

gentle and good-natured of all men cried in the face of his miserable tormentor:

"For years you have been basely cheating me. You have massacred, or got a brute beast to massacre, the work of twenty good men who have devoted to you their time, their talents, their vigils, from love of right and truth, from the simple hope of seeing their ideas given to the public and reaping from them a little esteem richly merited, which your injustice and ingratitude have now robbed from them forever. . . * You and your book will be dragged through the mire; you will henceforth be cited as a man who has been guilty of a treacherous act, an act of vile effrontery, to which nothing that has ever occurred in this world can be compared. Then you will be able to judge your panic terror, and the cowardly counsels of those barbarous Ostrogoths and stupid Vandals who assisted you in the havoc you have made".

The abominable operation of the unscrupulous Le Breton affected the frank and communicative Diderot doubly, because the most infamous treachery of all times had to remain a secret and was, to Diderot's pain, kept as such, except for four of his close friends.

III

On the background of this still very incomplete survey of censorship and persecution, it is easy to imagine that in poor Diderot, while relentlessly going on, the feeling emerged of coming "too early" with his works to be understood by the "general public". His feeling, taken as the deeper motive for withholding manuscripts from print, has in any case been confirmed and may perhaps become tangible in concentrating a little on the fate *Jacques* encounters with his critics. The decisive note is struck in Loy's opening remark:

"Literary critics are not infallible. The pronouncement is neither surprising nor debatable. Yet to follow the literary fortunes of any important work, and to see the original formula of criticism perpetuated, is to feel in operation amongst the members of the literary *confrérie* a respect for past dicta which approaches dogmatism. What is disconcerting in such blind faith in a former judgment is the fact that the first judgment very often shows a complete misunderstanding of the work.

"On this score, it must be admitted that *Jacques le fataliste* has been sinned against much less than many other works in the history of literature. *Jacques'* story has been pretty generally one of indifference rather than of complete condemnation. But one has only to glance through the standard handbooks and histories of any literature to notice the repetition of trite judgments. . . . Frequently it appears a useful service to devote a more thorough study to such an indifferently accepted work, in an attempt to reevaluate its merit by more recent standards".

Complete misunderstanding and indifference (or indifferent acceptance) have their root, to be sure, in banal social conditions and circumstances.

* The word "forever" must be understood in the light of the cruel circumstance that Le Breton and his helper executed their censorship to the point of a private *Autodafé* in the true spirit of the inquisition: they took great care to make sure that the damage was beyond repair by burning all the original manuscripts and proof-sheets which Diderot had carefully corrected, revised and signed.

Constant acceptance of the work expresses the fact that its substance is "eternal" and indestructible; perpetually adverse conditions and circumstances prevent, at the same time, its understanding and lead to indifference, because the substance cannot become a vitalizing factor in the context of the given reality. Loy poses the problem well in saying:

"The critics at the close of his own century seem to have least understood Diderot. This is natural when one considers the unsettled atmosphere in which the book first appeared in 1796, and is, at once, a tribute and a proof that the *tête universelle* wrote for posterity".

Indeed, when *Jacques* finally made his appearance in France, he came in one sense still too early, and in another too — late. At that time the parvenu of the Directory occupied the high places of the revolution. The tribune, from which Paris had once heard the voice of Danton (himself, with his boundless optimistic energy and sensuality on one side, with his touch of pessimistic melancholy and resignation on the other, perhaps the purest incarnation of the true French spirit during the revolution), was now held by Barras; and in the society and salons of the 9th of Thermidor, *Jacques le fataliste* was anything but sympathetically received. Expressed in a different way: The conditions into which *Jacques* would have fitted had vanished when the enthusiasm of the Revolution with its universal ideals was reduced to the prosaic task of replacing the *ancien régime* by bourgeois rule. These conditions could, as history bears out, be re-established (and for that matter on an even much higher level) only in our time with its "more recent standards", a time in which the exhaustion of the narrow interests of the bourgeoisie again imposes a social change and opens a broad, real perspective for all. What, precisely, the recent standards are will be concretized in the course of the investigation which continues with Loy's essential statement:

"The nineteenth century is, on the whole, more understanding, but it repeats most of the adverse criticism. . . . That the general pattern should show greater comprehension in proportion to the lapse of time only strengthens the basic conviction Diderot had that he was writing for posterity [my italics! W.L.]. But, in detail, the criticism of *Jacques* during the nineteenth century reflects the general waves of liberal and reactionary thought [my italics! W.L.] which Miss Charles has seen for the works of Diderot in general. Thus there is a renewal of interest in Diderot and in *Jacques* in the early part of the century, and a judgment which is on the whole favorable; there is another renewal of interest in the latter part of the century where judgment of *Jacques* is less favorable. This is probably a reflection of the unrest during the Restoration; the varied feeling, with Reaction usually victorious, under the Second Empire. For Diderot in general, and the very equivocal nature of *Jacques* in particular, might be expected to appeal to those thinkers who are not completely satisfied with the *status quo*".

There seems to exist, then, a direct connection between Diderot's basic conviction to write for posterity and the social conditions — namely to the effect that dissatisfaction with the *status quo* is a *presupposition* for the understanding of *Jacques* either by the public or specific thinkers. It is highly characteristic that "from 1912 to the present day, there has been a definite change in attitude toward Diderot in general, with accompanying

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increase of understanding of the equivocal *Jacques*'. And again Loy remarks:

"The enthusiasm for the novel, in general, has been strangely incoherent, an enthusiasm of literary creators such as Schiller, Goethe, and Stendhal, or of social radicals such as Marx and Engels — all *preoccupied with new directions which are not yet absolutely clear even to themselves*. The most recent criticism has marked a change. The past thirty years has seen a dismissal of the familiar fault-finding, and an attempt to explain, quite simply, why the book was written and why it is still read. Perhaps the *world confusion* of these past years has encouraged such an attempt, for the confusion of *Jacques* is, for such a period, somehow consoling. And yet, there have been *similar periods before*. It would rather seem that, both from a literary and a philosophic point of view, the time has become ripe for a sympathetic understanding of *Jacques*. It is at least with that conviction that the following chapters were written". [All italics mine!]

It must, however, be observed that the historical period from 1912 up to this day is one of steadily growing *world confusion*, namely social decomposition, unrest, insecurity, discontent in all countries and segments of society. This kept in mind it will be evident that there have been *similar periods before*, but by no means periods which expose the features favorable to an understanding of *Jacques* with such constancy, increasing generality and magnitude as the one in which we actually live. The connection between the social conditions and the basic understanding of *Jacques* is thus rather strengthened and remains the principal inspirer for its adequate appraisal "both from the literary and philosophic point of view". The implication of all this is that "the time has become ripe" for Diderot's novel (which should be called an "un-novel") because only today we face which began with the Renaissance and which is in its literary aspect marked by the forming of the new humanistic ideal of life. From the days of the early capitalist development there arises and is transmitted from century to century a more or less conscious foreboding that its final results will be much broader, much more universal or "all-embracing" than those which the different concrete stages of this development immediately yielded. Great manifestations of the new feeling for life coincide quite naturally always with times of political and social troubles, of wars, reaction, persecution, censorship and confusion. But spirits are highest when these characteristics are but the reverse side of impending and far reaching social changes of a progressive order which reaction attempts to prevent. The audacious, enthusiastic and unrestricted vision of men representing these times in literature contains far more than the "illusion" which the mercantile, financial and industrial bourgeoisie had about the "blessings" which were to spring from the execution of their specific and relatively limited historical tasks — tasks which are after all only mere links in the development of the whole. There is invariably a tremendous difference, even an abyss, between the spiritual representatives of the capitalist epoch (beginning with the mercantile system) and those representing the *material* interests of the new strata rising in the process of change: the latter will generally follow the "day" and betray all ideals as soon as established in power; the former hold the "universal view", survey centuries and take the attitude that the

outcome of the new development will in the end be itself "universal" and benefit *everybody*.

It is not at all accidental that the unsurpassed encyclopaedic outbursts of humanism occur in the Renaissance with Rabelais and on the eve of the French revolution with Diderot, for the times of these men were times of decisive changes and "encyclopaedic" in themselves. Even the somewhat more sceptical note in Diderot can easily be explained by the character of the French revolution as the "lesser event" compared to the Renaissance as the foundation upon which everything else rests. All other manifestations of the same spirit are revivals and "follow ups" rather than fundamental enlargements, for they reflect times in which economic and political changes coincide with a still more specific and therefore "narrower" stage of the development. In such times the general perspective is, despite inherent tremendous consequences, less immediate than before, and the negative effects of the particular stage overshadow for the whole the positive ones and make them practically appear as not too consoling "possibilities". If men like Schiller, Goethe, Stendhal, Marx and Engels expose a "strangely incoherent" enthusiasm for *Jacques* it is because the enthusiasm receives impulse only when the deeper coherence between the basic aspirations and certain trends or events in a given stage of the development impresses itself to whatever degree upon the mind. The revitalized coherence may then produce new manifestations or enthusiasm for the older ones, but they are (except for the intervals of roughly 200 years each which separate *Jacques* from the fifth book of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* and Loy's study from *Jacques*) not strongly enough supported by events to make *new directions* clear even to those *preoccupied* with them. It is finally not the "confusion" of *Jacques* which is "somehow" consoling in periods of "world confusion", but rather the insight that the confusion can be mastered somewhat in *Jacques'* manner and that mastering it will yield a marvellous reward. This insight consists in the perception that the apparent chaos or confusion is not devoid of sense — it is on the contrary saturated with strong forces striving beneath the surface towards a new comprehensive balance. Loy, with a remarkable grasp for the relation between the conditions of the time and the manifestations of the new spirit, is very close to the consoling perception when he describes the "tradition", the "typical French lineage" of — Pantagruelism:

"Such a tradition *does not presuppose* that all of these authors manifest a complete similarity or community from *all points of view*, for the *ages* in which they wrote *have left their imprint* on their works. But the *spirit* — of which the *keynote* is Pantagruelism — is the same. Rabelais, for example, shows exuberance, a *faith in the human animal so complete* as to be only slightly conditioned by his very real experience with existence as it is. The newly rediscovered testimony of Greece and Rome is still too fresh and exciting [in connection with the newly opened perspective of his own age! W.L.J. Montaigne, after a century of religious wars, has already greatly modified his enthusiasm, but the *faith* and the *hope* are there along with the resignation. Moliere, writing in a medium which puts his reader immediately off-guard, and in a century where the classical conventions of the *honnête-homme* have so readily been accepted as fact, was probably much closer in spirit to his libertine friend Cyrano de Bergerac than is

usually thought. The equivocal nature of *Le Misanthrope* alone gives sufficient pause for reflection. Without *Jacques* the eighteenth century would seem without representation except perhaps for Voltaire and his philosophic tales — especially *Candide*. But there is a certainty and an inherent bitterness, often ill-disguised, in all of Voltaire including *Candide* which is quite different from the final impression of *Jacques*. Since Diderot mentions it in the same breath with Rabelais, mention should perhaps also be made of the abbé Dulaurens' eighteenth-century *Compère Mathieu*. Although obviously a lesser work, Diderot certainly was not making an empty gesture in mentioning it in *Jacques* as recent research has shown. Diderot, not in *Le Neveu de Rameau*, certainly not in *La Religieuse*, but in *Jacques le fataliste* is the eighteenth-century representative. Much has happened intellectually and socially since Molière's day, so it is not surprising if the basic humanist enthusiasm has been even more seriously and stringently limited by actual experience. But the faith in man and the scorn of events is still there and *inviolable*. A century separates Diderot from Anatole France and the humanist's position in a period of revolutions, industrial and political, has become a hundred years more difficult. The easier judgment of France has been that he is a sceptic or cynic; the terms were probably as applicable to the others in this lineage by their contemporaries. But the same love of man, masquerading strangely, is in France as it was in Rabelais, Montaigne and Diderot. Gide, by reason of his overdose of Puritanism and carefully cultured intellect, is sometimes questionably qualified for the group". [Aside from French expressions and titles, all italics mine!]

IV

If the keynote of the "Gallic spirit" is Pantagruelism and Gide (who definitely belongs to an inferior group) cannot qualify, exception shall here be made also for Anatole France. To discuss the proper place of both Gide and France would require a special study. The fundamental difference between them and the Rabelaisian tradition can, however, be made distinct by definition of what Pantagruelism is.

To begin with it may be stated that the reference to Rabelais (or to Sterne, Cervantes and even Voltaire) plays an enormous part in the discussion of *Jacques* with most of its friendly or hostile critics. These critics can be examined, one after the other, in Loy's study. But whether they are friendly or hostile, pure enthusiasts or enthusiasts with critical reservations, referring to Rabelais or not — very few of them have something to say about either the substance (content) of the work or "Pantagruelism". The tone of the pure enthusiasts, and not mentioning Rabelais, is set in a letter by Goethe to Merck (1780):

"There is a manuscript of Diderot, *Jacques le fataliste*, being circulated about, which is quite remarkable. A large, very rich dinner, with much intellect, prepared and served up for the mouth of a unique idol. I took over the seat of this Bel and during six uninterrupted hours, devoured all the courses and between-the-courses in the order and following the intentions of this artificial cook and table-setter".

Confronted with identical comments by Goethe and Schiller, which add nothing in content, Loy sees at once what is involved:

"It is unfortunate that the reactions of Schiller are not more detailed; in effect, they tell us little more than his personal attraction to the book. . . . [What Goethe] has to say of *Jacques* is again much in the vein of Schiller's unbridled delight, and however unusual his figures of speech, he gives little actual textual appreciation".

Going over to the hostile group operating with Rabelais, its typical representative is Andrieux with his "famous" exclamation (1796):

"You know Rabelais? You know Sterne? If you don't, I advise you to read them, especially the latter; but, if you want a very weak imitation of *Tristram Shandy*, you have only to read *Jacques le fataliste*. . . . From his model, Diderot has copied only the disorder and lack of transition. . . . Do you like scandalous tales, even filthy ones about monks, whores and renegades? Read *Jacques le fataliste*. . . . It's enough to turn the stomach of the least delicate reader".*

In view of this, one may reverse Loy's remark about Schiller-Goethe and state: In effect, Andrieux reveals little more than his personal revulsion for the book and leaves us with Rabelais-Sterne in the air. But so do also, in the latter respect, most critics of the third group who evoke the Rabelaisian element on the basis of a more or less sympathetic approach. The heart of the matter is touched upon by F. C. Green who is, however, already "concerned with explaining away the emphasis on Sterne's influence, and attempts to see clear into the difference between the two writers":

"Sterne and Diderot, though they both sat at the feet of Rabelais, have actually little in common. They present a temperamental [!] disparity which is reflected in *Tristram Shandy* and in *Jacques le fataliste*. Sterne's interest in human beings is essentially that of the artist, whilst Diderot's springs from a deeper source. Sterne has the simian inquisitiveness of the small boy, the same alert cocked eye for the comic or revelatory trick of speech or movement. In point of fact, he has none of that profound sympathy for humanity [!] which glows beneath the screen of Diderot's apparent cynicism and humorous tolerance".

Similarly Lucien Scheler:

"What separates Diderot irrevocably from the modern writers is his temperament [!]. Faulkner and his colleagues say 'Abandon all hope, ye who enter here'. . . . Completely different is the convivance that Diderot establishes among his characters, his reader and himself, for here the

* Poor Goethe, Schiller, Stendhal, Carlyle, Marx, Engels, Hegel and so on! They all may take to heart what this "very serious gentleman" (as Loy apostrophizes Naigou, another of the hostile critics and by chance Diderot's friend, disciple, and literary heir) has to say about their extremely "undelicate" stomachs, which did not turn in the least after being filled with all the courses and between-the-courses of the very rich dinner. Goethe is even explicit about his stomach when he writes: "I read it with the delight of the Bel of Babel enjoying an immense feast, and thank God, I was able to devour such a portion with the greatest appetite, all at once, as if I were drinking a glass of water, and yet with an indescribable voluptuousness". No being is more ridiculous and selfrighteous than the "serious" moralist generalizing on the ground of his private taste. Andrieux is punished on the spot (Nov. 16, 1796) by a writer with a more healthy stomach than his: "All these situations are developed with a good-natured spirit, and a light touch which could please only a few peevish [!] minds who replace purity of morals by the hypocrisy [!] of decency". That writer observes on the Sterne-Rabelais question that Diderot had Sterne's "work in mind", but that *Jacques* is "an original modeled after an original".

complicity is established in fun. It is because Diderot loves life [!] passionately that he has confidence in man; it is for this reason that *Jacques*, in the worst circumstances, preserves his good humour."

The statements of the two last critics have (like that of Loy in the previous section) the merit of pointing out some characteristics of Pantagruelism. First, faith in the human animal or confidence in and love of man, profound sympathy for humanity, passionate love of life; secondly, *hope* for humanity on one side, *scorn of events* on the other; thirdly, humorous tolerance or complicity among all established in fun. Whether these characteristics make for a distinct *temperament* or are the properties of the temperament itself, is irrelevant: the temperament cannot be separated from its properties (and vice versa) which are, further, indissolubly blended with a sound dose of — pessimism. This pessimism is concretely at work in the forms of resignation, scepticism, satire, irony, humour, stoicism, "fatalism"; it gives the enthusiasm or optimism (in itself, like gold, too soft a material) the necessary resistance, while the temperament receives from it that wonderful balance without which faith in the human animal would become: insipid day-dreaming; hope: a cheap consolation; love of life: trivial affirmation of existence *per se*; scorn of events: pure cynicism; humorous tolerance: apologetic complicity in baseness; complicity in fun: passive and sentimental adaptation to circumstances.

V

How the balance, so vital for Pantagruelism, asserts itself at every turn and point is to be gathered from other characteristics and elements present in *Jacques*. Of great consequence is the element of *realism* (not to be confused with the product of degeneration called "naturalism"), many times objected to as the "obscenity" of Rabelais, Diderot and Sterne alike. Loy notes on this score: *

"Both works [*Jacques* and *Tristram Shandy*] have been criticized for their obscenity: the issue needs some clarification. . . . The passages for which Diderot has been taken to task are the very frank *gaulois* episodes of *gay and earthly lovmaking* [which is one of the pillars in the structure of the Rabelaisian temperament! W.L.]. Sterne's treatment of such episodes is more suggestive than pictorial; Diderot goes *bluntly to the point without insistence*, as if he were relating *any other inoffensive* event. . . . The pseudo-sensibility, the '*vire mouillé d'une petite larme*' which is Ducro's formula for Sterne's humor, or at least the very fact that he is, after all, a churchman prevent him from a *frank* treatment of subjects touching the obscene. Diderot, on the other hand, for all his sensitive nature, is a man of the world and, *at heart, an uninhibited gaulois* from the provinces. . . . Obscenity or not, it is fairly clear that Diderot's *earthy attitude in face of the sexual and physical* is the more *honest and frank*. Actually, this attitude toward the physical, with the above reservation, is common to both men; there is *much of Rabelais* in them both. . . . But in a broader sense obscenity is a *universal human problem* [and treated as such and positively embraced by all Pantagruelists! W.L.]."

* If not otherwise indicated, and except for titles, French words and expressions, all italics in all following quotations are mine. These italics emphasize Pantagruelism.

A significant example of the realism in question is the ravishingly "obscene" episode in which Jacques tells his master how he fooled Dame Marguerite who believed wrongly that Jacques was wholly ignorant about the female sex. The trick he used to prove his "puceilage" is very convincing, because it is very realistically conceived:

Jacques (proceeding in his recital): "Ah! Dame Marguerite, teach me, I beg you, and I shall be very much obliged to you, only teach me. . . . Begging her in this manner, I squeezed her hands and she squeezed mine, too. I kissed her eyes and she kissed my mouth. Meanwhile it had become completely dark. I therefore said to her: "I see well, Dame Marguerite, that you don't feel enough toward me to teach me; I'm all chagrin about it. Come, let's go up and go back". Dame Marguerite was silent; she took back one of my hands, and I don't know where she led it, but the fact is that I exclaimed: "There is nothing! there is nothing!" At which point the *Master*, who immediately understands the trick, apostrophizes Jacques: "Miserable! double miscreant!"

Jacques continues: "The fact is that she was very much undressed, and I was much so too. The fact is that I still had my hand where there was nothing on her, and that she had placed her hand where this was not exactly the same on me. The fact is that I found myself under her and, consequently, her on top of me. The fact is that, not helping her in any way, it was quite necessary that she take all the effort upon herself. The fact is that she instructed me with such a good heart, that there came a moment when I believed she would die of it. The fact is that I, as much confused as she was and not knowing what I was saying, exclaimed: "Ah, Dame Suzanne, what pleasure you give me!"

The *Master* (keen listener and observer): You mean Dame Marguerite.

Jacques: No, no. The fact is that I confounded one name with another, and that instead of saying Dame Marguerite I said Dame Suzanne. The fact is that I confessed to Dame Marguerite that what she believed she was teaching me that day, Dame Suzanne had taught me, a little differently, it is true, three or four days before. The fact is that she said to me: "What! It is Suzanne and not I?" The fact is that I replied: "It is neither the one nor the other". The fact is that, while still making fun of herself, of Suzanne, the two husbands, and while bestowing upon me slight insults, I found myself on her and consequently her under me, and that, whilst she admitted that this had given her much pleasure, but not as much as in the other manner, she found herself again on me and consequently me under her. The fact is that after a little rest and silence, I found neither myself nor her below, neither me above nor her above nor me below; for we were one and the other on our sides, and she had her head bent forward and her two buttocks tightly pressed against my thighs. The fact is that if I had been less instructed, good, Dame Marguerite would have taught me all there is to learn. . . . [Jacques doesn't forget to add that they had, after such strain, much pain in regaining the village.]

The *Master*: And you haven't seen these women again?

Jacques: I beg your pardon — more than once.

Master: Both of them?

Jacques: Both of them.

Master: They didn't fall out with one another?

Jacques: Being mutually useful, they liked each other even more for it.

Master: Our kind of folk would have done much the same. . . .

Everything in this episode is realistic and delightfully balanced, above all morals and psychology. Jacques' slip of the tongue (saying Dame Suzanne), the sensuality without inhibition, the heartiness with which Dame Marguerite embraces Jacques' trick (it is a good and witty one, and if there is a prickle in it, it increases only the pleasure), the healthy behavior of the two women, the concluding aphorism of the master — all that is a thousand times more profound and truer than the Freudian rubbish. Natural things are in themselves harmless, unproblematical and gratifying: the balance is

preserved if nobody gets hurt, and then the complexes, guilt-feelings, repressions, sublimations and so on of the psychoanalysts are put to shame. Indeed, Jacques "slip" reveals nothing but the fact that two women gave him equal pleasure — nothing "subconscious" is brought out by it which Jacques was not consciously intent on telling Dame Marguerite anyhow. How right was that writer of 1898 who accused *Jacques* of being a work "without psychology"! Ah, he didn't know that his accusation was a compliment which placed Diderot far above the fabricants of the wearisome, boring and paralyzing *Ersatz*s for true psychology called the "psychological novel".

But what about "morals" if the husbands of Suzanne and Marguerite are made cuckolds, who earn nothing but mockery in the whole affair? First of all, morality is a matter of convention, and the convention is in the case of "monogamy" (before or after marriage) a thoroughly hypocritical and untenable one. The realist sees things as they are — it is higher morals to dismiss the lie and to recognize without ado that every healthy man and woman is an "adulterer", if not in flesh, the more frequently in thought. How many writers describe indignantly and enjoy secretly what they can't have in real life! Instead of attacking the *social* conditions, the only barrier to their longings and the sole force which cripples man psychologically, they call their frustration morals and embellish it with problems of psychology and human "nature". Such "problems" are quickly squashed when the master says that virtue is a good thing of which the wicked and the good speak well, and Jacques retorts: "Because both of them reap benefit from it". Or when, in the affair of Jacques and Justine, the master cries out: "Traitor! miscreant! Do you know what crime you're going to commit? You are going to violate that girl, if not by force, at least by fright. Carried before the law courts you would suffer the full severity reserved for rapists". To which Jacques replies: "I don't know whether I violated her, but I do know for sure that *I didn't hurt her any and that she didn't hurt me*". For the fact is that "all" went very well, and then very well again, and then again very well. And there go your morals, very much hurt, to the pit, where "deep" analysis can follow them and solve the problems of human "nature" which have just so happily been — dissolved.

Secondly, the two husbands, who will not fail of their own opportunities, receive only just "punishment" (an implicit side-point also in the case of Justine). At a wedding, these "jokesters" had asked Jacques some questions concerning wedding nights to which he answered rather stupidly. They burst out laughing and arouse the curiosity of their wives sitting at the other end of the table. "It's too funny", said one of them to his wife, "I'll tell you to-night". The wife of the other gets the same answer, and when all are in their beds they tell their wives the incomprehensible, unbelievable thing that Jacques, at the age of twenty-two, big and strong as he is, rather good-looking, alert and not stupid, is as new, but just as new as when he had left his mother's womb. The two women marvel about it as much as their husbands, and the very next day Suzanne gives Jacques a sign and asks him: "Have you nothing to do?" Naturally, Jacques has nothing to do, and there they go together with your — psychology, which you should enrich with a chapter on how to remove "inhibitions" of any sort (the material for it can be taken, gratuitously, from these notes).

Thirdly, neither the master nor Jacques nor Diderot himself stand outside the moral circle. Jacques-Diderot philosophizes, as Loy remarks, in terms reminiscent of Lady Macbeth's "Things without all remedy should be without regard". So he accepts the unavoidable, and his sole reaction to the perspective of becoming one fine day himself a cuckold is realistically balanced and constitutes an invulnerable position. This position, stated at the very end of the book, is Diderot's last word on the matter. Since it is rendered in the "vein of that *gaiety of mind* concocted in spite of fortune, in spite of fear, one catches a last glimpse of *Jacques the fatalist* — who is, in reality, all along Jacques the *Pantagruelist* — [Loy] when Diderot concludes:

"One has tried to convince me that his master and Desgland have fallen in love with his [Jacques] wife. I don't know what it's about but I am sure that in the evening he said to himself: 'If it's written up yonder that you'll be a cuckold, Jacques, you may do what you want, you'll be one; if, on the contrary, it is written that you'll not be, they may do what they want, you'll not be. Sleep then, my friend. . . And he fell asleep'."

Once more: There goes your psychology, a dry, dead product of frustration! Commercial interests alone are responsible for its reproduction, but once reproduced it becomes an animal more hungry than ever before. It will now proceed to a "deep" analysis; it will search for complexes lying at the bottom of the *pantagruelistic* human "nature" and surely find another — frustration on which to feed. And why on a frustration? Because, for psychoanalysis, everything is, leads to, or results from a frustration. If you eat and make love twenty-four times a day, you never get hungry. That's the trouble — *you overcompensate* therewith only an immense frustration which may go back to Cain who loved mother Eve (there was no other woman around) but was rejected by her (reason enough to kill Abel whom he suspected perhaps of being more successful, and to create the "brother-complex" which is nothing more than an overcompensated Oedipus-complex). So it is easy to grasp that the seemingly unproblematical appetite of the Pantagruelists is extremely problematical and a mere overcompensation, because the healthier the appetite, the more "complex" the hunger. And what is wrong with them both? Ah, that is a question you must never ask an animal which devours only pseudo-problems and rightly says: Doesn't the water make you wet? Well, then there's something "behind" it!

VI

Realism, in steady opposition to convention, is by its very nature *factual*, not programmatical, *revolutionism* — the next important element of the Pantagruelian temperament. Jacques and his master, the "strange pair", may be taken as a symbol of whatever one likes, but one can heartily agree with Naigon's complaint that Jacques is a servant "such as has never existed". It is easy to agree on this point because the servant is the carrier of a *shift* in the social status quo (*chose incompréhensible* for a Naigon!), appears as the real master and, for that matter, as one who is the negation of all masters or (*omnis negatio est determinatio*) a generalized human being as visualized by Diderot. This human being is, of course, in the process of *becoming* generalized, and it has to struggle with the actually *outlived*, yet *formally* still persisting status quo.

Once, Jacques had forgotten to water the horses. His father got angry. Jacques shrugged his shoulders. The father took a stick and worked rather heavily on Jacques' shoulders. Jacques, *out of spite*, enlisted in a regiment just passing by.

Jacques reports this incident to his master in the beginning of the story, but very soon follows one of a quite different type. The weather is sticky and the master falls asleep. Night *overtakes* them in the middle of the fields, and there they are, *lost*. The master, in a terrible rage, falls on his servant with a whip, and that poor devil says at each blow: "*That one, too, was apparently written up yonder . . .*"

Very soon after this Jacques' behavior changes again. With pistols in hand he puts a dozen brigands to reason who have insulted him and the master. Later, on the road, Jacques discovers that his wallet, and the master that his watch, have been left behind. Jacques immediately rides back to fetch them, while his master goes on, then sits down and — falls asleep. When Jacques returns he sees that the master's horse has been stolen. As the master is about to beat Jacques with the bridle-thong, Jacques says to him: "Take it easy, sir, *to-day I'm not in the mood* to let you assail me; I shall receive the first blow, but I swear that at the second I shall spur my horse and *leave you there . . .*" Upon which menace the master suddenly calms down.

At another occasion, the master tells Jacques that he is and will ever be only a rascal. Jacques counters: "If, in that thatched inn where we found the rascals, Jacques hadn't been worth a little more than his master. . . ." — What ensues from this answer is too relevant for the subject-matter not to be rendered in full:

Master: "Jacques, you are an insolent person: you abuse my bounty. If I have committed the folly of taking you out of your place, I shall quite know how to put you back there. Jacques, take your bottle and your kettle and go downstairs". Jacques: "It pleases you to say that, sir; I'm fine here and go down". *Master*: "I say that you will go down". Jacques: "I'm sure that you don't mean it. How, sir, after having for ten years accustomed me to live as your equal. . . ." *Master*: "It pleases me to stop that". Jacques: "After having suffered all my impertinences. . . ." *Master*: "I will suffer them no longer". Jacques: "After having seated me on your side at the table, having called me your friend. . . ." *Master*: "You don't know what the name friend means when given by a superior to his subaltern". Jacques: "When one knows that all your orders are but wind-bags if they are not ratified by Jacques; after having paired your name so well to mine that the one never goes without the other and everybody says Jacques and his master — suddenly it pleases you to separate them! No, sir, that will not be. It is written up yonder that as long as Jacques lives, and as long as his master lives, and even after they are both dead, one will say Jacques and his master lines, and I say, Jacques, that you go downstairs, and that you go downstairs immediately, because I order you to do so". Jacques: "Sir, order me anything immediately, because I obey you".

Here Jacques' master got up, took him by the lapel and said gravely to him: "Go downstairs". Jacques replied to him coldly: "I'm not going down". The master, shaking him violently, said: "Go down, boor, obey me". Jacques replied coldly again: "Boor as much as you please, but the boor is not going down. Look, sir, what I have in the head, as the saying goes, I have not in the heel. You excite yourself in vain; Jacques will stay where he is and will not go downstairs". Thereupon Jacques and his master, having been moderate up to this moment, lose patience at the same time and start to cry at the top of their voices: "You will go down. — I will not go down. — You will go down. — I will not go down". At this noise the landlady came up to find out what was going on; but it was not instantly that one answered her. They continued to shout: "You will go down.

I will not go down". Then the master, his heart heavy and pacing about the room, said grumbling: "Has one ever seen something like that?" The landlady, standing there amazed: "Well, gentlemen, what's the matter?"

Jacques, without exciting himself, said to the landlady: "It's my master who's off his head; he's mad". *Master*: "He's stupid, you mean". Jacques: "All as you please". *Master* (to the landlady): "Did you hear him?" *Landlady*: "He is wrong; but peace, please, speak, one or the other, and let me know what it's all about".

Master (to Jacques): "Speak, boor". Jacques (to his master): "Speak yourself". *Landlady* (to Jacques): "Come, now, Mr. Jacques, speak; your master orders you to, after all, a master is a master".

Jacques explained the affair to the landlady. The landlady, after having listened, said to them: "Gentlemen, will you accept me as arbiter?"

Jacques and his master (in unison): "Very gladly, our landlady". *Landlady*: "And you engage you by your honor to execute my sentence?" Jacques and his master: "Honor, honor. . . ."

Then the landlady, seating herself on the table and assuming the tone and the bearing of a grave magistrate, said:

"Having heard the declaration of Mr. Jacques, and upon facts tending to prove that his master is a good, a very good, a too good master, and that Jacques is not at all a bad servant, albeit a little subject to confound absolute and immovable possession with temporary and gratuitous concession, I annul the equality which has been established between them over a period of time, and I immediately re-establish it. Jacques will go down, and when he has gone down, he will come back up: he will re-enter in possession of all the prerogatives he has enjoyed up to this day. His master will offer him his hand and say in friendship: 'Good day, Jacques, I'm very glad to see you again. . . . Jacques will answer him: 'And I, sir, I'm very glad to have you back. . . .' And I forbid that this affair ever come up between them again, and that the prerogative of either the master or servant be disturbed in the future. We decree that the one shall order and the other obey, each to the best of his ability; and that there be left, between what the one can and what the other shall, *the same obscurity as before*".

Upon finishing this pronouncement, which she had lifted from some contemporary work published on the occasion of a very similar quarrel, and in which one heard the master cry from one extremity of the kingdom to the other at his servant: "You will go down!", and the servant cry from his side: "I will not go down". . . . she said to Jacques: "Come, now, give me your arm without further delay".

Jacques exclaimed grievously: "Thus it was written up yonder that I should go down. . . ."

The Landlady (to Jacques): "It was written up yonder that the moment one takes a master one will go down, go up, go forward, retreat, stay — and all that without the feet being ever free to turn down the head's orders. Your arm, and that my order be accomplished. . . ."

Jacques gave his arm to the landlady, but scarcely had they passed the threshold of the room when the master threw himself upon Jacques and embraced him; left Jacques to embrace the landlady, and whilst embracing the one and the other said: "It is written up yonder that I should never disengage me from that original there, and that as long as I live he would be my master and that I would be his servant. . . ." The landlady added: "And that as things stand neither of you would be the worse off for it".

The landlady, after having settled this quarrel, which she took for the first and which was but the hundredth of the same sort, and having reinstated Jacques in his position, went about her business. And the master said to Jacques:

"Now that we are cooled off and in shape to judge sensibly, don't you agree?" Jacques: "I agree that when one has given his word of honor one must hold it; and since we have promised the judge on our word of honor not to return to this matter, we must not speak any more about it". The *Master*: "You are right". Jacques: "But without returning to this affair, couldn't we prevent a hundred others by some reasonable agreement?" *Master*: "I consent to that". Jacques: "Let's stipulate: 1. Since it is written up yonder that I'm essential to you, and since I feel and know that you cannot get along without me, I shall abuse these advantages at any time and as often as *the occasion for it presents itself*". *Master*: "But Jacques, one has never stipulated something like that". Jacques: "Stipulated

or not stipulated, that has always happened, happens to-day, and will happen as long as the world stands. Do you believe that others had not, like yourself, attempted to escape that decree and that you will be more able than they? Get rid of that idea and submit to the law of a necessity from which it is not in your power to free yourself.

Let's stipulate: 2. Since it is as impossible for Jacques not to realize his influence and his power over his master as it is for his master not to realize his own weakness and to get rid of his indulgence, it is necessary that Jacques be insolent and that, for the sake of peace, his master will not notice it. All that has been arranged behind our back, all that was sealed up yonder the moment nature made Jacques and his master. It was decreed that you would have the titles and that I would have the stuff. If you would try to oppose the will of nature, you would piss but clear water.

Master: "But in this way your lot would be better than mine". Jacques: "Who says the contrary?" Master: "But in this way I have only to take your place and to put you in mine". Jacques: "Do you know what would happen? You would lose the titles and you wouldn't have the stuff. Let's stay as we are, we're both very well off; and may the rest of our lives be employed in making a proverb". Master: "What proverb?" Jacques: "Jacques leads his master. We shall be the first of whom one will have said it, but one will repeat it of thousands of others who are worth more than you and I". Master: "That seems hard to me, very hard". Jacques: "My master, my dear master, you are going to kick against a prick which will but prick the more lively. That is it, then, what is agreed between us". Master: "And what does our consent add to a necessary law?" Jacques: "Much. Do you think it's useless to know, once and for all plainly and clearly, to what we have to stick? All of our quarrels have, up to now, come only because we had not yet clearly said to ourselves that you would call yourself my master and that it is I who would be yours. But now that's understood and we have, consequently, only to go ahead". Master: "But where the devil did you learn all that?" Jacques: "In the great book. Ah, my master, one may reflect, meditate, study as much as one wants in all the books in the world, but one is only a petty scholar if one has not read in the great book. . . ."

Jacques' fatalism is *determinism*, but a determinism which comprises the actions of the individuals as one of the main determinant factors. Sometimes Jacques acts out of spite, and that may influence the course of his whole life. At another time he is lost because night has overtaken him, and then the master represents mere elemental forces with which it is senseless to argue and whose blows he endorses with the comment that *it was written up yonder*.^{*} A third time he is not in the mood to suffer, and that

* What is true of Jacques is true of the master: he is one such as has never existed. Diderot's description of him runs: "He has very few ideas in his head; if he happens to say something sensible it's from reminiscence or from inspiration. He has eyes like you and me; but one doesn't know most of the time if he's looking. He doesn't sleep, nor is he awake either; he lets himself exist: that's his usual function". This "automaton" clearly stands for nature and outside conditions and foibles, still a well meant man, a very good master, who likes to interrogate Jacques and cannot go on without him. It is precisely as a part of the outside conditions that he represents also the "master" of whom Loy says with good reason: "The Master would seem to represent for Diderot just that — a gentleman whose extinction is forestalled only by the efforts of a Jacques. Yet even this picturization is too simple, for although he has not the fire of genius, the Master is not a complete dolt. At times he amazes the reader with a pronouncement which shows a quiet sort of experience and reflection and which fits very badly with most of the other things he has said. He is undeniably but an individual member of a more general class, yet nonetheless, a convincing and consistent character". As such a character he stands in evident contrast to Jacques: "In politics Jacques would certainly be to the left, his Master, to the right; in matters scientific, Jacques would be an experimentalist, his Master, a scholastic; in matters of

means only that he struggles, and struggles successfully, against evils and injustices which can be avoided. A fourth time the forces in play block each other, and then the only way out of the impasse is a compromise.

In the compromise accepted by both parties the same obscurity as before is maintained, but Jacques' position has become stronger. It is now once and for all stipulated that he shall abuse the advantages he has over his master at any time and as often as there is an occasion, and that it is necessary that he be insolent. Jacques draws his lessons from the past, lives completely in the present, and is nevertheless entirely oriented towards the future. He is at the spearhead of the development, which has already gone too far to be reversed and which makes the social change a necessity. So he does not advocate physical violence — forces have shifted and the status quo has become such that thousands of Jacques will lead their masters peacefully along the path set down in the "great book", provided that the status quo in its true actuality is recognized and respected. As Loy expresses

it: "Just how much of a revolutionary there is in Diderot cannot be adequately discussed here. It is certain, however, that the relentless project of the *Encyclopédie*, and the equivocal, often strong, suggestions as to a change of things . . . point to a certain amount of defiant spirit against the status quo. Several such thought-provoking ideas tinged with revolution have already been pointed out in Jacques. For Jacques was conceived in a time of crisis, in the years of the Maupeou parliament so disliked by the *philosophes*, in the years when the young Louis XVI made his tragic bid to counterbalance the march of tragic events and was found wanting, in the years when Turgot was about to make his valiant but unsuccessful attempt to save France from 1789. If there can be a final explanation for Jacques, it is that it represents Diderot's prejudgment of the Revolution which was already writ large, the testament he leaves to limit his responsibility in that tragic affair, and a forejudgment of those basic romantic heresies (here Rousseau again rears his head) which still badger the modern world — destructive totalitarianism and self-assertive individualism. . . . If all the Jacques can be assured of leading their masters who, for all that do not cease being masters, the revolution, if it be called revolution, will necessarily be a gradual, not a violent shift. Such an attitude with its insistence on the power of the Jacques, is Machiavelli popularized and reversed, a handbook for the masses and not for the Prince. . . . But with what fear and stealth is it necessary to proceed! The Masters are patently afraid of the Jacques, and the Jacques cannot but be, more than ever, distrustful and afraid of the Masters when their well-meant attempts to help are met with fearful repression. Fear begets fear whether in the political body or in the individual. If there is a mellowing in the aging Diderot it is in the realization that much effort and time has been lost because of the fear of fear. Jacques sums it up rather well in the episode of the brigands with whom he has so bravely dealt. To the Master, who is at once afraid of he-knows-not-what, and awed by this devil of a man, his lackey, Jacques says, 'All of us, in this

morality, Jacques would be relativist, his Master, a careful adherent to the code of his family and the times. It is natural, then, that Jacques should do most of the leading in discussions, that the Master should only react [to the usual function of the environment! W.L.], which is, in effect, what happens from the start'.