house, are afraid of each other — which proves we are all fools'. In many ways the French Revolution remains the most important event in modern history, and still overhangs most of the modern world’s problems more than the moderns will admit. In Jacques Diderot has answered before the fact both the practical and the philosphic problems which that Revolution... has preserved for the twentieth century.

VII

It is only too probable that here, in Diderot’s answer to the practical and philosophical problems of our time, one of the truly determinant factors for the rejection of Jacques by (specifically) American publishers has been uncovered. To act out of spite, to accept what is absolutely inevitable, to fight unflinchingly against avoidable evils, to make necessary compromises without sacrificing one’s character — this alone is already ‘dangerous’ but it does not exhaust Pantheoguelle revolutionism and cannot suffice to make the Pantagruelian temperament the rounded, well-balanced unit it is. Pantagruelists are generally far ahead of their time and their revolutionism has other “appealing” aspects for the Masters of the mad-house in which we live.* Some of these aspects particularly concern America, the country in which a serious compromise with the Jacques could spare humanity immeasurable sufferings and prevent its eventual annihilation. In Mussolini’s Italy, Hitler’s Germany and Stalin’s Empire it has all too clearly been demonstrated that any violation of the “will of nature” cannot but destroy the social substance, engender general barbarism and finally, a universal catastrophe. Vice versa: America could eliminate barbarism once and for all and free the world from want, fear and avoidable evils. In no other country does it appear so clearly written upon the face that as long as the Jacques and the Masters live, the former would have the stuff and lead the latter to the creation of a society in which both categories are to be dissolved into pure and simple human beings, whose lives will be regulated neither by orders nor their ratification, but by social relations which have become reasonable in themselves. It is, in short, in no other country so absolutely clear that the very terms Master and servant have already been stripped of

* A fine observation by Loy concerning the fear Stalinists sense in view of Jacques shall not be omitted: “The Russians... usually skip over Jacques as having no [1] significance to their study, or perhaps, as having only an equivocal in his whole work on Diderot, is content to say that ‘in 1773 he finishes the great prosic epic, Jacques le fataliste, Luc...’ limits himself to a sympathetic observation on the so-called obscenity: ‘As for the tone of Denis Diderot’s artifice of the Biboindicars... it is an admixture of a rather [1] rustic indigence which expresses scarcely [1] more than a healthiness of temperament’.

It seems that this utterance is less sympathetic than extremely snobbish. Stalinist counter-revolution was naturally eager to stamp out all achievements of indigence of a healthy temperament has been supplemented by a rather Russian indigence, which expresses no more than a painful, artificial and unhealthy admixture of low Siberian puritanism coupled with Stakhanovism for record, Luc and neo-Malthusians may learn from Jacques why to-day even France has a rising birth-rate: “One never makes so many les gens extra.”

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all sense by force of material conditions which have rendered the capitalist status quo obsolete and require no longer the social types corresponding to these norms.

And yet, besides the Stalinoid sector of our mad-house, no other part of it is so extensively pervaded with insane fear, hysterical distrust, malevolent persecution, ridiculous (but disastrous) witch-hunting, intimidating “loyalty oaths”, degrading “tests”, perverse spying, insulting controls, wanton injustices and insidious censorship as America. Especially there have Masters long since been transformed into sheer usurpers — its ranks have been filled with innumerable parvenus, with scum (and in the genuine tradition which has always “distinguished” the formation of the American ruling class) outright criminals. And what such “Masters” instigate is amply supplemented by the viciousness and the zealous cowardice of their dependents (lackeys in the meanest sense of the word) in every sphere of public life. The press, Hollywood, publishers, writers, professors, school-teachers, union-leaders, scientists, “liberals”, many organizations and bodies impose voluntarily — and therefore all the more ruthlessly — a devastating censorship upon themselves and the public, not to mention voluntary participation in illegal government drives, and witch-hunting, denounced and similar activities of their own.

Even willing publishers must, in such an atmosphere, be frightened of one-knows-not-what at the sight of Jacques. They must be “awed” by a book which has a “contagious” quality, and whose author delights in the unpardonable sin of saying what he means and... for the benefit of all: seriously, honestly — meaning what he says. Indeed, what is to be done with a “Master” who revolts outright against the injustice of Him who “is said to be the assemblage of all perfection”? No doubt, Jacques and his Master lived in a mad time, and that is why Jacques, fearing for the security of his outraged Master, looked around to make sure that nobody had over-heard him. But pray, has an American publisher in our time not to watch out for Cardinal Spellman and the American Legion? Are they not at any time ready to “protest” successfully against anything they “don’t like”, and that without the slightest concern for the democratic right of others to like intensely what the “protesters” don’t like? Indeed, the poor publisher has to watch out — the fear is under his skin and drives him into submission, even if he is unaware of what really makes him conform to the rules of the mad-house.

Perhaps the most horrifying circumstance of all for to-day’s illiterate rulers is the fact that Jacques, this devil of a man, is so strong in character, so unassuaged, so steady, so indomitable, so sure of himself, and simultaneously so gay, so easy, so good-natured, so harmless, so undisturbed, so relativistic. Diderot’s portrait of him and his ideas really inspires “dread”:

He does not, like our beloved “mass-psychology”, hold that the masses are “inhuman” and enjoy the crimes of their diverse tyrants. “They would snatch that unfortunate about whose gallows they gather from the hands of justice if they could... The people are terrible in their fury, but it doesn’t last. Their own misery has made them compassionate; they turn their eyes away from the spectacle of horror they went looking for; they grow tender, they return weeping”. (Pray, citizens, what can any government and “scientific” propaganda do with teachings which do not conform
with "collective guilt" and give the lie to the assumption that people are crazy about witch-hunting? "The distinction of a physical world and a moral world seemed void of sense to him." [That fellow is definitely dangerous: If people realize what he means — adieu rulers and a lot of ideologies!] "He waxed angry at the unjust man; and when somebody objected that then he resembled the dog who bites the stone that struck him, he said: 'Not at all; the stone bitten by the dog is not corrected; the unjust man is modified by the stick.' Often he was inconsistent like you and me, and subject to forgetting his principles, except in some circumstances where his philosophy evidently dominated him and then he said: 'That had to be, for it was written up yonder.' He tried to prevent evil; he was prudent with the utmost scorn for prudence. When the accident happened, he came back to his refrain, and he was consoled."

 Practically speaking: If the rulers are foolish enough to provoke a violent revolution against the stipulations in the "great book", the undesired "accident" must happen and provide the consolation which all natural events bear in themselves. Pantagruelian revolutionism is thus not only a property of the physical world, but also of the human "moral" world whose behaviour is off-hand not distinguishable from the "behavior of matter". For in the final analysis only one morality can stand the test — the morality expressed in the great dictum: Good is that which is necessary, or what is necessary, that is good. And what is necessary will be felt with irresistible force every time the situation itself commands: For better or for worse, you have no other choice than between these two possibilities! In the interim which separates such situations from each other, the problems of balance are solved by steps relative to the concrete stage of the development, and here numerous solutions are offered. Jacques remarks: "The doctors say that opposites are cured by opposites." The master concretizes: "Which is as true for morality as for physiology. I have noticed a rather strange thing; there are scarcely any moral maxims of which you couldn't make a medical aphorism, and, conversely, no medical aphorisms which wouldn't make moral maxims."

 The cure of opposites by opposites is the general pattern of all development, but it depends again on many concrete circumstances what form this development will take. The master has been condemned to bring up a child which is in reality that of his deceitful friend, the Chevalier de Saint-Quin. Jacques reflects on the strange things written up yonder: "Who knows the rôle which this little bastard will play in the world? Who knows whether he is not born for the good fortune or the destruction of an empire?" The master says no — he will make him a good turner or a good watchmaker. He will marry and have children who will perpetually do the same as their father in this world. Jacques: "Yes, if that's written up yonder. But why should not a Cromwell come out of the workshop of a turner? He who had his King's head cut off, didn't he come out of the workshop of a brewer, and does one say to-day...?"

 The master hastily interrupts him at this point, and while the book approaches its end the opposite solution is presented in the episode which is, as the climax of human behavior, the most significant in the whole story. This episode has been prepared in a dialogue in which Jacques challenges the Master's view that he is free to do as he wishes. The master admits that we pass three-quarters of our lives in intending without doing. Jacques immediately gives the problem its dialectical turn: "And in doing without intending," This the Master doubts, yet he conceives that it be proven to him. Jacques declares that the proof will be delivered and proposes meanwhile to speak about other matters. Before long the following happens: Jacques has loosened the straps of his Master's saddle; the Master falls, but Jacques is at his side and receives him (falling) in his arms. The Master complains that Jacques takes bad care of him — he might as well have ended his life in falling. Jacques answers insolently; the Master gets furious and chases Jacques round the horse in order to beat him; Jacques bursts out laughing and the chase goes on until the cursing Master and the laughing Jacques, sweating and exhausted by fatigue, stop each at the opposite side of the horse, both breathless, but Jacques still laughing and the Master looking furiously at him. With breath coming back, Jacques says:

 "Will the sir, my master, now agree?" The master: "And with what, you dog, rascal, insolent, shall I agree if not that you are the most malignant of all servants and that I am the most unhappy of all masters?" Jacques: "Is it not evidently proven that we act most of the time without intention? There, put your hand on your conscience: have you intended something of all you have said or done since half an hour? Haven't you been my Marionette and wouldn't you have continued to be my pickel-herring for a moment if I had so proposed to myself?" Master: "What! This was a jest?" Jacques: "A jest." Master: "And you were expecting the straps to break?" Jacques: "I had that prepared." Master: "And with your Marionette cord, you led me at your fancy?" Jacques: "Exceedingly nice!" Master: "And your impertinent reply was premeditated?" Jacques: "Premeditated.

 Master: "You are a dangerous scamp," Jacques: "Say that thanks to my captain who gave himself once a similar pastime at my expense, I am a subtle reasoner." Master: "If I nevertheless had been hurt?" Jacques: "It was written up yonder and in my provision that that wouldn't happen."

 As soon as provision comes into play and arises as a possibility out of the development, the Cromwell-perspective can be supplanted: if the masters consent to the experiment it will be proven that they will "fall" without being hurt. Loy neglects this obvious aspect of the episode, but his philosophical comment on it is of the highest "recent standard": "Yet what is this but a complete admission on the part of Spinoza's disciple that volonté did come into the affair — obviously not the Master's free will, but moral freedom nonetheless. So that the chain of cause which toppled the Master is then not purely physical, but, in great part, psychological, and the latter due to Jacques' wishing. [Observe, however, that wishing must have become physically possible if it is to be more than wishedful fancy! W.L.]

 The victor in the affair is not fatalism, in which planning is helpless but determinism, in which planning is an integral part of the moral freedom granted."

 Equally excellent is Loy's summary concerning Diderot's moral ideas:

 "After Jacques, there is no easy analysis, but it becomes increasingly clear that there is here still no codified moral system, no philosophic structure with bylatos for behavior. There are as many solutions as there are in actual personal behavior; there is only an attitude toward life, a
suggested state of mind toward a facilitated acceptance of life by the individual, of the individual by the world.

VIII

With this attitude or state of mind the third essential element of the Pantagruelian temperament has been brought to the fore, namely the philosophical element which involves, of course, all other elements, and especially revolutionism. It is now again irrelevant whether the elements make for a distinct philosophy or are shaped by it: the philosophy cannot be separated from its concrete content — both philosophy and temperament form one whole and are as a whole stronger than the sum total of their parts.

The balance of Pantagruelian realism and revolutionism is well established, but is the matter of its morals definitely settled? Loy does not always escape the danger connected with an abundance of nerves — here and there he turns his subject around too much in the desire to explore it to the fullest extent in his reach. And so the discussion of philosophy opens anew with the problem of morals when Loy continues his happy summary: “And in that parallel acceptance centering about the individual, there is a blending of the conservative with the revolutionary which presupposes a humanistic equilibrium of moral behavior. But the actual balance of such equilibrium is not precisely projected.”

Unless we have missed Loy’s point, he obscures what he had just so excellently clarified and makes a statement which represents factually an impossible demand. In order to show that the first part of Loy’s summary is sufficient in itself and injured by his addition, some steps back are imperative.

It seems above all that the parallel acceptance must center as much about the world as about the individual, for no facilitated mutual acceptance (as a matter of practical behavior) is thinkable if that attitude (also something practical) or state of mind is not suggested by the, so to speak, physical state of the world. The only meaningful distinction between the unconscious (elemental) physical world and the conscious (responsible) physical world is exactly this, that a part of the physical world has become conscious of its problems and tries consciously to solve them in a responsible (moral) manner. Since wide differences between consciousness and consciousness exist and by far not all human beings have reached that degree of consciousness required for responsible action, it follows at once that it is impossible to precisely project the actual balance of the equilibrium in either world. To speak about actual projection means to pose a false problem (as, alas, all moral or ethical systems have hitherto not projected the actual balance of the equilibrium, but the abstract balance of a very actual disequilibrium — the real problem is whether or not an equilibrium, of which the actual balance is unknown and unprojectable, can be achieved in human society. And in this respect everything depends on whether or not there are sufficient reasons which suggest that the problem is solvable in actual practice.

A famous sentence has it: “It is not enough that the idea strives toward reality, reality itself must strive toward the idea”. If a humanistic equilibrium of moral behavior is presupposed, then no problem exists, for problems arise out of concrete practice and must be solved. If, conversely,
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e) Matter is intrinsically (by attribute) revolutionary, namely creative — it tolerates no other absolutes than its own attributes: motion (energy), sensitivity (as a faculty), creativeness (revolutionism), and the striving for balance.

d) An equilibrium may be “presupposed” in the most abstract sense because, for the whole universe, equilibriums and disequilibriums are in “equilibrium” and constitute their opposites without distinction. In the concrete, however, everything is and remains partial and relative. A part of the universe may be in violent eruption or change, while the solar system is in relative equilibrium, which may be indeed “the best of all possible equilibriums.”

e) The same holds for the relative equilibrium of matter organized in all the forms of our globe up to human society. Specifically, parts of human society for a long time may live in a fairly stable equilibrium; for example, primitive people if not disturbed by natural catastrophes, the interference of the white man or other outside influences. But human society as a whole has never reached a stage in which the equilibrium was the predominant one. The so-called social balance has been and is to-day more than ever an extremely precarious one — it is through and through a coercive and suppressive “balance”, not a free one swinging of itself.

f) The moral problem arises precisely from the fact that in human society, with growing reasoned perception, the elimination of all blind elemental processes, eruptions and violations is, at least in principle, possible.*

*To avoid misunderstanding: The “violence” attached to childhood, personal accidents, certain sicknesses, minor natural catastrophes are of no consequence for the social equilibrium and must be left aside. However, traffic accidents (public services), epidemics, social maladies and — death belong to the problems of synthesis. To eliminate these evils and make natural diseases disappear, is a “problem” for no one who had not a full and harmonious life for all a peaceful and painless process instead of a “deadfall” event, a well-balanced society is required.

and to make the other side clear: All possibilities hold only as long as an unpredictable elemental catastrophe does not interfere. The natural character of the solar systems is another factor which brings all possibilities to an end, but that is a matter too far off to be counted with here.

and distinguished from accident by cognition or “insight”. It is frequently said that accident and necessity, minor sicknesses, minor natural catastrophes are of no consequence for the social equilibrium and must be left aside. However, traffic accidents (public services), epidemics, social maladies and — death belong to the problems of synthesis. To eliminate these evils and make natural diseases disappear, is a “problem” for no one who had not a full and harmonious life for all a peaceful and painless process instead of a “deadfall” event, a well-balanced society is required. The fallacy of this assertion is obvious: fatalism and free will, or whatever opposites (poles) one may take, are as little synthesis as hydrogen and oxygen, the synthesis of which is water. With water something new is “created” (thermally, i.e., for all true synthesis), while accident and necessity, taken as synthesis, produce nothing other than what they are: two poles of one and the same thing (blindness or fatalism of the strictly determined world), turning into each other and remaining accidental as necessity, necessary as accident. The case turns from bad to worse if the concept (fatalism) which has the two poles of freedom and necessity, taken as synthesis, is not simply the one of the poles and fatalism and free will are presented as not “simply” antithesis but synthesis. In other words: Fatalism and free will are not even an antithesis — they are “simply” false poles and cannot be opposed at all. The real poles of fatalism (strict mechanical determinism or blindness of nature) are accident and necessity, and freedom as the evolutionary synthesis (more complicated than and different from the “unification of opposite units” in chemistry) appears only where the evolution has progressed to reasoned perception and material conditions which permit differentiation in practice, not only in theory. From this moment on, accident and necessity, necessity and accident, become practicably distinguishable.
Not even the idea of a general, non-coercive social balance could be conceived by the human brain until, at the time of the Renaissance, the material development suggested it to the mind. The humanistic equilibrium is a product of history — nothing in it can be presupposed other than the striving for balance inherent in matter. This striving is the sign of a real disequilibrium, the negation of which is a real equilibrium, not an equilibrium of moral behavior.

Hence: Morals are always relative and concrete, never absolute and abstract. Their own nature, moreover, will render them completely superfluous when the social organization has reached the stage where Rabelais' Rabelais' maxim is the dismissal of all maxims and is neither moral nor immoral, but simply amoral (a synthesis in which its components are preserved, yet deprived of their specific character).

IX

When Loy returns from his occasional errantries to “recent standards” he sees the true state of affairs. Some of what he has to say on philosophy is once more an excellent summary and deserves a place of honor. For example:

“To make Jacques and every other man worthy of existence on this earth, practically not intellectually, he must be granted the possibility of doing something for himself. But if, like the Neveu, he is necessarily the canary the reservation for human effect be intercalated? Spinoza had made no general, Diderot would insist on the same anti-Cartesian unity but for Diderot is the organ of thinking and constructed from the same (in modern parlance) electro-chemical organization of matter which has itself and causing all other existence, has just as surely made individual decisions a confusion of terms, for that decision at any given moment has already been decided in the Substance. Of the myriad attributes [Loy's emphasis] possible to his Substance, Spinoza has made only two comprehensible to man. Thus, man, like all Substance, moves and occupies space, and that is all. But suppose, once matter has become organized into the species man, in his capacity as a new entity, he finds himself capable of more than movement and extension, finds himself, from the great necessary backlog of matter-movement and matter-extension, capable of envisioning not the cause of his next step, but the effect which it might have. Would not this in itself add to the causes of the next step and change, ever so slightly, the fated effect? [In reality, we change the effect tremendously and separable as a chain of differently determined cause and effect by which accident has been freed from the blindness of necessity, necessity from that of accident. It is even not enough to say (with Hegel) that freedom is the recognition of necessity, not enough to say that necessity is blind only insofar as it is not and not only “plain” planning, but planning capable of calculating the conse-

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find in principle no limitations to effect decisive changes! W.L. Here basically is Diderot's argument with Spinoza. The sage of Amsterdam has completely ignored the possibility of development and evolution of the modes of his Substance. However determined any human entity may be, can he not for that become an agent, another attribute [Loy's emphasis] of Substance? Or more simply, must he be any part of that Substance, or, for that matter, does Substance, as Spinoza defines it, really exist? There is matter, to be sure, capable of movement and extension; and there are atoms of matter. But who is to say that such atoms must always follow an irreversible path in their peregrinations? Must not the atomic chance be taken into consideration here? Then Jacques is what he is because the atoms took the turns they did, but they did not have to take those turns and those turns only. And if there were but a way of encouraging a certain turn over another in the realm of psychologic determinants [again: such a way exists to an enormous extent in every realm! W.L.], might one not have added to or at least have directed the turn of events? The issue of disagreement is clearly scientific reasoning vs. a priori reasoning, determinism vs. fatalism, a doctrine of advance vs. a pragmatic doctrine of circumstances [the "philosophical" equivalent for chewing-gum! W.L.], a doctrine of optimism on practical grounds vs. a doctrine of, at best, purely intellectual optimism.

With this the moment has arrived where a closer description can be given of that element from which the examination of the Pantagruelian temperament proceeded, namely the "sound dose of pessimism". It is the palpating heart, the fiery soul, the animating spirit of Pantagruelism and gives (to repeat what is of paramount importance) the enthusiasm or optimism on practical grounds the necessary resistance, the temperament its wonderful balance. Since this pessimism is concretely at work in the forms of resignation, scepticism, satire, irony, humour, stoicism, "fatalism," and since it prevents the acceptance of the world from becoming the hard-boiled, brutal, disgustingly, self-righteous, infatuated, stinking, murderous "optimism" of those vulgar materialists who (God bless America's pragmatic doctrine of circumstances, so flatly mirrored in Eisenhower's face!) take business, their own world, their own stupid beliefs, their own "successes" for the last word — it refutes any over-seriousness and declares even the "seriousness" of the universe with its "grave" problems to be what it is when all reflection has been done with: vanity, futility, fust, nonsense. It makes an enormous difference whether one indulges blindly in such vanity or approaches world and life with the distance flowing from the insight that "all this" is a play — a serious play, certainly, but a play nonetheless. With the latter approach, the nonsense can make sense — with the former, humanity will go to pieces.

Loy sees the true state of affairs and has jewels to offer:

"Jacques le fataliste [Pantagruelism] makes sense only if seen in the general setting of nonsense."

There is [besides the outward amusement] an inner amusement of much more festivity — the "merry heart of Sterne", the Pantagruel chuckle, the enlightened laugh of Diderot. The complete treatment of a serious problem in this atmosphere of healthy gaiety [the cure for dead-sick over-seriousness] is what makes Jacques a rare and worthy work of French fiction."
“Jacques, far from Swiftian bitterness, is full of good fun and derision, however serious certain implications of the fatalism question are for Diderot.”

“Jacques is a gay book and the intentional playfulness of the author is certainly not least in that part which centers about fatalism. . . . Jacques in ridiculous many times and the very recurrence of the stock phrase ‘written up yonder’ is calculated, sooner or later, to strike the reader’s sense of comedy, given the character of Jacques and the situations in which he proffers his dictum.

“All of this constitutes not a boisterous humor, but rather an intellectual chuckle, that very inward smile of Sterne of which Diderot has so many times been judged incapable.”

“Jacques’ doctrine works, of course, much more efficiently after the fact, and Diderot takes relief in showing the Great Scroll at work in such circular order. After a request by the Master for clarification on a point of Jacques’ love story, the following dialogue takes place:

Jacques: I consent — but only on condition that we come back on our traces and return to the surgeon’s house. Master: Do you believe that’s written up yonder?

Jacques: It’s up to you to say so; but it’s written here below that chi va piano va sano. Master: And that chi va sano va lontano; and I would like to go there.

Jacques: Well, have you decided? Master: It’s up to you; whatever you like. Jacques: Well, in that case, we are back at the doctor’s, and it was written up yonder that we would come back.

Jacques is certainly not unique in this playfulness . . . But it is unique in the degree of playfulness; from first page to last, the reader cannot long ponder seriously over these weighty problems of human freedom because Diderot cuts him off with an ‘after all this twaddle or humbug’, or ‘thank your stars, readers, that I don’t continue this problem which theologians have argued for centuries’. For Diderot has realized the academic nature of the problem and — to put it frankly — the futility of it. In this, he has again seen much of modern philosophy, for if the basic implications of human freedom are still very vital, the dissection of the question as academic metaphysics is not; the interest has been transferred more to what the tangible effects of the problem will be to society, which is precisely where Diderot would have put it. It is to the philosopher what the squared circle is to the mathematician — a philosophical chess game. But meanwhile the philosopher must live in an actual world. Academic questions are not complete nonsense on the one hand, but on the other, they are not the sum total of truth. A thinking man considers them seriously when he is serious, knows how to play with them when they refuse to bend to his contemporary world. The very academic thinking is not useless, the day might arrive when the steadily changing, the steadily enlightened psychological elements will have made a natural adaptation to the equally changing physical elements. Moral freedom might then be either unnecessary to the human entity, or nature itself might leave off its adamancy and become increasingly a willing cosmos like man. But until then, the answer of Jacques is evident: at all times when the materialist philosophy would seem to confuse and thwart the humanist — paradox, contradiction, inconsistency notwithstanding — the humanist must stay.

It stays naturally, for after Jacques it is clear that the humanist can be, must be, and is synonymous with the materialist. So Jacques [whose materialism is not business-materialism!] goes peacefully to sleep, lulled by his doctrine which need not necessarily influence his acts, and Diderot continues to act and mold for the future although his experience many times tells him he is a fool’.

“Hoax it is [the book], and the laugh is equally on the reader, the author, and humanity in general. And if the good-natured admission of the joke does not end in an equally good-natured laugh, Jacques has missed its point”.

“Any paradox which is read into Diderot comes from the eternal desire to categorize, to demand that each man create his system if he is to be preserved for posterity. Systems are so much more easily and painlessly grasped. What has not been seen is that Diderot is preeminently human, with none of the pretenses of a Nietzsche; that, although he may waver on concrete problems between two possible points of view, the general feeling for and interpretation of human existence remains much the same, one of reasoned optimism. Has more been required or received from Montaigne and Rabelais?”

“If the final interpretation of Jacques le fataliste et son maître seems thus to turn completely toward the comic, there have perhaps been many words wasted in the foregoing attempt to study several aspects of the novel from the serious point of view. If that is true, then much unnecessary talk about Rabelais has been published since 1532. The serious implications in both cases, rather, the necessary precondition for the fullest enjoyment of the final laugh. The steady infectious laugh of the simple and naïve joker is spontaneous and momentary; the more sparing intellectual laugh of the responsible man who has equal reasons for weeping is apt to be more effective and more lasting. It is the second type of laugh which is the final impression of Jacques”.

“The final tone of the work, then, is Rabelaisian . . . Jacques is a comedy, a true human comedy whose tragic is felt but definitely hidden beneath the playful Pantagruelism”.

X

The Pantagruelian approach to life or the philosophical attitude of Pantagruelism, forming one whole with the Pantagruelian temperament and admitting no difference (dis-equilibrium) between philosophy and practical activity, is the miracle by which nature attains its self-liberation. It is an inexhaustible miracle and reveals the realism, the revolutionism, the playfulness, the merry heart, the bursting laughter, the philosophic chuckle, the preeminently human and unpretentious seriousness with which nature proceeds in all its creations and finally finds with the creation of the human brain its liberating formula: As serious nonsense I recognize myself the moment self-reflection has been completed, but since the nonsense cannot be brought to an end I constitute my capacity of being serious as reasoned optimism.

This formula leads back to the question of realism and deeper into the inexhaustible miracle of Pantagruelism. Writes Loy: * 

* The writer of this Appeal selects the following quotation in which Loy quotes
"In an excellent article on Sterne, B. H. Lehman ["Of Time, Personality, and the Author", *Studies in the Comic*] has attempted to explain the real significance of *Tristram Shandy*; he has succeeded admirably in writing order of a much more universal and human kind than is usually granted about the disorder of that work. It is not at all surprising if in many places his conclusions are equally valid for Diderot. For both men had set themselves the same Herculean and generally thankless task.

"Sterne and Diderot were both conscious of the basic relativity of all things. As Lehman puts it, ‘For Sterne, the world is contingency incarnated. Anything and everything may be upset by thoroughly but irrelevantly motivated chance’. So that the ‘normal’ concept of reality, of morality, and particularly of time is an artificial concept. The possibilities, then, of reality in a multiform world are infinite, and small wonder that both men found themselves incapable of expression in a *traditional medium* [the steady opposition of Pantagruelism against convention! W.L.]. For they are talking of time by the period clock, by the mind’s clock, and in a much broader sense, by the universal clock which for Sterne is moved by God, for Diderot, by matter and the material concept of the cosmos. This points the way to obvious differences of detail in the two men. Says Lehman:

Since therefore all that man can know was mind-made and not actual, all principles of morality were imposed on the natural order by the idea—association process of the mind. As laid down in a hundred directions, they did not consist with the reality, because man’s dreams and hopes and fantasies of old traditions and procedures got associated into the reality patterns and falsified them.

Thus far we are still in a Lockian, if not indeed a Berkeleian* world. But Diderot has gone even further. For if he insists very definitely upon this psychologic causality, he has made it sufficiently clear that there is another very physical causality of materialism. His conception of reality is then doubly complicated, for there is the chance of both simple matter and organized or mind-matter to be accounted for when he defines the real, and the complete comprehension of this twin chain of causality has thus far eluded him. The gigantic proportion of the problem he has set himself becomes suddenly much clearer. For ‘personality’, that enigma in itself, existed and manifested itself in time; association of ideas and communications took place in time, and time itself (in whatever concept it existed — personal, periodic, or universal) was the precarious balance between per-

* In a note on this Loy says: "One of Diderot’s maddening preoccupations was his inability to refute completely Berkeley’s. Diderot’s inability was one inherent in the problem, and of any idealism in philosophy can only be refuted in practice, that consistent idealism is practically much closer to materialism than is generally believed.

Lehman, because he has the avowed aims of demonstrating that there exists a ‘community’ of Pantagruelists (he will return to this point a little later) and that he tries, therefore, to bring in as many witnesses as possible and refrains wherever he can from treating in his own words a subject he has cherished during his life. The motive for quoting other (if only potential) Pantagruelists is, avowedly, a selfish one: Pantagruelists find their utmost satisfaction in meeting — Pantagruelists.
creative whole which reflects a limited reality. From the foregoing it is obvious that both Sterne and Diderot were much too sincere to accept the inherent compromise of such limitation. What Diderot probably knew very well, but refused to accept, was the consciously or unconsciously admitted fact that every work of art presupposes a certain artistic convention. Each time a spectator enters the theater or the opera he has already accepted without question a great deal of limitation; what he is going to see has by definition been subjected to much formalization or stylization. The same applies to all genres of literature. It is true, that at some periods such formalization has been more strick on other periods, more pliable, but the tacit understanding between create and audience has always existed. New art forms are continually searching to break down or add greater freedom to this artistic convention; sometimes, indeed, seem intent upon working the other way and making the formalization so difficult to accept that only a chosen few disciples can hope to share in the communication; but invariably such attempts sink down to the same attempt at mutual understanding. The scope of both the imitation and the communication of Jacques le fataliste is so vast and all-inclusive that it rather defies the type of acceptance which every work of art must have. Perhaps a changed novel form will one day successfully cope with the problem, but it seems highly improbable, for the problems of Jacques, tied off they are to so many other relative values, would still appear rather insoluble.

With such a good start Loy arrives at the rather strange conclusion:

"It is the very wilful order of disorder which has so characterized Jacques that allows finally the introduction of a term which has come to be so familiar to the modern literary world. It seems clear that Diderot and Jacques stand at the beginning of a long and involved road which leads finally to surrealism. If by surrealism one thinks of Apollinaire's search for a reality above and beyond the accepted and the obvious, if surrealism, as Anna Balakian has so clearly stated it, is an expedition into disorder using contradiction in place of comparison as basic communication, then Jacques is Diderot's closest surrealist attempt."

If, says Jacques, if the sea boils there would be a lot of cooked fish — it simply makes no sense to ask for more than is there, because it means to ask for much less. It is, of course, true that a long and involved road has, among other phenomena, also led to surrealism, but it is equally true that the great stream or the great tree of literature and life has many stunted arms and dead branches, one of which is precisely the pretentious (over-serious) nonsense of surrealism. That the dead wood is "wood" and that Jacques has something in common with surrealism (all things have something in common with — all things) in no way justifies the identification of the dead branch with the main and "all-inclusive" living tree. The main tendency of the modern development goes toward the positive dissolution of bourgeois society in economy, politics, art, literature, philosophy, etc. — a vast process in which much that is sheer decomposition tries to resist and to crystallize against change. Such crystallizations, as they are manifestations of a certain decay, may remain an interesting phenomenon and can tell us much about the degree which the decomposition has already reached. The main stream, in contrast, defies the type of acceptance and

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The formidable limitation of surrealism which has, at best, succeeded in making its own disorder which it tries to ossify, but which has not succeeded in making order of a universal human kind out of disorder, not sense out of nonsense. Pantagruelism achieves this miracle and nothing can deprive it of further characteristics which — together with the mass of other characteristics and elements so far enumerated — irrevocably separate it from surrealism: sincerity, simplicity, naturalness, and the power to convince. It is neither art nor a means of communication to use contradiction for the sake of contradiction, i.e. to operate with absurd contradictions and to ask for so much mutual understanding as is required to accept a dancer dancing on human legs for more than an attempt to justify the absurd position of the artist in the framework of our absurd system. Such endeavor is, even if executed with the most refined techniques, simple invention of the convention apologetically postulated and taking the form of voluntary dilettantism in the service of the status quo. The real art in every sphere is to reveal the inner logic of true, tragic contradictions whose essence is to represent sense in spite of nonsense and to remain (as Rabelais, Diderot, Sterne, and nature itself) perfectly natural. The real art, in one word, is to master the nonsense and to face the grotesque with the same heroic serenity which characterizes nature's behavior on the one, and Pantagruelism (as the miracle of nature's self-liberation) on the other side.

Loy, in this case too, returns to the true state of affairs and shows by his own efforts the hopelessness of his undertaking:

* According to our newspapers must be regarded as "great manifestations" of surrealism because they are filled with the most absurd contradictions that are by no means below the level of today's voluntary dilettantism. The "same story with another "artistic" effort of our time" is the story, in fact, of the "surrealistic" description of "compositions" by a spilithic musician. To describe music is the same, to seek, the pretension of pretensions, and that pretension of describing non-existent music could not make ten steps without landing in Hollywood. There is, besides innumerable crutches like "my good and faithful Helen", those to the "beautiful" boy killed by the "platonic" love of Leverkuhn, who had, in his pact with the devil, forsaken all love. How terrible! Hollywood should not neglect the subject but rather combine it with the story of the dog who listens to a whistle man can't hear! There is the more irrelevant story of Clarissa Rodde who kills herself (that noble Hollywood soul) because a stepson of the purest Hollywood brand (for whom she once fell while she was, in the purest Hollywood style, a little "tipsy") tries to blackmail her with a motivation drawn from the purest Hollywood psychology, etc. That a man like T. W. Adorno, who helped Mann in the fabrication of his Hollywood monster but together with Horstheimer (Dialectic of the Enlightenment) wrote bitter truths about Hollywood, — that such a man associated himself with these pure Hollywood revelations is a problem which psychologists interested in the phenomenon of "dual-personality" may examine in their own way.
"It is equally true that Diderot could not have accepted many of the manifest peculiarities which have characterized the more daring [one should say the most apologetic! W.L.] surrealists. To begin with, the frank anti-social iconoclasm would have needed limits for Diderot; as Jacques has clearly shown, Diderot could not equate his artistic search for the transcendent with complete isolation from the social. But the errancy is still so tempting! W.L.] there is more than enough feeling if not proof in all of Diderot (cf. the surrealist René Crevel's title, Le Château de Diderot) and particularly in Jacques to justify the conclusion [the impossible conclusion that particularly Jacques is Diderot's closest surrealist attempt! W.L.]. It is so difficult for Diderot to tell what he means by real [Loy's emphasis] values, if it is so difficult for the reader of Jacques to assimilate and co-ordinate what seems many times only disordered contradiction [by far not all readers find that assimilation and co-ordination difficult! W.L.], it is most probably because he was groping about for the surreal [Loy's emphasis] in the vocabulary of a century whose ideal was logic and whose first mission was to destroy the old marvelous and in every way spread the conviction that the physical universe including man was more logical and natural than tradition would allow. Thus Diderot is far ahead of his contemporaries, for he has seen a new unreal [!] world, not based on the traditional confusion of revelation and metaphysical speculation, but which must grow out of a better comprehension of the pseudo-logical nature of things."

The point is that Loy for all his efforts is unable to reconcile Jacques the Pantagruelist with the pitiful experiments of "surrealistic" parasitism. He himself has said so much about the impossibility of his conclusion that all that is left of it is the same "confusion of terms" he has seen in Spinoza. Indeed, why insist on the term "surreal", why speak about Diderot's search for "the trans-logic", the "pseudo-logical nature of things" and a new "unreal" world when Diderot was looking for the real world and the deeper reality behind the vanishing status quo? Is this not a fact which Loy has repeatedly stressed, foremost in his brilliant discussion of Diderot's disagreement with Spinoza? There is not even a purely formal justification for Loy's conclusion, for not even the slightest similarity between the formal (artistic) means employed by Diderot and surrealism exists. Surrealism, one could say with Lehman, is contingency incarnate, but with the severe reservation that it is exclusively artificial, mechanical and dead: reality, not irreality, as seen by the traditional concept of irreality which appears as perfect "order" to traditional minds coaxed by the contingencies of competition. Jacques is far removed from the mechanical artifices of surrealism and remains perfectly natural — it destroys, as Loy states (and in reality argues against surrealism), the old marvelous and spreads the conviction that the physical universe including man was more logical and natural than tradition would allow. Indeed, how is one to reconcile this statement with the opposite statement that Diderot has seen a new unreal world (recession into the Berkeleyan world against which Diderot had "made it sufficiently clear that there is another very physical causality of materialism") which must grow out of a better comprehension of the pseudo-logical nature of things? This contradiction makes no sense and only leads back to a world based on the traditional confusion if not of revelation, then at least of metaphysical speculation. Diderot had, in truth, realized the futility of metaphysical problems like "surreality" and was groping for the deeper coherence of what seems (in a world which was for him entirely a physical reality) many times only disordered contradiction. It must be admitted that Loy's contradiction is a "perfect" one and consequently (Mephistopheles told us so long ago) "equally mysterious for ages of fools" — he has constructed a paradox against his own premonition: the paradox read into Diderot comes from the eternal desire to categorize.

Summary: In surrealism the world becomes more adamant than ever (not a willing cosmos) and the humanist disappears in it. And so it is the business of "deft scholars" who have not read in the "great book", where Jacques the Pantagruelist has his feet "solidly on the ground" (Loy) and stays as a convincing character, preeminently human, sincere, simple, natural, beyond all bourgeois art. But as the living instrument of nature's self-liberation and the personification of this miracle he emerges with new qualities of great consequence. To be preeminently human and to love life in spite of the nonsense, nay, even with the firm resolution to master it, means to face life and world heroically. Yet this heroism too is beyond bourgeois notions: it is not the heroism of the drama, the battle-field or the tragic destiny — it is the serene heroism of prudence with the utmost scorn for prudence which yields the synthesis of all characteristics and elements of Pantagruelism, namely Sovereignty.

XI

Sovereignty reigns in every Pantagruelic work from Rabelais to — Claude Tillier, the man who has to be put in the place of such inferiors as Anatole France and André Gide in the "typical French lineage" of Panta. There are, no doubt, traces of Pantagruelism in many individuals, but it should by now be absolutely clear that neither France nor Gide exhibit any of the essential features required to constitute that all-rounded, all-inclusive and preeminently French miracle. The only man who corresponds in temperament and character, in philosophy and attitude, in politics and personality perfectly to Rabelais and Diderot is, all necessary differences between the three men considered, Claude Tillier. No guess can be ventured as to why Loy totally overlooked Tillier's Mon oncle Benjamin, that novel which manifested the "Gallic spirit" (of which the keynote is Pantagruelism) in the nineteenth century with a freshness, originality and uniqueness as if no similarity with the two other great originals (Pantagruel and Jacques) had existed.

The originality of these works flows from the character of the ages in which they were written and which have left their "imprint" on them. It has been explained that great manifestations of the new feeling for life (Pantagruelism) always coincide quite naturally with times of political and social troubles, of wars, reaction, persecution, censorship and confusion, but that spirits are highest when these features are but the reverse side of impending and far-reaching social changes of a progressive order which reaction attempts to prevent. It has further been stressed that the enthusiasm for Jacques receives impulses 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; that
the revitalized coherence may then produce new manifestations or
enthusiasm for the older ones, but that 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. And that is to say that Tillier's Mon oncle Benjamin
has all the features of Pantagruelism crowned by Sovereignty, that it
exhibits the Pantagruelian personality with its specific attitude towards life
in which no difference between philosophy and practical activity is
permitted, but that it gives, unlike Pantagruel and Jacques, no clear new
direction. To bring this difference between Tillier and Rabelais-Diderot
into relief, the attempt to define Pantagruelism as closely as possible and
from all sides may be rounded up with the help of some writers who
approach the problem in such a way that the Pantagruelian personality
becomes the centre of the whole, as is natural and fitting for a phenomenon
which is both the incarnation of nature's miracle and its performer. To
begin with, there is Rabelais' own definition of Pantagruelism (Prologue to
the fourth book) which is unthinkable without his personality:
“Do you ask what Pantagruelism is? Good heavens, you know as well as
I! Pantagruelism is a certain gaiety [serenity] of spirit produced by a
contempt for the incidents of fate; it is a healthy, cheerful spirit, one ever
ready to drink, if it will.

“Did someone ask me why? O dearly beloved, I answer positively: because
such is the will of the mighty, beneficent and omnipotent Creator [nature], Whom I acknowledge and obey. Whose sacrosanct and auspicious Word I revere. (By Word, I mean Bible.) [By Word, I mean what is written
in the “great book”.)

“Is it not the Bible which derides with excoriating sarcasm the physician
who neglects his own health? Does not the Holy Book say: ‘Physician,
heal thyself!'”

Then there are the fine and pertinent passages concerning Rabelais
himself in Jacques LeClerc's Introduction to his praiseworthy English
translation of Gargantua and Pantagruel (The Modern Library, N.Y.,
1944):

“Born into that age which, of all ages, possessed the most passionate love
of life and knowledge, Rabelais believed intensely in the cultivation of
nature, and its enjoyment through every sense and faculty. He is a
thorough-going realist, interested in life as it is; this realism, moreover, holds
the key to his own existence, to his philosophy and to his writings.

“To his existence, because, eminently French, he never failed to face facts.
... As hostile to the mediaeval bigotry of extreme pacacy as he was to the
new fanaticism of Calvinist cant, he steered, almost miraculously, the
middle course of reason.

“To his philosophy, because it was concerned solely with actualities, and
because it indicated always a reasonable resolution of the problems of life.
Rabelais was, after all, no profound thinker, however wide his scholarship;
indeed, his ideas are primitive, fundamental and eternal in their simplicity.

“To his writings, because those five books, far from being a single work,
reflected three decades of constantly changing endeavor in the world, over

four centuries ago, yet to-day possess a freshness, a power and an immediacy
that are dynamic.

“What is the secret of Pantagruelism? It is in the theory of life held by your
man of the Renaissance: live fully, richly, follow your instincts, find the
utmost satisfaction for the body in the pleasures at hand, acquire the utmost
delight for the mind in the joys of intellectual curiosity. One may say: Do as
thou wilt was the only rule in the house of Thélème, and Rabelais was too
confident in the unerring rightness [LeClerc's emphasis] of instinct to fancy
there lay the slightest danger in doing as one willed. Instinct, with him,
thus became a principle of human morality, a principle of human activity;
theology, a principle of science and art. Nature was good; excessive discipline, not to
mention the mortifying asceticism of mediæval monasticism, was utterly
rotten. For the middle ages had taught contempt for the body: flagellum
of corrupt flesh, and a scholasticism to justify it to the incurable,
acquisitive mind. Into this dreary mismass, Rabelais tossed the horned
acquisitive mind of Thélème. He preached the full and free development of every faculty,
the rehabilitation of the body, the love of forms; his work was a panegyric
of nature, a hymn to life. Is morality menaced? No, he replies: ... because ‘men that are
free, of gentle birth, well bred and at home in civilized
company, possess a natural instinct that inclines them to virtue and saves
them from vice. This instinct they name their honor'. Was truer, nobler
tribute to humanity ever penned?

“'What Rabelais has the power of communicating to us,' says John
Cowper Powys in Visions and Revisions, 'is the renewal of that physiological
energy which alone makes it possible to enjoy this monstrous world ...'
Rabelais is the sanest of all the great writers, perhaps the only sane
one'.

“The man, then, was religious in the high sense of the term. But, since he
believed in instinct and since ‘laughter is the essence of mankind', he
abandoned himself prodigiously to it, and, mirthfully engaged in a satire
which can be qualified only by applying to it a word coined from his own
monstrous character, Gargantua. This satire was, ever reasonably, ever
realistically, directed against anything that could offend or hinder Rabelais'
philosophic conception of liberty. ... O laughter, universal, purgative,
indestructible, immense!'”

Speaking of the ideas on education of the “broad, all-inclusive” (nobody
who describes Pantagruelism can avoid these terms!) Rabelais, LeClerc
notes:

“His literary method consists first in sharply satirizing the existing order,
the old scholarship routine of the middle ages [no Pantagruelism without
steady opposition to convention and the status quo! W.L.], then in outlining
the new humanistic learning. Poronocrates' instruction follows out, step by
step, Rabelais' philosophy: since nature and instinct are good, they
should be cultivated to the utmost; since life is enjoyable, the faculties
should be developed and trained to enjoy it to the full. The body is not the corruption
despised by mediaeval monks, it is the temple of the Holy Ghost, worshipped
by Renaissance men. ...”

* O modern psychology, pale, becacked (as Rabelais would have said), lump,
doeful — this laughter must ring like a blasphemy in thy dog's-ear!
"Mentally and intellectually, the plan is encyclopedic; Rabelais would have Pantagruel become 'an abyss of knowledge'. No detail of daily life but serves to teach something useful in the most pleasant manner. Rabelais' own curiosity, realism and joy pierce through the text at every line [the unity of Pantagruelism in all its aspects! W.L.].

"Does Rabelais' idea make his schoolboy a well-taught compiler, rather than a human being feeling and experiencing objectively? Does it lack the sense of beauty that animates the Renaissance poets, does it lack the exquisite tact of Montaigne?

"In fairness to Rabelais it must be stated that his is a program for a giant, perhaps [1] less a workable scheme than an ideal to aim at. And, as such, for all our modernism, we have advanced very little further in the last four centuries. Again, Rabelais' pupil studies texts and books; but he also studies the text of nature and the book of life. His learning derives from things about him; Ponocrates proves more realistic and one hundredfold more inspiring than Rousseau. If the enjoyment of art goes by the board, that is a slight loss with the practical results acquired [and what a slight loss in our time, where "art" is merely "artful" b ----------- t! W.L.]. Montaigne offered us a sceptic adapting his intelligence to a strangely limited life [reflecting the conditions of the time! W.L.]; Rabelais aimed to create a man, happy and rich in the satisfaction of his natural instincts. 'An abyss of science!' Rabelais' is the higher ideal, and the closer to a noble tradition which is daily being perverted."

Wherever one touches it, Pantagruelism emerges as a miraculously organic and indivisible unity in philosophic composition, temperamental attitude and practical results or (with a new formula and a perhaps surprising turn) a philosophy which is preeminently French, which is lived in daily life by Pantagruelists, and which aims to create Pantagruelists and a Pantagruelistic society.

No truer word can be said about this philosophy than that it constitutes (neither in Gargantua and Pantagruel, nor in Jacques, nor in Mon oncle Benjamin), after all and despite the knowledge of their authors, no so-called "profound thinking". It must only be clearly understood that a) Pantagruelism has practically overcome the adanancy of "profound thinking" and has recognized the academic nature and futility of certain problems; that b) to work consistently with ideas which are primitive, fundamental and eternal in their simplicity amounts to the same as to work with the most profound ideas of the most profound system;* that c) to be concerned

* Hegel's philosophy, the deepest and richest ever conceived, is a case in point on which to expand is impossible here. It may be least said that it stands closest to Pantagruelism and is the only profoundly serene philosophy beyond Pantagruelism and its other great relative, Marxism. Just because of the close relationship between primitive, fundamental, eternal, simple ideas and true profound thinking was Loy able to write: "From England also comes the assurance that two correspondents, whose names are destined to remain long upon many lips, have read and talked about Jacques. In a letter of August 20, 1852, from Marx to Engels, both Jacques and the Neveu are spoken of as well worth reading. In a subsequent letter Marx speaks more at length of the Neveu which he characterizes as a 'unique masterpiece'. Unfortunately, there is no record of a longer statement on Jacques. But in the article on the Neveu he quotes at length from 'old Hegel' who must have read the Neveu with rare understanding and delight. It is clear that Hegel had also read and

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solely with actualities, to indicate always a reasonable resolution of the problems of life and to oppose ever reasonably, ever realistically anything that can offend or hinder one's liberty means to solve our problems more "profoundly" than any other philosophy can, for it means to solve them practically, not theoretically or intellectually.

Rabelais, working with his philosophy in the broad perspective opened in his age, presented the only realistic new direction possible for that time. The way in which he, himself threatened by the church (dear Calvin at the spearhead) and saving his neck thanks to his common sense, solves the problems of government and politics is best illustrated by the principles applied in the Picaro War (LeClerc on that whole episode: "What a ridiculous thing he can make of personal ambition, of militarism and its minions"). One has literally to study these principles in all seriousness, for in a moment or in a manner to perceive that they are of a profundity which answers any objection in advance, of a wisdom from which our own age has learned a thing to learn, and of a freshness, power, immediacy so dynamic as to reduce to bloody dirt the "principles" with which in "modern" times utterly obsolete governments conduct utterly obsolete wars.* Rabelais' enlightened sovereigns proceed with genuine Sovereignty — the policy of the pretentious pyromaniacs in Washington, Paris, Bonn and the Kremlin (250 pounds and a face like a balloon don't make Malenkov a giant) merits only the sarcastic comment: Physician, heal thyself!

True enough, Rabelais was enthusiastic about the new broad perspective and anticipated genuine Sovereignty in state affairs, expanding his exuberant, gigantic personality into a sphere not yet ripe for him. True enough, hence, that the still adamat material conditions did not answer him with the Sovereignty of his enlightened giants. But they answered him nonetheless with what was still necessary to secure further development and to hold the perspective of Sovereignty in state affairs open: with the more or less enlightened sovereignty of Absolutism as the interim form of Sovereignty and the only progressive political force which could pave the way for Sovereignty in all spheres. This intermediary phenomenon of

*In fact, the Picaro War amounted to a true revolution, executed soveraegny by Pantagruel, and must particularly have angered Calvin, who in the interest of his monstrous doctrine of predestination eagerly watched for victims to be tortured and burned. Compare Gargantua: The "worst harm" he did to the troublemakers who had instigated the Picaro War (not merely stated their opinion like Rabelais, Servet, etc.) was to make them work the screw-presses in the printing house he had newly installed (compare also the Allies and their "concept" of "collective guilt"). The contrast is illuminating: Calvin and the Allies as miserable slaves of "divine" or "democratic" passions, Rabelais as the enlightened, reasonable and practical humanist acting with serene Sovereignty and amiability in a position most during modern viewpoints on "crime and punishment". It is necessary to underline that Diderot and Tillier, in this respect too, are one body with Rabelais?

remembered Jacques le fataliste, for in a short newspaper article which concludes with a discussion of master-servant relationship, his admiration is reserved for the French manner of looking at things, exemplified immediately for him by Diderot's lackey and master. In Diderot's strange pair, he half-jokingly sees a new possibility of class society which might succeed, just as in the whole of the article he has playfully and humorously seen a central problem of his philosophy in terms of eighteenth-centry art".
note that the new Masters are generally blind or bad Masters; that the Jacques of the nineteenth century have greatly increased in numbers; that their sufferings drive them repeatedly to revolt; that “deep thinking” has advanced society not one iota and is factually an ideological attempt to prevent political progress which is always achieved by execution of the revolutionary directions of Pantagruelism; that the only real new directions which are formulated aim to end the sufferings of the Jacques by bringing them to power, i.e., to free society by the revolution and the (temporary) rule of the fourth estate; that these new directions (profoundly thought out and at the beginning seemingly the final solution, it must be admitted) were with regard to their ultimate aim, the end radically disproven by all events from the Paris Commune to the October Revolution in Russia (which was in content only a belated Revolution of the third estate and almost immediately exposed but the most extreme decadence of Bourgeois society); that in this whole period “profound thinking” is on its positive pole identical with real knowledge, scientific research and discovery (which Pantagruelism absorbs to the full), on its negative pole with pseudo-thinking which marks the progressive decay of the capitalist system in every field and becomes more and more a systematic dupery of the people.

Mon oncle Benjamin appears in a time of high political fermentation — between the July-revolution (1830) and the February-revolution (1848). Its author shares the persecution suffered by Rabelais and Diderot: for his liberal pamphlets he is punished by the loss of his position as a teacher; he lives in poverty, dies at forty-three years (born 10th April, 1801) of consumption, but holding his ground to the last and ready to haunt his children should they ever become “rich”. He is the man of the people in a time of the people, and his unrestricted love of the people, his deep instinct tells him what is needed for its cause. The mere fact that he is untouched by contemporary concepts concerning the social question proves not only that he is the deeper realist but it assures also the roundedness of his incorruptible character. For what is the secret of the entire epoch from the French Revolution up to the present day? Its secret is that the time slowly ripens for Rabelais’ higher and general direction of “Do as thou wilt”, for the installation of the house of Théleme everywhere, in which house rulers of any sort are unknown. The situation of society becomes from decade to decade more perplexed and paradoxical: On the one side nature, under the molding hand of man, visibly loses its admirancy and behaves increasingly like a willing cosmos which produces and reproduces whatever is desired; on the other side society, under the system of commodity production and precisely because of nature’s unlimited willingness, becomes more enslaved by petty interests, more adamant than ever and behaves blindly like nature in its most crude stage. Those blind automatons, who possess and rule and ruthlessly exploit their fellow men and nature, harden under the compulsion of competition to a degree where they sacrifice everything except their profits and privileges — the people who are forced into the mechanism of competition suffer all its consequences, until the very admirancy of the rulers and their army of interested parasites will either drive the people to revolt or the whole system to explosion.

What is the way out of the social paradox? It is surely not the workers’ movement whose leadership and functionaries finally wind up in total
corruption. These bureaucrats gain influence, power, positions, privileges, high salaries, even fortunes; they get well embedded in bourgeois society, lower the intellectual level to zero and sacrifice everything (especially one bit of political liberty after the other) except their positions, until they become either political oppressors themselves (chemically pure example: Stalinism) or the victims of their own policy (fascism), with the further alternative that either the people will dethrone them or that they perish with the system.

The workers' movement, dead, it is surely not “profound thinking” which has found a way out, for this fine endeavor finally winds up in charlatanries like Positivism, Pragmatism, Logical Positivism, Existentialism, Keynesian Economics, Psychoanalysis, Pre-natal Anthropology, trash on “Education”, on “1984” (Orwell), the United Nations and so on.

Since no other effort enters, it is after a hundred years of experience simply a fact that Tillier the Pantagruelist was the man who took the correct stand. Factually, he operates firmly on the basis that one has to oppose ever reasonably, ever realistically anything that can offend or hinder the liberty of the people. Factually, he recognizes that his is the age of the whole mass of the people, not of a new class which has to take power, and it is a fact of highest significance that as long as the workers' movement conquered and defended its political liberty, human and social progress were assured. Through defence and constant enlargement of the peoples' liberty to a human society — that is the fundamental idea of Pantagruelism which in its simplicity leaves “profound thinking” behind and solves the social problem, because enlargement of freedom means to break down the adanancy of class society and to dissolve it through its harmonious unification with the liberation of nature, which unification becomes a natural necessity at that point of the development where both man and nature can accept each other with the greatest facility. Where the leadership of the workers' movement engaged in the wars of the Procholine and "led" the masses into ever greater misery, the utmost Pantagruelism did was to accept necessary compromises without injuring in whatever form its character. One has to read Mon oncle Benjamin and to study it in order to see how Tillier's fundamental idea works, how his inviolable character pierses through the text at every line. The perspective of the age is anything but rosy — for the first time in a work of Pantagruelism the "sound dose of pessimism" appears directly as its basic pessimistic philosophy, but no other form, characteristic or element is lacking which constitutes the miraculous unit, and serene Sovereignty reigns supreme. One must firmly grasp that Pantagruelism is something that is incarnated and actually lived if one is to understand the realism, the revolutionism and the philosophical attitude of the Pantagruelistic temperament and personality. Tillier is not less identical with his Benjamin than Rabelais with his Pantagruel and Diderot with his Jacques, a point which Guy Palmade in his Introduction to Jacques (Editions Delmar, Paris, 1948) brings out somewhat better than Loy who tends to weaken it. What Palmade has to say is interesting in more than one respect:

"There is much of Diderot in this sympathetic Jacques, of the Diderot who believed, as Andrè Billy wrote, ‘in a nature soverignly good and just in its compensations and its unfathomable harmonies’; of the Diderot who..."

who had given himself for epitaph: ‘Ci-git un sage; ci-git un fou’ [here lies a sage; here lies a fool]. The same care to understand all and to clarify all, but inside of certain limits only, and the same calm scorn for what overflows them and exceeds man. To compare Rabelais and Diderot, as the critics of Jacques want, is folly if one thinks of the profound differences of the men and the epochs; but to recognize in them, together with a certain relationship, I don't know what common quality, that the reader of Jacques can doubtless admit”.

The certain relationship and the common quality which Palmade cannot denominate is precisely the complex miracle of Pantagruelism — consequently no wonder that the quotation contains not one word about Diderot's personality, personal behavior, beliefs or endeavors which does not entirely apply to Rabelais and Tillier. This is but another side of the miracle: The difference of the men and epochs is there and asserts itself vigorously, yet the complex unit too is there and asserts itself as stronger than the sum total of its parts, i.e. renders even the most marked difference unessential. And that is still not yet the end of the miracle: Ci-git un sage; ci-git un fou, the epitaph for all Pantagruelists, is a formula which bespeaks them as a-bourgeois individuals.

Indeed, the Pantagruelist is not anti-bourgeois or "non-bourgeois" but a-bourgeois: he is preeminently human, while the bourgeois is fundamentally a-human and alienated from the human essence; he is naturally social, while the bourgeois is unnaturally a-social; he possesses reasoned perception, while the bourgeois is blind and demoniacal; he faces facts, while the bourgeois is overwhelmed by them; he is sovereign, while the bourgeois is entirely enslaved by commodity production and its adamant mechanism of competition; he is a realist and an effective planner, while the bourgeois is essentially irrational and with all his pseudo-planning increases solely the adanancy of his extremely chaotic commodity production; he revolutionizes the mind and society, while the bourgeois is reactionary and revolutionizes only the means (techniques) for society's enslavement; he is heroic and serene, while the bourgeois is stupidly tragic and idiotically serious with all the pretensions of a Stalin or Hitler; he is reasonable and enlightened, while the bourgeois is fanatic and either cynical or superstitious or both; he is concerned with what the tangible effects of certain problems will be to society, while the bourgeois is completely absorbed by the problem of profit-making in the interest of which he disregards all other effects; he recognizes that insoluble problems are no problems at all and have to be dismissed as absurdities, while the bourgeois insists on the absurdities of commodity production and, thoroughly infatuated, tries to solve the insoluble problem of competition which will simply be dismissed when production for profit is transformed into production for human use.

(XIII)

That Rabelais-Pantagruel and Diderot-Jacques are the embodiment of this a-bourgeois entity has been sufficiently demonstrated (at least one can hope so) by their deeds, procedures, attitudes, lives, philosophy, etc., which are besides well-known enough to bring many complementary illustrations to the mind. As for Tillier-Benjamin, this shamefully neglected but inestimable witness for the fact that since Rabelais the social problem itself has steadily
become more humanized and must be solved by the majority of the people, only a few indications are possible here. One has to read Benjamin and to observe with what scorn for prudence Benjamin encounters the Marquis de Cambysse; how he saves his neck thanks to his common sense and faces the fact of brute force which compels him to compromise, i.e. to kiss the behind of the Marquis instead of being killed by the ragamuffins of the latter; with what serene Sovereignty, wit, prudence, planning he foils the Marquis and drives him to kiss his (Benjamin's) behind, insisting that every witness of the insult done to himself be present when it is avenged, but gallantly permitting Madame la Marquise, who had not witnessed the insult, to retire (realistic episodes of that sort, by the by, burden Tillier with the unavoidable Pantagruelian "obscenity"); with what indomitable pride he preserves the integrity of his character and rejects, poor as he is, the money with which the Marquis tries to buy his silence on what had happened; how reasonably he handles matters like duelling (to give only one instance) and first offers his adversary to settle the affair by a game of chess, then thrice simply disarms the well-trained fencer without doing him in true Pantagruelian fashion any physical harm (that unjust nobleman has, however, to endure the whip of Benjamin's vivid wit); how he is in unflinching opposition to convention; how he cares to understand all and to clarify all, but inside certain limits only, in the way he acts, lives, laughs, loves (very "earthly", it is only too true!), philosopher, makes sense out of nonsense and is "ever ready to drink" in a perfect gaiety of spirit produced by a contempt for the incalculables of fate ... until all that is essential for Pantagruelism is unfolded and the sparkling miracle performed once more.

O laughter, o serenity of mind, o wisdom of Sovereignty and of the readiness to drink! Whenever there is a presentiment, a doubt, an insoluble problem, a false tragedy — whenever inspiration is needed, the Holy Bottle gives advice. Gargantua and his companions travel far (that is they examine many social institutions and find them bad or ridiculous) in order to obtain an answer on Panurge's pseudo-problem! Shall I marry or not? And if I marry, will I be a cuckold? The one-word answer Panurge receives from the Holy Bottle is: Trinc! The priestess of the Bottle, Bacchus, then instructs the amazed Panurge:

"My friend", she said, "give thanks to heaven, as reason requires you to, for you have been vouchsafed the Word of the Holy Bottle. And what a word! The most gracious, godliest, most certain word of answer I have ever heard her give since I have officiated here at her most sacred oracle. Rise, friend; let us try the chapter in whose glass this noble word is explained!

"She produced a large, unwieldy silver book, shaped like one-quarter of a four-volume work of erudite philosophy or, if you prefer, like a half-hogwash of learning. Having dipped it in the fountain, she announced:

"The philosophers, preachers and learned doctors of your world feed you up with fine words, cramming their cant down your ears. Here, on the contrary, we really incorporate our precepts at the mouth. Therefore I shall not tell you to read this chapter or consult that gloss; I prefer to suggest that you taste this succulent chapter or swallow this rare gloss!"

"By Bacchus's bidding, at the Lord's bidding, an ancient prophet of the Jewish race, Ezekiel, ate a book and became scholarly to the back teeth. I now tell you to drink a book to become learned to your very liver. Come, open your jaws!"

Panurge was gaping wide as his jaws would stretch. Bacchus picked up the silver book — and we watched, spellbound. For we believed it to be a real book, because of its shape: it looked like a breviary. And a breviary it was, too: a tome-shaped flask filled with Falernian wine, every drop of which she made Panurge swallow.

"A notable chapter! A most authentic gloss!" Panurge declared. "Is this all the trismegistic, or thrice-mighty Bottle's word meant? I'm very grateful, of course."

"Exactly that and nothing more", Bacchus explained. "For Trinc is a panomphantastic word, that is a word employed, understood and celebrated among all nations. It means simply: Drink!"

The Holy Bottle does not mean drinking in the simple and absolute sense in which any beast may be said to drink. No — I mean the drinking of cool, delicious wines. Remember, friends, that by the vine we grow divine; no argument could be surer, no divination less hazardous. Why, your own Academics say as much, when they give the etymology of wine, as things are bound with words, which means strength and power. Has not wine the power to fill the soul with all truth, wisdom and philosophy?"

"It is impossible to speak more cogently than this excellent priestess", Pantagruel told Panurge. "As much as much to me about it all. Trinc, then. What says your heart, elevated as it is by Bacchic enthusiasm?"

"I say this", cried Panurge:

Trinc! Drink up, by goodman Bacchus!

All our quest was one long fable. I foresee a juggling arse,

Gaining vast momentum under Good Panurge's wedding thunder.

From Arlington, I draw these

My gigantic pleasure-saw,

Working it in the soft wood

Of Milady's maidenhead.

Trinc! I know she shall be wed,

How my wife will love her bed!

The pot snaps shut, the stout eel wriggles,

Lord! What juicy franklefrigles!

So the problem of cuckoldry is not less effectively drowned than in the case of Jacques who reacts to ponderous problems as follows:

"Here, sir, here's what knows better than all the augurs, seers, aeolians, and sacred chickens of the republic: it's the bottle [its gourde]. Ask the bottle."

Jacques took the bottle and consulted it lengthily. His Master drew out his watch and snuff-box, looked at the time, took his snuff, and Jacques said: "It seems I see destiny less black now."

But since the author of a Pantagruelian work is always fully involved in the affair, Diderot himself addresses the reader as Rabelais did:

"I have forgotten to tell you that in cases which demanded reflection, his [Jacques'] first move was to interrogate his gourd. Was it necessary to solve a problem of morals, a fact, prefer one way to the other, embark upon, pursue the affair, weigh the advantages or disadvantages of a political operation, of a commercial or financial speculation: the wisdom of a law, the outcome of a war, the choice of an inn, in the inn the choice of an apartment, in the apartment the choice of a bed — in all these cases his first word was: 'Let's interrogate the gourd'. His last was: 'It is the opinion of the bottle and mine'. With the gourd, a man made wise in his head, he explained it by saying that it was a sort of portable Pythia, mute the instant it was empty. At Delphi, the Pythia, her skirts pulled up, seated with naked arse on her tripod, received her inspiration from the bottom of the cup, Jacques, on his horse, his head turned toward heaven, his gourd uncorked and the mouth of the vessel near his own, received his inspiration from the top down. When the Pythia and Jacques pronounced their oracles, they were both drunk. He pretended that the Holy Ghost had come down to the disciples in a gourd; he called Pentecost 'the festival of the gourds'. . . . He gave the most magnificent picture of the enthusiasm, the passion and the fire with which
people and its cause undiscussed, his serenity and the pessimism underlying it indestructible.* This style answers for its man as for his time, his life and the world around him:

* The author takes the passage on style, as some on other subjects to follow, from a study he wrote ten years ago. A rather strange coincidence: just having tackled the question, an English translation of Mon o n c e l Benjamin arrives for which he had asked his friend M. S. Shiloh. The translation has an appendix—

the Baebicians and Perigordians were and still are seized when, at the end of a meal, their elbows resting on the table, the divine Bacchus would appear to them, would be placed in their midst, would hiss, throw her cap far away and cover her worshippers with her prophetic foam. His manuscript [his treatise on divination] was ornamented with two portraits, beneath which one reads: 'Aeacceon and Rabelais, the one among the Ancients, the other among the Moderns, Sovereign Pontiffs of the Gourd'; [Diderot's italics.] . . .

All this is very well, you will add, but Jacques's loves? — As for Jacques's loves, there is but one Jacques who knows them, and there he is suffering from a sore throat which reduces his master to his watch and his sniff-box; an indigence which afflicts him as much as you. — What shall we do then? — Really, I don't know. This would be truly the case to interrogate the divine Bacchus or the sacred gourd; but at this hour, her temples are deserted. As at the birth of our divine Savior the oracles of paganism ended; as at the death of Galatt the miracles of Bacchus were mute — so also no more great poems, no more these pieces of sublime eloquence, no more these productions marked with the stamp of enthusiasm and sanctity. All is reasoned out, considered, academic and flat. O divine Bacchus! O sacred Gourd! O divinity of divinity! Come back to our midst! The desire seizes me, reader, to entertain you with the birth of the divine Bacchus, the miracles which accompanied and followed it, the marvels of her reign and the disasters of her retreat . . .

It is the same praise of the Holy Bottle, namely of genius and serenity, as in the verses with which Pantagruel rebukes Friar John who makes fun of Panurge's rhyming:

Believe me, friend, this must be noble Bacchus —
His mad, poetic frenzy will attack us
Through his sweet wine, and grant the gift of song.

Impossible for Tillier not to strike again and again this keynote of true Pantagruelism. Two examples will show how congenially he understands the nature of the Holy Bottle: "Is he [Benjamin] drunk?" whispered my grandfather to his wife. "Why?" answered she. "Because he speaks with sensibility".

Yet my uncle Benjamin was not what you trivially term a drunkard, take care not to believe that. He was an epicurean who pushed philosophy to the point of intoxication, rapture, and that was all. He had a stomach full of elevation and nobleness. He loved wine, not for itself, but for that dementia which it procures for some hours, a dementia which makes the man of wit talk nonsense in such a naive, such a piquant, such an original fashion that one would like to talk so forever. If he could have intoxicated himself by reading the mass, he would have read the mass every day. My uncle Benjamin had principles: he pretended that a man with an empty stomach was a man still asleep; that drunkenness would have been one of the greatest blessings of the Creator, if it did not cause headaches, and that the only thing which gave man superiority to the brute was the faculty of getting drunk.

Goethe, says René-Louis Doyon in the René Rasmussen edition of Mon o n c e l Benjamin, "Goethe affirmed that only a work of circumstance could attain to a masterpiece; if his works were not adequate to confirm his saying, Rabelais had proven it in advance [and Diderot had confirmed it at Goethe's time! W.L.]. The history of Mon o n c e l Benjamin decides once more amply in favor of the Weimar master". A winged word has it: The style is the man! That is only too true, but the style of the Panta-

Tillier's style is pure and, in the noblest sense of the word, popular; his art of characterization is masterly concise, his wit cogent, his irony sure of its aim; his cheerfulness and humor are bubbling, his sympathy with the
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his personal spirit, his turn of mind, and his qualities... What accent, what voice! What a sense of dramatic dialogue!... The criticism of bad taste has not been spared this work. Shall we say that the grossness of certain jokes does not shock us? The style saves everything and every work has its strong points" (especially if the style is "strong" content).

Goethe on Diderot (in the notes to his translation of Diderot's Noveau):
"The important work which we deliver over to the German public under this title is certainly to be reckoned among the most outstanding works of Diderot. His nation as well as his friends have reproached him as being able to write excellent parts of things, but no excellent whole work. Such formulas of judgment are not denied and are being propagated; and the merit of an excellent man, without further inquiry, remains belittled. The same ones who judge thus have certainly not read Jacques le fataliste which... shows quite well with what happy skill he has been able to mold the heterogeneous elements of Reality into an ideal whole. You can think of him as a writer what you will, even so, both friends and enemies will have to agree that nobody, in vivace, vigor, spirit, diversity and charm..."

XIV

It is natural, after all the foregoing insistence that Pantagruelism is a predominantly French phenomenon, to pose the question: Why is this so?

The problem defines any exact scientific investigation of the phenomenon is there together with the fact that France, unlike Italy, Spain, etc., is a great capitalist nation and yet industrially second-rate. France has arrived at her relatively favorable second rank because she has in all her colorful history travelled a side road which was her fortune and (under capitalist conditions) also her fate. This nation, which has given modern society its dramatic effects and the fireworks of history, the Great Revolution and the Paris Commune, the press and the parodical operetta, comedy and satire, bourgeois rhetoric and criticism, pathos and passion, irony and serene catholic sentimentality, romanticism and naturalism, eroticism and luxury industries, liquors and the gourmet's kitchen, spirit and fashion, impressionism and pointillism, military techniques and the Republic (yes, for all that and more France is "classical", because economically second-rate) — this nation is imbued like no other with a feeling for life in which the consciousness that all earthly efforts are in the last instance nonsense vibrates perceptibly.

The French feeling for life is based on pessimism, but it has nothing of the brooding despair of Northern pessimism or Eastern nihilism, nothing of the struggle of the Faustian man with an eternal insoluble problem.* The plant grows, blooms and must die — on such crystal-clear grounds, which are by no brooding surpassable for depth and balance, sprouts the incomparable flower of French 'sérénité', a word that has a precise

André Billy on Diderot:
"Jacques is of all the novels of Diderot the most strongly marked with and take a good aim. But if a plumed crest happens to pass by my door, I always give him preference".

With regret must here be left out the short but excellent Introduction to Benjamin by Benj. R. Tucker who translated the work into English and published it (Boston, 1890).
equivalent in several languages and yet is as untranslatable as the transplanting of the French feeling for life into other cultures. Out of the marvellous and, in its perfection, unique mixture of both components (the consciousness of the nothingness of all efforts, and the priority of existence which obliges to activity) springs the ideal of "clarté," that is, clarity in all its nuances such as light, splendour, transparency, brightness, impidity, perspicuity. Clarté represents the living readiness of the qui-voit — the call to be heroic and to fight, to guard life and to empty the goblet in the quiet flow of life, but also to plunge into the stream and to burn oneself when the great hour has struck. The world for hundreds of years has rightly looked upon France with admiration and pampered her even with abuses. Her vices and weaknesses have been as figurative as her strengths and virtues. Nowhere else has civilization bore a more beautiful flower on its broad vulgar stem; nowhere else has liveliness of temperament and the laissez-faire, laissez-aller! transmitted an inking of better humanity than in France. Where sureness, composure, ingenuous humanness appear, one is on the trail of great traditions which condition their — self-evidence.

Alas, that great and noble tradition is, as LeClerc says, daily being perverted. Poor France! — she too has not been spared by the general retrogression of contemporary society. How horribly she has broken up since the Dreyfus-affair, how her magnificent feeling for life has sunk to mere banal need for rest, how her well-balanced optimism has crept down to the trivial affirmation of the status quo. The true battle-cry of France in the last war sounded: Je veux mon bœuf! (I want my beefsteak) and Foutez-moi la paix! (go to hell). The famous French talent for improvisation, by which the Marne-battle was once won, flames up for the last time in the sit-down strikes of 1936 and fails completely in the last war, giving way to the slogan: Débrouillez-vous! (get out of trouble).

Débrouillez-vous! is the negative turn of the winged éveil of qui voit?! It is indeed the only possible battle-cry for France after every better solution has been prevented through outright betrayal by those world-forces figuring under the name of the "progressive camp". Thus it is only natural that the flower fades while the stem rots; only fatal destiny if France goes to ruin in the capitalist mill; only broken force of a people with sure instinct in good and evil if it accepts certain defeat without futile resistance. That befits a great nation which economically never could reach the first rank, which exhausted itself in the dramatic effects of politics and precedes the doom of the British Empire while the merciless Gods of imperialism prepare with the doom of the latter also their own downfall.

What France during the last war was scolded for by the "progressive camp" — for her "pacifism", her unwillingness to let herself be once more sacrificed for a hopeless cause — that is what she should be praised for. As much as she has sunk and her qualities have been lost in triviality — in this refusal of the French people is preserved a remnant of her former qualities: in it is hidden political instinct and historic genius. The French people refused to follow the leadership of Stalin, Churchill and Roosevelt; it gave them the negative answer which the masses always have in store for political deceptions: passive rejection.

Old France is dead and will never see her resurrection under the rule of the capitalist system. That is what the French people senses and has lived through intensely. Whether in the Great Revolution, in the Paris Commune or in the Dreyfus-affair — at all historical turns it accepted being shaken from top to bottom. Again and again it has, collectively and individually, fought out its conflicts to the point of exhaustion; again and again it has forced through events which set its blood in uproar and which left the true taste of things on its tongue. And therefore it had to be thus: Finished as an imperialistic country, France could do nothing else but anticipate the fate of humanity in the age of capitalist disintegration and be the mirror in which the civilis by their world's future is reflected. The hopelessness of all endeavors becomes under imperialism the gray reality of daily life. This hopelessness burns now in the consciousness of a people which has experienced history like no other and has learned from it: History is (to speak with Theodor Lessing) the endeavor "to give sense to what is senseless", or, better yet, the effort to purge the senseless of the demony which it bears in its crude natural status. It is the great want of life under unmastered nature which sets history in motion — through it shall be restored the pure, uninhibited movement of the senseless (waxing, blooming and withering away) which emerges from the historical process purged from the demony of the unconscious. History is thus the formal means in the liberatory struggle of humanity and must in its present form negate itself with the accomplishment of its task. A great nation which imperialism deprived earlier than other great nations of a historical perspective had to feel the catastrophic effect of the capitalist system earlier than they. France has authentically proven that capitalism ruins humanity, breaks its life-energy and murders its spirit, will and instinct.

If that is the situation (and it surely is), what will then be the fate of Pantagruelism? And has the France of the twentieth century made no attempt to keep the tradition alive?

The last attempt to present a true "Frenchmannerish" novel the present writer knows of was made by Romain Rolland with his Maître Colas Breugnon, the story of a philosophic woodcarver. It was, significantly enough, written in 1918 (there was some hope that the war would end with a social turn) and passed quite unnoticed. And since then the scene has, perspicuously, changed. On one side the tradition becomes more and more perverted and we have, in fact, not advanced, but terribly regressed from Rabelais' "ideal". Thus no more great Pantagruelian works, no more these Frenchmen for whom, the same as for our man of the Renaissance, the ideal was as much a workable scheme as the workable scheme an ideal. A program for a giant fitted perfectly a multitude of men (especially in the Renaissance and in the eighteenth century) who were giants themselves — broad, all-inclusive, encyclopedic, universal not only in knowledge, but also in their capacity to exercise many "professions". Goethe, that universal genius who represented both Germany's spiritual greatness and politico-economic backwardness (this "philistine" side of his prevents him from being the Pantagruelian entity, but he nevertheless easily manages to admire Jacques and Tristram Shandy without restraint) — Goethe and Hegel and even Schiller are compared to Proust, Gide, Joyce, Thomas Mann, Jaspers, Bertrand Russell, the world in comparison to a piece of dry straw (cf. Mann's utterly rotten "problem": the "problematic of the writer in our time", the lollipop of an over-pretentious parasite). "The strange
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prejudice that any worthwhile achievement can be brought about only by the always earnest, always serious man whose life follows an irrevocably blue-printed doctrine remains just that — a narrow prejudice” [Loy]. Compare then the life, occupations, actions of Rabelais, Diderot and Tillier with these “professional” writers, philosophers, specialists who are regarded as the “cream” of our time, and the tremendous regress, the extreme rarity of men distinguished by character and “free development of every faculty” is striking.

But this side of the picture portrays only the official side of a status quo which has become untenable, has even factually vanished. If to-day France cannot live nor die, her past still stands before humanity and extends into the present as a challenge! You all can neither live nor die, and yet there is Pantagruel who has the answer to every one of your silly problems! Indeed, the pretentious and disastrous madness of the capitalist system is too obvious — renewed and forceful hope flows from the fact that the official trend is slowly being reversed. There is, as a consequence of the inherent tendencies working beneath the surface of the confusing modern development, a steadily growing number of individuals from all social strata who see the problem and elaborate it from the most diverse angles — a kind of collective effort to reconstruct Pantagruelism by piecing the elements scattered all over the world which corresponds perfectly to a world full of awakening Jacques who sooner or later must ask: “Why should we continue to be your slaves, and why should you wish to remain our masters”, if you yourselves are dissatisfied with the system, if there is more than enough for all of us and if you don’t even know what to do with the fruits of our services? Favorable conditions made Pantagruelism spring up first in France, but it is the essence of nature in its human form and will be a general phenomenon when the basis for it has been laid on a world scale. This is presently the case — to pose a problem means to go beyond former limits, and the urge to look for its solution has led to the scrutiny of the past not for the sake of mere (passive) scholarship, but with the more or less clear aim of finding “workable schemes” outside of the official ones. This has in turn created a kind of Renaissance, especially of the Renaissance itself with all that goes back to classical Greece (Periclean age) and forward to the eighteenth and the middle of the nineteenth centuries.

Men, dissatisfied with the status quo, again study texts and books, but also the text of nature tortured by man and the text of life violated by a vicious system. If there are no more great Pantagruelistic works, there are pieces* and studies in its spirit and, above all, the spreading of the Pantagruelistic human individual. Again Pocratus proves more realistic and one hundredfold more inspiring than Rousseau, again men derive their learnings from things around them. The whole development turns, on a higher technical and material level, back to its starting point, the point where man and life occupied the first place and production, art, science and so on were not their masters, but their friendly helpers. The need to present

Jacques to the English speaking world is thus the need to restore more and more the sense of how full the Pantagruelian challenge is and, yet, how much we will surpass this peak when all fetters have been removed which separate us from our own human resources.

XV

“The awkward and tenuous work of preparation, of suggestion, of criticism has been done. There remains only to read, or reread, Jacques le fataliste, a masterpiece of Diderot who doubtless knew all this without knowing it. It is enough to consider — to consider anything — if, as for Alice, it will keep us from crying, keep us from forgetting man”.

With these words Loy takes leave of his readers and the sober practical question must be answered for which this Appeal has been written: If there is a need to present jacques in English, how can it be met if all efforts to find a publisher for it fail? In former times it was the usage to open subscriptions and it may well be that we have to return to solid customs in this respect too. Contempory Press, in any case, will publish Diderot’s ravishing work if a sufficient number of readers encourage it by giving their opinion and support. They can rest assured that Contempory Press is no business enterprise and takes the editorial work upon itself as a public service.

“To Posternity and the Being who does not die”. This dedication by Diderot, says Loy, “is the fitting dedication to the wonderful nonsense of Jacques”. It will, eventually, be also the dedication to the readers of an edition by Contemporary Press.

G. Troiano

THE FARM GLUT

The housewife who protests the outrageous prices of food probably does not realize that what she pays the grocer is only a small part of her actual food bill. Indeed, government statistics show that she is paying twice for everything she buys. First she pays the grocer for the food that actually appears on the family table. But, at income tax time, she must pay again: this time for food that she will never see at all. This second kind of food will probably never be eaten by anybody. Instead, it will be bought by the government, stored away in granaries, freezing plants, abandoned factories, and surplus ships. There it will be left to rot. When it begins to overflow all available storage space, it will be taken by truck and trainload and dumped into lakes, rivers, and into the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Great heaps of it will be poisoned or set afire. The government, which cannot