanist opinions.

In chapter 5 Pantagruel undertook the study of law at the University of Bourges, where he made great progress thanks to the study of the source material of jurisprudence, Roman law --with which he was greatly impressed. However, its beauty and directness were, he found, obfuscated by the mediaeval interpretations and annotations to it. Rabelais has Pantagruel express this opposition between primary and secondary sources in a rich,

popular language comprehensible to all readers:

"...vint à Bourges, où estudia bien longtemps et proffita beaucoup en la faculté des loix. Et disoit aulcunes fois que les livres des loix luy sembloient une belle robe d'or, triumpante et précieuse à merveilles, qui feust brodée de merde:

"Car (disoit-il) au monde n'y a livres tant beaux, tant aornés, tant élégans comme sont les textes des Pandectes: mais la brodure d'iceulx, c'est assavoir la Glose de Accurse, est tant salle, tant infâme et punaise, que ce n'est que ordure et villénie".

In chapter 10 Rabelais re-iterated this opposition in greater detail, and, once more, in an image-filled, earthy language which communicated his ideas to his readers with great force. Of all the branches of learning whose reform the Humanists were concerned about, it is no accident that Rabelais chose law as a prime example in Pantagruel; law --where the faculty of judgement is constantly exercised in a concrete way, among men, in order to establish truth in the midst of contending and contradictory claims; law --where, for the correct exercise of their judgement, direct knowledge, both of theory (ie. the understanding, through personal study of primary sources, of the laws themselves: their origins their basis, their dispensation) and of practice (ie. the complete, first-hand ascertainment of the facts of a given case) would appear to be indispensable. And yet, in chapter 10, Rabelais gives his readers the spectacle of some of the most traditionally eminent judges put to shame, unable by the exercise of their expert judgement to get to the bottom of a particular case. Not only was the case double-Dutch to the "court de Parlement":

"(il) n'y entendoit que le hault alement",

but the prestigious judges assembled by order of the king:

"le Grand Conseil, et tous les principaulx régens de universitéz, non seulement de France, mais aussi d'Angleterre et Italie, comme Jason, Philippe Dèce, Petrus de Petronibus et un tas d'autres vieulx Raba-nistes",

in spite of forty-six weeks of deliberations, had been stumped:

"(ils) n'y avoyent sceu mordre ny entendre le cas au net

pour le mettre en droict en façon quelconques".

In fact, not only were they making no headway but had become so embroiled that they were:

"philogrobolizés du cerveau".

Rabelais makes it clear to his readers that the experts' intellectual muddle, their inability to discern truth from falsehood stems from a defective conception of knowledge on their part. On the one hand their practical "knowledge" of the dispute in question has been gained not from direct questioning of the persons involved, but second-hand --from formal, stilted legal documents, legal red-tape: those

"fatrasseries, de papiers et copies... ces babouyneries /.../ ces registres, enquestes, répliques, reproches, salvations et aultres telles diableries"

amounting to

"subversions de droict et allongement de procès".

And, on the other hand, their "knowledge" of the theoretical aspects of the law is not founded on study of the original texts; it has been gleaned from mediaeval commentators, from glosses on the original texts. In other words, Rabelais shows that information accepted on its prestigious authority, without verification, has led to the truth being obscured:

"au cas que leur controverse estoit patente et facile à juger, vous l'avez obscurcie par sottises et desraisonnables raisons et ineptes opinions de Accurse, Balde, Bartole, de Castro, de Imola, Hippolytus, Panorme, Bertachin, Alexandre, Cartius...".

In the prefatory letter to Manardi's Epistolarium medicinalium tomus secundus,¹⁴⁸ Rabelais mocks those men of the law whose knowledge is based on received authority and who cling to it in spite of proof of its fatuity, and he reminds Tiraqueau that not only in his own field, namely medicine, but also in his friend's, namely law, this false knowledge based on secondary sources still has its adherents:

"Sic vestra ista iuris peritia cum eo evaserit, ut ad eius instaurationem nihil iam desideretur, sunt tamen etiam dum quibus exoleta illa barbarorum glossemata excuti e manibus non possunt".

Rabelais was aware, however, that he must certainly have raised a number of questions in his readers' mind by such a thoroughgoing condemnation; for example, why should the interpretations of these authorities be rejected? What indeed was it about the knowledge of jurisprudence possessed by these legal experts of the past which induced the legal experts of the present into error? In providing answers to these possible objections Rabelais was, at the same time, able to strengthen his case, to take his argument a step further. Through the words of Pantagruel, Rabelais exposes the flimsiness of the theoretical knowledge of the law which the "glossateurs" themselves had: "opinions de Accurse ...".¹⁴⁹ They were unable, because they lacked the necessary intellectual tools, to accede to the primary source itself, Roman law. Their "knowledge" was mere opinion. First of all, they lacked knowledge of ancient languages:

"ilz n'avoient congnoissance de langue ni Grecque, ny Latine, mais seullement de Cothique et Barbare; et toutefois les loix sont premièrement prises des Grecz, comme vous avez le tesmoignage de Ulpian, l. posteriori De origi. iuris, et toutes les loix sont pleines de sentences et motz Grecz; et secondement sont redigées en latin le plus élégant et aorné qui soit en toute la langue Latine, et n'en excepteroys volontiers ny Saluste, ny Varron, ny Ciceron, ny Sénèque, ny T. Live, ny Quintilian. Comment doncques eussent peu entendre ces vieulx resveurs le texte des loix, qui jamais ne virent bon livre de langue Latine, comme manifestement appert à leur stille, qui est stille de ramonneur de cheminée ou de cuisinier et marmiteux, non de jurisconsulte?".¹⁵⁰

Secondly, of moral and natural philosophy:

"veu que les loix sont extirpées du mylieu de philosophie morale et naturelle, comment l'entendront ces folz qui ont moins estudié en philosophie que ma mulle?".¹⁵¹

Thirdly, of literature and history:

"Au regard des lettres de humanité et congnoissance des antiquitéz et histoire; ilz en estoient chargéz comme un crapault de plumes, dont toutesfoys les droictz sont tous pleins et sans ce ne peuvent estre entenduz".¹⁵²

Counterbalancing the penury of theoretical and practical knowledge of the law of the expert judges of the Baisecul-Humeveano case (and their consequent failure to attain the truth) Rabelais shows the reader how

the Pantagruel who has pronounced the condemnation of superficial theoretical knowledge and who is equipped with the maximum amount of practical knowledge of the case (he calls the litigants forward and listens to their evidence personally) has little difficulty in discerning the truth and bringing about an equitable settlement.¹⁵³

On the other hand Rabelais stressed for his readers --in two episodes, the sobriety of whose tone and style stood out and underlined the importance of the ideas contained in them --that primary sources alone provide the basis of a genuine knowledge that can lead to truth, that is able to lift the veils of "abus".

Before his battle with Loup Garou in ch. 29, Pantagruel addresses a prayer to God in which ^{by implication} he condemns the effect of secondary sources and received interpretations in religious matters on the minds of the people. He promises that if God champions him in the coming struggle, he will strive to eliminate the "imposteurs" who are responsible for poisoning men's minds. That which will dispel the abuse is the Gospel, the direct word of God:

"Doncques, s'il te plaist à ceste heure me estre en ayde, comme en toy seul est ma totale confiance et espoir, je te fais voeu que, par toutes contrées, tant de ce pays de Utopie que d'ailleurs, où je auray puissance et auctorité, je feray prescher ton saint Evangile purement, simplement et entièrement, si que les abus d'un tas de papelars et faulx prophètes, qui ont par constitutions humaines et inventions depravées envenimé tout le monde, seront d'entour moy exterminéz".

Pantagruel's humanist Evangelism founded on primary sources is shown by Rabelais to his readers to have God's assent:

"Alors feut ouye une voix du ciel disant: "Hoc fac et vinces", c'est à dire Fais ainsi, et tu auras victoire".

From my examination of chapters 5, 10 et 28, I have shown therefore that the ignorance which results from a conception of knowledge based on received interpretations is not only intellectual, it is moral.

The converse idea is most fully expressed in Pantagruel 8. Through Gargantua's letter to his son on his moral and intellectual formation Rabelais argues passionately and compellingly that the moral and intellectual enlightenment of the individual can only stem from direct, personal contact with first-hand information. This crucial opposition between primary and secondary sources between empirical and non-empirical evidence is resumed in the familiar humanist image of light versus darkness (ie. the ignorance of the Middle Ages as opposed to the enlightenment of the era of the "restitution des bonnes lettres") which Rabelais himself employs in his Latin correspondence¹⁵⁴ as well as in chapter 8. Gargantua justifies his own partial ignorance to his son in this way:

"comme tu peulx bien entendre, le temps n'estoit tant idoine ne commode ès lettres comme est de présent, et n'avoys copie de telz précepteurs comme tu as eu.

Le temps estoit encores ténébreux et sentant l'infélicité et calamité des Gothz, qui avoient mis à destruction toute bonne littérature. Mais, par la bonté divine, la lumière et dignité a este de mon eage rendue ès lettres..."

The enlightenment which knowledge provides is the aim of this ideal education, that

"manne céleste de bonne doctrine".

It alone makes a real man,

"absolu et parfaict, tant en vertu, honesteté et preudommie, comme en tout sçavoir libéral et honeste".

But the knowledge must be as complete as possible, as Gargantua continually emphasizes:

"acquiens-toy parfaicte congnoissance"

"que je voy un abysme de science"

"quand tu congnoistras que auras tout le sçavoir de par delà acquis".

As I mentioned earlier Gargantua's picture of France is not a eulogy of the actual state of learning in the early 1530's. It is a projection into a fictional world of the advanced aspirations of the humanists. It

embodies but expands upon their actual achievements. Similarly, Gargantua's education-programme is super-human; no man can achieve

"parfaicte congnoissance".

However, Rabelais points out the direction in which perfect knowledge and hence Truth resides: the direct study of the source-material of all the scholarly disciplines --but also of nature itself; for, ideally nothing must remain unknown:

"rien ne te soit incongneu".

When Latin and Greek are learned, one's style must be developed by a study of the style of the greatest of the classical writers:

"que tu formes ton stille, quant à la Grècque, à l'imitation de Platon, quant à la Latine, à Cicéron".

Since the Bible is to be studied in the original texts:

"commence à visiter les saintes lettres, premièrement en Grec, le Nouveau Testament; et Epistres des Apostres et puis en Hébreu, le Vieulx Testament";

the original languages must be learnt. Civil law is to be studied from the primary sources:

"que tu saiche par cueur les beaulx textes"(du droit civil);

but while Pantagruel should turn his attention to astronomy which has an empirical source (the sky), astrology as well as alchemy, "sciences" based on no tangible verifiable knowledge are rejected:

"laisse-moy l'astrologie divinatrice, et l'art de Lullius comme abuz et vanitéz".

When it comes to medicine, the texts of all the authorities must be studied at first hand --even the more unlikely, unorthodox ones:

"songneusement revisite les livres des médecins Grecz, Arabes, et Latins, sans contemner les Thalmudistes et Cabalistes".

As well as the medical texts, the most direct source of medical knowledge, man, must be examined scrupulously at first hand:

"par fréquentes anatomies, acquiers-toy parfaicte congnoissance de l'autre monde, qui est l'homme".

Finally, man's enquiry must not only be confined to the world of study and of the sciences; his curiosity must be applied to the outside world, to nature itself:

"quant à la connoissance des faictz de nature, je veulx que tu te y adonne curieusement: ou'il n'y ait mer, rivière ny fontaine, dont tu ne connoisse les poissons, tous les oyseaulx de l'air, tous les arbres, arbustes et fructices des forestz, toutes les herbes de la terre, tous les métaulx cachéz au ventre des abyssmes, les pierreries de tout Orient et Midy, rien ne te soit incongneu".

An analogous analytical procedure can fruitfully be applied to the main humanist-inspired episodes of Gargantua. These are: Gargantua 3 (the legal legitimacy of eleven-month births); Gargantua 6 (the opposition of the life of St. Margaret and the Gospel); Gargantua 6 (Gargantua's birth and the Sorbonne's criterion of faith); Gargantua 14 and 15 (Gargantua's education under Maistres Thubal Holoferne and Jobelin Fride, and its effect upon him); Gargantua 19 (Janotus's plea for the return of the bells of Notre-Dame); Gargantua 21 and 22 (a closer look at the effect of Gargantua's education at the hands of his Sorbonne teachers); Gargantua 23 and 24 (Gargantua's education under the supervision of Ponocrates); Gargantua 40 (the attack on monks by Gargantua); Gargantua 45 (Grandgousier's condemnation of pilgrimages); Gargantua 52-57 (the Theleme chapters).

The episodes fall broadly into two groups. Satirical passages which comically ape and downgrade, in the most popular of terms, the methods and utterances of the traditional, in the main religious, authorities (3; 6; 14-15; 19; 21-22); non-comic critical assaults and positive exposés sanctioned by spokesmen who are close to Rabelais's readers and have their trust -Gargantua, Grandgousier and the created author Alcofribas (6; 23-24; 40; 45; 52-57). Not only the burlesque but also the "serious" episodes of Gargantua are, like those of Pantagruel (the letter in

Pantagruel 8, the prayer in Pantagruel 29), couched in non-abstract forms which are an integral part of the novel's narrative development (Gargamelle's labour pains; a direct description of Gargantua's education; a discussion on the value of the religious orders to society; a lecture to pilgrims; the detailed description of Frère Jean's anti-monastery). By expressing his ideas in concrete and memorable terms Rabelais rendered them more intelligible and was thus able to communicate them with greater effectiveness to the ordinary reader.

The "positive" and "negative" passages are perfectly complementary. Rabelais makes use of a striking, down-to-earth leitmotif - activity versus passiveness- to link these disparate passages and underline their thematic unity.

On the one hand Rabelais comically exposes as fatuous the notion that the authorities --and more especially the church --possessed in their sphere of competence perfect knowledge, the unique truth and hence incontrovertible authority. These, he allows his readers to see, were a cover for ignorance and falsehood. The key concept which permits this deceit is passiveness of mind: the absence of critical reason and informed individual judgement. In Pantagruel Rabelais pointed out that the establishment's "knowledge" was derived from indirect sources. He underlines this in Gargantua. Porocrates has the Bible read to Gargantua in a clear, intelligible way.¹⁵⁵ The Sorbonne teachers read him a muddle of commentators and secondary sources:

"De modis significandi, avecques les commens de Hurtebize, de Pasquin, de Tropicoulx, de Gualehaul, de Jean le Veau, de Billonio, Brelinguandus et un tas d'aultres",¹⁵⁶

as well as:

"Hugutio, Hebrard Grécisme, le Doctrinal, les Pars, le Quid est, le Supplementum, Marnotret, De moribus in mensa servandis, Seneca De quatuor virtutibus cardinalibus, Passavantus, cum Concerto et Romi secure pour les festes".¹⁵⁷

Never, under the Sorbonne's method, is the young Gargantua asked or

allowed to think, criticize or interpret what he is taught. It is all imposed and unquestioned. This disastrous mental passiveness which makes the boy

"tant fat, niays et ignorant"¹⁵⁸

and helped him to become

"aussi saige qu'oncques puis ne fourneames-nous"¹⁵⁹

is characterized by Rabelais through images of deadening heaviness --both physical and intellectual - and of repetitive boredom. The style of chapter 14 is instructive. The construction "et y fut" and its variants is repeated to emphasise the painful dullness and formalism of the process of "learning":

"et y fut cinq ans et troys mois"

"et y fut trèze ans six moys et deux sepmaines"

"ou il fut bien seize ans et deux moys, lors que son dict précepteur mourut..."

as is the expression "Puis luy leugt", suggesting intellectual force-feeding:

"Puis luy leut Donat, le Facet, Théodolet et Alanus in Parabolis..."

"Puis luy leugt De modis significandi..."

"Puis luy leugt le Compost!"

The long, heavy years on Gargantua's education pile up, echoing the massive immobility of his teacher, both physical and mental:

"portoit ordinairement un gros escriptoire pesant plus de sept mille quintaulx, duquel le gualimart estoit aussi gros et grand que les gros pilliers de Enay, et le cornet y pendoit à grosses chaisnes de fer à la capacité d'un tonneau de marchandise".

Similarly the style of chapters 23 and 24 symbolizes the methodology and results of the education-process directed by Ponocrates. But in this instance, variety, richness, lightness and clarity are the stylistic hallmarks. Whereas Gargantua was crushed by the weight of his previous

masters, this time the learning process is a dialogue in which the youth participates fully. His enthusiasm is conveyed by the breathtaking dynamism of certain passages:

"De sa lance doncq assérée, verde et roide, rompoit un huys, enfonçoit un harnoys, acculloyt une arbre, enclavoit un aneau, enlevoit une selle d'armes, un aubert, un gantelet. Le tout faisoit armé de pied en cap".¹⁶⁰

This diversity of activity, characterized by the precision and variety of verbs is in stark contrast to the stultifying and static repetition of the useless games¹⁶¹ learnt by the pupil in his foregoing "education".

Gargantua's humanist education is not only based on direct sources of all kinds, nor does it only comprise all the disciplines both intellectual, practical, theoretical, manual and military. It is above all centred on freedom and personal initiative. Imposition is absent:

"Tout leur jeu n'estoit qu'en liberté, car ilz laissoient la partie quand leur plaisoit et cessoient ordinairement lorsque suoyent parmy le corps, ou estoient aultrement las".¹⁶²

"Lors (si bon sembloit) en continuoit la lecture, ou commençoient à diviser joyusement ensemble...".¹⁶³

The timetable is flexible; days of rest are provided for. In fact so little constraint is involved that:

"mieulx ressembloit un passetemps de roy que l'estude d'un escholier".¹⁶⁴

Gargantua is encouraged to exercise not only his physical but his intellectual enterprise. While the texts are read to him, there is no question of any imposition of ideas. He interprets for himself; either through discussion:

"devisoient des leçons leues au matin".¹⁶⁵

"yssoient hors, tousjours conféréns des propoz de la lecture".¹⁶⁶

or through personal reflexion. For, from what he has heard he is asked to interpret and apply the ideas in reality. Thus

"y fondoit quelques cas practiques et concernans l'estat humain...".¹⁶⁷

or made models:

"ilz faisoient mille joyeux instrumens et figures géométriques..."¹⁶⁸

and machines:

"bastissoient plusieurs petitz engins automates, c'est à dire soy mouvens eulx-mesmes".¹⁶⁹

The difference in result between the two educational methods is radical. In the second one Gargantua acquires real knowledge. He interprets, using his reason, what he is taught. He understands and can judge what is correct. The initial education had produced an unthinking dolt deprived of real knowledge, understanding and initiative. He can only recite useless facts off-by-heart:

"...luy aprint sa charte si bien qu'il la disoit par cueur au rebours;"

"Et le sceut si bien que, au coupelaud, il le rendoit par cueur à revers, et prouvoit sus ses doigtz à sa mère que de modis significandi non erat scientia."¹⁷⁰

Rabelais does not hide his bitterness at this waste of talent; for the clever young Gargantua had, as a child, been full of initiative. After his stay in the care of the theologians:

"toute la contenance de Gargantua fut qu'il se print à plorer comme une vache et se cachoit le visaige de son bonnet, et ne fut possible de tirer de luy une parolle non plus qu'un pet d'un asne mort.

Dont son père fut tant courroussé qu'il voulut occire Maistre Jobelin. Mais ledict Des Marays l'en guarda par telle remonstrance qu'il luy feist, en manière que fut son ire modérée".¹⁷¹

That the authorities' "knowledge" was not even understood by them is shown by Rabelais in chapter 40. Gargantua during his tirade against monks counters an objection by his father which the majority of Rabelais's ordinary and pious readers (anti-monastic though they might be) would have put forward:

"- Voyre, mais (dist Grandgousier) ilz prient Dieu pour nous".

Gargantua repudiates the monks' claim to be mediators between God and men.

Not only are their prayers based on indirect sources ("grand renfort de légendes---longs Ave Mariaz---"), these sources themselves have been accepted passively . The monks have applied no critical reasoning to the words they utter when addressing the Supreme Being. They have used no personal initiative or judgement. They have failed to understand:

"Ilz marmonnent grand renfort de légendes et pseaulmes nullement par eulx entenduz; ilz content force patenostres entrelardées de longs Ave Mariaz sans y penser ny entendre, et ce je appelle mocquedieu, non oraison".

It is this passive acceptance which abused the pilgrims:

"-O (dist Grandgousier) pauvres gens, estimez-vous que la peste vienne de Saint Sebastian?"

-Ouy vray (respondit Lasdaller), noz prescheurs nous l'affermant",¹⁷²

and to which Rabelais opposes individual industriousness. Passive acceptance of the non-empirical source, which is the Vie de St. Marguerite , does not procure for Gargamelle the relief from labour-pains which a reading and understanding of the religious primary source, the Gospel, brings. Grandgousier encourages his wife by reminding her that once the child is born her pain will soon be forgotten and by citing the New Testament which confirms this empirical truth:

"Je le prouve (disoit-il). Dieu (c'est notre Sauveur) dict en l'évangile Joan.16: "la femme qui est à l'heure de son enfantement a tristesse, mais lorsqu'elle a enfanté, elle n'a soubvenir aulcun de son angoisse".

-Ha (dist-elle) vous dictes bien et ayme beaucoup mieulx ouyr telz propos de l'Evangile et mieux m'en trouve que de ouyr la vie de sainte Marguerite ou quelle autre capharderie".¹⁷³

For Rabelais, the authorities' unwillingness to criticize and interpret their "knowledge" --and hence their claim that it was unchallengeable --stemmed from their fear of losing their authority and position. In other words it was a product of self-love. In chapter 40 Rabelais suggests, through Gargantua, that beneath their outward piety the monks described have selfish motives which block their critical faculties and

prevent them from exercising their reason:

"Mais ainsi leur ayde Dieu s'ilz prient pour nous, et non par paour de perdre leurs miches et souppes grasses".¹⁷⁴

It is this "philautia" which is at the bottom of the abuse of the authorities' "knowledge". Rabelais (by exploiting the authority of his persona) demonstrates how erudition can be manipulated unscrupulously and arbitrarily, with no regard paid to reason, to prove one's point of view; that one's personal truth is the only one. He parodies this procedure when he piles up a list of impressive authorities to prove a point which reason ("le bon sens" as Rabelais calls it) disproves --the legal legitimacy (not of course, the possibility) of eleven-month

pregnancies.¹⁷⁵ He begins by citing examples of long pregnancies from mythology which are clearly grossly comic and used with irony. He goes on to quote a list of ancient authorities whose seriousness he undermines by calling them "les anciens Pantagruelistes" as well as by adding:

"et mille aultres folz, le nombre desquelz a esté par les legistes acreu, ff. De suis et legit., l. Intestato §fi. et in Autent. De restitut. et ea quae parit in xj. mense. D'abondant en ont chaffouré leur robidilardicque loy Gallus, ff. De lib. et posthu., et l. septimo ff. De stat. homi. et quelques autres que pour le présent dire n'ause".¹⁷⁶

The learned arbitrariness of their "knowledge" (which confirms the possibility but not the legitimacy of 11-month^{pregnancies}) is completely deflated by Rabelais's down-to-earth rejoinder to his readers expressed through Alcofribas:

"Moiennans lesquelles loys, les femmes vefves peuvent franchement jouer du serrecropière à tous enviz et toutes restes, deux mois après le trespas de leurs mariz.

Je vous prie par grâce, vous aultres mes bons averlans, si d'icelles en trouvez que vailent le desbraguetter, montez dessus et me les amenez",¹⁷⁷

and by his use of an amusing classical anecdote to suggest the advantage which women would take of such legal licence.

Janotus, the representative of the Faculty of Theology, deploys his

formidable battery of second-hand, undigested "knowledge" to prove why Gargantua --the matter being of the utmost seriousness --ought urgently to return the bells of Notre-Dame to Paris. Rabelais exposes that Janotus has understood nothing of what he has learnt by having him gibber in the most execrable dog-latin, by making of him one of those

"rappetasseurs de vieilles f erailles latines, revendeurs de vieux mots latins tous moisis et incertains".178

Janotus pleads:

"Par ma foy, Domine, si voulez souper avecques moy in camera, par le corps Dieu! charitatis nos faciemus bonum cherubin. Ego occidi unum porcum, et ego habet bon vino. Mais de bon vin on ne peult faire mauvais latin".179

He employs his learned formulae with complete arbitrariness. A quotation from Ecclesiastes proves the worth of breeches:

"Ho! par Dieu, Domine, une paire de chausses est bon, et vir sapiens non abhorrebit eam".180

Why should the bells be returned?:

"Reddite que sunt Cesaris Cesari et que sunt Dei Deo. Ibi jacet lepus".181

The impressive syllogism, Rabelais comically reveals, can, in the hands of a Janotus, be devoid of meaning. This sophist hopes to impress by form alone:

"Ego sic argumentor:

"Omnis clocha clochabilis, in clocherio cl-chando, clochans clochativo clochare facit clochabiliter clochantes. Parisius habet clochas. Ergo gluc".182

Janotus distorts his "knowledge" for his personal ends:

"Si vous nous les rendez   ma requeste, je y guaigneray six pans de saulcices et une bonne paire de chausses que me feront grant bien   mes jambes..."183

as Rabelais emphasizes by stressing the theologian's concern for food and his own personal comfort:

"ne me fault plus dor navant que bon vin, bon lict, le dos au feu, le ventre   table et escuelle bien profonde".184

This concrete sign of self-love is again exploited by Rabelais to make clear that the process of acquiring and using knowledge, as seen by the Sorbonne, is directed towards self-gratification. In chapter 21 not only does the young Gargantua, under his theologian masters, become stupified mentally thanks to his intellectual force-feeding ; he gorges himself, physically, to a disgusting extent:

"Puis fiantoit, pissoyt, rendoyt sa gorge, rottöit, pettoyt, baisloyt, crachoyt, toussoyt, sangloutoyt, esternuoit et se morvoyt en archidiacre, et desjeuroyt pour abatre la rouzée et mauvais aër: belles tripes frites, belles charbonnades, beaulx jambons, belles cabirotades et force soupes de prime".

His mind is at the service of his body:

"Puis estudioit quelque meschante demye heure, les yeulx assis dessus son livre; mais (comme dict le comicque) son âme estoit en la cuisine".

For this reason, he makes use of his knowledge in the most cynical way to justify his self-love. Thus a misplaced quotation from a psalm provides justification for his heart-laziness:

"il s'esveilloit entre huit et neuf heures, feust jour ou non; ainsi l'avoient ordonné ses régens antiques, alléguans ce que dict David: Vanum est vobis ante lucem surgere".¹⁸⁵

On the other hand Gargantua's interpretation of his learning when under his humanist tutor's regime is shown by Rabelais to be totally dissociated from personal gain or interest. His mind is not at the service of his body. Scatological and gluttonous descriptions are absent from chapters 23 and 24; for Gargantua eats rationally and with moderation, to satisfy not to gratify.

Rabelais's readers were given the opportunity to see that the irrefutable "knowledge" of the authorities is not only a product of indirect sources; since they have used no critical reason or personal judgement upon it, they have not understood it. What is more, their passive acceptance is a product of their lack of "charité",¹⁸⁶ of their

desire for self-preservation. In a devastating piece of comic criticism, in chapter 6, Rabelais combined all of these flaws and exposed how "knowledge" was abused by the most venerable of hierarchies, the Faculty of the theologians Theology, to convince people that \wedge possessed absolute authority. The subject Rabelais chose was faith, belief par excellence. He launched into his critique in the most unlikely way by having Alcofribas describe the comically grotesque and completely unbelievable birth of Gargantua through his mother's ear. Alcofribas then ironically maintains the absolute truth of the cock-and-bull birth, feigning the authorities' encouragement of unthinking belief in people:

"Je me doute que ne croyez asseurément ceste estrange nativité. Si ne le croyez, je ne m'en soucie mais un homme de bien, un homme de bon sens, croit tousjours ce qu'on luy dict et qu'il trouve par escript".

Rabelais then deliberately associates this blatant abuse of faith, this undisguised attempt to impose as truth what is patently no more than a "canard", with the Sorbonne and their abuse of learning. Thus in the grotesque context of Gargantua's birth, Alcofribas cites the most hallowed authorities from scripture to back his tongue-in-cheek demand for belief from his readers:¹⁸⁷

"Ne dict pas Salomon, Proverbiorum, 14: Innocens credit omni verbo, etc., et Saint Paul, Prime Corinthio, 13; Charitas omnia credit"

when, in the biblical context, this "credere" refers to opinion not to faith and when the "innocens" of Proverbs XIII, 15 ("Innocens credit omni verbo: astutus considerat gressus suis") means not "innocent" but the "foolhardy". Rabelais then trod on most dangerous ground (he later bowdlerized this whole episode) by playing on the theological and ordinary meanings of the expression "nulle apparence"¹⁸⁸ (and it is in effect the latter meaning the Sorbonne use as their criterion of faith when they identify their own interests with that of God)¹⁸⁹ to explain to his readers why indeed they ought to believe Alcofribas's obviously fanciful description

By so doing, he suggests that the Sorbonne twists the words of Scripture, as the young Gargantua had been taught in his "sophiste" education (cf. Gargantua 21), demands unthinking belief, - and all to prove that it alone is right. In fact it abuses people in the grossest of ways:

"Je vous dictz que pour ceste seule cause vous le devez croire en foy parfaicte. Car les Sorbonistes disent que foy est argument des choses de nulle apparence. Est-ce contre nostre loy, nostre foy, contre raison, contre la Sainte Escripature?"

The answer expected should be "no" but is of course "yes", as Rabelais's readers could not fail to see. To cap his demonstration Alcofribas comically cites exempla from mythology to prove that births through unusual orifices are perfectly possible --but which Alcofribas makes clear he does not believe for a second. If any reader had been tempted to believe these examples Alcofribas is not long in setting him straight by his irony:

"Mais vous seriez bien davantage esbahys et estonnés si je vous expousoys présentement tout le chapite de Pline auquel parle des enfantemens estranges et contre nature, et toutefois je ne suis poinct menteur tant asseuré comme il a esté. Lisez le septiesme de sa Naturelle Histoire, capi. iij, et ne m'en tabustez plus l'entendement".

For the Sorbonne, religious knowledge was fixed, finite and in their possession, and their truth was consequently transcendental. As is evident from Gargantua's education in chapters 23 and 24, knowledge for Rabelais is firmly centred on man. This conception of cognition was already clearly expressed in Pantagruel 8, but whereas the education described in book I was potential, the actual, physical description of the acquisition of knowledge in Gargantua underscores that it is man-based. It has no limit (we are shown two days of it, but the process continues); it is a description of becoming, not of being (this is the full significance of the opposition between activity and passiveness). It relies on the obvious non-absolutes which are reason and personal interpretation --for critical judgement must always be exercised on the source material.

Rabelais replaces perfect with partial, human knowledge; absolute with relative truth. In the ideal society of Thélème where men are freed from the constricting and perverting rules of the authorities, where they can use their reason, where all have an ideal education and are motivated not by self-love but by honour, the individual judgements of all the inhabitants are always equally valid, correct and in harmony with one another:

"En leur reigle n'estoit que ceste clause:

FAY CE QUE VOULDRAS,

parce que gens libères, bien nez, bien instruitz, conversans en compagnies honnestes, ont par nature un instinct et aiguillon, qui tousjours les poulse à faictz vertueux et retire de vice, lequel ilz nommoient honneur. Iceulx, quand par vile subjection et contraincte sont déprimez et asserviz, détournent la noble affection, par laquelle à vertuz franchement tendoient, à déposer et enfreindre ce joug de servitude: car nous entreprenons tousjours choses défendues et convoitons ce que nous est denié".¹⁹⁰

Although Rabelais believes in the natural rectitude of human nature and demonstrates total trust in human judgements, which in Thélème always concur,

"Si quelq'un ou quelcune disoit: "Beuvons", tous buvoient; si disoit: "Jouons", tous jouoient; si disoit "Allons à l'esbat ès champs", tous y alloient",¹⁹¹

the portrayal is an ideal one. Rabelais does not mean his readers to take the description of Thélème as a real one. From the comic opening¹⁹² Rabelais clearly places it in an ideal world. It is the embodiment of an idea —based on opposition to monastic rules. Like Fantagruel 8 and Gargantua 23 and 24 these chapters ask not for belief; they stimulate reflexion, provide an ideal. For in reality the perfect conditions of Thélème do not exist. The conditions of comfort in the Abbey (there is no work) allow a leisure which, with the facilities provided (both for body and mind), permit a perfect physical and mental development for each individual. The purveyors of intellectual abuse (the religious and

legal authorities) and the fomentors of civil strife are banned. 193
Nothing is imposed on the inhabitants which could remotely be compared to Gargantua's initial education. Indeed the notion of constraint, imposition and passive acceptance are anathema:

"Et parce que ès religions de ce monde, tout est compassé, limité et reiglé par heures, feut décrété que là ne seroit horologe ny quadrant aulcun, mais selon les occasions et oportunitéz seroient toutes les oeuvres dispensées; car (disoit Gargantua) la plus vraye perte du temps qu'il sceust estoit de compter les heures --quel bien en vient-il? --et la plus grande resverie du monde estoit soy gouverner au son d'une cloche et non au dicte de bon sens et entendement".194

Freedom is absolute:

"Toute leur vie estoit employée non par loix, statuz ou reigles, mais selon leur vouloir et franc arbitre. Se levoient du lict quand bon leur sembloit, beuvoient, mangeoient, travailloient, dormoient quand le désir leur venoit; nul ne les esveilloit, nul ne les parforceoit ny à boyre, ny à manger, ny à faire chose aultre quelconques".195

Rabelais's ideal education processes in Pantagruel and Gargantua showed or recommended a perfect knowledge which no man could achieve; yet they bear witness to Rabelais's belief in the infinite potentiality of human beings, in their capacity to acquire partial knowledge. The same can be said of Thélème. Rabelais is not suggesting that in reality anyone's and everyone's judgement is valid (some men's judgement, as he has shown, are based on secondary sources and received interpretations and are therefore founded on opinion, not knowledge; other men's judgement are unreasoning because deformed by self-love). He has again demonstrated his belief in man's potential. When the necessary conditions --empirical information and critical reason -- obtain, then relative truth can be attained by individual judgements.

We have seen that all the disparate humanist-inspired episodes of the first two novels, beyond the specific topics they deal with, are linked

both within and between Pantagruel and Gargantua by the theme of truth and knowledge. We have observed that underlying an apparently erudite argument is Rabelais's concern to disabuse people; that in order to communicate his ideas Rabelais made them as tangible as possible to his readers; that Rabelais made use of both the comic and non-comic, juxtaposed, to convey his serious ideas.

Rabelais's contribution in Pantagruel and Gargantua to the history of ideas is impressive. Modern Renaissance scholars of the highest standing have underlined this. F. Simone, to cite a notable example, has confirmed the originality and importance of Rabelais's expression of the humanists' historic consciousness of the rebirth of learning.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless, appraisals of Rabelais's achievement have tended to concentrate on the exegesis of single episodes (almost exclusively the non-comic passages and more especially Pantagruel 8 and Gargantua 52-57) and on Rabelais's contribution to particular areas of humanist concern. Little study has been devoted to the drawing together of these episodes and the description of the wider argument which informs and unifies them. A. Lefranc's synthesis¹⁹⁷ is partial; it concerns only the satirical episodes of books I and II which he does not see as directed towards all of Rabelais's readers but as being for the attention of an informed elite (he considers that the satire is covert).¹⁹⁸

Modern critics have also tended to confine Rabelais's serious ideas either to the non-comic or to the comic humanist-centred episodes and not to fuse the two. A. Lefranc held the latter position; J. Plattard, M. Françon, M. Screech and most recently J. Larmat have held the former. Moreover the importance of the fact that Rabelais was unique in expressing such important ideas in the vernacular and that the forms his ideas were embodied in were highly communicable has been underrated (overlooking this point, J. Plattard, only saw that Rabelais repeated notions which had

already been expressed by other humanists in Latin and thus he undervalued Rabelais as a scholar).¹⁹⁹ What is more, a divide has been opened up between the humanist-inspired episodes and the comic remainder of Pantagruel and Gargantua. Rabelais's serious ideas have been restricted exclusively to the former. The remainder of the novels has variously been explained off as a cover for Rabelais's serious ideas, sugar to sweeten the bitter intellectual pill or simply dismissed as irrelevant.

Lefranc viewed the comedy as a convenient "masque de la folie" for Rabelais, the revolutionary heretic, wishing to express his subversive atheistic ideas under cover of comedy so as to avoid risking his own life:

"sans encourir des poursuites criminelles, en d'autres termes, sans risquer de gravir le bûcher ou plusieurs de ses émules sont montés pour avoir osé beaucoup moins".²⁰⁰

Rabelais's readers were meant to see the seriousness beneath the comedy:

"Sous couleur de plaisanter, il émet une déclaration dont la portée est singulière et la sincérité absolue. A côté du prodigieux réalisme qui s'en dégage, il existe un sens caché dans son oeuvre. Rabelais comptait bien que les initiés, c'est-à-dire les adeptes des doctrines qui lui étaient chères...sauraient le découvrir...Cherchons donc à briser l'os et à en extraire la moelle qui s'y trouve dissimulée...La pensée profonde de Rabelais ne saurait être dégagée sans quelque effort ...Ainsi interrogé, le roman rabelaisien pourra laisser transparaître la doctrine "absconce" du Maître et le sens véritable des "symboles" de Pantagruel en matière religieuse, politique et économique".²⁰¹

That Lefranc overstated his case has, as L. Febvre constantly stressed,²⁰² been shown by our increased knowledge of what the tolerated norms of irreverence and blasphemy were for Rabelais's contemporaries. M. Françon and J. Larmat have opted for the second position:

"Rabelais s'est servi du cadre que lui fournissait le récit des aventures des géants, et a exprimé l'enthousiasme qu'il ressentait pour l'époque où il vivait",²⁰³

proclaims M. Françon. In 1973 J. Larmat gave fullest expression to this variant:

"Non seulement les récits folkloriques, mais les éléments comiques, quelle que soit leur origine, ne nuisent pas à l'enseignement que l'auteur veut donner; ils contribuent peut-être à le faire accepter; ils le mettent à la portée des lecteurs qui, sans cela, ne l'auraient jamais reçu. Tel le miel au bord de la coupe contenant une potion amère, mais salubre, dont parle Lucrèce au début de son poème, les narrations et les dialogues comiques de Rabelais sont comme les descriptions du De Natura Rerum: ils font lire la leçon.

Plus encore que Pantagruel, Gargantua est un livre de propagande où Rabelais, sous le couvert d'une histoire récréative, expose sa philosophie et particulièrement sa conception de la religion. De ce point de vue, on peut examiner le roman d'une manière nouvelle et montrer comment l'auteur se sert du comique --qu'il soit de situation, de caractère ou purement formel --et en fait un support et un assaisonnement".²⁰⁴

Jean Plattard does not attempt to explain the comedy;

"Concluons-nous donc qu'il n'y a nulle idée sérieuse dans les livres de Rabelais? Non, il s'y trouve de la "substantifique moelle"; ce sont des idées morales, politiques et religieuses. Mais elles ne sont ni coordonnées en un système tenu secret, ni ingénieusement dissimulées. Elles affleurent, au contraire, ouvertement sous la forme de préceptes, de réflexions, de conseils, parfois de fiction. Rabelais était un humaniste qui avait fait le tour de la pensée antique, un légiste qui connaissait l'histoire du droit et les méthodes de la jurisprudence, un médecin qui avait aidé au progrès de la médecine, un érudit d'un savoir encyclopédique: il était difficile qu'en écrivant un livre de passe-temps, il n'y disposât point quelques-unes des idées, des observations, des réflexions qui étaient l'aliment quotidien de la vie de son esprit";²⁰⁵

while A. Krailsheimer explains away the irrelevancy of the comedy in the most logical way:

"It has been pointed out in an earlier chapter that Rabelais's public standing in 1532 did not seem likely to gain lustre from his experiment in popular authorship and that he was probably not at first disposed to devote more than the minimal effort to creating for himself a style adequate to his money-making purpose";²⁰⁶

and again:

"By 1532, when Rabelais published Pantagruel, he had already made his name as a doctor and humanist, and it has always intrigued critics that he should at a relatively late age (about forty) have launched suddenly into a form of authorship unlikely to increase his prestige with his fellow scholars, and in any case behind the mask of a pseudonym. The motive commonly proposed for this departure is financial need, and this is almost certainly right".²⁰⁷

At this juncture, let us pause to get things into perspective. Although we noted an increase, in Gargantua as compared to Pantagruel, in the number of humanist-inspired episodes, the fact remains that these occupy, in terms of space, a relatively small proportion in both novels. We must, I believe, ask ourselves if we are justified in confining what Rabelais had to say to these episodes alone; if, in so doing, we do not limit the meaning of these very passages by singling them out, considering them in isolation and thus losing sight of a wider unity. It hardly requires to be pointed out that by restricting the seriousness of the first two books to the humanist-inspired passages, considered in a vacuum as it were, and thus drawing a sharp dividing line between these and the comic remainder of the novels, we inevitably diminish the status of Pantagruel and Gargantua as artistic unities.

Yet one of Rabelais's most famous and quoted passages concerning the "message" of Gargantua would seem to sanction just such a restriction. In the prologue to Gargantua (quoted by Lefranc)²⁰⁸ Rabelais warns the readers not to be deceived by the frivolous outer appearance of his works: their content is very different from their form. The serious meaning lies hidden; it must be unravelled and deciphered:

"par curieuse leçon et méditation fréquente, rompre l'os et sugcer la sustantificque mouelle — c'est à dire ce que j'entends par ces symboles Pythagoriques — avec espoir certain d'estre faictz escors et preux à ladicte lecture: car en icelle bien aultre goust trouverez et doctrine plus absconce, laquelle vous révélera de très haultz sacremens et mystères horrificques, tant en ce que concerne nostre religion que aussi l'estat politicq et vie oeconomique".²⁰⁹

So much, it would appear, for the unity of the works' different elements. But is this Rabelais addressing us seriously? Is it not rather his fictional persona Alcofribas Nasier, who will with equal conviction swear, only a few lines later, that in fact we ought to accept his books for what they seem to be, i.e. pure frivolities? As G. Josipovici says,²¹⁰ when reading Rabelais, we must always be alive to the tone, the register. The

above extract, so portentous when read out of context, takes on a highly ironic and comic ring in the prologue where it comes at the climax of a series of incongruous and mock-serious comparisons (the Sileni, the dog and the marrow-bone) by means of which "Rabelais" assures his readers of the profundity not only of Pantagruel and Gargantua but of "his" other (non-existent) volumes: "Fessepinte", "la Dignité des Braguettes", "Des Poys au lard cum commento".

If we examine the pronouncements about Rabelais's fiction made by those contemporaries of his who approved of his work, we discover that for them the ideas and the comedy of his novels are never dissociated. As far as I know his specifically humanist-inspired episodes are never singled out for special comment (the terms of Ducher's eulogy of Rabelais's wisdom²¹¹ seem in their abstraction and emphasis to transcend the scope of these episodes). The ancients to whom Rabelais was most often compared were Democritus and Lucian,²¹² whose wisdom was expressed through laughter, in the case of the former, and through comedy in the case of the latter. The praise accorded to Rabelais always stresses the indissoluble unity of his fiction implied in these comparisons. It was on account of his gift for clowning wisely, that Rabelais often had the ultimate Renaissance laudatory epithet applied to him: "utile-doux". The "privilege au roy" of 1550²¹³ for the Tiers Livres expresses contemporary appreciation of this double quality of the Rabelaisian "oeuvre" in the warmest terms:

"De la partie de nostre cher et bien aymé M. Francois Rabelais, docteur en médecine, nous a este exposé que icelluy suppliant ayant par cy-devant baillé à imprimer plusieurs livres en Grec, Latin, François et Thuscan, mesmement certains volumes des faictz et dictz héroïques de Pantagruel, non moins utiles que délectables..." (my underlining)

The poet Hugues Salel puts it this way, a propos of Pantagruel:

"Si, pour mesler profit avec douceur,
On met en pris un aucteur grandement,
Prisé seras, de cela tien toy sceur;
Je le congnois, car ton entendement
En ce livret, sous plaisant fondement,

L'utilité a si très bien descripte,
Qu'il m'est advis que voy un Démocrite
Riant les faictz de nostre vie humaine".²¹⁴

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to explain why the critical attitudes of 16th, and in so many instances of the 20th centuries, towards Rabelais are so utterly divergent. M. Bakhtin's²¹⁵ excellent analysis of the history of laughter with reference to the way Rabelais's comedy has been regarded since his own time must surely serve as the basic text for a thorough investigation of this phenomenon. The theme of truth and knowledge, as we saw, was a unifying element holding together the humanist-inspired passages. This fact added to the constant juxtaposition of comic and non-comic elements, and the eminently communicable forms this theme takes, points to a possible unity under the umbrella of the theme of truth and knowledge within and between the totality of Pantagruel and Gargantua. In the remainder of this thesis I shall attempt, by examining the rest of the two novels, to establish that this unity indeed exists. My analysis will, I hope, answer a question which could legitimately be asked, namely: why is it that Rabelais's ideas on truth and knowledge were never openly pointed to by Rabelais's contemporaries? A partial answer can be given immediately. First of all, serious textual criticism was not applied to works in the vernacular, far less to popular, comic works such as Pantagruel and Gargantua. Secondly I demonstrated that Rabelais discredited the notion of received information; refuted the validity of passively accepted "truth"; encouraged his readers to make use of their critical faculties, of their personal judgements. Paradoxically but clearly, Rabelais would have been contradicting his own intentions if he had put forward his ideas on truth and knowledge in the same way as those authorities he decried; he would have been defeating his own ends. It would have been tantamount to forcing his readers to receive and accept uncritically his own views, his personal truth. As

I showed in the introduction and will attempt to show in the rest of the thesis Rabelais's ideas on truth and knowledge were implicit. He asked his readers to reflect and to infer them for themselves.

CHAPTER II

THE DISRUPTION OF THE STATUS QUO IN "PANTAGRUEL"

The sine qua non of Rabelais's conception of truth and knowledge, as he developed it in the humanist-inspired episodes of Pantagruel and Gargantua was an independent and enquiring attitude of mind. All the episodes I examined fostered this attitude of individual initiative in the readers. However, standing in the way of this basic and essential prerequisite lay a formidable obstacle for Rabelais: social immobility. The influence which naturally tends to accrue to the specialist (especially in such highly respected and socially important fields as the law and theology) vis à vis the layman --and which leads to a degree of passiveness in the latter --was enhanced among Rabelais's readership by the institutionalized stratification of society into orders or "estates".

In 1481 in his translation of the 13th century French encyclopaedia L'image du monde, William Caxton outlined the mediaeval, hierarchical division of society into three separate estates with fixed functions. These consisted of

"clerkes, knyghtes, and labourers"²

--the church, the nobility and the common people (from wealthy bourgeois to poor labourer).

"The labourers --Caxton explained -- ought to pourueye for the clerkes and knyghtes such thinges as were needful for them to lyue by in the world honestly; and the knyghtes ought to defende the clerkis and the labourers that ther were no wronge don to them; and the clerkis ought to enseigne and teche these ii maner of peple, and to adresse them in their workis in such wise that none doo thinge by which he sholde displease God..."³

If we consult a representative historian such as Georges Chastellain, we can grasp that for the late mediaeval world this rigid division was unchangeable because divinely ordained. It had God's sanction and its tripartite structure was seen as an analogy of the trinity:

"la trinité des estats, qui tous y sont condescendus, et dont le roy, en chef et exemple de ce qui luy a plu, a esté produiseur premier..."⁴

In L'entrée du roys loys en nouveau règne Chastellain described the importance of this hierarchical structure and the necessity for it to remain unchanged:

"Ne sont en ce très chair royaume, qui est un entier corps, trois fondemens angulaires, les plus espéciaux de la terre et lesquels, en leur haulte construction, et par la vertu du cyment qui les lye ne sont...à mettre à l'envers? Qui sont-ils ces fondemens? Ne sont-ce les trois estats, principaux membres de la chrétienté, sur lesquels la maison de Dieu se repose, et desquels tout ce que bon est, dépend et résulte?"⁵

The estates may have been mutually inter-dependent, but for Chastellain, the court-historian, they were far from being of equal importance and dignity. In Le Miroër des nobles hommes de France he proclaimed that God created the nobles to rule and

"les peuples fit naistre pour labourer..."⁶

while in L'entrée du roys loys he was more explicit still:

"Pour venir au tiers membre qui fait le royaume entier, c'est l'estat des bonnes villes, des marchans et des gens de labour, desquels il ne convient faire si longue exposition que des autres, pour cause que celuy estat mesme ne le requiert, et que de soy il n'est gaires capable de hautes attributions, parce qu'il est au degré servile..."⁷

R. Mohl, in her doctoral thesis on the mediaeval and Renaissance literature of the three estates,⁸ demonstrated the persistence and familiarity of the idea of the three estates and their divinely ordained nature right through the 16th century in France. In effect, if the idea of the fundamental equality of all men --John Ball's

"When Adam delved and Eve span
Who was then the gentleman"

had wide currency in the Middle Ages, it was never, as Huizinga pointed out,⁹ put into practice. It remained a theoretical piety. A manifestation of the gap between theory and practice is the mediaeval theme of the dance of death, which --notably in the woodcuts of Rabelais's contemporaries Holbein and Dürer --extended well into the 16th century.

They showed the basic equality of all men, from monarch to labourer in face of death, but not in life.

An interesting example of this dichotomy occurs in an episode of Castiglione's Cortegiano, a work whose influence was great and which was published (in 1527) only a few years before Pantagruel. Gaspar Pallavicino floats the notion that there is no harm in a young gentleman dancing and taking part in competitive sports with peasants, albeit:

"perchè ivi non si fa paragone della nobiltà, ma della forza e destrezza".¹⁰

The last word on this question, however goes to the representative of the traditional divisions:

"Quel ballare nel sole" respose messer Federico "a me non piace par modo alcuno, ne so che guadagno vi si triovi; ma lottare, correre, saltare non e forse male farlo ancor qualche volta con villani: parmi bene che si abbia a fare come per provarsi e, come si suol dire, per gentilezza non per contendere con loro; e dee l'uomo essere quasi securo di vincere, altrimenti non vi si metta, perchè sta troppo male e troppo è brutta cosa e fuori della dignità vedere un gentiluomo vinto da un villano, e massimamente alla lotta; però io credo che sia bene astenersi, almeno in presenza di molti, perche el guadagno nel vincere è pochissimo e la perdita ne l'essere vinto è grandissima".¹¹

The attitude of mind which this traditional stratification inevitably encouraged ran directly counter to that which Rabelais wished to stimulate in his first two novels. Rabelais perceived that the apparent permanence and inevitability which, to ordinary people, the existing order possessed and which was deliberately promoted by the establishment (witness the cynicism and self-interest which underlies the above quotation from Il Cortegiano) bred in these people an inability to envisage change and hence to formulate rational criticism. (The majority of Rabelais's readers --whether bourgeois, students or craft-workers --would probably belong to the third estate). This explains why the pilgrims in Gargantua 45 undertook pilgrimages against all reason and why in the Cinquième Livre the men of law, whom Rabelais dubs the "Chats-fourrés", were able to turn the rules of reason and decent conduct upside down with absolute impunity:

"...ils bruslent, esclattent, décapitent, meurdrirent, emprisonnent, ruinent et minent tout sans discrétion de bien et de mal. Car parmy eux vice est vertu appelé: meschanceté est bonté surnommée: trahison a nom de féauté larrecin est dict liberalité: pillerie est leur devise, et par eux faicte, est trouvée bonne de tous humains, exceptez-moy les hérétiques, et le tout font avec souveraine et irréfragable autorité".¹²

Interestingly Chastellain pinpointed the two spurious premises which underpinned the hierarchical division of society and which justified the grossly unfair share of power accorded to the least populous and least economically important estates. Firstly the establishment of the estates was not of man's making: it was divine and thus untouchable. Secondly the tripartite division performed an absolutely vital social function in which the orders were mutually dependent. Because this reciprocal inter-dependence had been ordained by God, the function performed by each "estat" must necessarily be perfect and permanent. In this way labouring was the vocation of the labourer and, for example, law and religion of the "clerkis". That the knowledge and truth of the church or the authority of the monarchy and nobility could be challenged on the grounds that it performed its function insufficiently well was an absurdity.

Rabelais showed his sympathy for the common people by allowing them to appreciate the vacuousness of these two premises. We saw how in Pantagruel and Gargantua Rabelais layed bare for his readers the abusive manner in which:

"the clerkis...enseigne and teche"

them. He also showed that while the people by their labour fulfilled their clause in the "divine" social contract, the authorities did not.

"the knyghtes ought to defende...the labourers..."

translated Caxton. The practice fell far short of the precept. Their tutelage, as it was practised, was detrimental to the interests of the ordinary people.

In chapter I of the Tiers Livre we come across an expression which reminds us of Rabelais's condemnation of lawyers in the "Cri" of Theleme:

"mangeur de peuple".

On this occasion Rabelais employs the epithet to qualify the

"roy inique démovore"

who brutally puts down and ill-treats the common people whose land he has conquered in war:

"brièf les peuples mangeant et dévorant".

This chapter of the Tiers Livre by its position (it opens the novel) and subject-matter (how conquered peoples ought to be treated humanely by their new kings) which differs radically from the main narrative thread of the remainder of the work reveals Rabelais's preoccupation with the behaviour of monarchs with regard to the greatest physical blight for ordinary people: war. Rabelais knew that war:

"ceste insigne fable et tragicque comédie"¹³

disrupted people's lives and caused great suffering. The vivid descriptions of pillage and destruction in Gargantua 26 and 27 suggest that Rabelais had witnessed the ravages of war at first hand.

Rabelais focuses on this subject again and again in Pantagruel and Gargantua. The numerous passages about the monarchy and war are full of bitterness at traditional kings' failure to do their duty by their subjects. In Pantagruel 30 a host of rulers are dispatched to Hell where, in their turn, they are ill-treated and put down by those who formerly had been powerless and at their mercy. In Pantagruel 31 Panurge scornfully remarks --ostensibly about King Anarcho but tacitly with wider targets in view -- and with the maximum irreverence:

"Ces diables de roys ici ne sont que veaulx et ne sçavent ny ne valent rien sinon à faire des maulx ès pauvres subjectz et à troubler tout le monde par guerre pour leur inique et détestable plaisir".

Rabelais was aware that the fate of ordinary citizens was in the hands of their kings who claimed to rule in God's name and with his assent yet who --as he pointed out to his readers --acted in an un-Christian manner:

"Je dis, quant est de moy, que si les roys, princes et communautés christians ont en révérence la divine parole de Dieu et selon icelle gouvernent soy et leurs sujets, nous ne veismes de nostre aage année plus salubre ès corps, plus paisible ès asmes, plus fertile en biens, que sera cette-cy"

Rabelais's critique of the ruling élite was made all the more pointed by the humanist princes he created as his heroes: Pantagruel, Gargantua, Grandgousier. Not only were they close to the people in speech and manner, as I observed, they were also the epitome of tolerance and clemency. So peace-loving were they that they would go to any lengths to avoid spilling the people's blood. Grandgousier, in Gargantua 28 left no stone unturned before finally resolving to take up arms against Picrochole:

"je n'entreprendray guerre que je n'ay essayé tous les ars et moyens de paix".

He gave the following as his reason for calling on his son Gargantua to help him:

"L'exploict sera faict à moindre effusion de sang que sera possible, et, si possible est...nous saulverons toutes les âmes et les enverrons joyeux à leurs domiciles".

The basis of this humanity is an acknowledgement of the real value of the common people, an appreciation of their contribution to the common good which stands at the opposite pole to Chastellains's disdainful élitism. Rabelais's good kings admit their debt to the ordinary people and act accordingly. Grandgousier, for instance, is impregnated with a sense of duty towards them. Through his words Rabelais gives his ordinary readers a sense of their own dignity:

"Secourir et guarantir mes pauvres subjectz. La raison le veult ainsi, car de leur labeur je suis entretenu et de leur sueur je suis nourry, moy, mes enfans et ma famille".¹⁵

This notion of human dignity is at the heart of Pantagruel's refusal in Pantagruel 28 to place a ransom on his prisoner's head:

"(ma) fin n'estoit de piller ny ransoner les humains mais de les enrichir et réformer en liberté totale"

and lies behind Gargantua's humane moderation in victory. In Gargantua 50

he affirms that his predecessors (like him):

"plus volontiers (ont) érigé trophées et monuments ès cueurs des vaincuz par grâce, que ès terres par eulx conquestées par architecture: car plus estimoient la vive souvenance des humains acquise par libéralité..."

In Gargantua 46 through the proclamation of his fictional monarch, Gargantua, Rabelais paints a picture of a humane Christian king which contrasts sharply with his readership's experience of their actual rulers who were preoccupied with disputing Europe between themselves:

"Le temps n'est plus d'ainsi conquister les royaumes avecques dommaige de son prochain frère christian. Ceste imitation des anciens Hercules, Alexandres, Hannibalz, Scipions, Césars et aultres telz est contraire à la profession de l'Evangile, par laquelle nous est commandé garder saulver, régir et administrer chascun ses pays et terres, non hostilement envahir les aultres, et ce que les Sarazins et Barbares jadis appelloient prouesses, maintenant nous appellons briganderies et méchansetez".

Only under monarchs, like Rabelais's fictional kings, who only have recourse to arms as a last resort, can the people live in tranquillity. Such kings were unknown to Rabelais's readers:

"--C'est (dist Gargantua) ce que dict Platon, lib.V de Rep. que lors les républiques seroient heureuses quand les roys philosopheroient ou les philosophes régneroient".¹⁶

Twice between 1532 and 1535 Alcofribas openly scoffed at the idea that humanity had from its origins been categorized into immutable castes by God. On the first occasion Rabelais took advantage of the astrological context of the Pantagrueline Prognostication to express his belief that such hierarchies were man-made and to defend the inherent dignity of ordinary people.

"La plus grande folie du monde est penser qu'il y ayt des astres pour les Roys, Papes et gros seigneurs, plutost que pour les pauvres et souffreteux, comme si nouvelles estoilles avoient este crééz depuis le temps du déluge, ou de Romulus, ou Pharamond, à la nouvelle création des Roys. Ce que Triboulet ny Cailhette ne diroient, qui ont esté toutesfoys gens de hault sçavoir et grand renom".

Basically, hints Rabelais, all men are equal:

"Et par adventure en l'arche de Noé ledict Triboulet estoit de la lignée des Roys de Castille, et Cailhette du sang de Priam; mais tout cest erreur ne procède que par deffault de vraye foy catholicque".

In the first chapter of Gargantua Rabelais mentioned the "admirable transport des regnes et empires" from the Assyrians through to the French. The conception of a universal and unbroken monarchy handed down divinely from one chosen people to another --each being the repository of absolute kingship for a particular epoch --was commonplace when Rabelais published his first two novels.¹⁷ It was exploited first and foremost to lend weight to and legitimize François I's pretensions on the Holy Roman Empire.¹⁸ Its implications were enormous. It suggested an unchangeable, divinely constituted hierarchy. It also implied that hierarchical social groups or "estats" move in parallel lines from generation to generation, with no convergence whatsoever. Kings were not made; they were kings in essence. Only on this assumption could French kings from the Capetians through to 1789 --and François I was no exception --claim to cure, miraculously, the disease of scrofula (known as the King's Evil or "Le Mal du Roi") by the laying-on of hands and the formula:

"Le roi te touche et Dieu te guérit".¹⁹

Failing to appreciate the ironic context in which Rabelais cited this "transfert" in Gargantua H. Hauser²⁰ was convinced that Rabelais was actually employing it in order to back François I's claims to be Emperor. Let us look more closely at what Alcofribas really had to say.

Referring to Gargantua's genealogical origins, which --as Rabelais displayed in Pantagruel I --are known in great detail, Rabelais's persona breaks into an aside. He expresses the wish that everyone were as well-informed about their own origins:

"Pleust à Dieu qu'un chascun sceust aussi certainement sa généalogie depuis l'arche de Noé jusques à cest eage ! Je pense que plusieurs sont aujourd'hui empereurs, roys, ducz,

princes et papes en la terre, lesquelz sont descenduz de quelques porteurs de rogatons et de coustretz, comme, au rebours, plusieurs sont gueux de l'hostiaire, souffreteux et misérables, lesquelz sont descenduz de sang et ligne de grandz roys et empereurs, attendu l'admirable transport des règnes et empires:

des Assyriens ès Mèdes,
des Mèdes ès Perses,
des Perses ès Macédones,
des Macédones ès Romains,
des Romains ès Grecz,
des Grecz ès François".

There can be no doubt that Rabelais is making use of the pretended continuity, permanence and divinely-constituted nature of the "transport", which he quotes in full, with great irony. The picture Alcofribas gives the readers is of a fluid social ^{structure} in which the great and small rise and fall in turn (and not solely within their own class groups), where hierarchies turn out to be man-made and temporary. The implication of his irony is that if ordinary people, who are uninformed, were to come into possession of direct, personal knowledge of their own origins and other people's they would realize that the social status quo only possesses the appearance of permanence. They would judge and not passively accept their own lowly position on the social scale. Rabelais went further. He had Alcofribas identify with the readers, many of whom were, like the author-persona, members of the "tiers estat", the dispossessed. He gave them a glimpse of a different social order both in the next world (a conventional hope) or, much more disturbingly, here on earth ("ou meilleure pensée"):

"Et pour vous donner à entendre de moy qui parle, je cuyde que soye descendu de quelque riche roy ou prince du temps jadis: car oncques ne veistes homme qui eust plus grande affection d'estre roy et riche que moy, affin de faire grande chère, pas ne travailler, point ne me soucier, et bien enrichir mes amys et tous gens de bien et de sçavoir. Mais en ce je me réconforte que en l'autre monde je le seray voyre plus grand que de présent ne l'auseroye soubhaiter. Vous en telle ou meilleure pensée réconfortez vostre malheur, et beuvez fraiz, si faire se peut".

We have observed that these attacks on the most fundamental of social

conventions were made in the interests of ordinary people, as well, of course, as to move those in authority, the learned and the powerful. The University of Tours, upon calling itself after Rabelais, described him as "sans complaisance à l'égard du conformisme". This citation applies particularly aptly to Pantagruel where, in the words of a recent critic,²¹ Rabelais

"clearly...satirizes man and his institutions --religious, judicial, political".

It was in Pantagruel as a whole that Rabelais carried the deliberate disruption of the status quo to its highest point in order to sharpen his readers' critical faculties. By treating disrespectfully those conventions which his readers were most in awe of, most respected and tended to accept unquestioningly at face value, Rabelais brought these social "certitudes" and hierarchies within his readers' critical range. He thus fostered in them a more irreverent, flexible, critical attitude of mind. When we recall that Rabelais had in his first novel placed a premium on the examination of primary sources and empirical information and had shown an implacable opposition to passive, received interpretations, the importance of Rabelais's wholesale assault on the institutions of the two dominant estates becomes apparent.

From the outset of his first novel Rabelais placed his readers in a universe of reversed values: a topsy-turvy world. Rabelais had a close acquaintance with popular theatrical genres. He was familiar with the fool's costume of the "Soties";²² the name of Grandgousier was plucked by Rabelais from a farce²³ and he himself, while a student at Montpellier, had taken part in a popular comedy: "la morale comoedie de celluy qui avoit espouse une femme mute"²⁴--the plot of which is described by Epistémon. He showed a particular predilection for "Mystères" and more

especially for the comic part of these mystery plays, known as "diableries". References to the "diableries" abound in his novels. To describe something particularly difficult Rabelais immediately thinks of a

"grande diablerie à quatre personnages",²⁵

the "mise-en-scene" of which --with its devil's mouth, smoke and flying angels -- was extremely arduous. When Panurge wishes to evoke a scene of great disorder, the mystery-plays again provide the simile:

"...qu'une diablerie plus confuse que celle des jeux de Doué"²⁶

The Francois Villon episode of the Quart Livre reveals Rabelais's familiarity with the detail of the production of a "Mystère". His evocation of "la monstre de la diablerie parmy la ville et le marché" is obviously based on a first-hand knowledge of and delight in this popular pageant:

"ses diables estoient tous caparasonnez de peaulx de loups, de veaulx et de béliers, passementées de testes de mouton, de cornes de boeufz et de grands havetz de cuisine; ceinctz de grosses courraies, esquelles pendoient grosses cymbales de vaches et sonnettes de muletz à bruyt horrificque. Ten-oient en main aucuns bastons noirs pleins de fuzées; aultres portoient longs tizons alluméz, sus lesquelz à chascun carrefour jectoient pleines poignées de parasine en pouldre dont sortoit feu et fumée terrible. Les avoir ainsi conduictz avecques contentement du peuple et grande frayeur des petitz enfans, finalement (Villon) les mena bancqueter en une cassine..."²⁷

Rabelais appears to have at one time or another been present at performances of "Mytères" the length and breadth of the "pays de loire" and to have weighed the merits of these respective representations. Villon cries to his performers:

"--Vous jourez bien, Messieurs les Diables, vous jourez bien, je vous affie. O que vous jourez bien! Je despite la diablerie de Saulmur, de Doué, de Mommorillon, de Langes, de Saint Espain, de Angiers, voire, par Dieu! de Poictiers avecques leur parlouire, en cas qui'ilz puissent estre à vous parragonnez".²⁸

Rabelais's attraction to the "Mystères" is understandable. It was essentially the spectacle of and for the ordinary people. Villon's "Dieu le père", to whom the official ecclesiastical authorities represented by

"Estienne Tappecoul, secrétaire des Cordeliers du lieu", refused "une chappe et estolle" is merely

"un vieil paisant".²⁹

The devils who parade through the streets are no longer fearsome tormentors; like the gigantic "gueule d'Enfer"³⁰ they amuse the people and only frighten the children. In Greban's "diablerie" of the Mistère des Actes des Apostres³¹, Lucifer is at times a grotesque, harmless figure. The representation of the Passion was seen in terms of the ordinary people and hence like the "Sermons joyeux"³² whose mock litany and outrageous saints Rabelais was familiar with,³³ it counterbalanced the official religious hierarchy. It was, we should remember, not to teach the people but for their recreation that Villon wished to put on his "Mystère", not in the official Latin of the church, but in the language people used in everyday life:

"pour donner pasetemps au peuple, entreprint faire jouer la Passion en gestes et langaige Poictevin".³⁴

Not surprisingly it was not long after the publication of Pantagruel and Gargantua that the authorities finally suppressed the "Mystères", whose orthodoxy was unreliable.³⁵

It was from the comic "diableries" of the unofficial and popular world of the "Mystères" that Rabelais found the name for the title and the hero of his first novel: Pantagruel. Pentagruel the devilkin,³⁶ under the orders of Lucifer, whose mission was to toss salt into the open mouths of sleeping drunkards was a familiar figure to the people who watched the "Mystères". His thirst-provoking qualities had become proverbial: "avoir le Pantagruel" had entered the language.³⁷ The title-page of book I with its:

"Pantagruel, roy de Dipsodes"

was patently designed by Rabelais to evoke the non-official world of the

"Mystères". Indeed throughout the novel Rabelais never let his readers forget his hero's origins; no less than eleven separate times³⁸ are the mystery devilkin's thirst-provoking attributes referred to.

The fictional world Rabelais's hero was born into was unmistakably different from the real world. Rabelais did not conceal this; on the contrary he purposely drew the picture of an unpredictable, inside-out world for the birth of Pantagruel. Pantagruel, as befitted his mystery-play origins, must have struck Rabelais's readers forcefully as an unconventional hero, associated with the people: a non-establishment figure.

The title-page announced for all to see that Pantagruel was the "filz du grand géant Gargantua".

The significance of this Pantagruel-Gargantua association was twofold. Gargantua was a figure who lived on among the common people as Sebillot discovered during his survey at the end of the last century and as the tales of certain old people from Brittany still confirm.³⁹ He was a giant who --as Sebillot's "dires" indicate --was felt to belong to each community.⁴⁰ He was a friend of the people --helping them whenever possible and significantly he was definitely regarded as an anti-authority figure.⁴¹ His being the father of Rabelais's hero simply confirmed the latter as an unofficial figure close to the lowly and at a distance from the high and mighty. And Rabelais elevated these popular figures into dignitaries: Pantagruel was a king, an anti-monarch like the "roy des sots" or the king of the "connards".

By making the devilkin descend from the giant Rabelais deliberately dispensed with "vraisemblance", indicated that the ordinary conventions were not "de mise" in his novel. And, as it was, Rabelais invented for his hero a cosmogony appropriate to his hero's bizarre and popular origins. As if Pantagruel were almost an anti-divine figure Rabelais deemed it necessary to begin from the beginning of the world with a creation-story befitting his devilkin-giant.

The story appears familiar at first-glance (the Abel-Cain episode, Noah, the forbidden fruit, the tribes of Israel). The resemblance is only superficial however; a closer look reveals the ways in which Rabelais has modified these familiar landmarks in a grotesque comic way. In the beginning when Cain killed Abel the earth did not become barren, as in scripture:⁴²

"la terre embue du sang du juste fut certain année si très fertile en tous fruits qui de ses flans nous sont produytz"

Man's history takes a radically different turn --leading not to the hierarchies of Rabelais's readers' world where poverty reigns among the common people and

"le deuil vous mine et consomme"⁴³

but to a world of reversed orders where abundance and laughter are the order of the day:

"mieux est de ris que de larmes escripre."⁴⁴

"vivre en paix, joye, santé, faisant toujours grande chère".⁴⁵

The fertilized earth produced not the biblical apple but the "mesle" or "nèfle" the fruit of the poor people, so ligneous it can only be eaten when "blette" after the first frosts.⁴⁶ But in the year of Pantagruel's birth the medlars were huge, so that the year went down in history not because of some important historical event concerning the establishment but because it was

"l'année des grosses mesles".

Noah is evoked, not for the flood and his role in it, but because --something he ought to be remembered by all "bons compagnons" for --he was according to the Bible,⁴⁷ the first man to plant the vine. Nothing could be more intimately popular than the "tribes" descended from the

"beau et gros fruit"

All are characterized by grotesque inflations of parts of the body and

especially those most un-respectable parts, the sexual organs, lovingly and lingeringly described by Alcofribas:

"Les aultres enfloient en longueur par le membre qu'on nomme le laboureur de nature, en sorte qu'ilz le avoient merveilleusement long, grand, gras, gros, vert et acresté à la mode antique, si bien qu'ilz s'en servoyent de ceinture le redoublans à cinq ou à six foys par le corps".

The carnivalesque aspect of these bloated comic creations --with their stilt-like legs, flapping ears, hunch-backs, huge red noses and phallus-like penises --is re-inforced by Rabelais by the use of a number of familiar associations. The carnival figure Mardi Gras⁴⁸ is said to be descended from those with pot-bellies. The mock litanies of the "Sermons Joyeux" are evoked in the "saint Pansart" and "Ne reminiscaris" associated respectively with the big-belly tribe and the big-nose race. The popular Aesop or Esopet⁴⁹ is a descendant of the hunch-backs. The big-noses are exploited by Rabelais to put flesh and blood on a popular proverb:

"...et dict-on que en Bourbonnoys encores dure l'éraige dont sont dictes aureilles de Bourbonnoys",⁵⁰

while the fact that the race of the long penises has vanished is lamented by women in the (genuinely) popular song

"Il n'en est plus de ces gros etc"⁵¹

of which, adds Alcofribas saucily,

"vous sçavez la reste de la chanson".

Pantagruel's genealogy is of the most popular, unrespectable and unexpected kind. The attributes of his ancestors are not of the heroic type; they are concerned with more down to earth matters:

"Qui engendra Hurtaly, qui fut beau mangeur de soupes et régna au temps du déluge"

/.../

"Qui engendra Eryx, lequel fut inventeur du jeu des gobeletz"

/.../

"Qui engendra Etion, lequel premier eut la vérolle pour

n'avoir beu frayz en esté, comme tesmoigne Bertachim"

/.../

"Qui engendra Gabbara, qui premier inventa de boire d'autant"

/.../

"Qui engendra Offot, lequel eut terriblement beau nez à boyre au baril"

/.../

"Qui engendra Erray, qui fut très expert en matière de oster les cérons des mains"

/.../

"Qui engendra Morguan, lequel premier de ce monde joua aux dez avecques ses bézicles"

/.../

"Qui engendra Happemousche, qui premier inventa de fumer les langues de boeuf à la cheminée, car auparavant le monde les saloit comme on faict les jambons"

/.../

"Qui engendra Galehaut lequel fut inventeur des flacons".

The names of Pantagrue's forebears reflect these interests. Gayoffe we are told,

"avoit lescouillons de peuple et le vit de cormier",

while the names of the hero's closest relatives evoke a similar concern with sexual and culinary delights: Foutasnon, Vitdegrain, Grandgosier and Gargantua himself.

Pantagrue's etymology, as expounded by Alcofribas, places him in this lineage and confirms his popular nature:

"car panta en grec vault autant à dire comme tout et gruel en langue Hagarène vault autant comme alteré".

Significantly Pantagrue was born at the very moment of an anti-miracle, when the common people led by their ecclesiastical authorities, asked God for rain with that comically described and non-Evangelical:

"belle procession avecques forces létanies et beaux preschans"

The people, who believe that the drops of water oozing out of the ground

were an answer to the authorities' supplications were disillusioned upon tasting brine. On that day of disillusion, of disappointed belief,

"en ce propre jour",

the popular Pantagruel was born, accompanied by an abundance of salty food destined to be:

"aguillons de vin".

From the moment they are depicted in a narrative context, Rabelais's heroes, Gargantua and Pantagruel, are shown, in Pantagruel, to incarnate an independent, critical outlook: the antithesis of passive acceptance. In chapter 3, the readers find Gargantua in a potentially heart-rending quandary, for the life of Pantagruel has been paid by the death of Badebec. He is torn between his grief at his wife's death and his joy at his son's birth. Gargantua, versed, we are led to believe, in the methods of scholastic disputation initially availed himself of the Pro and Contra technique to extricate himself from his dilemma,

"Car il les faisoit très bien in modo et figura".

But this passively received method of the traditional establishment, which has nothing to do with Gargantua's feelings and in which he exercises no initiative leads him nowhere:

"D'un costé et d'aultre il avoit argumens sophisticques qui le suffocoquent... mais il ne les pouvoit souldre, et par ce moyen demouroit empestré comme la souris empeignée ou un milan prins au lasset".

He formulates, following scholastic rules, reasons for being grief-stricken which are merely formal, devoid of any real sentiment. Rabelais conveys this by the comic flatness and hollow conventionality of the clichéd and incongruous lament constantly disrupted by Gargantua's real thoughts on his spouse:

"...Ma tant bonne femme est morte, qui estoit la plus cecy la plus cela, qui feust au monde...Ha, Badebec, ma mignonne, m'amy, mon petit con (toutesfois elle en avoit bien troys arpens et deux sexterées), ma tendrette, ma braguette, ma

savate, ma pantofle, jamais je ne te verray!
..."

On the other hand, as soon as Gargantua's true thoughts and feelings burst through he is immediately freed from his dilemma and begins living again. When he exercises his individual initiative and judgement then events no longer act upon him:

"Seigneur Dieu, faut-il que je me contriste encores? Cela me fasche; je ne suis plus jeune, je deviens vieulx, le temps est dangereux, je pourray prendre quelque fievre; me voilà affolé. Foy de gentilhomme, il vault mieulx pleurer moins et boire davantage! Ma femme est morte et bien par Dieu! (da jurandi) je ne la résusciteray pas par mes pleurs: elle est bien, elle est en paradis pour le moins, si mieulx ne est; elle prie Dieu pour nous, elle est bien heureuse, elle ne se soucie plus de nos misères et calamitéz. Autant nous en pend à l'oeil, Dieu gard le demourant! Il me fault penser d'en trouver une aultre".

The absolute contrast between his present activity and previous passiveness is rendered in the contrasting passages of lament (for Badebec) and joy (for Pantagrue). The former languishes. In the latter the words are no longer hollow: they spring from real feelings. The sentences scud across the page dynamically:

"...un si beau filz, tant joyeux, tant riant, tant joly!
Ho, ho, ho, ho! que je suis ayse! Beuvons, ho! Laissons toute mélancholie! Apporte du meilleur, rince les verres boute la nappe, chasse ces chiens, souffle ce feu, allume la chandelle, ferme ceste porte, taille ces soupes, envoie ces pauvres, baille leur ce qu'ilz demandent!"

In chapter 5 Pantagrue takes time off from his studies to visit the tomb of the well-known historical figure Geoffroy de Lusignan, known as "Geoffroy à la grand dent",⁵² where he is startled and puzzled by a portrait of his ancestor which depicts him

"comme...un homme furieux, tirant à demy son grand malchus de la guaine".

Pantagrue, evidently ignorant of the legendary knight's career wishes to find out why Geoffroy has been portrayed in such a ferocious posture. The answer of the religious authorities at Maillezais is interesting. For the purposes of making his point Rabelais renders the monks, like Pantagrue, ignorant of Geoffroy's deeds. How do they then interpret the portrait?

They do not; instead of thinking about it, exercising their judgement and coming to some kind of conclusion, they merely fall back on a famous secondary source: Horace's topos concerning artistic licence:

"...Pictoribus atque Poetis, etc."
(Quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa potestas),⁵³

or, as Rabelais paraphrases it for his ordinary readers:

"Les Paintres et les Poëtes ont liberté de paindre à leur plaisir ce qu'ilz veullent".

To Rabelais's readers, who knew perfectly well who Geoffroy was, this passive solution would have appeared ludicrous. Pantagruel's reaction to the portrait is in direct contrast. He refuses to accept the representation as gratuitous; he expects it to be meaningful, to have a direct relationship with reality:

"Il n'est ainsi painct sans cause".

Pantagruel, in contrast to the religious authorities, insists on judging for himself:

"et me doute que à sa mort on luy a faict quelque tord dont il demande vengeance à ses parents".

This appraisal provides much of the comedy of the little episode. For as I said, Rabelais knew his readers would be perfectly aware of the link between the artistic image of Geoffroy and the reality of the man's life.⁵⁴ Geoffroy was of course so depicted because of his ferocity and injustice towards others --especially and ironically towards the monks at Maillezais --and not because of any incidental wrong done to him. While Rabelais has his readers laugh at Pantagruel's judgement, he also leads them to infer a vital point. Pantagruel's attitude is perfectly correct. He makes a judgement (and a reasonable one at that, given the evidence he has at his disposal); he tries, by his powers of observation and deduction, to tie the image to reality. Rabelais's readers cannot fail to see the importance of this; for if his judgement does not hit upon the truth, it is not his method which is at fault. He merely lacks the knowledge --the

concrete knowledge of Geoffroy which the readers themselves possess-- which would enable him to make a proper appraisal of the image. Significantly Pantagruel is shown as being flexible enough to realize the limitations of his judgement; to realize it is provisional and could be modified by subsequent direct knowledge:

"Je m'en enquesteray plus à plein".

Rabelais created the ideal atmosphere and narrative setting within which to render innocuous his readers' major bugbears, the great hierarchies of their daily existence; to disrupt the constrictive inevitability of hunger, of the devil and Hell, of fear, violence and death.

The very names of Rabelais's two heroes epitomize an abundance of food and drink. Pantagruel, king of the thirsty, has his mystery-play drink associations re-inforced upon becoming Rabelais's giant-prince. His lineage links him not only with salt and water but with food and wine, with good cheer. The time of his birth and the etymology of his name confirm this as do the "aiguillons de vin" which constitute his "waters":

"yssirent premier de son (Badebec's) ventre soixante et huit trégéniers, chascun tirant par le licol un mulet tout chargé de sel, après lesquelz sortirent neuf dromadaires chargés de jambons et langues de beuf fumées, sept chameaulx chargés d'anguillettes, puis XXV charretées de porreaulx, d'oignons et de cibotz..."⁵⁵

Gargantua, the popular giant, was also associated with drink but above all his name was synonymous with great hunger, with gigantic eating-feats: a link made even stronger by the "Garg" root of his name, recalling a number of familiar words to do with the throat and swallowing⁵⁶ (this association is equally manifest in the names of Grandgousier, Badebec and Gargamelle).

Pantagruel, in whom are combined the attributes of the devilkin (drink) and the giant (food) confirms his vocation as he grows up. His

proWess as a child is astounding:

"il humoit le laict de quatre mille six cens vaches...",⁵⁷

devoured a whole cow when in his cradle,

"comme vous feriez d'une saulcisse"⁵⁸

made mincemeat of a passing bear,

"vous print Monsieur de l'Ours et le mist en pièce comme un poulet, et vous en fist une bonne gorge chaulde pour ce repas",⁵⁹

and burst free from his cradle-chains in his desire to eat. Much of his student activity is concerned with his culinary interest. He raised the "Pierre levée" for the students of Poitiers, so that,

"quand ilz ne scauroyent aultre chose faire, passassent le temps à monter sur ladicte pierre et là banqueter à force flacons, jambons et pastez..."⁶⁰

At Montpellier University:

"il trouva fort bons vins de Mirevaux et joyeuse compaignie..."⁶¹

Pantagruel's love of good cheer is shared by all the Pantagruelistes. Panurge's thirteen-language harangue centres on the inconveniences of an empty stomach. His appetite is as sharp as his wits:

"j'ay nécessité bien urgente de repaistre: dentz agues, ventre vuyde, gorge seiche, appétit strident, tout y est deliberé. Si me voulez mettre en oeuvre, ce sera basme de me veoir briber".⁶²

Panurge's adventure with the Turks amounts to a panegyric on spit-roasting which ends with the clarion-call of

"vive la roustisserie!",⁶³

while, of course, prior to his yarn, his tongue had been loosened by wine:

"ce vin est fort bon et bien délicieux, mais plus j'en boy plus j'ay de soif. Je croy que l'ombre de Monseigneur Pantagruel engendre les altérez, comme la lune faict les catharres".⁶⁴

Carpalim, when tired of salt-meat, bags not a rabbit or two like the ordinary poacher, but (and with the greatest of ease):

"Quatre grandes otardes,
Sept bitars,

Vingt et six perdrys grises,
 Trente et deux rouges,
 Seize faisans,
 Neuf béccasses,
 Dix et neuf hérons,
 Trente et deux pigeons ramiers,
 Et tua de ses pieds dix ou douze, que levraulx, que lapins
 qui jà estoit hors de piège,
 Dix huyt rasles parez ensemble,
 Quinze sanglerons,
 Deux bléreaux,
 Troys grands renards⁶⁵

.../"

Food and wine are the essential and constant accompaniments to any occasion. After the Thaumaste disputation Pantagrueel ordered dinner and

"ilz beurent à ventre déboutonné...jusques à dire: "Dont venez-vous? "Sainte Dame, comment ilz tiroyent au chevrotin, et flaccons d'aller et eulx de corner:

"Tyre!
 --Baille!
 --Paige, vin!
 --Boutte, de par le diable, boutte"

Il n'y eut celluy qui ne beust vingt cinq ou trente muys et sçavez comment? Sicut terra sine aqua, car il faisoit chault, et dadvantaige, se estoyent alterez".⁶⁶

The Pantagrueelistes march to war with Pantagrueel brandishing the mast of a ship, the crow's nest of which contains:

"deux cens trente et sept poinsons de vin blanc d'Anjou..."⁶⁷

which is all drunk before battle is joined. After their defeat of the six-hundred and sixty knights

"Pantagrueel feut bien joyeux, et loua merveilleusement l'industrie de ses compaignons et les fist rafraichir et bien repaistre sur le rivaige joyeusement et boire d'autant le ventre contre terre, et leur prisonnier avecques eulx familiarment..."⁶⁸

the victory celebration is carried out in even finer style later with the spoils of Carpadim's prodigious hunting foray:

"Et après, grand chère à force vinaigre. Au diable l'un qui se faignoit! C'estoit triumphe de les veoir bauffer.

Lors dist Pantagrueel:

"Pleust à Dieu que chascun de vous eust deux paires de sonnettes de sacre au menton et que je eusse au mien les grosses horloges de Rènes, de Poictiers, de Tours

et de Cambray, pour veoir l'aubade que nous donnerions au remuement de nos badigouinces".⁶⁹

When we consider these passages in relation to the importance of food and drink as disruptive elements in the humanist-inspired episodes, it is not difficult to deduce, as any reader of Pantagruel does, that the whole fabric of the novel is steeped in Pantagruelisme, as defined by Alcofribas in chapter 34. Indeed,

"...faisans tousjours grand chère"

is an appropriate description of Rabelais's heroes. This delight in food and

"le pïot"⁷⁰

is the essential concomitant of that

"paix, joye et santé..."

which Rabelais recommends in the philosophy of his first novel. Rabelais knew that

"la dance vient de la pance"⁷¹

and ordinary people (undernourished as they were)⁷² were gnawed at by "le deuil" (as he said in the prefatory poem to Gargantua). The diet of Rabelais's heroes, who are so close to the readers, is the diet of princes. In the consoling and upside-down world of Pantagruel the perennial monotony of ordinary people's diet in the 16th century, the ever-present fear of scarcity and famine are banished. In the next-world of chapter 30, where the lowly rule in their turn, the epigram over Epictetus's trellis sums up the radically different fate reserved for ordinary people in Rabelais's fictional conception of the world:

"Saulter, dancier, faire les tours
Et boyre vin blanc et vermeil
Et ne faire rien tous les jours
Que compter escuz au soleil".

Most people, even today, are familiar with the traditional Hell of

the Catholic church as portrayed in stained-glass, mosaic, church painting and church sculpture. The fate reserved for the sinner is uniformly horrific: the flames, the boiling pot, the dreadful devils with horns, tail and claws. One thinks, for example of the vast judgement-day mosaic in the byzantine church of Torcello which is packed with graphic detail ; and of the horned devil, cauldron and flames of the fresco in the church of Bagnole (Côte d'Or). The effect of such iconography on the imagination of the devout ordinary people of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance must have been most powerful. Villon painted this effect through the words of his persona's mother in the Testament . The pious old lady describes Hell as represented in her local parish "moustier": it is

"ung enfer où dampnez sont boullus".⁷³

While she is comforted by the portrayal of heaven, this Hell

"me fait pœur".⁷⁴

This fear is dispersed in Pantagruel. Pantagruel, formerly the "diablerie" devilkin, is even more a friend to the people than his mystery-play predecessor. Hell itself, as Epistemon suggests, may not after all be such a bad place for the common people: for there, they lord it over those who dominated them in this life. Epistemon found himself on good terms with Satan:

" il avoit parlé à Lucifer familièrement...",⁷⁵

had eaten to his heart's content there:

"et il avoit fait grand chère en enfer...".⁷⁶

The traditionally terrifying devils had lost their sting:

"les diables estoient bons compagnons".⁷⁷

This is the Hell of the down-trodden, not of the establishment, for while the horror of the church's underworld is erased:

"Au regard des damnez...L'on ne les traicte...si mal que vous penseriez",⁷⁸

the humorous and very human punishments which are meted out are distributed by the lowly to the high and mighty. The comic Lucifer and his

devils of chapter 30 --so familiar and innocuous --are an echo of the Devil and his lieutenants described by Alcofribas in chapter 3. One of the chains holding the baby Pantagruel down in his cradle was appropriated by the devils:

"Et de ces chaînes...la quarte fut emportée des diables pour lier Lucifer, qui se deschaînoit en ce temps-là à cause d'une colicque qui le tourmentoit extraordinairement pour avoir mangé l'âme d'un sergent en fricassée à son desjeuner".⁷⁹

In the sequel, which in the final chapter Alcofribas promises his readers, one of the episodes will deal with Pantagruel's summary treatment of the Devil - who is no match for Rabelais's hero:

"comment il combatit contre les diables et fist brusler cinq chambres d'enfer, et mist à sac la grande chambre noire, et getta Proserpine au feu, et rompit quatre dentz à Lucifer et une corne au cul..."⁸⁰

Rabelais for once shows his ordinary readers a Devil who is not an object of terror. He is like them: he eats fricassees, has indigestion, suffers pain, has trouble with his henchmen and, to his credit, like a good friend to the people, takes vengeance on the hated "sergeants".

The sergeants like the Devil were agents of violence who produced fear in people. Rabelais joked about them to his readers and --what was unheard of --he depicted them as receiving their deserts. . The power of naked violence and death which people openly and commonly witnessed is nullified in Pantagruel and becomes a subject of laughter.

"Contra la forza la ragion non vale"

submits the Italian proverb, summing up popular wisdom. This does not hold good in Rabelais. The fearsome violence of the six-hundred and sixty armed and mounted knights is comically reduced to impotence by Panurge⁸¹ employing nothing but his wits and personal initiative. The all-powerful and tyrannical King Anarche is reduced to the status of a pantomime figure, a "crieur de saulce vert" who is married off to an old hag of a prostitute by whom he is hen-packed and beaten.⁸² The gigantic and potentially frightening Loup Garou has his fearsomeness neutralized in his encounter

which Pantagruel and finally dispelled when his great corpse is thrown away:

"et tomba comme une grenoille sus ventre en la place mage de ladicte ville, et en tombant du coup tua un chat bruslé, une chatte mouillée, une canne petière et un oyson bridé".⁸³

Loup Garou's massed troops, like their leader, are portrayed as harmless figures of scorn defeated by Pantagruel's devilkin-like gesture of tossing salt into their mouths and by Rabelais's giant's flood of urine.⁸⁴

Even death's dominion is challenged in Book I. The outcome of the Pantagruelistes' struggles with their enemies is never for a second at issue. Panurge sees to that, for the ordinary laws of nature can be bent by Rabelais's mercurial sleight-of-hand artist. His conjuring-trick with rod and glasses prior to the battle with the Dipsodes and the giants put paid to all fear of death.

'J'en sçay bien d'autres (he quips); allons seulement en assurance".⁸⁵

In any case when confronted with the cunning of Panurge, the military knowledge of Epistemon, the strength of Eusthenes and the nimbleness of Carpalim any army --as Rabelais's readers perceive --must be disarmed.⁸⁶ When by accident Epistemon is decapitated in the great battle⁸⁷ (and he is the sole casualty) the grief of Pantagruel and his companions is short-lived. With the assistance of food, drink, and a touch of excrement Panurge promptly fits Epistemon's head back on, brings him to life and dispells all despair.⁸⁸

Death by burning at the stake was a common punishment, often reserved for heretics (pointedly, those who do not conform with the layed-down norms). Alcofribas referred jocularly to this dreadful torture in the prologue when he affirmed the worth of the "Grandes Chronicques"

"jusques au feu exclusive".⁸⁹

There occurs in this context a significant passage in chapter 5 in which Rabelais incorporates a brutal and recent example from reality and his readers' knowledge into his fiction and, in connivance with his readers,

laughs at the horror of this practice; at the same time he hints at Pantagruel's (and his own) unorthodox sympathies, for the implication is that Rabelais's giant might have found his way to the stake too. Pantagruel, for this reason, in his tour of French universities, did not remain long in Toulouse ("Tolosa barbara"):

"quand il vit qu'ilz faisoient brusler leurs régens tous vifz comme harans soretz, disant: "Jà Dieu ne plaise que ainsi je meure, car je suis de ma nature assez alteré sans me chauffer davantage!""

The reference to the recent burning at the stake for heresy of Jean de Cahors, in Toulouse, in 1532,⁹⁰ was clear.

In the last major narrative episode of Pantagruel⁹¹ Rabelais undertook a global "mise en question" of the "certitudes" of this world and by using his own persona in the action, demonstrated the progression away from passive acceptance of non-empirical sources (which produces ignorance) to the personal acquiring of first-hand information and the exercise of individual judgement (leading to knowledge). Significantly, and as a prelude to the episode, Rabelais accentuates the topsy-turviness of the narrative: the "author" becomes a participant who is dwarfed by a dock-leaf; Pantagruel suddenly expands to such an extent that he sees above the clouds, can shelter a whole army beneath his tongue and houses a microcosm in his mouth. This opening is deliberately fantastic and unreal. In this way, by lulling the readers, Rabelais achieves the maximum shock-effect when the "normal" nature of the world in the giant's mouth becomes clear. For in the (expected) "New World", which in chapter 32 Alcofribas stumbles upon in Pantagruel's mouth, Rabelais's narrator discovers what is in effect a mirror-image of our own world. Beneath the apparent unusualness we discover the same, familiar topographical features and variety:

"... y veiz de grands rochiers comme le mons des Dannoys (je croy que c'estoient sesdents) et de grands prez, de grandes forestz, de fortes et grosses villes, non moins grandes que Lyon ou Poictiers",

the same social divisions; the same necessity to work. When Alcofribas wishes to know what an (apparently) strange and from Alcofribas's point of view, meaningless activity is about, he gets a pat answer from a peasant as down-to-earth as any in Touraine:

"Ha monsieur (dist-il) chascun ne peut avoir les couillons aussi pesant q'un mortier, et ne pouvons estre tous riches. Je gaigne ainsi ma vie, et les porte (ie. the cabbages) vendre au marché en la cité qui est icy derrière".

The request for a bulletin of health when he enters the town of Aspharge (peopled surprisingly by "christiens, gens de bien") which surprises Alcofribas ("je fuz fort esbahy") has as its motive the presence of the plague with which Rabelais's readers were exceedingly familiar.

Transplanted to Pantagruel's mouth the familiar activities and phenomena of our own world whose normality is never questioned are suddenly deprived of their permanence and inevitability. From absolute they become relative. Rabelais has reversed the perspective so that his readers are allowed to see these familiar aspects of everyday life afresh, with surprised eyes. To the eyes of the people in Pantagruel's mouth, it is our world which is curious. From spectators, we have become the spectacle. To Alcofribas startled:

"Jésus!... il y a icy un nouveau monde?"

comes the even more startling retort from the cabbage-planter:

"Certes (dist-il) il n'est mie nouveau; mais l'on dist bien que, hors d'icy, a une terre neufve où ilz ont et soleil et Lune, et tout plein de belles besoignes; mais cestuy-cy est plus ancien".

It is from this other "New World", which considers itself the old world that the pigeon-snarer in Pantagruel's mouth obtained his supply of pigeons.

The fiction of the world in Pantagruel's mouth --oblivious to the fact that it is there at all and of its puniness, ignorant of the trivial and chance causes of phenomena which (to it) were catastrophic and inevitable, proud in its mistaken belief that it is the old world ---was an ideal

fictional vehicle for undermining the unchallenged familiarities and conventions, the unquestioned absolutes of our own world and the mental passiveness which accompanied these. Alcofribas the newcomer, able to put things into proper perspective, whose mind is free of received information, lights, upon reflexion, on the fact that the "puante et infecte exhalation" which engendered the plague and wiped out "vingt et deux cens soixante mille et seize personnes" in a week in the towns of "Laryngues et Pharingues" had a simple, trivial explanation which completely escaped the inhabitants of these towns who do not see beyond their unquestioning parochialism and its apparent inevitability:

"Lors je pensé et calculé, et trouvé que c'estoit une puante haleine qui estoit venue de l'estomach de Pantagruel alors qu'il mangea tant d'aillade, comme nous avons dict dessus..."

Similarly, furnished with his knowledge born of personal experience Alcofribas is able to reflect and realize what the pigeon-snarer does not: that his pigeons from the other world flew through Pantagruel's mouth:

"Lors je pensay que, quand Pantagruel basloit, les pigeons à pleines volées entroyent dedans sa gorge, pensans que feust un columbier".

By presenting the most familiar of absolutes in this light and by describing Alcofribas's reactions, Rabelais allows his reader to infer that an enquiring attitude, the need to judge at all times, is vital. Correct judgements can only stem from first-hand knowledge --like that acquired by Alcofribas. The people in Pantagruel's mouth have the same idées fixes, received notions, that Rabelais's ordinary readers would be prone to have. The so-called judgements they make, based on this second-hand information are shown to be potently false. For instance when Alcofribas tells the people who live on one side of Pantagruel's teeth that on his way to them he had been robbed, by some inhabitants from the other side, of his master's teeth, the reaction is a sweeping judgement based only on received prejudice:

"Et contoiz aux sénateurs comment on m'avoit destrous-
sé par la valée, lesquelz me dirent que pour tout
vray les gens de delà estoient mal vivans et brigans
de nature".

Alcofribas who knows this is plainly a gross overstatement (since he also found on the other side of the giant's teeth a country resembling the legendary "pays de cocagne) shows the extent to which people's "judgements" (both in that and this world) are led astray by inert ignorance bred of received certitudes --the relativity and pettiness of which is denounced by the scale involved in his comic comparison :

"à quoy je congneu que, ainsi comme nous avons les
contrées de deçà et delà les montz, aussi ont-ilz
deçà et delà les dentz".

The down-to-earth, egalitarian and anti-heroic nature of Pantagruel is quite clearly the antithesis of the establishment's two great elitist myths : chivalry and courtly love. Rabelais made the contrast explicit, and in so doing removed the mystique of these two concepts. I leave the detailed analysis of Rabelais's disruption of the chivalrous ethos and its topoi as expressed in the romances of chivalry to the next chapter. At this point I shall confine my remarks to a few notable examples. The heroes of the romances of chivalry --"Lancelot du Lac... tous les chevaliers de la Table Ronde... Giglan et Bauvain... Godeffroy de Billon... Morgant... Huon de Bordeaulx... Jean de Paris... Artus de Bretagne... Galian Restauré... Les quatre filz Aymon"-- are dispatched to Epistemon's Hell (as dominators of the common people in this world) and set to doing humble tasks. The mystical high-mindedness of the chivalrous ethic is satirised in the opening words of Book I when the typical precious language of the former is employed in praise of those "galant" readers who have read and believed every word of the popular and grotesquely comic "Grandes Chronicques" (dealing most inappropriately with the giant's monumental eating habits and

containing, in the coarsest language, a distinctly unchivalrous copulation-scene):⁹³

"Très illustres et très chevaleureux champions, gentilzhommes et aultres (the others of course being Rabelais's readers whom Rabelais makes accomplices of his tongue-in-cheek praise) qui volontiers vous adonnez à toutes gentillesses et honnestetez, vous avez n'a guères veu, leu et seu les Grandes et inestimables Chroniques de l'énorme géant Gargantua et, comme vrays fidèles, les avez creues gualamment, et y avez maintesfoys passé vostre temps avecques les honorables dames et damoyelles leur en faisans beaulx et longs narrez alors que estiez hors de propos dont estes bien dignes de grande louange et mémoire sempiternelle".⁹⁴

In the same vein, the high-flown bombast of Pantagrue's exhortative praise of the splendour of knightly combat:

"Allons, enfans c'est trop musé icy à la viande, car à grand poine voit-on advenir que grans bancqueteurs fa-cent beaulx faictz d'armes. Il n'est ombre que d'estan-dartz, il n'est fumée que de chevaulx et clycquetys que de harnoy".⁹⁵

is swiftly and comically exposed to ridicule (to Pantagrue's own delight) when his companions take up the refrain and apply it to more earthy, human and "common" feats more in keeping with Pantagrueism:

"A ce commença Epistemon soubrire et dist:

"Il n'est ombre que de cuisine, fumée que de pastez et clycquetys que de tasses"

A quoy respondit Panurge:

"Il n'est ombre que de courtines, fumée que de tétins et clycquetys que de couillons"

Puis se levant, fist un pet, un sault et un sublet, et crya à haulte voix joyusement:

"Vive tousjours Pantagrue!"

Ce voyant, Pantagrue en voulut autant faire..."⁹⁶

The mystique of courtly love --already a target of the popular Gargantuan literature⁹⁷ receives similar treatment. Grandgousier's overblown and empty eulogy of Badebec (La noble Badebec .. (qui) avoit visaige de Rebec... et ventre de Souyce")⁹⁸ was an example of the holding up to ridicule of the conceits of courtly love:

"Ma tant bonne femme est morte, qui estoit la plus cecy, la plus cela, qui feust au monde. Jamais je ne la verray, jamais je n'en recouvreray une telle; ce m'est une perte inestimable! O mon Dieu, que te avoys-je faict pour ainsi me punir? Que ne envoyas-tu la mort à moy premier que à elle? Car vivre sans elle ne m'est quelanguir... Ha, faulce mort, tant tu me es malivole, tant tu me es outrageuse, de ma tollir celle à laquelle immortalité appartenoit de droict!"⁹⁹

Panurge, whose designs on the Lady of Paris are highly un-courteous, exploits these conceits, for his own ends, ruthlessly: those

"longs prologues et protestations que font ordinairement ces dolens contemplatifz, amoureux de Karesme, lesquels point à la chair ne touchent..."

as Alcofribas says contemptuously.¹⁰⁰ When Panurge's direct approach fails to achieve results he unscrupulously has recourse to courtly love language, revealing, with his "base intentions" and grotesque endings, the emptiness of its chichés. His panegyric of the Lady's "beaulté et élégance" contains all the "lieux communs". Nature has, in her, given proof of its boundless power and capabilities:

"La vostre beaulté est tant excellente, tant singulière, tant céleste, que je crois que Nature l'a mise en vous comme un parragon pour nous donner entendre combien elle peut faire quand elle veult employer toute sa puissance et tout son sçavoir. Ce n'est que miel, ce n'est que sucre ce n'est que manne céleste, de tout ce qu'est en vous.

C'estoit à vous, à qui Paris debvoit adjudger la pomme d'or, non à Vénus, non, ny à Juno, ny à Minerve car oncques n'y eut tant de magnificence en Juno, tant de prudence en Minerve, tant de élégance en Vénus, comme y a en vous".¹⁰¹

From these lofty heights the reader (and the Lady) are suddenly brought down with a bump, as the emptiness of the words falls away to reveal Panurge's lust:

"O dieux et déesses célestes, que heureux sera celluy à qui ferez celle grâce de ceste-cy accoller, de la baiser et de frotter son lard avecques elle. Par Dieu, ce sera moy, je le voy bien, car desjà elle me ayme à plein; je le congnoys et suis à ce prédestiné des phées. Doncques pour gagner temps, bouttepoussenjambions!"¹⁰²

Panurge's "Rondeau" again builds up, with its scholarly and regular form, impeccably courteous images and highly polite tone, the atmosphere of courtly love. The reader and the Lady are lulled by its familiarity into

accepting the sincerity of Panurge's melancholic lament; the come-down is all the more abrupt when the licentious sting-in-the-tail appears:

"/.../

Tort ne vous fays, si mon cueur vous décelle,
En remonstrant comme l'ard l'estincelle
De la beauté que couvre vostre atour;
Car rien n'y quiers, sinon qu'en vostre tour
Me faciez de hait la combrecelle
Pour ceste foys".103

As he is about to leave France, in chapter 23, Pantagruel receives a cryptic missive from a Parisian lady ("laquelle il avait entretenue bonne espace de temps") addressed in true courtly style:

"Au plus aymé des belles
et moins loyal des preux
P.N.T.G.R.L."

Within is only a diamond ring. The Pantagruelistes take the secrecy of the letter seriously. Panurge believing there to be a vital message present but invisible, employs all his erudition to render visible the invisible writing. It is all to no avail. Only when he turns to the ring itself and sees the Hebrew inscription on it does he finally hit on the solution. False diamond and "Lamah Hazabethani" taken together give, with an execrable pun:

"Dy, amant faulx, pourquoy me as-tu laissée"

The courtly love of the lady was no more than a game, translating itself in this childish "emblématique" based on nothing but word-play and deprived of feeling and intelligence. Rabelais condemned this empty and futile practice of an élitist clique, of

"ces glorieux de court et transporteurs de noms"

in Gargantua 9. when he gave some "courtois" examples

"voulons en leurs devises signifier espoir, font protraire une sphère, des pennes d'oiseaulx pour poines, de l'ancholie pour mélancholie..."

and for good measure, added some incongruous ones himself:

"Par mesmes raisons (si raisons les doibz nommer et non resveries) ferois-je paindre un penier, dénotant qu'on me faict pener; et un pot à moustarde, que c'est mon cueur à qui moult tarde ;...et un estront de chien, c'est un tronc de ceans, où gist l'amour de m'amy".

Rabelais's irreverence in Pantagruel extended beyond an attack on the mystique of élitist myths, to an attack on the mystique attached to the eminent representatives of the establishment itself. Rabelais demystified its dignitaries for his readers. When requested by the establishment to become one of its members:

"on le voulut faire maistre des requestes et président en la Court",¹⁰⁴

Pantagruel declined to join its ranks. In so doing he cast the gravest doubt on the integrity and trustworthiness of these high officials:

"il refusa tout, les remerciant gracieusement:

"Car il y a (dist-il) trop grande servitude a ces offices, et a trop grande peine peuvent estre saulvez ceulx qui les exercent, veu la corruption des hommes, et croy que, si les sièges vuides des anges ne sont rempliz d'aultre sorte de gens, que de trente sept jubilez nous n'aurons le jugement final..."¹⁰⁵

He has no desire for power. As his reward he is content with

"quelque muintz de bon vin".¹⁰⁶

The exhaltation of humility as against power-seeking is expressed in starker terms in chapter 30. In Rabelais's hell the roles are reversed. Rabelais puts the Evangelical precept:

"The first one now will later be last"

into practice. The great dominators of history: emperors, warriors, kings (even those of France), queens, popes are now drudges performing the most menial of tasks: they are now the lowliest of the third estate:

"Achilles estoit teigneux,
Agamemnon, liche casse

.../...

Hannibal, cocquassier
Priam vendoit les vieulx drapeaulx

.../...

Le pape Jules estoit crieur de petitz pastez...

.../...

Boniface pape huytiesme estoit escumeur des marmites
Nicolas pape tiers estoit papetier,
Le pape Alexandre estoit preneur de ratz,
Le pape Sixte, gresseur de vérolle".

On the other hand, the lowly and disinherited are now the masters, lording it over these former great men, humiliating them and themselves living a life of ease: the philosophers Diogenes and Epictetus, the anti-papal Jean Le Maire des Belges, the poet Villon:

("Povre je suis de ma jeunesse
De povre et de petit extrace"),¹⁰⁷

and the common heroes of popular works of fiction: Pathelin and "le franc archier de Baignolet". Epistemon draws the clear-cut conclusion:

"En ceste façon, ceulx qui avoient este gros seigneurs en ce monde icy guaingnoyent leur pauvre meschante et pail-larde vie là-bas. Au contraire, les philosophes et ceulx qui avoient esté indigens en ce monde, de par de là estoient gros seigneurs en leur tour."

The effect on Rabelais's readers of this role-inversion may perhaps have been to stimulate them into judging the worth of the high and mighty around them; for by allowing the common reader to visualize great men in poor positions and themselves in positions of dominance Rabelais blurred the divide between high-born and low-born, persuaded his readers that far from being inferior they were perhaps worthier than the great dignitaries of the status quo.

In fact throughout his first novel Rabelais took undisguised delight in bringing about before his readers' eyes the comic demise of the most dignified representatives of society and in recounting the exploits of his principal agent of social disruption, Panurge. The dreaded "sergeants" appear less frightening when Panurge and his ad hoc companions bowl them over with hand-barrows, bringing them literally down to earth:

"Mettoyent tout le pauvre guet par terre, comme porcs"¹⁰⁸

Pantagruel had himself deflated the Sorbonnards' "science" and made them objects of laughter, within his readers' critical range (again Rabelais employs animalistic imagery):

"Et ...assistèrent la plus part des seigneurs de la Court: maistres des requestes, présidens, conseilliers, les gens des comptes, secrétaires, advocatz et aultres, ensemble les eschevins de ladicte ville, avecques les médecins et canonistes ...il (Pantagruel) les feist tous quinaulx et leurs monstra visiblement qu'ilz n'estoient que veaulx engiponnez"¹⁰⁹

Panurge took their descent towards mindless bestiality even further when he surprised those dignified members of the religious establishment, in the rue du Feurre, with his fowl mixture, containing inter alia garlic, hot turds and pus. Alcofribas describes the scene gleefully:

"Et tous ces bonnes gens rendoyent là leurs gorges devant tout le monde, comme s'ilz eussent escorché le renard: et en mourut dix ou douze de peste, quatorze en feurent ladres, dix et huyct en furent pouacres, et plus de vingt et sept en eurent la vérolle; mais (and any pity on the readers' part is removed at a stroke by Panurge's indifference and the swift move to another subject) il ne s'en soucioit mie..."¹¹⁰

The dignity of the priest in chapter 16 is rudely shattered by Panurge's practical joke of sewing his vestments together:

"Mais, quand ce fut à l'Ite missa est, que le pauvre frater se voulut dévestir son aulbe il emporta ensemble et habit et chemise, qui estoient bien cousuz ensemble, et se reb-rassit jusques aux espauls, monstrant son callibistris à tout le monde, qui n'estoit pas petit sans doute. Et le frater tousjours tiroit. Mais tant plus se descouvroit-il jusques à ce qu'un de Messieurs de la Court dist: "Et quoy, ce beau père nous veult-il icy faire l'offrande et baiser son cul? Le feu saint Antoine le baise!"

What seemed untouchable has been reduced to human proportions once more.

This is the case when Panurge makes a laughing-stock of the dignified

"Conseiller" by almost, but not quite, cutting his stirrup-strap:

"Quand le gros enflé de Conseiller, ou aultre, a pris son bransle pour monter sus, ilz tombent tous platz comme porcz devant tout le monde, et aprestent à rire pour plus de cent francs".¹¹¹

One of Panurge's functions in Pantagruel is to shatter the dignity of great men, to deflate the "enflés" and bring them down to earth. But

Panurge is more than that. He is, at the same time, an agent of social de-mystification. The establishment's dignitaries looked, prima facie, as if they ought to be respected by ordinary people. They had that appearance of gravity, piety, learning (as I remarked when analysing the works in the "librairie de Saint Victor", and the behaviour of the sellers of indulgences) which tended to encourage unquestioning acceptance in the layman who took appearance for reality. However, as we saw in the above-mentioned examples, the gravity, piety and learning were deceptive façades concealing something very different, eg. ignorance and self-interest. By undermining the unilaterality of these façades through Panurge, Rabelais encouraged his readers to adopt a more irreverent attitude to these dignitaries, to judge them for themselves.

Appropriately Rabelais endowed Panurge with a hatred of deception of this kind. He was so careful to fit the decapitated Epistemon's head on straight:

"affin qu'il ne feust tortycolly, (car telles gens il haysoit de mort)".¹¹²

Thus, in his dealings with society, Panurge pulled away any mask of deception. He revealed the self-interested swindle beneath the outward piety of the pardoners. The refusal of the Lady of Paris to respond to Panurge's advances might be construed as something inherently noble: praiseworthy "pudeur", or lack of interest in base pleasure. Rabelais showed through Panurge that it was only the fear of getting caught which restrained her. The readers were able to observe that Panurge's mock love-eulogy almost brought results:

"Et la vouloit embrasser, mais elle fist semblant de se mettre à la fenestre pour appeller les voisins"¹¹³

as did his lavish offer of fabulous gifts:

"Par la vertu desquelles parolles il luy faisoit venir l'eau à la bouche".¹¹⁴

The noble lady is not superior to ordinary women, despite initial appearances. The readers' suspicions are confirmed by Alcofribas' remark when

he steals the lady's rosary-beads; these turn out to be, not as appearances had suggested, a sign of piety, but

"une de ses conteneances à l'église".¹¹⁵

The facility with which impressive appearances can conceal base motivations, the thin dividing-line between appearance and reality are brought home tangibly and comically to the readers by Panurge's use, in this very context, of the most ambiguous of figures of speech: the pun. He presents the "haulte dame" with a punning riddle:

"A Beaumont le Vicomte".¹¹⁶

Nothing could look more solid and respectable. A closer look, however, a slip of the tongue, reveal --concealed within these same letters--

"A beau con le vit monte".

As Panurge remarks in chapter 16, between a woman who is a church-going zealot (like the "haulte dame"):

"femme folle à la messe"

and a woman who is a zealot about something very different:

"femme molle à la fesse"

there is only "un antistrophe".

Ambiguity is the keynote of Panurge's character, the essential trait of the word-portrait Rabelais gives the readers of him in chapter 16. It is an ambivalent, double-headed picture. Panurge is a thief, a wrong-doer a vagabond, a rebel against recognized authority and yet the verve of the description indicates a likeable character and signals Rabelais's total approval of him. The "bon", "noble" and un-scurrilous Pantagruel approves of him and his pranks (cf. chapter 22 when he takes pleasure in seeing the "haulte dame" urinated over by thousands of dogs) and his attachment to Panurge is total (cf. chapter 9). Rabelais's description sets up a tension between the two sides of Panurge. The very descriptive epithets are ambiguous:

"fin à dorer comme une dague de plomb".

This sounds complimentary, and would be, but for the fact that lead could not be gilded and that being a soft metal, would hardly be suitable for making a dagger with.

"malfaisant, pipeur, beuveur, bateur de pavez, ribleur,
s'il en estoit à Paris; au demeurant, le meilleur filz
du monde".

The reference to Marot's virtually contemporary "Epistre au Roi" was unmistakable. It conjured up the image of Marot's good-bad valet:

"J'avais un jour un valet de Gascogne,
Courmand, ivrogne, et assuré menteur,
Pipeur, larron, jureur, blasphémateur,
Sentant le hart de cent pas à la ronde,
Au demeurant, le meilleur fils du monde...".¹¹⁷

Panurge's actions infringe what is normally acceptable, but Rabelais's readers are obviously meant to approve of his conduct. His acts stem not from gain, from the usual criminal motives. Rabelais makes this abundantly plain. His pranks put him out of pocket in many cases. In chapter 17 we learn how he lost the six thousand francs he earned on the crusades in order to finance his practical jokes. His display of foreign and invented languages about his empty stomach displays his disinterestedness. He could simply have stated that he was starving; instead his verbal pyrotechnics were designed to induce Pantagruel into asking:

"ne savez-vous parler François?"¹¹⁸

so that in his turn he could produce the devastating punch-line:

"Si faictz très bien, Seigneur...C'est ma langue naturelle et maternelle...".¹¹⁹

In fact far from being directed towards self-gratification, Panurge's de-mystificatory acts are, the readers clearly perceive, performed on their behalf.

It is the tension between the two sides of Panurge which the readers are aware of, the total absence of certainty and complacency in him, the impression of flux and movement conveyed by this "déclassé" who has no fixed rank in society, his absolute disinterestedness, which suits him

ideally to the role he plays in Pantagruel as the disrupter of impressive façades.

Just as he had resumed, in one major episode towards the end of the book (chapter 32), his shaking of life's great "certitudes", so Rabelais drew together the threads of his social de-mystification and, as it were, summed them up, in the concluding chapter of Pantagruel. Rabelais added and subsequently maintained in all later editions a conclusion to chapter 34 in which he attacked his slanderers and defended his first novel against their accusations (of obscenity). The tone of this "envoi" contrasts starkly with the rest of the novel. Rabelais/Alcofribas has dropped the tone of tongue-in-cheek badinage with the readers; for the first and only time he addresses them directly with a voice which contains both bitterness and genuine emotion. The absolutist "callumniateurs" of the Sorbonne, afraid of Rabelais's irreverence had attempted by their slander to discredit Rabelais's novel in the eyes of his readers:

"leur estude...est toute consummée à la lecture de livres Pantagruélicques, non tant pour passer temps joyusement que pour nuyre à quelc'un, meschamment..."

This self-interested defiling of innocence, he characterizes in a moving simile:

"Ce que faisons, semblent ès coquins de village qui fougent et écharbottent la merde des petitz enfans, en la saison des cerises et guignes, pour trouver les noyaulx et iceulx vendre ès drogueurs qui font l'huile de Magaelet".

They had dishonestly attempted to show that the joyful appearance of Pantagruel was only a façade covering filth. Rabelais in his turn --and with good reason in this instance --applied the same scrutiny to them and with devastating effect. He shows his readers that it is they, the ecclesiastical authorities, who take them in by means of a deceptively pious exterior. The common people, like Rabelais, are the victims of their deceit; Rabelais identifies with his readers and justifies them in continuing to read his work without guilt-feelings:

"...vous et moy sommes plus dignes de pardon qu'un grand tas de sarrabovites, cagotz, escargotz, hypocrites, caffars, frappars, botineurs, et aultres telles sectes de gens, qui se sont desguisez comme masques pour tromper le monde.

Car, donnans entendre au populaire commun qu'ilz ne sont occupez sinon à contemplation et dévotion, en jeusnes et macération de la sensualité, sinon vraiment pour sustenter et alimenter la petite fragilité de leur humanité, au contraire font chière, Dieu scait quelle,
Et curios simulant, sed bacchanalia vivunt".

Rabelais even provided his readers with the necessary first-hand information with which to detect this deception and judge it for themselves:

"vous le pouvez lire en grosse lettre et enlumineure de leurs rouges muzeaulx et ventres à poulaine, sinon quand ilz se parfument de soulfre"

and warned them in the strongest terms against placing their belief on the evidence of outward appearance, in such people who peer literally and metaphorically through a cowl and conceal their real selves from people's view:

"Iceulx fuyez, abhorrissez et haïssez autant que je foyz et vous en trouverez bien, sur ma foy, et si désirez estre bons Pantagruelistes...ne vous fiez jamais en gens qui regardent par un pertuys".

CHAPTER III

FORM AND CONTENT IN "PANTAGRUEL"

No reader of Pantagruel --or of Gargantua for that matter --has ever believed in the literal narrative truth of the novel: the Pantagrueline cosmogony, the dispute between Baisecul and Humevesne, Panurge's Turkish adventure and Parisian pranks, the war against Loup Garou, Epistémon's visit to the underworld... Where we might expect Rabelais, as a writer of fiction, to produce an illusion of verisimilitude to make his narrative plausible, we have to come to the conclusion that he deliberately and carefully sought exactly the opposite. Whenever there is a danger of the reader being taken in by a description, of suspending disbelief, Rabelais pulls him up short; reminds him that the words on the page are no more than that--words. These words are the arbitrary creation of the author. The potentially enthralling and awe-inspiring description of Loup Garou in chapter 29 (reminiscent of the Biblical description of Goliath) suddenly recedes back into two-dimensionality, when behind the historical precision, we glimpse the author --manipulating exactitude with comic arbitrariness:

"Loup Garou doncques s'adressa à Pantagruel avec une masse toute d'acier pesante neuf mille sept cens quintaulx deux quarterons, d'acier de Calibes, au bout de laquelle estoient treze pointes de dyemens, dont la moindre estoit aussi grosse comme la plus grande cloche de Nostre Dame de Paris; il s'en failloit par aventure l'espeueur d'un angle ou au plus, que je ne mente, d'un doz de ces cousteaulx qu'on appelle coupe oreille, mais pour un petit, ne avant ne arrière..."

Through his fictional persona, Alcofribas, Rabelais constantly indulges in self-mockery, holding the fiction writer's "truthful" art up to ridicule, and playing with the idea of the readers' belief. We noted in the preceding chapter that Rabelais had focused his readers' attention on belief from the first paragraph of Pantagruel when Alcofribas pretended, tongue-in-cheek, that his readers had accorded absolute, quasi-religious belief to the truthfulness of the (in reality) humorous and slight Grandes Chroniques. The entire burlesque prologue --which forms the subject of an

extended analysis in this chapter --is an exercise in creating disbelief from the outset of the novel. This care on Rabelais's part to distance the reader, to make him keep his ground is maintained through to the book's concluding chapter. In chapter 34 Alcofribas gives the readers the conventional, tantalizing foretaste of a sequel to the first volume which, in this instance, is to be made up of tales as undesguisedly "tall" as those in Pantagruel. (Pantagruel finds the philosopher's stone, marries Prester John's daughter, visits the moon...). These, Alcofribas pointedly reminds Rabelais's readers, are:

"petites joyeusetéz toutes véritables"

or as he had put it --even more tellingly --in the first edition:

"ce sont beaux textes d'évangilles en françoys".

Nothing was more incontrovertible than Gospel Truth.

Rabelais's unusual attitude to fictional truthfulness, to the readers' belief, and to the role of the authorial "I" reminds one most strongly of Lucian of Samosata's position. (Interestingly Lucian was Rabelais's favourite comic writer of antiquity; he was the author to whom Rabelais was most often compared in his own life-time¹ and references to his work figure prominently both at the beginning and end of Pantagruel²). In the ironically-titled True History Lucian openly admits to parodying

"the cock-and-bull stories of ancient poets, historians and philosophers"³

who, like Ctesias, son of Ctesiochus of Cnidus, assert as exact

"details for which (they) had neither the evidence of (their) eyes nor of hearsay".⁴

Lucian's reaction to writers who attempt, fallaciously, to convince their readers that their words are literally true and ought to be believed --and with whose attitude he contrasts his own --is very much akin to Rabelais's:

"When I come across a writer of this sort, I do not much mind his lying; the practice is much too well established for that ...I am only surprised at his expecting to escape detection. Now I am myself vain enough to cherish the hope of bequeathing something to posterity; I see no reason for resigning my right to that inventive free-

dom which others enjoy; and as I have no truth to put on record, having lived a humdrum life, I fall back on falsehood --but falsehood of a more consistent variety; for I now make the only true statement you are to expect --that I am a liar. This confession is, I consider, a full defence against all imputations. My subject is, then what I have neither seen, experienced, nor been told, what neither exists nor could conceivably do so. I humbly solicit my readers' incredulity".⁵

Rabelais's choice of fictional frameworks when he began to write in the vernacular is perfectly in line with this attitude. He started his career by expressing himself within the recognizable medium of the Prognostication, the Almanach and the Romance of Chivalry. These genres were immensely popular, very cheap and reached the widest cross-section of the reading-public. All three shared a salient feature. They claimed, in their different ways, to be providing the reader with absolute truth of things which --of their very nature --were unknowable to the senses of their authors ("Details of which (they) had (not) the evidence of (their) eyes..." as Lucian put it). They consequently encouraged their readers to believe what the latter had not and could not verify for themselves.

Rabelais makes it clear that he has composed the Pantagrueline Prognostication as a salutary antidote to the

"infiniz abus...perpétréz à cause d'un tas de Prognostications de Lovain, faictes à l'ombre d'un verre de vin..."⁶

which deliberately lie:

("mentir à son escient")⁷

and whose goal is to:

"abuser le povvre monde curieux de sçavoir choses nouvelles"⁸

In the prologue to his mock-predictions Rabelais makes great play of the idea of belief, and specifically of the credulity of the French who are of their nature --he says --extremely curious:

"Si doncques, comme ilz sont promptz à demander nouvelles, autant ou plus sont ilz faciles à croire ce que leur est annoncé, debvroit on pas mettre gens dignes de foy à gaiges à l'entrée du Royaulme, qui ne serviroient d'aultre chose sinon d'examiner les nouvelles qu'on y apporte et à sçavoir si elles sont véritables?"⁹

Pantagruel, Alcofribas tells the readers, has already carried out, and most successfully too, this very idea: a mischievous and unmistakable reference to Rabelais's own demystificatory work in the Pantagrueline Prognostication and of course in Pantagruel. Alcofribas asserts that his prognostication is:

"certaine, véritable, et infallible".¹⁰

On the face of it, this is exactly the claim made by the "prognostiqueurs". However by predicting only the obvious (what always occurs in any given year, eg. "les aveugles ne verront que bien peu"¹¹ or "Vieillesse sera incurable ceste année a cause des années passées)¹² and dressing his (at first sight) strange-looking "Lapalissades" up in the typical forms within which standard astrologers make their extravagant claims ("Des ecclipses de ceste année",¹³ "Des maladies de ceste année",¹⁴ "De l'estat d'aulcunes gens")¹⁵ Rabelais really does keep to what is certain, truthful and infallible. What is more, by so doing, he renders ridiculous and shows up the deceptiveness of the predictions of the astrologers. Rabelais's predictions had at first glance seemed unusual, even spectacular. In fact they merely stated the obvious. Rabelais suggests that the learned and impressive appearances of the predictions of those:

"folz Astrologues de Lovain, de Numberg, de Tubige et de Lyon",¹⁶

which purport to reveal the secrets of the future, are similarly devoid of transcendental truth. Rabelais only makes assertions about what he and his readers know by their senses, at first hand, to be true. The rest, unlike the astrologers, he makes no claim to know:

"Ce que sera dict au parsus sera passé au gros tamys à tors et à travers, et par adventure adviendra, par adventure n'advendrá mie".¹⁷

In the Pantagrueline Prognostication as in Pantagruel itself Rabelais toys ironically with the exhortations to belief of the abusive author. In both instances this total belief, placed in its absurd context, is highlighted in all its arbitrariness for the readers to see:

"D'un cas vous advertys, que si ne croyez le tout, vous me faictes un mauvais tour, pour lequel icy ou ailleurs serez très-grièvement puniz. Les petites anguillades à la saulce de ners bovins ne seront espargnées sur vos espauls, et humez de l'air comme de huytres tant que voudrez, car hardiment il y aura de bien chauffer, si le fournier ne s'endort".¹⁸

Alcofribas's truth and knowledge, in the Pantagrueline Prognostication lie not outside the senses.

In the Almanachs for 1533 and 1535 Rabelais returns under his own name and without irony to the topic of extra-sensory knowledge --ie. astrology --for as he says to his readers:

"Je vous voids suspens, attentifs et convoiteux d'entendre de moy présentement l'estat et disposition de cette année..".¹⁹

(Montaigne informs us of the hold astrological predictions indeed had on people's minds even at the end of the 16th century.)²⁰ Rabelais recognizes with Aristotle that people wish to know not only:

"les choses présentes...mais singulièrement les choses advenir, pource que d'icelles la cognoissance est plus haute et admirable".²¹

He accordingly consults the greatest astrological authorities:

"des auteurs en l'art, Grecs, Arabes et Latins".²²

However, not for a second does he pretend that this is the truth, that people can possess transcendental knowledge. The Truth, Rabelais makes clear, is not for this life:

"si a cettuy fervent désir voulez satisfaire entièrement vous convient souhaiter (comme saint Pol disoit Philipp. I Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo) que vos âmes soient hors mises ceste chartre ténébreuse du corps terrien, et jointes à Jésus le Christ".²³

He warns his readers that not only should his own predictions not be believed, but neither should non-empirical assertions about truth make by anyone --whoever they may be:

"Autrement en prédire seroit légèreté à moy, comme à vous simplesse d'y adjouster foy. Et n'est encores depuis la création d'Adam, né homme qui en ait traité ou baillé chose à quoy l'on deust acquiescer et arrester en assurance".²⁴

What is accessible to his senses is man's concern; what is transcendental,

"(le) gouvernement et décret invariable de Dieu, tout puissant, qui tout a créé et dispensé selon son sacré arbitre"²⁵

is none of our concern:

"C'est ce que Socrates disoit en ses communs devis:
quae supranos, nihil ad nos".²⁶

Astrologers achieved their success by gulling people (eager to know the secrets of the future) with technique, with verbal trickery. Rabelais's send-up prognostication is equally a success because Rabelais perceived these techniques and parodied them. His burlesque went further than emptying the astrologers' claims to transcendental knowledge and Truth of validity; by employing the obvious and the everyday he showed his readers what they could trust: the evidence of their senses. Rabelais chose to couch his first major work of fiction --Pantagruel--within the burlesqued framework of the romance of chivalry --the major fictional genre of the day. For a writer with Rabelais's conception of fictional truthfulness it was an appropriate genre to disrupt. For not only did its authors claim to relate with total fidelity events beyond their senses; they had a fully developed range of fictional techniques whose aim was to render the authors' supra-sensory knowledge and hence the book's absolute truthfulness plausible. Rabelais --through Alcofribas --demonstrated to his readers that such techniques --impressive though they appear on the face of it --cannot be relied upon to tell the truth. In this way, by exposing --in the most comic, familiar and down-to-earth terms --the vacuousness of the romance-authors' claims to a knowledge they could not have acquired personally, to relate with absolute precision incidents they could not have been present at, and by underlying for his readers the serious pitfalls involved in accepting as true what they are told at second-hand, Rabelais devalues non-empirical

knowledge in his readers eyes.

To Rabelais's contemporaries Pantagruel bore, in its outward appearance and structure, many of the hallmarks, in a travestied form, of the fictional genre they were most familiar with: the romance of chivalry. This comic resemblance was particularly apparent in the prologue and first chapter; for, placed conspicuously at the outset of the first book, Rabelais had devised a clearly-recognizable structural framework by combining a whole series of typical, conventional features belonging either specifically to the romances of chivalry themselves, or to two other genres which had come to be closely associated with the romances: historical chronicles and the Gargantua story (in both its oral and written forms). In this "exordium", as in no other part of Pantagruel the voice of Rabelais's created author, Alcofribas, holds the stage and is in close sustained dialogue with the reader.

Before we can embark upon detailed textual analyses, it must first be established that Rabelais did, in general terms, set his first published fictional work within the frame of reference provided by the "romans de chevalerie" --and that he did so in a way unmistakable to contemporary readers.

To this end --and also to establish a clear idea of the nature of the literary productions we are dealing with --a brief description of certain features of the romances is called for. Detailed studies of the origin, sources and characteristics of the romances have been carried out by G. Doutrepont²⁷ and E. Besch.²⁸ But for our purposes only the following points are directly relevant:

From the evidence that can be gathered from contemporary sources²⁹ and from modern research done on notorial inventories³⁰ this genre appears to have been the most popular, widely read form of vernacular fiction in France in the first half of the 16th century. Yet, while sharing the distinction of popularity with the works of Rabelais, it should be stressed that the

romances were not works of humour and that their world had little in common with that of Rabelais. As their generic name implies, these largely anonymous publications, were, essentially, adventure tales set, invariably, in courtly society among "nobles barons et chevaliers dames et damoiselles"³¹. Their subject-matter was courtly love and the "faits et vaillances des Princes et vaillants Chevaliers"³² and was envelopped in a vague fairy-tale atmosphere in which good triumphed over evil. Interest in contemporary day-to-day existence and non-aristocratic people was minimal and the courtly society they portrayed was not parodied or satirised. Stylistically, too, there was little resemblance between the romances and the work of Rabelais: their prose was repetitive,³³ their vocabulary imprecise and poor.³⁴

The following salient and typical traits of presentation and structure of the romances should be noted. The format of the romances was generally small --either quarto or octavo ³⁵ and they used the popular, non-humanist gothic print.³⁶ The form of their titles³⁷ with their long windedness and emphasis, was unmistakable as was that of their summarizing chapter-headings beginning with "Comment.." or "De..".³⁸ Because much was made of the hero's origins and antecedents, a recurrent feature of the romances was the long, detailed genealogical lists.³⁹ The structure of the narrative, often followed the hero's progress through birth and childhood, education, loves and feats of arms⁴⁰ (though, as a rule, the armed exploits and adventures were preponderant and the other stages were telescoped).⁴¹ The story was told as though it were literally true in the strict historical sense and ought to be accepted by the reader as such. The blend of escapism and moralizing --mascarading under the cloak of historical truth --which the romances provided was, evidently, a potent mixture to a public which was among the first generation of readers of printed books. It is worth bearing in mind that this public to which the romance-narrators addressed themselves had no newspapers, radio or television. It had precious little

historical perspective or documentary evidence at its disposition and its knowledge of and ideas about other nations were, of necessity extremely sketchy and often wildly fanciful. Rabelais's contemporary H.C. Agrippa recounts how people believed the "nugas" and "monstrosa mendacia" put forward by historians concerning fabulous creatures of unknown lands:

"de Arimaspiis, gryphis, Pigmæis, & gruibus, ac de Cynocephalis & Astromoribus, Hippopodibus, Pharisæis, Troglodytis legimus",⁴²

and how historians took advantage of the public's credulity bred of lack of information:

"atque tamen inveniunt stultos & sine iudicio homines, qui illis talia credant, ac pro oraculis habeant".⁴³

This public relied on the most part --even in the upper echelons of society --on hearsay for historical information. Rabelais's correspondence (while he was in Rome as physician to Cardinal Jean Du Bellay) with his benefactor Geoffrey d'Estissac is an apt illustration of this point. Writing to the Bishop of Maillezais on the 30th December 1535,⁴⁴ Rabelais informs his patron that news has just reached the Pope, from as imprecise a source as "lettres de divers lieux",⁴⁵ a week earlier, of a great battle in which "le Sophy, roy des Perses, a deffaict l'armée du Turc".⁴⁶ This battle in fact took place between the 20th and 23rd September 1535; even the spiritual head of Christendom then was only informed three months after such an important event.

When we take into account, then, the extreme difficulty for even the most powerful members of society of verifying the accuracy of contemporary events in any precise and satisfactory way we can understand how hazy the public's knowledge of past history must have been. The dividing-line between truth and fantasy, the possible and the impossible must have been difficult to discern. When we also take into account the inexperience of the early 16th century reading-public, we can grasp what potent and effective use the authors of the romances of chivalry make, at the outset of their

works of the device of the created author intervening in the form of the authorial "je" and of the techniques borrowed from Chronicles. On the one hand, they played on the fact that their readers were starved of precise information yet avid for concrete historical knowledge (for this public desired its reading material to be useful, either morally, religiously or practically). On the other hand, they took advantage of the authority and almost automatic credibility which must assuredly have been possessed in the first half of the 16th century by the first person singular on the printed page --especially since the address of the prologue and opening chapter was delivered in a moralizing and quasi-religious seriousness of tone. Thus the romance-authors conferred on their narrative voice a bogus air of all-pervading knowledge and on their novels as a whole an illusion of historical truthfulness.

It was the abuse, on the part of the authors of the romances, of these two key concepts, which led Rabelais to exploit the "topoi" --and the turgid, atrophied forms these clichés took --of the romances in the prologue and chapter 1 of Pantagruel. The monolithic, assertive claims, put into the mouth of the created author in the romances to possess the key to a concept as complex and ambiguous as truth; the pretence that the romance-narrator possessed absolute and unchallengeable knowledge of past events: these assertions must have appeared to Rabelais not only ludicrous but dishonest and deceitful --given the reading public's lack of mental preparedness and its sincere desire to be informed.

An examination of the editions of Pantagruel --from the original edition to the F. Juste edition of 1542 --reveals that Rabelais clearly wished his readership to seize the overt, formal resemblances between his novel and the romances. Pantagruel was, in format, small (quarto size) and slight (64ff) and its print was the popular gothic. The form of its title (again this is especially true of the early editions)⁴⁷ was calqued on the

typical romance-title pattern and, in all probability, more particularly on that of the best-selling romance Huon de Bordeaux,⁴⁸ which Rabelais was familiar with.⁴⁹ The form of its chapter-headings likewise mirrored those of the romances and seemed to echo the conventional structural division into birth-childhood, education, loves and armed exploits.⁵⁰ The reader's eye was likely to fall upon the conspicuously long genealogy in chapter 1 as well as upon the 12 allusions⁵²—direct or indirect --to romances found in the prologue and chapter 1. In the prologue of the original edition the comic "standard" reference-works, to which the Grandes Chroniques and hence Pantagruel --which purports to be "un aultre livre de mesme billon" --are compared, are: "Robert le Diable, Fierabras, Guillaume sans paour, Huon de Bourdeaulx, Montevielle et Matabrune". The first three were among the most popular romances of chivalry of the day,⁵³ the last refers to a character in another romance, La Chanson du Chevalier au Cygne by Pierre lesrey,⁵⁴ while "Montevielle" is the popular Voyages of Mandeville, justifiably associated with the romances because of the similarity of the extravagant adventures it recounts with those of the romances.⁵⁵ Not only the beginning but the end of Pantagruel evokes the romances. Critics seem to have overlooked the fact that the ending of the original edition of Pantagruel is a parody of the enticing promises of more to come offered by the romance narrators to the readers. The section of chapter 34 from line 8 to line 21 which was the original conclusion of Pantagruel is a very accurate send-up of a romance-ending such as that of the Enfances Vivien.⁵⁶

Furthermore, at the foot of the title-page of the original edition was the following information:

"On les vend à Lyon en la maison de Claude nourry/
dict le Prince près nostre dame de Confort".

Its significance is that it reveals that Rabelais had Pantagruel printed and published by Claude Nourry,⁵⁷ who was one of the two foremost producers of popular vernacular works --and especially romances of chivalry --in

Lyon. Pantagruel's formal affinity with the romance genre is clear. Pantagruel was definitely not the kind of book handled by Sébastien Gryphius,⁵⁸ the printer and publisher of scholarly works to whom Rabelais entrusted the three purely erudite editions⁵⁹ he had put his name to in 1532 --prior to the publication of Pantagruel.

An examination of a number of typical "romans de chevalerie" --and I have deliberately restricted myself as far as possible to those highly popular romances cited by Rabelais in the prologue of Pantagruel shows that basically the romance-author achieved his end in one or both of the following ways:

- a) In the prologue of the romance he introduced the authoritative weight of the romance-persona's voice to deliver a sermon with heavy religious and moral overtones which amounted to a eulogy of the romance's truthfulness and moral utility. The grave authority given to the created-author's voice --in which there was no trace of humour, irony or ambiguity --was naturally also calculated to produce belief, on the reader's part in the omniscience of the narrative voice.
- b) In the opening section proper of the romance he exploited certain techniques and commonplaces familiarly associated with real historical chronicles in order to give his fiction the aura of historical fact and at one and the same time to enhance the reader's respect for the knowledge of the narrative voice.

Of course, not all romances used both methods; nor indeed did each romance employ all the techniques and conventions of each individual method which I am going to describe and which Rabelais comically exploited in his burlesque romance-opening. But Rabelais's aim was not to achieve a totally accurate parody of any particular romance. He had read and digested many romances and was concerned to bring together all the typical romance "topoi" in order to create an archetypal romance-framework and thus render his parody of their truth and knowledge as effective as possible. Let us

examine in turn each of these methods in detail and the ways in which Rabelais, through Alcofribas, undermines them.

a) The romance-authors exploited the authority of their created author's "je" in four well-defined fashions.

1. By having the created author assure the reader that his subject-matter was utterly factual and had been derived from one or several bona fide historical sources --usually chronicles. The words put into the mouth of the fictional persona in the prologue of Fierabras⁶⁰ are entirely typical:

"je n'ay intencion de déduire matière qui n'en soye informé premièrement tant par ung livre auctentique qui le dit miroir historique comme par les croniques et aulcuns autres livres qui fait mencion de l'euvre suyvant".

He gives a similar assurance at the beginning of book two:

"ce que j'ay dessus escript je l'ay prins en ung autentique livre nomme miroer historial et ès croniques anciennes et l'ay seulement transporté du latin en francois".

2. By having the created author lend the romance prestige by citing the names of accepted authorities (especially religious ones --and not excluding God) and placing the romance under the authorities' auspices. Thus, in the prologue to Fierabras the created author begins by invoking St. Paul:

"Saint Pol docteur de vérité dit que..."

and goes on to use the authority of Boethius:

"Et Boèce fait mencion que diversement le salut d'ung chacun procède puy quainsi est que la foy cristienne est allez par les docteurs de sainte église corroborrée".

In the prologue to Robert le Dyable we again find Boethius cited:

"Au commencement de chacun oeuvre est bon d'invoquer le nom de nostre Seigneur ainsi que dit Boèce...",

while John the Evangelist's authority is exploited in the prologue to

Ogier le Danois:

"Nostre sauveur et rédempteur Jésus-Christ dit comme il est escript, au quinzième chapitre de monseigneur

saint Jean l'Évangéliste sans moy vous ne pouvez rien faire
pourquoy nous luy prions qu'on commencement de ceste oeuvre il
luy plaise estre à nostre aide".

The persona of the Chanson du chevalier au cygne⁶¹ cites:

"aulcuns saintz, prophètes, docteurs, hystoriographes
(qui) nous enseignent par leurs escriptz... Moyse au
quinziesme chapitre dexode en disant Ma force et toute
ma louange est dieu mon souverain seigneur..."
(followed by quotes from David and Job).

Perhaps the most blatant example occurs in Mélusine. In the prologue
the persona quotes:

"David le prophète (qui) dit que les jugemens et les
pugnitions de Dieu sont comme abîmes sans fons et sans
ripve".

to prove the existence of the supernatural and consequently the truth of
his story. He even goes as far as to use Aristotle and Saint Paul to back
his contentions:

"La créature de Dieu qui est raisonnable", he preaches,
"doibt moult songneusement entendre, selon que dit
Aristote, que les choses qu'il a fait ça bas et créés,
par la présence qu'elles ont en elles, certifient estre
telles qu'elles sont. Si comme dit saint Pol..."

3. By the created author's constant insistence on the edifying and morally
uplifting qualities possessed by the book's contents. The created author
of Robert le Dyable invokes the Virgin so that she will ask God's help in
making:

"ceste présente Histoire...au profit et salut de
ceux qui la liront";

and he goes on:

"c'est (Ave Maria) priant et suppliant à tous ceux qui d'icy
en avant liront ce présent livre qu'ainsi le facent pour
mieux entendre et mieux retenir les grands enseignements
et bons exemples en ce livre contenus".

The created author of Ogier le Danois has equally lofty goals: he prays
to St John that his story will be

"à l'utilité et proffit des lisans, et escoutans, et qu'elle
soit cause de leur donner exemple de bien et vertueusement
vivre en ce mortel monde ainsi qu'ont fait ceux dequoy nostre
matière fera mencion...car en lisant les faits et vaillances

des Princes et vaillants Chevaliers...le cuer esmeut
à les ensuyvre".

The created author of the Chanson du Chevalier au Cygne finds his story:

"merveilleusement de mémoire et grande recomandacion"

because he feels that as for:

"les vigoureuses prouesses de plusieurs nobles princes
et victorieux chevaliers...Qu'il est trèsbon d'ensuyvre
la voye de ses maieurs se étroitement ilz ont procédez".

4. By the pious moralizing tone of voice given to the created author.

From the extracts I have already quoted, it can be seen that the tone

of, for instance, the prologues of Robert le Dyable and Ogier le Danois

is very much that of a moralizing sermon. This air of authority was

further re-inforced by the rhetorical, repetitive style given to the

persona. The romance-adaptors meant to impress and overawe the readers

by linguistic pomp and circumstance. The adventures described were always

"merveilleuses", "terribles", or "espouventables"; the heroes actions were

"prouesses" and were described as "haultes nobles et vertueuses", "haulx

gestes et historieulx faiz"; the degree of adjectives was invariably the

superlative --"trèschevaleureux", "trèsnoble", "trèsrenommé", "trèsvaillant",

"trèsvictorieulx", "trèsioyeuc". Rhetorical repetition gave the created

author's words an aura of importance: in the prologue to the Chanson du

Chevalier au Cygne we find:

"... les haulx gestes et historieulx faiz des anciens roys,
princes et seigneurs qui par leurs magnanimes entreprises,
prudentes conduites et victorieuses opérations ont dilaté,
espandu et semé leur nom".

In addition, the didactic weight of the first person singular was difficult

to gainsay. The prologues abounded in formulae such as:

"car je n'ay intencion de déduire matière",
"ce que j'ay dessus escript, je l'ay pris en ung livre
authentique",
"je proteste de ne rien adjouster, mettre ni oster à mon
pouvoir rien du mien".

By this technique, not only was the supposed truth of the romance's contents

endorsed, but the authority and omniscience of the narrative voice were enhanced.

However, Alcofribas's corresponding panygyric in the prologue of Pantagruel, based on and parodying these four pillars of support of the romances, did not directly praise Pantagruel itself but the Grandes et inestimables Chroniques de l'énorme géant Gargantua, and so, in order to appreciate the contrast between form and content through which the romance commonplaces were burlesqued we must take one step back and explain the strong links which existed, in the minds of contemporary readers of Pantagruel, between the romances of chivalry and the Gargantua legend.

Already, at the end of the 15th and the beginning of the 16th centuries, the romance-world had been treated humourously, in Italian by Boiardo⁶² and Ariosto,⁶³ in Maccaronic Italian by Teofilo Folengo and in French by the author of the Farce du Capitaine Mal-en-Point.⁶⁴ If we add to this list works ridiculing the "prouesses" of "fanfaron" soldiers --such as the Monologue du Franc Archier de Bagnolet⁶⁵ it emerges clearly that burlesques of chivalry and heroism were a popular topic at the time Rabelais wrote his first novel. Furthermore, at this time, the popularity of the subject was given an added boost by the appearance on the market in 1532 (almost contemporaneously with the first edition of "Pantagruel") of a small quarto volume of 16 ff. --which achieved instant and widespread success --entitled Les grandes et inestimables Croniques: du grand et énorme géant Gargantua: Contenant sa généalogie, La grandeur et force de son corps. Aussi les merueilleux faictz d'armes qu'il fist pour le Roy Artus, comme verrez cy après. Imprimé nouvellement. 1532.⁶⁶ This little work was a humorous travesty of the romances, in which a typical romance narrative-pattern (cf. the promises of the title) and context (King Arthur's court) were grafted grotesquely onto the very unchivalrous and uncourtly story of an immensely big, immensely strong, unsophisticated giant called Gargantua.

The anonymous author of this booklet did not invent the subject of the giant Gargantua; indeed its origins were not literary. The fact that the Gargantua story had oral, pre-Rabelaisian and in fact pre-16th century origins had already been intuited by Georges Sand.⁶⁷ It was put forward as a formal hypothesis at the end of the 19th century by T. Sébillot⁶⁸ whose conjectures have since been confirmed by documentary evidence and especially by the recent research of H. Dontenville.⁶⁹ During his enquiries among the country-people of France from whom he collected his dozens of "dires" on Gargantua and other legendary folk-characters, Sébillot discovered:

"un vaste cycle légendaire dont les héros étaient des géants ayant pour attributs la résidence ou le passage dans un endroit déterminé du pays, la force, l'énormité, l'appétit, les grandes enjambées!⁷⁰

It was clear from his investigations that of all giants possessing these characteristics the most widely known --from one corner of the country to the other --was Gargantua.

"Le nom de Gargantua est connu de tout le monde...le peuple songe à lui sans terreur et parle de lui avec une sorte de bienveillance respectueuse...⁷¹il n'y a en France aucun personnage populaire dont le nom soit si universellement connu...D'un bout de la France à l'autre on trouve son nom attaché aux dolmens, aux menhirs et aux blocs naturels gigantesques".⁷²

By sifting through all the popular sayings and stories about the giant in Sébillot's work one finds that apart from the features already mentioned, Gargantua was strongly linked in people's minds with food and bodily functions --the concepts of swallowing, defecating, urinating and vomiting are pre-eminent among the "dires". Not only was Gargantua unusual in being a friend and, in general, a benefactor of the people --so that each locality regarded him as being its own --but he was above all unique among figures of popular legend in that he was never connected with the supernatural or with fairy-tales.⁷³ He was an extremely down-to-earth, non-mysterious character.

All these features made Gargantua's insertion into the rarified atmos-

phere of the Arthurian legend, and hence of the romances of chivalry, highly incongruous. The humour at the expense of the romance-world in the Grandes Chroniques stems precisely from the introduction of "low" elements associated with the Gargantua legend into the "high" narrative framework (for the story unfolds in the context of King Arthur's court, with mentions of Lancelot and Guinevere, and supernatural interventions by Merlin, while Gargantua does battle for the legendary King). The author constantly disrupts his setting with the Gargantuan subject matter eg. fo. III r° —an extremely crude copulation scene between Grandgousier and Gallemele, Gargantua's parents; fo. VIII v° and fo. XIII r° —Gargantua's eating habits; fo. V r° /v° —concentration on the unheroic subject of Gargantua's toe; fo. XII v° —Gargantua kills a prisoner placed "aufond de ses chausses" by breaking wind and splitting the poor man's skull. In other places the romance-world is even more directly mocked eg. fo. VII v° and fo. VIII r° —King Arthur is shown as a doting fool; fo. VII and fo. XI v° —Gargantua in his naivety is cynically exploited by Arthur and Merlin; fo. XI v° —the great battle takes place at

"la ville de reboursin, questoit la ville capitale
du royaume";

Reboursin, in fact, refers to a tiny village in Berry; fo. IX r° —the refined nature of the romance-world is mocked; fo. II r° —through the author's irony, Merlin's magic spells and the supernatural qualities attached to Lancelot and Guinevere are laughed at.

It comes as no surprise, consequently, that Rabelais should have chosen to make his hero Pantagruel "filz du grant geant Gargantua" and that Alcofribas purported to be writing a follow-up to the Grandes Chroniques ("vous offre de présent un aultre livre de mesme billon").⁷⁴

The Grandes Chroniques was well-known to the public as a mockery of the world of the "romans de chevalerie": a book couched within the romance-framework

as Pantagruel was, and posing as a sequel, would be expected to take the same attitude to the romances. More important still, perhaps, Gargantua and his attributes were universally known both from the oral legend, --the extent of his popularity can be tangibly gauged by examining the wall-map at la Devinière⁷⁵ and now thanks to the popular written version:

"sujet à la mode".⁷⁶

With his friendliness towards the common people,⁷⁷ his anti-heroic associations,⁷⁸ his connection with food, drink and swallowing⁷⁹ (his very name conjured up associations with the throat)⁸⁰ which were automatically conferred on his "son" Pantagruel - himself linked in the public's mind with thirst, drink, the throat and anti-heroism⁸¹ --Gargantua incarnated, at least potentially, the down-to-earth truthfulness of "Pantagruelisme". The reading-public's knowledge of what the Grandes Chroniques stood for in relation to the romances of chivalry is crucial to our understanding of how --in disrupting the high-flown, rhetorical forms of the romance-prologues by applying them to the praise of the humble and humorous little travesty of the romances --Alcofribas's irony works on the bogus truth and knowledge claimed by the romance-authors through the voice of their fictional personae. We can now turn to Rabelais's treatment of the four ways in which the romance persona's authority was exploited:

1. The bona fide historical chronicle brought forward by Alcofribas as a guarantee of the truthfulness and accuracy of the contents of Pantagruel is of course the Grandes Chroniques. Alcofribas's praise of those who have believed the chapbook:

"comme vrays fidèles"

is heavily loaded with irony aimed at the gullibility of romance devotees. For while Alcofribas appears to be addressing them, the:

"Très illustres et très chevaleureux champions,
gentilz hommes"

he is in reality addressing the "autres" who are naturally well aware of

the real nature of the Grandes Chroniques. It is they, reading between the lines of Alcofribas's double-edged flattery, who perceive Alcofribas's irony and share the joke at the expense of those who:

"les (ont) creues gualantement".

Rabelais's reader is led by implication to reflect upon the nature of the historical sources brought forward by the romance-authors and to question his own belief in these "authorities" and in the omniscience of the voice of the fictional persona and hence of the romance-narrator. The backing of the Grandes Chroniques has been employed by Alcofribas not to increase the reader's belief in the absolute truth of Pantagruel, but to make sure from the start that the reader's scepticism is awoken and that he will realize that no such "truth" is to be found and no such belief is to be expected in the contents of Alcofribas's

"aultre livre de mesme billon".

Basing his assertions on the "truthfulness" of the Grandes Chroniques Alcofribas proceeds to claim that he will speak equally truthfully in Pantagruel; in so doing, he not only further undermines the authority of the romance-persona but --in the context of the veracity of the chapbook -- shows up the romance concept of "truth" for what it was: a meaningless and empty abstraction. The more Rabelais's persona insists upon the perfect truthfulness which the reader will find in the first book, the more the reader comes to realize that he and Alcofribas are laughing together in a shared joke at the romance persona's expense:

"Car ne croyez (si ne voulez errer à vostre escient) que j'en parle comme les Juifs de la Loy. Je ne suis nay en telle planette et ne m'advint oncques de mentir, ou asseurer chose qui ne feust véritable".

Just as, in the climax to his mock panygyric, Alcofribas's oath to damn himself

"en cas que j'en mente en toute l'histoire d'un seul mot"

is disrupted by the juxtaposition of the lofty and the basic:

"corps et âme, trippes et boyaux"

(while at the same time these "Pantagrueliste" norms become the new shared truth of Alcofribas and reader), so the high flown "truth" of the romances has been brought down to earth by the "Pantagrueliste" norms associated with the Grandes Chroniques.

2. In a masterly piece of irony, Alcofribas's "exempla", his accepted authorities whose "kudos" as works of unchallengeable truth, of "propriétés occultes" is meant to enhance, by comparison, the truth of the Grandes Chroniques, and hence of Pantagruel, are ...the very romances flayed by his tongue-in-cheek eulogy. This is brought home to the reader especially clearly in the original Nourry edition where the "livres de haulte gresse" are:

Robert le Diable, Fierabras, Guillaume sans paour, Huon de Bourdeaulx, Monteville, Matabrune.

(in later editions Rabelais added Fessepinte -- hardly a title to reassure a prospective reader of a work's total serious dedication to truth --and Orlando Furioso, itself a travesty of the romance world).

Thus Alcofribas makes the romance-authors' "topos" backfire, confirming in the reader's mind the real butt of his irony. And Rabelais's contemporaries certainly grasped the point of Alcofribas's attacks on the "truth" the romances purported to possess, if we are to judge by the Rabelaisian "pasticheur" who wrote the Chroniques admirables du puissant Roy Gargantua (SLND)⁸² and who begins his work by addressing his readers as follows:

"Beuveurs très illustres et vousvalleurs très précieux...
Pour le commencement de ceste vraye cronique...nous
prendrons Huon de Bordeaux, Tristan du Lyonnais, Jourdain
de Blaves, Mandeville... Grier le Dannoys, ...Mabrun... dont
y a assez pour bien approuver la vraye vérité de ceste
présente hystoire".

3. In the manner of the created author of the romances Alcofribas makes the
the
a great deal of edifying, uplifting qualities (which Rabelais and the
reader knew were non-existent) of the Grandes Chroniques:

"Le grand émolument et utilité qui venoit de ladicte
Chronique Gargantaine".

But Alcofribas takes the inflated claims put into the mouth of the romance persona one step further, and over the brink of absurdity in his "reductio ad absurdum". From being moral, the "emolument" becomes wholly physical, and the norms of "Pantagruelisme" subvert any vestiges of belief the reader might have had in these claims; for, when they are brought down to this concrete tangible level the reader is able to perceive for himself the bombast in them. The transition from moral to physical benefit is achieved subtly by Rabelais. First the Grandes Chroniques are presented, quite plausibly, as the "réfuge de réconfort" of noblemen, disappointed by the hunt,

"affin de ne soy morfondre".

However, playing on the double meaning of "morfondre" (moral and physical), Alcofribas leads the reader on to the concrete and absurd miraculous benefits procured by the chapbook for sufferers from toothache (for when applied, in the manner of a poultice to the ailing tooth, with a touch of excrement, it brings more relief than any doctor could) and then on sufferers from pox and gout. The moral worth of the romances is finally laughed away in this last assertion by Alcofribas, where he lavishes the most high-flown rhetoric on the chapbook's powers to give relief to sufferers from pox and gout, the two comic and "Pantagrueliste" diseases "par excellence":

"Mais que diray-je /.../ dudit livre".

4. Rabelais has Alcofribas adopt the pious, moralizing tone of the romance-personae as well as their mannerisms; by having Alcofribas apply these trappings of authenticity to the lowly Chronique Gargantaine and hence to his own novel, Rabelais gives the lie to the authoritative weight and credibility of the romance persona. Rabelais's aim, then, is achieved through the irony in Alcofribas's voice, stemming from the bathos inherent

in the overall disruption of form by content. Here is how Alcofribas catches the aloof, chivalrous conventions of the romance persona's language to perfection and by applying them to the Grandes Chroniques exposes their emptiness:

"Très illustres et très chevaleureux champions, gentilz hommes et aultres... vous adonnez à toutes gentillesses et honnestetez, vous avez n'a guères veu, leu et sceu les Grandes et inestimables Chronicques de l'énorme géant Gargantua et comme vrayz fidèles les avez creues gualantement... les honorables dames et damoyelles... bien dignes de grande louange et mémoire sempiternelle".

Alcofribas feigns an even more exalted register --that of the religious exhortation the romance personae commonly adopted --and hence increases the gulf between form and content, as he employs the authority of his "je":

"à la mienne volonté"

to urge the reader to abandon all other occupations (the empty rhetorical repetition of "sa propre besogne... son mestier... ses affaires propres" should be noted) in order to learn the Grandes Chroniques off-by-heart:

"ainsi que une religieuse Caballe".

But while he has his persona undermine the pretended truths of the created author of the romances, Rabelais also begins to replace them in the reader's mind with the down-to-earth truths which will be the hallmarks of "Pantagruelisme", through the anticlimax produced by Alcofribas's "grivois" asides to the reader. These truths, familiar and comic both to Alcofribas and the reader, take the place of the unknowable knowledge by which the romance-persona and hence the romance-author dominated the reader. eg. Alcofribas precipitatedly drops the tone at the end of his rhetorical "exordium" and with a fraternal nudge to the reader, as it were, reveals his and the reader's real view of the chapbook in a language devoid of pretension:

"car il y a plus de fruit que par adventure ne pensent un tas de gros talvassiers tous croustelevez, qui entendent beaucoup moins en ces petites joyeusetés que ne faict Ralet en l'Institute".

Similarly he brings the reader into his confidence and further establishes

their mutual bond with the earthy anticlimax to his mock-rhetorical praise of the Grandes Chroniques as a consolation for sufferers from pox and gout:

"en avons veu qui se donnoyent à cent pipes de vieulx diables en cas que ilz n'eussent senty allègement manifeste à la lecture dudict livre, lorsqu'on les tenoit ès lymbes, ny plus ny moins que les femmes estans en mal d'enfant quand on leur leist la vie de sainte Marguerite".

and in his menacing exhortation to the reader to believe his every word in Pantagruel, where his threats that he has the authority to punish the reader are nullified by his oath (disrupted by bodily norms):

"Je me donne à cent mille panares de beaulx diables, corps et âme, trippes et boyaulx..."

and by the comic scatological nature of some of these moralizing threats themselves:

"...la caquesangue (dystery) vous viengne, le mau fin feu de ricqueracque aussi menu que poil de vache tout renforcé de vif argent vous puisse entrer au fondement..."

It is in lines 43-48, as Alcofribas reaches the climax of his panygyric of the Grandes Chroniques, that Rabelais makes his most damning indictment of the truth and knowledge claimed by the romance author for his persona. Seen in the context of the Grandes Chroniques and with Alcofribas's fraternal irony, the reader realizes the emptiness of the knowledge and truth claimed by the persona:

"Est-ce rien cela? Trouve-moy livre, en quelque langue, en quelque faculté et science que ce soit, qui ayt telles vertus, propriétés et prérogatives, et je poieray chopine de trippes. Non, Messieurs, non. Il est sans pair, incomparable et sans parragon. Je le maintiens jusques au feu exclusive".

In consequence he sees that the two adjectives Alcofribas applies to those who gainsay him:

"Et ceulx qui vouldroient maintenir que si, réputés-les abuseurs et séducteurs"

are, by a deadly stroke of irony on Rabelais's part, made to backfire on the romance-authors. In their assertions of transcendental truth and knowledge it is they who are "abuseurs et séducteurs".

b) As we have seen, the romance-authors deliberately associated their works in the reading-public's mind with real historical chronicles in an attempt to further blur the distinction between the two genres and enhance both the appearance of truthfulness of their romances and the prestige and authority of their own narrative voice. It was even common for romances to take upon themselves the title of chronicle --a pretension which the Grandes Chroniques⁸³ parodied by its own title and which Alcofribas alluded to ironically by referring to Pantagruel as "ceste presente Chronicque" and to himself as a "historiographe".⁸⁴ Titles such as these were entirely typical:

Hystoire et cronique du noble et vaillant conte de Flandres
lequel espousa le dyable;⁸⁵
Le premier Livre de l'histoire et ancienne cronique de
Gérard d'Euchrate, Duc de Bourgogne...⁸⁶
Hystoire et ancienne Cronique de lespellant roy Florimont
filz du noble Mataquas duc Dalbanie.⁸⁷

A revealing example of the way reality and fiction were confused is the fact that real chronicles could be published within the same covers as romances eg. in 1509, Rabelais's publisher, Nourry, put the following book on the market:

Les nobles prouesses et vaillances de baudoyne conte de
flandres et de Ferrant filz du roy de portugal qui apres
fut conte de flandres. Item aucunes croniques du roy
Philippe en son vivant roy de france et de ses quatre filz.
Item aussi du roy saint Loys, et de son filz, Jehan Tristan.

A stock feature of chronicles which the romances exploited was the genealogical list, a recurrent trait not only in histories but in such surprisingly popular works as Ravisius Textor's Officina⁸⁸ with its interminable lists. The romance authors were frequently careful to promise a genealogy in the titles of their works e.g.:

La Généalogie avecques les gestes et nobles faictz d'armes
du trèspreux et renommé prince Goddefroy de Bouillon; et de
ses chevalereux freres baudoin et eustace...(Paris, J. Petit,
1504, in f. goth. 185 ff).

Thus we find pedantically exact but totally spurious genealogies in, for

instance, the first chapter of book one of Fierabras where the romance-author purports to establish with exactitude, in a fantastic creation story, the origin of the hero:

"... Francus le quel estoit compaignon de Enéas qui quant il partit de Troie vint en la région de France et commença à régner en grant prospérité. Et pour la félicité de son nom il fist composer une cité a laquelle il mist nom France, et puis ensuyvant toute la région fut appelée France. Et puy quant France fut exaulcée et réduite à magesté voyable Priamus fut le premier qui régna sure les Francois cinq ans".

The first chapter of Mélusine begins, similarly, with a genealogy:

"Ce après s'ensuyvent les noms et les estas des enfants qui furent au mariage de Raimondin et de Mélusine. Et premièrement en saillit le roy Urian qui régna en Chippre, et le roy Guion qui régna moult puissamment en Arménie; item le roy Regnauld qui régna moult puissamment en Bretagne; item Anthoine qui fut duc de Lucembourg; item Raimond qui fut conte de Foretz; item Geoffroy au Grant Dent qui fut seigneur de Lusignan; item en saillit Thiéri qui fut seigneur de Parthenay; item Froimond qui fut moyne de Maillières, le quel Geoffroy au Grant Dent ardit l'abbaye et l'abbé avecq cent religieulx".

The romance-authors' subterfuge had not escaped the critical attention of H.C. Agrippa of Nettesheim.⁸⁹ He remarked scathingly, in his chapter on history, on how the romances were presented to the readers under the guise of real history:

"Mélusine, Amadysi, Florandi, Tyranti, Conamori, Arcturi, Dietheri, Lanceloti, Tristani...".

However, the chroniclers themselves employed an even more blatantly deceitful device to prove to their readers that their chronicles were truthful and that they possessed an absolutely accurate knowledge of history (and since Rabelais was concerned to create an archetypal and exaggerated romance-framework at the beginning of Pantagruel he incorporated and had Alcofribas parody this feature in chapter I of his romance-cum-"chronicque"). At the outset of their histories they gave a supposedly accurate and truthful account of world history from the original creation until the events or epoch with which the main body of the particular chronicle was concerned. Again Agrippa was scathing in his

condemnation of these historians who pretended to have knowledge of events they could not possibly have witnessed:

"non dico solu de principio mundi, de diluvio universali, de urbe condita, a quibus exordus res gestas sese scribere profitetur cum primum illorum omnes ignorent, alteri non omnes credant, tertium penes eos incertusit".⁹⁰

And, in effect, the opening Agrippa describes was the norm in historical chronicles. In the 6th century Gregory of Tours in his Historiae Ecclesiasticae Francorum ⁹¹ states in his prologue:

"Ergo et nos... cupimus a primi hominis conditione, si Dominus dignabitur suum commodare auxilium, usque ad nostrum tempus cunctam annorum congierem computare",

and summarizes his first book thus:

"Explicitus est liber primus, qui computantur a principio mundi usque ad transitum sancti Martini episcopi".⁹²

In his chronicle, we even find the three typical examples cited by Agrippa; for it begins:

"ab ipso Adam sumamus exordium (prol.)... In principio Dominus coelum tenamque... formavit (I)... Dominus ergo commotus contra iniquitates populi non in suis gradientis; diluvium immisit (IV)..."

The same pretended accuracy is maintained --with long genealogical lists, both biblical and mediaeval --until Gregory's own epoch.

In the 15th century, Froissart, at the start of the Chroniques⁹³ follows the progress of "Proèche" from the creation up to his own day:

"Vérité est, selonch les anchiennes escriptures, que apriès le Déluge et que Noëls et sa génération eurent repeuplé le monde...Proèche resgna premièrement ou roiaulme de Caldée, par le fait dou roi Ninus qui fist fonder et édifier la grande chité de Ninevée qui contenoit trois journées de lonch... Après Proèce se remua et vin resgner en Judée et Jhéruusalem... Après elle vint resgner ensi ou roiaulme de Perse ...Apriès... en Gresce par le fait de Herqules, de Tézeus, de Jasson et de Acilles et des aultres preus chevaliers... apriès en la chité de Romme...Après elle vint demorer en France... Apriès a resgné Proèce un temps en Engleterre... ensi que vous veres et trouveres se toute les lissies en ceste histoire".

Georges Chastellain⁹⁵ in the 15th century is even more explicit. In order to explain his pessimistic view of life he has (p.9):

"pris (son) recours sur le principe du monde, et tous le temps depuis, par succession d'âge, ramené légèrement à celui d'aujourd'hui".

Once more, at the outset of his history, he follows the rise and fall of the powerful from:

"les premiers engendeurs Adam et Eve dont le premier né, tost, pour l'angoisse sur douleur de ses parens, devint homicide et respandit le sang de son frère Abel",⁹⁶

through the flood, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and to the passing of power through the hands of the Carthaginians, the Macedonians and the Romans --until it falls inevitably into the hands of the French.

Alcofribas, aware that:

"tous bons hystorographes ainsi ont traité leurs Chroniques", incorporates these "topoi" of the romances--authors and the chronicles in order to trace

"la première source et origine dont nous est né le bon Pantagruel".

Like the chroniclers, Alcofribas begins at the creation:

"Il vous convient doncques noter que, au commencement du monde".

But, in order to show up the impossibility of such precision, Alcofribas heightens the contrast by applying his comic creation of Pantagruel to the book of creation: Genesis (indeed, there are more biblical references in this first chapter than in any other chapter of the first novel)⁹⁷. Alcofribas reproduces to perfection the norms of the Chronicles. We pass from the creation to the killing of Abel by Cain.⁹⁸

"peu après que Abel fust occis par son frère Cain"

to the fall:

"le monde voluntiers mangeoit desdictes mesles, car elles estoit belles à l'oeil et délicieuses au goust (cf. Genesis III, 6: "et pulcherum oculis adspectaque delectabile" ie.the tree of knowledge)

to the story of Noah:⁹⁹

"tout ainsi comme Noé, le saint homme...".

Then, in the manner of both romances and chronicles we are given genealogies. First (modelled on the different tribes of the Genesis)¹⁰⁰ we

have the various families or branches of the Pantagrueliste creation (lines 38-81) introduced in some cases by the biblical formula:

"desquelz est escript" ("scriptum est enim").¹⁰¹

Then follows the long genealogy of Pantagruel himself (lines 84-157) reminiscent both of the "Liber generationis Jesu Christi" of the gospel according to St. Matthew and of the genealogies of Genesis with their quaint descriptive epithets akin to Alcofribas's.¹⁰²

In this ultra-standard context, this most hallowed form, Alcofribas situates his upside-down, comic chronicle with its down-to-earth subject matter. By employing these conventions, yet standing them on their head, by burlesquing the very techniques exploited by both romance-authors and chroniclers, Alcofribas demonstrates the futility of their presumption to possess precise, absolute knowledge of what is palpably unknowable. At the same time while Alcofribas's down-to-earth subject matter makes a mockery of these commonplaces which are grafted on to it, it is itself exalted in Rabelais's comic Genesis, his Pantagrueliste cosmogony. While disrupting the transcendental truths of both romances and chronicles Alcofribas affirms once and for all his own humble and universal standards of truth, and the limits of the knowledge he claims.

Alcofribas first proceeds to undermine the romance-authors' and chroniclers' precision in the realm of historical time, by entering into the most precise detail over what the reader can clearly see to be unimportant and impossible; in so doing he exposes the emptiness and futility of their supposedly accurate detail.

Alcofribas calculates the date of the creation with even more precision than the Chroniclers themselves:

"il y a plus de quarante quarantaines de nuyets pour nombrer a la mode des antiques Druides"¹⁰³ (an impossible figure computed using an upside-down method);

He situates the fall, a ridiculously precise "peu après" ("que Abel fust occis par son frère Cain").

After the death of Abel the earth becomes fertile, not sterile as in the Bible (cf. Genesis, IV, II-12):

"la terre embue du sang du juste fut certaine année si très fertile en tous fruictz..."

The apple of the fall becomes Alcofribas's "mesles" (reminiscent of course, of the Latin and Italian words for apple, "mela") that most humble of fruits, which is uneatable except rotten and which in its other form (nèfle) was in the 16th century,¹⁰⁴ and still is, a synonym of something useless.¹⁰⁵

In that same year:

"les Kalendes feurent trouvées par les bréviaires des Grecz" (impossible, for the Greeks had no Calends). (cf. Cargantua I, XX);

"Le moys de mars faillit en Karesme" (Lent is always in March).

After this string of absurdities shaking the notion of chronological precision, Alcofribas delivers the "coup de grâce" when he intervenes in the first person with ironical protestations about how careful he is to be accurate in all he says:

"Au moys de octobre, ce me semble, ou bien de septembre (affin que je ne erre, car de cela me veulx je curieusement garder) fut la sepmaine, tant renommé par les annalles qu'on nomme la sepmaine des troys jeudis" (proverbial expression for "never", current to this day)

then he launches into a pseudo-learned tirade to prove, scientifically, the impossible assertion that there can be three Thursdays in a week, (in so doing he shows the reader how truth can be manipulated by words):

"car il y en eut troys, à cause des irréguliers bissextes, que le soleil bruncha quelque peu, comme debitoribus, à gauche, et la lune varia de son cours plus de cinq toyzes et feut manifestement veu le mouvement de trépidation au firmament dict aplane, tellement que la Pléiade moyene, laissant ses compaignons, déclina vers l'Equinoctial, et l'estoille nomme l'Espy laissa la Vièrge, se retirant vers la Balance".

We have seen, then, that the truth of the chroniclers' norms of time, of the conventions employed by them to ensure the reader believed they had placed historical events precisely is undermined by the irony of

Rabelais's created author and by Alcofribas's shared understanding with the reader. Rabelais, through Alcofribas shows the reader that for his part he makes no claims to and will have no truck with attempts at chronological precision.

The way in which Alcofribas pulls the carpet from underneath the above word-spinning designed to prove "la sepmaine des troys jeudis" (by taking a metaphor literally and by introducing what is concrete and physical:

"qui sont bien espoventables et matières tant dures et difficiles que les Astrologues ne y peuvent mordre; aussy auroient ilz les dens bien longues s'ilz povoient toucher jusques là")

points the way to how Alcofribas goes on to subvert --by the introduction of Pantagrueliste elements connected with the body, - the stages in the unfolding of history from the creation onwards which were the norms or "exempla" used by chroniclers and romance-authors to lend importance and substance to the "truth" of their assertions. Their norms are replaced by those of Pantagruelisme, common and well-known to Alcofribas and reader.

1. Alcofribas states from the beginning that he personally will follow in his description of the creation and Pantagruel's origin the example of those:

"bons hystoriographes"

who were:

"buveurs éternelz",

while again (lines 165-167) he adduces the authority of the "Massoretz":

"bons couillaux et beaux cornemuseurs Hébraïques".

2. Noah is mentioned by Alcofribas not for his role in the flood but because he planted the vine --whose properties are lauded by Rabelais's persona --and who was the first man to get drunk:

"Noé, le saint homme (auquel tant sommes obligez et tenuz de ce qu'il nous planta la vine, dont nous vient celle nectarique, délicieuse, précieuse, céleste, joyeuse et déificque liqueur qu'on nomme le piot) fut trompé en le beuvant, car il ignoroit la grande vertu et puissance d'icelluy, semblablement les hommes et femmes de celluy temps mangeoyent en grand plaisir de ce beau et gros fruit".

3. The tribes and subdivisions in Genesis become applied to each group of deformities in the Pantagrueliste creation. It is written of those whose belly has swollen:

"Ventrem omnipotentem",

(a pretended lapsus for "patrem omnipotentem" of the Credo and reminiscent of a passage in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (III, 18/19)), and from these are descended:

"saint Pansart et Mardy Gras";

from those who develop a hunchback are descended "Esopet" (ie. Aesop who was extremely popular when Rabelais was writing Pantagruel).¹⁰⁶

From those whose testicles swell are descended:

"les couilles de Lorraine" (a popular proverb);¹⁰⁷

Those whose legs stretch are called

"en grammaire Jambus" (the latin term "iambus" being taken literally : Jiambus/Jambe);

Among these descended from the people who develop gigantic noses

("tous furent amateurs de purée septembrale")

are

"le chanoyne Panzoult" (pun on "pansu"),
"Piedepoys, médecin de Angiers" and "Nason et Ovide". (Both Ovid, naturally, with the nasal connotations of Ovid's "agnomen");

the ears of some people expand and these are called "aureilles de Bourbonnoys" (again a popular proverb).¹⁰⁸

The massive penises of those who:

"enfloient en longueur par le membre qu'on nomme le labourar de nature",

and on which Alcofribas lavishes so many loving epithets:

"long, grand, gras, gros, vert et acresté à la mode antique",
are regretted by women who lament:

"Il n'en est plus de ces gros, etc."

(Once more the "exemplum" is well-known to the readers; this time it
is the refrain of a popular song).¹⁰⁹

4. The serious attributes of Pantagruel's gigantic predecessors in his
genealogy, are replaced, as is appropriate in his case, by Pantagrueliste
ones, outnumbering the few conventional examples (there to provide contrast)
such as:

"Qui engendra Attilas, qui avecques ses espaulles garda le
ciel de tumber"

or

"Qui engendra Bruyer, lequel fut vaincu par Ogier le Dannoys,
pair de France".

We find, e.g.:

"Qui engendra Hurtaly, qui fut beau mangeur de soupes
et régna au temps du déluge"

.../...

"Qui engendra Eryx, lequel fut inventeur du jeu des beletz"

.../...

"Qui engendra Etion, lequel premier eu la vérolle pour
n'avoir beu frayz en esté, comme tesmoigne Bertachim".

The apotheosis of Rabelais's destruction through Alcofribas of the truth
and knowledge of the romances/chronicles and of the establishment of his
own norms of truth and knowledge takes place in the closing section of
chapter I (lines 158-182). After apostrophizing the reader and feigning
seriousness over the question of truth and knowledge (as applied to ch. I):

"J'entens bien que, lysans ce passaige (Pantagruel's
genealogy) vous faictez en vous mesmes un doubte bien
raisonnable et demandez comment est il possible que ainsi
soit, veu que au temps du déluge tout le monde périt, fors
Noé et sept personnages avecques luy dedans l'Arche au
nombre desquelz n'est mis ledict Hurtaly?"(truth)

"La demande est bien faicte... Et parce que n'estoys
de ce temps là pour vous en dire à mon plaisir"(knowledge),

Alcofribas --having now gained the full consent and understanding of the reader in his irony, launches into a cock-and-bull explanation with no reference to historical truth and based on the:

"autorité des Massoretz, bons couillaux et beaux cornemuseurs Hébraïques".

Rabelais also solicits his readers' incredulity at the end of this opening section, comprising the prologue and chapter I, when his created author denies the authority of his own words by invoking a response from a hypothetical reader:

"Avés-vous bien le tout entendu? Beuvez donc un bon coup sans eue. Car, si ne le croiez, non foys-je, fist-elle".

Throughout his first novel Rabelais turned the tongue-in-cheek adoption of persuasive fictional techniques to good account. He exploited them to put his readers on their guard against passively accepting what they are told at face value. Building on the rapport of connivance and participation (on the readers' part) established on the threshold of Pantagruel between reader and created author Rabelais selected and emptied a whole gamut of rhetorical fictional techniques - whose purpose was, deceitfully, to induce belief --of their pretended substance. In so doing he exposed their deceptive, outward shells. Rabelais's parodies strikingly showed how words can be mere forme devoid of fond. Rabelais's readers are enabled to infer from these burlesques that appearances, no matter how impressive and convincing cannot of themselves --without being personally verified --be relied upon. Non-empirical information is no guarantee of knowledge and a reliable assessment cannot be based upon it.

Given the sheer number and frequency of examples, on the one hand, and the detailed analysis devoted to Rabelais's de-mystificatory methods at the outset of Pantagruel on the other hand, a detailed account of all

the examples of subverted fictional techniques would be superfluous. These techniques can broadly and conveniently be divided into four kinds:

1. Standard, high flown forms eg. Badebec's epitaph (ch. 3) Panurge's rondeau to the Parisian lady (ch. 22); the mock victory poem composed by Panurge (ch. 27).
2. The evocation of impressive events and details: eg. the mock-epic account of Pantagruel's birth (ch. 2); Pantagruel's "heroic" feats as a child (related in absolute detail) (ch. 4); the already-cited detailed description of Loup Garou's fearsome mace (Ch. 29); the step-by-step detail given by the narrator in the Thaumaste-Panurge episode (ch. 19) which fails totally to give the readers a correct account of the uproariously funny significance of the participants' gestures.
3. The exploitation, in order to convince, by mystification, of "pseudo-logia": eg. the learned-looking astronomical mumbo-jumbo of ch. 1; the pseudo-learned techniques, which I have already discussed, employed by the authors of the volumes in the library of St. Victor (ch. 7); the pretentious and empty Latin jargon --to recount a host of trivial details and convince his listeners of his wisdom --employed by the scholar from the Limousin (ch. 6).
4. The use of lofty, rhetorical language to lend importance to trivia and to convince the readers of the narrative's truth (often characterized by the presence of sentences beginning with "O que...") --eg. the rhetorical description of the state of the earth before Pantagruel's birth (ch. 2); the mock-heroic invocation of the muses by Alcofribas before the encounter between Pantagruel and the giants (ch. 28):

"O qui pourra maintenant raconter comment se porta Pantagruel contre les troys géans? O ma muse! ma Calliope, ma Thalie, inspire-moy à ceste heure! restaure-moy mes esperitz, car

voicy le pont aux asnes de Logique, voicy le trébuchet,
voicy la difficulté de pouvoir exprimer l'horrible
bataille qui fut faicte. A la mienne volonté que je
eusse maintenant un boucal du meilleur vin que beurent
oncques ceux qui liront ceste histoire tant véridicque!"

Rabelais emphasized his refusal to claim a truthfulness his readers had no means of checking directly, to induce his readers to accept uncritically second-hand information, by himself employing (in those passages where he is not concerned to burlesque fictional techniques) a language shorn of all tendentiousness. In so doing he further highlighted the fictional sleight-of-hand of authors who do claim truthfulness. In the "contes" of chapters 14 (Panurge's Turkish adventure), 15 (Panurge's suggestion for constructing stronger city-walls for Paris; the tale of the fox and the lion; the supposed scarcity of "preudes femmes, chastes et pucelles" in Paris), 23 (the explanation of the brevity of Parisian leagues), there is absolutely no attempt on Rabelais's part to create verisimilitude. No literal belief is sought. Instead, the reader is amused while retaining his lucidity --a noteworthy point which Panurge makes the readers doubly aware of by prefacing his "martyrdom" story with the words:

"Par Dieu, Seigneur... je ne vous en mentiray de mot"

In the "fatras" chapters --ch. 9 (Panurge's 13 languages) and chapters 11-13 (the speeches of Baisecul, Humevesne and Pantagruel) the readers are confronted, to their amusement, with language laid bare, stripped of its persuasive role. By removing all authorial intervention, injecting meaning, Rabelais de-mystifies language itself. He demonstrates that language is not in itself meaningful; it is --as Pantagruel emphasizes to Panurge in the Tiers Livre¹¹⁰ --the arbitrary creation of men. Despite appearances, it cannot be taken on trust; it must be verified. The mechanics of style by means of which coherent and persuasive arguments are constructed are left high and dry, in full view, by Rabelais's cock-and-bull "récits".¹¹¹

There is a more positive facet to Rabelais's verbal de-mystifications --which re-inforces his message to his readers on the central question of

cognition. Not only did Rabelais lead his readers to be sceptical about non-empirical information; he stressed, at one and the same time, the logical corollary. By unmasking and deflating unverified, deceptive façades of words with concrete information available to each and every reader (thus putting them "in the know" as it were) Rabelais underscored his argument. He clearly wished his readers to infer that only first-hand information can reliably be considered as knowledge; only personally-acquired information can lead to the truth. In effect, common to all Rabelais's satires and parodies in Pantagruel --whether in the field of humanist concern, in the deflation of the status quo or in the undermining of verbal smokescreens --we find the basic bodily norms of Pantagruelisme by means of which Rabelais brings pretention down to earth and reveals the reality ^{behind} outward appearances. Just as the Parisian lady's probity was shown to be a mere façade by Panurge's sexual advances, as the triviality underlying the learned-seeming volumes of St. Victor was exposed by culinary and sexual concerns, so in Rabelais's verbal de-mystifications eating, drinking, urinating and defacating are omnipresent. Panurge's "rondeau" comes down with a bump when we discover that his chaste desire is dedicated to "la combrecelle"¹¹²; the young Pantagruel's childish "exploits" are unheroic in the extreme (the drinking of the milk of 4,600 cows, for example)¹¹³; the astrologers of chapter 1 cannot - literally - get their teeth into the complexities described as the cause of "la sepmaine des troys jeudis". Alcofribas's invocation to the muses has as its ultimate "gage": "un boucal de...vin".¹¹⁴

Rabelais made full use of the deflationary qualities traditionally associated with bodily norms --employed as disruptive elements, for instance, in the songs of the Goliards¹¹⁵ and the Sermons Joyeux.¹¹⁶ But Rabelais went further; he harnessed them to his exploration of the nature of truth and knowledge.

CHAPTER IV

ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE IN "GARGANTUA"

In Pantagruel, Rabelais exploited the clichés of the romances of chivalry to make comically clear to his readers that the omniscience claimed by the romance-authors was absurd. It was only deceptive, verbal façades which made the fiction-writer's absolute truth seem plausible. Once Rabelais's narrator had cracked the perfect appearance, the elusive and multifarious nature of the reality which the writers of the pseudo-historical adventure-tales had purported to pin down, showed through.

I also tried to show that ambiguity was the keynote of Panurge in Pantagruel. His double-sidedness was opposed to and brought about the downfall of unilateral social façades. Through his jack-of-all-trades hero, Rabelais palpably demonstrated that such perfection as was displayed on the surface by "enflés" did not correspond to reality: it too was a deceptive appearance.

When we take into account that - as I have already argued - Rabelais couched his early fictional works in the burlesqued forms of genres, a marked feature of which was the omniscience they claimed, it seems clear that Rabelais was deeply pre-occupied at the time of writing Pantagruel and Gargantua with discrediting that which is absolute and rigid: unilateral façades, institutionalized hierarchies, supposedly complete and truthful transcriptions of reality, authorial omniscience. It is interesting and significant for our appraisal of Rabelais's attitude in his fiction to the concepts of truth and knowledge that he used comedy as his prime weapon against absoluteness.

That which is absolute and rigid should, of necessity, be perfect and as Rabelais reminded his readers in the prologue to the Tiers Livre, apropos of even the wise Diogenes:

"S'il avoit quelques imperfections, aussi avez-vous,
aussi avons-nous. Rien n'est, sinon Dieu, parfait".

If perfection can only reside in God, it follows that whatever is human - by definition fallible - yet purports to be absolute, rigid and hence perfect, must be fallacious and deceitful.

Bergson¹ observed that laughter was an antidote to inflexible behaviour, while Baudelaire in his essay on comedy² pointed out that whatever is perfect (or thinks itself so), whatever claims to possess absolute truth, does not laugh. There was no laughter in the earthly paradise and

"les livres sacrées...ne rient jamais".³

Now, in ch. 32 of the Quart Livre Pantagruel describes and contrasts "Physis" ("c'est nature") and "Antiphysie" ("laquelle de tout temps est partie adverse de Nature"). The deformed, grotesque "Antiphysie" twists reason and common-sense in order to prove to and persuade people that its own unnatural way of being and doing is the sole and correct way, is absolutely true to nature.

"Ainsi, par le tesmoignage et astipulation des bestes brutes, tiroit tous les folz et insensez en sa sentence et estoit en admiration à toutes gens écervelez et desguarniz de bon jugement et sens commun. Depuys elle engendra les Matagotz, Cagotz et Papelars, les Maniacles Pistoletz, les Démoniacles Calvins, imposteur de Genève, les enraigez Putherbes, Briffaulx, Caphars, Chattemittes, Canibales et aultres monstres difformes et contrefaits en despit de Nature".

"Matagotz", "Cagotz", "Briffaulx", "Caphars" and "Chattemittes" are all, in Rabelais's writings, synonyms of hypocrite:⁴ he who twists the truth and presents a unilateral and deceitful façade of perfection to the world - in the image of "Antiphysie". Similarly, extremist bigots like Gabriel de Puy-Herbault, Calvin and the "Papelars" claim they possess the sole key to the truth (a claim which, like "Antiphysie"s, is shown by Rabelais to be preposterous). Like the Panurge of the Tiers Livre, who is led astray by self-love, or the two Pierres (Ramus and Galland) who refuse to compromise on their personal view of the truth and whose rigidity is aptly conveyed by Rabelais in the idea of turning them both to stone (mental rigidity made concrete)⁵ these "petites philauties couilloniformes" make

their personal way to the truth final and unique. They will allow no other; they are absolute, intolerant, inflexible. Significantly, Rabelais connects all these absolutists with the word "Canibales" which, as the Briefve Déclaration informs us, Rabelais takes to mean:

"peuple monstrueux, en Afrique, ayant la face comme chiens et aboyant en lieu de rire (my underlining)

Claiming perfection as they do they must necessarily fear and eschew laughter which is irreverent, which subverts and dissolves perfection, which thrives on the imperfections of life.

In the "épître liminaire" of the Quart Livre, Rabelais complained to his benefactor Odet, Cardinal of Chastillon, that his books had been unjustly accused of containing heresies, that their contents had been twisted and deformed by those who pervert reason and common-sense, by those same "callumnieateurs" of Pantagruel 34 who feared the frankness of his comedy and wished to find an excuse to tarnish his work in his readers' eyes:

"Quant est de leur estude, elle est toute consummée à la lecture de livres Pantagruelicques, non tant pour passer temps joyeusement que pour nuyre à quelc'un meschamment, sçavoir est articulant, monarticulant, torticulant, culletant, couilletant et diaboliculant, c'est à dire callumniant".

Rabelais's syntactical and semantic tortuousness, which graphically conveyed the process of deforming reality to suit one's own view of things, is echoed in the image he employed in the letter to Odet:

"perversement et contre tout usaige de raison et de langage commun interprétans ce que, à poine de mille fois mourir, si autant possible estoit, ne voudrois avoir pensé: comme qui pain interprétroit pierre; poisson, serpent; oeuf, scorpion".

This:

"hideuse, morveuse, catharreuse, vermolue cagotaille qui en public et privé déteste les livres frians et dessus vilainement crachent par leur impudence"⁶

was described by Rabelais using three epithets:

"Canibales, misantropes, agelastes".⁷

"Canibales"; as we have seen, bark but do not laugh. "Agelastes", the Briefve Déclaration once more informs us, refers to those

"point ne rians, tristes, fascheux".

These absolutists and paragons of perfection are also "Misantropes", that is to say:

"Haïssans les hommes, fuyans la compagnie des hommes".⁸

As in the "Thysis"/"Antiphysis" episode Rabelais linked what is absolute, perfect and hence unnatural with the inability to laugh and indeed with a hatred of laughter. It is in the nature of man, who is inherently imperfect, to laugh. Rabelais puts it this way in the liminary letter to Gargantua:

"Vray est qu'icy peu de perfection
Vous apprendrez, sinon en cas de rire
/.../

Mieux est de ris que de larmes escripre
Pour ce que rire est le propre de l'homme".

It is no coincidence that in Pantagruel and Gargantua, Rabelais's two great comic characters Panurge and Frère Jean are placed at the opposite pole to pretended absoluteness and perfection. In Pantagruel 30, Panurge is extremely careful to place the decapitated Epistémion's head on straight:

"affin qu'il ne feust tortycolly (car telles gens
il hayssoit de mort)"

while in Gargantua 40, Gargantua in his explanation of the fact that monks are universally reviled by society, while Frère Jean is not, goes to the heart of the matter:

"Il n'est point bigot ---il est honeste,
joyeux, délibéré, bon campaignon".

From all of these preliminary observations it is possible for us to appreciate just to what extent the underlying attitude towards omniscience in Pantagruel and those salient features displayed by the proponents of this

concept, which we have isolated (unilaterality; absoluteness; perfection; bigotry; the distortion of facts and the misuse of reason; the desire to impose one's own viewpoint upon others; self-love or "philautia") square with our conclusions in ch. I about the humanist-inspired episodes of Gargantua. To recapitulate: Rabelais, in undermining the abuses of the central humanist disciplines, exposed as false and deceptive the fundamental idea claimed by the authorities i.e. that they possessed absolute truth and hence absolute authority. He discredited in his readers' eyes the deliberately blinkered view of the multifariousness of reality which only focuses upon these aspects with which one agrees; the twisting of first-hand information by the misuse of reason; the stifling of critical reason; the claim that one is in possession of the unique truth; the intolerant imposition of this "truth" upon other people. He revealed that "philautia" lay at the heart of this misguided attitude to truth and knowledge. At the same time it emerged from my analysis that Rabelais believed in the possibility of partial knowledge and relative truth in the humanist disciplines, that he urged the unfettered use of critical reason and unbiased personal judgement of first-hand information.

My aim in the remainder of this chapter is to show - by looking at a broad cross-section of examples - that these core-ideas on the question of truth and knowledge not only underpin the humanist-inspired episodes of the second novel, but inform Gargantua as a whole. We shall begin by examining a number of episodes in which Rabelais discredited the notions of omniscience and absolute truth (and the attitudes underlying these) by demonstrating how inadequate they are at giving a full account of reality.

The "perfect" and absolute structure of the "transport des règnes et empires", suited the absolutist pretensions of a ruling élite. Its formal elaboration as transcribed by Rabelais in Gargantua 1 was the fruit of this caste's "appréhensions". The unblemished and regular inevitability of the transfer of kingship:

"des Assyriens ès Mèdes,
 des Mèdes ès Perses,
 des Perses ès Macédones,
 des Macédones ès Romains,
 des Romains ès Grecz,
 des Grecz (inevitably from the French point of view) ès Francoys"

was not based on an unbiased appraisal of all the facts. It was like the notion of parallel estates which artificially set up a divinely-ordained barrier between people "destined" for the élite and others "destined" to obscurity:

"Pleust à Dieu ;counters Alcofribas", qu'un chascun sceust aussi certainement sa généalogie depuis l'arche de Noé jusques à cest eage! Je pense que plusieurs sont aujourd'huy, roys, ducz, princes et papes en la terre, lesquelz sont descenduz de quelques porteurs de rogatons et de coustretz, comme, au rebours, plusieurs sont gueux de l'hostiaire, souffreteux et misérables, lesquelz sont descenduz de sang et ligne de grandz roys et empereurs..."

Each of these absolute truths - which pre-suppose transcendental knowledge - can only stand up if facts are deliberately distorted to suit one's point of view (the selective choice of the French, for instance, as heirs to the Byzantine Greeks) or suppressed (are the "roys, ducz, princes et papes en la terre" wilfully ignorant of their humble forebears?). Here then, at the outset of his second novel, Rabelais brought out, in a satirical digression on the venerability of Gargantua's genealogy, one of these traits which were the concomitants of pretended, absolute truth and omniscience: the moulding of reality by the manipulation of fact and the misuse of reason (for personal ends). It was on account of this that the authorities discouraged (both Catholics and Reformers) personal reflexion, the unhindered use of reason. They could countenance no encroachment on their domain, for any interpretation at variance with theirs was bound to cast doubts on their authority and on the absolute truth they propounded.⁹ Through his persona, Alcofribas, Rabelais drew attention to this narrowing process by which perfection could be maintained intact. Once more Rabelais uses Gargantua's genealogy to make his point about truth and

knowledge. Mentioning that Gargantua's genealogy is very complete Alcofribas adds, in passing, that that of Jesus alone is known in greater detail. However, he tells us, the latter's genealogy is something he cannot talk about, for the authorities forbid it:

"Retournant à nos moutons, je vous dictz que par don souverain des cieulx nous a esté reservée l'antiquité et généalogie de Gargantua plus entière que nulle autre, exceptez celle du messias, dont je ne parle, car il ne me appartient, aussi les diables (ce sont les calumniateurs et caffars) se y opposent".

What could be more innocent, less dangerous than the list of Jesus's forebears? Yet any personal use of reason was a potential danger. So, effectively, Alcofribas is muzzled. Thus from the outset of Gargantua, Rabelais associates absolute truth and omniscience with self-righteous and self-centred hypocrisy and imposition.

Absolute truth is exclusive; the omniscience on which it rests can allow no competitors. Consequently, absolute truth must be imposed upon others whether the latter like it or not. They must accept what they are told unquestioningly. I described in the first chapter of the thesis the way in which the young Gargantua's Sorbonnard teachers - secure in the truths which they had no wish to challenge and which no one else was allowed to challenge - indoctrinated their young pupil. He was permitted no initiative, he exercised no rational judgements; he was given no justifications. His task was simply to believe. We were a long way from the tolerance and enquiring state of mind recommended by Montaigne, quoted by Diderot and in effect adopted by Fonocrates:

"J'aime ces mots qui amollissent et modèrent la témérité de nos propositions, à l'aventure, quelquefois, on dict, ie pense, et autres semblables: et si i'eusse eu à dresser des enfants, ie leur eusse tant mis en la bouche cette façon de respondre enquestante et non résolutive: qu'est-ce à dire? Je ne l'entends pas, il pourrait estre, est-il vray? Qu'ils eussent plutôt gardé la forme d'apprentis à soixante ans que de représenter les docteurs à l'âge de quinze".¹⁰

The fifteen-year old Gargantua, far from being illuminated by his teachers' absolute truth ("cette façon...résolutive"), was plunged into mental

darkness, from which he was saved by an education allowing his critical faculties to come into play and from which second-hand "knowledge" was abolished:

("cette façon...enquestante").

The imbibing of "absolute truth" was a recipe for ignorance.

What more telling way to underline this point for Rabelais the author - and at the same time to contrast his own conception of partial knowledge and relative truth - than to choose as a prime example of the fallaciousness of absolute truth, authorial browbeating? In Gargantua 8 we learn how the young Gargantua was dressed by his father. Alcofribas reminds us in the opening lines of the subsequent chapter that the young man's livery was blue and white; at the same time he relates for the readers Grandgousier's reasons for choosing these two colours:

"par icelles vouloit son père qu'on entendit que ce luy estoit une joye céleste: car le blanc luy signifioit joye, plaisir, délices et resjouissance, et le bleu choses célestes".

Rabelais pointedly says "ce luy estoit", not "c'estoit", "le blanc luy signifioit, not "le blanc signifioit. Grandgousier clearly does not hold absolute opinions about colour-symbolism. His interpretations are the result of simple analogy: white equals gaiety; blue (as the sky on a sunny day) equals heavenly joy. His interpretation is personal and avowedly relative.

Subtly Rabelais leads his readers to compare Grandgousier's attitude to his own personal interpretation with that of the exponent of another personal reading of the "meaning" of the two colours: the author of the Blason des couleurs. First of all, as the readers could see, Grandgousier's reasons for his interpretation were transparent. Second, he held his opinion humbly and in no way claimed it as transcendental and universally valid. The writer of the heraldic handbook held that white signified faith and blue steadfastness. However, he held this not merely

as his own personal opinion. He presumed to impose it on all his readers and - being an expert - he also presumed to be, and doubtless was, believed. When Rabelais provokes his readers into reflecting, he obviously assumes in them this belief:

"Qui vous meut? Qui vous point? Qui vous dict que blanc signifie foy et bleu fermeté?"

He rouses them to look more closely at the reasons why they should accept as absolute truth that which emanates from

"Un (dictes-vous) livre trepelu, qui se vend par les bisouars et porteballes, au tiltre: le Blason des couleurs".

Are they, in believing, receiving enlightenment or being duped by their pretended authority? Employing his own authorial influence Rabelais brings his readers to call into question the authority of the Blasons's author. He draws their attention to the fact that the latter's interpretation is every bit as personal as Grandgousier's while, at the same time, it lacks the reason, the transparency of Gargantua's father's. As it is, it has even less claim to universality than Grandgousier's:

"...je ne sçay quoy premier en luy je doibre admirer, ou son oultrecuidance ou sa besterie:
son oultrecuidance, qui, sans raison, sans cause et sans apparence, a ausé prescrire de son autorité privée quelles choses seroient denotées par les couleurs, ce que est l'usage des tyrans qui veulent leur arbitre tenir lieu de raison..."

Rabelais, in a nutshell, has spelt out for his readers what underlies absoluteness: the self-centred, tyrannical attitude which foists its own version on everyone else. It is such an attitude which led Calvin, while upholding the primacy of the individual Christian-conscience in interpreting the Bible, to impose his own personal interpretation as the only valid one and to condemn all others as heresy (to the extent of having Servetus burnt for denying, from his own reading of scripture, the validity of the Trinity). The author of the Blasons's claims to possess ⁵the truth is merely an illusion which Rabelais very subtly (by defending ⁵the readers himself)

has his readers realize it is silly of them to believe:

"...je ne sçay quoy premier en luy je doibre admirer,
ou son outrecuidance ou sa besterie /---/
sa besterie, qui a existimé que, sans aultres
démonstrations et argumens valables, le monde
reigleroit ses devises par ses impositions badaudes".

Thus Rabelais makes his readers more exigent.

The full absurdity of the bigoted approach of absoluteness which draws up its own rules and adopts them as transcendental is caricatured in the same chapter in the preposterous pedantry of

"ces glorieux de court et transporteurs de noms..."

They wish their finicky private code of puns - thought up by themselves and understood only by themselves - to be, according to Rabelais, a valid language expressing abstract concepts. It leaves everyone else in the darkness of ignorance instead:

"en pareilles ténèbres sont comprins ces glorieux de court et transporteurs de noms lesquelz, veulent en leur divises signifier espoir, fontprotraire une sphère, des pennes d'oiseaulx pour poines, de l'ancholie pour mélancholie la lune bicorne pour vivre en croissant, un banc rompu pour bancque roupte, non et un alcret pour non durhabit, un lict sans ciel pour un licentié, que sont homonymies tant ineptes, tant fades, tant rustiques et barbares, que l'on doibvroit atacher une queue de renard au collet et faire une marque d'une bouze de vache à un chascun d'iceulx quiouldroit derénavant user en France, après la restitution des bonnes lettres".

Unlike the rational hieroglyphs of the Egyptians, which although not aspiring to universality,

"nul n'entendoit qui n'entendist et un chascun entendoit qui entendist la vertu, propriété et nature des choses par icelles figurées...",

the "devises" of Rabelais's "glorieux de court" consist not of "raisons" but of "resveries".

Rabelais, in chapter 33, through the egoistic dreams of his tin-pot tyrant Picrochole, sweeps away the notion that absoluteness and reality are compatible. Absolutism, we are shown, is no more than the irrational

symptom of wish-fulfillment. Self-love overrules what is, in favour of what (from its own vantage point) should be.

The opening lines of the chapter disclose Picrochole's fatal weakness - which will eventually lead to his ruin: his amenability to flattery. The incredibly ingratiating and inflated claim with which his lieutenants greet him (and of course Picrochole is only the tyrant of a tiny country district):

"Cyre, aujourd'hui nous vous rendons le plus heureux, plus chevaleureux prince qui oncques feust depuis la mort de Alexandre Macédo",

is received by the deluded leader with uncritical pleasure and approval:

"Couvrez, couvrez-vous, dist Picrochole".

If he can see himself as heir to Alexander the Great he can swallow any praise. This is precisely what happens as his generals lead him in brilliant conquest across the globe. His imaginary exploits could only conceivably hold together verbally, not in the real world. But Picrochole's inflated conceit and ambition never raise any objections to this imaginary realization. Even at the start of the "récit", anyone using unbiased reason would have raised grave doubts about the premises on which the grandiose expedition rests. The duc de Menuail, comte Spadassin and Captain Merdaille begin:

"Vous laisserez icy quelque capitaine en garnison avec petite bande de gens pour garder la place, laquelle nous semble assez forte, tant par nature que par les rampars faictz à votre invention. Vostre armée partirez en deux, comme trop mieulx l'entendez. L'une partie ira ruer sur ce Grandgousier et ses gens. Par icelle sera de prime abordée facilement desconfit. Là recouvrez argent à tas, car le vilain en a du content; vilain, disons-nous parce que un noble prince n'a jamais un sou".

The word-spinning is able in the extreme: flattery ("les rampars faictz a votre invention"); the impression given that Picrochole is taking decisions which of course he is not ("comme trop mieulx l'entendez"); the use of a dictum to lend their words authority ("Thesaurizer est faict de

vilain"), all influence Picrochole's self-love. Nevertheless, the snags and non-sequiturs in the plan are glaring to anyone (including Rabelais's reader) who exercises unbiased reason on the matter. It is hardly likely that Grandgousier's forces could be overrun "de prime abordée" by no more than a fragment of the tyrant's army. The internal contradiction in the condemnation of Grandgousier and justification of Picrochole's plundering, could only be overlooked by someone blind to reason and fact.

Having surmounted the initial hurdle without a hitch, the generals' claims reach even loftier heights of extravagance. The armies sweep down through the south-west of France ("sans résistance prennent villes, châteaux et forteresses"), northern Spain, Portugal, North Africa. Picrochole swallows everything without question and continues to raise no objections as the list of his future conquests piles up breathlessly. The sheer gullibility of Picrochole's self-love is always made clear to the readers; having reached the Holy Land, Picrochole presumes to build Solomon's temple. But no, his councillors plead caution (and their leader of course falls for their distorted, "prudent" advice):

"Non (dirent-ils) encores, attendez un peu. Ne soyez jamais tant soubdain à vos entreprises. Sachez-vous que disoit Octavian Auguste? Festina lente".

This is all well and good. What follows shows that reason is putty in the hands of those with absolutist pretensions:

"Il vous convient premièrement avoir l'Asie Minor, Carie, Lycie, Pamphile, Célicie, Lydie, Phrygie, Mysie, Bétuné, Charazie, Satalie, Samagorie, Castamena, Luga, Savasta, jusques à Euphrates".

Once more the contradiction is glossed over. At the climax of the imaginary conquest, Rabelais emphasizes his point by actually having Picrochole use the word "reason" (indeed pretend to consider it the ultimate touchstone of correct action) while in the act of slandering this very concept. His army having reached Constantinople, Picrochole eagerly questions his scurrilous lieutenants:

"...Allons-nous (dist Picrochole) rendre à eulx le plus toust, car je veulx estre aussi empereur de Thébizonde. Ne tuerons-nous pas tous ces chiens turcs et mahumétistes?

-Que diable (dirent-ilz) ferons-nous doncques? Et donnerez leurs biens et terres à ceulx qui vous auront servy honnestement (we now know that they too were motivated by self-love).

- La raison (dist-il) le veult; c'est equité. Je vous donne la Carmaigne, Surie et toute Palestine .

- Ha! (exclaim the self-centred hypocrites)

Cyre, c'est du bien de vous. Grand mercy! Dieu vous face bien tousjours prospérer!"

At this point Rabelais, in contrast, introduces someone whose reason is not compromised, the experienced old warrior Echéphron. Able as he is to use his critical faculties objectively, he sees through the false councillors' airy words and expresses the view of reasoned common-sense, based on experience:

"J'ay grand peur que toute ceste entreprinse sera semblable à la farce du pot au laict, duquel un cordouannier se faisoit riche par resverie; puis, le pot cassé, n'eut de quoy disner. Que prétendez-vous parçes belles conquestes? Quelle sera la fin de tant de travaulx et traverses?"

The whole episode ends with the overruling of the wise-councillor and the return to the folly of before, with more airy-fairy promises from Merdaille, more "fanfaronnades" and a lapsus symptomatic of the turning on its head of reason:

"...Une belle petite commission (replies Merdaille to Picrochole's question about a possible attack on them from the rear), laquelle vous envoieerez ès Muscovites, vous mettra en camp pour un moment quatre cens cinquante mille combatans d'eslite. O! si vous me y faictes vostre lieutenant, je tueroy un pigne pour un mercier! (ie. "un mercier pour un pigne"). Je mors, je rue, je frappe, je attrape, je tue, je renye!"

Moderation, compromise, relative victory is anathema to Picrochole; it would mean adjusting his absolutist aspirations to reality. Reality and perfection are incompatible.

Picrochole's lack of objective reason, his distortion of reality in the cause of an impossible perfection - and the self-deception which this involves - is, at least, so grotesque that it is plain to see (for all but

himself). The bending process is not always so blatant. It - and the process of self-deception it entails - can be much more subtle and difficult to discern.

Grandgousier's personal reasons for assigning the meanings joy to the colour white and "choses célestes" to blue were perfectly satisfactory; they were "raisons" not "resveries". It was a valid "imposition humaine" which others could well understand even if the colours did not mean exactly the same thing to them. In ch. 9 we witnessed Alcofribas's onslaught on the author of the "Blason" for his failure to adduce a reasonable justification for his personal interpretation and for his presumption in imposing his views as transcendental. His crime was an arbitrary, not a meaningful "imposition humaine". In ch. 10, however, Alcofribas - self-consciously, with tongue-in-cheek - attempts himself to prove, with reason this time, that Grandgousier's interpretation is the only valid one. The attempt proved to be impossible; the point cannot be proved conclusively and be established as universally valid. The relativity of Grandgousier's initial analogy - no matter how widely accepted - cannot be transcended. In spite of Alcofribas's erudition it still stubbornly remains a purely human convention (and hence not perfect). In this brilliantly and subtly satirical chapter Rabelais shows the limitations of reason in establishing truth; the powerful urge to round things off and make them perfect leads Alcofribas to bend reason and fact (even if it be by simple omission or underemphasis). Only under the influence of self-love - ie. self-deception - can absolute perfection be achieved. We can distinguish three stages in Rabelais's persona's exquisitely humorous rhetorical proof or "plaidoyrie". Each one contains the distortion I spoke of - the tell-tale symptom of "philautia's absolutist wish-fulfillment.

The introduction is a model of modesty and moderation in which the reader is disarmed by the narrator's request for him to be unbiased:

"Le blanc donc signifie joye, soulas et liesse et non à tort le

signifie, mais à bon droict et juste tiltre, ce que pourrez vérifier si, arriere mises vos affections, voulez entendre ce que présentement vous exposeray".

First, Alcofribas attempts to establish - by logic - that white equals joy. His model is above reproach: Aristotle. His method, an example of clarity. His deduction seems, from the outset, conclusive and water-tight:

"Aristotles dict que, supposent deux choses contraires en leur espèce, comme bien et mal, vertu et vice, froid et chaud, blanc et noir, volupté et douleur, joye et dueil, et ainsi de aultres, si vous les coublez en telle façon qu'un contraire d'une espèce convienne raisonnablement à l'un contraire d'une aultre, il est conséquent que l'aultre contraire compète avecques l'aultre résidu. Exemple: vertus et vice sont contraires en une espèce; aussy sont bien et mal; si l'un des contraires de la première espèce convient à l'un, de la seconde, comme vertus et bien, car il est sceut que vertus est bonne, aussy feront les deux résiduz que sont mal et vice, car vice est mauvais.

Ceste reigle logique entendue, prenez ces deux contraires: joye et tristesse, puis ces deux: blanc et noir, car ilz sont contraires physicalement, si aussi donques est que noir signifie dueil, à bon droict blanc signifiera joye".

This seems irreproachable. However, closer inspection reveals, as M. Screech¹¹ pointed out, that Rabelais has deliberately committed a logical error, discernible to the reader. The key words which in fact Alcofribas does not adhere to - are:

"si l'un des contraires de la première espèce convient à l'un de la seconde, comme vertus et bien..."

This is correct and indeed one can draw the inference that if "virtue" corresponds to "good", then "vice" corresponds to "bad". But as soon as he has stated this, Alcofribas proceeds to draw an analogy between concepts which belong to different orders (joy and sadness on the one hand and white and black on the other) of ideas, where in fact the

"contraires de la première espèce"

do not correspond to the opposites of the second. The proof is flawed by self-love from the beginning.

Next, Alcofribas attempts to remove the taint of arbitrariness, by conferring a sort of absoluteness on this interpretation. It is - he affirms - universally acknowledged and valid for everyone everywhere :

"Et n'est cette signification par imposition humaine institué, mais reçue par consentement de tout le monde, que les philosophes nomment jus gentium, droit universel valable par toutes contrées".

This suggests that white

"signifie naturellement"

-as Panurge erroneously maintains of language in the Tiers Livre¹². The expressions

"n'est cette signification par imposition humaine institué"

and

"droit universel valable par toutes contrées"

imply that Alcofribas is removing Grandgousier's judgement out of the relative realm of personal judgement into the realm of absolute certitude. He is only a step away from the absolute (though on different and more apparently reputable premises) truth claimed by the compiler of the Blason .

The third section - the longest and most complex - displays the movement from reason to unreason (as awkward facts and exceptions block the road to perfection) in the most palpable way for the ordinary reader. Gradually - and the readers cannot fail to notice this - as the absolute establishment of Alcofribas's hypothesis becomes more arduous his exempla accumulate madly, have less and less relevance, became increasingly unreasonable. At the end the erudition is merely employed to paper over the cracks in Alcofribas's argument; it has turned into

"science sans conscience".¹³

Alcofribas's aim is to prove that his "jus gentium" justification is

absolutely valid. To begin with he adduces proof from custom:

"Comme assez sçavez que tous peuples,
toutes nations...toutes langues, voulens
extérieurement démontrer leur tristesse, portent
habit de noir, et tout deuil est faict par
noir. Lequel consentement universel n'est faict
que nature n'en donne quelque argument et raison,
laquelle un chascun peut soubdain par soy comprendre
sans aultrement estre instruit de personne - laquelle
nous appellons droict naturel.

Par le blanc, à mesmes induction de nature, tout
le monde a entendu joye, liesse, soulas, plaisir et
délectation."

On the surface there seems to be no distortion of fact, no wilful personal imposition on Rabelais's part. "Consentement universel" he says. Are there no exceptions? Does everyone in every country accept and understand the meanings of black and white

"sans aultrement estre instruit de personne?"

Do colours

"signifie (nt) naturellement"

If so, what is to be done with the exceptions classical antiquity has handed down, or which experience of other nations brings to us (the Chinese for instance, whose colour of mourning is white) ? Alcofribas's answer demonstrates that he is bending the facts, by omission, in order to be absolutely right.

"(je excepte les antiques Syracusans et
quelques Argives qui avoient l'âme de
travers)!"

It is, of course, Alcofribas who arbitrarily decides that these people have

"l'âme de travers".

When we realize this, then examples such as

"Au temps passé, les Thraces et Crètes
signoient les jours bien fortunez et
joyeux de pierres blanches, les tristes
et défortunez de noires",

are no longer conclusive, but merely relative.

No amount of learning can compensate for the personal nature of

Alcofribas's interpretation. His rhetorical questions:

"La nyct n'est-elle funeste, triste et
mélancholieuse? --- La clarté n'es-
jouit-elle tout nature?"

are far from being conclusively answered by his own viewpoint:

"Elle est noire et obscure par privation
--- Elle est blanche plus que chose que
soit."

We are still no further than Grandgousier's initial personal statement. Alcofribas's mixed bag of erudite exempla cannot conceal the flimsiness of his absoluteness; for it is he who chooses and adduces the examples to prove his own point:

"A quoy prouver je vous pourrois renvoyer au
livre de Laurens Valle contre Bartole".

Yes, but who says Vallà is right?

"---mais le tesmoignage évangélique
vous contentera: Math.xvij, est dict
que, à la transfiguration de Nostre
Seigneur, vestimenta ejus facta sunt
alba sicut lux, ses vestements feurent
faictz blancs comme la lumière".

Then Alcofribas adds, to clinch his assertion:

"par laquelle blancheur lumineuse
donnoit entendre à ses troys apostres
l'idée et figure des joyes éternelles".

And so the vicious circle continues, Alcofribas making unfounded assertions of his own:

"Car par la clarté sont tous humains
esjouiz---

followed by his own examples:

"---comme vous avez le dict d'une vieille
que n'avoit dens en gueulle, encores disoit
-elle: Bona lux. Et Thobie (cap. v) quand
il eut perdu la veue, lorsque Raphael le
salua respondit: "Quelle joye pourray-je
avoir, qui poinct ne voy la lumière du ciel?"
En telle couleur tesmoignèrent les anges la
joye de tout l'univers à la Résurrection
du Sauveur (Joan.xx) et à son Ascension (Act. J)

De semblable parure veit saint Jean Evangéliste
(Apocal. iij et vij) les fidèles vestuz en la
céleste et béatifiée Hiérusalem".

This is impressive; nevertheless it tells us more about the encyclopaedic extent of Alcofribas's learning than about the universal validity of his hypothesis. Indeed Rabelais reveals Alcofribas's own psychological incertitude about his own proof by making him plough on and pile up his proofs endlessly. He cannot fool himself completely.

The exempla became increasingly far-fetched: Alba longa named after a white sow; the white horses which pulled chariots in Roman victory triumphs; the story of Pericles and the white beans; why the lion is afraid of the white cock (with the authority of Proclus, lib. De Sacrificio et Magia). Indeed they spill over into the near farcical and become frankly "fantaisiste".

"Ce est la cause pourquoy Galli (ce sont les François, ainsi appelez parce que blancs sont naturellement comme laict que les Grecz nomment γαλα) volontiers portent plumes blanches sur leurs bonnetz: car par nature ilz sont joyeux, candides, gratieux et bien amez, et pour leur symbole et enseigne ont la fleur plus que nulle autre blanche: c'est le lys".

Finally, Alcofribas pretends to prove his point, once and for all, scientifically. But in fact the erudition - spurred on by Alcofribas's feigned desire for perfection - simply takes over. Words become more important than meaning, until breathlessly the proof comes to its end, headlong, out of control, in a torrent of citations concerning those who died laughing and the mortal effects of saphron. At this point we have entered the world of Janotus de Bragmardo, of the Pardoners of Pantagrue 17 and of Gargantua's Sorbonnard tutors: reason and knowledge have departed company with reality. In the end the object, the aim of the exempla has been forgotten. All that matters is to be right, absolutely. Absolute truth, Rabelais has shown his readers, is a myth inaccessible even to the most rigorous reasoning and the vastest store of erudition.

Alcofribas finally concedes, tongue-in-cheek, that he has somewhat contradicted his own initial intentions:

"Mais quoy! J'entre plus avant en ceste matière
que ne establissois au commencement. icy
doncques calleray mes voilles..."

and adds with a coy wink - implying that nothing at all has been shown "certainement" (as he puts it) and abandoning the promise of the chapter's absolutist title (to "explain" blue as well as white):

"---et diray en un mot que le bleu
signifie certainement le ciel et choses
célestes, par mesmes symboles que le blanc
signifioit joye et plaisir".

In chapter I of my thesis I tried to show that in the humanist-inspired episodes of Gargantua Rabelais communicated his argument on the theme of truth and knowledge by means of what I termed "negative", and "positive" passages. The former group consisted of satirical passages directed at the traditional (in the main religious) authorities and ridiculed the notion that these authorities possessed perfect knowledge and could therefore speak the absolute truth. I included in the latter group those non-comic critical assaults and exposés uttered under the aegis of trustworthy characters. Through these "positive" episodes Rabelais replaced discredited omniscience and perfection with credible alternatives: partial human knowledge and relative truth. A similar balance can be shown to exist in the remainder of the second novel. So far in this chapter, we have examined episodes in which Rabelais took to task the notions of omniscience and absolute truth - and the attitudes underlying these - by showing their failure to give a valid account of reality. My aim now is to demonstrate that Rabelais counterbalanced these by - in a number of important episodes - recommending to his readers a viable alternative to this unacceptable rigidity: partial knowledge and relative truth.

A striking feature of the humanist-inspired episodes was the activity-passiveness leitmotif running through and linking these episodes. It was a brilliantly tangible way of highlighting the opposition between

the finality and fixity of being which characterized the attitude of the authorities (and which Rabelais exposed as fraudulent) and the relativity of becoming which typified Rabelais's approach.

We have, so far in chapter IV, looked at those episodes which demonstrate the fatuousness of claims to totality and which - as in the humanist-inspired episodes - make clear that this "perfection" is achieved by the wilful distorsion of reality to suit one's own point of view. Rigidity was the hallmark of these attempts at finality.

The author of the Blason des couleurs had no hesitation in blatantly imposing his own personal "imposition humaine" on all his readers, in presuming that they should, ipso facto, accept his value-judgement as absolutely valid:

"sans raison, sans cause et sans apparence".

Grandgousier's interpretation - supported by Alcofribas - though it too was personal, was certainly not

"sans raison, sans cause et sans apparence".

Now while Rabelais's persona attacks the arbitrariness and the tyrannical imposition of the Blason's author, he refrains from imposing his own in chapter 9 (and when he does so, tongue-in-cheek, in chapter 10, it is only to show that such an enterprise is bound to fail or to lead to self-deception). His words are typical of the tolerance Rabelais opposes to the bigotry bred of pretended absoluteness (and ultimately the product of the wish-fulfillment of "philautia"):

"J'entends bien que lisans ces motz (ie. Grandgousier's ideas about white and blue) vous mocquez du vieil beuveur et réputez l'exposition des couleurs par trop indague et abhorrente et dictes que blanc signifie foy et bleu fermeté. Mais, sans vous mouvoir, courroucer, eschauffer ny altérer (car le temps est dangereux), respondes-moi, si bon vous semble. D'aulture contraincte ne useray envers vous ny aultres, quelz qu'ilz soient; seulement vous diray un mot de la bouteille".

And so, while the monologues of certitude of more powerful bigots - both Catholic and Protestant - were imposed willy-nilly upon others by force,

Rabelais deliberately rejects imposition and force.

"D'aultre contraincte ne useray envers
vous, ny aultres, quelz qu'ilz soient",

says Alcofribas. While others - dispensing with or twisting reason - have the temerity to claim perfection and absoluteness, Alcofribas tacitly admits the imperfection of his and Grandgousier's knowledge and the consequent relativity of their judgement. He therefore engages the readers in a dialogue, he does not harangue them with his personal "truth":

"respondez-moi, si bon vous semble".

The manner in which Alcofribas treats the "transport des règnes et empires" and the notion of parallel estates once more exemplifies his attitude. To their fraudulent rigidity and finality he opposes a relative account of society in which time and change happen to all and make, on the one hand,

"empereurs, roys ducz, princes et papes en la terre"

and, on the other,

"gueux de l'hostiaire, souffreteux et misérables"

mutually interchangeable. His relative approach leads him to introduce the fluidity and mobility allowing ordinary people a positive role in history and giving them a sense of their own dignity. Once again, they are part of the interchange, the dialogue. Alcofribas's irreverence towards self-assertion and accepted "certitudes" - that attitude which brings him to admit humbly in Gargantua 1 that he, (unlike the authorities) considers himself unfit to pontificate about Jesus,

"car il ne me appartient",

is aptly exemplified in chapter 27.

The scene is the beginning of the invasion of Grandgousier's territory by Picrochole's armies. The advancing hordes destroy and pillage everything before them. They even enter plague-ridden houses, the

same houses which good and virtuous people - who had subsequently died - had entered. Justice, an ordered creation, a perfectly meaningful world as envisaged in the "isle des ferremens" in the Cinquième Livre¹⁴ would, at least, demand the lives of the evil pillagers. Rabelais-Alcofribas rejects such an absolute and ordered view. Let us consider his words in chapter 27:

"Tant feirent et tracassèrent, pillant et larronnant qu'ilz arrivèrent à Seuillé, et détroussèrent hommes et femmes, et prindrent ce qu'ilz peurent: rien ne leurs feut trop chault ne trop pesant. Combien que la peste y feust par la plus grande part des maisons, ilz entroient partout, ravissoient tout ce qu'estoit dedans, et jamais nul n'en print dangier, qui est cas assez merveilleux: car les curez, vicaires, prescheurs, médecins, chirurgiens et apothécaires qui allèrent visiter, penser, guérir prescher et admonester les malades, estoient tous mors d'infection, et ces diables pilleurs et meurtriers oncques n'y prindrent mal".

In the Cinquième Livre Alcofribas had offered his own uncertainty¹⁵ to the perfection, which explained all, of the "isle des ferremens". In this chapter of Gargantua he has once more subverted conventional wisdom, pointed out that phenomena cannot all be explained away satisfactorily; there are always "bavures". Alcofribas proposes no all-embracing answer to this disquieting problem. He simply asks his readers not to accept but to reflect for themselves:

"Dont vient cela, Messieurs? Pensez-y, je vous prie".

Again, Alcofribas encourages the dialogue and rejects the monologue of assertion.

Narrator though he is, Alcofribas is a man like his readers. He possesses no omniscience - for example, when describing the bun-makers of Lerne he does not pretend to know exactly how many buns they are carrying, beyond what he can gauge roughly:

"dix ou douze charges".¹⁴

Like his readers he enjoys good and simple foods and does not hesitate to enter into earthy details, for Rabelais/Alcofribas does not place himself

above his readers :

"Car notez (he addresses them in ch. 25) que
c'est viande céleste manger à desjeuner raisins
avec fouace fraîche, mesmement des pineaulx,
des fiers, des muscadeaulx, de la bicane et des
foyrars pour ceux qui sont constipez de ventre..."

I have merely cited a few examples. From first to last, Gargantua is permeated with the questioning, humorous voice of Alcofribas --disrupting certitude and perfection, inciting the readers to reflect and judge for themselves, to accept nothing human as perfect and absolute.

Rabelais's advocacy of the exchange in opposition to the assertion is particularly well-illustrated in two chapters of Gargantua : ch. 2 "Les Fanfreluches antidotées trouvées en un monument antique" and ch. 5 "Les propos des bien yvres".

The enigma of ch. 2 is deliberately and tantalizingly ambiguous. Never sheer "coq-à-l'âne" and never fully intelligible, it teeters on the edge of the meaningful-meaningless divide. The second stanza, for example, begins :

"Aulcuns disoient que leicher sa pantoufle
Estoit meilleur que guaigner les pardons".

The obscurity seems decipherable at this point ; we feel we can get to grips with the riddle. These look like clear references to the Pope and to the scandalous practice of bartering indulgences. When we read in the subsequent line :

"Mais il survint un affecté marroufle",

Luther immediately springs to mind. But if the poem terms him

"un affecté marroufle",

is it for (as the first two lines would have suggested) or against reforms (as the third line implies) ? The stanza continues :

"Sorti du creux ou l'on pesche aux gardons
Qui dict : "Messieurs, pour Dieu nous en gardons ;
L'anguille y est et en cest estau musse ;
Là trouverez (si près de regardons)
Une grandetare au fond de son aumusse."

Are we any further on ? Conspiratorial hints seem to abound : dire warnings ("pour Dieu nous en gardons"); shady secrecy ("L'anguille y est et en cest estau musse" - reminding us of "anguille sous roche"); a suggestion of church criticism re-inforced by reference to the word "Aumusse" and the expression "Une grandetare". And yet, no real meaning has ever been or can be pinned down. Each reader combines the humorous and the serious in different proportions and forms his own opinion of what the enigma says. Rabelais takes obvious delight in confounding and baffling once-and-for all interpretations - a delight obvious in the ingenious and deliberate misprints and pretended lacunae with which the poem opens. Like Panurge's puns in Pantagruel (and the enigma is, in a way, an extended pun), "les Fanfreluches antidotées" with their ambivalence, uncertainty and their capacity to suggest different meanings simultaneously, stand wholly opposed to the unilaterality which typifies absolutism. The reader of the enigma is asked to look and think, to tease out answers (if there are any). He is in no way requested to imbibe firm meanings.

The first important thing to note about the "Propes des bienyvres" - a chapter which Rabelais made particularly appealing, with its sparkling pace, "brio" and "bonhommie" - is the total absence of authorial intervention. Nothing in the rustic scene is interpreted by the narrator; no background material is supplied, no characters named or character-portraits drawn. They consist entirely of snatches of conversation, quips, riddles, jokes, "boutades". The reader is left to identify the speakers by himself, to fit the words to the appropriate speaker. It is the reader who must, by paying attention and interpreting critically, introduce order into the raw material provided by the author. We are worlds away from the authorial manipulation which Rabelais burlesqued at the beginning of Pantagruel. We are no longer in the presence of a browbeating monologue conducted by the author's "je". Rabelais, instead, establishes a genuine

dialogue between himself and his readership.

The "Propos" is not only a dialogue between author and readers. Its whole intelligibility, humour and movement revolve around the give-and-take of dialogue. No statement in the chapter exists or has meaning singly. The sound or sense of a word provokes a response which is taken up again and again.

"Par ma foy, ma commère, je ne peuz
entrer en bette"

complains a female guest, which provokes from her companion the question

"Vous estes morfondue, m'amie?"

The affirmative answer to this query:

"Voire"

is misinterpreted by a third person as "boire" (linked to the "bette" of the initial speaker). This person then exclaims in his enthusiasm:

"Ventre saint Quenet! parlons de boire".

The theme is subsequently taken up by a fourth guest who affirms:

"Je ne boy que à mes heures, comme la mulle du pape".

The ecclesiastical reference leads to a further development in the mouth of his companion, which branches off, in turn, into a whole series of jokes concerning the origin of thirst.

A passage such as this:

"- Petite pluye abat grand vend. Longues beuvettes rompent
le tonnoire.
- Mais, si ma couille pissait telle urine la voudriez-vous
bien sugcer ?
-Je retiens après.
- Paige, baille; je t'insinue ma nomination en mon tour",

is meaningless when the snatches of conversation are considered separately. They each become meaningful when seen together as a unit, as elements of a dialogue. Only then do the legal-sexual "double entendres", linking the quips, take on sense.

The omnipresence of "pyot" in this chapter, providing the

very basis (literally and metaphorically) of the conversations and drawing them all together, is not without significance. The communion and interchange which Rabelais exalts in this chapter (and Rabelais/Alcofribas remarks warmly in chapter 4:

"c'estoit passe-temps céleste les veoir ainsi soy rigouller"), are fittingly described in the presence of wine and drinking, which symbolize conviviality, talk, exchange of ideas, expansion. What is fixed, final, self-centred is banished from the company of Rabelais's merry-makers.

Social barriers too are shown to have been broken down by the dialogue's fluidity. People from all walks of life intermingle in the Rabelais's willow-meadow. Peasants: we have quoted the two "commères", but there are plenty of others:

"Je laveroy volontiers les tripes de ce veau
que j'ay ce matin habillé"

proclaims one of Grandgousier's farm-workers, while another connoisseur of livestock declares:

"Voicy trippes de jeu et guodebillaux d'
envy de ce fauveau à la raye noire. O,
pour Dieu, estrillons-le à profict de
mesnaige".

Soldiers.

"Lans Tringue"

calls out a German-speaking "lansquenet".

Merchants. These appreciators of Rabelais's wine are used to dealing in fabrics:

"- Et, par mon âme, ce n'est que vin de tafetas.
-Hen, hen, il est à une aurette, bien drappé
et de bonne laine".

Clerics.

"-Je ne boy que à mes heures, comme la mulle
du pape.
-Je ne boy que en mon bréviaire comme un beau
père gardien

/---/

- Je boy comme un templier.
- Et je tamquam sponsus.
- Et moy sicut terra sine aqua.

/---/

- Le grand Dieu feist les planettes et nous faisons les platz netz.
- J'ai la parolle de Dieu en bouche: Sitio"

Intellectuals. One group exclaims in rhyme:

- "-Ainsi se feist Jacques Cueur riche.
- Ainsi profitent boys en friche.
- Ainsi conquesta Baecchus l'Inde.
- Ainsi philosophie Mélinde"

Lawyers.

- "-Qui feut premier, soif ou beuverye?
- Soif, car qui eust beu sans soif durant le temps de innocence?
- Beuverye, car privatio presupponit habitum. Je suis cleric.
- Faecundi Calices quem non fecere disertum?

/---/

Si le papier de mes schédules beuvoyt aussi bien que je foys, mes créditeurs auroient bien leur vin quand on viendroyt à la formule d'exhiber"

All mingle freely without restraint.

The failure of pretended absolute truth and omniscience - with its rigidity, finality, passive belief and imposition - to enlighten people was depicted by Rabelais in his portrayal of Gargantua's education at the hands of his Sorbonnard teachers. From bright the boy was made a witless dunce by his masters' "truth". Rabelais not only contrasts Gargantua's initial education with what follows under the guidance of Ponocrates but also with what came before. What the readers clearly see is that the young Gargantua, by being given freedom and by exercising his curiosity and initiative, arrived at correct, if relative, judgements in the real world. He was sharp, quick-witted, resourceful; he was able to attain partial knowledge and relative truth - which, Rabelais obviously believes, are all that matter in the real world.

Quae supra nos, nihil ad nos.¹⁶

As a child Gargantua is in no way hemmed in ; he is allowed to develop and explore in his own time --learning, for himself, by experience, the hard way :

"Tousjours se vaultroit par les fanges, se mascaroyt le nez, se chauffouroit le visaige, aculoyt ses souliers, baisloit souvent au mousches, et couroit volentiers après les parpaillons, desquelz son père tenoit l'empire. Il pissoit sus ses souliers, il chyoit en sa chemise, il se mouschoyt à ses manches, il mourvoit dedans sa soupe, et patroilloit par tout lieux, et beuvoit en sa pantoufle, et se frottoit ordinairement le ventre d'un panier".¹⁷

Rabelais strikingly conveys this process of learning by experience ; this route to knowledge which is not laid down a priori but discovered for oneself by using proverbs. These embody popular wisdom ; Gargantua learns them not off-by-heart but by turning them upside down until experience finally teaches him his mistake, until he modifies his behaviour gradually by experience :

"Ses dens aguysoit d'un sabot, ses mains lavoit de potaige, se pignoit d'un goubelet /---/ se soucioyt aussi peu des raitz comme des tonduz..."¹⁸

That this education, based on personal initiative, has made of Gargantua an enterprising child is demonstrated in Gargantua 12. His horse-game is rich in invention and in clever developments. Rabelais depicts this by the pace of his description of the boy's play and by the rich variety of his vocabulary. The duc de Francrepas and the comte de Mouillevent soon come to know, to their cost, the razor-sharp flexibility of mind of the young man as he leads them a merry-dance round his father's castle. Their conversation with the child after he has led them to "his" stables reveals, in the boy's adroit manipulation of words and lively sense of fun, a potential Rabelais.

When a concrete and as yet unsolved problem confronts this child (and concrete problems are of their very nature relative, a point underlined by Rabelais's humorous choice of problem), Gargantua does not forget the methodology of his infancy: experiment personally until the right answer, the truth, is attained. He asks no one, accepts no one else's personal opinion on which arse-wipe will suit him. He simply and painstakingly tries all the possible solutions for himself; this, Rabelais shows, is a process so stimulating that it even incites the youngster to artistic endeavor in the shape of scatological verse.¹⁹

The young Gargantua knows there are no final, transcendental solutions available to him; only trial and error. He consequently uses his own judgement as the ultimate touchstone of rightness for him personally. His words make Rabelais's meaning crystal clear:

"J'ay (says Gargantua) par longue
et curieuse expérience inventé un moyen
de me torcher le cul, le plus seigneurial, le
plus excellent, le plus expédient que jamais
feut veu".²⁰

Gargantua has by personal experience gleaned the concrete and partial experience he requires to solve his concrete problem. He has reached a personal and relative truth. This is the Gargantua stultified by the purveyors of omniscience and absolute truth.

CHAPTER V

THE CONCEPT OF DUALITY IN "GARGANTUA"

My analysis of Pantagruel and Gargantua has, I hope, enabled us to build up a clear idea on the one hand of the nature of the truth and knowledge which Rabelais believed was accessible to us and, on the other, of the means by which these can be attained. Plainly, primary sources, empirical information constitute for Rabelais the essential stepping-stones to knowledge. This raw material must be assessed critically and arranged meaningfully by the use of unbiased - and consequently uncompromised - reason. Since Rabelais recognized that our mortal condition means that knowledge is not finite, there can, in his eyes, be no limits placed on the process of acquiring knowledge. The logical extension of Rabelais's position was that nobody could lay claim to absolute truth and that nobody, as a consequence, could insist that his authority was absolute.

On the other hand we saw clearly that Rabelais dismissed the opposite position - the notion that all human judgements, doomed as they are to relativity, are equally valid or invalid. On the contrary we can infer, from the evidence I have looked at from his first two novels, that where certain conditions have been fulfilled (where the available evidence has been consulted at first hand, where reason has been applied and where the distortions caused by vanity are absent) Rabelais considered that a whole range of valid opinions could exist side by side. Each one expressed one truthful facet of the boundless Truth of reality.

We saw in Pantagruel and Gargantua how Rabelais's position on this question expressed itself. He discredited the world of rigid absolutes in favour of a world of fluid relatives. But does he replace the monolith solely with the "décousu"? Was there no way of depicting, fictionally, a closer approximation to the complexity of reality? Rabelais was undoubtedly preoccupied with the issue of portraying reality in the round without

trading it by oversimplification . In what way, then, did he carry out a synthesis of relative and equally valid views of life in such a way as to give the reader a higher and fuller account of reality's Truth?

I have already in the course of my examination of Books I and II drawn attention to a number of features which reveal Rabelais's fascination with and attraction to the idea of duality, to the paradox. In Gargantua he favourably contrasted the movement, fluidity and interchange of the dialogue to the rigid monologue of absolutism. In Pantagruel it was Panurge, his ambiguous, good-bad hero, who revealed and stood opposed to deceptive façades of perfection. Again in the first novel the two heroes Pantagruel and Panurge were represented as being from radically different backgrounds, (the prince and the "déclassé") and as having totally different temperaments. They seemed poles apart --yet Rabelais made them inseparable companions:

"vous ne bougerez jamais de ma compagnie," states Pantagruel;
"vous et moy ferons un nouveau pair d'amitié telle que feut
entre Enée et Achates".¹

Although surface appearances would seem to condemn them to incompatibility, they are portrayed as needing each other as a complement to their character. The one is incomplete and one-sided without the other. In both novels we also observed how fond Rabelais was of the pun, which, within the same words, harbours two divergent meanings.

In this final chapter I shall try to show how in Gargantua, Rabelais makes the reconciliation of valid but seemingly opposing views of reality a dominant motif --a means of fictionally transcending the relativity of personal truth and at the same time of replacing for his readers the absolutism he discredits. It is entirely typical of Rabelais that he should propound his dualistic conception of truth through the structure and content of Gargantua and in no way didactically. To the end Rabelais imposes nothing on his readers; he implies, they have the freedom to infer .

As Alcofribas puts it:

"répondez-moi, si bon vous semble. D'aulture contraincte ne useray envers vous, ny aultres, quelz qu'ilz soient; seulement vous diray un mot de la bouteille".²

Rabelais's background again provides a clue to his preoccupation with duality. Rabelais achieved considerable stature both as a scholar and as a doctor, but he was no typical "parvenu" rejecting his humble country origins and showing no further interest in the ordinary people from whose ranks he rose. He was a humanist in both the moral and scholarly senses, as I defined them in the first chapter. In Pantagruel and Gargantua he expressed both his profound erudition, his humanist concerns (in the narrow and broad sense) and his attachment to people and his preoccupation with their physical and moral well-being. All within the same covers. The famous chapter 8 of Pantagruel stands alongside the grotesque Pantagrueline cosmogony, the ribald and irreverent list of books in the "librairie de St. Victor" and Panurge's method of building the walls of Paris. Thélème shares the same covers not only with Gargantua's denunciation of the uselessness of monks to the community but with the "propos des bien yvres", with Gargantua's birth and with his discovery of the best "torche cul", with Frère Jean's racy conversation. Later generations of readers of Rabelais found, as we observed, this "promiscuity" of superior and inferior elements very difficult to explain away. They could not grasp that Rabelais was trying to depict the whole of himself, the entire man, by expressing both sides of his nature each of which he accepted equally and in which he recognized a mirror image of the ambivalence of real life; each side alone would not have come near either the truth of his complex personality, or the fullness and multiplicity of reality. La Bruyère, for instance saw only an irreconcilable antithesis:

"Farot et Rabelais sont inexcusables d'avoir semé l'ordure dans leurs écrits: tous deux avaient assez de génie et de naturel pour pouvoir s'en passer, même à l'égard de ceux qui cherchent moins à admirer qu'à rire dans un auteur. Rabelais surtout est incompréhensible. Son livre est une énigme, quoi qu'on veuille dire, inexplicable...C'est un monstreux assemblage d'une morale fine et ingénieuse et d'une sale corruption. Où il est mauvais, il passe bien loin au delà du pire, c'est le charme de la canaille; où il est bon, il va jusques à l'exquis et à l'excellent, il peut être le mets des plus délicats".³

This fundamentally erroneous judgement which failed to see that the juxtaposition and fusion of seeming opposites was a factor not of discord but of harmony in Rabelais's work was lucidly exposed by P. Stapfer when he insisted:

"il faut débarrasser la critique de l'erreur traditionnelle qui faisant deux parts dans ce livre extraordinaire, l'une des beautés fortes et exquisés, l'autre des polissonneries et des ordures, déclare la première compromise par le contact de la seconde..."⁴

Where others discerned total antithesis, Rabelais saw that the only way to give the fullest possible expression to his complex personality and to reality in his work was by depicting side-by-side the extreme facets of them. The harmonious unity of opposites in himself and which he had observed in life itself was the basis of the unity of opposites in his novels.

A. Lefranc sub-titles one of his introductory chapters to his edition of Rabelais's works "le réalisme de Rabelais".⁵ The conclusions which his research work had prompted were revolutionary. In spite of a number of conjectures which were little more than speculation (eg. the identification of Grandgousier and Gargantua with Rabelais's grandfather and father respectively), Lefranc convincingly demonstrated the extent to which the events, characters and topography of Gargantua were based on detailed events, precise characters and the accurate topography of Rabelais's native Chinonais to which he was, as I described in detail in my first chapter, particularly attached and of which he had an almost encyclopaedic knowledge.

The minor characters of book II --Jehan Denyau, Ulrich Gallet, Frogier, Marquet-- were convincingly demonstrated by documentation to be based on real people whom Rabelais knew⁶. By studying relevant documents Lefranc revealed how the idea of the Picrocholine war was derived by Rabelais from the dispute which opposed the Rabelais family and other landowners to the Seigneur de Lerne (Gaucher de St. Marthe) over the question of river rights. He proved that :

"Grandgousier et Gargantua résident dans le domaine de la famille de Rabelais, c'est-à-dire à la Devinière. Cette identification, si longtemps insoupçonnée, ne fait aujourd'hui l'objet d'aucun doute : l'examen de la topographie du 1er livre (Lefranc means Gargantua) et notamment celui des circonstances de la guerre picrocholine le prouvent de la manière la plus évidente. Toute la guerre se déroule autour de la Devinière. Il n'est aucune donnée de la nomenclature des lieux cités qui ne converge, pour ainsi dire, vers cette résidence familiale de Rabelais /.../ Cherchons maintenant, à travers le roman, les données qu'on peut y relever sur les parents du futur héros : Grandgousier et sa femme ; nous aboutirons bientôt à de nouvelles constatations, non moins intéressantes. Ainsi, on sait, tant par les documents authentiques que par des inductions des plus sérieuses, quelles étaient les principales propriétés de la famille de Maître François ; or il se trouve que les places fortes de Grandgousier (I, XLVII) concordent avec les biens que possédèrent le père et le grand-père de Rabelais : La Devinière, Chavigny-en-Vallée, Gravot, Quinquenays. Même remarque également frappante au sujet de l'énumération contenue dans le discours de Panurge en Lanternois (II, IX): Gravot, Chavigny, La Pomardièrre, La Devinière près (Ci)nays, énumération ajoutée en 1532, après le voyage de Touraine. Quand Grandgousier offre de donner sa métairie de La Pomardièrre à Marquet (I, XXXII), c'est une propriété de la famille de Rabelais qu'il propose. Quand Gargantua distribue à ses compagnons d'armes des terres pour les récompenser de leurs services : que leur octroie-t-il ? Des biens de la famille du conteur ou situés dans des localités où cette dernière possédait des immeubles. Un seul bien est excepté de cette distribution : La Devinière. Pourquoi Gargantua garde-t-il celui-là ? Il n'y a qu'une réponse : c'est parce qu'il y habite avec son père."⁷

Section IV of Lefranc's chapter on Rabelais's realism was headed :

"Les opérations de la guerre picrocholine expliquées par la topographie régionale."⁸ In effect the whole action of the grandiose campaigns could be

scaled down perfectly to the tiny villages surrounding la Devinière. The action could be contained within the bounds of the large scale map which was reproduced in Lefranc's edition of Rabelais's works. All the geographical and tactical details described by Rabelais turned out, upon examination by the great Positivist critics, to be totally accurate, as if the entire war had taken place in the few square miles of Touraine where Rabelais spent his childhood. When we add to these observations the references and reminiscences of Touraine which we noted in a previous chapter,⁹ there can be no doubt that Gargantua was steeped in, indeed based on, the precise, local and personal reality which Rabelais was so lovingly familiar with. Is this "verismo" the limit of Rabelais's realism? Considering this aspect alone of Rabelais's realism, Lefranc wrote:

"L'un des résultats les plus certains des récentes recherches rabelaisiennes a été sans aucun doute de montrer en Rabelais le plus grand et le plus habile des réalistes, c'est-à-dire l'écrivain qui a cherché, aimé et représenté le vrai, ou mieux encore la vie, avec une passion, une continuité et une puissance sans égales".¹⁰

But is what Lefranc describes "le vrai" in its totality? It would seem fairer to say that it represents one side of reality --precise, obsessive detail --represented in the fullest and most artistically satisfying way possible. Yet, this narrow, local reality was Rabelais's personal reality; it was "le vrai", in fact, of the most strictly personal kind. It was not a complete or comprehensive depiction of reality.

Rabelais's realism was much more complex and profound. To this highly personal and detailed aspect of it he allied the broadest possible backcloth. Real life viewed simultaneously through the microscope and the telescope. By uniting broad, free brushstrokes and the minute detail of the miniaturist Rabelais succeeded in conveying a much fuller account of the multifariousness of real life, a much closer approximation to reality in all its complexity. The dispute between Ficrochole and Gargantua is not

conceived by Rabelais or understood by the reader as a series of local skirmishes involving two country squires; it is a full-scale war of world dimensions. What does Picrochole's army consist of?

"feut par son édict constitué le seigneur Trepelu sus l'avant-garde, en laquelle furent contez seize mille quatorze hacquebutiers, trente cinq mille et unze aventuriers.

A l'artillerie fut commis le Grand Escuyer Toucquedillon, en laquelle feurent contées neuf cens quatorze grosses pièces de bronze en canons, doubles canons, baselicz, serpentines, couleuvrines, bombardes, faulcons, passevolans, spiroles et aultres pièces".¹¹

What are Picrochole's ambitions? As we saw, nothing short of world domination; as his lieutenants perfidiously promised him:

"...Aujourd'hui nous vous rendons le plus heureux, plus chevaleureux prince qui oncques feust depuis la mort de Alexandre Macédo".¹²

The final confrontation between the opposing armies at la Roche-Clermaud, around Rabelais's properties "La Devinière", "Chavigny", "Cravot" and "Quinquenays", is a monumental battle, a siege of massive proportions:

"Cependant l'assault continuoit. Les gens de Picrochole ne sçavoient si le meilleur estoit sortir hors et les recevoir, ou bien garder la ville sans bouger. Mais furieusement sortit avecques quelque bande d'hommes d'armes de sa maison, et la feut receu et festoyé à grandz coups de canon qui gresloient devers les courtaux, dont les Gargantuistes se retirèrent au val pour mieulx donner lieu à l'artillerie.

Ceux de la ville défendoient le mieulx que povoient, mais les traictz passoiēt outre par dessus sans nul férir. Aulcuns de la bande, saulvez de l'artillerie, donnèrent fièrement sur nos gens /.../ hors chargèrent si roidement, toutesfoys grandement feurent endommaigez par ceulx qui estoient sus les murs, en coupz de traict et artillerie. Quoy voyent, Gargantua en grande puissance alla les secourir et commença son artillerie à hurter sus ce quartier de murailles, tant que toute la force de la ville y feut revocquée".¹³

We may be in the heart of provincial Touraine but the scenario conjured up by Rabelais is on a different level; it is on a world scale. The grave and considered words of Grandgousier's ambassador Gallet speak not of petty statelets but of the mightiest nations on earth. Rabelais deliberately associated his giants' conquests as we observed, with those of the French

monarchy itself.¹⁴ The Chinonais and the world stage are presented simultaneously when Gallet addresses Picrocholo.

Grandgousier may be the quasi-peasant patriarch, the "vieil beuveur":

"qui après souper se chauffe les couilles à un beau, clair et grand feu, et attendent graisler des chastaines, escript au foyer avec un baston bruslé d'un bout dont on escharbotte le feu, faisant à sa femme et famille de beaulx contes du temps jadis".¹⁵

He is equally the educated, wise, humane king who writes to his son in the gravest tone about the impending conflict with Picrocholo --an urgent, saddened tone reserved for a potential catastrophe not for a farcical and minor tussle.¹⁶

On the one hand, Rabelais, in describing the original peasant dispute, for instance, adopted the homeliest, down-to-earth register through Alcofribas, for his narrative. On the other hand, we have the contrast of the Ciceronian polish of Grandgousier's letter,¹⁷ of Gallet's harangue¹⁸ and of Gargantua's "contion"¹⁹ (where again the associations with the French monarchy are renewed) which begins on this broad rhetorical, introductory sweep:

"Nos pères, ayeulx et ancestres de toute memoire ont esté de ce sens et ceste nature que des batailles par eulx consommées ont, pour signe mémorial des triumphes et victoires, plus volontiers érigé trophées et monumens ès cueurs des vaincuz par grâce, que ès terres par eulx conquestées par architecture: car plus estimoient la vive souvenance des humains acquise par liberalité que la mute inscription des arcs, colonnes et pyramides, subjecte ès calamitez de l'air et envie de chascun".

Rabelais has confronted his readers with the extremes of linguistic register in his pursuit of a more total reality --the most relaxed down-to-earthness and the most formal, carefully constructed rhetoric. He has brought together in the character of Grandgousier the "bon vieillard" peasant and the humane Christian king. In the Picrocholine war he has fused the parochial and the international.

Not for nothing was Rabelais interested in the fictional possibilities of gigantism --to such an extent that he adopted giants for the titles and

heroes of his five novels and made gigantism a framework of both Pantagruel and Gargantua. The flexibility of scale offered by the giant-theme were ideally suited to Rabelais's fictional ends. Not only did it enable him to disrupt linearity and rigidity, to create a topsy-turvy world where all was possible and which was conducive to the sharpening of his readers' critical faculties (a vital first step on the road to the conception of truth and knowledge proposed by Rabelais). He could also, by expanding or contracting his heroes' stature, enlarge or concentrate his readers' vistas. Grandgousier could be king of Utopia but also lord of the few square miles around La Devinière. Rabelais could switch from the merry-making in the Rabelais's willow-meadow to Thélème, from Gargantua's arse-wipe to his humanist education, from the dispute over grapes and bun to the serious issues involved in the conflict between Grandgousier and Picrochole. By deliberately creating a convention of ambiguity about his giants' size (at times they come across as humans eg. in chapter 6 or in the chapters to do with Gargantua's childhood; at other times they are portrayed as exceptional human beings eg. in the chapters on Gargantua's humanist education, where the intellectual but above all the physical feats, while plausible, would be too much for a real human-being; while sometimes, eg. in the incident of the pilgrims and the salad or the cannon balls in Gargantua's hair,²⁰ the vast size of Rabelais's giant returns human concerns to that relativity I described when analysing the episode in Pantagruel's mouth in Pantagruel 32) Rabelais was able to combine, in a fictionally satisfactory way, microcosm and macrocosm.

The close, warm friendship binding the two most fully-developed heroes in book II --Gargantua and Frère Jean --could, if analysed coldly, appear a puzzling one. It could, that is, if it were not for the fact that Rabelais quite obviously approves whole-heartedly of them both. They

seem the flesh and blood embodiments of both poles of Rabelais's own character. The adult Gargantua is a serious, sober intellectual. He has been through a highly rigorous and strictly organized mental-cum-physical humanist education --which required moderation, self-restraint and abstinence, which was intellectual and physical, not sensual. The product of such a "formation" was educated in active seriousness, in high-mindedness and in sobriety.

Is there no other acceptable route for the man with a different temperament to take? The initial pen-portrait of Frère Jean by Rabelais is --like that, in Pantagruel, of Panurge --an approving, benevolent one; yet the personality and temperament suggested by it seem to be the antithesis of Gargantua's:

"En l'abbaye estoit pour lors un moyne claustrier, nommé Frère Jean des Entonneurs, jeune, guallant, frisque, de hayt, bien à dextre, hardy, aventureux, deliberé, hault, maigre, bien fendu de gueule, bien advantaigé en nez, beau despescheur d'heures, beau desbrideur de nesses, beau descriteur de vigiles, pour tout dire sommairement vray moyne si oncques en feut depuys que le monde moynant moyna de moynerie; au reste clerc ès dents en matière de bréviaire".21

As this picture implies and as subsequent events confirm we are in the presence of an utterly different kind of character from the humanist prince. No intellectual, he is absolutely ignorant of the humanist disciplines and of Graeco-Roman scholarship as such and has obviously had no formal education. His temperament is inclined not only towards the physical, active life, but more particularly towards the life of the senses. And just as Gargantua is depicted as developing his own inclinations to their highest pitch, so Frère Jean is the epitome of "joie de vivre" and active outward-directed energy. His élan in whatever field --and the dynamism of Rabelais's initial description sets the tone --is phenomenal. Here is how he puts paid to Ficrochole's marauding troops:

"Es uns escarbouilloyt la cervelle, ès autres rompoyt bras et jambes, ès autres deslochoyt les spondyles du coul, ès autres demouloyt les reins, avaloyt le nez, poschoyt les yeux, fendoyt les mandibules, enforcoyt les

dens en la gueule, descroulloyt les omoplates, sphaceloit les grèves, desgondoit les ischies, débézilloit les fauciles".²²

His conversation on the subject of food, drink and sex is ribald and irresistible:

"...j'ay un estomac pavé, creux comme la botte saint Benoist, tousjours ouvert comme la gibbessière d'un advocat. De tous poissons, fors que la tanche, prenez l'aesle de la perdrys ou la cuisse d'une nonnain. N'est-ce falotement mourir quand on meurt le caiche roidde? Nostre prieur ayme fort le blanc de chappon".²³

Appropriately his fighting energy, when he is first introduced to us, is devoted to the vital task of defending the abbey's vineyard and hence the year's supply of wine.²⁴

Frère Jean --this man of instinct and impulse par excellence --has no time for discipline, restrictions or man-made rules of any kind. Significantly it is to this propounder of personal responsibility and free-will that Rabelais gives the task of deciding the rules --in fact the anti-rules --of Thélème:

"requist à Gargantua qu'il instituast sa religion au contraire de toutes aultres"²⁵

The monk spells out his attitude in chapter 41:

"Jamais je ne me assubjectis à heures: les heures sont faictez pour l'homme et non l'homme pour les heures. Pour tant je foys des miennes à guise d'estrivières: je les acourcis ou allonge quand bon me semble..."

Rabelais goes to considerable lengths to illustrate and draw attention to the fundamentally different, indeed totally opposed natures, of Gargantua and Frère Jean. Two episodes in particular are especially important in demonstrating the equal validity and status accorded by Rabelais to the judgements of Gargantua and Frère Jean. A difference of opinion separates Rabelais's two heroes in chapter 41. Having decided to set out on a reconnaissance mission at midnight, Gargantua and his men take a nap to rest before the appointed hour. Frère Jean is first to wake:

"Juy esveillé, tous les aultres esveilla, chantant à pleine voix la chanson:

Ho, Regnault, réveille-toy, veille;

Ho, Regnault, réveille-toy

Quand tous furent éveilléés, il dict:

"Messieurs, l'on dict que matines commencent par tousser et souper par boyre. Faisons au rebours: commençons maintenant noz matines par boyre, et de soir, à l'entrée de souper, nous tousserons à qui mieulx mieulx".

This "régime" obviously suits Frère Jean who has always thrived on it. Gargantua however remembers how such behaviour had degraded and made him a slothful and gluttonous thick-head under his Sorbonnard preceptors and how he, in his turn, had thrived under a strictly regulated and moderate diet. He therefore counters Frère Jean thus:

"Boyre si tost après le dormir, ce n'est vescu en diète de médecine. Il se fault premier escuver l'estomach des superfluitez et excréments".

The chapters devoted to Gargantua's two educations clearly lend great weight to Gargantua's view and might tend, in the readers' mind, to assume the appearance of an absolute, universally-valid truth. Rabelais is therefore careful to give the last word to the monk, to even out the argument:

"C'est (dist le moyne) bien médecine! Cent diables me saultent au corps s'il n'y a plus de vieulx hyrognes qu'il n'y a de vieulx médecins! J'ay composé avecques mon appétit en telle paction que tousjours il se couche avecques moy, et à cela je donne bon ordre le jour durant, aussi avecques moy il se liève. Rendez tant que voudrez vos cures, je m'en voys après mon tyrouer".

Which way is the right way? Each is equally valid; it depends on the individual temperament. This conclusion is implicit in the scene which follows the two heroes' difference of opinion:

"L'on apresta carbonnades à force et belles soupes de primes, et beut le moyne à son plaisir. Aucuns luy tindrent compagnie, les aultres s'en deportèrent".

The novel ends on an enigma, in chapter 58, found under the foundations of Thélème. The meaning of the ambiguous poem is unclear. The final words of Gargantua are taken up by the interpretations of this enigma offered by Gargantua and Frère Jean. Their interpretations are signific-

ant. The serious-minded humanist prince focuses on those aspects of the poem which are in line with his own pre-occupations; his own temperament colours his judgement which - based directly and faithfully on the evidence of the enigma as it is --is a perfectly valid one:

"La lecture de cestuy monument parachevée, Gargantua souspira profondément, et dist ès assistants:

"Ce n'est de maintenant que les gens reduictz à la cré-
ance Evangélique sont persécutez; mais bien heureux est
celuy qui ne sera scandalizé et qui tousjours tendra au
but au blanc que Dieu, par son cher Filz, nous a préfix,
sans par ses affections charnelles estre distract ny
diverty".

The complexity of this enigma is, however, a mirror of the enigma of life. There is no one answer available. Its Truth is not reducible to one definitive and exclusive judgement. Gargantua's view, founded on an accurate reading of the enigma is a relatively truthful one. Frère Jean's interpretation is founded equally on the factual evidence available. His judgement --a product like Gargantua's of his own character --is diametrically opposed to Gargantua's but is valid also:

"Le moyne dist:

"Que pensez-vous, en vostre entendement, estre par cest
énigme désigné et signifié?

--Quoy? dist Gargantua. Le discours et maintien de
vérité divine.

--Par saint Coderan (dist le moyne), telle n'est mon
exposition: le stille est de Merlin le Prophète. Donnez
y allégories et intelligences tant graves que voudrez,
et y ravassez, vous et tout le monde, ainsy que voudrez.
De ma part, je n'y pense aultre sens enclous qu'une
description du jeu de paulme soubz obscures parolles.
Les suborneurs de gens sont les faiseurs de parties, qui
sont ordinairement amys, et, après les deux chasses faic-
tes, sort hors le jeu celluy qui y estoit et l'aultre y
entre. On croyt le premier qui dict si l'esteuf est sus
ou soubz la chorde. Les eaulx sont les sueurs; les chor-
des des raquestes sont faictes de boyaux de moutons ou
de chèvres; la machine ronde est la pelote ou l'esteuf.
Après le jeu, on se rafraichit devant un clair feu et
change l'on de chemise, et volontiers banquette l'on,
mais plus joyeusement ceulx qui ont guaigné. Et grand
chère!"

The juxtaposition and combination of both interpretations does greater justice to the total and complex reality of the enigma and transcends

personal, if valid, interpretations.

The "full-man" is not Gargantua, nor is it Frère Jean. The path taken by each is not the only path. However by uniting these antithetical human beings in Gargantua Rabelais creates a more satisfactory, less one-sided "uomo universale". After all, Rabelais, the "bouffon" and the "savant", the peasant and the intellectual, had united in himself and his fiction the opposing truths of Frère Jean and Gargantua. That is why, opposed in temperament and inclination as they may be, they are, far from being irreconcilable enemies, - the greatest and most inseparable of friends. Gargantua delights in the monk's conversation and calls him to his end of the table:

"Cza, Cza (dist Gargantua), une escarcelle icy, auprès de moy, à ce bout!"²⁶

It is Gargantua who gives Frère Jean the right to decide upon the anti-rules of Thélème and he himself who formulates Frère Jean's wishes in the matter. Rabelais emphasizes that the capture and possible death of Frère Jean by Picrochole's men grieves Gargantua in particular:

"Adoncques commenda qu'on aprestat très bien à desjeuner pour les rafraichir. Le tout apresté, l'on appella Gargantua; mais tant luy grevoit de ce que le moyne ne comparoit aulcunement, qu'il ne vouloit ny boyre ny manger".²⁷

And there is a firm basis to this friendship, for, in point of fact, despite their seemingly opposed personalities they have so much that is vital in common. Gargantua is a man of activity (and we saw the importance, in chapter 1 of the thesis, of the activity-passiveness opposition in Rabelais's conception of truth and knowledge) but so is the monk. We saw the energy (contrasted with the pathetic passiveness of his stuttering monk companions) Frère Jean deployed in the defence of the abbey vineyard.²⁸ It is Gargantua himself who praises Frère Jean for his activity in chapter 40:

"...il travaille; il labeure..."

to which Frère Jean adds:

"Je foys (dist le moyne) bien dadvantrige, car, en despeschant nos matines et anniversaires on cueur, ensemble je fois des chordes d'arbaleste, je polys des matraz et

garrots, je foyz des retz et des poches à prendre les connis.
Jamais je ne suis oisif."

He is above all --and this too unites him to Gargantua --particularly concerned to help people. Again it is Gargantua himself in chapter 40 who makes this point plain:

"il défont les opprimez; il conforte les affligez; il
subvient ès souffreteux; il garde les clous de l'abbaye"

His energy, like Gargantua's is not self-centred; it is turned outwards, towards the community. Above all, like Gargantua, he enjoys (though to a greater degree) wine and (to the same degree) conviviality, conversation, dialogue. Their reconciliation and friendship is ultimately made possible by the tolerance of both men. Again Rabelais puts the words of praise for Frère Jean into Gargantua's mouth:

"Maintenant tel est nostre bon Frère Jean. Pour tant
chascun le soubhaite en sa compaignie. Il n'est point
bigot il n'est point dessiré; il est honeste, joyeux,
delibéré, bon compaignon;"²⁹

Few readers of Rabelais can have read the prologue of Gargantua without feeling simultaneously amused and bemused. On the one hand we can clearly perceive that on the level of surface meaning the prologue is irreconcilably split down the middle by the two antithetical authorial interpretations of the novel's contents which are proposed to us. Yet on the other hand we undoubtedly experience an equally strong sensation of aesthetic satisfaction; a feeling that somehow, in spite of the overt message of the passage, the introduction forms a harmonious whole which overcomes the contradiction. What is more, a full reading of Gargantua invariably confirms that this intuitive reaction corresponds to the complex reconciliation of opposites, the fusion of those things which are normally regarded as being detached extremes, which we find in the work's fifty-eight chapters. This fusion, as we noted, is an expression of Rabelais's outlook on life. Life cannot be fully appreciated by singling out and concentrating on one side of it, to the exclusion of the other. Similarly, by the device, the shock-tactic of comic antithesis reconciled (the seeming

opposites, seriousness and humour, brought together) Rabelais awakens our critical faculties, stimulates us into realizing for ourselves that Gargantua, in which Rabelais mirrors his world-view, cannot be fully appreciated on one level. Its true significance, we are led by Rabelais to infer, lies in the way it embraces, harmonizes and artistically gives expressions to different but valid attitudes to existence. Let us now consider in greater detail the prologue itself.

Alcofribas's first argument - his initial advice to the reader on how to "read" Gargantua - can be summarized as follows. If you, the reader, go by appearances alone then my books will quite obviously seem to you to be no more than frivolities (their titles and the names of their characters are ridiculous and funny for instance). However, this response is only an impression produced by a cursory glance, or by a superficial reading. If the books are carefully studied and their contents are studiously weighed up then the works' true meaning, their higher sense - beyond the external flippancy - will be revealed:

"vous convient estre saiges pour fleurer, sentir
et estimerces beaulx livres de haulte gresse, légiers
au prochaz et hardiz à la rencontre; puis par curieuse
leçon et méditation fréquente, rompre l'os et sugger
la sustantificque mouelle - c'est à dire ce que j'entends par
ces symboles Pythagoricques avecques espoir certain d'estre
faictz escors et preux à ladicte lecture: car en icelle bien
aultre goust trouverez et doctrine plus absconce, laquelle
vous révélera de très haultz sacremens et mystères horrificques,
tant en ce que concerne nostre religion que aussi l'estat poli-
iticq et vie oeconomique".

The amusing form then has no other function than to be a stepping-stone to the real content.

Hardly have we digested this when Alcofribas veers and changes tack. He argues directly against his initial line. He takes to mocking any suggestion that his work contains

"haultes matières et sciences profondes".

His new line can be condensed thus. If you reject, as I do, the notion that Homer and Ovid's writings contain all the profound allegories

discovered and foisted on them by subsequent commentators then why not react to my books in exactly the same manner? The book you have before you is nothing more than what it purports to be on the surface:

"à la composition de ce livre seigneurial,
je ne perdiz ne employay oncques plus,
my aultre temps que celluy qui estoit
estably à prendre ma réfection corporelle,
sçavoir est beuvant et mangeant".

If, as they have been accused of doing, my books reek of wine then I am pleased and proud of it. What you are about to read is no more than

"belles billes vézées"

composed by a

"cerveau caséiforme".

Alcofribas's final advice is explicit:

"Or esbaudissez-vous, mes amours, et
guayement lisez le reste, tout à l'aise
du corps et au profit des reins!"

The two interpretations proposed by Rabelais's persona seem contradictory and irreconcilable. On the one hand the reader must not simply read for pleasure, but must penetrate through the outer shell of humour to reach the loftier kernel. On the other hand the reader should discount any such ideas and read purely and simply for pleasure. Here: "sustentifique moelle"; there: "joyeuses et nouvelles chronicques". There would appear to be no way of uniting the two extreme critiques. Which is the reader to believe? If he adopts one, he must necessarily disavow the other and so render Rabelais's novel lopsided.

So much for what is said in the prologue. Let us now look at how it is said. An analysis of Alcofribas's first line shows that his thesis is argued essentially by means of a number of exempla of frivolous, useless outsides concealing serious, precious, worthwhile interiors. We can isolate two extended exempla (the Socrates-Sileni and bone-marrow oppositions) and two simple ones (the habit and the monk and the "cappe

Hespanole" contrasted with its wearer). In the bone-marrow exemplum works by Plato and Galen are cited while in the Socrates-Sileni comparison Plato's Symposium is involved. All this seems perfectly erudite and in order in an argument stressing the seriousness of a book's contents. Does the tone of the passage, however, square with this high-mindedness?

Popularised by Erasmus's adage "Sileni Alcibiades" the Socrates-Sileni comparison was almost a "topos" among the humanists. Rabelais, in point of fact, follows Erasmus's version closely but his divergences from it are particularly significant.³⁰ From the first, Rabelais essentially and comically falsifies the comparison by describing the Sileni not as little boxes with amusing designs painted on the outside which, when opened, revealed a little figurine of a God but as those

"petites boîtes, telle que voyons de présent
ès boutiques des apothécaires, pinctes au-dessus
de figures joyeuses et frivoles, comme de harpies,
satyres, oysons bridez, lièvres cornuz, canes
bastées, boucqs volans, cerfz limonniers et aultres
telles pinctures contrefaictes à plaisir pour exciter
le monde à rire (quel fut Silène, maistre du bon
Bacchus); mais au dedans l'on réservoir les fines
drogues comme baulme, ambre gris, amomon, musc,
zivette, pierreries et aultres choses précieuses".

In this description the seriousness of the comparison is subverted by inappropriate, "low" elements. There is the unnecessary (in a serious context) reminder the Silenus was

"maistre du bon Bacchus".

The reader's attention is deviated from the surface "message" by the way Rabelais has Alcofribas concentrate on the painted figures on the boxes - which are grotesque and funny - and the list of the precious drugs within (a list which is needlessly long for the conveyance of information alone). When we come to the description of Socrates's shortcomings we again find disruptive modifications (as compared with Erasmus's epithets):

"le nez pointu ...infortuné en femmes"

-these belong to Rabelais. Indeed Rabelais's rendering of the sage's

outward appearance is decidedly popular in tone, with phrases such as:

"le voyans au dehors et l'estimans par l'extérieure apparence, n'en eussiez donné un poupeau d'oignon... tousjours riant, tousjours beuvant d'autant à un chascun, tousjours se guabelant..."

Above all, the introductory address by Alcofribas to the readers:

"Beuveurs très illustres, et vous, Vérolez très précieux (car à vous, non à aultres, sont dédiés mes escriptz)..."

with its mock-serious reference to drink and the pox cannot help but remind us^{of} and make the link with the other references to ribaldry and drink (Alcibiades, the Symposium - called by Rabelais "le Bancquet" -, the Sileni, Bacchus, Socrates's drinking habits) which undermine the pretended seriousness of Alcofribas's first thesis.

The outside-inside comparison, once established, is applied by Alcofribas to "his" work. However, Alcofribas contradicts his claims by the manner in which he makes them:

"A quel propos, en voustre advis, tend ce prélude et coup d'essay? Par autant que vous, mes bons disciples, et quelques aultres foulz de séjour, lisant les joyeux tiltres d'aucuns livres de nostre invention, comme Gargantua, Pantagruel, Fessepinte, La Dignité des Braguettes, Des Foys au lard cum commento etc... jugez trop facilement ne estre au dedans traicté que mocqueries, folateries et menteries joyeuses, vue que l'enseigne extérieure (c'est le tiltre) sans plus avant enquérir est communément receu à derision et gaudisserie".

In fact this entire mock-serious transition draws heavily from Lucian's comic Préface ou Bacchus.³¹ How can we really take Alcofribas literally, take his words to be Rabelais's when the list of books he refers to as

"aucuns livres de nostre invention"

contains works - Fessepinte, La Dignité des Braguettes, Des Foys^{au} lard cum commento - which Rabelais never wrote?

An examination of the bone-marrow comparison serves to further reinforce this conclusion. The exemplum, although argued with fine repetitions and questions:

"vous avez peu noter de quelle dévotion il (the dog) le guette (the bone), de quel soing il le garde, de quel ferveur il le tient, de quelle prudence il l'entomme, de quelle affection il le brise et de quelle diligence il le sugce. Qui le induict à ce faire? Quel est l'espoir de son estude? Quel bien prétend-il? Rien plus qu'un peu de mouelle".

is once more robbed of its serious force by the very triviality of the subject-matter. The reader's amusement is increased by the reference to a man screwing up his features as he uncorks a bottle and by Alcofribas's "patois" interjections:

"Crochetastes-vous oncques bouteilles?
Caisgne! Réduisez à mémoire la contenance
qu'aviez".

Just as the Socrates-Sileni comparison was brought down to earth by the pervasive wine-theme so food is a disruptive factor in the bone-marrow exemplum. From the dog chewing its bone lovingly, the idea is carried over to Alcofribas's pretended work:

"ces beaulx livres de haulte gresse...
rompre l'os et sugcer la sustantificque
mouelle...en icelle bien aultre goust
trouverez".

As for the effect of the celebrated conclusion to this section which speaks of revelations to be made in Gargantua concerning

"nostre religion...aussi l'estat
politicq, et vie oeconomique",

we cannot help but feel how the effect of this portentous conclusion is checked by the outdated and inappropriate chivalrous vocabulary with which it is accompanied;

"avecques espoir certain d'estre faictz escors
et preux à ladicte lecture...laquelle vous
révélera de très haultz sacremens et mystères
horrificques..."

Are we then to reject the idea of a hidden meaning in Gargantua in favour of the "pleasure-only" thesis propounded by Alcofribas in the second section of the prologue? Does this reading of Book II represent a more faithful interpretation than the first? In order, this time, to

disclaim any hidden, allegorical meaning in "his" writings - and while insisting (in a created literary fiction) that Gargantua occupied his meal-times only - Alcofribas once again employs a number of examples to back up his argument. Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, Ovid's Metomorphoses, the Gospels, Ennius, Horace, Demosthenes are all cited as are critics ancient and modern:

"Plutarche, Héraclides Ponticq, Eustatic;
Phornute...Politian".

In the first thesis, which purported to be perfectly serious, we saw that the exempla, in their humorous incongruity, were elements of disruption; contradicting the argument's import. In the second section however, which sets itself up as a non-thesis, the examples have exactly the opposite effect: they obviously come from an erudite man of letters, not from a hack writer aiming at amusing a mass readership and they, in effect, run counter to the notion that what we are reading are "ballivernes". When we add to this the indubitable fact that the seeds of the idea that the novel is serious have already been planted in our mind, we are alerted against a superficial judgement, against accepting this extreme interpretation at face-value. In fact although Alcofribas rejects the allegories tacked on to Homer and Ovid he does not for a moment question the seriousness of their work. Real seriousness may lie elsewhere than in hidden allegories.

It seems clear that the pleasure-instruction contradiction is strictly a fiction. It is a way of posing a dilemma - for neither thesis can satisfactorily be applied alone to Gargantua. The resolution to the contradiction, the unification of its elements is to be found both in the ambiguity of the prologue and in Gargantua itself. In posing the dilemma in theory, Rabelais has resolved it in practice.

It comes as no surprise to us when we find out what Gargantua adopts as his emblem:

"Pour son image avoit, en une platine d'or

pesant soixante et huyt marcs, une figure
d'esmail compéent, en laquelle estoit
pourtraict un corps humain ayant deux
testes, l'une virée vers l'autre,
quatre bras, quatre piedz et deux culz,
telz que dict Platon in Symposio avoir
esté l'humaine nature à son commencement
mystic, et autour estoit escript en lettres
Ioniques: ΑΓΑΠΗ ΟΥ ΖΗΤΕΙ ΤΑ ΕΑΥΤΗΣ"

This is, significantly, a composite emblem which re-unites what seem to be opposites. Not only do we find fused in it pagan and Christian elements (St. Paul's phrase about Charity written in Greek script), we also find the intellectual and corporeal, the individual and the altruistic, brought together in harmony, for the figure of the androgene from Plato's Symposium is a symbol of physical love (Eros), while St. Paul's phrase evokes brotherly love (Agape).

CONCLUSION.

Let us now try to bring together the main conclusions to be drawn from this study of Pantagruel and Gargantua.

In the opening chapter of the thesis I analysed those episodes of both books in which Rabelais expressed, through his interlocuters or by means of satire, his humanist views about religion, law and the education (in the widest sense) of the individual. My examination tended to reveal that Rabelais's criticisms and recommendations were not a simple series^{of} unconnected erudite contributions of scholarly interest alone. It was clear that they constituted a closely-linked argument with a common, thematic thread. We can sum it up as follows. Taken together, the humanist-inspired episodes raise and develop wider issues concerning the nature of truth and knowledge and its fundamental importance for the lives of ordinary people. It emerged from my analysis of the forms in which these episodes were couched that Rabelais strongly desired that his ideas should be understood by a wide range of readers.

Underlying these chapters we discovered Rabelais's concern to open his readers' eyes, to let them see that the religious and legal establishments were guilty of intellectual and moral deception. By the cumulative effect of both serious argument and satire, Rabelais exposed and undermined the techniques by means of which the authorities hoodwinked people with "Mateotechnie" (a false knowledge based on secondary sources) by which they obtained awe and respect. In disabusing his readers Rabelais had them infer that in the scholarly sphere mental passiveness is disastrous. He sugges-

ted, as we saw, that only the information acquired by one's senses is trustworthy ; that it is only by using critical reason, by exercising informed judgement on primary sources, that partial knowledge and relative truth can be attained.

We went on to examine in what ways the rigidity of the social status quo tended to be a strong factor contributing to mental immobility and consequently to passive acceptance among the early sixteenth century public. This was a major stumbling block to Rabelais's wish to encourage an independent attitude of mind in his readers, to stimulate them into thinking and judging for themselves. It was in this light that we examined the ways in which, in Pantagruel, Rabelais fictionally disrupted the social status quo --its dignitaries, its pompousness, its institutions, its great constants. Pantagruel is a topsy-turvy and irreverent fictional world, where roles and precedence are reversed, like in the Saturnalia of Antiquity and in the Mediaeval and early Renaissance Feast of Fools.

We turned our attention, in the third chapter of the study, to the ways in which Rabelais, in Pantagruel, made use of his very medium, words, in order to undermine in as unobtrusive (and yet, in a sense in as direct) a way as possible, for his readers, the trustworthiness --as knowledge capable of leading one to a reliable picture-- of information which is passively believed at second-hand. Pantagruel is dominated by parody, by the de-mystification of verbal smoke-screens. Rabelais held up word-patterns --impressive, authoritative, plausible-- for his readers' scrutiny and reminded them by his burlesques that they were no more than words which could

be manipulated to appear truthful and so induce belief.

Fond and forme do not always coincide, as Rabelais demonstrated.

In the two concluding chapters we focused our attention on how Rabelais developed and enriched his underlying argument on the theme of truth and knowledge. We isolated the hallmarks of the conception of truth and knowledge which Rabelais was at pains to get his readers to reject. These were, we concluded, the deliberate, blinkered view of the multifariousness of reality to include only that which agrees with one's own viewpoint ; the distortion of empirical information by the abuse of reason (the result of self-love) ; the claim that truth is one, indivisible and --at the same time-- one's own private property ; the imposition (intolerant and consequently unsmiling) of this "truth" upon others, willy-nilly.

We looked at a wide variety of episodes in Gargantua in which Rabelais indirectly exposed the fallaciousness of these principal traits --and hence undermined this conception of truth-- by showing how inadequate these attitudes were at producing a valid account of reality.

To the fallacious one-sidedness, absoluteness and perfection of the conception of truth and knowledge embodied in the attitudes of Picrochole and the author of the Blason des Couleurs , of Gargantua's Sorbonnard teachers and in the episode of the "transport des empires", Rabelais provided a counterweight which underlined his own attitude. To these he opposed the fluid relativity of the social order which a reasonable interpretation of society gives ; the personal trial

and error exploration of reality undertaken by the young Gargantua who, by the critical examination of first-hand information, arrives at relative truth ; the relative truthfulness of Alcofribas's initial explanation of colour symbolism ; above all the humility of the narrator Alcofribas who never claims "Truth". Alcofribas always refuses to impose his personal opinions on the readers. Through his irony, ambiguity and sheer good humour (which in Rabelais's work is shown to accompany the realisation that absolute truth is not possible for man) Alcofribas provokes the readers into reflexion.

The study concludes with a series of analyses of major episodes and aspects of Gargantua. The paradoxical, yet harmonious prologue ; the enigma at the novel's close to which two opposing but complementary solutions are proposed. Gargantua's syncretic emblem ; the paradoxical but hugely successful friendship between Gargantua and Frère Jean ; the dovetailing of seriousness and humour in the novel as a whole ; the fusion of detailed description and a larger-than-life framework. From these analyses it seemed reasonable to deduce that Rabelais wished to show that (in reaction to the absolute truth he rejected) a bringing together and blending of opposing but complementary aspects of life does greater justice to the multifariousness of reality. Rabelais's conception of duality takes in the fullness of real life without trying to pin it down.

Rabelais published his first two novels at that very moment of flux when, in the light of the great shift in values witnessed by the Renaissance, Catholics and Reformers were striving to establish a new criterion of knowledge and

hence of truth within a predominantly mediaeval framework. Whether the criteria they evolved were derived ultimately from ecclesiastical authority, which had to be obeyed, or from the individual illuminated by Grace, the authority of neither criterion could be proved satisfactorily by human reason. In spite of this, each side maintained its own criterion to be absolute and its own truth to be beyond challenge.

How do the underlying attitudes we saw in Pantagruel and Gargantua appear against the background of this polemic, at a moment when attitudes had not yet fully crystallized and when Rabelais could still --in Pantagruel 8, in Gargantua 23 and 24-- proclaim the re-birth of man? We concluded that in these two works Rabelais exalted human reason and the validity (indeed necessity) of exercising individual judgements. The novels seem indisputably to express in the warmest terms the thrilling immensity of a world whose limits were receding constantly and the consequent limitlessness of the learning process. We found a consistent emphasis on the autonomy of the rational individual, on the search for a knowledge and truth which remain relative, coupled with a hostility towards whatever claims to be transcendental. We recognize, like Ernst Bloch¹, that these are the authentic hallmarks of Renaissance thought.

Footnotes to Introduction.

- 1) In the year 1532, Rabelais wrote the prefatory letter to J. Manardi's Epistolarum medicinalium tomus secundus, Lyon, S. Gryphius, 1532, pp. 2-3 (dedicated to Tiraqueau). To Geoffroy d'Estissac Rabelais dedicated his Hippocratis et Galeni libri aliquot, ex recognitione Francisci Rabelaesi, medici omnibus numeris absolutissimi, Lyon, S. Gryphius, 1532, pp. 3-7. To Amaury Bouchard, Rabelais dedicated the (false) Roman document entitled Ex reliquiis venerandae antiquitatis Lucii Cuspидii testamentum. Item contractus venditionis antiquis Romanorum temporibus initus, Lyon, S. Gryphius, 1532.
- 2) Pantagrueline Prognostication, "Au Liseur Bénivole", p. 949.
- 3) Pantagrueline Prognostication, "Au Liseur Bénivole", p. 949.
- 4) Cf. the Almanach de 1535, p. 959 : "Autrement en prédire seroit légèreté à moy comme à vous simplesse d'y adjoûter foy. Et n'est encores, depuis la création d'Adam, né homme qui en ait traité ou baillé chose à quoy l'on deust acquiescer et arrester en assurance... De l'homme la vie est trop brève, le sens trop fragile et l'entendement trop distrait pour comprendre choses tant esloignées de nous".
- 5) The apparently unusual "predictions" of the Pantagrueline Prognostication (eg. "...les chancres iront de cousté, et les cordiers à reculons", ch. 2, p. 950) are all odd-looking statements of the obvious. Rabelais refuses to speculate about the unknown : "Ce que sera dict au par-sus sera passé au gros tamys à tors et à travers, et par adventure adviendra, par adventure n'advendrá mie". For Rabelais, the mysteries of the future are in God's hands alone (Pantagrueline Prognostication, ch. 1, p. 950) and are no business of man's (Almanach de 1533, p. 955).
- 6) The importance of the theme of self-love in Rabelais's work has long been recognized. It has tended to be regarded as important, however, from the Tiers Livre onwards (for instance, M. Screech treats the problem of self-love with reference to the Panurge of the Tiers Livre in The Rabelaisian Marriage, London, 1958). In this thesis I hope to show how important it is as a theme in Pantagruel and Gargantua, linked to what Rabelais had to say about truth and knowledge.
- 7) D. G. Coleman, Rabelais. A critical Study in Prose Fiction, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1971, pp. 45-77.
- 8) D. G. Coleman, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

- 9) M. Bakhtin, Rabelais and his World, M. I. T. Press, Cambridge Mass. and London, 1968.
- 10) F. Rigolot, "Les langues de Rabelais" in Etudes Rabelaisiennes, X, Droz, 1972 (the entire volume is devoted to Rigolot's study).
- 11) In his chapter devoted to Rabelais in the World and the Book, Paladin Books, 1973, pp 85-98.
- 12) Cf. the "Epistre Liminaire" of the Quart Livre, p. 565 : "Allors me dictes que de telles calumnies avoit esté le défunct roy François, d'éterne mémoire adverty ; et curieusement aiant, par la voix et prononciation du plus docte et fidèle Anagnoste de ce royaume, ouy et entendu lecture distincte de iceulx livres miens...". On p. 80 of the Triumphes de l'abbaye des conards..., Rouen, N. Dugard, 1587, there is a vivid description of how, at a grand dinner of the "Connards" in 1542 "y avait un personnage abillé en hermite, assis sus une chaire, lequel, au lieu de Bible, lisoit continuellement, durant ledit disner, La Cronique Pantagruel".
- 13) Cf., for instance, the prologue of the Chroniques admirables du puissant Roy Gargantua (S.L.N.D.) which relies on the readers knowing the mockery of the romance clichés in the prologue of Pantagruel : "Beuveurs très illustres et vous avalleurs très précieux... Pour le commencement de ceste vraye cronique... nous prendrons Huon de Bordeaux, Tristan du Lyonnais, Jourdain de Blaves, Mandeville... Ogier le Dannoys... Mabrun... dont y a assey pour bien approuver la vroye vérité de ceste présente hystoire".
- 14) It is of course well-known that many members of the nobility could not read Latin. So much so that when Budé wrote his Institution du Prince, he did so in French, as he wished to make sure François I could read it. However, such an example of a humanist writing in French is a rarity. Rabelais surely wrote to be read by nobles and the king as well, but Du Bellay leaves us in no doubt about who Rabelais was really writing for : "Je te veux bien avertir que tous les savants hommes de France n'ont point méprisé leur vulgaire. Celui qui fit renaître Aristophanes et feint si bien le nez de Lucien en porte bien témoignage". (Deffence et illustration de la langue francoyse, ed. critique par H. Chamard, Paris, Fontemoing, 1904, p. 331).
- 15) In his Nugae, M. Vasosan, fol. 71 v^o-72 r^o. For details cf. M. de Grève, L'interprétation de Rabelais au XVII^e siècle, t. III of Etudes Rabelaisiennes, Droz, Geneva, 1961, pp 17-18.
- 16) In spite of A. Glauser's convincing study, Le faux Rabelais, (Librairie Nizer, Paris, 1975), I still regard the Fifth Book as authentic. I acknowledge with Glauser

that the text is more uneven than any of the other four books (p. 179 "les innombrables faiblesses et incongruités que le Cinquième Livre présente"). However as Glauser himself puts it (p. 179) : "Ce n'est pas par une analyse stylistique de passages séparés que l'on arriverait à une solution : le style rabelaisien défie toute définition". And while Glauser does not see in the Fifth Book that internal tension between author-reader-text "qui donne à chaque épisode sa dynamique" (p. 179), to me the thematic continuity on the subject of truth and knowledge, which I find in the Cinquième Livre, puts its partial authorship, at least, by Rabelais beyond doubt. George A. Petrossian's recent quantitative study (The problem of the authenticity of the "Cinquième livre de Pantagruel" Etudes Rabelaisiennes , t. XIII, pp I-64), seems to square with my conclusion.

- 17) M. de Grève, op.cit, "avant propos", p. 9.

Footnotes to Chapter I

- 1) In his letter to Budé, dated March 4, 1521, from the Franciscan monastery at Fontenay-le-Comte (Demerson, p. 936) Rabelais describes himself as "Franciscus Rabelaesus Franciscanus". In his reply of April 12 of the same year (text in "Revue des Etudes Rabelaisiennes"-known henceforth as R.E.R. - VI, 45) Budé addresses Rabelais as "sodali franciscano". In 1525 Clement VII authorized Rabelais to transfer to the Benedictine monastery at Maillezois. This information is found in the "Supplicatio pro aportasia" addressed by Rabelais in 1535 to Paul III and reprinted in the edition of Rabelais's works edited by Ch. Marty-Laveaux (Paris, Lemerre, 1881, 5 vol. in -8^o) vol. III, pp. 336-339: "Cum alias postquam devotus Orator Franciscus Rabelais Presbyter. Turonensis Diocoesis tunc Ordinem Fratrum Minorum de Observantia pofessus, sibi quod de Ordine Fratrum Minorum ---ad ordinem S. Benedicti in Ecclesia Maleacensi dicti ordinis se libere transferre---Clementem Papem VII Praedecessorum Vestrum Apostolica obtinuerat autoritate concedi seu indulgeri".
- 2) cf. the laudatory ode by Salmon Macrin: "Ad Franciscum Rablaesum Chinonien. medicum Peritissimum"(in Salmonii Macrini ---Odorum libri sex ad Franciscum Regem Regum invictissimumque, Lyon, S. Gryphius, 1537, 8vo., folio 7, verso). In his Carminum libri quatuor (Lyon, Dolet, 1538, in -4^o, book II, ch. I, pp. 62-63) Dolet praises Rabelais thus:

"Franciscus Rabelaesus honos et gloria certa
Artis Paeoniae, qui vel de limine Ditis
Extincto revocare potest, et reddere luci".
- 3) Rabelais appears to have been among the first to carry out public dissections of corpses. Testimony of this is found in a poem by Dolet in "Carminum libri quatuor" (op. cit.) pp. 164-165, entitled "Cuiusdam Epitaphium, qui exemplo edito strangulatus, publico postea spectaculo lugduni sectus est, Francisco Rabelaeso Medico doctissimo fabricam corporis interpretante". He also invented a number of inovatory surgical devices (cf. R. Antonioli "Rabelais et la médecine" in Etudes Rabelaisiennes, XII, 1976, pp. 99-104).
- 4) Between 1532 and 1535 Rabelais was doctor at the "Grand Hostel Dieu de Notre Dame de Pitié du Pont-du-Rhône" in Lyon (for the terms of his employment cf. Lyon communal archives, series GG, reproduced in Marty-Laveaux, op. cit., vol. III, pp. 324-325; the same archives, series BB, 54, fol. 18 relate Rabelais's replacement as doctor in Feb. 1535). From 1534 Rabelais was private physician to Cardinal Jean du Bellay, accompanying him to Italy in 1534 (cf. his dedicatory letter to du Bellay prefacing the "Topographia antiquae Romae" of Marliani reproduced in Demerson, pp. 955-957) and in 1535-36 (cf. Rabelais's letters written from Rome to Geoffroy d'Estissac in Demerson, pp. 960-968). Rabelais was subsequently doctor to du Bellay's brother Guillaume, Seigneur de Langey, at whose deathbed, in 1543, he was present (an incident referred to in the Tiers Livre, 21 and the Quart Livre, 26 and 27).
- 5) On the question of the dating of Pantagruel and Gargantua cf. A. Lefranc "Les dates de publication de Pantagruel et des premiers ouvrages de Rabelais" in R.E.R. IX, 1911, pp. 151-158.

For a more recent consideration of the problem cf. M.A. Screech "Some reflections on the problem of dating Gargantua A and B" in Etudes Rabelaisiennes, IX, pp. 9-56; M. Françon "Note sur la datation de Gargantua, ibid. pp. 81-82; G. Defaux "Les dates de composition et de publication du Gargantua" in Etudes Rabelaisiennes, IX, pp. 137-147; M.A. Screech "Some further reflections on the dating of Gargantua (A) and (B) ---", Etudes Rabelaisiennes, XII, pp. 79-111.

- 6) Rabelais's name appears on the University of Montpellier's "Registre des matricules" (1502-1561, f. 109 recto) on Sept. 17, 1530. His "inscription de doctorat" appears on the same register (f.33 recto), dated May 22, 1537.
- 7) Ch. 12 of the Quart Livre and chpts. 11-15 of the Cinquième Livre are the best known examples. Chpts. 39-42 of the Tiers Livre bear ample witness to Rabelais's knowledge of legal terminology.
- 8) Reproduced in Demerson, pp. 942-943.
- 9) Quoted from the prefatory letter to the Cuspidii testamentum reproduced in Demerson, pp. 946-947.
- 10) Quoted from the Quart Livre, 37,^{p684} The "conseiller au parlement" of Bordeaux is also praised in Pantagruel, 10, pp. 126-127
- 11) "Homme de Grans Lettres grecques et latines" says the title of Rabelais's verse-epistle to Jean Bouchet (Poitiers, Jacques Bouchet, 1545 fo. XXXV) reproduced in Demerson, pp. 940-941. The poem in praise of Rabelais's learning by Gilbert Ducher ("Vulteus") entitled "Ad Philosophiam, de Francisco Rabelaeso" (Epigrammaton libri duo, Lyon, S. Gryphius, 1538, in-16^o, p. 54) ends thus:

"In primis sane Rabelaesum, principam eundem
Supremum in studiis diva tuis Sophia".
- Claude Chappuis in Discours de la Court (Rouen, C. le Roy and N. le Roux, 1543, in -8^o, p. 54) has the following to say of Rabelais:

"Et Rabelais à nul qu'à soy semblable
Par son savoir partout recommandable".
- 12) In E. Fournier Le théâtre français avant la Renaissance 1450-1550, B. Franklin, New York - ong. Published 1872. Fournier dates the farce tentatively 1523-25.
- 13) Letter to Budé reproduced in Demerson, pp. 936-938; letter to Tiraqueau, ibid. pp. 942-943; letter to Erasmus, ibid. p. 948.
- 14) According to Tiraqueau, De legibus connubialibus, Paris, Galliot du Pré, 1524 (cf. R.E.R. III, 138 and IV, 72), Rabelais translated the ~~first~~ ^{second} book of Herodotus.
- 15) Respectively, of the "Aphorisms" and the "Ars Parva", with Rabelais's own notes: "Hippocratis ac Galeni libri aliquot, ex recognitione Francisisci Rabelaesi, medici omnibus numeris absolutissimi---", Lyon, S. Gryphius, 1532.

- 16) Rabelais tells us so in the prefatory letter to his edition of Hippocrates and Galen, reproduced in Demerson, pp, 944-946. J. Boyssonée mentions Rabelais's lecture in a letter (of 1537) to Maurice Scève, in the Bibliothèque de Toulouse, ms. 835, fos. 36-37, quoted by M. de Grève in L'Interprétation de Rabelais au XVI^e siècle, "Etudes Rabelaisiennes", III, Droz, Geneva, 1961, p.44: "Montpessulum --- Rabelaesus frequenti auditorio librum Prognosticorum Hippocratis praelegebat."
- 17) cf. the prefatory letter to his edition of Hippocrates and Galen, op. cit.: "Collatis enim eorum traductionibus cum exemplari graecanico, quod, praeter ea quae vulgo circumferantur, habebam vetustissimum literisque Ionicis elegantissime castigatissimeque exaratum---".
- 18) In the prefatory letter to Manardi, op. cit., Rabelais describes d'Estissac as "Maecenatum meum benignissimum" and in the prefatory letter to his edition of Hippocrates and Galen he refers to him as "nostrates episcopi absolutissimum probitatis, modestiae, humanitatis exemplar ---".
- 19) The prefatory letter to Bouchard is reproduced in Demerson, pp. 946-947. The title of the publication was Ex reliquiis venerandae antiquitatis Lucii Cuspidii testamentum. Item contractus venditionis antiquis Romanorum temporibus initus, Lyon, S. Gryphius, 1532.
- 20) op. cit.
- 21) op. cit. p. 942.
- 22) op. cit., p. 948: "Patrem te dixi, matrem etiam dicerem, si per indulgentiam mihi id tuam liceret---Salve itaque etiam atque etiam, pater amantissime, pater decusque Patriae, litterarum adsector---veritatis propugnator invictissime".
- 23) Pantagruel, 8 ll. 117-118, p. 108
- 24) Pantagruel, 8 ll. 113-114, p. 107
- 25) Pantagruel, 10 ll. 80-91, pp. 129-130
- 26) Pantagruel, 29 ll. 70-74, pp. 296-297.
- 27) An examination of a corpse is related by Dolet in his "Carminum libri quatuor", op. cit. pp. 62-63. In Pantagruel, 8, Gargantua urges this method as a means of knowing man more fully; "par fréquentes anatomies acquiers-toy parfaite connoissance de l'aultre monde, qui est l'homme".
- 28) Pantagruel, 10, pp. 123-132
- 29) In Pantagruel, 7, ^{pp. 72-97} biblical glosses and "glossateurs" are often at the receiving end of Rabelais's parodies, eg. "Mammetrectus", a bible-gloss by Marchesino of Reggio, is clearly shown to be little appreciated by Rabelais for its religious value, while Nicolas des Orbeaux commentary on a commentary suffers in consequence:

"Mammotretus de Baboinis et Cingis, cum commento d'Orbellis". In Pantagruel, 4, Rabelais makes fun of Nicolas de Lyra's well-known biblical commentary by invoking it in the burlesque context of the child Pantagruel's escape from his cradle:

"Dont povez bien croire ce que dict Nicolas de Lyra, sur le passaige du Psaultier où il est escript: Et Og regem Basan ---" (pp. 46-47)

The dangers of biblical interpretation are comically exposed by Rabelais in Gargantua, 38^{pp. 328-329} when the pilgrims, in the most far-fetched way, relate Psalm 124 to their own mishaps and thereby rationalize them. (For information on de Lyra's glosses in psalters of Rabelais's day cf. J. Plattard "L'Écriture sainte et la littérature scriptuaire dans l'oeuvre de Rabelais" in R.E.R. VIII, 264).

30) Such as the following three examples from Pantagruel, 7 (pp. 72-97)

"Quaestio subtilissima, utrum Chimera in vacuo bombinans possit comedere secundas intentiones, et fuit debatuta par decem Hebdomadas in concilio Constantiensi".

"Pasquillii Doctoris marmorei, De capreolis cum chardon-eta comendendis, tempore Papali ab Ecclesia interdicto".

"De Calcaribus removendis decades undecim, per M. Albericum de Rosata".

Rabelais is presumably attacking what he saw as futile scholastic debates such as those considered by Aquinas in the Summa Theologica eg. iii. Q. LXXV, Article III "Whether the substance of bread or wine is annihilated after the consecration of this sacrament"; *ibid.* Q. LXXVII, Article II "Whether in this sacrament the spatial dimension (quantitas dimensiva) of bread or wine is the subject of other accidents" (quoted from H. Bettenson Documents of the Christian Church, O.U.P., London, 1963, pp. 207-211). The Scholastic theologians are taken to task for this kind of speculation by Rabelais's mentor Erasmus in his "Praise of Folly" (first published 1511), translated by B. Radice with introduction and notes by A.H.T. Levi, Penguin 1971, pp. 152-160.

31) In the Prologue to Pantagruel^{R.} scathingly juxtaposes the effectiveness of the "vie de sainte Marguerite" as a confort to women in labour with that of the "Grandes Chroniques" to the "pauvres vérolez et goutteux". The dialogue between Grandgousier and Gargamelle in Gargantua, 6 (prudently removed from the 1542 F. Juste edition) is even more explicit (p. 68):

"Ha! (dist elle) vous dictes bien et ayme beaucoup mieulx ouyr telz propos de l'Évangile et mieux m'en trouve que de ouyr la vie de sainte Marguerite ou quelque autre capharderie". (Lefranc, variants of ch. 6).

32) cf. the "Quaresmeprenant" chapters (29-32) of the Quart Livre and Rabelais's letter to his friend Antoine Hullot (reproduced in Demerson, p. 975: "---celluy grand, bon, piteux Dieux, lequel ne créa oncques le quaresme, ouy bien les sallades, arans, merluz, carpes, bechetz, dars, umbrines, ablettes, rippes, etc. Item les bons vins---".

33) Gargantua, 45, pp. 364-366

"Voyre mais (dist Grandgousier), qu'alliez-vous faire a Saint Sebastian? - Nous allions (dist Lasdaller) luy offrir noz votes contre la peste. - O (dist Grand-

gousier) pauvres gens, estimez-vous que la peste vienne de Saint Sébastian? - Ouy vrayement (resp-ondit Lasdaller), noz prescheurs nous l'afferment. -Ouy? (dist Grandgousier) les faulx prophètes vous annoncent-ilz telz abus: Blasphèment-ilz en ceste façon les justes et saintz de Dieu qu'ilz les font semblables aux diables qui ne font que mal entre les humains---".

- 34) Gargantua, 45. Grandgousier chides the credulous victims of this abuse (p. 368):

"dorénavant ne soyez faciles à ces ocieux et inutiles voyages---".

- 35) In Pantagruel, 17, ^{pp. 198-200} Panurge outwits the sellers of indulgences at their own game of deceit. The base venality of the practise which instigated Luther to nail up his theses is conveyed in Janotus's cheap and ignorant offer to Gargantua in Gargantua, 19 (p. 170):

"Vultis etiam pardonos? Par diem, vos habebitis et nihil payabitis".

- 36) Rabelais's opposition not simply to the abusive practices of monks but to their very existence is constant in his novels. cf. Pantagruel, 34 (pp. 346-348):

"telles sectes de gens, qui se sont desguizés comme masques pour tromper le monde /---/ Iceulx fuyez, abhorrissez et haissez autant que je foys, et vous en trouverez bien, sur ma foy, et, si désirez estre bons Pantagruelistes ---ne vous fiez jamais en gens qui regardent par un pertuys".

Gargantua's condemnation of monks in Gargantua, 40 is comprehensive. At the very sight of boatloads of monks in the Quart Livre, 18, p. 632, "Pantagruel restoit tout pensif et mélancholicque". The attack on monks, their futility and egotism, in the Cinquième Livre, 1-6 is sustained and ferocious. It is of course made clear that the ideal Thélème is founded in direct opposition to monastic rules and from it (ch. 54) are excluded "cagotz, caffars empantoufflez, Gueux mitoufflez" (p. 11). John Wycliffe, who like Rabelais, abhorred the parasitic nature of the religious orders, plausibly expressed Rabelais's opinion of monks and monasteries when he said "That any one who enters a private religion (ie. religious house), either of those having property or of mendicants, is rendered more inapt and unfit for the performance of the commands of God. That the religious who live in private religions are not of the Christian religion". cf. "Propositions of Wycliffe condemned at London, 1382, and at the Council of Constance, 1415", "Fasciculi Zizaniorum", 277-282-Rolls Series. Mansi, XXVII. 1207 E sqq., quoted in Bettenson, Documents of the Christian Church, pp. 243-245 (propositions 21 and 23).

- 37) What Rabelais calls ("les abus d'un tas de papelars et faulx prophètes, qui ont par) constitutions humaines et inventions depravées (envenimé tout le monde---") (My underlining) (ch. 29, pp. 296-297).
- 38) This is the expression employed by Rabelais in his prefatory letter to Manardi's work (op. cit.).

- 39) Pantagruel, 10, p. 128
- 40) Pantagruel, 10, pp. 128-129
 "au cas que leur controverse estoit patente et facile à juger, vous l'avez obscurcie par sottises et desraisonnables raisons et ineptes opinions de Accurse, Balde, Bartole, de Castro, de Imola, Hippolytus, Panorme, Bertachim, Alexandre, Curtius---".
- 41) in the prefatory letter to Manardi's second volume; op. cit.
 "In hac autem nostra medicinae officina, quae in dies magis ac magis expolitur, quotusquisque ad frugem meliorem se conferre enititur?"
- 42) Pantagruel, 9, p. 120
 "-Quoy! dist Carpalim, lacquoys de Pantagruel, c'est Grec, je l'ay entendu. Et comment? As-tu demouré en Grèce?"
- 43) This can be gathered from Budé's second letter to Rabelais dated January 27, 1524 (cf. Epistolae Budaei posteriores, Paris, 1522, in -4°, 19 v°).
- 44) We have this information from Calvin's correspondence with Fr. Daniel cf. Joannis Calvinii opera quae supersunt omnia, Baum, Cunitz, Reuss and Erichson in Corpus Reformationum (Brunswick, 1860-1900, 59 vol., in -8°), vol. X, t. 2, col. 29.
- 45) Notably in Pantagruel, 17 and 18. eg. originally
 "Ce diable de Pantagruel, qui a convaincu tous les ruseurs et bejaunes sophistes---"
 (ch. 18) spoke of "Sorbonnicoles" not "sophistes" (p. 215).
- 46) Gargantua, 6 (Lefranc variants to ch.6), p. 73:
 "Les Sorbonistes disent que foy est argument de choses de nulle apparence".
- 47) I refer to the mockery of the life of St. Margaret in Gargantua, 6 in particular.
- 48) In edition A of Pantagruel (ch. 34) Alcofribas described his forthcoming fictional offering as "beaux textes d'évangilles en françoys" (Lefranc, variants to Pantagruel, 34) which he later changed to "Ce sont belles besoignes" (p. 345).
- 49) Notably by Calvin and Puy-Herbault cf. for instance Calvin's attack on Rabelais in Des Scandales qui empeschent beaucoup de gens de venir à la pure doctrine de l'Évangile et en desbauchent d'autres, Geneva, J. Crespin, 1550, in-4° in Calvini Opera, vol. VIII, col. 44-46. and that of Puy-Herbault in Theotimus sive de tollendis et expungendis malis libris---, Paris, Jean Roigny, 1549, in-8°, pp. 180-183 reproduced in M. de Greve L'interprétation de Rabelais au XVIe siècle op. cit., pp. 72-73.
- 50) As he tells us in the "Epistre Liminaire" of the Quart Livre. (Demerson, pp. 564-565.)

- 51) The most important we know of are d'Estissac, the du Bellay brothers and Odet de Chastillon (to whom the Quart Livre is dedicated). For Puy-Herbault's opinion of Chastillon's patronage of Rabelais cf. M. De Greve L'interprétation de Rabelais au XVI^e siècle, op. cit., pp. 72-73.
- 52) The rumour is contained in a letter by Denys Lambin, dated November 2, 1552. For details of this letter cf. R.E.R. I, 57.
- 53) Tiers Livre, 16, p. 428
- 54) Cinquième Livre, 47 (manuscript), reproduced in Demerson, pp. 916-917.
- 55) Almanach de 1535 (Demerson, p. 959).
- 56) Cinquième Livre, 47 (manuscript), Demerson, p. 916.
- 57) Tiers Livre, Prologue, p. 363
- 58) It is mentioned in Pantagruel, 18, ^{p. 211} Tiers Livre, 36, ^{p. 500} and in the prefatory letter to the "Cuspidii testamentum", op. cit. p. 947.
- 59) Pantagruel, 18, p. 211
- 60) It is clear that Rabelais knew the Democritic explanation of folly as wisdom explained in letter 12 of the Hippocratic novel cf. Oeuvres --- complètes ed. by Littré, Paris, J.B. Baillière et fils, 1839-61, vol. X, pp. 331-333, from the passage beginning "-Mon amy (respondit Rondibiles), Hippocrates, allant un jour de Lango en Polystylo visiter Démocritus le philosophe---" in the Tiers Livre, 31 and also from the Tiers Livre, 37, pp. 504-507
- 61) This is obvious from chpts. 35 and 36 of the Tiers Livre.
- 62) For a detailed account of scepticism cf. Ch. I of R.H. Popkin's The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Descartes, Harper Torchbooks, 1960.
- 63) From the prefatory letter to the "Cusidii Testamentum".
- 64) Gargantua's education, for example, is based not only on empirical source-material but on his individual interpretation and understanding of it. For Gargantua (cf. Gargantua, 40) to recite prayers and responses without thinking about them and understanding them is to mock God ^{pp. 340-41}. For philosophical discussion of the issue of knowledge and the interpretation of source material, of particular relevance to Rabelais are Diderot Pensées Philosophiques, nos. IX, XV and XVIII in the Garnier edition (Oeuvres philosophiques), Paris, 1964 and W.H. Walsh Reason and Experience, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1947, esp. p. 35.
- 65) This is a point implied forcefully in Gargantua, 9 with reference to the overweening presumption of the author of the "Elason des couleurs": "---je ne sçay quoy premier en luy je doibve admirer, ou son outre-cuidance ou sa besterie: son outrecuidance, qui,

sans raison, sans cause et sans apparence, a ausé prescrire de son autorité privée quelles choses servoient denotées par les couleurs, ce que est l'usage des tyrans qui veulent leur arbitre tenir lieu de raison, non des saiges et scavans qui par raisons manifestes contentent les lecteurs", (p. 97).

- 66) This is a central issue not only of Pantagruel and Gargantua but of the Tiers Livre where the ravages wrought by self-love are shown in the interpretations of Panurge and Pantagruel. The source material sought by Panurge is interpreted fairly by Pantagruel who uses unbiased reason and defectively by Panurge whose self-love makes him biased. For Rabelais's explicit views on self-love, "philantie" or "philautia" (a term familiar to Erasmus: cf. The Praise of Folly, *op. cit.* pp. 152-153) cf. the Tiers Livre, 29^{pp 427-428} and the prefatory letter to Manardi's second volume (Demerson, p. 942):
- "—non aliunde ortum habere isthaec errorum Odyssea quam ab infami illa philantia tantopere a philosophis damnata videtur, quae simul ac homines rerum expetendarum aversandarumque male consultos perculit, eorum sensus et animos praestringere solet et fascinare, quominus videntes videant, intelligentesque intelligant".
- 67) For the validity of contrasting individual judgements based on direct sources and untainted by self-love cf. the "Enigme en prophétie" of Gargantua, 58^{pp 433-438} (the judgements of Gargantua and Frère Jean) and the difference of opinion between Epistémon and Frère Bernard Lardon in the Quart Livre, 11^(p 61). In each case the divergence is due to differences in individual temperament.
- 68) Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise, éd. critique par H. Chamard, Paris, Fontemoing, 1904, p. 331.
- 69) In his Nugae, Paris, Michel Vascosan, fol. 71 v^o -72r^o. For details, consult M. de Greve L'interprétation de Rabelais au XVI^e siècle, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.
- 70) The only notable exception was Budé's Institution du Prince which, of course, was not aimed at a wide, popular audience.
- 71) as the details I give above in footnote 6 confirm.
- 72) Demerson, p. 562
- "seulement avois esguard et intention par escript donner ce peu de soulagement que pouvois ès affligez et malades absens, lequel volontiers, quand besoing est, je fais ès présens qui soy aident de mon art et service".
- 73) In the prefatory letter to Rabelais's edition of Hippocrates and Galen, (Demerson, p. 945).
- 74) In Pantagruel, 8 and Gargantua, 14-15 and 21-24.
- 75) Pantagruel, 28, p. 284
- 76) Pantagruel, 8, pp. 103-104
- 77) Quoted from the "Au Liseur Bénivole" of the Pantagrueline Prognostication, (Demerson, p. 949).
- 78) Quart Livre, Prologue, p. 579

- 79) Pantagruel, 9, p. 121
- 80) Demerson, pp. 766-773
- 81) Cinquième Livre, 47 (manuscript), Demerson, p. 917:
 "Par ung pais plein de toutes délices, plaisant, tempéré plus que Tempe en Thessalye /---/ flairant, serain et gratieulx aultant qu'est le pais de Touraine, enfin trouvasmes noz navires au port".
- 82) Cinquième Livre, 34, pp. 883-884
- 83) Cinquième Livre, 18, pp. 834
- 84) cf. his letter, in French, to Antoine Hullot, reproduced in Demerson, p. 975.
- 85) Roman de Jean de Paris, reprinted by the "Société des anciens textes français", Paris, E. Champion, 1923.
- 86) "---le vieux bonhomme Grandgousier, son père, qui après souper se chauffe les couilles à un beau, clair et grand feu, et, attendent graisler des chastaines, escript au foyer avec un baston bruslé d'un bout dont on escharbotte le feu, faisant à sa femme et famille de beaulx contes du temps jadis".
- 87) for instance in the name Jean de Gravot in the Prologue to the Pantagrueline Prognostication,^{p. 949} in Panurge's nonsense languages in Pantagruel, 9^{pp. 112-121} and[^] among the rewards given by Gargantua to his men in Gargantua, 51 (pp. 395-398).
- 88) As he shows in the Quart Livre, 3, pp. 588-590.
- 89) In the young Gargantua's prank in ch. 12 of Book II, pp. 122-128
- 90) For example the field called the "Saulsaie" mentioned in Gargantua, 4^{p. 51} and 42^{p. 350} was a field adjacent to La Deviniere, the Rabelais's property - as can be confirmed by consulting the "Topographie Rabelaisienne" published by "les Amis de Rabelais et de la Devinière" and the map of the Rabelaisian country in the introduction to vol. I of Lefranc's edition.
- 91) from the "noyer grollier", beside La Devinière, mentioned in Gargantua, 38, p. 326
- 92) Called "gouvetz" according to Gargantua, 27 (p. 269):
 "--- gouvetz, qui sont petitiz demy cousteaux dont les petitiz enfans de nostre pays cernent les noix".
- 93) Rabelais's incorporation of local speech into his fiction is detailed in Ch. III of J. Plattard's La vie de François Rabelais, Paris, Champion, 1928.
- 94) Says Alcofribas in Gargantua, 9, p. 102.
- 95) For a complete description of Rabelais's use of local dialect, idioms and sayings cf. J. Plattard La vie de François Rabelais, *op. cit.*

ch. III and especially L. Sainéan La Langue de Rabelais, Paris, de Boccard, 1922-1923, 2 vols. (section 5 of vol. I in particular).

- 96) In Gargantua, 36,^{pp. 312-313} Rabelais shows he is familiar with the local legends connected with St. Martin, while in Gargantua, 27 the despairing invocations of Frere Jean's victims reveal Rabelais's detailed knowledge of the saints venerated around Chinon: "Notre-Dame de Cunault! de Lorette! de Bonne Nouvelle! La Lenou! de Rivière! Certains se vouaient à saint Jacques; d'autres au Saint Suaire de Chambery, mais il brûla trois mois après, si bien qu'on n'en put sauver un seul brin; d'autres à Cadouin; d'autres à saint Jean d'Angely; d'autres à saint Eutrope de Saintes, à saint Mexme de Chinon, à saint Martin de Candès, à saint Clouand de Cinais, aux reliques de Javarzay et à mille autres bons petits saints" (pp. 266-268)
- 97) Gargantua, 7, p. 78
- 98) The accuracy of the topography of the Picrocholine war (Gargantua 25-49) can be checked on the "Topographie Rabelaisienne", *op. cit.* and in the map in the introduction to vol. I of Lefranc's edition.
- 99) For the authenticity of the names used by Rabelais (such as Denyau, Frogier, Gallet) cf. the note (17) on p. 78 of vol. I of Lefranc's edition of Gargantua and pp. LIV-LX of the introduction, as well as H. Grimaud "Notes sur quelques héros secondaires du Gargantua" in R.E.R. II, 44-45.
- 100) cf. the peasants' tools-cum-weapons of Gargantua, 25 (pp. 250-251):
"luy jetta un gros tribard qu'il portoit soubz son escelle /---/ les mestaiers---accoururent avec leurs grandes gaules et frappèrent sus ces fouaciers comme sus seigle verd /---/ vindrent avec leurs fondes et brassiers---".
- 101) As can be ascertained in the enumeration of tools in Gargantua, 23 (p. 233)
"ensemble des marrochons, des pioches, cerfouettes, bèches, tranches et aultres instrumens requis à bien arborizer"
and in the aforementioned description in Gargantua, 25, pp. 250-251
- 102) "En Angiers estoit pour lors un vieux oncle, seigneur de Saint George, nommé Frapin, c'est celuy qui a faict et composé les beaux et joyeux Noëlz en langage poictevin".
(Quart Livre, "Ancien Prologue"; Demerson, p. 767.)
- 103) Gargantua, 4, pp. 49-50
- 104) Gargantua, 5 is a fine example.
- 105) Gargantua, 4, p. 51
- 106) eg. Gargantua 7
"Et luy (for Gargantua) feurent ordonnées dix et sept mille neuf cens treze vaches de Pautille et de Bréhémond---"
and Gargantua, 8, pp. 80-81
"Pour sa chemise furent levées neuf cens aulnes de toile de Chastelraud".

- 107) As he demonstrates in Gargantua, 4, for example:
 "Coiraux sont beufz engressez à la crèche et
 préz grimaulx" (p. 48).
- 108) Gargantua, 4, p. 48
 "Préz grimaulx sont qui portent herbe deux fois l'an"
- 109) Gargantua, 25, p. 246
 "des pineaulx, des fiers, des muscadeaulx, de la
 bicane, et des foyrans pour ceulx qui sont constipéz
 de ventre—".
- 110) Gargantua, 25, pp. 245-246
- 111) As the young Gargantua does (ch. 24):
 "alloient veoir comment on tiroit les métaulx, ou
 comment on fondoit l'artillerje, ou alloient veoir
 les lapidaires, orfèvres et tailleurs de pierreries,
 ou les alchymistes et monoyeurs, ou les haulteliss-
 iers, les tissotiers, les velotiers, les horologiers,
 miralliers, imprimeurs, organistes, tinturiers et
 aultres telles sortes d'ouvriers, et, partout donnans
 le vin, aprenoient et considéroient l'industrie et
 invention des mestiers" (p. 238)
- 112) Full details are given by Sainéan La Langue de Rabelais, op. cit.,
 vol. I, sections 4 and 5.
- 113) cf. Pantagruel, ^{pp. 80-94} 81 and Gargantua, 24, pp. 237-244
- 114) An intellectual defect recurrently and severely condemned by
 Rabelais and the remedy for which he describes through his persona
 in Pantagruel, 33, p. 339
- 115) The two with which ordinary people most come into contact and
 which most directly affects their lives. When referring to lawyers'
 "claims to absolute truth" I am, of course, paraphrasing
- 116) Pantagruel, 10, p. 737 | Rabelais's views and not expressing per-
 sonal opinions about 16th cent. lawyers.
- 117) Gargantua, 20, pp. 180-187
- 118) Cinquième Livre, 11, p. 818
- 119) Cinquième Livre, 11, p. 818.
- 120) Gargantua, 54, p. 412
- 121) Gargantua, 54, p. 412
- 122) Gargantua, 40, pp. 340-341
 "Ilz marmonnent grand renfort de légendes et pseaulmes
 nullement par eulx entenduz; ilz content force paten-
 ostres entrelardées de longs Ave Mariaz sans y penser
 ny entendre, et ce je appelle mocquedieu, non oraison".
- 123) Gargantua, 40, pp. 339-340

- 124) Pantagruel, 17, *p. 100*. The quotation; "Centuplum accipies", is culled from Matthew 19, 29. This kind of bad faith was not unknown. Pope Leo X proclaimed a crusade against the Turks in 1513. To entice the faithful to arms he promised full remission of all sins and more:
- "concedimus pariter et indulgemus, ac eorundem omnium animas, quos in hac sancta expeditione poficisci contigerit, sanctorum angelorum consortio in coelestibus aeterna felicitate mansuras perpetuo decernimus aggregandas".
- (B.J. Kidd Documents illustrative of the continental reformation, Clarendon Press, 1967 - first published 1911-p.10). Scriptural authority was obviously necessary to back such a claim, even on a Pope's part:
- "---confisi de eiusdem Dei omnipotentis misericordia, ac beatorum Petri et Pauli Apostolorum auctoritate, ac verbieius qui est via veritas et vita, ac nobis, qui in persona eiusdem B. Petri successores sumus dixit: "Quodcumque ligaveris super terram, erit ligatum et in coelis; quodcumque solveris super terram, erit solutum et in coelis "---".(B.J. Kidd, op. cit, p. 10)
- 125) Gargantua, 19, *p. 170*
- 126) In Gargantua, 45, ^{*p. 368*} This is contrary, of course, to Loyola's "Rules for thinking with the Church" ("Spiritual Exercises", part II,) no. 6:
- "To praise relics, the veneration and invocation of Saints: also the stations, and pious pilgrimages, indulgences, jubilees, the custom of lighting candles in the churches, and other such aids to piety and devotion".
- (Bettenson Documents of the Christian Church, op. cit, p. 365).
- 127) Gargantua, 45, *p. 368*
- 128) An expression employed by Rabelais in the preamble to the Pantagrueline Prognostication, *p. 949*
- 129) Gargantua, 45, *p. 366*
- 130) Prefatory letter to Manardi (Demerson, p. 942).
- 131) Pantagruel, 8, *p. 109*
- 132) Many documents can be cited to confirm Rabelais's view eg. the Decree "Sacrosancta" of the Council of Constance (1415). (Hardt "Rerum Magni Conc. Const. (1700), IV. 98): "This holy Council of Constance---declares, first that it is lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit, that it constitutes a General Council, representing the Catholic Church, and that therefore it has authority immediately after Christ, and that all men, of every rank and condition ---~~are~~ bound to obey it in matters concerning the Faith---" (Bettenson, op. cit, p. 189); the Pope's affirmation of his own authority is made clear in the Bull "Execrabilis" of 1460 (Bettenson, op. cit, p. 190). Tetzl, in 1517, in his two disputations, expressed the

idea of blind obedience to the authority's interpretation of scripture when he said "Quod Papa ea, quae fidei sunt, solus habet determinare, quodque sacrae scripturae sensus ipse auctoritate, et nullus alius, pro suo sensu, interpretatur, et quod aliorum omnia dicta vel opera habet vel appobare vel reprobare" (Kidd., op. cit., p. 31) as did Silvestro Mazzolini in the same year in his "Dialogus de potestate Papae" when he wrote ("Fundamentum tertium"):

"Quicumque non innititur doctrinae Romanae ecclesiae ac Romani Pontificis, tamquam regulae fidei infallibili, a qua etiam Sacra Scriptura robur trahit et auctoritatem, haereticus est".

(Kidd., op. cit., pp. 31-32). The Faculty of Theology in Paris, of course, thought of itself as the bastion and defender of orthodoxy.

- 133) Pantagruel, 34, p. 346
- 134) Pantagruel, 17, p. 200
- 135) Matthew 19, 29 says
 "Et omnis qui reliquit domum--- aut agros propter nomen meum, centuplum accipiet et vitam aeternum possidebit".
- 136) In Pantagruel, 18, p. 217
- 137) In editions (H), (J) and (K), ch. 18 (cf. Lefranc's variants of ch. 18), p. 217
- 138) Fervent opponent of the new learning and author of Annotationes Natalis Bedae Doctoris Theologii Parisiensis in Jacobum Fabrum Stapulensem libri duo: et in Desiderium Erasmus Roterodamum liber unus, Paris, Badius Ascenius, 1526.
- 139) Before whom Reuchlin was summoned to appear in 1513.
- 140) Ortwin Gratius or Hardouin de Graes, the theologian from Cologne who condemned Reuchlin and was ridiculed by Von Hutten in the Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum, Hutteni Operum Supplementum, i. 226 sq., Bocking, Leipzig, 1864, cf. Kidd, op. cit., pp. 11-12.
- 141) The Franciscan teaching at Poitiers at the end of the 15th century who wrote a commentary on Peter Lombard.
- 142) J. Plattard in his footnote in the Lefranc ed. (ch. 7) is not convinced that "L'Esperon de fromaige" is aimed at de Saix.
- 143) And much printed in the 15th and 16th centuries, eg. Orationes sive collectae ---beate Brigide quas dicebat ante ymaginem Jhesu crucefixi in the Horlogium devotionibus circa vitam Christi, 1489, in 8°.
- 144) cf. J. Plattard "L'Ecriture sainte dans l'oeuvre de Rabelais", R.E.R. VIII, 266.
- 145) cf. Lefranc's variants of ch. 18, p. 217
- 146) "Sorbillans, Sorbonagres, Sorbonigènes, Sorbonnicoles, Sorbonniformes, Sorbonisècques, Niborcisans, Borsonisans, Saniborsans".

- 147) Pantagruel, 7, p. 91
- 148) op. cit.
- 149) Pantagruel, 10, p. 128
- 150) Pantagruel, 10, pp. 129-130
- 151) Pantagruel, 10, p. 130
- 152) Pantagruel, 10, pp. 130-131
- 153) In Pantagruel, 13, pp. 156-161
- 154) In the prefatory letter to Manardi, op. cit., p. 942:
 "—ut e densa illa gothici temporis calligine plus quam Cimberia ad conspicuam solis facem oculos attollere aut nolint, aut nequeant?"
- 155) Gargantua, 23 (p. 216):
 "luy estoit leue quelque pagine de la divine Escripiture haultement et clèrement, avec pron-
 unciation compètente à la matière".
- 156) Gargantua, 14, p. 147
- 157) Gargantua, 14, pp. 143-144
- 158) Gargantua, 21, p. 182
- 159) Gargantua, 14, p. 145
- 160) Gargantua, 23, pp. 224-225
- 161) Which take up an entire chapter (22)
- 162) Gargantua, 23, p. 218
- 163) Gargantua, 23, p. 219
- 164) Gargantua, 24, p. 241
- 165) Gargantua, 23, p. 221
- 166) Gargantua, 23, p. 218
- 167) Gargantua, 23, p. 218
- 168) Gargantua, 23, p. 222
- 169) Gargantua, 24, p. 244
- 170) Gargantua, 14, p. 143
- 171) Gargantua, 15, p. 149
- 172) Gargantua, 45, p. 365

- 173) Gargantua, 6 (cf. Lefranc, variants to ch. 6) (p. 69)
- 174) These same motives were ascribed to the religious authorities by Von Hutten in 1520 in his "Vadiscus" or "Trias Romana" (reproduced, in Kidd, op. cit., pp. 57-58.
- 175) In Gargantua, 3 (pp. 40-43)
- 176) Gargantua, 3 (pp. 42-43)
- 177) Gargantua, 3 (pp. 43-44)
- 178) Tiers Livre, Prologue, p. 366
- 179) Gargantua, 19, p. 170
- 180) Gargantua, 19, p. 169
- 181) Gargantua, 19, pp. 169-170
- 182) Gargantua, 19, p. 171.
- 183) Gargantua, 19, p. 169
- 184) Gargantua, 19, p. 172
- 185) From Psalms, 127
- 186) As is clear from Gargantua's motto in ch. 8, "Charité" is the opposite of "philautie".
- 187) Von Hutten exposes this same abuse on the religious authorities part in the Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum, when they blatantly justify their self-love by quoting the Bible and thus claim absolute authority in matters of faith: "Etiam debetis scire quod Magister Noster Iacobus de Hochstraten acquisivit mille florenos ex banco: et credo quod luerabit causam, et diabolus confundet illum Ioannem Reuchlin et alios poetas et iuristas, quia volunt esse contra Ecclesiam Dei, id est contro Theologos, in quibus est fundata ecclesia, ut Christus dixit: "Tu es Petrus et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam". (Kidd, op. cit., p. 12).
- 188) "Fides est substantia rerum sperandum, argumentum non apparentium" says Paul (Hebrews XI). Erasmus in the Praise of Folly, op. cit., p. 157 quoted this definition:
 "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". Rabelais transcribes the definition as "foy est argument de nulle apparence" (ie. "non vraisemblant") and imputes this reading to the Paris theologians.
- 189) "---volunt esse contra Ecclesiam Dei, id est contra Theologos, in quibus est fundata ecclesia---"
 said Von Hutten Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum (Kidd, op. cit., p. 12)
 In the Praise of Folly, op. cit., p. 154, Erasmus said "they interpret hidden mysteries to suit themselves". Rabelais shows how the Faculty of Theology subtly exploits the orthodox definition of faith to suit itself. It follows that if the Sorbonne is in possession of the Truth about faith then one must believe what they say,

even if it is "argument de nulle apparence". As Loyola said in "Rules for thinking with the Church", no. 13 (Bettenson, op. cit, p. 366):

"That we may be altogether of the same mind and in conformity with the Church herself, if she shall have defined anything to be black which to our eyes appears to be white, we ought in like manner to pronounce it to be black. For we must undoubtedly believe, that the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of the Orthodox Church His Spouse, by which Spirit we are governed and directed to Salvation, is the same;---".

- 190) Gargantua, 57, pp. 430-431
- 191) Gargantua, 57, p. 431
- 192) Beginning of ch. 52 (pp. 399-401)
- 193) Gargantua, 54, pp. 410-414
- 194) Gargantua, 52, pp. 400-401
- 195) Gargantua, 57, p. 430
- 196) F. Simone Umanesimo, Rinascimento, Barocco in Francia, Biblioteca Europea di Cultura, 7, Milano, 1968, ch. I, pp. 5-6.
- 197) In ch. III of the introduction to vol. I. of his edition of Rabelais's work.
- 198) Indeed ch. III is entitled "La pensée secrète de Rabelais".
- 199) In ch. VI of L'Oeuvre de Rabelais---, Paris, Champion, 1910.
- 200) Lefranc, op. cit., vol. III, p. LII.
- 201) Ibid, pp. XL-XLI
- 202) L. Febvre Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle. La religion de Rabelais, A. Michel, Paris, 1947,
- 203) In the section on Rabelais of M. Françon's Leçons et notes sur la littérature française au XVIe siècle, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1965.
- 204) Le Moyen Age dans le Gargantua de Rabelais, "Les Belles Lettres", 1973, p. 236.
- 205) Rabelais, l'homme et l'oeuvre, Hatier-Bovin, Paris, 1957, pp. 77-78.
- 206) Rabelais and the Franciscans, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1963, p. 313.
- 207) Ibid, p. 80. For the dichotomy between comedy and seriousness in Rabelais's work as seen by A. Krailsheimer cf. The Continental Renaissance 1500-1600 ed. by A.J. Krailsheimer, Penguin, 1971 esp. p. 303.

- 208) Vol. III, introduction, ch. III, p. XL.
- 209) Gargantua, Prologue, pp. 11-12
- 210) In his chapter on Rabelais in French Literature and its Background - The Sixteenth Century, ed. by J. Cruickshank, O.U.P., London-Oxford-N. York, 1968, p. 19.
- 211) Gilbert Ducher "Ad Philosophiam, de Francisco Rabelaeso" (Epigrammaton libri duo, Lyon, S. Gryphius, 1538, in-16°, p. 54)
- 212) For the many Renaissance comparisons between Rabelais and Democritus and Rabelais and Lucian cf: M. de Grève L'interprétation de Rabelais au XVIIe siècle op. cit., under "Democritus" and "Lucian" in the index.
- 213) Demerson, p. 360
- 214) Preliminary poem to Pantagruel, p. 2
- 215) M. Bakhtin Rabelais and his World ("Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable"), M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1968, ch. I: "Rabelais in the history of laughter".

Footnotes to chapter II

- 1) The Mirroure of the World, ed. Prior, Early English Texts Society, O.U.P., 1913.
- 2) The Mirroure of the World, op. cit., p. 29.
- 3) The Mirroure of the World, op. cit., pp. 29-30.
- 4) G. Chastellain, Oeuvres, K. de Lettenhove, 8 vols., Brussels, 1863-66, vol. VII, p. 17.
- 5) G. Chastellain, Oeuvres, op. cit., vol. VII, p. 8.
- 6) G. Chastellain, Oeuvres, op. cit., vol. VI, pp. 204-5.
- 7) G. Chastellain, Oeuvres, op. cit., vol. VII, p. 13.
- 8) R. Mohl, The three estates in Medieval and Renaissance literature, New York, 1933.
- 9) J. Huizinga The Waning of the Middle Ages, translated by F. Hopman, Penguin, 1972, Ch. III "The Hierarchic Conception of Society".
- 10) B. Castiglione, Il Cortegiano ("La seconda redazione del Cortegiano di B. Castiglione"), critical edition by G. Ghinassi, Florence, 1968, p. 91.
- 11) op. cit., p. 92
- 12) Cinquième Livre, 11, p. 818
- 13) Tiers Livre, Prologue, p. 366
- 14) Almanach de 1535, p. 960
- 15) Gargantua, 28, p. 274
- 16) Gargantua, 45, p. 369
- 17) See "Rabelais et Jean Bouchet" by P. Haskovec in R.E.R., VI, pp. 56-60 and "Le Transport des règnes et empires" by H. Hauser in R.E.R. VI, pp. 182-189.
- 18) "Le Transport des règnes et empires" by H. Hauser, op. cit., pp. 182-189.
- 19) This practise - which François I indulged in - is fully documented by M. Bloch in his work Les Rois Thaumaturges, Strasbourg, 1924.
- 20) Cf. H. Hauser "Le Transport des règnes et empires", R.E.R., VI, pp. 182-189.
- 21) R.C. La Charité, "The Unity of Rabelais's Pantagruel" in 'French Studies', 26, 1972, p. 258.
- 22) G. Cohen's article "Rabelais et le théâtre" in R.E.R., IX, 1911 is still important and provides full documentation and interesting illustrations to bring out Rabelais's intimacy with popular theatre.

- 23) "Farce Nouvelle—des femmes qui font/accroire—" in G. Cohen, Recueil de farces françaises inédites du XVe siècle, no. XV (Cambridge, Mass., 1949)
- 24) See Tiers Livre, 34, p. 496
- 25) Gargantua, 4, p. 48
- 26) Tiers Livre, 3, p. 384
- 27) Quart Livre, 13, p. 617
- 28) Quart Livre, 13, p. 618
- 29) Quart Livre, 13, p. 617
- 30) See Tiers Livre, 27 and G. Cohen, "Rabelais et le théâtre", op. cit.
- 31) Ed. G. Paris and G. Raynaud, Paris, 1878.
- 32) F. Picot, "Le monologue dramatique dans l'ancien théâtre français" in Romania, 1886, pp. 388-422 and 1887, pp. 438-542.
- 33) See the "Ne reminiscaris" of Pantagruel, 1 and the mock saints of Gargantua, 27, pp. 266-268
- 34) Quart Livre, 13, p. 616
- 35) They were suppressed in 1548; for the reasons which led to this ban, consult I. Siciliano, Il teatro medievale francese, Montuoro, Venice, 1944, pp. 104-133.
- 36) He appears in two "Mystères": the Mystère des Actes des Apostres, G. Alabat, Paris, 1538 (folios III and IV, r^o) and La Vie de Saint Louis par personnages (late 15th century)-folio 110r^o (cf. Bibliothèque Nationale f. fr. 24331).
- 37) See, for instance, its use in the "Sottie Nouvelle à six personnages du Roy de Sotz" in E. Picot, Recueil general des Sotties, Paris, Firmin-Didot, 1912, 3 vols., vol 3, pp. 222-223, lines 203-212.
- 38) Pantagruel, 2, 5, 6, 7, 14, 18 (twice), 28 (twice,) 29 (twice).
- 39) P. Sébillot, Gargantua dans les traditions populaires, Paris, Maisonneuve, 1883.
- 40) P. Sébillot, Gargantua dans les traditions populaires, op. cit., p. 113
- 41) P. Sébillot, Gargantua dans les traditions populaires, eg. pp. 33, 44-45, 78, 82, 83, 89.
- 42) Genesis, IV, 1-15.
- 43) Liminary poem to Gargantua, p. 2
- 44) Liminary poem to Gargantua, p. 2
- 45) Pantagruel, 34, p. 348
- 46) Consult E. Huguet, Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle, Paris, Champion, in 4^o (cf. the modern expression "des nêfles!")

- 47) cf. Genesis, IX, 18-24.
- 48) See Quart Livre, 41, p. 693
- 49) The Vita et Fabellae Aesopi (graece) ---- was published in 1505. The three best-known publishers of popular vernacular works in Lyon, Nourry, Arnoullet and Chaussard all published translations of. C. Nourry et P. de Vingle, "Les subtiles fables d'Esopé---", Lyon, 1526, in-4° goth; feu Barnabé Chaussard, "Les subtilles fables de Esopé ---", Lyon, 1531; O. Arnoullet, "Les Fables de Esopé", Lyon, 1552, in -4°, 70ff.
- 50) Consult the notes of Marcel Schwob in R.E.R. I, 71-73.
- 51) The whole of this popular song is reproduced on p. 140 of R.E.R. II.
- 52) cf. footnote // of ch. 5 of Pantagruel in the Lefranc edition (p. 57).
- 53) Horace, Ars Poetica, 9-10.
- 54) On account of the widespread popularity of such romances as Mélusine (Mélusine by Jean d'Arras. Nouvelle éd. conforme à celle de 1478--- Ch. Brunet, Paris, Jammet, 1854).
- 55) Pantagruel, 2, p. 36
- 56) See Randle Cotgrave, A Dictionarie of the French and English tongues London, Adam Islip, 1611, for the connexion with the mouth and the throat of the words Gargamelle; Garganton; Gargareon; Gargarizer; Gargassasse; Gargate; Gargatte; Gargouille; Garguette; Garguillon. The link with the throat of the GARG/GURG root occurs in many languages (cf. O. Bloch and W. Von Wartburg, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française", Paris, Presses Univ., 1960 - under "Gargote").
- 57) Pantagruel, 4, p. 43
- 58) Pantagruel, 4, p. 44
- 59) Pantagruel, 4, pp. 45-46
- 60) Pantagruel, 5, p. 51
- 61) Pantagruel, 5, p. 56
- 62) Pantagruel, 9, p. 122
- 63) Pantagruel, 14, p. 173
- 64) Pantagruel, 14, p. 164
- 65) Pantagruel, 26, pp. 265-266
- 66) Pantagruel, 20, pp. 227-228
- 67) Pantagruel, 28, p. 286
- 68) Pantagruel, 25, p. 263
- 69) Pantagruel, 26, p. 267

- 70) Pantagruel, 1, p. 15
- 71) Villon "Le Testament" in Oeuvres, ed. by A. Lognon (corrected by L. Foulet), Paris, Champion, 1969, XXV, 200.
- 72) This problem is discussed in the opening chapter of R. Mandrou's Introduction à la France moderne, Paris, 1961.
- 73) Villon, "Le Testament", op. cit., LXXXIX, 897.
- 74) Villon, "Le Testament", op. cit., 898.
- 75) Pantagruel, 30, p. 306
- 76) Pantagruel, 30, p. 306
- 77) Pantagruel, 30, p. 306
- 78) Pantagruel, 30, p. 306
- 79) Pantagruel, 4, p. 46
- 80) Pantagruel, 34, p. 345
- 81) Pantagruel, 25, pp. 262-263
- 82) Pantagruel, 31, p. 328
- 83) Pantagruel, 29, p. 302
- 84) Pantagruel, 28, pp. 289-290
- 85) Pantagruel, 27, p. 281
- 86) Pantagruel, 24, pp. 258-260
- 87) Pantagruel, 30, p. 303
- 88) Pantagruel, 30, pp. 304-305
- 89) Pantagruel, Prologue, p. 7
- 90) Consult footnote 39, Ch. 5 in Lefranc's Pantagruel (p. 55).
- 91) Chapter 32, pp. 329-336
- 92) In Chapter 30, pp. 306-318
- 93) cf. the ed. of the "Grandes Chroniques" reprinted by S. de Ricci in R.E.R. VIII, 57-92, (leaf 3).
- 94) Pantagruel, Prologue, p. 3
- 95) Pantagruel, 27, p. 278
- 96) Pantagruel, 27, p. 278
- 97) cf. "Une rédaction inconnue de la chronique de Gargantua", presented by S. de Ricci, R.E.R. VII, 1909, pp. 1-38 (esp. chpts 4 and 5 of the booklet).

- 98) Pantagruel, 3, pp. 41-42
- 99) Pantagruel, 3, pp. 38-39
- 100) Pantagruel, 21, pp. 229-230
- 101) Pantagruel, 21, p. 232
- 102) Pantagruel, 21, pp. 232-233
- 103) Pantagruel, 22, p. 240
- 104) Pantagruel, 14, p. 162
- 105) Pantagruel, 14, pp. 162-163
- 106) Pantagruel, 14, p. 163
- 107) Villon, Le Testament, op. cit., XXXV, 273-274
- 108) Pantagruel, 16, p. 186
- 109) Pantagruel, 10, pp. 124-125
- 110) Pantagruel, 16, p. 188
- 111) Pantagruel, 17, p. 206
- 112) Pantagruel, 30, p. 305
- 113) Pantagruel, 21, p. 233
- 114) Pantagruel, 21, p. 237
- 115) Pantagruel, 21, p. 235
- 116) Pantagruel, 21, pp. 233-234
- 117) Marot; "Epistre au roy pour avoir este dérobbé" (1531); cf. Les Epîtres, éd. critique par C. A. Mayer, Univ. of London, The Athlone Press, 1958, pp. 171-176 (line 12).
- 118) Pantagruel, 9, p. 121
- 119) Pantagruel, 9, p. 121

Footnotes to Chapter III

- 1) This can be gauged by looking up the rubric "Lucien" in the index of M. de Grève's L'interprétation de Rabelais au 16ième siècle, op. cit.
- 2) See Pantagruel, 1, p. 29
"et quelquefois parlementoyent ensemble, comme faisoit Icaroménippe à Juppiter, selon le raport de Lucian"
and Pantagruel 32 which was plausibly influenced by the True History.
- 3) In The works of Lucian of Samosata translated by H.W. and F.G. Fowler, Oxford, 1905, vol II, p. 136.
- 4) The works of Lucian of Samosata, op. cit. p. 136.
- 5) The works of Lucian of Samosata, op. cit. p. 136.
- 6) Pantagrueline Prognostication, "Au liseur bénivole", p. 949
- 7) Pantagrueline Prognostication, "Au liseur bénivole", p. 949
- 8) Pantagrueline Prognostication, "Au liseur bénivole", p. 949
- 9) Pantagrueline Prognostication, "Au liseur bénivole", p. 950
- 10) Pantagrueline Prognostication (title), p. 949
- 11) Pantagrueline Prognostication, ch. 3, p. 951
- 12) Pantagrueline Prognostication, ch. 3, p. 951
- 13) Title of ch. 2, p. 950
- 14) Title of ch. 3, p. 951
- 15) Title of ch. 5, p. 951
- 16) Pantagrueline Prognostication, "ch. 1, p. 950"
- 17) Pantagrueline Prognostication, "Au liseur bénivole", p. 950
- 18) Pantagrueline Prognostication, "Au liseur bénivole", p. 950
- 19) Almanach de 1535, p. 959
- 20) Montaigne, selected essays ed. by A. Tilley and A.M. Boase, Manchester Univ. Press. pp. 8-9 (Book I, ch. XXVII).
- 21) Almanach de 1535, p. 959
- 22) Almanach de 1535, p. 959
- 23) Almanach de 1535, p. 959
- 24) Almanach de 1535, p. 959
- 25) Almanach de 1535, p. 959

- 26) Almanach de 1535, p. 454
- 27) Les Mises en prose des Epopées et des Romans chevaleresques du XI^{ve} siècle, Brussels, 1939.
- 28) Les adaptations en prose des 'chansons de geste' au XVI^{ème} et au XVII^{ème} siècle, in R.S.S., III, 1915.
- 29) cf. (1) H.L. Baudrier Bibliographie Lyonnaise. Recherches sur les imprimeurs, libraires, relieurs et fondeurs de lettres de Lyon au XVI^e siècle---, published and contd. by J. Baudrier, 12 vols., Lyon 1895-1921. Consult lists of publications of contemporary publishers of popular vernacular works (and esp. romances of chivalry) - in particular Claude Nourry (died 1535): vol XII, p. 74. Oliver Arnoullet (?1486-1567): vol X, p. 29, Barnabé Chaussard: Vol. XI, p. 26-27.
- (2) H.C. Agrippa's statement about the craze for romances in Henrici Corneli Agrippae---de incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum declamatio invectiva--- S.L., 1537., Caput V., De Historia.
- (3) The "Inventaire de Jacques le Gros" (in "Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile de France", vol. XXIII, p. 296: "Documents parisiens de la Bibliothèque de Berne"). This is a list of books drawn up for his personal use in 1533 by an unknown Parisian. It would seem to demonstrate by its completeness (it contains almost all the published romances, as well as the first mention of Rabelais's Pantagruel) the interest aroused among the public by the genre.
- (4) The "Ballade aux lysans" of the "Légende joyeuse de maistre de Pierre Faifeu" (publ. 1532) - cf. A. Lefranc, "Les plus anciennes mentions du "Pantagruel" et du "Gargantua" in R.E.R. III, 1905, p. 219, for a reprint of the "Ballade". The author whets his readers' appetite for his own work by comparing it to the most popular works of the day, among these are the romances Robert le Dyable and Les quatre Filz ayen.
- (5) "Farce nouvelle du Clerc qui fut refusé à estre prestre pour ce qu'il ne scavoit dire qui estoit le père des quatre Filz Haymon" in G. Cohen Recueil de farces françaises inédites du XV^{es}. no. XI, Camb. Massachussettes, 1949. The central joke of this farce depends on the audience's intimate knowledge of the popular romance mentioned in the title.
- 30) cf. R. Doucet Les bibliothèques Parisiennes au XVI^e siècle, Paris, Picard, 1956. A.H. Schutz "Vernacular books in Parisian private libraries of the sixteenth century according to the notorial inventories," in "Studies in the Romance Languages and Literatures", no. 25, Univ. of N. Carolina Press, 1955.
H.J. Martin "Ce qu'on lisait à Paris au XVI^e siècle," in B.H.R., XXI, 1959, pp. 222-250.
- 31) La vie du terrible Robert le dyable P. Mareschal et B. Chaussard Lyon, 1496, in -4^o (B.N. Rés. y² 2712), f^o 3r^o.
- 32) Ogier le Danois, 1583, in -4^o, (B.N. Rés. y² 602), Prologue.
- 33) cf. eg. the repeated use made by the author of Robert le dyable of the simile "Come ung loup fait un troupeau de brebis".

- 34) cf. eg. the Roman de Jean de Paris reprinted by the "Société des anciens textes français", Paris, E. Champion, 1923, Ch. II, p. 4: "Il fut jadis en France un roy moult sage et vaillant, lequel avoit un trèsbeau fiz de l'eage de trois ans, nommé Jehan, et plus n'en avoit de la royne sa femme qui moult notable et sage dame estoit".
- 35) cf. the lists of romances published in Lyon in the 16th C. in H.L. Baudrier, op. cit.
- 36) On this point cf. M. Butor and D. Hollier Rabelais ou c'était pour rire, Larousse, Paris, 1972, p. 37 and V.L. Saulnier La littérature française de la renaissance, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1973. p. 35.
- 37) e.g.
 "L'Histoire de Giglan filz de messire Gauvain qui fut roy de Galles. Et de Geoffroy de Maience son compaignom tous deux chevaliers de la table ronde. Lesquelz feirent plusieurs et merveilleuses entreprises: et eurent de grandes fortunes et adventures, autant que chevaliers de leur temps: Desquelles par leur noble prouesse et cueur chevaleureux viendrent à bout et honorable fin, comme on pourra veoir en ce présent livre", C. Nourry, S.D. in -4° goth. 76 ff.
- 38) cf. the chapter-headings of Robert le dyable, e.g.:
 "Comment robert le dyable fut engendré & comment sa mère le donna au dyable à son concepvement"
 "De la douleur que la mère souffrit à l'enfantement"
 "Des terribles signes qui furent ouys et veuz au naissance de robert le dyable".
- 39) cf. e.g. Ch. I of Méluſine ("Méluſine par Jehan d'Arras. Nouvelle édition conforme à celle de 1478 revue et corrigée---par Ch. Brunet", Paris, Jannet, 1854).
- 40) cf. e.g.
 "Le premier Livre de l'histoire et ancienne cronique de Gérard d'Euphrate, Duc de Bourgogne: Traitant, pour la plus part, son origine, ieunesse, amour et chevaleureux faitz d'armes---", Paris, Jan Longis, 1549.
- 41) As is the case, for instance, in Robert le dyable.
- 42) Op. cit., Caput V.
- 43) Op. cit., Caput V.
- 44) Demerson, pp. 960-963
- 45) Demerson, p. 961
- 46) Demerson, p. 961

47) Compare the original title (A):

Pantagruel. Les horribles et espouventables
faictz & prouesses du trèsrenommé Pantagruel
roy des Dipsodes, filz du grant géant Gargantua,
composéz nouvellement par maistre Alcofybas
Nasier---

with that of the 1542 Juste ed. (M):

Pantagruel, Roy des Dipsodes, restitué à son
naturel, avec ses faictz et prouesses espovent-
tables : composéz par feu M. Alcofribas, abstr-
acteur de quinte essence---

48) Compare the original title of Pantagruel with that of Huon de
Bordeaux (Paris, Michel le Noir, 1516, in f^o goth).

Les prouesses et faictz merueilleux du noble Huon
de Bordeaux, per de France, duc de Guyenne, merv-
eilleusement redigé en bon francoys.

Four elements can be discerned in this title:

- (a) The hero's name.
 - (b) His titles, both of birth and renown.
 - (c) Conventional chivalrous epithets in praise of his exploits.
 - (d) Reference to the book's composition. These same four elements are present in the original title of Pantagruel.
- (a) The hero's name: "Pantagruel".
 - (b) His titles of birth and renown: "très renommé," "Roy des Dipsodes, filz du grant géant Gargantua".
 - (c) Conventional chivalrous epithets in praise of his exploits: "Les horribles et espouventables faictz et pouesses".
 - (d) Reference to the book's composition: "Composéz nouvellement par maistre Alcofrybas Nasier".

49) The title of the romance is cited in the prologue and a character from it (Galaffre) is mentioned in Ch. I (l.144).

50) Ch. II:

"De la nativité du très redoubté Pantagruel"

Ch. IV:

"De l'enfance de Pantagruel"

Ch. V:

"Des faictz du noble Pantagruel en son jeune eage".

Ch. XXIV:

"Lettres que un/messagier aporta à Pantagruel d'une
dame de Paris, et l'exposition d'un mot escript en
un aneau d'or".

Ch. XXVIII:

"Comment Pantagruel eut victoire bien estrangement
des Dipsodes et des Géans".

51) Lines 84-157.

52) Prol: Robert le Diable; Fierabras; Guillaume sans paour;
Huon de Bourdeaulx; Montevielle; Matabrune.

Ch. I:

"Fierabras (along with the characters "Sortibrant
de conimbres" and "Brushant de Mommière");
"Roboastre" (character in "Guérin de Monglave");
"Caloffre" (from "Huon de Bordeaux"); "Morgan"
(ie. "Morgant le géant"); "Ogier le Danois";
"Gallehault" (from "Lancelot du Lac").

- 53) Consult A. Tilley The Prose Romances of Chivalry in Studies in the French Renaissance, Cambridge, 1922.
- 54) cf. R.E.R. X, pp. 107-108.
- 55) cf. L. Sainéan's notes on Montevielle in R.E.R. IV, 1911, pp. 265-275.
- 56) cf. the closing paragraph of Les Enfances Vivien, Chanson de geste publiée pour la première fois d'après les manuscrits de Paris, de Boulogne-sur-Mer, de Londres et de Milan, par C. Wahland et H. van Failandt, introd. par A. Nordelt, Upsala and Paris, 1895, in -4^o. From "Et somme toute" to "Et est listoire merueilleusement belle à ouir".
- 57) For details of C. Nourry, cf. Baudrier op. cit., Vol. XII p. 74.
- 58) For details of S. Gryphius (1493-1556) cf. Baudrier, op. cit. vol. III.
- 59) (1) Introductory letter to the Epistolarum medicinalum tomus secundus by J. Manardi (Lyon, Seb. Gryphius, 1532, pp. 2-3) - dedicated to A. Tiraqueau.
 (2) Introductory letter to Hippocrates et Galieni libri aliquot ex recognitine Francisci Rabelaesi, medici omnibus numeris absolutissimi. (Lyon, Seb. Gryphius, 1532, pp. 3-7). - dedicated to Geoffroy d'Estissac.
 (3) Introductory letter to Ex reliquis venerandae antiquitatis Lucii fuscipii Aestamentum. Item contractus venditionis antiquis Romanorum temporibus initus (Lyon, Séb. Gryphius, 1532) - dedicated to Amaury Bouchard.
- 60) Geneva, 1478.
- 61) B.N. Rés. y² 2129.
- 62) In Orlando Innamorato
- 63) In the Orlando Furioso
- 64) In G. Cohen, op. cit., cf. verses 599-607.
- 65) cf. E. Picot & C. Nyrop: Nouveau Recueil de Farces françaises des XV^e et XVI^es---. Skatkiné reprints, Geneva, 1968, and E. Picot "Le Monologue dramatique dans l'ancien théâtre français", in two parts - (1) Romania, 1886, pp. 358-422, (2) Romania, 1887, pp. 438-542.
- 66) All references are taken from the reprint in R.E.R. VIII, 1910, pp. 61-92.
- 67) In Légendes rustiques pp. 56-59 - quoted by T. Sébillot Gargantua dans les traditions populaires, Paris 1888, p. 196.
- 68) Ibid.
- 69) cf. La France Mythologique, Tchou, 1966.

- 70) op. cit., introduction p. XXV.
- 71) Quoted by Sébillot (introd.) from F. Bourquelot "Notice sur Gargantua" in "Mém. Soc. des Antiquaires de France", vol. XVII, 1844, pp. 413-436 (Paris, in -80).
- 72) Sébillot, op. cit., introd. p. XXI
- 73) cf. ibid. p. 113.
- 74) Pantagruel, prologue.
- 75) Near Seully (Indre-et-Loire). The map is entitled "Géographie populaire de Gargantua, autres géants et êtres gigantesques". It carries numbered signs, each of which indicate a locality in France where mention of Gargantua, or of other popular figures who performed gigantic feats, have been found. The precise details related to each reference are given in the accompanying "Nomenclature par département".
- 76) For the various editions of the written Gargantua legend consult M. Françon "Les Chroniques gargantuines" in French Studies, 2, 1848, pp. 247-252.
- 77) cf. Sébillot, op. cit. pp. 95, 33, 78, 82, 83, 76, 24
- 78) He is always identified with the peasantry in all of Sebillots "dires".
- 79) cf. eg. Sébillot, op. cit. pp. 33, 79-80, 81, 76, 38, 177.
- 80) cf. footnote 56 of Chapter II of this thesis.
- 81) For the devilkin "Pentagruel" who was connected with the sea and who threw salt into drunkards' mouths while they slept cf. (1) Simon and Arnoul Greban Mystère des Actes des Apostres, Ed. de G. Alabut, Paris, 1538, in fol. (written 1478) - folios III and IV r^o.
 (2) the mystery-play (late 15th c.): Vie de Saint Louis par personnages (B.N., f. fr. 24331, fol. 110 r^o)
 (3) Le Vergier d'honneur (end 15th c.) by André de la Vigne (link with thirst)
 (4) "Sottie nouvelle à six personnages du roy des sottz" (c. 1545?) in E. Picot Recueil Général des Sotties, Paris, Firmin-Didot, 1912 vol. III, pp. 222-223, ll. 203-212. (link with thirst/throat).
 Consult also: A. Lefranc's introduction to Pantagruel (Vol. I) p. XIV onwards, and J. Plattard "Un document nouveau sur la légende de Pantagruel à la fin du XV^es", in R.E.R. IX, 1911, pp. 326-330. Pentagruel had a comic role in the "diablerie"- the anti-heroic part of the mystery-plays. - cf. M. Bakhtin Rabelais and his world, translated by H. Iswolsky from "Tvorchestvo Fransua Rable", Moscow, 1965 pp. 266-267. and G. Cohen "Rab. et le théâtre" in R.E.R., IX, 1911, pp. 1-68. Ref. to this aspect of Pantagruel occur in Pantagruel chs. 2, 5, 6, 7, 14, 18, 29, 31.
- 82) No. 256 in M. Françon, op. cit.
- 83) Pantagruel, Prologue

- 84) Pantagruel, I
- 85) O. Arnoullet, in -4^o, 48 ff.
- 86) J. Longis, Paris, 1549.
- 87) O. Arnoullet, in -4^o, 54 ff., 1529.
- 88) ie. Ioan. Ravisii Textoris nivernensis officina/partim poeticis referta disciplinis--- (May, 1532).
For the popularity of this encyclopaedic work, cf. R. Doucet, op. cit., p. 48.
- 89) op. cit, ibid.
- 90) Ibid.
- 91) Sancti Georgii Florentii Gregorii, episcopi turonensis, Historiae Ecclesiasticae Francorum libri decem publ. Paris, chez J. Renouard, 1836.
- 92) Ibid pp. 92-94.
- 93) Froissart Chroniques, édition du ms. de Rome, Reg. Lat. 869, par George T. Diller, Geneva, Droz, 1972.
- 94) Ibid, prologue, pp. 37-38.
- 95) Oeuvres de Georges Chastellain publiées par M. le Baron Kervyn de Lettenhove vol. I, Brussels, F. Heussner, 1863.
- 96) Ibid, prologue.
- 97) For lists of biblical refs. in Pantagruel and in all of Rabelais's novels cf. J. Plattard "L'écriture sainte et la littérature scripturaire dans l'oeuvre de Rab." in R.E.R. VIII, 1910, pp. 257-330 & R.E.R. IX, 1911, pp. 423-436 (addenda & corrigenda) cf. also E. Bertalot, "Rabelais et la Bible---" in Et. Rab., vol.V, 1964, pp. 19-40.
- 98) Genesis IV, 1-15.
- 99) Genesis IX, 20-22.
- 100) cf. Genesis X.
- 101) cf. e.g. Epistola Pauli ad Romanos XII, 19: "Scriptum est enim, Mihi est ultio---".
- 102) e.g. Genesis IV, 20 & 21: "Adam bore Jatal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have cattle. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe".
- 103) cf. Caesar De bello gallico , VI, 18.
- 104) Consult E. Huguet Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle, Paris, Champion (& Didier) in -4^o.

105) cf. the expression "Des nèfles!"

106) In 1505 came the publication of Vita et Fabellae Aesopi (graece) cum interpretatione latina. The three best known publishers of popular vernacular works in Lyon, Nourry, Arnoullet & Chaussard, all produced translations of Aesop:

Les subtiles fables d'Esope, C. Nourry et P. de Vingle, Lyon, 1526, In -4^o goth.

Les Fables de Esope, O. Arnoullet, Lyon, 1552, in -4^o, 70 ff.

Les subtilles fables de Esope, feu Barnabé Chaussard. Lyon, 1531.

Aesop is given as one of the most popular books of the day in the Grande Généalogie des Fripelippes, (1537) directed against Marot (cf. A. Lefranc "Oeuvres de Rab." vol. III, pp. XXIII-XXIV, & Oeuvres de Cl. Marot, édition de la Haye, 1731, vol. VI, p. 66):

"---Puis Huon de Bordeaux Me racompta d'aucun de ses hardeaux. / Après rencontre, ainsi que m'esbattoys, / Merlin, Giglan et Gyron le courtoys, / Pentagruel, Esopet, Mandeville".

107) cf. R.E.R. I, p. 72 and R.E.R. VII, p. 447. cf. also A. de Montaiglon Recueil de poésies françaises des XV^e et XVI^es. ---, Paris, P. Jammet, 1855, vol. V, L. 111.

108) cf. notes by Marcel Schwob in R.E.R. I pp. 71-73.

109) cf. R.E.R. II, p. 140 for the whole song.

110) Tiers Livre, 19, pp. 476-478

111) cf. F. Rigolot "Les langues de Rabelais", Et. Rab. tX, Droz, 1972., pp. 41-47.

112) Pantagruel, 22, p. 240

113) Pantagruel, 4, pp. 46-47

114) Pantagruel, 28, p. 285

115) cf. O. Dobiache - Rojdestvensky, Les Goliards, Paris, Rieder, 1931.

116) cf. E. Picot "Le Monologue dramatique dans l'ancien théâtre français"; article in 2 parts. Part I Romania 1886, pp. 358-422. Part 2, Romania, 1887, pp. 438-542.

Footnotes to Chapter IV

- 1) H. Bergson, Le Rire. Essai sur la signification du comique, Paris, Alcan, 1900.
- 2) Baudelaire De l'essence du Rire et généralement du Comique dans les arts plastiques, in the Pléiade édition of Baudelaire's Oeuvres Complètes, Gallimard, 1961, pp. 975-993.
- 3) Baudelaire, op. cit. p. 982.
- 4) As is clear from the "cri de Thélème" of Gargantua, 54,^{pp. 410-411} see also L. Sainéan La langue de Rabelais, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 264-271.
- 5) See the prologue of the Quart Livre, pp. 574-575
- 6) Cinquième Livre, Prologue, p. 789
- 7) Liminary letter to the Quart Livre, p. 564
- 8) "Briève Déclaration", "En l'epistre liminaire", p. 775
- 9) For instance in Rule 13 of his "Rules for Thinking with the Church" reproduced in Bettenson, Documents of the Christian Church, op. cit., p. 366. St. Ignatius Loyola said: "That we may be altogether of the same mind and in conformity with the Church herself, if she shall have defined anything to be black which to our eyes appears to be white, we ought in like manner to pronounce it to be black".
- 10) Quoted from Montaigne (III,2) by Diderot in Pensées Philosophiques, Garnier, 1964, pp. 24-25.
- 11) In footnote 21 of Ch. 9 (pp. 70-71) of his critical edition of Gargantua (Gargantua, édition critique faite sur l'Editio princeps, texte établie par R. Calder), Droz, 1970.
- 12) Tiers Livre, 19, p. 438
- 13) Pantagruel, 8, p. 109
- 14) GARGANTUA, 25, p. 245
- 15) Cinquième Livre, 9, p. 815
"je vis derrière je ne sçay quel buysson je ne sçay
quelles gens, faisans je ne sçay quoy, et je ne sçay
comment, aguisans je ne sçay quels ferremens, qu'ils
avoient je ne sçay où, et ne sçay en quelle manière".
- 16) Almanach de 1535, p. 95-9
- 17) Gargantua, 11, p. 113
- 18) Gargantua, 11, pp. 113-118
- 19) Gargantua, 13, pp. 135-136
- 20) Gargantua, 18, p. 131

Footnotes to Chapter V

- 1) Pantagruel, 9, p. 121
- 2) Gargantua, 9, p. 95
- 3) Les Caractères de la Bruyère, foreword by M. Suard, Paris, Furne, 1860, p. 15.
- 4) P. Stapfer, Rabelais, sa personne, son génie et son oeuvre, Paris, 1896, p. 505.
- 5) The title of Ch. III (pp. L-CVI of vol. I of the Lefranc edition) is "La réalité dans le roman de Rabelais et spécialement dans le Gargantua"
- 6) pp. LXII-LXIII
- 7) pp. LV-LVI
- 8) pp. LXXII-LXXXVII
- 9) Chapter I of this thesis.
- 10) p.L of the introduction to vol. I (Gargantua) of his edition.
- 11) Gargantua, 26, pp. 255-256
- 12) Gargantua, 33, pp. 291-292
- 13) Gargantua, 48, pp. 382-383
- 14) Gargantua, 31^{p. 281} There is a clear allusion to Charles VIII in Gallet's words:
"---si bien que non luy seulement ny les siens, mais les nations barbares, Poictevins, Bretons, Manseaux---ont estimé aussi facile démolir le firmament et les abysmes ériger au dessus des rues que désemparer vostre alliance---".
The combined forces of the "Poictevins, Bretons, Manseaux---" were defeated in 1488 at Saint-Aubin-du-Cormier by Charles VIII.
- 15) Gargantua, 28, p. 272
- 16) Gargantua, 29, pp. 275-277
- 17) Gargantua, 29, pp. 275-277
- 18) Gargantua, 31, pp. 280-285
- 19) Gargantua, 50, pp. 388-394
- 20) Gargantua, 38, pp. 324-329 and 37, pp. 317-318
- 21) Gargantua, 27, pp. 260-261
- 22) Gargantua, 27, pp. 264-265

- 23) Gargantua, 39, p. 332
- 24) Gargantua, 27, pp. 261-263
- 25) Gargantua, 52, p. 400
- 26) Gargantua, 39, p. 331
- 27) Gargantua, 45, p. 363
- 28) Gargantua, 27, pp. 264-270
- 29) Gargantua, 40, p. 341
- 30) In R.E.R., VII, pp. 433-441, A. Lefranc argues convincingly that Rabelais based his description not directly on the "Sileni Alcibiadis" of the Adages but from an offprint of this adage published by Froben - with his own gloss - given ten editions between 1512 and 1528.
- 31) In Oeuvres complètes de Lucien de Samosate, translated from Greek by B. de Ballu, Paris, Garnier, 1896. Compare the transition passage in the prologue of Gargantua, to pp. 239-242 of Ballu's translation.

Footnotes to conclusion.

- 1) La Philosophie de la Renaissance, Payot, Paris, 1972,
pp 5-11.

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