

# The World Upside-Down in Sixteenth-Century French Literature and Visual Culture



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Lincoln College  
University of Oxford  
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Thesis submitted for the degree of D.Phil. in Medieval and Modern  
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# ABSTRACT

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To call something ‘inverted’ or ‘topsy-turvy’ in the sixteenth century is, above all, to label it as abnormal, unnatural and going against the natural order of things. The topos of the world upside-down brings to mind a world returned to its initial state of primeval chaos, in which everything is inside-out, topsy-turvy and out of bounds: fish live in trees, children rule over their parents, wives command their husband and rivers flow back to their source.

This thesis undertakes a detailed account of the development of the topos of the world upside-down in sixteenth-century French literature and visual culture. By examining different uses of this topos – comic, moralising and polemical – it relates the transformations of the topos to religious, social and political conflicts of the period. To explain the shift of this topos from comic and moralising device to satirical and polemical tool, this thesis argues that troubled times produce troubled texts.

In order to demonstrate this hypothesis, two kinds of evidence will be examined: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 present diachronic evidence of the ‘polemicalisation’ of the topos of the world upside-down in literary genres of the period (adages, paradoxes and emblems) and within François Rabelais’s body of work; Chapter 3 and 4 provide synchronic evidence of the polemical use of the topos of the world upside-down during the French religious wars in Huguenot and Catholic polemic and in depictions of socio-political turmoil.

Charting the variety of uses of the topos of the world upside-down throughout the sixteenth century, this thesis connects the world upside-down and its historical context; and contributes to the scholarship on religious polemic.

## DETAILED ABSTRACT

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This thesis focuses on the topos of the world upside-down in sixteenth-century French literature and visual culture. This topos describes a world in which every relationship has been turned on its head: students teach professors; women go to war while men stay at home; deers live underwater while fish fly in trees, for instance. Widely used from Antiquity to the twenty-first century, the topos of the world upside-down is extremely versatile and can be applied to a variety of situations. Linked to *adynata* or *impossibilia*, a rhetorical device which describes a natural impossibility, the world upside-down can be used to describe a dystopian or utopian world, and to mock, deplore, criticise or debase a person, a situation or an institution. The world upside-down can be found in poetry, novels, adages, pamphlets, paintings and prints.

The world upside-down during the Renaissance has been the focus of two collective volumes, both of which illustrate the difficulty in defining such a versatile and widespread topos. To solve this problem, *Les Figures du monde renversé de la Renaissance aux Lumières* (ed. Desjardins, 2013) approaches the world upside-down from a transhistorical perspective, and considers it as a way to promote social, political, moral and scientific changes. As a result, this study looks at this phenomenon from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the late eighteenth century as the trigger for the main revolutions occurring in various fields. Such a reading of the world upside-down is tempting insofar as it offers a simple key for understanding a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. However, by showing that the world upside-down is often associated with turmoil, revolution and discovery, this study connects the phenomenon to its historical context, and contradicts, therefore, the transhistoricity of the world upside-down.

Considering the world upside-down as a harbinger of social change is nothing new. In his fundamental study *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin examines how popular laughter overturns official institution in Rabelais's novels. This classic study has initiated a whole critical tradition, and has propagated the view that medieval and Renaissance instances of inversion pertain to Carnival, a festive, transgressive and periodical occurrence based on social, generational and gender reversal. As a result, *carnavalesque* and *inverted* are often conflated. Even though Carnival provides an important framework to study the world upside-down, it is too restrictive to account for the versatility of the phenomenon. More specifically, Bakhtin's approach presupposes that the world upside-down is linked to regenerative, revolutionary popular laughter, and seeks to overturn official institutions. In fact, I will show that the topos of the world upside down in sixteenth-century French literature, especially in Rabelais, and visual arts is prominently influenced by learned, classical adages, and does not necessarily involve overturning official institutions.

As a result of the respective shortcomings of the Bakhtinian and transhistorical approaches, it comes as no surprise that most scholars use the term 'world upside-down' without defining it, and that no monograph has been published on the subject. This thesis aims at filling this gap by providing a detailed account of the topos of the world upside-down in sixteenth-century French literature and visual culture. By connecting the development of this topos with the rise of socio-political and religious tensions in sixteenth-century France, I demonstrate that the world upside-down is inextricably linked to its historical context. More specifically, this thesis shows that this topos is used prominently to reflect and describe the troubles of the period. As a result, the central notion pervading this thesis is that troubled times produce troubled texts.

In order to demonstrate this, this thesis provides two kinds of evidence. First, it offers diachronic evidence by showing that the use of the topos of the world upside-down changes

throughout the sixteenth century so as to reflect the increasingly troubled historical context. Second, it provides synchronic evidence by demonstrating that the topos of the world upside-down has been a primary mean of satirical polemic throughout the French religious wars. Such an approach presents three main advantages. First, it avoids oversimplifying the signification and scope of the topos of the world upside-down by allowing me to connect the carnivalesque, parodic, satirical, or polemical aspects of the world upside-down to a precise set of historical circumstances. Second, it avoids the conflation between the topos and one of its many (and sometimes contradictory) uses. Instead, it retraces the different uses of the world upside-down (to overturn the official institution, to disrupt the social hierarchy, and to debase one's enemies) in relation to the historical context. Third, this approach allows me to set precise historical and geographical boundaries (in this case, sixteenth-century France) and, therefore, avoids difficult and potentially anachronistic comparisons across time and place.

The General Introduction offers a brief review of the scholarship on the topos of the world upside-down by assessing three critical approaches of this topos: rhetorical, historical and social. It also offers four models for the sixteenth-century use of the world upside-down: Lucan's *Pharsalia*, the classical myth of the *Gigantomachia*, late medieval woodcut prints, and medieval comic theatre.

Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 present diachronic evidence of the shift of the topos of the world upside-down from parodic and moralising device to satirical and polemical tool, and links this development to the rise of the socio-political and religious tensions. Chapter 1 shows how adages, paradoxes and emblems contribute to the dissemination of the topos of the world upside-down throughout the sixteenth century. By analysing emblematic examples, I demonstrate that the 'polemicisation' of adages and emblems pertaining to the world upside-down reflects socio-political and religious tensions. Chapter 2, 'Rabelais's World

Upside-Down’, examines Rabelais’s use of the topos of the world upside-down from *Pantagruel* to the *Cinquième Livre*, and shows that it reflects the historical context by becoming increasingly polemical.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 examine synchronic evidence of the prominent use of the topos of the world upside-down in relation to the French religious wars. Chapter 3, ‘Religious Polemic’, focuses on the trope of the overturning of the papal cooking pot in Huguenot polemic and on its appropriation by Catholic polemicists in order to demonstrate the significance of the topos of the world upside-down in religious polemic. Chapter 4, ‘Social and Cosmic Disorders’, investigates the influence of millenarian views on depictions of socio-political upheaval. I observe that the topos of the world upside-down is central to descriptions of eschatological signs, and offers a widespread metaphor for the disorders of the religious wars.

The General Conclusion summarises the main argument of the thesis, and alludes to the development of the topos of the world upside-down in the seventeenth century by examining late sixteenth-century and early seventeenth-century examples.

The contribution of this thesis to the field of French Renaissance studies is threefold: first, it provides a critical and detailed reappraisal of the sixteenth-century significance of the topos of the world upside-down in literature and visual culture; second, it offers valuable insights into the mechanisms and *development* of the polemic of the French religious wars; third, it sheds light on understudied motifs and themes (such as the trope of the overturning of the papal cooking pot), and examines well-known passages from key Renaissance authors (Rabelais, Ronsard, Du Bartas, D’Aubigné, for instance) from a stimulating perspective.

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Parts of chapter 3 have been accepted in the peer-reviewed journal *Histoire Culturelle de L'Europe*, but have not been published at the time of submission. I have also been invited to present an extension of chapter 2 at the international conference 'Penser le petit de l'Antiquité au XIXe siècle' in Toulouse (October 2015).

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# EDITORIAL NOTE

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## Academic Journals and Publishers

*Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*: BHR  
*Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales*: EHESS  
*Etudes Rabelaisiennes*: ER  
*Modern Language Notes*: MLN  
*Société d'édition d'enseignement supérieur*: SEDES

## Dictionaries

*Oxford English Dictionary*: OED  
*Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*: FEW  
*Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*: DMF

## Works of Erasmus

*Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterdami*: ASD  
*Collected Works of Erasmus*: CWE

## Works of Rabelais

Rabelais edition of reference: Huchon, M. and Moreau, F. (eds) (1994) *François Rabelais: Œuvres complètes*, Paris, Gallimard. All page numbers in brackets refer to this edition.

## Works of Du Bartas

Du Bartas's *Sepmaine* edition of reference: Céard, J., Arnaud-Seigle, S., Bellenger, Y., Bjaï, D., Ferrer, V., Lardon, S., Ternaux, J.-C. (eds) (2012) *La Sepmaine ou Creation du monde*, 3 vol., Paris, Garnier. In-text references are given as follows: ([day in Roman numerals], [verse in Arabic numerals])

## Works of Ronsard

Ronsard edition of reference: Laumonier, P. (ed.) (1914) *Œuvres complètes*, Hachette, Paris. In-text references are given according to the standard format.

## Works of D'Aubigné

D'Aubigné's *Tragiques* edition of reference: Fanlo, J.-R. (ed.) (2006) *Les Tragiques*, 2 vol., Paris, Garnier. In-text references are given as follows: ([book in Roman numerals], [verse in Arabic numerals])

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# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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## STATE OF THE FIELD

The topos of the world upside-down has often been associated with medieval and early modern popular culture. Based on inversion, this topos was a pervasive way of perceiving, ordering and understanding the world in literature, visual arts, family relationships, politics as well as religious dogma and practices. The scholarship on this topic, from Bakhtin (1984) to the 2010 conference on the world upside-down (ed. Desjardins 2013), has placed much emphasis on its propensity to inspire social, political, religious, and scientific change. Viewing this topos as a way of promoting change – either by depicting an overturned social hierarchy as argued by Bakhtin, or by triggering a change of perspective as suggested in the 2010 conference – presupposes that literary and artistic representations of the world upside-down have had a direct, quantifiable impact on society throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. On the contrary, I focus on the influence of historical context on the topos of the world upside-down. To do so, I will examine the development of this topos throughout sixteenth-century France in relation to the religious wars. By analysing the use of the world upside-down in significant works across sixteenth-century literature and visual culture, I argue that troubled times produce troubled texts.

In this general introduction, I will examine three central approaches to defining the topos of the world upside-down, which will inform my thesis: the rhetorical approach is typified by Céard (1979), who asserts that the world upside-down is based on two kinds of inversion: functional and transformative; the historical approach is closely associated with the work of Clark (1980), who studies the place of inversion in Renaissance mentality; and the social approach, which can be traced back to the fundamental study of Carnival by Bakhtin (1984). Then, I will identify and define the boundaries and main concepts that I will

use in this study. I will also highlight classical and medieval models for the sixteenth-century use of this topos: Lucan's *Civil War*, the myth of the *Gigantomachia*, Carnival, and medieval comic theatre. These models will provide a useful background for understanding the development of the topos of the world upside-down during the sixteenth-century. To conclude, I will provide an outline of this thesis.

## Rhetorical Approach

Building on the fundamental definition of Curtius (2013: 94-8), who considers the topos of the world upside-down as a development of the *adynaton* or *impossibilia* – a rhetorical figure akin to hyperbole describing something impossible – Céard defines the topos of the world upside-down as a rhetorical device that ‘aide à construire l’image d’un pays de Cocagne, image renversée du monde réel, ou à représenter ce monde réel comme la figure renversée, l’antithèse, le négatif de ce qu’il devrait être’ (Céard 1979: 117). Céard distinguishes two figures governing the topos of the world upside-down: transformative inversion and functional inversion (*détournement*). In transformative inversion, something turns into its opposite (e.g. wise men into fools), while, in functional inversion, things are used for a purpose opposite to their original function (e.g. liturgical objects used as kitchen utensils). Adding to Céard’s useful categorisation of the kinds of inversion at work in the topos of the world upside-down, I will argue that absurd, foolish or improper behaviours can also be described as inverted insofar as they overturn expectations by going against the proper and natural order of the world.

## Historical Approach

A broader and more historical perspective on the phenomenon of inversion is offered by Clark, who argues that ‘in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a predisposition to see things in terms of binary opposition was a distinctive aspect of a prevailing mentality’ (Clark 1980: 105). The tendency to polarise, identified by Clark as a characteristic cognitive trait of

the Renaissance, is closely related to ‘a linguistic preference for standardized forms of argument and expression based on antithesis, (polarisation) and a preoccupation with the extreme poles of the religious and moral universe’ (Clark 1980: 117). Clark finds in early Greek natural philosophy and metaphysics the theoretical foundations for the Renaissance understanding of inversion. Building on Clark’s argument, this thesis will present the sixteenth-century topos of the world upside-down as an example of the convergence of classical and medieval influences. More specifically, I will demonstrate that the medieval popular tradition, classical mythology, and historical literary accounts play an important role in the development of the topos of the world upside-down in the sixteenth century French literary and visual culture.

### Social Approach

Another key perspective on the topos of the world upside-down is offered by the work of Bakhtin (1984), who opened up new avenues for Renaissance scholarship by examining the relationship between Carnival – a social institution – and grotesque realism – the corresponding literary mode. Bakhtin’s notion of ‘carnavalesque’ provides valuable insights into the socio-historical context of medieval and Renaissance uses of the world upside-down (Bakhtin 1984: 303-437). According to Bakhtin, the world upside-down represents the destructive and regenerative powers of popular laughter as it overturns official institutions and the social order. With reference to the Feast of Fools, Bakhtin shows the prevalence of the body – especially the ‘material bodily lower stratum’, which designates a set of functions and characteristics associated with the lower body, such as digestion, defecation, and urination; as well as with drunkenness and debauchery – in Rabelais’s fiction. The world upside-down is typified by a downward movement, which takes place through the redirection of everything that is elevated, sacred, and official into the lower realm of the material lower bodily stratum. Building on Bakhtin’s analysis of carnivalesque images in Rabelais, this thesis

will show how transgressive and subversive carnivalesque motifs have been appropriated by religious and political polemics.

## DEFINITIONS OF SCOPE AND TERMS

The Renaissance world upside-down has been the focus of two collective volumes, both of which illustrate that there are two problematic issues when dealing with this topic: one is the definition of the world upside-down, the other is its scope (ed. Desjardins 2013: 1-21; eds Lafond and Redondo 1979: 179-185). In this study, my corpus focuses on sixteenth-century French texts and images.<sup>1</sup> Setting such boundaries will enable me to show the transformations undergone by the world upside-down in France between late medieval examples based on Carnival and the late sixteenth-century religious and political polemics. I will argue that these changes can be explained by classical influences and by the increasingly troubled socio-political context.<sup>2</sup> The fortunes of the world upside-down after the religious wars are beyond the scope of this thesis.

Since this thesis seeks to connect literature and visual culture with their historical context, I will concentrate my enquiry on texts and images in which the use of inversion offers insights into the social, political, religious or historical issues of their time. Given the pervasiveness of the world upside-down, I will restrict my study to emblematic examples without claiming to be exhaustive. I will, additionally, refer to other kinds of inversion – such as inversion of words within phrases or letters within words, and inversions related to witchcraft – where these provide additional insight into the phenomena discussed here, while recognising that other kinds of inversion and their development deserve separate treatment.

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<sup>1</sup> Another collective volume of anthropologically oriented research has also been published on the subject: ed. Babcock 1978.

<sup>2</sup> On the same topic, but related to different periods or countries, see: Hill 1972; Zemon-Davis 1975; Grant 1979; Ronzeaud 2013.

Because of the multifaceted nature of the world upside-down, differentiating it from neighbouring concepts can prove difficult. Rhetorical figures such as *hysteron-proteron*, *adynaton/impossibilia*, oxymoron, paradox and antithesis can be associated with the world upside-down.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, genres such as parody and satire and registers such as the burlesque and the grotesque, often overlap with the world upside-down.<sup>4</sup> To clarify, even though it can make use of various rhetorical strategies and exist in a variety of genres, it is useful to consider that the world upside-down presupposes a relationship of inversion between an established system of binary oppositions. The nature of these binary oppositions determines, to a certain extent, the kind of strategies and the genre at play in the topos. For instance, inversions based on the dichotomy between normal and abnormal bodies are likely to point towards the grotesque, while cosmic inversions are probably based on the use of *adynaton*. A more complex case, the inversion between style and content in literary works may pertain to paradox, burlesque or parody.

The central feature of the world upside-down consists in the use of ‘inversion’, a concept which also calls for further clarification, as the nuances (or lack thereof) comprised by the sixteenth-century French notion of inversion may be challenging to twenty-first-century, English-speaking readership. I will begin by examining phrases directly related to the world upside-down, before considering broader expressions denoting inversion. Designated in Latin as *mundus inversus*, the world upside-down is known in French under various denominations: *monde à l’envers*, *monde renversé*, *monde à rebours* and *monde bestourné*. As a Europe-wide phenomenon, it is also called: *die verkehrte* or *widerwertige Welt*, *de verkeerde Wereld*, *il mondo alla rovescia* and *el mundo al revés*. It is useful to note that these phrases do not discriminate, from an etymological perspective, between the Latin roots *inversus* and *reversus*

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<sup>3</sup> On *adynaton*, see: Dutoit 1936: 51-52; Lafond and Redondo (eds) 1979: 179-180; Perrier 1996; Parker 2007; Leclerc 2013.

<sup>4</sup> On this question, see: Varga 1979; Bakhtin 1984: 1-59, 303-358; Debailly, 2006: 7.

and do not seem related to the Latin *praepostere* (*FEW*, s. v. ‘inversus’; ‘reversus’; ‘praepostere.’). As a result, Middle French phrases pertaining to inversion – *bestourner*, *renverser*, *mettre sans/sens dessus dessous*, etc. – convey the idea of turning upside-down, inside-out, back to front; going in the wrong order; throwing into a state of disorder or upheaval; debasing, subverting or making something worse (*DMF*, s. v. ‘bestourner’; ‘renverser’; ‘envers’). The distinction between upsetting the vertical hierarchy of the world or its horizontal organisation – that is to say between the English ‘inversion’ and ‘reversal’<sup>5</sup> – does not seem significant in the context of sixteenth-century French. Finally, it is crucial to differentiate between inversion and concepts such as reversibility, contrariety and opposition. Reversibility, which indicates the potential for being overturned, is an essential condition of the world upside-down. In this respect, the reversibility of the world is an important factor for the development of the topos. Contrariety and opposition, which refer to a diametrical difference between two things, are also crucial: inversion, which depends on reversibility, can only happen if things are opposite to each other.

## MODELS FOR THE RENAISSANCE WORLD UPSIDE-DOWN

Critics have suggested various classical and medieval models for the Renaissance world upside-down. Curtius (2013) and Céard (1979) point out the importance of the figure of the *adynaton*. Clark proposes that the sixteenth century is characterised by ‘a heightened appreciation of what was involved when the orthodox world was reversed or inverted’ (Clark 1980: 105). and attributes this feature to the emphasis on opposition and the harmony of contraries (*concordia discors*) in early Greek religion and natural philosophy as well as Christian metaphysics. Finally, Bakhtin (1984) convincingly highlights the influence of the Roman *Saturnalia* and the medieval Carnival and Feast of Fools over Rabelais’s depiction of the world upside-down. My contribution will consist in proposing two additional and complementary

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<sup>5</sup> I am indebted to my supervisor, Prof. Richard Cooper, for suggesting this distinction.

models for the sixteenth-century world upside-down. The classical models I will mention have had a crucial influence on epic poetry and emblem books, with the notable exception of Rabelais, who mixes classical and medieval source materials. I will also refer to medieval examples of the world upside-down insofar as they provided an important source of inspiration for Renaissance authors, especially for emblematicists and for Rabelais.

## Classical Models

### **Lucan's *Civil War***

The first set of influences I will examine consists of classical sources: Lucan's *Civil War* and the myth of the *Gigantomachia*. The *Civil War* is an epic poem recounting the Great Roman Civil War (49-45 BC) between Julius Caesar and the forces of the Roman Senate supported by Pompey the Great. The poem takes its title from the battle of Pharsalus in Thessaly, which is considered as a turning point in the civil war. In the *Civil War*, available from 1469 and published in Lyon in 1519 and 1523, Lucan makes abundant use of the topos of the world upside-down to convey the horrors of the civil war and the fact that Romans fighting Romans is against nature. Examples of inversion and disorder include cataclysmic storms, the overturning of all family relationships and witches bringing the dead back to life. As Tutu puts it: 'The unchecked impiety of the civil war waged between Pompey and Caesar causes a dissolution of the entire cosmos' (Tutu 2011: 86). In his study of the influence of Lucan over French civil war writers, Bailbé (1980) considers the *Civil War* as 'un modèle épique' for Du Bartas and D'Aubigné, mentioning briefly 'le renversement des lois morales qui accompagne la guerre civile' (Bailbé 1980: 84). Building on Bailbé's study, I will argue that Lucan's *Civil War* provides a potential model for representing the French religious civil wars in terms of the world upside-down.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For the use of the world upside-down to describe the Greek civil wars, see Loraux 1995.

## The *Gigantomachia*

Another influential model is the *Gigantomachia*, the struggle between the *Gigantes* and the Gods for control over the cosmos. Frequently depicted in Greek art and tackled by several mythographers (Apollodorus 2008: 1.6.1-2; Hesiod 2008: 178-186; Ovid 2008: 1.151-162, 1.182-186), the *Gigantomachia* describes the *Gigantes*' attempt to bring down heaven. Born when the blood of Uranus fertilised Gaia, the *Gigantes* are monstrous, often represented with many hands and with snakes instead of feet. Renaissance writers referring to the *Gigantomachia* or the *Gigantes* include: Rabelais, Ronsard, Du Bartas and D'Aubigné (Pineau 2007: 43; Pouey-Mounou 2002: 139-143, 169-173). While Rabelais provides a parodic depiction of the *Gigantes* as the *Andonilles*, the sausage-people, Ronsard, Du Bartas and D'Aubigné use this myth to convey the idea of a foolish and nefarious rebellion against the natural order of the world. Medieval and Renaissance interpretations of the *Gigantomachia* consist in multiple layers: from a Christian perspective, *Gigantes* are associated with pride and can be related to the Tower of Babel or the fallen angels; they can also embody the battle between the carnal and the spiritual or between folly and wisdom. As such, the *Gigantomachia* contains the necessary elements to be an image not only of disorder and rebellion, but also of the world upside-down.

### Medieval Models

Following Bakhtin's study of Rabelais, the world upside-down is frequently studied from a medieval and carnivalesque perspective (e.g. Berrong 1986; Gaignebet 1986; Lachman and Eshelman 1988; Kinser 1990; ed. Bideaux 1997). Carnivalesque rituals and festivities are a particularly apt framework to describe inversion of the social hierarchy, so much so that *carnivalesque* is used as a synonym for *inverted* or *topsy-turvy* without direct reference to Carnival. I will suggest two medieval and Renaissance models for the world upside-down to build on Bakhtin's framework. First, I will focus on representative examples of images or vignettes

revolving around the world upside-down in order to show some of the stock images available to emblematisers and authors of the time. Secondly, I will investigate inversion as a dramatic principle in late medieval and Renaissance farces.

### **Late Medieval and Early Modern Iconography**

The rich iconography based on the world upside-down demonstrates that the sixteenth century was a pivotal moment in the development of the topos: while topsy-turvy imagery was not uncommon during the Middle Ages, the earliest examples of a collection of vignettes named after the world upside-down date from the sixteenth century. As Tristan and Lever (1980) show in their anthology, such prints are not an early modern specificity, but become increasingly popular during the seventeenth century until the French Revolution. The earliest examples of this Europe-wide tradition seem to be a series of sixteenth-century Spanish and Italian woodcut prints (Fig. 1-3). They probably stem from the iconographic tradition of painting or engraving proverbs and from medieval illustrations of folly, such as Bruegel's *Netherlandish Proverbs* or the illustrated version of Brant's *Ship of Fools* (Jones 1989). The prints represent various scenes of inversion, often in the form of vignettes. A large number of the scenes revolve around inversion between human beings and animals: the horseman carries the horse, the ox kills the butcher, and animals command men, for instance. Other vignettes focus on inversion of gender roles (women go to war while men stay at home), natural impossibilities (fish and pigs fly, hens chase foxes) and cosmic inversions (upside-down towns in the clouds). Presented as such, as Grant (1979) clearly shows, these images are double-edged and can be used to entertain people with absurd illustrations, to scare them by showing the folly of the world, or to undermine the social and political order. What I will demonstrate throughout this thesis is that sixteenth-century authors will make abundant use of these versatile, ambiguous and powerful images and that the world upside-down will be increasingly associated with socio-political troubles (See also Linzeler and Adhémar 1932-38).



Figure 1: 'Cosi va il mondo all riversa', Sanuto, G. (1570-1580) engraving, Harry Ransom HRC, Austin. [www.lib.utexas.edu](http://www.lib.utexas.edu)



Figure 2: 'Il mondi alla riversa', Parmensis, B. (1585) engraving, Harry Ransom HRC, Austin. [www.lib.utexas.edu](http://www.lib.utexas.edu)



Figure 3: 'Questo mondo è come una gabbia de matti', Re, S. di (1550-60) engraving, Harry Ransom HRC, Austin. [www.lib.utexas.edu](http://www.lib.utexas.edu)

### Medieval Farces

The social dimension of inversion is also a prominent feature of medieval comic theatre: typically, in farces, the character guilty of having transgressed social norm in pursuit of personal ends (mostly sexual or financial) is punished and the social order is restored at the end of the play. *Sotties* are characterised by the presence of a wise or beneficial fool, or *sot*, who points out instances of folly in the world around him. Social historians and folklorists have insisted on the importance of theatrical performances in the development of Carnival (Gaignebet 1974; Leroy-Ladurie 1979; Gaignebet 1986; Harris 2011: 65-113, 239-285). Performed by the members of the festive societies, these performances belonged to a variety of neighbouring genres, including secular ones such as farce and *sottie*, and religious ones such as *mystère*, *sermon joyeux* and morality play. Along with other spectacles, such as the fight between Lent and Carnival, the trial and execution of Carnival and various parodic

processions, carnivalesque theatre constitutes one of the most widespread forms of entertainment during the Carnival period.

Gringore's *Le Jeu du Prince des Sotz et Mere Sotte* provides an emblematic example of medieval comic theatre (Brown 2003: 237-312). Including a 'cry', a 'sottie' and a 'moralité', *Le Jeu du Prince des Sotz* is set in a world ruled by folly, in which each character illustrates a different kind of folly. Central to the play is the confrontation between the *Prince des Sotz* and the *Mere Sotte* disguised as the Church. *Le Jeu du Prince des Sotz* can therefore be considered as a political and social satire in the service of the French royal authorities (Hochner 2000). According to Brown, 'c'est l'alliance brillante entre le comique, la sottise, et la satire politique de l'abus du pouvoir et de la folie régnant partout dans le monde qui expliquent le grand succès de cette pièce' (Brown 2003: 242). Gringore's polemical effort at the beginning of the sixteenth century prefigures the use of the topos of the world upside-down in later polemical morality plays (See also: Picot 1880).

## PLAN OF THE THESIS

This thesis undertakes a detailed study of the influence of the troubled historical context on the world upside-down by combining diachronic and synchronic evidence. In Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, I opt for a diachronic approach in order to demonstrate the development of the topos of the world upside-down from comic and moralising device to polemical tool with reference to specific genres (adages, paradoxes and emblems), and within Rabelais's body of work. In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, I study the polemical use of the topos of the world upside-down during the wars of religion from a religious perspective (the overturned cooking pot trope), and from the perspective of social and cosmic upheaval (millenarianism and eschatological signs).

Chapter 1, 'Adages, Paradoxes and Emblems', shows how adages, paradoxes and emblems contribute to the dissemination of the topos of the world upside-down throughout the sixteenth century. By examining representative examples, I demonstrate that the 'polemicalisation' of adages and emblems pertaining to the world upside-down follows the radicalisation of socio-political and religious tensions.

Chapter 2, 'Rabelais's World Upside-Down', considers the development of Rabelais's use of the topos of the world upside-down from *Pantagruel* to the *Cinquième Livre*. Through the themes of Carnival, the grotesque body, and wisdom and folly, I show that Rabelais adopts an increasingly polemical stance, thus mirroring the historical context.

Chapter 3, 'Religious Polemic', demonstrates the critical importance of the topos of the world upside-down for the polemic of the French religious wars. I focus on the trope of the overturning of the papal cooking pot in the Huguenot polemic, and its appropriation by Catholic polemicists.

Chapter 4, 'Social and Cosmic Disorders', investigates the influence of millenarian views on depictions of socio-political upheaval. I observe that the topos of the world upside-down is central to descriptions of eschatological signs, and offers a widespread metaphor for the disorders of the religious wars.

# 1 ADAGES, PARADOXES AND EMBLEMS

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will examine the diffusion and development of the topos of the world upside-down throughout the sixteenth century. Incorporating paradoxes and emblems will not only show how some adages were adapted into other genres, but will also highlight the ‘polemicisation’ of the topos of the world upside-down. My study seeks to demonstrate how adages of inversion, paradoxes and emblems become increasingly polemical throughout the sixteenth century. To highlight this phenomenon, I will examine the polemical potential of adages, paradoxes and emblems pertaining to the world upside-down and analyse how they came to be used to denounce the social instabilities of the times, thus confirming that the use of this topos is highly correlated to the perception of social troubles.

Adages of inversion are often related to natural impossibilities or impossible tasks, which derive from the classical figure of speech: *impossibilia* or *adynaton*. Defined by Melanchthon as a ‘scheme, a kind of paradox’, *adynaton* designates both ‘the figure by which we admit that our message is beyond the power of words to convey’ and, by extension, natural impossibilities (Sonnino 1968: 191). While *adynata* are often associated with promises of eternal and ineffable love (Nash 1990; Glauser 1990), they can also represent the concretisation of the feeling of surprise accompanying the intrusion of the extraordinary and the bizarre into the world:

Un fait surprenant s’est produit et l’on conclut: c’est le monde renversé, il faut s’attendre à tout, ce qui était impossible se réalisera. Le sentiment s’exprime alors d’une façon très concrète : c’est comme si à l’imprévu dans l’ordre humain devait nécessairement correspondre quelque chose d’inattendu dans la nature (Dutoit 1936: 51).

*Adynaton* exploits the inextricable symbolic and analogical connections between nature and social order. Classical impossibilities constitute a distinct category of adages briefly described

by Erasmus in the *Prolegomena* and grouped according to their sources: ‘Accedunt ad proverbii speciem et illa bucolico carmini familiaria, ἀδύνατα, ἀναγκαῖα, ἄτοπα, ὅμοια, ἐναντία, id est impossibilia, necessaria, absurda, contraria, similia’ (ASD, II-1, 68), (there is also a resemblance to proverbs in those expressions often met with in pastoral poetry, the impossible, the inevitable, the absurd, likeness and contraries) (CWE, vol. 31, 22). As such, *adynata*, along with other adages of inversion, will bear an important role in the development of polemic discourse, especially in deploring the corruption of society or announcing catastrophic events.

The wide popularity of collections of adages, commonplaces and proverbs throughout the sixteenth century may explain, according to Clément (2003: 97), the development of the paradox. The availability and popularity of condensed, conventional wisdom trigger the development of contradictory forms of argumentation. Bowen observes that distinguishing between paradox and polemic can be challenging and she argues that such a division might not be relevant to sixteenth-century writers. By going against the received opinion, paradox necessarily contains a measure of polemic and encourages the reader to consider, at least for a short moment, a position opposite to their own. Focusing on the case of Agrippa’s *De Incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum* – a paradoxical rebuttal of learning and philosophy – Bowen (1972b: 255-6) concludes that Agrippa is ‘looking back to Folly’s multi-level and often ambiguous attack on society, [...] looking forward to Rabelais’s comic giants,’ while participating in the struggle against the abuses of the Pope and Church. This example clearly shows how arguing against a common or received opinion – often represented by adages or commonplaces – can create a space for polemic.

The genre of the emblem begins with the publication of Alciato’s book of emblems in 1531. As the first emblem-book, the *Emblemata* will prove to be widely influential in terms of form and content, and will provide the name of the whole tradition. According to Colie

(1973: 32-66), Alciato's *Emblemata* – and the emblem tradition as a whole – directly derives from the adage – often designated as motto or lemma – and the epigram even though the pictorial element is its most striking feature (See: Bergal 1985).<sup>7</sup> The picture, which links the adage to the text, can either complicate the meaning of the emblem, or help unskilled readers to understand it. The hybridity of the emblem book, as Saunders (1988) points out, makes it extremely versatile: it can serve as a didactic tool to teach Latin, as a collection of moral sentences or religious truths, and as a bundle of patterns for tapestry or embroidery. Emblem books also have a strong festive and playful potential, as indicated in Alciato's in his letter to the printer Calvo, which presents the *Emblemata* as a product of the holiday season, composed 'His Saturnalibus' (Manning 2002: 221). Like the adage, the emblem-book became a Europe-wide trend during the sixteenth and seventeenth century and had a deep impact on visual and literary culture. There are various kinds of inversion at work in emblems. As in the adage tradition, the topos of the world upside-down is used in moral sentences to describe vices and virtues. Carnavalesque inversions, such as sexual allusions or scatological humour, can undermine the moral message of certain emblems. Finally, the topos of the world upside-down can be used to debase or criticise, especially in religious polemic.

I will focus on three genres: adages, paradoxes and emblems. The genre of the adage, in particular, has been considered as a strong catalyst, influencing the intellectual and literary development of the Renaissance. As a result, identifying the main characteristics of adages of inversion will provide fundamental insights into the source material and inspiration of the sixteenth-century authors and artists using the topos of the world upside-down.

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<sup>7</sup> The genre of emblem can relate to a variety of other genres such as medieval woodcut prints and canting arms. (Russell 1995)

## 1.2 ADAGES OF INVERSION

### 1.2.1 Introduction

As ‘the chief monument of [Erasmus’s] classical scholarship’ (Kinney 1981: 169), the *Adagia* played a crucial role in the dissemination and assimilation of classical thought from the sixteenth century onwards. According to Sullivan (1991: 434), ‘the *Adages* is Erasmus’s earliest and most ambitious effort to introduce a large lay audience to classical authors and to show how the writings of the ancients were relevant for the problems of the sixteenth century.’ The far-reaching impact of Erasmus’s work shaped an important part of sixteenth-century culture, exerting its influence on writers, thinkers and artists as diverse as Rabelais, Ronsard, Montaigne, Calvin, Alciato and Bruegel (Sullivan 1991: 434-5). Even though the *Adagia* were not translated into French, they became successful and were published numerous times from 1520 onwards.

One of the chief goals of Erasmus’s *Adagia* is didactic: in addition to providing a useful commentary on difficult or ambiguous classical passages, they offered students of rhetoric and potential writers a wealth of expressions, a bundle of ideas to be expanded upon as well as used in various contexts (Mann-Philips 1990: 326). Kinney (1981: 172) argues that ‘reconstituting the totality of pagan wisdom meant for Erasmus incorporating successfully the totality of the available fragments as such into his own Christian, modern-day context.’ The *Adagia*<sup>8</sup> demonstrates Erasmus’s willingness to make the classical past relevant, lively and intelligible to contemporary readers. The *Adagia* did not only supply content, but also had a deep impact on formal aspects of the literary landscape. The most obvious consequence of this success is the publication of numerous translations, adaptations and other proverbs collections.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Colie (1973) considers essays and emblems as logical evolutions

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<sup>8</sup> 52 complete editions and 72 epitomised editions between 1508 and 1700. (Kinney 1981: 169)

of adage-making. She coins the phrase ‘adage-habit’ to describe the crucial influence of adages on the Renaissance culture. Throughout the *Adagia* Erasmus emphasises not only the rhetorical application of the adages he compiles, but also their philosophical significance as they spark essays on politics, religion or society.

In order to show how adages contributed to the diffusion and development of the topos of the world upside-down, I will focus on adages of inversion in Erasmus’s *Adagia* and examine how the use of such adages evolved throughout the sixteenth century from conveying notions of inappropriateness and foolishness to being polemical tools.

### 1.2.2 Adages of Inversion in Erasmus

#### **‘To set the cart before the horse’ (I, vii, 28).**

I will use the adage ‘to set the cart before the horse’, expressed in Latin as ‘*plaustrum bovem trahit*’<sup>9</sup> and in French as ‘*mettre la charrue avant les bœufs*’ as an introductory case-study of adages of inversion as it embodies various kinds of inversion and is commonly used to signify that something is topsy-turvy (e.g. Calvin 1961: 514; Lucinge 1963: 228; Calvin 1985: 101; Baïf 1992: 335). Cotgrave (1611) refers to this adage as a translation of the French verb *prépostérer* (Cotgrave, s. v. ‘*prépostérer*’). It is also mentioned in rhetorical handbooks to clarify the definition of *hysteron proteron*, a disruption of the word order (Parker 1987: 67-69; Parker 2007).

The earliest form of the proverb ‘to put the cart before the horse’ diverges from its English equivalent: Lucian writes ‘the cart draws the ox’ in the dialogue between Terpsion and Pluto (Lucian 1961: 82-87). Dead at the age of thirty, Terpsion complains to Pluto that Thucritus, a rich ninety-year-old ‘living sepulchre’, is still alive. After a vivid description emphasising the contradiction between the vigorous and youthful dead on the one hand and

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<sup>9</sup> Other Latin versions include: *bos currum trahit*, *non bovem currus* (the ox draws the cart, not the cart the ox) and *currus bovem trahit* (the cart draws the ox).

the decrepit old man holding on to life on the other, Terpsion concludes his diatribe with two conventional expressions: “That’s as unnatural as “rivers running backwards”. [...] But at present, it’s just one more case of the proverbial cart coming before the horse’ (Lucian 1961: 85). Used in conjunction with each other the striking images of the river flowing backwards and of the cart dragging the horse allude to the topos of the world upside-down.

This adage, which can denote either impatience or absurdity in a wide variety of contexts, marks the first use of the word *topsy-turvy* in English in Taverner’s translation of the *Adagia* and has survived until the twenty-first century (*OED*, s. v. ‘topsy-turvy’). It illustrates two kinds of inversion: the disruption of a logical and temporal sequence (the cart and the horse are put in the wrong order) and, in its original form, the reversal of the natural order of things (the cart fulfils the function of the horse and vice versa). More precisely, Erasmus’s commentary on this proverb lists four different preposterous situations in which the cart is put before the horse: ‘veluti si uxor praescribat marito, si discipulus reprehendat praeceptorem, si populus imperet principi, si ratio pareat affectui’ (*ASD*, II-2, 154). (of a wife laying down rules for her husband, of a pupil correcting his master, of a people giving order to their prince, of reason subservient to the emotions) (*CWE*, vol. 32, 83). As a result, this adage comprises many kinds of inversion: hierarchical, political, philosophical, and gender inversions.

### **Other Adages of Inversion**

While the relationship between adjacent proverbs is not always explicit and can sometimes seem arbitrary, adages deriving from classical *adynata* nonetheless often reveal significant connections with their immediate context. The nature of these connections can indicate Erasmus’s fondness for a particular source or his concern for a particular theme (Moss 1996: vii; Cave 2009: 46). Adages revolving around the idea of inversion are often grouped together in small clusters, suggesting that the connection between them is noteworthy. For instance, ‘hinnulus leonem’ (I, iii, 49) (a fawn against a lion) introduces a series of closely related adages:

‘iungere vulpes’ (I, iii, 50) (to yoke foxes), ‘mulgere hircum’ (I, iii, 51) (to milk a he-goat): not only do they have a very similar meaning – to attempt something absurd and impossible – but these adages also use analogous animal imagery and follow the same formal pattern. Like ‘to put the cart before the horse’, these adages use examples from farming to express inversion and absurdity.

Erasmus defines ‘hinnulus leonem’ as follows: ‘proverbialis est allegoria Ὁ νεβροῦς τὸν λέοντα, id est Hinnulus leonem, subaudientem cepit, vicit aut provocat aut id genus aliquid pro ratione sententiae, quoties praepostero rerum ordine qui viribus multo est inferior, superat potentiolem’ (*ASD*, II-1, 361) (this is a proverbial allegory: Ὁ νεβροῦς τὸν λέοντα, the fawn (we must supply) has caught, or has conquered or is challenging, the lion (or any other verb which gives the gist of the saying); used whenever a far weaker antagonist defeats a stronger, thus turning things upside-down) (*CWE* 31, 276). While Erasmus provides an alternative interpretation for this saying – ‘it can also be suitably extended to the case where a much weaker person attacks a stronger’ – the primary definition involves a ‘praepostero rerum ordine’, an inversion of the order of things. Erasmus’s commentary on this adage clearly shows a deep awareness and concern for the natural order of things and its reversibility. The next adages, ‘iungere vulpes’ and ‘mulgere hircum’, can be used in conjunction with each other. The first one exploits a rural setting similar to that of ‘to put the cart before the horse’ to convey a sense of absurdity: ‘de re palam absurda dicitur.’ The second marks the transition between adages focusing on the notion of absurdity to those concentrating on vanity.

The adage ‘graculus inter Musas’ (I, vii, 22) (a jackdaw among the Muses), which should be used when an ignorant man participates in a conversation with educated company, introduces the theme of inappropriateness. The following adage ‘in lente unguentum’ (I, vii, 23) (perfume on the lentils) has a similar meaning but can be used in a broader manner:

‘quadrat autem in hominem aut in rem quampiam, quae neququam in tempore adhibeatur iis, quibus minime congruit. Veluti si philosophum juvenum lascivientium convivio misceas aut inter pocula de rebus gravibus ac theologicis incipias disputare’ (this is appropriate to any man or subject brought in at entirely the wrong moment in some quite unsuitable context; for instance, if you were to involve a philosopher in a riotous party of young men, or to start an argument over the wine on some serious theological topic). The juxtaposition of incompatible and contrary elements, such as debauchery associated with wine and theological arguments or philosophy and wild partying, constitutes the crux of this series of adages and directly points toward the rhetoric of inversion.

In ‘delphinium sylvis appingit, fluctibus aprum’ (I, iv, 93) (to people his woods with dolphins and his waves with boars), Erasmus explicitly mentions ‘in lente unguentum’ as a potential equivalent. By underlining the relationship between these adages expressing incongruity and absurdity, Erasmus reinforces the notion of a network of closely related adages revolving around inversion. The following adages are variations on the same theme: ‘anulus aureus in naribus suis’ (I, vii, 24) (a gold ring in a pig’s snout) and ‘in eburnean vagina plumbeus gladius’ (I, vii, 25) (a leaden sword in an ivory sheath). They precede two adages on an opposite theme ‘omnia octo’ (I, vii, 26) (all eights) and ‘omnia idem pulvis’ (I, vii, 27) (all is the same dust) both of which emphasise concordance and resemblance instead of opposition and unsuitability. Concluding his back and forth play on concord and discord, similarity and disparity, Erasmus then quotes the familiar adage ‘plaustrum bovem trahit’ (I, vii, 28) (the cart draws the ox).

This selective list of adages of inversion shows the prevalence and coherence of this theme in Erasmus’s *Adagia*. It also demonstrates the difficulty in classifying the different types of inversion, such as transformative and functional inversions as well as absurd, improper or foolish behaviours. In some cases, the distinction between these categories

remains fluid: it is unclear whether ‘*plaustrum bovem trahit*’ designates a foolish action (putting the cart before the ox) or implies a transformative inversion of the roles of the ox (to draw) and of the cart (to be drawn); similarly, ‘*delphinium sylvis appingit, fluctibus aprum*’ can refer to a reversal of the laws of nature or to the inappropriate imagination of poets. Such ambiguity – as well as the convergence of learned and popular sources – makes adages of inversion a versatile tool to be used in a variety of contexts from farces to polemic. By providing examples of how such adages were used during the sixteenth century, I will demonstrate that they made possible a widespread diffusion of topsy-turvy stock images.

### 1.2.3 Foolish adages in Rabelais and Bruegel

In this section, I will examine the use of adages to convey the notions of inappropriateness and foolishness in Bruegel’s painting *The Topsy-Turvy World* and in Rabelais’s *Gargantua and Cinquième Livre*. Studied side by side, these cultural artefacts illustrate the importance of adages during the sixteenth century and connect folly and impropriety with the world upside-down. In both cases, a significant number of proverbs – including Erasmian adages – are used in the context of the world upside-down. I distinguish two views of folly: the first, clearly visible in the passages I will examine from *Gargantua* and the *Cinquième Livre*, links back to medieval farces and presents the fool as an innocent, positive and comical character; the second is more socially and politically charged and can either be interpreted as a way to promote social change and mobility or to restrict them (Kaiser 1964; Gendre 1978; Newels 1985; Harris 2011: 246-258).

#### **Gargantua’s Youth and the Officers of Quinte Essence**

The influence of Erasmus and his *Adagia* over Rabelais is well-known.<sup>10</sup> I will focus on two emblematic examples of Rabelais’s use of adages: his description of Gargantua’s infancy (33-35) and his account of the activities of the officers from the island of the *Quinte Essence* (773-

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<sup>10</sup> Rabelais acknowledges Erasmus’s influence on his works in a well-known letter (998-999). See Thuasne 1905.

775). Rabelais uses the same processes in both chapters: adages and proverbs are either taken literally, or their original meaning is twisted. Rabelais makes abundant use of *adynata* and of adages depicting foolish or impossible tasks in both passages, but with different purposes in mind.

As Antonioli (1976: 158) points out, the young Gargantua behaves like a farcical fool and does everything upside-down. Rabelais places much emphasis on Gargantua's lower body by pointing out scatological, animalistic and sexual behaviours. Objects are used for inappropriate (and sometimes scatological) purposes: 'Il pissoit sus ses souliers, il chyoit en sa chemise, il se mouschoyet à ses manches'. Other proverbs focus on different categories of absurd tasks going against common sense and expectations: they can be self-evident ('Congnoissoy mousches en laict.'), impossible ('Ferroyt les cigalles. '; 'Prenoit les grues du premier sault. '; 'Mangeoyt sa fouace sans pain. '), futile ('Pissoyt contre le soleil. '; 'Gardoyt la lune des loups. '), or absurd ('Se cachoyt en l'eau pour la pluye. '; 'Si les nues tomboient esperoyt prandre les alouettes. '). Gargantua also disrupts the logical and chronological order of things: 'Mettoyt la charrette devant les beufz. '; 'Faisoyt chanter *magnificat* à matines, et le trouvoyt bien à propous.' These examples illustrate the extent of Rabelais's use of adages of inversion in a playful, carnivalesque and farcical context. A similar use of adages can be found in late medieval and Renaissance farces (Vignes 1997: 36-38; Vignes 2005).

The activities of the officers of the island of *Quinte Essence* are more difficult to interpret. Huchon (2001: 30) considers them as a parody of medieval and early modern alchemical theories: 'Les officiers de la Quinte sont une parodie des diverses manières d'extraire la quintessence et des guérisons que répertorie l'ouvrage attribué à Lulle, *De secretis naturae sine Quinta essentia* dont une édition avait paru en 1542'. This chapter revolves around the various *adynata* and foolish tasks – mostly borrowed from Erasmus's *Adagia* – achieved by the officers. Most of these burlesque miracles are based on three principles: they alter

some fundamental characteristics of an object ('blanchissoient les Ethiopiens', 'lavoient les tuilles, et leur faisoient perdre couleur'), they extract something of value from a worthless object ('tondoient les Asnes, et y trouvoient toison de laine bien bonne', 'faisoit putrefier grande doye d'urine humaine en fiant de cheval, avec force merde Chrestienne [...] d'icelle sacrée distillation abbeuvoit les Roys et grans Princes'), or they invert the laws of nature ('tiroient laict de boucs', 'chassoient aux vents avec des rets, et y prenoient Escrevisses Decumanes'). Rabelais's literal use of *adynata* evokes the world upside-down insofar as natural impossibilities become possible. Worth mentioning is the similarity between the island of *Quinte Essence* and the land of Cockaigne: both are mythical places where it is possible to be healed and regain youth miraculously and where foolish activities are the norm. However, the social hierarchy of the land of Cockaigne is often inverted – silliness, incompetence and laziness foster social advancement (see: Delpech 1979; Demerson 1981) – while Rabelais's focus, in the *Quinte Essence*, is the depictions of impossibilities and the reconciliation of contraries rather than the social organisation of the island.

### **Bruegel's Topsy-Turvy World**

Adages and proverbs pertaining to the world upside-down also form the basis of various visual artefacts such as emblems (which I will consider in sections 1.4 to 1.6), broadsheets and paintings. The world upside-down is a popular and widespread subject for broadsheets and woodcut prints from the sixteenth century to the French Revolution (Tristan 1980). These represent the folly and troubles of the world through a set of *adynata*, sometimes taken from Erasmus (e.g. 'currus bovem trahit' (I, vii, 28), 'asinus ad lyram' (I, iv, 35)) or from popular sources (Kunzle 1977). Contemporary with these broadsheets, Bruegel's *Topsy-Turvy World* represents a Flemish village as an emblematic example of the folly of the world. (Fig. 4) The key to the painting is provided by the inverted globe in the far left of the middle-section. (Fig. 5) As Sullivan (1991: 444) points out, none of the proverbs depicted in this painting have a positive meaning. Instead, they depict a world out of bounds in which the

wife deceives her husband, the fool defecates on the world or urinates on the moon, the Devil hears confession, and the chamber pot hangs outside.<sup>11</sup> (Fig. 6-10)



Figure 4: 'The Topsy-Turvy World', Bruegel the Elder (1559) oil on panel, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.



Figure 5: Bruegel, 'The Topsy-Turvy World,' (detail 1)



Figure 6: Bruegel, 'The Topsy-Turvy World' (detail 2)

<sup>11</sup> This last proverb is an expression of inversion and madness. (Bonn 2006: 160)



Figure 7: 'The Topsy-Turvy World'  
(detail 3)



Figure 8: 'The Topsy-Turvy World'  
(detail 4)



Figure 9: 'The Topsy-Turvy World' (detail 5)



Figure 10: 'The Topsy-Turvy World' (detail 6)

Broadsheets featuring the world upside-down have been associated with revolutionary impulses and civil unrest: by representing a world turned upside-down, they upset the established order of society and inspire people to challenge it (e.g. Leroy-Ladurie 1979). This argument needs to be qualified. Illustrations of the world upside-down – either in the form of vignettes or as paintings – depict a world that is not as it should be and, in the case of Bruegel's *Topsy-Turvy World*, identify the lower class and the peasants as the embodiment of the folly of the world, which goes against the idea of the promotion of social mobility (Kunzle 1977).

#### 1.2.4 Polemical adages in Baïf's *Mimes*

The last example of the use of adages and proverbs in literature that I will consider in this chapter is Baïf's *Mimes, Enseignemens et Proverbes*. Written between 1574 and 1587, the *Mimes* are an extensive compilation of adages, proverbs, and of various short poetic forms from classical and popular sources (Vignes 2005). Baïf does not mention any source and groups the proverbs together in sixains of octosyllables, without any particular order, nor any headings. As a result, the *Mimes* fall in between the typical commonplace book and the *coq-à-l'âne*. Baïf's initial project, according to Vignes (Baïf 1992: 9), was 'd'offrir à ses contemporains divisés par les guerres civiles l'héritage d'une sagesse universelle susceptible de constituer peut-être un terrain d'entente'. Vignes distinguishes, between each revision of the *Mimes*, the signs of Baïf's political evolution from Catholic courtier to moderate *politique* and finally disenchanted satirist.

Instances of adages or proverbs of inversion permeate Baïf's *Mimes*. In this section, I will look at how they are used in a polemical context to deplore social and political unrest and denounce the excess of the Catholic League. What makes Baïf's use of adages especially interesting for the study of the topos of the world upside-down is the variety of sources combined in a discombobulating, yet distinctively polemical, framework. Considering the heterogeneity and obscurity of the *Mimes*, it is useful to divide adages and proverbs of inversion into categories before examining what role they perform in their immediate context and in the wider scope of the *Mimes*.

#### **Adages and Animals**

I will start by studying proverbs and adages of the world upside-down in relation to animals. While other polemical works – such as D'Aubigné's *Tragiques*, as I will show in section 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 – depict the world upside-down in terms of the animalisation of human beings, Baïf's *Mimes* follow popular broadsheets in depicting a reversal of roles among animals and,

occasionally, the anthropomorphisation of animals. (See also 1.5.3 and 1.6.3). Most of the examples occur in the first book, with the exception of a passage in the third book. The focus of the initial project in the first book – to establish a consensus among divided Christians with the help of universally accepted proverbs – might explain the concentration of this kind of images at the beginning, before Baïf's writing devolves into near-nonsensical *coq-à-l'âne*. Animals are a frequent motif in proverbs, insofar as they provide a mirror of society and permit striking characterisations of particular vices, virtues or situations. In the case of the topos of the world upside-down, the absurd or topsy-turvy behaviours of animals signify that the laws of nature are broken and reflect the social upheaval of the times.

The second *mime* of the first book opens with such an inversion: 'La Lyre à l'Asne, au Porc la Harpe:/Haze au vivier, au clavier carpe' (Baïf 1992: 72).<sup>12</sup> Two kinds of inversion are at play: the incongruity of donkeys and pigs playing instruments, borrowed from Erasmus's 'Asinus ad lyram' (I, iv, 35), and an inversion of the laws of nature, based on a variation on 'delphinium sylvis appingit, fluctibus aprum' (II, iv, 77). These lines introduce the subject of ignorance, which Baïf describes as deliberate stupidity. He goes on to indicate that such 'art non art' belongs to the world upside-down and relates to the disorders of the times.<sup>13</sup>

Subsequent adages, 'Oysons meinent les Oyes paistre' (87) taken from the *Proverbes communs*, 'Le lievre pelisse le chien' (121), also present topsy-turvy situations in order to deplore the vices of the world: in these cases, debauchery and arrogance respectively. Baïf uses the well-known adage 'Le Porc enseignera Minerve' (92), borrowed from Erasmus's 'Sus Minervam' (I, i, 40), in a different way: rather than indicating that the world is upside-down, it precedes a list of recommendations ('Cherchez & sçavoir, & sagesse', 'Ose Mortel chose

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<sup>12</sup> Subsequent quotations refer to the same edition.

<sup>13</sup> Other examples of similar grammatical constructions permeate Scève's *Délie*, *Object de plus haulte virtue* and D'Aubigné's *Tragiques*. See Glauser 1990.

mortelle’, ‘Deffie toy: la deffiance/Est tout le nerf de la prudence’, etc.) (93). It seems probable that ‘Le Porc enseignera Minerve’ consists in a modesty topos in which the pig represents Baïf himself.<sup>14</sup>

A more comprehensive account of the world upside-down occurs in the last *mime* of the third book:

Au feu au feu, nostre puy brûle:  
Nostre chien brait, nostre asne hûle:  
La charrue va devant les beufs,  
Les eaux reboursent aux fontaines:  
Lon casse les bestes à laines:  
Et maintenant lon tond les œufs (335).

This short passage alludes to various kinds of inversion: the burning well and the water springing back to the fountain are *adynata*; dogs and donkeys have switched their characteristics; and shearing eggs/breaking sheep constitute foolish tasks and indicate greed. Baïf’s use of the first person plural pronoun suggests that, rather than being dedicated to a specific courtier like the other *mimes* in the third book, this *mime* is addressed to Baïf’s friends as a whole. The rest of the *mime* urges them to adopt a moderate stance in the face of socio-political and religious troubles. In this case, the various manifestations of the world upside-down illustrate the present disorders, which, according to Baïf, can be easily resolved: ‘Renverse tout, tout ira bien’ (335). In other words, Baïf’s *Mimes* provides several examples of moderate polemic against the religious wars. However, Baïf also mentions more militant, gallican proverbs, such as: ‘Les asnes s’affublent de chapes:/Dieu sçait comment se font les Papes’ (87).

### **Adages of Folly**

The second category of proverbs and adages of inversion I will look at revolves around folly and, more precisely, the wisdom of folly or *morosophie*. This pivotal notion, which will be

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<sup>14</sup> Baïf applies the same adage to himself elsewhere: ‘Baïf où te poussa ta verve?/Veux-tu porc enseigner Minerve?’ (Baïf 1890: II, 656).

examined in more detail in sections 1.4.2 and 2.4, posits that presenting oneself as wise is foolish, while admitting one's folly is wise. In the *Mimes*, however, Baïf deplores that wisdom is often mistaken for folly and that the troubles of the times allow fools to elevate themselves above the wise. Examples along these lines abound: 'C'est estre fol que d'estre sage' (65); 'Qui n'ha rien en ce maudit âge/Est tenu pour fol, fust-il sage' (81); 'En lieu d'un sage le fou monte/En la chaire. C'est grande honte/Que les sages sont tous muets' (212). Baïf considers folly as a mechanism of inversion ('Le fol prend l'endroit pour l'envers' (175).), which fosters a variety of vices and causes social upheaval.

In conclusion, these examples illustrate how proverbs and adages pertaining to the world upside-down have been used in a polemical context. The originality of Baïf's use of proverbs and adages derives from his understanding of proverbs as elements of generally accepted wisdom rather than building blocks of conventional thought intended to enhance, support or ornament discourse. For Baïf, images of the world upside-down serve as a way to construct a consensus around two ideas: the religious civil wars are unnatural and taking an active part in them is foolish.

## 1.3 PARADOXES

### 1.3.1 Introduction

The status of paradox is difficult to establish and still debated: it has been considered as a way of thinking, a rhetorical figure or a genre (Margolin 1988; Steczowicz 2004). As it goes against or inverts accepted opinion, paradox relates to the topos of the world upside-down. By blaming or debasing an object worthy of praise or praising something trivial using an elevated style, paradox is meant to unsettle the reader by inverting their expectations 'en instillant une logique perverse qui déstabilise tout énoncé' (Clément 2003:97). Such mechanisms are described at length in a number of studies, such as Bowen's *The Age of Bluff*

(1972a), Colie's *Paradoxia Epidemica* (1966) and Eichel-Lojkine's *Excentricité et humanisme* (2002). In this section, I will examine three examples of paradoxes who has been tremendously influential throughout the sixteenth century: Erasmus's *Encomium Moriae*, Lando's *Paradossi* and the *Paradoxe contre les lettres*. These examples provide a useful background for understanding how the trend of paradox and the topos of the world upside-down have interacted.

### 1.3.2 Erasmus's *Encomium Moriae*

The French paradox tradition traces back to classical, neo-Latin and Italian works. Of considerable importance to the development of this tradition are classical authors – most prominently Lucian, whose wide influence on the sixteenth century has been thoroughly investigated (Lauvergnat-Gagnière 1988), and neo-Latin paradoxical writers (Tomarken 2014: 49-80). Among the neo-Latin authors of paradoxes, the most notable proves to be Erasmus, who translated and contributed to circulating Lucian's works and composed the well-known *Encomium Moriae* (Tomarken 2014: 28-49).

The praise of folly and fools, as one of the central themes of Rabelais's *Tiers Livre* and as a constant source of inspiration for emblematisers, provides an example of the way paradoxical praises upset readerly expectations by upholding seemingly absurd arguments. However, according to Kaiser (1964: 37), 'Erasmus' great originality, then, was to make Stultitia [Folly] both the author and the subject of her encomium.' This self-cancelling, self-referring paradox allows 'reason to question itself and yet emerge with wisdom' (Panofsky 1944: 235). While Erasmus was not the first writer to make Folly speak – as it was a central character in many farces, *sotties* and *sermon joyeux* – his twist on the mock encomium genre remains significant (See also: Margolin 1983).

What makes the *Encomium Moriae* especially important to understanding the sixteenth-century use of the topos of the world upside-down is its treatment of what Kaiser

calls the ‘transvaluation of values’: a process whereby all values are overturned (Kaiser 1964: 51-83). To describe it, Kaiser appropriates the Erasmian and Rabelaisian image of the Sileni of Alcibiades (III, iii, 1): ‘for any given truth the opposite may be equally true. If you open the Silenus, you will find everything suddenly reversed. [...] It finds its authorities in Socrates, who claimed that ignorance was wisdom, and in Christ, who claimed that death was life’ (Kaiser 1964: 59-60). Kaiser’s ‘transvaluation of values’, which inverts established values by presenting their opposite as true, is not only central to Christian morals (as I will show in section 1.4.2), but also to religious and political polemics insofar as it permits the inversion of features or values commonly associated with a targeted institution (such as the justice system or the Church) or characters (such the Pope or the King).

### 1.3.3 Lando’s *Paradossi* and the *Paradoxe contre les lettres*

The publication of Lando’s *Paradossi* – a list of thirty defences of unworthy or absurd causes – in Lyon in 1543 and its adaptation in French by Estienne in 1553 contributed to the development of the French paradox tradition (Larsen 1997: 760; Clément 2003: 98; Tomarken 2014: 81-101, 140-145). Also noteworthy is Lando’s *Sermoni Funebri*, published in Venice in 1548, providing hyperbolic praises of dead pets (Tomarken 2014: 199-229). In the preface of his adaptation of the *Paradossi*, Estienne provides two main justifications for arguing against the established opinion:

afin que par le discours [des paradoxes], la vérité opposite t’en soit a l’advenir plus clere & apparente : & aussi pour t’exercer au debat des choses qui te contraingnent a chercher diligemment & laborieusement raisons, preuves, autoritez, histoires & memoires fort diverses & cachees (Estienne 1998: 59).

According to Estienne, paradoxes are meant to reinforce the established opinion and to train the eloquence of the reader. However, paradoxes such as ‘Che miglior sia la povertà, che la ricchezza’, ‘Meglio è d’esser ignorante, che dotto’, ‘Meglio è d’esser pazzo, che savio’ and ‘Esser miglior l’imbriachezza, che la sobrietà’ clearly allude to a world turned upside-down and evoke the main themes of later works hinging on the overturning of the world. Praise of

poverty, ignorance, folly and wine will be central to many emblems, as I will show in sections 1.4.3, 1.4.2, and 1.5.2 respectively. Moreover, Rabelais incorporates similar arguments into his works: praise of wine and drunkenness, for instance, is crucial to *Pantagruélisme*; (Clark 1983) praise of humility and poverty provides an invaluable framework of reference for understanding Epistemon's description of the underworld's inverted social hierarchy; (section 2.2.2) and finally, praise of fools and folly is central to the *Tiers Livre* (section 2.4).

In addition to mock encomia, Lando's *Paradossi* also offers some examples of mock vituperations. In his adaptation, Estienne provides 'Contre celuy, qui lamente la mort de sa femme' and 'Contre celuy, qui ne se vault passer de serviteurs', but he leaves out the ironic attacks against Boccaccio, Aristotle and Cicero. Another striking examples of paradoxical blame is the *Paradoxe contre les lettres*, published in Lyon in 1545. Clément (2003: 100-105) provides convincing evidence for the author of the anonymous work being Scève. She also shows that the *Paradoxe contre les lettres* offers a complex example of self-referring paradox, similar to Erasmus's *Encomium Moriae*: the author attacks literature with a literary piece and uses literary authorities to do so. Clément (2003: 99) summarises the main argument as : 'Dans cette fiction, le monde va à l'empire à cause des lettres.' This *monde à l'empire* becomes, occasionally, a world upside-down.<sup>15</sup> According to the narrator, Opsimathes, 'S'il n'estoit l'escire, [...] nous entendrions, et ferions mieulx noz affaires de nous mesmes, et n'envoyeriens les choses à l'envers, comme le plus du temps nous faisons, servantz les mains à parler, et la langue à demeurer coye' (Clément 2003: 118). Opsimathes proceeds to give a lengthy and learned illustration of the 'mesaises, discommoditez, et desordres' (Clément 2003: 121) brought about by literature and writing.

In both paradoxical praise and blame, writers seek to challenge the reader with unconventional ideas, absurd or offensive arguments and topsy-turvy lines of reasoning.

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<sup>15</sup> The phrase 'le monde à l'empire' refers to Viret (1580), see sections 3.1 and 4.2.4.

They remain, however, committed to the idea that such inversion of the established opinion must either remain temporary (as specified in Estienne's preface), or be qualified (as shown by the frequent references to the foolishness of the author in the *Paradoxe contre les lettres*). In both cases, the upsetting of the proper order of the world seeks to reinforce the common and accepted opinion rather than undermine it. A similar claim can be made concerning ritualised, temporary disruption of the social order, such as Carnival or the Feast of Fools. However, with the rise of the social and religious tensions in France during the mid-sixteenth century, the topos of the world upside-down will be appropriated by polemicists who will use it to denounce abuses and disorders, and to debase their enemies.

## 1.4 MORAL EMBLEMS

### 1.4.1 Introduction

The origin of the emblem book – Alciato's *Emblemata*, composed during the *Saturnalia* – connects this genre to carnivalesque festivities and, more generally, inversion (Manning 2002: 220-275). As a result, the emblem tradition is crucial to the study of the world upside-down: not only does it link back to adages, commonplaces and to visual culture, but it brings together the moral dimension of the topos, its carnivalesque undertones and its uses in religious and political polemics.

Grant (1979) examines emblems and prints representing the world upside-down in relation to Spanish literature. In her essay, part of the 1977 conference on the world upside-down, she brings together emblems from the Low-Countries, Italy and Spain and interprets them as manifestations of the troubled religious and political context. Despite the rich scholarship on Alciato's *Emblemata* and on the sixteenth-century French emblematisers, much remains unsaid about their relationship with the topos of the world upside-down. Especially surprising is the lack of reference to the emblem tradition in the 2010 conference on the

world upside-down (ed. Desjardins 2013). To fill this gap, I will focus on Alciato and on French emblematisers as they provide a representative set of examples. I will argue that the use of inversion in the emblem tradition participated in the propagation and development of the topos of the world upside-down. In this regard, the development of the emblem tradition and of the topos of the world upside-down are closely related and undergo similar developments during the sixteenth-century: from playful and subversive carnivalesque puns to moralising and polemical tools.

Examples from the French emblem tradition demonstrate that sixteenth-century moral emblems are often based on binary oppositions and on inversion. The tendency to represent vices as overturned virtues derives from the specific organisation of the emblem book as a microcosm.<sup>16</sup> This mode of organisation, which starts with God and goes from religious matters, to moral and social issues and ends with botanical emblems, represents the (vertical) hierarchical order of the world and is largely based on (horizontal) binary oppositions: virtues and vices, fortune and honour, life and death, friendship and enmity, revenge and peace, and finally, knowledge and ignorance.

In this section, I will study two binary oppositions: wisdom/foolishness and humility/arrogance. Of particular importance to Christian moralism, these binary oppositions show the transvaluation of values at work in the notion of the wisdom of foolishness and the divine restoration of the proper order of the world throughout the theme of the victory of the weak over the powerful. I will show that earlier emblems use the topos of the world upside-down for moralising purposes, while later moral emblems prefigure the polemical use of the genre.

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<sup>16</sup> Especially after Rouillé's 1548 rearrangement of Alciato's *Emblemata* according to thematic headings (*loci communes*).

Since inversion does not only come into play along the horizontal axis described above, but also in the hierarchical order of the world, I will examine carnivalesque, scatological and sexual emblems in the next section. I will conclude this chapter by showing how emblematisers depicted social and religious upheaval with polemical emblems.

#### 1.4.2 Wisdom and Folly

The importance of folly during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance cannot be overstated (e.g. Kaiser 1964; Gendre 1978; Screech 1988, Huchon 2009). By the end of the fifteenth century, it had become a central feature of religious, intellectual and popular cultures. The character of the fool played an essential role not only in farces and sotties, but also in the liturgy of the Feast of Fools (Harris 2011). The paradoxical association of wisdom and folly can be traced back to St Paul's doctrine, which promotes folly over wisdom and weakness over power. Important works such as Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi*, Cusanus's *Of Learned Ignorance* and Erasmus's *Encomium Moriae* have participated in the propagation of the notion of the wisdom of folly during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The wisdom of folly – by asserting that a wise man is foolish and that only a fool can be wise – derives from the topos of the world upside-down.

#### **La Perrière's Morosophie**

One of its most direct manifestations in the French emblem tradition consists in La Perrière's *Morosophie*. Published in 1553, almost a decade after La Perrière's influential *Theatre des bons engins*, *Morosophie* is a bilingual (French/Latin) emblem book containing a hundred emblems mostly based on classical culture. In the introductory *Privilege*, La Perrière (1553: A4v) explains and defends his title: 'J'ay nommé mon dit œuvre, MOROSOPHIE, par diction Grecque composée, signifiant en Grec comme fole sagesse en François.' La Perrière's use of the modesty topos consists in admitting that he mainly displays his folly in the *Morosophie*, before providing classical examples of wise fools such as Plato, Diogenes or

Cicero. Finally, he concludes : ‘Je ne fais aucun doute, qu’entre tans de mes folies ne se treuve quelque sagesse, entre tans d’espines quelque rose, entre tans de cocquilles quelque perle, & entre tans de fables quelque verité’ (Perrière 1553: A6v). In order to resolve the apparent contradiction of the wisdom of folly, La Perrière alludes to the doctrine of *concordia discors*, a classical aesthetic principle whereby harmony is generated by the interaction of contraries.

It remains essential, however, to distinguish between good and bad folly: while good folly restores the proper order of things, bad folly overturns it. A clear example of folly overturning the world occurs in the forty-ninth emblem of *Morosophie*:

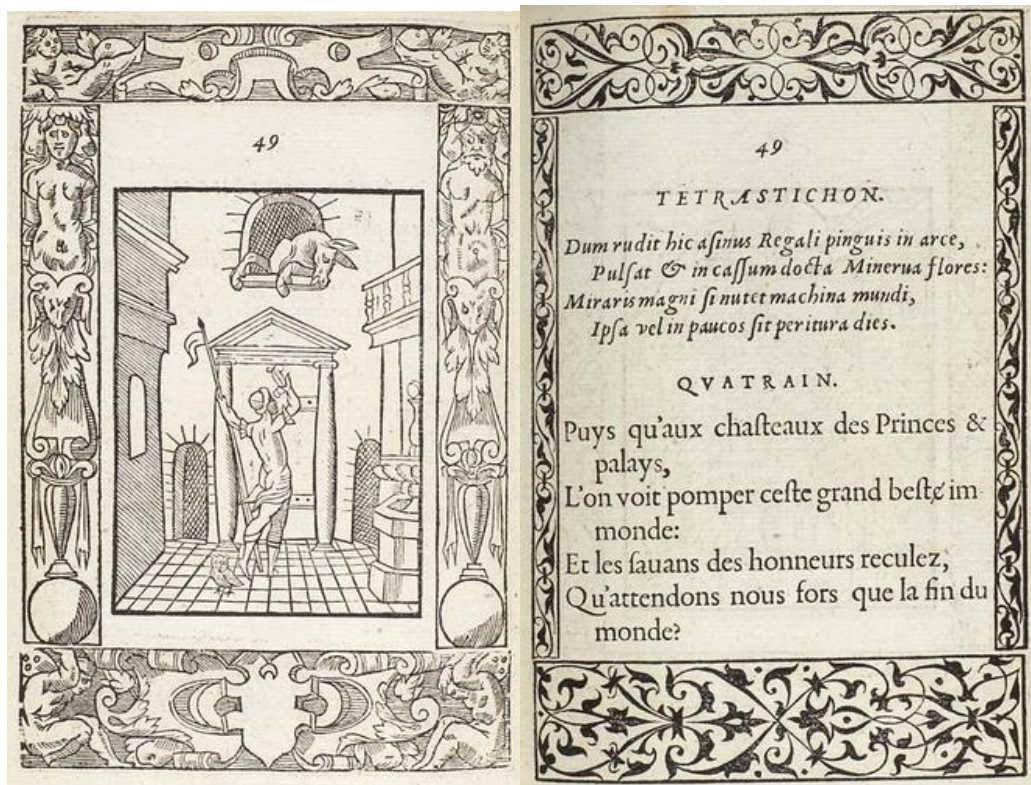


Figure 11: 'Emblem 49' (Perrière 1553: H5v-H6r)

As in his *Theatre*, La Perrière does not provide titles for the emblems of the *Morosophie*. The picture of emblem 49 represents a donkey at the window of a palace, looking down on Minerva. The text – two quatrains in Latin and French – explains that the donkey being honoured above Minerva (or wise men in the French version) is a sign of the imminent

overturning of the world. This emblem alludes to a number of adages, such as ‘Graculus inter Musas’ (I, vii, 22) or ‘Sus Minervam’ (I, i, 40), in order to represent an improper or incongruous situation. In this context, Minerva, identified by her owl, symbolises wisdom and knowledge. The Erasmian adage ‘Sus Minervam’, prominently used in Rabelais’s *Quart Livre*, is based on the same idea and indicates the fool’s attempt to teach the wise. (See section 2.2.3). Donkeys are associated with fools and unrefined people, such as the king Midas who, judging a music contest between Pan and Apollo, questioned Apollo’s victory and was punished with donkey’s ears. As Haverkamp-Begemann (1999: 222) points out there is a rich seventeenth-century tradition representing Minerva protecting the arts from donkeys or donkey-headed men. To conclude, this emblem confirms that inversion and the topos of the world upside-down were central to the Renaissance view of impropriety, incongruity and folly.

### **Alciato's *Emblemata***

Alciato provides an earlier example of an emblem related to folly and inversion. ‘Dives indoctus’ is based on the story of Phrixus who rode a golden sheep across the sea to Colchis. (Fig. 12) The text informs the reader that this emblem symbolises a stupid rich man living under the rule of his servant or his wife: ‘vir sensu hebeti, sed divite gaza,/Coniugis aut servi quem regit arbitrium’ (Alciato 1531: E4r). It remains unclear whether the stupid rich man is depicted as Phrixus or as the sheep. The inversion at play in this emblem pertains to the social and domestic sphere – a man ruled by his servant or wife – and depicts an improper situation going against the natural order of things.



Figure 12: 'Dives Indoctus' (Alciato 1531: E4r)

### Other Emblem-Books

Other emblematisers also tackled the issues of folly and lack of judgement, and connected them to inversion and to the topos of the world upside-down. In Sambucus's *Emblemata*, for instance, the emblem 'Consuetudo prava' clearly states that the people's opinion remains topsy-turvy by force of habit: 'Rebus in humanis praepostera opinio vulgi,/Ac sequitur morem, quem semel obtinuit' (Sambucus 1564: 129-130). This statement follows Erasmus's conclusion in *Ichtyomachia* in saying that topsy-turvy judgement is widespread and that the world is therefore upside-down (Visser 2005: 249-250).

A striking example of topsy-turvy judgement occurs in Aneau's *Imagination poetique* (1552a): the emblem 'Pervertiz jugemens' relates how Midas got his donkey's ears for questioning Apollo's victory in a musical contest.<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 13) Aneau's moral commentary on this story revolves around two kinds of inversion: the topsy-turvy judgement of foolish people, and the binary opposition between these people's appearance and their lack of judgement.

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<sup>17</sup> On Aneau, see Biot 1996.

Ainsi, Aucuns sont tant Asnes, tant lourdz,  
 De Jugement tourné tant à rebours : [...]  
 Or pleust à Dieu que tous Asnes masquez  
 D'oreilles d'Asne ainsi fussent marquez ! [...]  
 On peut nommer les renversez Apules.  
 Car par dehors figure d'hommes ont :  
 Mais par dedans Asnes & bestes sont (Aneau 1552a: 120).

Aneau's commentary clearly shows that inappropriate, absurd or foolish conducts are consistently characterised as upside-down, making inversion the central feature of deviant behaviours. In this case, as in emblem 49 of La Perrière's *Morosophie*, the donkey represents slow-witted and foolish people, whose judgement is effectively topsy-turvy. However, Apollo's punishment consists in revealing Midas's true nature rather than humiliating him.

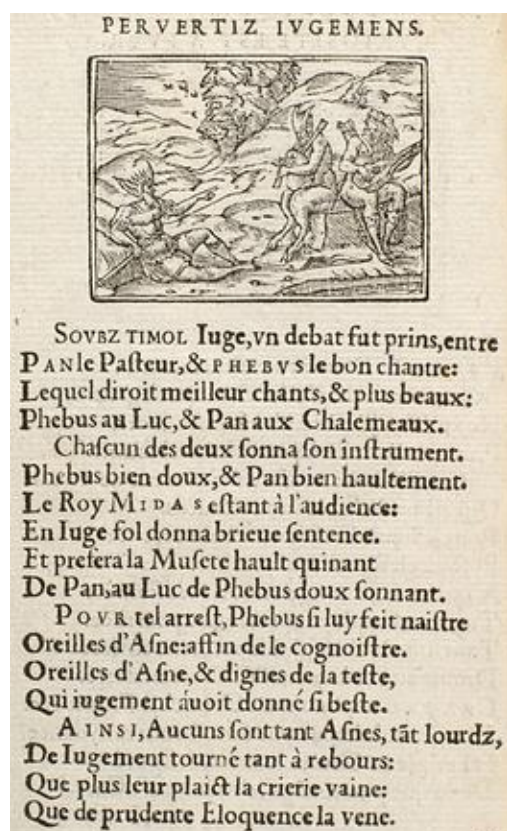


Figure 13: 'Pervertiz Jugemens' (Aneau 1552a: 120)      Figure 14: 'Embleme XXIII' (Perrière 1544: D5r)

This observation prompts Aneau's final remark concerning fools, which he designates as 'Asnes masquez' and 'renversez Apules' because they have the outer appearance of people, but are donkeys and bestial inside. The phrase 'renversez Apules' refers to Apuleius's novel *Asinus aureus*, in which the protagonist – Lucius – is accidentally turned into a donkey. Aneau

considers that fools have undergone the opposite metamorphosis: they are donkeys in human guise. As such, they belong to the world upside-down since animals behaving like humans and vice versa are a characteristic feature of this topos. Medieval vignettes representing the world upside-down – known as follies – make abundant use of anthropomorphisation of animals and animalisation of human beings; their influence is visible in the emblem tradition (Jones 1989).

In La Perrière's *Theatre* – an early French emblem book more focused on medieval than classical themes – emblem XXVIII lists a series of inappropriate situations. (Fig. 14) La Perrière frames the list with animals counterfeiting human behaviours: a pig wearing a ring and an ox presenting hats:

Pensez si c'est choses tresbien seante  
A un pourceau, de porter une bague, [...]  
A un enfant, de porter une dague :  
A un coquin, de mener grosse brave :  
A un lourdault, contrefaire le saige :  
A un asnier, traicter subtil ouvraige :  
A un gros boeuf, presenter des chapeaulx, [...] (Perrière 1544: D6r).

In 'Pervertiz jugemens', Aneau adds another layer to the well-known inversion between human and animal: the discrepancy between inner and outer characteristics, which may allude to Erasmus's adage 'Sileni Alcibiadis' (III, iii, 1). While a silenus metaphorically designates a wise person of ugly or grotesque appearance, the inverted silenus represents someone whose apparent virtue masks their true nature.<sup>18</sup> Such a discrepancy gives the impression that the world is turned upside-down: the more virtuous someone looks, the more sinful he is. These examples, which mostly belong to the first generation of French emblematisers, demonstrate the significance of the topos of the world upside-down for the depiction of folly as well as improper and absurd behaviours or situations.

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<sup>18</sup> The metaphor of the silenus is extremely popular and influential. See, for instance, the prologue of *Gargantua*. For a discussion of this concept, see La Charité 1989 and Rigolot 2006.

### 1.4.3 Humility and Arrogance

The praise of humility constitutes another important manifestation of the topos of the world upside-down in the sixteenth-century French emblem tradition. This theme revolves around the Christian notion of the humble overcoming the arrogant, or the weak defeating the powerful. The praise of humility presupposes that the world, by attaching more importance to material than spiritual values, is upside-down, and that only its overturning by God will restore its proper order.

My next set of examples spans from the first generation of French emblematisers to the late sixteenth-century: this theme is prominent in Corrozet's *Hecatomgraphie*, published in Paris in 1540, and can be found in Coustau's *Pegme/Pegma* (1555/1560) and Montenay's *Emblemes ou devises chrestiennes* (1567/1571). These three emblem books differ widely from each other: Corrozet's book is French-oriented while Coustau and Montenay cater for both French and Latin speakers; the *Hecatomgraphie* focuses mostly on moralising emblems, (see: Saunders 1980; Adams 1994) *Pegme/Pegma* introduces substantial 'narrationes philosophicae' commenting each emblem, (see: Bergal 1991) and Montenay's *Emblems* is specifically Christian (Adams 2003a: 9-118). While all three use the topos of the world upside-down to praise humility over arrogance, they do so in different ways. I will argue that earlier emblematisers provide a moralising account of this theme, while subsequent Christian emblematisers use it in a more polemical context.

#### **Descriptive Emblems**

There are three variations on the praise of humility over arrogance in Corrozet's *Hecatomgraphie*: 'Le mauvais est eslevé et le bon humilié' (Fig. 15), 'Triomphe d'humilité' (Fig. 16) and 'Le vainqueur surmonté par le vaincu' (Fig. 17). Each emblem follows the same structure: a motto and a picture accompanied by a quatrain on the left page and a longer explanation of the meaning on the right page. In 'Le mauvais est eslevé et le bon humilié',

Corrozet describes the topsy-turvy state of society before the triumph of humility over arrogance.

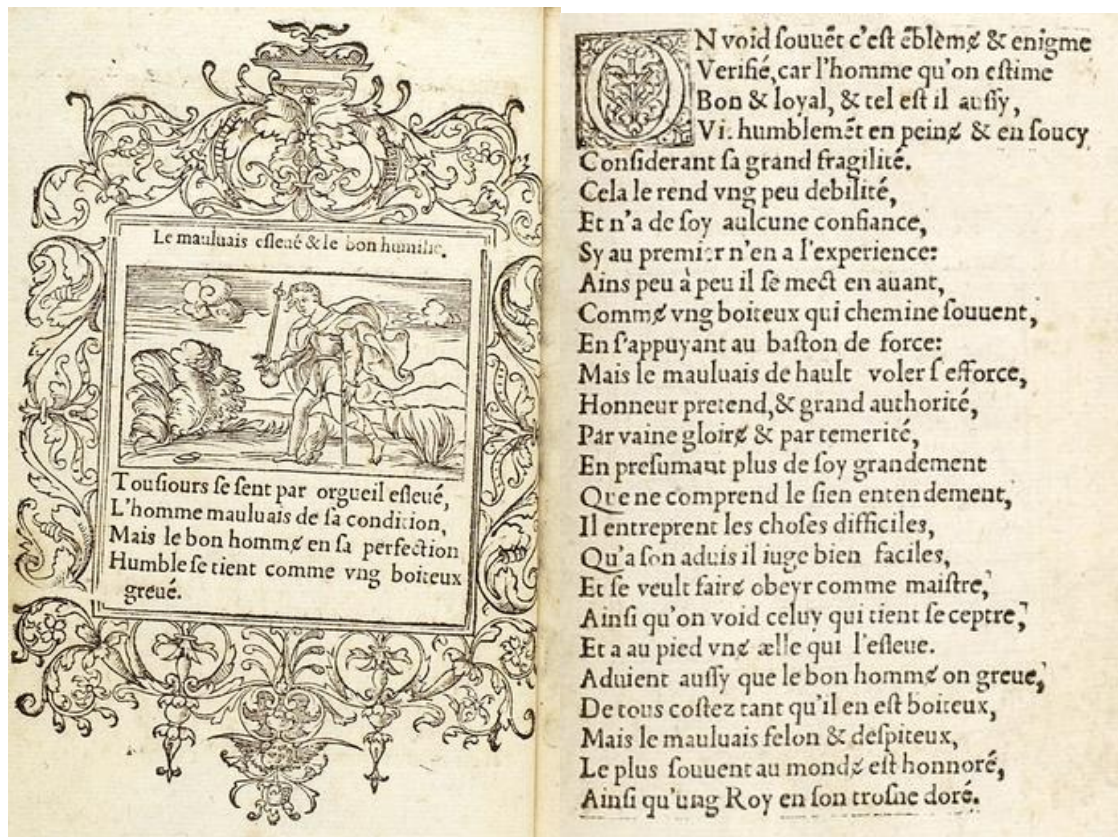


Figure 15: 'Le mauuais eslevé et le bon humilié' (Corrozet 1540: C7-C8)

The motto alludes to the Bible (Luke, Cor.) and points out the divergence between worldly and spiritual values as well as between perception of self-worth, the people's and God's judgement. To this extent, this emblem is paradoxical and claims that honoured people and people seeking honours are often less worthy of being honoured than humble people, thus going against the common judgement. The picture, however, complicates this explanation by showing a man embodying the binary opposition between someone good feeling crippled and an arrogant character feeling powerful: the man depicted has both a bandaged and a winged leg/foot, a sceptre and a cane. The ambiguity of the picture may be resolved by considering Corrozet's didactic and moral aims, which is to help the reader to choose between vice and virtue. In this emblem, the powerful side of the man represents his own self-perception, while the other side depicts his crippled, real self.

The emblems ‘Triumphe d’humilité’ (Fig. 16) and ‘Le vainqueur surmonté par le vaincu’, (Fig. 17) which occur one after the other, are strongly connected. The first one represents a lion bowing before a lamb and the second one shows a winged snake coiled around a sword. While both of these emblems revolve around the same theme – the praise of humility – they link back to different sources: the first one makes use of Christian symbolism insofar as the lamb represents Christ; the second one seems inspired by Aesop’s fable ‘the viper and the file’ (Perry 1980: 093). In the ‘Triumphe d’humilité’, Corrozet describes two antithetical beings: the powerful and aggressive lion and the sweet and weak lamb. What makes the lamb’s victory paradoxical is that it defeats the lion not by force, but by virtue of its sweetness.



Figure 16: ‘Triumphe d’humilité’ (Corrozet 1540: F2v-F3r) Figure 17: ‘Le vainqueur surmonté par le vaincu’ (Corrozet 1540: F3v-F4r)

The image of ‘Le vainqueur surmonté par le vaincu’ is ambiguous and demonstrates that Corrozet’s emblems can often be read on multiple levels. In this case, Corrozet replaces Aesop’s file with a sword and the viper with a winged snake. As a result, the image can evoke

a set of symbols including Asclepius's rod, the caduceus or the picture related to the well-known emblem 'Festina lente' representing a dolphin wrapped around an anchor (Alciato 1531: B2r). In any case, the motto indicates that this emblem is intended as a manifestation of inversion.

In Coustau's *Pegma/Pegme*, the emblem 'Ad fontem Dodonae. In sibi praesidentes'/'A la fontaine de Dodona. Contre les hautains' (Fig. 18) contributes to the development of this theme by using a classical image: Dodona's fountain, which puts out flaming torches, but also lights torches which have burned out. Various anecdotes surround Dodona's sanctuary: in Erasmus's 'Dodonaem aes' (I, i, 7) and in Rabelais *Cinquième Livre* (see section 3.4.2), the cooking pots of Dodona are said to amplify each sound; the oracles of Dodona are also well-known in the sixteenth century. Authors such as Du Bartas, (III, 180: 250-253) Goulart (1584: 135-142) and Le Loyer (1586: 544) also mention speaking oak trees or divination by water. The specificity of Coustau's emblem, in such a context, consists in interpreting this classical anecdote within a Christian and moralising framework.



Figure 18: 'A la fontaine de Dodona. Contre les hautains.' (Coustau 1560: 105)

In the philosophical narration, Coustau begins by putting aside the issue of the anecdotes' veracity. According to Coustau (1560: 106), even if the poets, 'qui avoient acoutumé cacher la verité sous leurs fables' had invented the story, Dodona's fountain and its miraculous properties would still stand as a metaphor for God's punishment of the proud and arrogant, and elevation of the humble. Coustau argues that this reversal stems from the fact that arrogant people do not attribute their good fortune to God, but to themselves. He mentions the fate of the king Nebuchadnezzar as an example of arrogance being punished by a divine reversal of fortune. As I will show in section 4.2.4, D'Aubigné uses the same example in the *Tragiques* to illustrate a more radical version of God's restoration of the proper order of the world through its overturning. The example of Nebuchadnezzar prompts a reflection on the fall of kingdoms: 'Dont plus je ne m'emmeveille de la ruine des Royaumes, la route des Empires, le foullement des provinces, perte des armées, & telz autres cas admirables en fortune, lesquelz de la memoire de noz peres sont avenues aux plus grandes seigneuries' (Coustau 1560: 108). While Coustau's mention of religious, social and political troubles is not as explicit and partisan as D'Aubigné's *Tragiques*, his description of 'la gent qui avoit souillé par toute mechanceté sa religion, & maculé par domestiques homicides les [...] villes & cités' (Coustau 1560: 109). seems to allude to the contemporary troubles in France and to prefigure the religious wars. The emblem 'A la fontaine de Dodona. Contre les hautains' shows how Coustau bridges the gap between the moral emblem books of the early sixteenth century and late sixteenth-century polemical works.

### **Protestant Emblems**

The last set of examples I will study in this section is taken from Montenay's *Emblemes ou devises chrestiennes*. As the first specifically religious emblem book written by the first female emblemist, the *Emblemes chrestiennes* are the focus of a significant body of scholarship. An important part of the critical tradition revolving around Montenay argues that the *Emblemes chrestiennes* require an 'active reading' or can be read 'en sens agile'. Adams (2003a: 10)

observes that the brevity of Montenay's biblical allusions (in her mottoes or elsewhere) 'demands an effort of recognition, an active reading, which encourages the emblems to serve as a source of meditation' (See also: Perrier 1990). Grieco (1994: 867) maintains that Montenay attempts to construct 'an alternative social and religious identity for women' through her creative use of images. Perrier (1991: 89) is especially interested in Montenay and the engraver Woeriot and 'leur manière paradoxale de communiquer l'esprit du "saint escrit" en jouant à le prendre à la lettre, à travers le mot à mot de leurs citations et leurs réalisations bizarres des images verbales'. I will examine the gap between the perceived aims of emblem books as tools of learning or religious propaganda and their polysemy, which manifests itself through scatological double-entendres or carnivalesque secondary readings, in section 1.5.3. To conclude this section, I will show how Montenay's treatment of the theme of the weak defeating the powerful prefigures the polemical use of emblems.

Adams points out that, despite its publication in 1567, De Montenay's book was in the hands of her publisher, De Castellat, from 1561: "This places her work in the very early days of the Calvinist church in France, and moreover at a point when, very briefly, Calvinists had a right to feel very optimistic about the religious development of their country' (Adams 2003a: 10). The discrepancy between the book's dates of composition and publication reveals a thought-provoking gap between an optimistic depiction of the rise of Protestantism in France and the religious wars. The first emblem I examine, 'Deposuit potent et exaltavit', makes use of a common biblical motif to superimpose the moralising praise of humility and weakness over arrogance and strength, and the metaphorical depiction of the fall of the arrogant Catholic Church. (Fig. 19) The picture represents the wind breaking a large tree and bending a smaller plant, which also evokes Aesop's fable 'the oak tree and the reed' (Perry 1980: 070). The text is divided into two parts: the first four lines describe the picture and the last four give its meaning.



Figure 19: 'Depositum potent et exaltavit' (Montenay 1567-71: 58)

The emblem 'Beati pauperes' illustrates a similar argument and combines it with the praise of folly over worldly wisdom. (Fig. 20) Montenay's text is based on the opposition between spiritual and worldly wealth and wisdom. Giving one's heart to God is the truest kind of wealth and any other care or possession only diverts people from it. Wierot's illustration represents a naked character holding a heart on a stick towards a cloud with a Tetragrammaton. Beneath this figure, there is a globe containing a T-shape and various bags. The naked figure probably represents the innocent and humble wise fool who holds his heart towards God and above the world and material concerns. The material world, a globe containing goods, is recognisable by the T-shape inside it. Montenay uses this globe ten times, that is to say in ten percent of her emblems, but only in 'Beati pauperes' is the T-shape not pointed upwards. However, as I will show in section 1.6.3, there are a number of globes

in the *Emblemes chrestiennes* that are either damaged or debased. In this instance, the skewed globe indicates the association between the theme of the emblem and the topos of the world upside-down.



Figure 20: 'Beati pauperes' (Montenay 1567-71: 63)

The character depicted in this emblem may represent a divine fool. Even though he does not possess any of the traditional attributes of the fool, his nakedness, neglect towards the material world and his symbolised proximity to God support this hypothesis. The text confirms this interpretation of the emblem by presenting a complex interplay of binary oppositions. Montenay pits innocence against presumption, wealth against poverty, fool against wise man, heaven against the world, and Protestantism against Catholicism. The first four lines provide the characteristics of the divine fool depicted in the emblem: innocence and contempt towards material wealth. The second part of the text warns the reader not to confuse 'sot' with 'povres d'esprit' since 'Sage est celuy qui renonce & qui laisse/Le monde & soy, pour estre riche en Christ' (Montenay 1567-71: 63). The figure of the divine fool

illustrates the transvaluation of values: his poverty means that he is spiritually rich, his innocence and humility elevate him and his folly is wise.

Similar elements can be found in the emblem ‘Sublato amore omnia ruunt’: a Cupid-like character, who resembles the divine fool of ‘Beati pauperes’ except with wings, holds a bow and arrow on one hand, and a globe on the other. (Fig. 21) As Adams observes, this character figures divine love and should not be conflated with Cupid, who would have been represented blindfolded (Adams 2003a: 52-3). The opposition between earthly and physical love on the one hand, and divine love on the other is clear in the epigram as Montenay warns the reader against ‘ce fol qu’on bande nu’ (Cupid) and admires ‘ceste bonté divine’ without which everything tumbles down. The motto, which translates as ‘without love, everything tumbles down’, reinforces the connection between Montenay’s militant religious message and the topos of the world upside-down. According to Montenay, only divine love can maintain the order of the world and prevent its overturning.

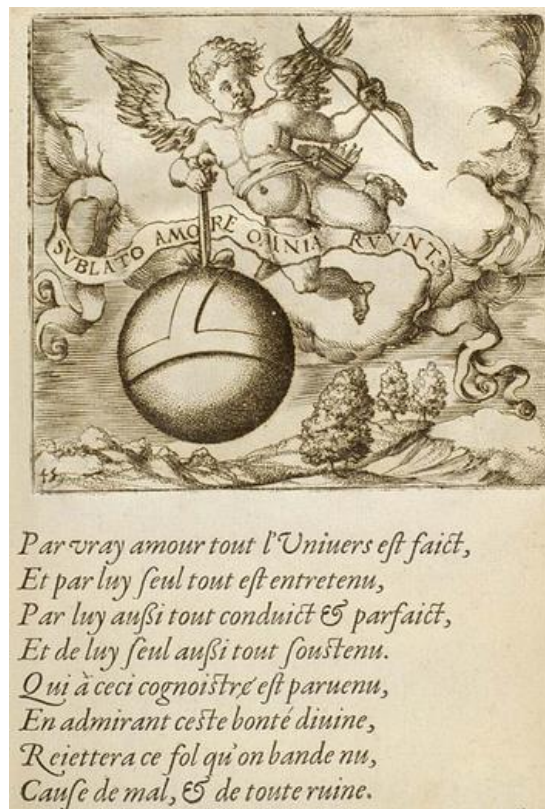


Figure 21: ‘Sublato amore omnia ruunt’ (Montenay 1567-71: 45)

## 1.5 CARNIVALESQUE EMBLEMS

### 1.5.1 Introduction

The emblem tradition is closely connected to carnivalesque festivities: according to Manning, it derives from the *Sigillaria*, a special market of figurines and images occurring during the Roman *Saturnalia* (Manning 2002: 221). For Manning the deep connection between Carnival and emblems manifests through a series of emblematic and carnivalesque themes such as wine, puns and games, scatology and sexuality. He observes both a ‘social levelling’ and a ‘democratization’ – that is to say ‘the view of the world taken by the laughing philosopher Democritus’ – at work in the emblem tradition (Manning 2002: 246). Bakhtin’s definition of the carnivalesque, which will be discussed in more detail in section 2.2, consists of a periodical and transgressive festivity based on the inversion of the social hierarchy. To explain the mechanisms of such inversion, Bakhtin concentrates on various features of Carnival: such as its festive aspect, its focus on the lower body stratum, and the regenerative power of laughter.

The lower body stratum is associated, either explicitly or implicitly, with a significant number of emblems. To this extent, part of the emblem tradition can be considered as carnivalesque from a Bakhtinian point of view: it focuses on the grotesque body and on the lower body stratum through various sexual and scatological images. Inversion works in two distinct ways in such emblems: on the one hand, scatological and sexual imagery can represent acts or beings going against the natural order of things; on the other, visual, verbal or cross-medium puns can overturn the moral purpose of the emblem (See Bergal 1987).

In this section, I will examine carnivalesque emblems pertaining to laughter, festivities, male and female lower body stratum, and scatology. I will show that carnivalesque emblems can be both bawdy and moralising, can either undermine or support serious interpretations, and become more polemical with the rise of the social troubles in France

### 1.5.2 Carnival and Laughter

A large number of emblems relate directly to festivities involving the overturning of the social order such as Carnival and *Saturnalia*. These emblems highlight the entertainment value of the genre and its relationship with festivities. Saunders (1988: 130-2) points out that Bacchus is, with Cupid, one of the most frequent characters to be depicted in emblem books. Alciato (1531: D4r/v) devotes an emblem to the description of Bacchus's characteristics, and La Perrière makes Bacchus the main protagonist of two emblems in his *Theatre*. In the first of these, Bacchus and Venus trap Minerva in a net, showing that wine and women can entrap even the wisest man. (Fig. 22) The second emblem shows Bacchus being mocked for masquerading as Hercules and alludes to the inappropriateness and impropriety characteristic of Carnival: 'Le fol peult bien du saige contrefaire, [...] Le foible aussi peult bien du vaillant faire'. (Fig. 23) Finally, Coustau's *Pegme/Pegma* represents Bacchus presiding over an assembly of judges. (Fig. 24) The picture shows Bacchus, naked and with a pitcher between his legs, with six men dressed as scholars. This emblem can be interpreted as be a satirical attack against the fat judges 'mis par argent' (who paid for their place), but it might also allude to the mock courts instituted during Carnival. These examples demonstrate the emblematisers' continuous interest in topics pertaining to carnivalesque festivities and show how the treatment of the theme evolves from a moralising praise of moderation to a polemical attack against the justice system. In the next examples, I will show how emblems pertaining to laughter and to the lower body stratum undergo a similar evolution.



Figure 22: 'Embleme II' (Perrière 1544: A7r)



Figure 23: 'Embleme XLVIII' (Perrière 1544: G5r)

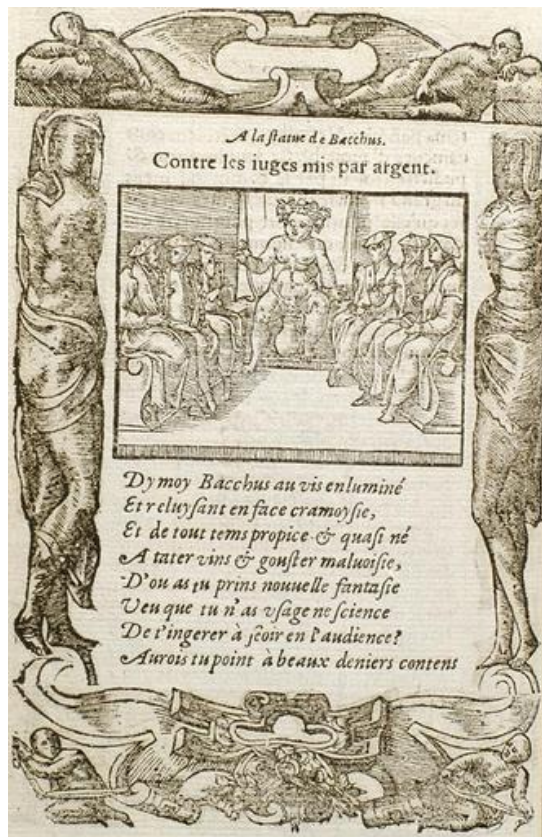


Figure 24: 'A la statue de Bacchus. Contre les juges mis par argent' (Coustau 1560: 138)

An emblematic example of laughter as a force of inversion consists in the topos of the laughing Democritus and the weeping Heraclitus. Tracing back to classical authors such as Seneca, Juvenal and Lucian, this topos pervades sixteenth-century European literature, arts and philosophy. D'Amboise, for instance, publishes in 1547 a French translation of an Italian allegory by Fregoso under the title *Le Ris de Democrite, et le Pleur de Heraclite Philosophes*. In Lando's *Paradossi*, published in Lyon in 1543, the paradox *Meglio è di piangere, che ridere* (translated as *Qu'il vaut mieux souvent plorer, que rire*) claims that 'Heraclite a tousjours plus esté estimé pour son plorer, que ne fut onc Democrite pour son rire' (Estienne 1998: 147). Since this paradox is meant to argue against the common opinion, it is reasonable to infer that, on the contrary, Democritus enjoyed wide popularity at the time.<sup>19</sup>

The basic assumption of the topos of Democritus's laughter and Heraclitus's tears is that the world is upside-down. Lippincott (1999: 78-80) points out that in a large number of paintings, Democritus and Heraclitus were represented next to a terrestrial globe, which represents the world in turmoil. (See, for instance, Fig. 25). As witnesses of the folly of the world, these philosophers illustrate two kinds of inversion: the overturning of the world they deplore or mock and the movement from one attitude to the other. Democritus's laughter is not only a philosophical posture, but also a satirical force of inversion. There is, however, an important distinction between Bakhtin's understanding of the regenerative carnivalesque laughter and Democritus: while Bakhtin considers laughter as a social tool to undermine official institutions and overturn the social hierarchy, Democritus's laughter is not necessarily directed towards official culture.

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<sup>19</sup> As Vila-Baudry (2007) shows in her thesis the relationship between Democritus and Heraclitus is complex and Renaissance authors have taken sides with one or the other, or have combined them.



Figure 25: 'De omgekeerde wereld', Crispin de Passe (1574-1637) engraving, Rijksmuseum, <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.collect.161270>

In Crispin de Passe's engraving (Fig. 25), the relationship between the topos of the tears of Heraclitus and the laughter of Democritus on the one hand, and the topos of the world upside-down on the other is clearly visible: the globe in the centre of the picture is upside-down as indicated by the cross oriented towards the bottom of the image. Inside the globe, various scenes are depicted: people are fighting, others are taking part in a funeral or playing a game, a ship is sinking and lovers are embracing. These figures of the world upside-down are placed under the influence of Satan, who presides over the image, accompanied by a man wearing a fool's cap – like most characters within the globe – and indulging in earthly pleasures.

While this engraving delivers a moralising statement and deplores human suffering, other treatments of this topos are possible. In ‘In vitam humanam’, Alciato considers the troubles of the world and encourages both Heraclitus and Democritus to weep and laugh more, respectively, before wondering about his own reaction. (Fig. 26) As far as the topos of the world upside-down is concerned, it is clear that Democritus’s position encountered the most success in sixteenth-century France. Carnavalesque festivities can be considered as specific time periods when inversion is not only tolerated, but also encouraged and when Democritus’s laughter is the norm. The social consequences of such festivities are diverse: while they can lead to social upheaval as Leroy-Ladurie (1979) demonstrated, they can also be used as a tool of social control. This tension is clearly at work in the emblem tradition. As I will show throughout this section, carnivalesque or gross emblems allow for moralising as well as comic interpretations.



Figure 26: ‘In vitam humanam’ (Alciato 1531: E7r)

### 1.5.3 The Lower Body Stratum

#### **The Male Lower Body Stratum**

In my discussion of emblems pertaining to the male lower body stratum, I will concentrate on satyrs as they offer one of the most recognisable symbols of male sexual excess. Other examples of male grotesque bodies include full animalisations, as in Aneau's 'Danse mal seante à l'homme' (Aneau 1552a: 138) in which the improper man is compared to a dancing monkey or Coustau's 'Sur le pourtrait de Grillus étant encor pouceau. Le vice plaît au méchant' (Cousteau 1560: 224) which relates the story of Grillus, one of Ulysses's companions, who chose to remain a pig after being transformed by Circe.

Half-goat, half-man and related to Pan, satyrs can be found in a number of Alciato's emblems: 'Luxure' (Fig. 27), 'La vertu de Nature' (Fig. 28) and 'De soubdaine frayeur' (Fig. 29); in Aneau's 'Difference des raisonnables essences' (Fig. 30), 'Conversion des amours a l'estude des lettres' (Fig. 31), 'Toucher femme est mauvais' (Fig. 32); and in Coustau's 'Sur le satyre. N'appartenir à un tas d'artisans d'interpreter, ou parler des letres saintes, à leur tête.' (Fig. 33) Alciato's 'Luxure' discusses the hot, lustful and malodorous nature of the satyr and of rocket salad. The symbol, however, is more complex than it appears: as the emblem 'La vertu de Nature' explains, the satyr represents the union of the contradictory aspects of humankind 'C'est à savoir divine & raisonnable: & humaine au dessus. Bestiale, & diabolicque au dessoubz' (Alciato 1549: 119). The lower parts of the hybrid represent the base aspirations of humans: excessive focus on the material world and on sexuality.

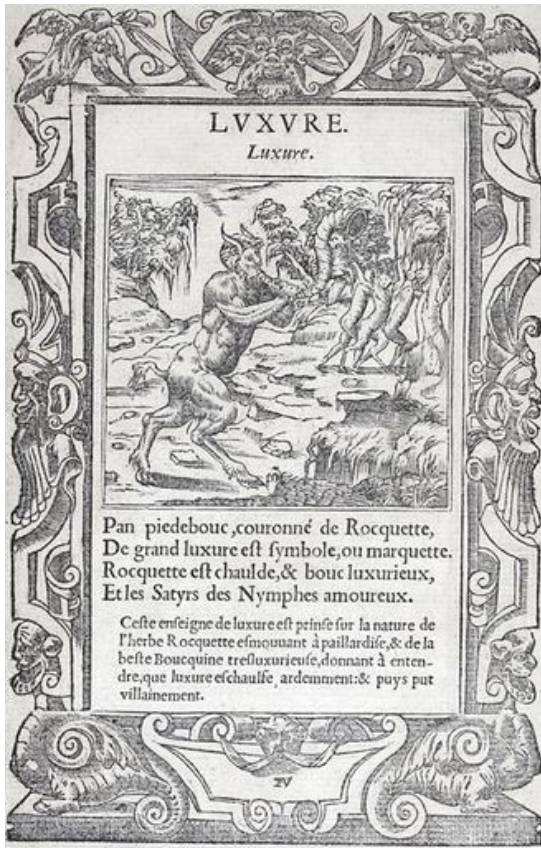


Figure 27: 'Luxure' (Alciato 1549: 94)

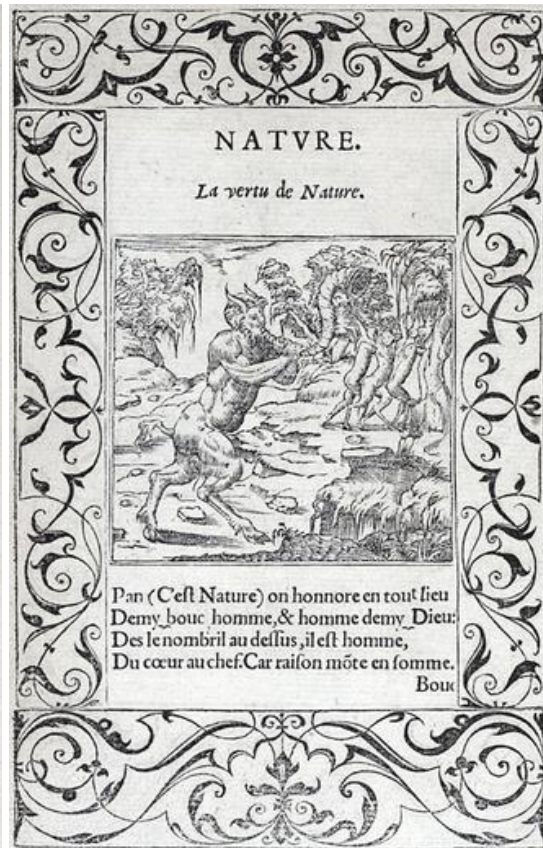


Figure 28: 'La vertu de Nature' (Alciato 1549: 118)

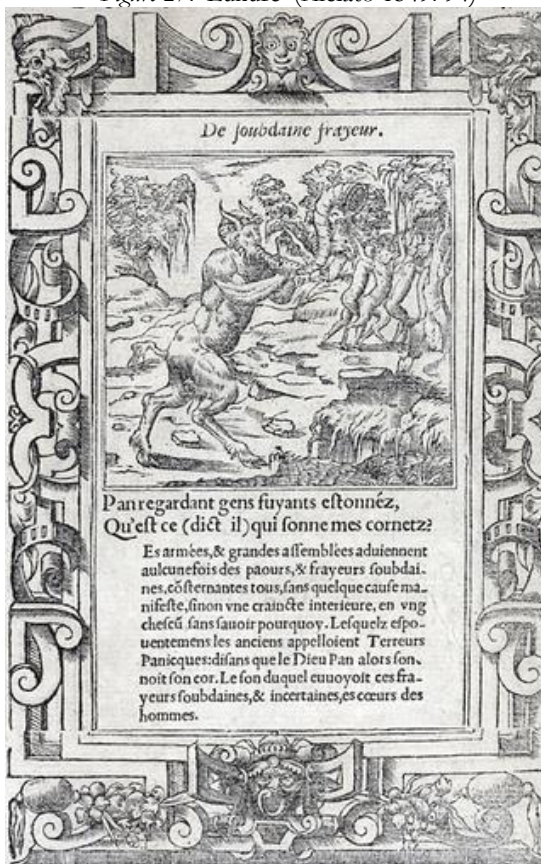


Figure 29: 'De soudaine frayeur' (Alciato 1549: 151)

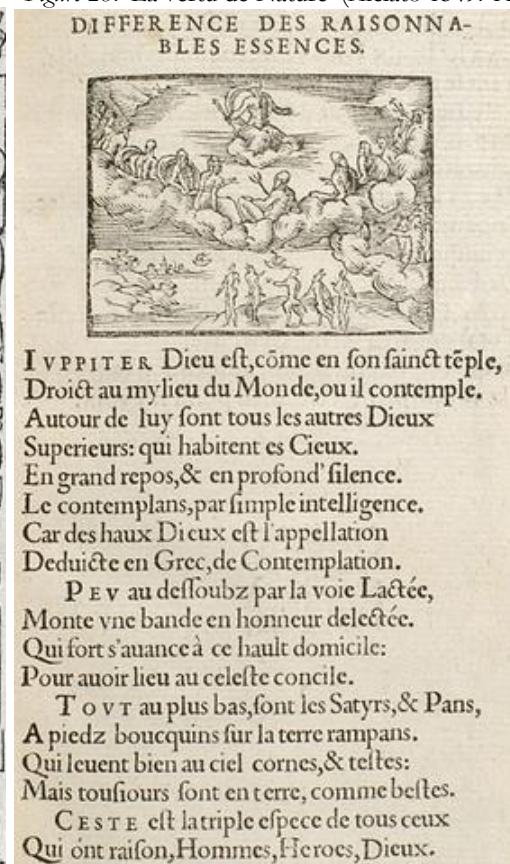


Figure 30: 'Difference des raisonnables essences' (Aneau 1552a: 78)

The notion that men are governed by contradictory impulses is particularly clear in Aneau's 'Difference des raisonnables essences' (Fig. 30), in which satyrs represent the lowest group of sentient beings:

Tout au plus bas, sont les Satyrs, & Pans,  
A piedz boucquins sur la terre rampans.  
Qui levent bien au ciel cornes, & testes:  
Mais tousjours son ten terre, comme bestes (Aneau 1552a: 23).

The notion of contradictory impulses at work in human nature is crucial in Rabelais's works. While Bakhtin observes a downward movement and constant carnivalesque debasing permeating Rabelais's fiction, Sozzi (1993) argues that Rabelais's characters are, like Aneau's satyrs, bound to earth but looking upwards, towards heaven. (See section 2.3). Aneau's 'La vertu de Nature' (Fig. 28) seems to consider both views together and reconcile these opposites: the satyr becomes 'Demy-bouc home, & home demy-Dieu' (Alciato 1549: 118).

The animalistic and sexual impulses of the satyr are not only signalled by his lower body, but also by his horns. Associated with fertility and considered as a phallic symbol, horns are a common attribute of fools. Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century literary examples, such as Gringore's *Sotie des Sotz escornéz* or Vaillant's *La Cornerie des anges de Paradis*, illustrate the importance and the ambiguity of horns or horned creatures (Cornilliat 1994: 310-321). In the *Sotz escornéz*, three fools rise up against the authority of the Prince by mimicking and mocking his language. The Prince answers in ballads, the first one of which is based on rhymes in *-corne*, *-corné*, *-corneront*. The *Cornerie des anges* is a versified account of the Apocalypse focusing on the various meanings of horns. The satyr's horns might also refer to the corresponding musical instrument. In 'De soubdaine frayeur' (Fig. 29) – based on Erasmus's adage 'Panicus casus' (III, vii, 3) – Alciato refers to Pan's invention of horns, the sound of which was said to have frightened people and beasts. Both Erasmus and Alciato relate Pan to *panic* terrors: 'irrational confusion of mind, [...] much like insane ravings' (CWE,

vol. 35: 215). Horns are therefore at the centre of a complex tapestry of meanings: Pan, with his animal, symbolic and musical horns, presides over the kind of confusion or ravings characteristic of the horned fools in the *Sotz escornéz*.



Figure 31: 'Conversion des amours a l'estude des lettres' (Aneau 1552a: 27)

As Aneau's 'Conversion des amours a l'estude des lettres' shows, Pan is also responsible for the invention of the panflute. (Fig. 31) More overtly sexual than the previous emblems, 'Conversion des amours a l'estude des lettres' is based on Syrinx's metamorphosis into reeds to escape Pan and the subsequent discovery of the panflute. According to Aneau, the flute represents the liberal arts, the satyr is an adolescent pursuing love rather than knowledge and the reed is a prostitute. The picture is particularly revealing in terms of inverted sexual acts: while one satyr is pursuing the nymph, another one is playing the flute in a position suggesting imminent zoophilic intercourse with a cow. The moral meaning of

the emblem – that one should pursue knowledge and arts rather than carnal love – is clearly undermined by the image of a satyr symbolically doing both at the same time.

Finally, two emblems – Aneau’s ‘Toucher femme est mauvais’ (Fig. 32) and Coustau’s ‘Sur le satyre’ (Fig. 33) – make use of a similar picture showing a satyr touching a fire. In both cases, the satyr represents a fool acting incongruously rather than an individual with excessive sexual impulses. In Aneau’s emblem, the satyr is rescued by a man, who brings him into his home. Taking the fire for the Sun, the satyr attempts to touch it and burns himself. Aneau interprets the anecdote as follows: the fire symbolises the woman, who looks attractive, but burns whoever touches her. For Coustau, the fire is more ambiguous: it represents the Gospel, but as soon as ignorant people try to interpret it ‘à leur sens’ it becomes the flames of hell. The satyr represents people whose acts are contrary to the proper order of things, not a wise fool, whose actions go against the order of the world to follow that of Heaven.



Figure 32: 'Toucher femme est mauvais' (Coustau 1560: 183)      Figure 33: 'Sur le satyre' (Aneau 1552a: 37)

### **The Female Licentious Body**

While emblematisers often represent the male grotesque body as monstrous and hybrid to highlight men's animalistic sexual impulse, they often present the female licentious body as an enigma to be deciphered. Such emblems focus on two main female sins: lust and greed. The most stereotypical embodiment of these two sins is the prostitute: typically, she entraps and controls men with promises of sexual pleasure before stealing their wealth. This basic cautionary tale, often told as an enigma, leads to a moral lesson: it is best to avoid having sexual intercourse with prostitutes and, to a certain extent, with women in general. The kind of sensual love depicted in these emblems is the exact opposite of spiritual love: it is based on greed rather than selflessness, focuses on the material body rather than the soul and leads to ruin rather than bliss. This inversion is clearly visible in the way the female licentious body is represented.

In 'Les Sirenes', Alciato uses the image of the sirens to symbolise worldly and sensual temptations. (Fig. 34) The picture shows three sirens with musical instruments trying to seduce sailors, while Ulysses listens to them, tied to the mast of his ship. The sirens' aim – to lure sailors to their death – is in direct contradiction with the harmonious music they produce. This emblem teaches to beware of 'regard, blancheur, & beaulté, & doux parler' because they can conceal ulterior and nefarious motives. The epigram begins by describing sirens as paradoxical creatures: 'sans plume oyseaux, filles sans jambe, & poisons sans museaulx, chantantz neantmoins de bouche à voix serenes'. The sirens offer a fragmented, hybrid and enigmatic representation of the female body, which is at the same time attractive, monstrous and lethal. As such, they belong to Antiphysie and, more generally, to the upside-down world of monsters and sensual temptations. (On Antiphysie, see section 2.3.1).



Figure 34: 'Les Sirenes' (Alciato 1549: 142)



Figure 35: 'Le tombeau d'une paillardre' (Alciato 1549: 96)

In another emblem, Alciato refers to the genre of the enigma: 'Le tombeau d'une Paillardre' depicts the tomb of a famous courtesan named Lais. (Fig. 35) On her tomb, which represents a lion chasing a sheep, her grotesque corpse is lying. The epigram, structured as a dialog of questions and answers, asks: 'Que signifie ung Belier escorché/Par la Lyonne au derriere accroché.' The lion represents the prostitute and the sheep, her lover, held by his genitalia. Two kinds of inversions are at work in this emblem: by virtue of negative transformative inversion the beautiful courtesan has become a rotting body; and functional inversion has turned the woman into a predator and her lover into a prey. This enigmatic representation of prostitution contributes to the view that lust inverts normal sexuality: women become predatory and dominant, while men are perceived as submissive and tied to the female licentious body.

This inverted dynamic is clearly visible in Sambucus's emblem 'Empta dolore voluptas'. (Fig. 36) The picture shows a man chained to a large peacock and forced to feed a

face hidden in its tail feathers. The peacock represents a prostitute ensnaring her client with outer beauty and hiding a greedy monster in her bottom. This emblem provides another example of the animalisation of prostitutes and of the inversion of sexual dynamics between women and men: the man is a slave of the prostitute's monstrous, lower body. Interestingly, the carnivalesque theme of the pursuit of physical pleasures related to wine (Bacchus) and women (Venus) is associated with death rather than renewal or fertility. Both 'Le tombeau d'une Paillardre' (Fig. 35) and 'Empta dolore voluptas' (Fig. 36) present the licentious and monstrous female body as a tool for inverting gender power relations and sexuality.



Figure 36: 'Empta dolore voluptas' (Sambucus 1567: 101)

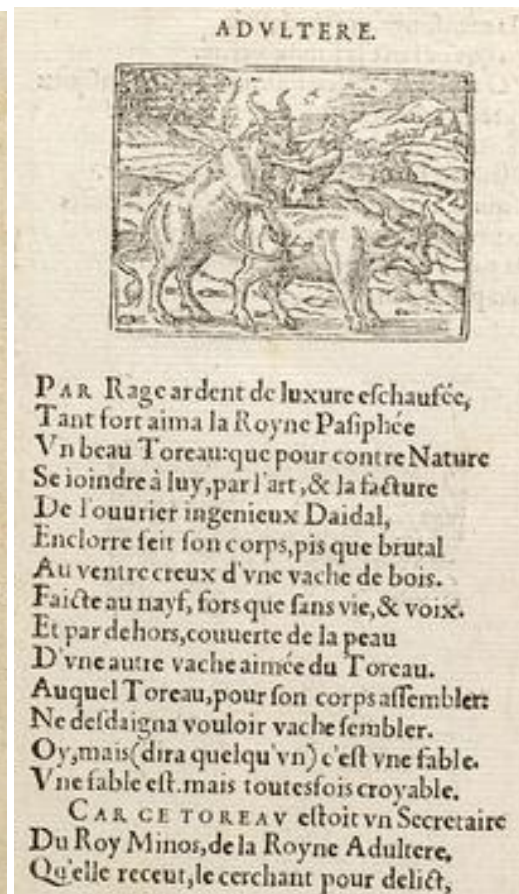


Figure 37: 'Adultere' (Aneau 1552a: 122)

The female body is not only assumed to lure and dominate men, but also to deceive them. In 'Adultere', Aneau provides two examples of women using animal disguise to cheat and act against the natural order of things. (Fig. 37) The picture, which shows a man helping a bull to mount a cow, refers to the story of Pasiphae, daughter of Helios and wife of Minos,

who had Daedalus build a hollow cow in which she could hide in order to trick a bull into mating with her. Another example of a woman disguising herself to satisfy her lust is Messalina, wife of the Emperor Claudius, who was said to prostitute herself under the name Lycisca, little wolf, which itself alludes to prostitution. Both these examples depict a woman using an animal disguise to transgress either the natural order of things to satisfy a zoophilic impulse or the social hierarchy to have extramarital sex with people of lower conditions. In the epigram, the rhymes associated with both women are representative of their characterisations: Pasiphae is 'eschauffée' and Messaline is 'maligne' a mix of 'Emperiere' and 'bordeliere'. As in the previous examples, the female licentious body is used as a tool to overturn the natural and social order of things. The animalisation of human beings (and women in particular), literal in the case of Pasiphae and metaphorical for Messalina, is a crucial element of the topos of the world upside-down. It denotes an overturning of the laws of nature and a descent into chaos. As I will show in sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4, more striking examples of animalisation and acts against nature can be found in D'Aubigné's *Tragiques*, in which they signify the civil and religious disorders of the time. (See also section 1.2.4.).

### **Scatological Emblems**

To conclude this section on carnivalesque emblems, I will examine scatological emblems. With examples from Montenay and Bèze, I will argue that polemical Huguenot emblem-books make use, on occasions, of scatological imagery in order to debase, attack or mock Catholics and their institutions. As I will show in more detail in section 1.6, late sixteenth-century French emblematists used the emblem-book to represent the turmoil and instabilities of the world or blame the people and institutions responsible for such disorders.



Figure 38: 'Converte oculors' (Montenay 1567-71: 76)

Montenay's emblem 'Converte oculos' is particularly representative of the interplay of multiple layers of signification in religious and polemical emblems. (Fig. 38) The picture shows a man digging a hole in the ground next to a fountain shaped like a Cupid-like statue urinating in a basin. The epigram explains that the fool is digging a well instead of drinking water from the ever-flowing fountain of Christ nearby. Perrier (1991: 78) observes that 'l'injonction *Converte oculos* opère à deux niveaux. Au niveau du représenté, pour le « fol » qui creuse sa fosse, comme appel à la conversion et, au niveau du dialogue avec le lecteur, comme appel à voir, sous le badinage, le pieux message.' There is another layer of representation at play in this emblem: the mystic fountain of Christ represented by a naked character urinating in a basin borders on scatology and mockery. The tension between the epigram, the picture and the religious message makes 'Converte oculos' a complex case of the use of scatology in religious emblems.



Figure 39: 'Embleme XXVI' (Bèze 1581: 266)

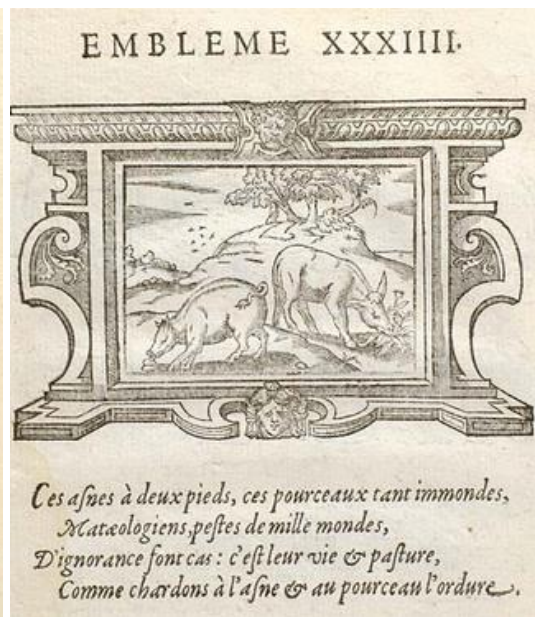


Figure 40: 'Embleme XXXIII' (Bèze 1581: 274)

More straightforward are Bèze's 'Embleme XXVI' and 'Embleme XXXIII'. 'Embleme XXVI' represents a man spitting at the sky. (Fig. 39) Obviously, the spit falls back on his face. As a result, the epigram designates him as a fool, more precisely as a 'vilain crachant contre les cieux' and as a 'profane vicieux'. 'Embleme XXXIII' depicts a donkey eating thistles and a pig eating excrement. (Fig. 40) The epigram associated to this picture compares both animals to Catholic Scholastics who, 'D'ignorance font cas: c'est leur vie & pasture, / Comme chardons à l'asne & au pourceau l'ordure.' In both cases, the faithless man or the representative of Catholicism is compared with something disgusting: a man spitting on his own face or a pig eating excrement. In both epigrams, the rhymes show that the emblematic debasement follows the target's overturning of the proper order of things: the fool's attack against heaven is against nature as indicated by the rhyme cieux/vicieux; and the behaviour of the pig and the donkey is also improper and against the world as the rhymes immondes/mondes and pasture/ordure highlight. These binary oppositions and the use of obscenity are central to the development of the Huguenot polemic against Catholicism.

## 1.6 EMBLEMS OF THE RELIGIOUS WARS

### 1.6.1 Introduction

The development of the French emblem tradition and its relationship with the topos of the world upside-down follow the change in the social, political and religious climate throughout the sixteenth century. The increasing importance of the topos of the world upside-down in the emblem tradition suggests that troubled times produce troubled texts and images. The relationship between the emblem tradition and its historical context is complex: because of its condensed and often enigmatic form, the emblem does not lend itself to the description of current events.<sup>20</sup> Rather, emblems represent the political and social instability caused by civil wars, lay blame on the people perceived as responsible for, or as profiting from, conflicts.

Emblems pertaining to the French religious wars can be divided into two main categories: descriptive emblems, often drawing from classical allusions or adages to depict disorder and upheaval; and polemical emblems, which are less frequently inspired by classical culture and focus on attacking or debasing a specific target. In both cases, depictions of the religious wars hinge on the topos of the world upside-down: descriptive emblems present the world as out of bounds, returned to primeval chaos, self-destructive and inverted, while polemical emblems point out that the people responsible for the conflicts are inverted beings with topsy-turvy behaviours.

I will show how the emblematisers' treatment of conflicts evolved throughout the sixteenth century. The main shift occurs after the 1560s, with the beginning of the religious wars and the rise of the religious emblem book as a genre. While the first generation of

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<sup>20</sup> The supposed exceptions to this principle can be obscure. The historical allusions to precise events can be based on puns, which renders their interpretation difficult. See, for instance, *Embleme XLIIII* (Bèze 1581: 284).

French emblematisers follow Alciato and allude to well-known classical and medieval topoi to describe the social disorders, Huguenot emblematisers like Montenay and Bèze refer to contemporary polemical pamphlets and prints, thus making their emblems more aggressive and more topical. The kind of inversion at play also shifts from the depiction of an unstable and chaotic world, subjected to topsy-turvy rules and discord, to the debasement of the Catholic Church, whether with symbols such as the cooking pot or through the animalisation of its ministers.

## 1.6.2 Social Disorders

### **The Ship of State**

The image of the ship of state provides a striking example of the shifts occurring throughout the sixteenth century in the representation of political turmoil. This theme is based on a double metaphor: the sea as a representation of the instability of the world and the ship as a symbol of the state. This topos can be traced back to Brant's *The Ship of Fools* published in 1494 and the medieval tradition of the ship of fools. *The Ship of Fools* combines verses and woodcut prints to mock one hundred and twelve kinds of fools sailing down the Rhine in an imaginary ship. An earlier poem by Van Oestvoren, *De Blaauwe Schuit* (the blue boat) from 1413, makes abundant use of the same image (Bénévent 2012). Also worth mentioning are Bosch's paintings the *Allegory of Gluttony and Lust* (Fig. 41) and *The Ship of Fools* (Fig. 42), which represent a ship of fools and fools pretending to be on a ship respectively. Brant and Bosch are especially important for the development of the emblem book tradition since they provide a widely available model of illustrated verses (Rossiter 1973). In the prologue of *The Ship of Fools*, Brant explains the main purpose of his book: to describe each kind of folly in order to help the reader realising the extent of their own folly. Alciato and the French

emblematisers move away from the self-reflexive and moralising aim of this theme to comment, instead, on the instability and turmoil of the state.



Figure 41: 'The Allegory of Gluttony and Lust', Bosch, H. (c. 1500), oil painting, Yale University Art Gallery.



Alciato's emblem 'Spes proxima', which appears from the 1536 Parisian edition, represents a ship sailing in a stormy sea and exposed to contrary winds while two stars shine in the sky. (Fig. 43) In the epigram, the parallel between the ship and the state is explicit. The commentary from 1584 interprets the stormy sea as a representation of the Italian Wars and the two stars as Charles V and Francis I of France signing the Truce of Nice. Interestingly, only the 1584 Parisian edition of the *Emblemata* does not depict the two stars in this emblem. Whether 'Spes proxima' is to be understood within the scope of the Italian Wars or as a wider moral lesson, its tone is undoubtedly optimistic. Even though the sea looks stormy, the ship is not led by fools, nor is it sinking.



Figure 43: 'Spes proxima' (Alciato 1536: E7v)

'Le monde instable' from Corrozet's *Hecatomgraphie* appears only four years after the 1536 edition of the *Emblemata*, but, already, the tone and scope of the emblem have evolved. (Fig. 44) The picture depicts a man who drifts on a piece of land holding a staff on one hand

and a globe on the other. In the distance, another inhabited island drifts on a stormy sea. Despite the absence of ship, this emblem still alludes to the tradition of the ship of fools since it also uses the sea to signify the instability of the world. The commentary is divided into three parts: the first one focuses on the *ubi sunt* motif to introduce the theme of impermanence and instability; the second and third parts show how this theme applies to the world and to mankind respectively. Rather than encouraging self-reflection and pointing out folly in the world, Corrozet provides a moralising statement on uncertainty and the constant imminence of disaster. However, the danger and instability threatening the world – the ‘vague prochaine/Qui ne tasche qu’a l’asbimer’ (Corrozet 1540: G6) – is only hypothetical.

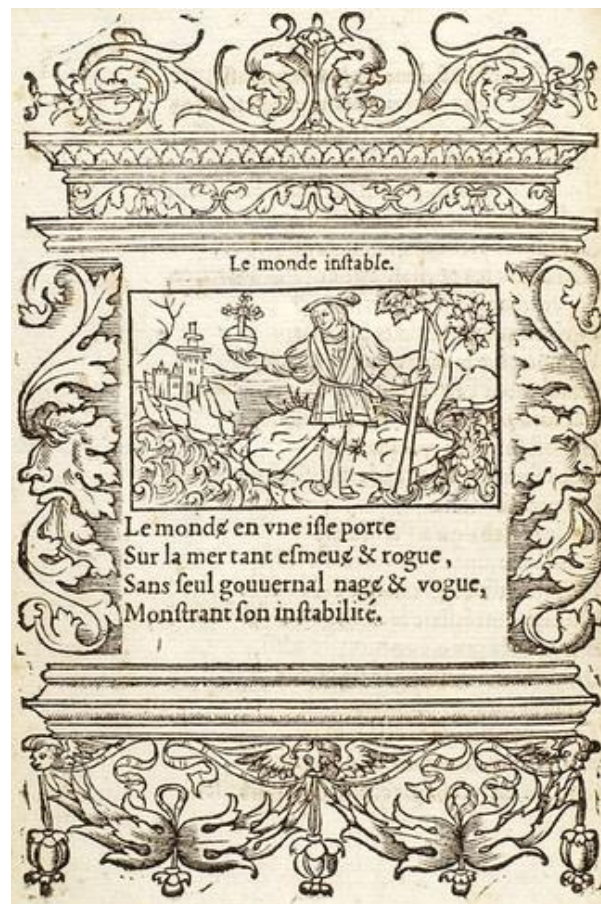


Figure 44: ‘Le monde instable’ (Corrozet 1540: G5)

More explicit is Bèze’s *Vrais Pourtraits* published in Geneva in 1580. Bèze is well-known for being a Calvinist leader. Several polemical works are also attributed to him, such as *Les Satyres chrestiennes de la cuisine papale* and *La Comédie du Pape malade et tirant à sa fin*. With

the *Vrais Pourtraits*, Bèze follows the footsteps of Montenay in order to make a polemical, Huguenot emblem-book. The religious context of Bèze's *Vrais Pourtraits*, however, is not as explicit as in Montenay's *Emblemes*: the anti-Catholic stance of the *Vrais Pourtraits* is often implied, hidden under the guise of seemingly moralising emblems. The picture of 'Embleme XLIII' – a ship sailing in stormy waters – is close to Alciato's 'Spes proxima', but their tone could not be more different. (Fig. 44) While Alciato seeks to convey hope in times of adversity, Bèze links back to the theme of the ship of fools:

Voyant cest enragé faire noyer soy-mesme  
 Et les siens, en perçant la nef qui les soustient :  
 Tu voids, hélas ! Au vif ceste misere extreme  
 Du temps auquel le monde aujourd'hui s'entretient (Fig. 45).

The epigram rehearses an important theme throughout the *Vrais Pourtraits*: that of the self-destructive fool harming himself through his foolish actions. Bèze compares these fools to the people who commit crimes against God or his servants and harm themselves in so doing. In 'Embleme XLIII', however, Bèze's target is more specific. Since the *Vrais Pourtraits* were published in 1580, it is a reasonable assumption that Bèze was criticising Henri III in this emblem. Under this interpretation, the king is portrayed as a fool working towards his own destruction and that of his people.<sup>21</sup> More specifically, the phrase: 'ceste misere extreme/Du temps auquel le monde aujourd'hui s'entretient' designates a world out of bounds and on the verge of ruin. In this emblem, Bèze appears to blame Henri III for the social and political turmoil in France. Elsewhere in the *Vrais Pourtraits* and in other works, as I will show later in section 1.6.3 and in chapter 3, he attacks the Catholic Church and the Pope.

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<sup>21</sup> On the significance of shipwrecks, see Oliver 2014.



Figure 45: 'Embleme XLIII' (Bèze 1581: 283)

### Discord

I now turn to how French emblematisers identify discord as one of the main causes of the country's instability. Discord is a crucial notion for Renaissance authors and emblematisers. Inherited from the Roman goddess *Discordia*, discord designates disputes, dissensions and disagreement and is closely related to the world upside-down. As I will argue in section 4.4.5, Catherine de' Medici, for instance, is accused of overturning the world by turning concord into discord. In Rabelais's retelling of Calcagnini's tale of *Antiphysis* in the *Quart Livre*, discord is one of the children of *Antiphysis*, that is to say anti-nature, and a clear manifestation of the world upside-down. (See section 2.3.1). Finally, as I will show in sections 4.2 and 4.3, the interplay between discord and concord is central to the principle of *concordia discors*, or the harmony of the contraries, and connects, especially in Ronsard's *Discours sur les misères de ce temps*, aesthetic, cosmological and socio-political concerns (See: Quainton 1996).

For early French emblematisers, discord is responsible for the turmoil in France. Even though some people benefit from it, discord is not identified with anyone in particular, but is associated with inversion and the world upside-down.

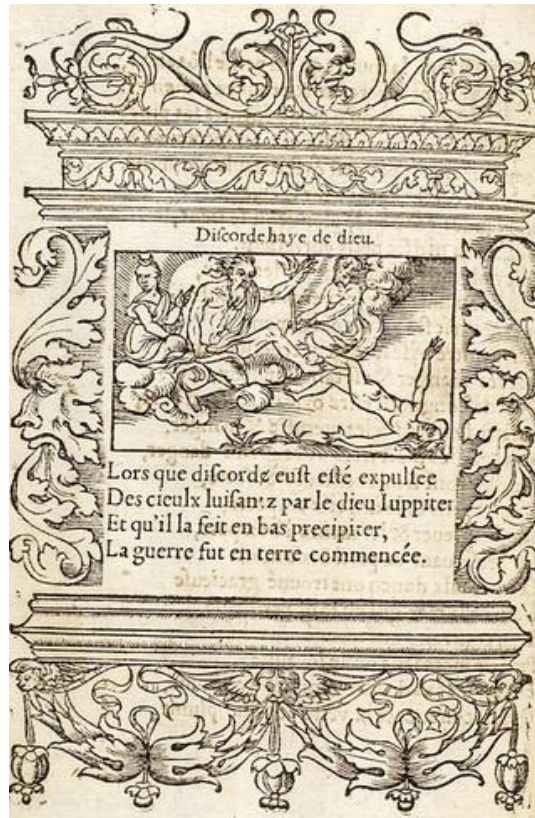


Figure 46: 'Discorde haye de Dieu' (Corrozet 1540: E6v)

In Corrozet's *Hecatographie*, discord appears as *Discordia*, the Roman goddess responsible for dissensions and wars. The emblem 'Discorde haye de dieu' describes how Jupiter threw *Discordia* out of heaven in order to preserve it from ruin. (Fig. 46) As a result, disputes and wars started on earth. This emblem is based on two kinds of inversion: the social disorders created by *Discordia* and the paradoxical conclusion stating that, since *Discordia* was banished to earth until the end of time, 'Nous debvrions doncq nostre mort souhaiter,/Pour les beaulx lieux de la paix habiter' (Corrozet 1540: E7r). For Corrozet *Discordia* is responsible for the rise of social troubles, most notably, the disruption of family and political relations, judicial excess and wars. Even though *Discordia* is described in eschatological and cosmological terms – it will exist 'tant de temps que ce monde sera' and

is powerful enough to make ‘le ciel tresbucher en ruyne’ – it does not point towards the kind of eschatological second inversion predicted in D’Aubigné’s *Tragiques*. (See section 4.2.4).

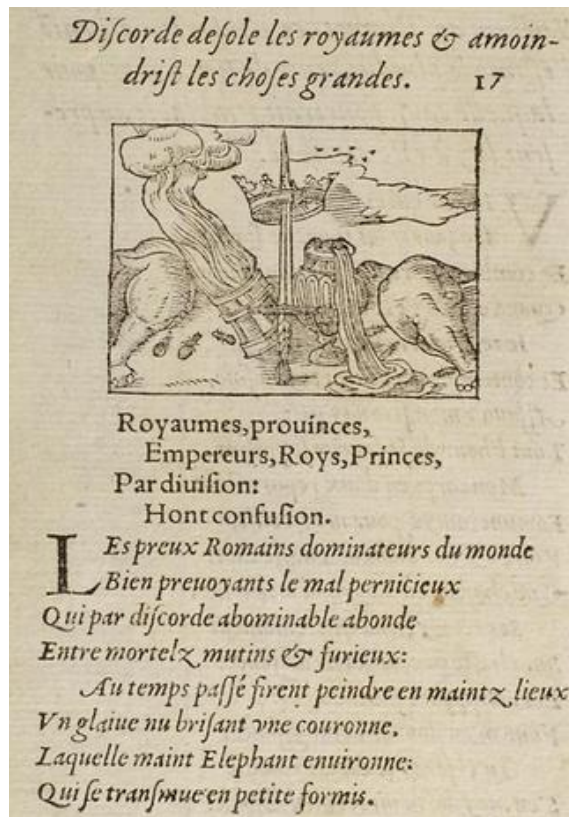


Figure 47: ‘Discorde desole les royaumes...’ (Gueroult 1550: 46)

The theme of discord can also be found in Gueroult’s *Le Premier livre des emblemes*. Published in Lyon in 1550, Gueroult’s *Premier livre* – the first French emblem book to feature the word ‘emblème’ in its title – contains twenty four emblems and has been published only once. The emblems ‘Par concorde choses petites croissent’ (Gueroult 1550: 36) and ‘Discorde desole les royaumes & amoindrist les choses grandes’ (Gueroult 1550: 46) are related to each other: the first depicts two winged snake intertwined on a stick and ants turning into elephants, while the second shows a sword breaking a crown, one pot from which a liquid is pouring and another one from which smoke is rising, and elephants are turning into ants near each pot. (Fig. 47) The elements of the emblem ‘Discorde desole les royaumes’ are to be read like a rebus: the combination of ‘grand hanap duquel sort un flambeau’ and the ‘vaisseau comblé d’eau’ represents discord; the sword breaking the crown

illustrates the first part of the motto ‘desole les royaumes’; and the elephants turning into ants depict the second part of the motto ‘amoindrist les choses grandes’.

This emblem clearly demonstrates the relationship between discord, inversion and social disorders. In this regard, the rhyme ‘Par division/Hont confusion’ is significant and summarises the main argument of the emblem. As in the *Hecatombgraphie*, the emblem alludes to classical culture. Rather than telling the origin story of discord, Gueroult’s emblem points to the Roman Empire as a model for interpreting sixteenth-century social turmoil. I will suggest in section 4.3, especially with regards to cosmological poetry, that the Roman civil wars, as recounted in Lucan’s *Civil War*, influenced the perception and literary interpretation of sixteenth-century social troubles, including the French religious wars (Bailbé 1980).



Figure 48: ‘In divites publico malo’ (Alciato 1546: A3r) Figure 49: ‘Embleme XLIIII’ (Perrière 1544: G1v)

Other examples of early French emblems pertaining to discord are Alciato’s ‘In divites publico malo’ (Fig. 48) and La Perrière’s corresponding emblem (Fig. 49), from the 1546 Venice edition of the *Emblemata* and the *Theatre des bons engins*, respectively. These emblems are based on Erasmus’s adage ‘Anquillas captare’ (III, vi, 79) (to hunt eels), which

means ‘to stir up trouble for the sake of a private advantage’ (*CWE*, vol. 35, 165). According to Erasmus, ‘The metaphor arises from the fact that those who hunt eels catch nothing if the water remains still, only when they stir the water up and down and thoroughly muddy it do they catch them’ (*CWE*, vol. 35, 165). Erasmus observes that this adage applies to ‘certain princes’, who ‘sow discord between states or stir up war on some pretext’ for their personal gain. Alciato’s followers watered down Erasmus’s political criticism. The emblem is directed against people profiting from disorders, rather than against creating them. In the 1549 Lyon edition of the *Emblemata*, Aneau’s translation of the epigram counts princes as victims, rather than instigators, of the turmoil: ‘ilz [les pêcheurs en eau trouble] troublent la paix, & la tranquillité des Princes, & du people, pour mieulx piller, & myeulx couvrir leurs larrecins.’ Only in Mignault’s translation, published in Paris in 1584, does the epigram mention ‘guerre intestine’ explicitly.

Finally, Sambucus’s ‘Intestinae simultates’, first published in 1564 and translated in 1567 by Grévin, gives a metaphorical account of the relationship between discord and civil war. (Fig. 50) In this emblem, civil war is described as a fire and discord as oil sustaining the fire. As evidence of social turmoil, Sambucus mentions fellow citizens and family members turning against each other: ‘le païs affligé par ses propres gens-darmes/Et la famille aussi pleine de tel discord’ (Sambucus 1567: 211). Other emblematisers depict a world turned upside-down by social, political or religious turmoil, but the notion of a country turning against itself as something going against the natural order of things and pertaining to the world upside-down attains its utmost expression in D’Aubigné’s *Tragiques*. (sections 4.2.3; 4.2.4; 4.3.2).



Figure 50: 'Intestinae simultates' (Sambucus 1564: 211)

### 1.6.3 Polemic and Inversion

#### Secular Emblems

The topos of the world upside-down is crucial to the description of social and political disruptions in France. Before examining how religious emblematicists used it for polemical purposes, I will study the importance of this topos in earlier, descriptive emblems. What makes the topos of the world upside-down particularly effective in this context is its versatility, as it connects the cosmic, social, religious and political orders. The examples I will consider, taken from Aneau's *Imagination Poétique* (1552a) and Cousteau's *Pegme* (1560), are based on classical culture, which allows for a degree of distantiation from their subject matter. As a result, each emblem uses the topos of the world upside-down to describe and deplore the state of society, without incorporating the polemical tone of later works.



Figure 51: 'Sans justice est confusion' (Aneau 1552a: 67)

The emblem 'Sans justice est confusion', from Aneau's *Imagination poetique*, represents the world in a state of primeval chaos and confusion caused by the warring elements. (Fig. 51) Such a state corresponds to the condition of the world before its organisation by God, or after the end of time, and evokes a world turned upside-down. The theme of the warring elements – borrowed from Ovid – is an obvious subset of the theme of the world upside-down: 'Et si tous les Principes Elemens/Se combatoyent en divers meslemens/[...] Le Monde estoit confus, & retourné'. The theme of the world being overturned and brought back to a state of primeval chaos is common in apocalyptic epic poetry. (See section 4.3.3). Aneau makes this connection abundantly clear in this emblem, but he uses it to praise and reinforce the authorities rather than for polemical purposes. For Aneau, the confusion of the

world is conditional upon the lack of a ‘Grand Seigneur’, ‘Juste Roy, du Monde Gouverneur’, who can govern the state and distribute justice.



Figure 52: ‘Senatus Heliogabali’ (Coustau 1555: 8)

Coustau’s emblems ‘Senatus Heliogabali; In iudices γυναικοκρατούμενους, & uxorio imperio viuentes’ (Le Senat d’Heliogabale; Contre ceux qui vivent souz l’Empire de leurs femmes) (Fig. 52) and ‘In tumulum Chironis; Optimum ad felicitatem quàm ocissimè aboleri’ (Sur le tombeau de Chiron; Abus du monde) (Fig. 53) are explicit in their treatment of the topos of the world upside-down in relation to social instabilities. Since they criticise the current political, religious and judicial authorities explicitly, these emblems mark the transition between the descriptive and polemical use of the topos of the world upside-down in the French emblematic tradition.

In 'Senatus Heliogabali', Coustau targets the king and the judicial system. (Fig. 52) The picture depicts a crowned woman on a throne, holding a sword and surrounded by other women on each side. The epigram criticises a judge for being under the thumb of his wife and the philosophical narration retraces a short overview of the political influence of women throughout history. After briefly mentioning the Amazons, Coustau recounts the story of a Roman emperor from the third century, Heliogabalus or Elagabalus, known for having allowed his mother and grandmother into the Senate and for having created a women's senate known as the *Senaculum*. The author then states that such inverted forms of government outlived Heliogabalus, so much so that foreign people mock the French by calling them 'Gynaicocratoumenes' that is to say governed by women. The female influence on the French government is indirect and proceeds from the submission of the men in power to their wives.

This emblem provides the embryo of two central themes of later polemical pamphlets and prints: the effeminate ruler and the female government. Both of these themes are related to the inversion of the gender hierarchy and what was perceived as the natural order of things. Only in a world turned upside-down would women rule over men or parents favour daughters more than sons. Coustau's observation that the French were being labelled as 'Gynaicocratoumenes' may refer to the influence of Diane de Poitiers on Henri II. In any case, it clearly prefigures the kind of criticism that will be directed against Catherine de' Medici from the 1560s (as shown in section 4.4.5). Such polemic depicts a society at odds with the principles of Salic law preventing women from acceding to the throne.

However, more than a political matter, the female influence over men of power pervades all aspects of society: legal decisions can be overturned overnight, fathers disinherit their sons, and men become increasingly effeminate. The feminisation of the ruling class – especially the king – is an important theme of the polemic against Henri III in the late

sixteenth century. Such polemic focuses on gender inversion, cross-dressing, homosexuality and hermaphroditism as indications of perversion (see section 4.4.5). The emblem ‘Senatus Heliogabali’ does not describe the feminisation of magistrate or judges in terms of perversion. Rather, it derives from the growing influence of their wives ‘au vouloir desquelles ilz rapportent toutes leurs cogitations.’ In conclusion, this emblem portrays women as a force of inversion overturning political and family hierarchies as well as turning their husbands into females.

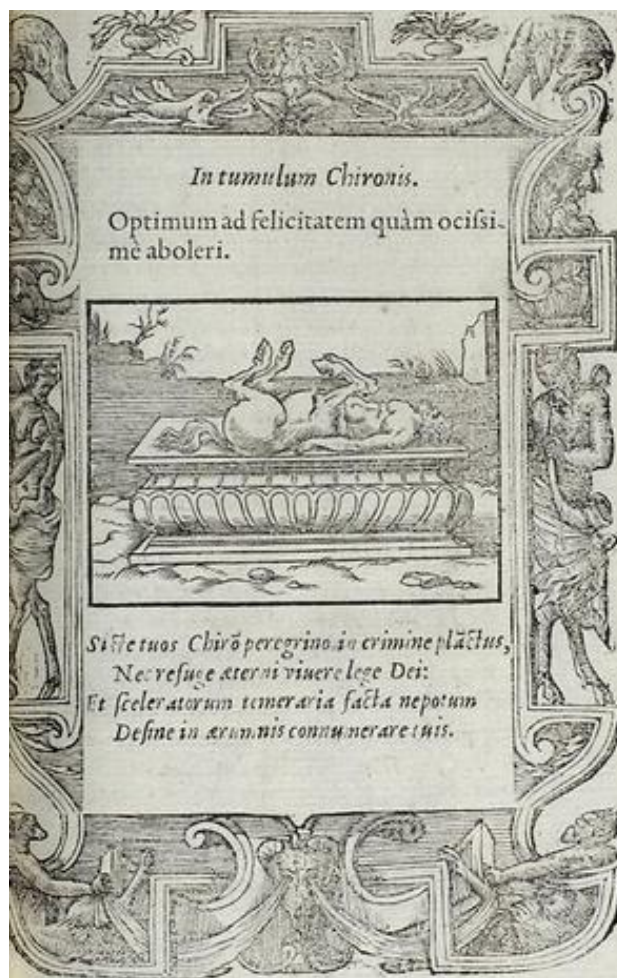


Figure 53: ‘In tumulum Chironis’ (Coustau 1555: 15)

The emblem ‘In tumulum Chironis’ offers a wider perspective on the world upside-down and directly references the social, political and religious troubles of the times. (Fig. 53) The motto and the picture refers to the story of the centaur Chiron, who willingly gave up immortality. The epigram, addressed to Chiron, attempts to explain why the centaur decided

to die, despite being blessed with immortality. A significant number of emblems present death as a force of inversion that either overturns, or restores the natural order of things.<sup>22</sup>

Coustau's 'In tumultum Chironis', however, focuses on Chiron's knowledge of future calamities to explain the centaur's sacrifice:

Estce pource que par esprit de divination, il prevoyoit long tems devant les empoisonnemens, adulteres, volleries, homicides, faucetés, & suppositions de testamens de sa posterité, & que le tems venoit, ou la vertu seroit ancelle du profit, la justice de l'iniquité ? Etoitce pour fuir les meurs & indignité de vie de ceux qui violeroient la religion par lubricité, la justice par argent, & le comerce des hommes par deception & fraude ? (Coustau 1560: 34).

The epigram and the philosophical narration offer a list of sins against the proper order of the world and adapt the doctrine of the wisdom of folly by asserting that, in a world upside-down, being called a fool means to be wise and being wicked provides success and advantages. Coustau's depiction of the topsy-turvy world focuses particularly on judges and on the Catholic clergy. The attack against the justice claims that 'ceux qui manient la chose publique ont apporté aux jugemens des proces toute paresse, avarice, corruption faveur & ambition.' Accusations of laziness, greed, corruption and arrogance are common against the justice system. In Rabelais's posthumous *Cinquième Livre*, Grippe-Minaud and the Chats-fourrez perfectly embody these characteristics. As I will show in section 2.3.3, the Rabelaisian satire of the justice system, especially Grippe-Minaud and the Chats-fourrez, is connected to the emblematic tradition. Pellerin's illustrations for the *Cinquième Livre*, for instance, are related to emblems: his drawing of Pantagruel and his companions visiting the Isle Sonnante presents similarities with Montenay's emblem 'Sic fraudibus scatent eorum domus' (Fig. 58) and his drawing of Grippe-Minaud strongly resembles Aneau's 'Amphilepsis'. (Fig. 68)

Coustau's attack against the Catholic clergy recuperates conventional criticism of the Church : 'ceux qui se nomment Crètiens ont par usure, dol & tromperie, bref par l'ennemie

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<sup>22</sup> See, for instance, the emblem pertaining to the story of Cupid and Death inadvertently exchanging their arrows in Alciato (1531: D3v) and subsequent editions. See also Corrozet 1540: D7v; Aneau 1552a: 75; Sambucus 1564: 116.

de toutes vertus avarice détruit la pieté & charité d'entre les homes.' The Latin version criticises the clergy and the Pope more directly by accusing them of simony: 'An quod & occidui testata piacula cleri,/Et positos noras munere pontifices?' ('Or because you knew of the attested sins of Western clerics,/And of Popes put in office for money?'). Coustau's attacks against the Church and the clergy are based on the topos of the world upside-down. So-called Christians destroy the virtues they are supposed to uphold: they replace truth with lies, poverty with greed, humility with arrogance and virtue with sin. Such criticism fundamentally diverges from later religious polemic since it focuses on the behaviour of the clerics instead of debasing their belief system. To conclude, Coustau touches upon the central themes of the polemic of the French religious wars and points towards a polemical tradition in the making, but he presents them in a less violent and more philosophical way than later polemical works.

### **Religious Emblems**

Socio-political and religious disorders occupy an important place in Protestant emblem books. Montenay's *Emblemes* and Bèze's *Vrais Pourtraits*, for instance, provide examples of strongly polemical emblems commenting on the contemporary upheaval. These emblems differ from earlier, more descriptive, emblems of social disorders in several ways: they involve blame and praise more directly; they refer to other contemporary polemical works rather than linking back to classical sources; their tone is more violent and their use of the topos of the world upside-down seeks to debase the Catholic Church rather than to show how inverted society has become.

With regards to the overturning of the world, the basic argument of the Huguenot polemic designates the Pope and his clerics as agents of inversion and sometimes advocates a second, divine inversion to restore the proper order of things. I will show that the Huguenot emblematic tradition modifies this narrative by conflating both inversions: in this

respect, by overturning the world, the enemies of God provoke their own demise. The higher degree of complexity of polemical themes in emblem books may be explained by their audience, much narrower than that of *placards* or polemical morality plays, which will be the topic of chapter 3. In this section, I will examine representations of the world in a state of upheaval, emblems referring to the polemical image of the cooking pot and animal clerics.



Figure 54: 'Coinquinat' (Montenay 1567-71: 21)

### The World in Turmoil

The first set of emblems I will examine comes from Montenay's *Emblemes* and represents two ways in which the world is defiled or destroyed as a consequence of moral or religious topsy-turvy behaviours or because of the restoration of the proper order of the world by virtue of divine inversion. The first emblem, 'Coinquinat', represents a woman with horns

or large ears holding a burning torch behind her back and pouring a liquid over a globe. (Fig. 54) Since she turns her back to the light, the woman personifies ignorance. Far from the positive characterisation of the *morosophe* or divine fool, Ignorance is described as ‘crasse’, ‘malitieuse’, ‘vitieuse’ and ‘odieuse’ in order to establish her relationship with filth as suggested by the motto, and with sin or vice. Of particular interest are the last four lines of the epigram:

Des apostats est ceste vitieuse  
 Le vray pourtraict. Car pour remplir leur panse,  
 Rejettans Christ, font la voix tenebreuse,  
 Souillans le monde & eux par leur bobance. (Fig. 54)

These lines explain the second level of interpretation of this emblem: the woman can also be understood as a representation of ungodly people especially Catholics or atheists. The woman’s rejection of light symbolises the ungodly people’s rejection of Christ, and the defilement of the world is a condition of their material wealth. The Catholics’ aim is to fill their belly and they do so through their *bobance*, which can both designate a feast and arrogance or pride (*DMF*, s. v. ‘bobance’). The word *bobance* probably derives from the Old French *boban*, meaning ‘pride’ or ‘arrogance’, and from the onomatopoeic radical *bob-* indicating a swelling. Thus, Montenay characterises ungodly people as bloated, from both a spiritual and a carnal point of view as the rhyme *panse/bobance* clearly shows. The upside-down cooking pot held by the woman in the picture also evokes the baseness and the swollen belly of ungodly people. Even though the allusion may seem more oblique, the cooking pot can also represent the institution of the Church itself, as I will briefly touch upon later in this chapter and examine in more detail in chapter 3.

The next emblem I will study, ‘Si iam accensus’, represents a hand coming out of the clouds and hitting a globe on fire with a book. (Fig. 55) The epigram sheds light on the image: the book, which stands for the Gospel being preached throughout the world, sets the world alight. The fire, compared to a double-edged sword, is more difficult to interpret: on the one

hand, it purifies gold and silver; and on the other, it consumes straw and ‘estule’, which may designate the post to which a convict is bound (*DMF*, s. v. ‘estule’). The basic argument is that the destruction brought about by divine intervention has two purposes: to purify the worthy and to put an end to the damned. The image of the Gospel as a book-sword had already been used in the print ‘Le renversement de la grand marmite’, but, as I will show in section 3.3.3, it was not described as double-edged and its main purpose was to tip over or break the papal cooking pot.



Figure 55: ‘Si iam accensus’ (Montenay 1567-71: 54)

### Polemical Cooking Pots

Another example of the emblematic appropriation of popular polemical tropes is the use of the papal cooking pot in Bèze's and Montenay's emblem books. The trope of the papal cooking pot is one of the central images of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Calvinist polemic and the topic of chapter 3. So much so that it has also been recuperated and overturned by Catholic polemicists. The cooking pot works on several layers: it evokes medieval representations of Hell and, more specifically, the punishment for greed; it can also be considered as a parodic liturgical vessel or refer to the material aspect of eating, cooking and, in some cases, cannibalism, particularly in relation to transubstantiation; finally, the shape of the upside-down cooking pot points towards the bell, another point of contention between Huguenots and Catholics. Because of its popularity, the trope of the papal cooking pot was appropriated by Catholic polemicists. (See section 3.5). Beauxamis, in particular, published two polemical books revolving around the cooking pot: *Resolution sur certains Pourtraictz et libelles intitulez du nom de Marmitte* (1562) and *La Marmitte renversee et fondue* (1572), in which he attempts to overturn the papal cooking pot trope by contrasting it with the occurrences of cooking pots in the Scriptures.

The examples of polemical cooking pots in the emblem tradition that I will examine slightly diverge from the other manifestations of this trope. In both cases, the cooking pot symbolises the suffering that separates the faithful from the ungodly. Rather than being pictured as a debasing metaphor for the Church, the cooking pot becomes an instrument of God's will. In Bèze's 'Embleme XXXV', the devil is tending a fire beneath a cooking pot while a disembodied hand is pouring water from heaven into it. (Fig. 56) According to the epigram, the cooking pot represents the fate of the saints who are tormented by the devil

and protected by God. The devil's effort is self-defeating since the more he tends the fire, the more he will reveal the saints.<sup>23</sup>



*Figure 56: 'Emblema XXXV' (Bèze 1581: 275)*

Montenay makes a similar argument in 'Sic demum purgabitur': this emblem represents a man pumping bellows into a forge in which stands a cooking pot, while a hand from heaven is brandishing a sphere mounted on a stick. (Fig. 57) As opposed to Beauxamis's idea, in this emblem the cooking pot is not melted, but is the place in which the faithless people are melted and only the faithful remain. When polemical religious emblem books use the image of the cooking pot, they present the cooking pot as the suffering that creates martyrdom.

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<sup>23</sup> On martyrs in Bèze, see Coates 1992: 85-117.



Figure 57: 'Sic demum purgabitur' (Montenay 1567-71: 80)

The religious emblem tradition does not seem to take advantage of the multiple levels of signification of the cooking pot, but presents it as an instrument of torture. The purpose of these emblems also fundamentally diverges from that of the polemic using the papal cooking pot trope: rather than attempting to mock and debase the Catholic clerics and institutions, these emblems argue that the persecutions endured by Protestants are hidden blessings that will purify them. The inversion at play is more subtle: suffering becomes positive, Satan's efforts are self-defeating and serve God's purpose, and persecution leads to purification and salvation.

### **Animal Clerics**

My next set of examples comes from Montenay's *Emblemes*: the emblems 'Ex parvo satis' (Fig. 58) and 'Sic fraudibus scitent eorum domus' (Fig. 59) both allude to other contemporary polemical works to debase Catholics. In both emblems, the topos of the world upside-down is central to the satire. In 'Sic fraudibus scitent eorum domus' – a direct quotation from Jeremiah – the picture shows a flock of birds let loose by a hand coming from heaven, while a hunter and his dog set nets and cages on the ground. (Fig. 58) The epigram explains the terms of the metaphor: the flock of birds represents the faithful and

the hunter symbolises the wicked trying to lure, trap or hurt them. The first four lines directly refer to the topos of the world upside-down:

Comme d’oiseaux les cages sont remplies,  
Ainsi aussi les maisons des pervers,  
D’iniquitez, fraudes, fureurs, folies,  
Remplies sont troublans tout l’univers. (Fig. 58)

By comparing the houses of the wicked with birdcages, Montenay seems to allude to Rabelais’s posthumous *Cinquième Livre* and to the episode of the Isle Sonnante, which was published separately. Published between 1562 and 1563, the *Isle Sonnante* consists in one of the most overtly polemical episodes of the quest of Pantagruel, Panurge and their companions. In this island lives a whole range of birds whose names evoke the clerical hierarchy of the Catholic Church. This episode can be read as a critique of various aspects of the Church, including Lent, monastic and chivalric orders, and the authority of the Pope. (See section 3.4.2). In the picture related to the emblem ‘Sic fraudibus scatent eorum domus’, the flock of birds seems to represent the faithful, but the epigram is more ambiguous: the birds seem to symbolise the ‘iniquitez, fraudes, fureurs, folies’ of the wicked turning the world upside-down.



Figure 58: 'Sic fraudibus scatent eorum domus' (Montenay 1567-71: 85)

A clearer example of the animalisation of clerics can be found in the emblem 'ex parvo satis': the picture shows four wolves dressed as monks keeping a fire alive with bellows, six ravens accompanying them, and a liquid pouring from a nearby tree into the fire. (Fig. 59) This emblem revolves around the same theme as the polemic of the cooking pot trope: the industrious clerics trying to maintain their institution, the uncovering of their deception and their imminent defeat. While the cooking pot, in this context, would point to the clerics' greed and debase their religion, the emblem focuses on the paradoxical fire of the Church. Instead of being overturned, the fire is about to be extinguished. This 'feu non feu' or 'feu feinct' designates the clerics' lies masquerading as truth. The most striking inversion at play in this emblem is the animalisation of clerics. By depicting Catholics as wolves and ravens, this emblem indicates that the Church goes against nature. As I will

show in sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4, denaturation and animalisation will be central to D'Aubigné's *Tragiques*.



Figure 59: 'Ex parvo satis' (Montenay 1567-71: 7)

In both of these emblems, the wicked or the Catholic clerics are called 'peruers'. As D'Aubigné points out in the *Tragiques*, inversion is a kind of perversion. D'Aubigné's rhyme 'monde à l'envers/peruers' is, in this regard, extremely significant. (See section 4.2.3). A similar system of rhyme can be found in Montaigne's emblem: 'univers/travers/peruers'. These rhymes allude to a world-wide, systematic perversion of the proper and natural order of things. To this extent, Montaigne's emblems – and to a lesser degree Bèze's emblems – offer the most striking use of the topos of the world upside-down in polemical emblems. As the socio-historical and religious context becomes more troubled, increase in the use of the topos of the world upside-down is clearly discernible.

## 1.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have studied the role of three genres – adage, paradox and emblem – in disseminating the topos of the world upside-down throughout the sixteenth century. The widespread popularity of adages and their use in various other genres explain the propagation of adages pertaining to the world upside-down. In the case of adages and emblems, I have also demonstrated the influence of the socio-historical context in the development of the topos of the world upside-down: with the rise of the social troubles and the religious wars in France, the use of adages and emblems pertaining to inversion become increasingly polemical. In the next chapter, I will show that Rabelais's use of the topos of the world upside-down undergoes a similar shift from moralising and parodic device to satirical and polemical tool.

## 2 RABELAIS'S WORLD UPSIDE-DOWN

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will study the topos of the world upside-down at work in Rabelais. Bakhtin's fundamental study brought into light crucial features of the world upside-down throughout Rabelais's works. However, notions such as the lower body stratum, the overturning of the social hierarchy or the downward movement are more significant, as Bakhtin's examples show, in *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* than in the subsequent books.<sup>24</sup> Jeanneret comes to a similar conclusion in his interpretation of the last chapters of the *Quart Livre*:

Le lecteur moderne réprime mal un regret : guidé par l'admirable livre de Bakhtine, il a appris à aimer, chez Rabelais, la célébration du 'bas corporel' et le renversement des hiérarchies spiritualistes, dont témoignent amplement *Pantagruel* et *Gargantua*. Mais le schème carnavalesque, le recours au comique régénérateur de la veine populaire perdent ici leur pertinence. Imperceptiblement, dès le *Tiers Livre*, d'autres valeurs, issues de la tradition philosophique ou de l'éthique chrétienne, ont pris le relai (Jeanneret 1994: 128).

Rabelais's use of the topos of the world upside-down provides an opportunity to assess the validity of Jeanneret's observation and expand his conclusions by examining the shifts at play in Rabelais's works. Scholars have sought to shed light on these shifts by examining the biographical and historical context of each book and by identifying the different genres and source materials used by Rabelais (Plattard 1910; Huchon 1986; Duval 1991a; Freccero 1991; Duval 1997; La Charité 1998; Duval 1998; Renner 2007a). The pattern of Rabelais's works can be described as follows: *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* are carnivalesque mock-epics using popular sources; the *Tiers Livre* is a mock-picaresque narrative in which erudite sources are mocked and misused; the *Quart Livre* is a travel narrative with strong polemical undertones;

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<sup>24</sup> On the world upside-down in *Pantagruel*, see also La Charité 1980.

and the *Cinquième Livre*, whose authenticity has long been disputed, is considered as a posthumous reconstruction based on authentic early drafts (Huchon 1981; Cooper 2001).

In this chapter, I will approach the shifts in Rabelais's works from a different perspective: by focusing on his use of the topos of the world upside-down in various contexts, I will show that similar images and themes keep being used, albeit to different ends and with different perspectives. While Rabelaisian scholarship has often insisted on the disparity between certain books and passages, this chapter will identify inversion and the topos of the world upside-down as important threads from *Gargantua* to the *Cinquième Livre*. I will argue that the evolution of inversion and the topos of the world upside-down from *Pantagruel* to the *Cinquième Livre* are indicative of the literary and social shifts in the period insofar as Rabelais refers back to medieval literary traditions and prefigures the polemical use of the topos of the world upside-down during the religious wars.

The first section will revolve around Carnival and the overturning of the social hierarchy. I will refer to examples from *Pantagruel* and the *Quart Livre* to illustrate the evolution of Rabelais's use of carnivalesque motifs. The second section will focus on the grotesque body. I will re-evaluate Bakhtin's claim that the elements of the grotesque body are 'predominantly subject to positive exaggeration' (Bakhtin 1984: 317) by showing how Rabelais adapts the theme of the microcosmic body for parodic and polemical purposes in *Pantagruel* and the *Quart Livre* respectively. Then, I will shed some light on the polemical use of enigmatic metaphors of the lower body stratum in the *Quart Livre* and *Cinquième Livre*. Finally, I will show how the characterisation and function of fools diverge between *Pantagruel* and the *Tiers Livre*.

## 2.2 CARNIVALESQUE RITUALS

### 2.2.1 Rabelais and Carnival

Carnival consists in a festive, transgressive and periodical occurrence based on social, generational and gender reversal. It manifests through a series of ritualised performances and dramatisations such as the crowning of the king of fools, the war between Carnival and Lent, the trial and execution of Carnival, and processions as well as farces performed by carnivalesque societies.<sup>25</sup> Festivities occur between the months of December and March, loosely corresponding to the Roman *Saturnalia*, *Lupercalia* and *Bacchanalia*. Each of these Roman festivals is characterised by the same excess of food and alcohol, reversal of social hierarchy and laughter as Carnival. The medieval Feast of Fools belongs to the same tradition as Carnival and the winter and spring Roman festivals: not only does it take place within the same time frame, but it is also governed by the same principle of inversion of the social order (Gilhus 1990; Chambers 1996: 274-335; Harris 2011).

The function of Carnival has been widely debated: social historians interpret it not only as a way of purging people's frustrations, but also as a mechanism that can both undermine and reinforce the social hierarchy (Zemon-Davis 1975; Leroy-Ladurie 1979). Another approach emphasises the periodicity of Carnival, linking it to the cycle of creation, destruction and renewal, and suggests that the world upside-down of Carnival interrupts the monotony of everyday life to go back to the primeval chaos (Bakhtin 1984: 1-59; Gaignebet 1986). To this extent, Carnival becomes the manifestation of what Caillois calls the 'sacré de transgression' (Caillois 2008: 263-289). Finally, folklorists concentrate on cataloguing and mapping the rituals of Carnival and observe how pagan elements have been gradually assimilated and Christianised (Van Gennep 1937: 1068-1088; Fabre 1976; Feuillet 1991). It

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<sup>25</sup> Such as the processions of the *Soufflaculs*, the *Connards* or the *Mère Folle* as well as the farces of the *Basochiens* and the *Enfants-Sans-Souci*.

has also been suggested that Carnival was a reminiscence of an Indo-European cult and should, therefore, be studied as a religion (Gaignebet 1974; Walter 1992; Lombard-Jourdan 2005).

Bakhtin linked the works of Rabelais to Carnival, drawing critical attention to issues that were, at the time, neglected by standard criticism, such as laughter and vulgarity (Persels 1996; Bowen 1998; Frei 2011). According to Bakhtin, Rabelais's world upside-down is connected to Carnival and to the cycle of life and its elements: birth, body, food, drink, sex, death, defecation, among others. These elements promote the victory of life and fertility over death. For Bakhtin, the power of laughter in Rabelais overturns the oppressive, official institutions by exalting what they repress:

We find here a characteristic logic, the peculiar logic of the 'inside out' (*à l'envers*), of the 'turnabout,' of a continual shifting from top to bottom, from front to rear, of numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings. A second life, a second world of folk culture is thus constructed; it is to a certain extent a parody of the extracarnival life, a 'world inside out' (Bakhtin 1984: 11).

The influence of the social and cultural carnivalesque practices on Rabelais's writings cannot be overstated. However, it is essential to remember that Rabelais offers an elaborate representation of carnivalesque motifs by mediating and complicating the festive, topsy-turvy rituals of Carnival. In the polarised debate between the critics considering Rabelais as a subversive spokesman for the people, seeking to overturn the official institutions, and those picturing him as a highly educated and moderate humanist,<sup>26</sup> not enough has been said about the gap between Carnival as a set of social and cultural practices and their literary representation. Greenblatt argues that Rabelais's writing 'is not carnival, but the brilliant aesthetic representation of carnival motifs; [...] not festive mayhem in the streets, but words on a page' (Greenblatt 2007: 88-9). While Rabelais makes abundant use of carnivalesque

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<sup>26</sup> Compare, for instance Clark 1983; Bakhtin 1984; with Screech 1979; Defaux 1997. For an attempt to reconcile both sides, see Cave 2001: 12-34.

elements, equating his novels with Carnival overstates their socio-political impact and does not account for his complex appropriation of such motifs.

In order to demonstrate that carnivalesque inversion is a factor of continuity prone to reflect the evolution of the historical context, I will examine Rabelais's use of two elements of Carnival: the inversion of the social hierarchy and the fight between Carnival and Lent. In *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*, Rabelais's transposition of aspects of Carnival serves a moralising purpose: the inverted hierarchical structure of the underworld provides a model and a justification for punishing greed and tyranny as well as praising Stoicism and literature. Having examined the organisation and impact of the underworld, I will study Rabelais's adaptation of the fight between Carnival and Lent in the *Quart Livre*. I will argue that Rabelais imbues this theme with polemical undertones and upsets the reader's expectations by turning its traditional elements on their heads.

## 2.2.2 Carnival in *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*

### **Epistémon's Katabasis**

An important aspect of carnivalesque festivities is the inversion of the social order. As historians have demonstrated, such inversion can either become a pretext for social, political or religious demonstrations of violence, or reinforce the social order and its institutions. In both cases, Carnival is related to the inversion of the social hierarchy based on a combination of transformative inversion (everything that is normally considered 'low' is praised above what is usually deemed 'high' and vice versa) and on the endorsement of improper behaviours. In the underworld described in *Pantagruel*, literary figures, François Villon and Jean Lemaire de Belge for instance, live in opulence and debase the greedy and the powerful. The impact of this inversion is twofold: it promotes Stoicism by encouraging kings to prepare for their humiliation, and praises writers as agents of inversion.

Having defeated the Dipsodes, Pantagruel finds that Epistémon has been beheaded during the course of the battle. Panurge declares that he will bring Epistémon back from the dead or lose his own head if he proves unable to do so. After the miraculous medical intervention, Epistémon comes back to life thirsty and with a sore throat. He proceeds to recount his trip to the underworld, where the social hierarchy is overturned (321-330).

By combining the influence of classical katabases – especially Lucian’s *Menippus*<sup>27</sup> – and medieval farces, this episode offers an example of Rabelais’s comic reworking of a conventional epic topos (Bambeck 1956). Contrary to classical katabases, in which the hero descends in the underworld to seek counsel or comfort from the dead, Epistémon’s katabasis mostly involves feasting with demons. Scholars have studied the divergences between this episode and Lucian’s *Menippus*. Bakhtin (1984: 387) contrasts Rabelais’s regenerative and popular laughter with Lucian’s abstract moralism. Lauvergnat-Gagnière, however, argues that the influence of medieval farces accounts for the difference between Lucian’s and Rabelais’s underworld. She claims that ‘la fantaisie l’emporte ici nettement sur la satire. La leçon de morale elle-même, “les derniers seront les premiers”, passe à l’arrière-plan’ (Lauvergnat-Gagnière 1988: 247).<sup>28</sup> On the contrary, I will argue that the list of punishments and rewards in Epistémon’s katabasis does not occult the moral components of the passage, but exemplifies them. Moreover, Rabelais’s revisions concerning the prominent historical and fictional characters debased in the underworld limit the potential for political satire.

To describe the inversion of the social hierarchy, Epistémon classifies characters according to their occupation. Rich and powerful people are demeaned, while poets and philosophers live in luxury. The list, which combines historical and fictional figures, has undergone substantial revisions between each edition of *Pantagruel*. The damned can be

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<sup>27</sup> Other important katabases, such as that of Orpheus and Odysseus, will not be considered in the section for the sake of brevity and because they present a narrative structure similar to *Menippus*.

<sup>28</sup> On Rabelais and Lucian, see also Smith 1987: 21-43.

divided into five categories: classical heroes (Jason, Ulysses, Achilles, etc.), kings and politicians of the Antiquity (Caesar, Scipio, Nero, etc.), heroes from chivalric romances (Fierabras, les quatre fils Aymon, Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, etc.), popes and, finally, French kings and nobility (Charlemagne, Pepin, the twelve Peers of France, etc.). From the 1534 edition, Rabelais eliminates any mention of French historical figures, which lessens the potential for political satire of the original text. In the underworld, French people are related to the literary sphere: fictional knights are debased and writers are celebrated. Rabelais's focus on characters from chivalric romances follows his own parodic reworking of a topos of this genre, the miraculous healing, and mocks his literary models.

For Lucian, the inversion of the social order restores the balance that was upset in the world of the living: the rich are punished for their arrogance and their failure to realise that material wealth and life itself are finite (Lucian 1925: 104-8). In Rabelais, the overturning of the social hierarchy is based on the inversion of the economic exchange: those who accumulate material goods in the world are punished in the afterlife, while those who produce rich verbal and intellectual inventions are rewarded with material comforts.<sup>29</sup> This observation complicates Cave's argument on the double-edgedness of gold in Rabelais. According to Cave (2001: 139-164), gold can either represent the absence of spiritual value and sterility – such as the gold of usurers and indulgences buyers – or be imbued with spiritual value, to become 'la manifestation visible de l'harmonie sociale et politique' (Cave 2001: 147). The famous *rime équivoquée* 'or donné par don/ordonne pardon' illustrates the relationship between materiality and spirituality: '[l'or] procure au donateur un bénéfice divin, le "pardon", entendons la grâce, expression de la charité divine' (Cave 2001: 147). In the underworld described by Epistémon, the model whereby 'or donné par don/ordonne pardon' is inverted. The system whereby monetary value and sale price are determined is

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<sup>29</sup> On economic exchange in Rabelais, see Tournon 1995: 38-58; Lavatori 1996; Desan 2002: 69-141.

turned upside-down: the quantity that one could afford for one *blanc* (that is to say ten *deniers*) in this world is not even worth one *pinart* (less than one *denier*) in the underworld.

The punishment of usurers (327) is representative of the inversion of economic exchange and contributes to shaping the inversion of the social hierarchy in the underworld. In Cave's view, usurers represent the sterile accumulation of money. In the underworld, they keep obsessively accumulating goods, but their possessions have become worthless 'quinqualleries' and their pursuit of material wealth leaves them penniless and starving. Usurers are forced to hoard money – a behaviour that made them rich in the world of the living – and to suffer poverty and starvation: a quintal of metal is not even worth a loaf of bread and a year of hard labour only 'quelque meschant denier.'

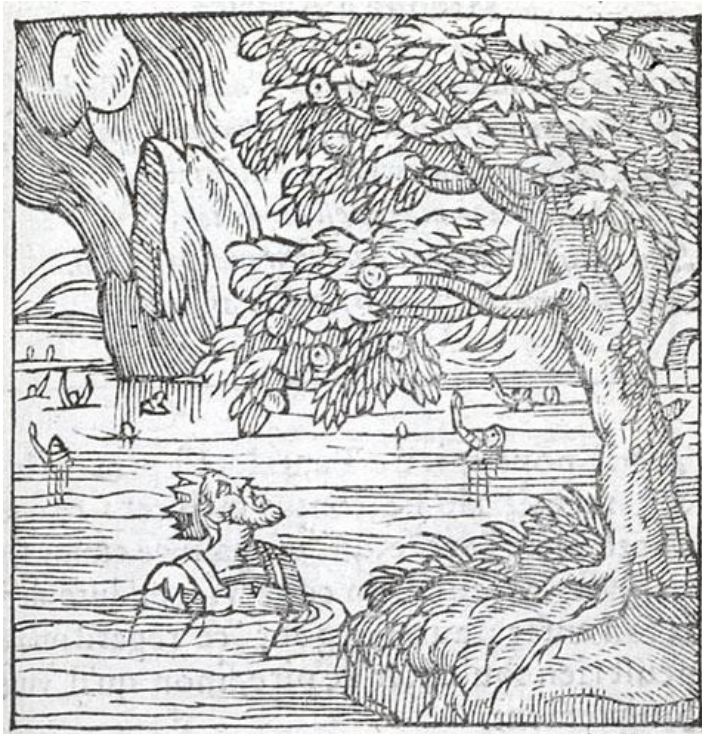


Figure 60: 'Avaritia' (Alciato, 1584: 118r)

The idea that greed turns abundance of goods into poverty is a common image in the emblem tradition. Alciato's 'Avaritia' (Fig. 60) and Aneau's 'L'avaricieux est povre' (Fig. 61) are based on the myth of Tantalus, who was condemned to remain thirsty and hungry close to water and fruits, under the threat of a rock hanging above his head. Tantalus's myth is an

example of the miser's inverted and absurd behaviour, who lives in poverty despite being rich. Starting from the 1584 Paris edition of Alciato's *Emblemata*, Tantalus is depicted with crown, which emphasises his wealth and power and alludes to the inversion of the social hierarchy in the underworld. Aneau's French translation of Alciato's emblem confirms the link between greed and the inverted social hierarchy of the underworld: 'Les Avaricieux hont leur enfer des ce monde, damnez (comme Tantal) à ne pouvoir jouyr, & user des biens, au mylieu desquelz ilz sont plongéz' (Alciato 1549: 108). As Panurge's punishment of Anarche, Aneau's translation likens the life of rich and powerful people to their punishment in the underworld.



Figure 61: 'Avarus inops' (Aneau 1552b: 108)

## Fallen Kings

The fate of the fallen kings in *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* is characterised by inversion. Anarche suffers a transformative inversion as Panurge makes him sell green sauce, dresses him in rags and marries him to a prostitute who beats him (327-330). Picrochole is punished for his improper behaviour (anger): after being defeated by Gargantua, he flees, loses his possessions, is beaten and ends up in Lyon, as a ‘pauvre gaignedenier’, where he waits for the ‘Cocquecigrues’ announcing his reinstatement as a king (131-132). Both kings share a number of characteristics with Panurge: Anarche is cheated and beaten by his wife and sells green sauce; Picrochole refuses to save money. Another common issue among these characters is their abnormal wedding and the humiliations related to it, which recall the *charivari*<sup>30</sup> despite occurring before instead of after the wedding. I will argue that the fate of fallen kings exemplifies the evolution of Rabelais’s appropriation of carnivalesque practices in the first three books, and illustrates his praise of Stoicism by showing how kings can prepare during their lifetime for their punishment in the underworld.

Bakhtin (1984: 205-6) considers Anarche and Picrochole as representations of the king of Carnival. Their humiliations are part of the ritual of renewal characteristic of Carnival. This episode directly alludes to Carnival: when the defeated Amaurotes welcome Pantagruel as a king, his entry is compared with *Saturnalia* and described in terms of carnivalesque festivities and debauchery (328). However, this situation is not considered topsy-turvy, instead, it implies that, like in the underworld, Carnival constitutes the proper and natural order of things. Rather than undermining the social order, the uncrowning and debasement of Anarche reveals his true nature (already contained in his name) and saves the city from a perverse tyrant. The former king Anarche embraces his fate: although his wedding and his occupation as a seller of green sauce are considered demeaning, such treatment is perceived

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<sup>30</sup> On the charivari see section 2.3.3 and Le Goff et al (eds) 1981: 33-45.

by Pantagruel, Panurge and by Anarche himself as an improvement for both the society and the fallen king. As a result, Anarche embodies Rabelais's 'joyful Stoicism', (Defaux 1997: 1) since he accepts his punishment and embraces the wisdom of folly.<sup>31</sup>

Picrochole, whose name is associated with his 'cholerique' temperament, is humiliated after his defeat against Grandgousier. However, as opposed to Anarche who accepts his fate, Picrochole flees and encounters 'males fortunes'. As Bakhtin (1984) and Defaux (1997: 327-332) point out, these 'males fortunes' correspond to the carnivalesque ritualistic debasement. More precisely, his beating, undressing and ride on a donkey evoke the *chevauchée de l'âne*, which happens in relation to the *charivari* to disrupt abnormal weddings and punish other transgressions of the social order. Such practices were widespread until the nineteenth century and occurred in a popular as well as official context (eds Le Goff et al 1981: 117-123, 237-251). Despite this clear association, Picrochole's misfortunes differ from *charivari* insofar as everything that happens to him is the result of his temperament, instead of the concerted action of society or the justice system. Picrochole's behaviour is, both before and after his defeat, the opposite of how a king should act. Although he cannot escape comic degradation, Picrochole does not learn anything from his 'males fortunes' and remains 'cholerique'.

Defaux (1997: 331) argues that 'Le destin de Panurge, on l'avouera, offre plus d'une ressemblance frappante avec celui des rois déçus.' He further points out that the *Tiers Livre* provides 'la fable exemplaire d'un vieux roi devenu bouffon, et l'image d'un silène au rebours' (Defaux 1997: 346). First, a radical change of clothes prefigures his humiliation: Anarche's new garments evoke that of a fool, Picrochole is undressed, and Pantagruel mocks Panurge, in the *Tiers Livre*, for being ill-dressed. Second, the abnormal weddings of both Anarche and

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<sup>31</sup> Anarche's attributes evoke the garments of a fool and his occupation and behaviour confirms this interpretation.

Picrochole recall Panurge's fear of being cuckolded and beaten by his future wife. Finally, two of the paradoxical praises of the *Tiers Livre* link back to elements of *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*: the green sauce and debts. Panurge turns into a 'cryeur de saulce verte' when he praises green sauce enthusiastically in the beginning of the *Tiers Livre* (Rigolot 1996: 140-141). Then, to defend the wasteful lifestyle that makes the fabrication of green sauce possible, Panurge praises debts (360-7). The praise of debts alludes to Picrochole's refusal of saving money – according to Pichrocole: 'un noble prince n'a jamais un sou. Thesaurizer est faict de villain' (92). The praise of the green sauce, presented as a potent aphrodisiac, is structured like a blazon: Panurge describes its beneficial effect on each part of the body. The green sauce is the equivalent, in terms of its effect on the human body, to debts for the socio-political body. Both are trivial – even negative – and praised by Panurge as essential to the proper functioning of the body: green sauce makes physiological processes possible and debts are responsible for the cosmic and political harmony (See: Renner 2010).

Rabelais's use of carnivalesque debasement to describe the fates of Panurge and of the fallen kings Anarche and Picrochole makes visible the shifts between *Pantagruel*, *Gargantua* and the *Tiers Livre*. While Anarche becomes a stoic model and accepts his fate, Picrochole and Panurge refuse it and cling to their foolishness. Also significant is the shift from the concretisation of carnivalesque practices in the first two books to their sophistic refutations by Panurge in the *Tiers Livre*. It follows that the moral focus of Rabelais's appropriation of Carnival moves, between *Pantagruel* and the *Tiers Livre*, from praising Stoicism to blaming rhetoric.

### **Lemaire de Belges and Villon**

In classical katabases, the main objective of the hero's trip to the underworld is the consultation of the wise dead. In Rabelais, however, the dead writers and philosophers do not provide any help. Rather, they stand for examples of the inversion of the social hierarchy:

the philosophers Diogenes and Epictetus lead a life of luxury; Pathelin and the ‘franc archier de Baignolet’, characters from medieval farces, occupy important functions (‘thesaurier’ and inquisitor, respectively); finally, the poets Lemaire and Villon humiliate ‘tous ces pauvres roys et papes de ce monde’ (326). I will argue that Rabelais’s depiction of writers and poets – such as Lemaire de Belges and Villon – as agents of inversion and tricksters who overturn the political and social order expresses a strong nationalist sentiment.

Lemaire de Belges – an important figure of the *Grands Rhétoriciens* known for his opposition to the Pope and for promoting Gallicanism<sup>32</sup> – plays the role of the Pope of the underworld and sells indulgences to fallen popes and kings with his cardinals, the famous fools Caillette and Triboulet (326). Bakhtin (1984: 385). interprets this passage as a scene of ‘ritualistic debasing’ in which the enemy of the Pope ‘plays the role of clownish pope of the underworld.’ The inclusion of Lemaire in the underworld highlights the nationalist undertones of the passage, as does Rabelais’s focus on the reward of French literary figures (fictional or historical) and his exclusion of French political characters from the list of the damned from the 1534 edition onwards. Including Lemaire, Rabelais might also allude to his *Epîtres de l’amant vert*, which contain the mock-katabasis of a parrot and may have influenced *L’Isle Sonnante* (Victorin 2008).

Another example of the agents of inversion featured in the underworld is Villon, who wants to buy mustard from Xerces, complains about its price and urinates in the barrel. The reference to mustard and urine comes back in the description of Mardigras. (See section 2.2.3). In the war between Pantagruel and the Andouilles urine and mustard have magical, healing properties. In Epistémon’s underworld, they appear as elements of scatological humour and underline the connection between Villon and Carnival. Villon’s characterisation as a trickster attempting (and succeeding) to get food and drink for free can be traced back

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<sup>32</sup> Lemaire published a violent Gallican essay against the Popes: this is his *Traicté de la différence des schismes et des conciles de l’Eglise*, ed. Britnell (Durham: University of Durham, 1997).

to the *Recueil des repues franches de maistre François Villon*. Koopmans argues that the *Repues franches* played a crucial role in the elaboration of Villon's *légende noire*. He also observes that this collection of short poems share with a significant number of medieval works (*farces*, *fabliaux*, *sotties* and *sermons joyeux*) an obsession for food, drink and money (Koopmans and Verhuyck 1995: 41-55).

At the end of the *Quart Livre* (699), the narrator evokes anecdotes linking fear and excretion; among them, he tells the story of Villon who, having been banned from France, visited Edward Vth. It turns out that the king had displayed the French coat of arms in his toilet, as a sign of disrespect. Villon overturned the king's mockery by interpreting this apparent debasement of France from a mock-medical perspective: the king's physician, having detected a tendency to constipation, must have had the French coat of arms painted in the toilet because they would frighten the king so much that he would not be able to stop defecating. Marichal (1947: 268) has shown that this anecdote is anterior to Villon and usually attributed to the juggler Hugues le Noir. Villon plays the role of the king's fool and turns the insult into a medical diagnostic and a political statement. In Villon's answer, the king oscillates between two impairments – constipation and excessive defecation related to old age and fear respectively. Multiple levels of inversion are at work: first, the impropriety of hanging the French coat of arms in the toilet; second, Villon's overturning of Edward Vth's insult, and finally, the debasement of the king and focus on scatology, which evokes the *Franches repues*, especially the *Repue des Torbeculs*.

More complex is the story of Villon told by the Lord Basché in the episode of the Chicanous (564-78). The Chicanous earn a living by being beaten by others: in exchange for money, they harass people with legal procedures until their victims beat them; then, the victim is forced to pay a compensation or to go to prison. Panurge tells the story of Lord Basché, who – harassed by Chicanous sent by an abbot – found a way to beat them for free

and with impunity: when a Chicanou arrives at his castle, he organises a fake wedding and concludes the ceremony by a fake general beating, in which only the Chicanou is really beaten. Between his encounters with the Chicanous, Basché tells the story of his model, Villon, who got revenge from a cleric, Tappecoue, after he refused to lend sacerdotal clothing for Villon's theatrical production. Villon and his actors, disguised as demons, ambushed the cleric, who fell from his horse and died horribly. Bakhtin (1984: 199-213, 263-269, 279-285) considers Villon's story as an enactment of the ritualistic dismemberment of a carnivalesque effigy. Tournon (1997) argues for a reading 'en sens agile' of this episode according to which the violence of the story, criticised by Pantagruel and Epistémon, is used to destroy any form of constraint (See also: Marichal 1952).

The Chicanous epitomise transformative inversion: instead of earning a living beating people (as one would expect), they are paid to be beaten. Such an inverted behaviour, along with the Chicanous' excessive legalism, underlines the corruption and monetisation of the justice system. Lord Basché's violent scheme seeks to overturn the Chicanous's confidence trick by beating them for free. Based on Villon's tale, which serves, like Epistémon's katabasis, as an inspiration to punish someone, Basché's theatrical response aims at correcting the transgression of the Chicanous in a similar fashion as popular *charivari*. Villon also wants to rectify what he perceives as a transgression on Tappecoue's part. However, the violence of the episode, Villon's enthusiasm to play devils and the suggestion that an old farmer should play 'Dieu le père' give to this passage strong polemical and anticlerical undertones. Villon, in the *Quart Livre*, moves away from the comic schemes of the *Franches repues* and overturns the different kinds of authority: the political power with scatology, the justice system with trickery and, through his association with (fake) demons, the religious order.

In conclusion, the ritualistic debasement of authority figures constitutes, according to Bakhtin, a key feature of the cycle of destruction and renewal of carnivalesque festivities. However, Rabelais's appropriation of carnivalesque motifs complicates Bakhtin's hypothesis: Carnival becomes permanent rather than temporary; it often expresses a nationalist, rather than revolutionary, sentiment; and tricksters – Panurge or the Chicanous, for instance – may be tricked themselves.<sup>33</sup> As Epistémon's depiction of the underworld shows, there are certain boundaries that Rabelais does not cross: the French nobility is not directly criticised (Anarche and Picrochole are more representative of the flaws illustrated by their names than of the royal power itself). Rather, Rabelais uses Carnival to frame his moralising study of certain themes (money, marriage) and inverted behaviours (tyranny, foolishness, sophistry, trickery). His reworking of these behaviours and themes accounts for a certain degree of thematic continuity between *Pantagruel* and the *Tiers Livre*.

### 2.2.3 The Fight between Carnival and Lent in the *Quart Livre*

The most striking allusion to Carnival in the *Quart Livre* is Rabelais's adaptation of the fight between Carnival and Lent in the episode of Quaresmeprenant and the Andouilles. The staging of the fight between Carnival and Lent, often followed by the trial and execution of the latter, is central to carnivalesque festivities. It represents the transition from the abundance of Carnival to the restraint of Lent. Kinser and Grinberg (1983) have found evidence of this theme across Europe, dating back from the thirteenth century. They provide forty-two examples between 1277 and 1795 in a variety of forms (drama, poem, narrative) and languages (Italian, French and German, among others) (Romano 1907; ed. Lozinski 1933; ed. Aubailly 1977). According to Kinser and Grinberg (1983: 66-69), the basic structure of this theme is comprised of five parts: the presentation of characters, the trigger and preparation of the fight followed by the fight itself (sometimes replaced by a lawsuit) and by

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<sup>33</sup> For a more detailed analysis of Panurge's shift from trickster to tricked, see section 2.4.

a conclusion on its consequences. It also features a rich iconographic tradition including, for instance, Bruegel's *Fight between Carnival and Lent* (Fig. 62) and Van der Heyden's *Lean Kitchen* (Fig. 63) and *Fat Kitchen* (Fig. 64).

Bruegel's painting provides a useful overview of this theme and highlights some of its elements. The avatars of Carnival and Lent are represented on the bottom left and right of the painting, respectively. Carnival – a fat man riding a barrel and holding a spit with meat – fights against Lent – an old and skeletal lady holding a spit with a fish. Near Carnival, a character with a fool's hat is doing tricks: he was already present in Bruegel's *The Proverbs or the World upside-down*, (Fig. 4) defecating on the emblem of the topsy-turvy world. (Fig. 6) Also worth mentioning is the character of the fool, in the centre of the painting, who suggests that the whole scene is governed by folly. According to Gaignebet (1972), this painting represents various stages of the Christian calendar, including Christmas, Carnival, Lent and Easter. He argues that the composition illustrates the dichotomy between Carnival and Lent by representing values associated with them on each side of the painting. For instance, the tavern and the fat people on the left correspond to a church and emaciated people on the right (See also: Stridbeck 1956).



Figure 62: 'The Fight Between Carnival and Lent', Bruegel the Elder (1559) oil-on-panel, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

A similar dichotomy between fat and thin characters can be found in the twin prints *The Lean Kitchen* (Fig. 63) and *The Fat Kitchen*. (Fig. 64) *The Lean Kitchen* shows a fat man trying to leave a room full of thin and sick people eating root vegetables. The French caption says : 'Ou Maigre-os Le pot mouve est uu pouvre Convive/Pource, à Grasse-cuisine iray, tant que je Vive'. In *The Fat Kitchen*, a thin man with a bagpipe is trying to enter a room full of fat

people eating pork and sausages: ‘Hors dici Maigre-dos a eune hideuse mine/Tu nas que faire ici Car cest Grasse-Cuisine’. These prints display the same elements in a diametrically opposed manner, for instance: an empty chimney with a small cooking pot/a chimney with three large cooking pots; a hungry dog beneath the table/a fat dog eating; a starved child/fat children playing.



Figure 63: ‘The Lean Kitchen’, Van der Heyden (1563) (from P. Bruegel), Liège University.



Figure 64: 'The Fat Kitchen', Van der Heyden (1563) (from P. Bruegel) Liège University.

*The Fat Kitchen* and *The Lean Kitchen* clearly illustrate the system of binary oppositions at work between Carnival and Lent. Their conflict presupposes that the ideal order of the Golden Age – that is to say the harmony of the contraries or *concordia discors* – has been disrupted and that the world has become chaotic. The conclusion of their fight offers a resolution by dividing the year into periods of abundance and restraint. *Le Conflit de Caresme et Charnaige* offers an example of the ideal order of the world before the conflict between Carnival and Lent. In this Golden Age, everything is in its rightful place and divine miracles occur:

Ou temps jadis que les bestes parloient,  
 Oyseaulx en l'aer et Poissons en marine  
 Et que les Beufz légiers en l'aer voloient,  
 Ce qui fut faict par volonté divine,  
 Ou temps aussi que Asnes en faict de Cuisine  
 Estudioient et Veaux en Geométrie,  
 Et que Renartz régentoient les Gélines  
 Et Loups estoient Seigneurs de bergerie  
 (eds Montaiglon and Rothschild 1875: 116-117).

Before the conflict between Carnival and Lent, birds and fish live in their natural environments as opposed to the well-known Erasmian adage ‘delphinium sylvis appingit, fluctibus aprum’ (I, iv, 93). When things go against the expected order of things – such as speaking animals<sup>34</sup> or flying oxen – it is the result of divine will. Also indicative of the harmony of contraries is the peaceful relationship between foxes and hens or wolves and sheep. Such a depiction of the world is diametrically opposed to later polemical poems in which everything is topsy-turvy as a result of the accumulation of sins and of the corruption of the world, as I will show in chapter 4. The conflict between Carnival and Lent, in addition to structuring calendar time, shows the transition between a period of harmony to a time of conflict and disorder.

Rabelais complicates the traditional conflict between Carnival and Lent by making the name and role of each character ambiguous, and by inserting a confrontation with a sea-monster, the Phytetere, thus upsetting the conventional order of the narrative (Kinser 1990: 69-92). The fight between Carnival and Lent, whose influence is confirmed by the characters, names and situations throughout this episode, is clearly subverted. Rabelais further upsets readerly expectations by incorporating elements of mock epic and a learned discussion of predestined names into the narrative; and by making no mention of eating and ingestion in a series of chapters focusing heavily on tripe-sausages and cooks. In order to demonstrate how the topos of the world upside-down makes this episode more ambiguous and polemical, I will examine the roles of Quaresmeprenant, the Andouilles and Mardigras. Because of the ambiguity of the passage, determining Rabelais’s stance in the religious polemic is difficult. His reworking of the carnivalesque fight between Carnival and Lent suggests that he rejects religious dogmatism of all kinds.

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<sup>34</sup> The first line of this extract is probably a reference to the story of the fox and the old woman in *Pantagruel*: ‘Au temps que les bestes parloyent (il n’y a pas troys jours)...’ (269)

## Quaresmeprenant

When Pantagruel's ship bypasses the *Isle Tapinois*, inhabited by the Quaresprenant, Xenomanes agrees to provide a detailed anatomy of the monster. The Pantagruelians sail towards the *Isle Farouche*, where dwell the Andouilles, Quaresmeprenant's mortal enemies. Frère Jean deems this ongoing war unnatural and suggests an intervention, but is contradicted by Panurge. The anatomy of Quaresmeprenant follows, according to the order prescribed by Pantagruel (606-615).

Quaresmeprenant's anatomy has been the subject of many diverging interpretations and continues to dazzle critics (Jeanneret 1992; Kritzman 1998; Fiola Berry 2000: 91-100, 151-157; Renner 2007a; Brancher 2009; Williams 2011: 27-74). Despite its name, which translates as Carnival, Quaresmeprenant is an avatar of Lent, but breaks away from the tradition as it comprises many layers: the monster may represent religious hypocrisy, strict observance of Lenten rituals, Catholicism or Charles V. Any attempt at stabilising the interpretation of Quaresmeprenant fails to capture the ambiguity of the monster. The proliferation of juxtaposed comparisons makes it difficult to imagine Quaresmeprenant and dissolves historical references. The political dimension of the fight between Quaresmeprenant and the Andouilles must have remained unnoticed for the majority of Rabelais's sixteenth-century readers: "The mimesis of Carnival forms must have been more obvious than the political elements to all but the most internationally informed readers" (Kinser 1990: 96).

Quaresmeprenant's anatomy also parodies the medical discourse by pushing the conventions of the genre of the anatomy to their limits.<sup>35</sup> According to Million, the anatomy is justified by the need to go beyond the surface of Quaresmeprenant: 'Il n'en fait pas le portrait, mais l'anatomie, car un portrait aurait manqué le dessous du personnage hypocrite'

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<sup>35</sup> Medical discourse is also used in the *Cinquième Livre* to criticise Lent. Epistémon claims that the food eaten during Lent excites sexual appetites and encourage debauchery. (797-99)

(Million 2009: 10). The effect of the parodic medical discourse, argues Kinser, is that Quaresmeprenant ‘becomes more and more imaginary, a creature in people’s minds rather than an element of narrative action’ (Kinser 1990: 63). I will argue with Kinser that ‘This fellow represents neither Carnival nor Lent but the inversive logic that binds them together’ (Kinser 1990: 84).

Rabelais uses Erasmian adages to show that Quaresmeprenant performs impossible or foolish tasks and, therefore, belongs to the world upside-down (614). Aside from pointing out that Quaresmeprenant upsets the natural order of things, these classical *adynata* confirm his connection to Carnival and Lent. The passage displays a high level of organisation: commonplaces are organised into chiasmic pairs as well as thematic groupings. The first group evokes the land of Cockaigne, where people work and play music while sleeping, only to subvert it. The second group is related to the mouth: Quaresmeprenant’s biting, laughing, eating, fasting and drinking are put together and evoke cruelty, Lent and hypocrisy. The third group is comprised of natural impossibilities and inverts the cosmic order of the world. Finally, Xenomanes brings together Quaresmeprenant’s guile and its irrational fears.

The topos of the world upside-down is most visible in the adages ‘Travailloit rien ne faisant: rien ne faisoit travaillant’ and ‘Peschoit en l’air, & y prenoit Escrevisses decumanes. Chassoit on profond de la mer, et y trouvoit Ibices, Stamboucqs, & Chamoy’s’. (See Erasmus’s *Adagia*: I, iv, 74). These adages inscribe Quaresmeprenant in a world turned upside-down. The only adage not directly pertaining to inversion is ‘Rien ne mangeoit jeusnant: jeusnoit rien ne mengeant.’ Related to the observance of the Lenten fast, this tautology suggests that Lent, being already artificial and topsy-turvy, need not be overturned by Quaresmeprenant. More problematic is ‘Corybantioit dormant : dormoit corybantiant les oeilz ouvers comme font les Lièvres de Champagne, craignant quelque camisade d’Andouilles ses antiques ennemies’ (See Erasmus’s *Adagia*, III, vii, 39). The neologism

*corybantisme* alludes to the worshippers of Cybele, known for their frantic and wild dances. It follows that *corybantier* can mean ‘to be taken by frenzy’ and, as suggested by Corneille in 1694, ‘to sleep with one’s eyes open’. Rabelais uses the adjective *corybantique* in the *Cinquième Livre* to describe the sound made by the bells of the Isle Sonnante. (See section 3.4.2). Other instances of the corybantic cymbals in relation to the sound of bells include: Viret’s *Physique papale* (1552) and Bèze’s *Satyres chrestiennes de la cuisine papale*. (See section 3.3.2). This trend suggests that *corybantier*, in Quaresmeprenant’s anatomy, relates to the clamour of bells and, by extension, to Catholicism.

To conclude, several observations can be made. With its various layers and its complex anatomy, Quaresmeprenant is an ambiguous and unstable creature. However, the monster is closely linked to the world upside-down of Lent, and by extension, to the Catholic Church. With its extensive play on Erasmian adages of inversion, this passage can also be compared to the chapter on Gargantua’s infancy. (See section 1.2.3). However, while the young Gargantua is represented with the attributes and habits of a fool to emphasise his innocence, the use of inversion in Quaresmeprenant’s anatomy is more unnerving and systematically undermines the positive values of Carnival. Quaresmeprenant’s anatomy shows that Lent’s effort to overturn the world upside-down of Carnival does not restore the proper order of things, but upsets it even more. In this respect, it can be argued that Quaresmeprenant represents a dangerous kind of folly, characterised by sterility, hypocrisy and dogmatism.

### **Pantagruel and the Andouilles**

In the feast following Pantagruel’s victory over the Physeter, the giant notices small, furry creatures: the Andouilles of the *Isle Farouche*. Mistaking Pantagruel and his companions for Quaresmeprenant and his allies, the Andouilles march on them. To repel the attack, Frère Jean and his cooks set up a great hollow sow on the model of the Trojan horse. The stratagem

proves to be successful. Only the apparition of Mardigras – a flying pig and the tutelary god of the Andouilles – prevents the annihilation of the Andouilles. As both armies cease fighting, Niphleseth, Queen of the Andouilles, surrenders to Pantagruel (620-637).

In traditional carnivalesque plays, the Andouilles are close allies of Carnival. Even though Xenomanes mentions that the Andouilles are at war with Quaresmeprenant, the narrative does not lead to such a confrontation. Instead, Rabelais inserts a series of narrative delays before making them fight against Pantagruel rather than Quaresmeprenant. Rabelais's appropriation of the Andouilles is working on many levels. Weinberg (1995) distinguishes five levels of interpretation: literal (tripe/sausage), visual (phallus/eels), historical/political (Protestantism), mythical/epic (ancient Greek and Roman war councils) and religious (criticism of the Eucharist). Kinser (1990: 109) compares the Andouilles to the people of the New World. I will focus on the encounter between Pantagruel and the Andouilles in order to illustrate Rabelais's reworking of the fight between Carnival and Lent for satirical and polemical purposes.

Since it does not involve the incarnation of Lent (in this case Quaresmeprenant), the fight between Pantagruel and the Andouilles represents an important deviation from its carnivalesque models. Charpentier (1980) focuses on the discrepancy between words and things in this episode. Bowen (1981: 23) considers it as a misunderstanding: the Andouilles mistook Pantagruel for Quaresmeprenant because of his size. Weinberg (1995: 372) argues that the Andouilles, which can represent Lutheranism, attacked the giant because they failed to distinguish between Quaresmeprenant's radical Catholicism and Pantagruel's moderate stance. For Kinser, there is a cultural disconnect between Pantagruel and the Andouilles. 'Like Cortez in Mexico, like Pizarro in Peru, like Raleigh in Guinea, they [the Pantagruelians] offer fair terms of greeting, but, when the natives resist, they annihilate them' (Kinser 1990: 109).

Rabelais's use of two adages representing foolish tasks contributes to shedding light on this complex episode: 'Plus toust auriez vous les chatz et ratz: les chiens et lievres ensemble reconcilié' and 'rompre les Andouilles au genoux.' The first one means to attempt something foolish or impossible. The second – more commonly known as 'rompre les anguilles aux genoux' – usually indicates that one uses unsuitable means to accomplish a task or that one attempts the impossible. The first adage shows that the conflict between Quaresmeprenant and the Andouilles cannot be resolved. The second adage destabilises the role of the Andouilles by associating them with Lenten eels.

Xenomanes uses the first adage to discourage Pantagruel from acting as a go-between. Attempting to reconcile Quaresmeprenant and the Andouilles by 'contemperer et amodier les conditions controverses entre les deux parties' (621) is a foolish task that goes against the natural order of things. His moderation cannot restore the peace between the Andouilles and Quaresmeprenant. Carnavalesque plays prevent the peaceful and amicable conciliation of Carnival and Lent since this allegorical fight is intended to explain the succession of fasting and festive periods throughout the year. As peace between Carnival and Lent would entail an impossible return to the Golden Age, this conflict cannot be resolved, except temporarily and at the expense of one or the other.

The second adage, 'rompre le andouilles aux genoux', gives its title to chapter XLI. After a series of narrative delays, 'Comment Pantagruel rompit les Andouilles au genoux,' depicts the fight against the Andouilles (634-636). This adage, which derives from 'rompre les *anguilles* aux genoux', has two purposes: on the one hand, it shows that Pantagruel uses inappropriate means to defeat the Andouilles; and, on the other, it suggests a parallel between tripe-sausages and eels. Bowen (1981) provides evidence of the use of the variation 'rompre les andouilles au genou' before Rabelais in the corresponding episode of *Le Disciple de Pantagruel*, a potential source for this passage. She also suggests that 'andouilles' and 'anguilles'

may be used indiscriminately. This confusion suggests that the Andouilles possess characteristics from both Carnival (as tripe-sausages) and Lent (as eels). Their gender is also a matter of debate since they are identified as feminine, but are shaped like phalluses and the name of their queen, Niphleseth, means ‘membre viril’ in Hebrew, as mentioned in the *Brieve declaration*. The definition of the Andouilles is blurred even further in the chapter retracing their genealogy: they are associated with the serpent in Genesis, with the snake-footed giants in the *Gigantomachia*, (see section 4.4.2) with mythical hybrids (Melusine, Erichthonius and Ora) and with people (the Swiss and the Himantopodes from Ethiopia). The variety of potential interpretations makes the Andouilles, like Quaresmeprenant, ambiguous and unstable. For Weinberg (1995: 371-2), the fact that the Andouilles attack Pantagruel after spying on his feast (which may refer to the Catholic Mass) links them to radical Protestantism. From this interpretation and Rabelais’s use of adages related to foolish tasks, two observations can be made: first, radical Catholics (represented by Quaresmeprenant) and radical Protestants (embodied by the Andouilles) cannot be reconciled; second, the distinction between both groups is blurred and they are both mocked in a similar way.

Instead of trying to uncover more and more levels of signification, Duval suggests that ‘Whatever Quaresmeprenant and the Andouilles may signify on secondary or tertiary levels of allegory, they are clearly meant to function on the most basic level as equal but opposite partners locked in the most inescapable and most irreducible of all antagonisms’ (Duval 1998: 67). According to Duval, Pantagruel’s willingness to reconcile them is central to the *Quart Livre* and when he fails he ‘opts for a relative, secondary kind of reconciliation in which he himself, as a friend and ally reconciled to each, would serve as the missing middle, a benevolent common denominator between the two’ (Duval 1998: 96). The main issue with Duval’s hypothesis is his conflation of the Andouilles and Mardigras. While, as Duval shows, Pantagruel has demonstrated his ability to solve cases of *perplexité* such as the dispute between Baisecul and Humevesne or the trial of the judge Bridoye (which I will study in section 2.4.2),

the case of the conflict between the Andouilles and Quaresmeprenant is different: Pantagruel is involved as a participant rather than a judge or intermediary; Quaresmeprenant is absent from the war; and the battle is stopped by Mardigras's intervention, not by Pantagruel's. Rather than a case of *perplexité*, this episode evokes the rejection of dogmatism from both sides of the religious conflicts. I will now turn to Mardigras, the flying pig, in order to demonstrate its instability and ambiguity.

### **Mardigras**

In a last attempt to avoid war, Gymnaste is sent to assure the Andouilles that they all serve a common master, Mardigras. Far from appeasing the Andouilles, this declaration infuriates them. The fight that ensues turns to the disadvantage of Pantagruel and his companions until Frère Jean's cooks intervene and massacre the Andouilles. Finally, Mardigras appears, interrupting the fight and resuscitating the dead Andouilles (634-36).

As Gymnaste's declaration to the Andouilles shows, both Pantagruel and the Andouilles serve Mardigras: '[il] s'escria tant qu'il peut disant. « Vostres, vostres, vostres sommes nous trestous, et à commandemant. Tous tenons de Mardigras, vostre antique confoederé. » Aulcuns depuys me ont raconté, qu'il dist Gradimars non Mardigras' (634). The narrator implies that the conflict between Pantagruel and the Andouilles have arisen because Gymnaste said 'Gradimars' instead of 'Mardigras'. The binary opposition between the Pantagruelians and the Andouilles is strongly suggested by two elements: the syllabic inversion of their respective master and the complex play on pronouns in Gymnaste's declaration. It has been suggested that the form 'Gradimars' comes from the South of France (Sainéan 1922-23: vol. 2, 184) or from the Roman god of war *Mars Gradivus*, the marching god, the strider (n. 6: 1557). More significant is the syllabic inversion of Mardigras into Gradimars. Such plays on letters can be traced back to the *Grands Rhétoriciens* and can be found elsewhere in Rabelais's works (Conley 1992; for a graphic reading of the *Tragiques*, see

Quainton 1999). The syllabic inversion of Mardigras reflects an ideological opposition between the Andouilles' dogmatism and Pantagruel's moderation. Even though Gymnaste points out that everyone (*tous*) hold allegiance to Mardigras, his constant and overemphasised distinction between the first and second person plural pronouns, *vous* (*vostre*) and *nous*, contrasts the Pantagruelians and the Andouilles. In this context, 'Tous tenons de Mardigras,' is ambiguous and can be interpreted in three different ways: we, Pantagruelians, all hold allegiance to Mardigras; we, Pantagruelians and Andouilles, hold allegiance to the same master; and everyone hold allegiance to Mardigras.

The apparition of Mardigras, the flying pig, interrupts the fight and reconciles the Pantagruelians and the Andouilles. The description of Mardigras evokes that of Quaresmeprenant: it consists of a series of comparisons between its body and various objects or materials. The narrator concludes by observing that Mardigras 'avoit un collier d'or au cou, au tour du quel estoient quelques lettres Ionicques, des quelles je ne peuz lire que deux mots. ΨΕ ΑΘΗΝΑΝ.. Pourceau Minerve enseignant' (636). The description of Mardigras revolves around a literal depiction of Erasmus's adage: 'Sus Minervam' (I, i, 40). (See sections 1.2.4 and 1.4.2). Usually used when a silly person attempts to teach a wiser one, this adage describes a world upside-down. Three natural impossibilities shape this passage: first, the pig – whose heaviness and earthy character is reinforced by the comparisons with stones and gems – is flying; more strikingly, this pig, although it is traditionally considered as a gross and brutish animal, is teaching Minerva; and, thunder roars in a clear sky.

In Kinser's view, 'To worship heavenly pig is just what one would expect of the spirit of Carnival. What wisdom does this pig have to teach Minerva? Simply that in Carnival time the stomach instructs the head, the low dominates the high, and earth pretends to be heaven' (Kinser 1990: 107). Kinser's interpretation identifies Mardigras with Carnival, but, in this passage, appearances can be deceiving. Duval (1998: 68) argues that 'Quaresmeprenant and Mardigras represent virtually the same thing, despite their mutual antagonism and apparent

polar opposition.’ In Duval’s view, they point to a similar form of idolatry and focus, above all, on flesh: Quaresmeprenant represents ‘[the] “Judaic” idolatry of religious formalism’ which is, for Duval, ‘carnality in religion’, while Mardigras embodies ‘[the] “Epicurean” idolatry of the appetites of the flesh’ (Duval 1998: 108). Milhe-Poutingon (2000) considers Mardigras as a symbol of *philautie* (presumption and arrogant self-love) and as ‘le paradigme d’un ensemble de figures porcines qui permettent de définir la philautie, source de tous les maux, comme faute capitale’ (Milhe-Poutingon 2000: 41). He further points out various levels of interpretation of Rabelais’s pigs, including its association to Rome and the Pope. The image of the flying pig has also been represented in visual form by the Dutch painter, engraver and mapmaker Anthonisz. (Fig. 65) In this case, the pig represents the debauchery of the people in power (Armstrong 1990: 51-53). Rabelais’s satire, given the context of the passage, does not have such a general scope, and summarises the attack against religious dogmatism.

It appears that Mardigras constitutes another unstable and ambiguous character satirising religious dogmatism. Several elements indicate a potential satire of the Catholic Church: the pig’s characterisation as earthy and base underlines the materialism of the Church; the resurrection of the Andouilles and the mention of Sangréal allude to the Mass (Duval 1988); and the abundance of precious gems points to the riches of the Church (Milhe-Poutingon 2000). However, Weinberg points out that the twenty-seven barrels of mustard refer to Luther’s twenty-seven theses and assimilate them with excrement (Weinberg 1995: 376-7; Krailsheimer 1953). It can be argued, therefore, that Mardigras condenses the meaning of the whole episode by representing the excess and ambiguity of Quaresmeprenant and the Andouilles, making it the symbol of religious dogmatism. This conclusion specifies the scope of Mardigras’s identification with *philautie*. Similar to Ronsard’s treatment of Opinion, Rabelais’s appropriation of the motifs of the flying pig and of the war between Carnival and Lent is to be understood in the context of the religious tensions of the period.



Figure 65: 'The Pig on the World', Anthonisz, C. (1541-1545) engraving, Netherlands

## 2.2.4 Conclusion

In this section, I have examined Rabelais's treatment of two carnivalesque motifs: the inversion of the social hierarchy and the fight between Carnival and Lent. Epistémon's katabasis is key to interpreting the moralising aspect of the inversion of the social order. On the one hand, the punishment of the rich and powerful dictates the fate of the fallen kings Anarche, Picrochole and, by extension, Panurge. Anarche's stoic acceptance of his uncrowning is depicted as a success, while Picrochole's refusal to accept defeat and Panurge's

sophistic rebuttal of his fate constitute emblematic examples of folly. Rabelais's complex appropriation of the fight between Carnival and Lent in the *Quart Livre* destabilises the traditional function of each character in order to mock and denounce religious dogmatism: Quaresmeprenant parodies Lenten rituals; the Andouilles parodies the Eucharist; and Mardigras typifies the *philantie* associated with dogmatism.

These examples are representative of the evolution of Rabelais's appropriation of carnivalesque motifs from moralising tools used to punish transgressions against the social and political order to polemical devices satirising religious dogmatism.

## 2.3 GROTESQUE BODY

### 2.3.1 The World Upside-Down of Antiphysie

In this section, I will examine the relationship between the grotesque body and the topos of the world upside-down. Various kinds of inversion take place in the body: functional inversion (some body parts are used for the opposite purpose of what they were meant to do); bodies are also presented in an improper or scatological way; and transformative inversion (the lower parts are placed above the higher ones). For Bakhtin, the grotesque body and the emphasis on the lower body stratum are central to Carnival and to Rabelais. My introductory example, the myth of Physie and Antiphysie, provides a useful framework for understanding the complexity of Rabelais's monsters: it presents them as upside-down creatures, going against nature and linked to hypocrisy and falsification. Then, building on Jeanneret (1984), who identifies a shift from a binary to an ambiguous depiction of the body, I will examine parodic and polemical representations of the body. I will argue that examples of the grotesque and lower body are representative of Rabelais's shift towards polemic.

Pantagruel tells Physie and Antiphysie's tale at the end of Quaresmeprenant's anatomy. In response to Physie's creation of Beauty and Harmony, Antiphysie and Tellumon

produced 'Amodunt' (Excess) and Discord, upside-down monsters with spherical heads. The story ends with Antiphysie's paradoxical praise of her children, which only convinces fools. Since then, Antiphysie has created a whole array of foolish and unnatural people (614-615). The tale of Antiphysie is borrowed from Calcagnini, but diverges from it in his omission of the arguments of Physie against Antiphysie's apology of her monstrous progeny. In Calcagnini's version, the gods send a delegation of virtues to restore the Golden Age, but such happy ending does not happen in Rabelais's retelling of the tale (Cooper 1981). Rather, it depicts a world out of bounds, in which Nature is distorted. Antiphysie is central to Rabelais's world and sums up everything that goes against Nature and harmony: 'To Antiphysie belongs everything that is artificial and stupid, that makes man into a freak or an automaton' (Eskin 1962: 173). In Kritzman's view, Antiphysie shows that sexual – and more generally material – impulses produce emptiness and sterility (Kritzman 1998: 353-4). Despite this accusation of sterility, Antiphysie seems at the basis of a wide range of monsters, unnatural beings and behaviours as well as paradoxical and polemical language. This episode reveals, for Defaux, the darker and more violent side of Humanism. He argues that Antiphysie's sophistic and paradoxical praise of her children represents the humanists' constant challenge against the established paradigm of scholasticism: 'the roles played by the humanists and the children of Antiphysie in their respective universes are likewise strangely similar. Both are condemned to be intruders, trouble-makers, eternal opponents' (Defaux 1995: 1035).

The description of Antiphysie's progeny and the enumeration of the people influenced by her paradoxical speech are key to determine what Rabelais denounces. The list concluding the tale connects the bodily features of Antiphysie's progeny – 'monstres difformes et contrefaits en despit de Nature' – with hypocrisy, bigotry and folly. Of particular importance to Rabelais is religious hypocrisy from both sides of the religious conflicts as demonstrated by expressions such as 'Calvins imposteurs de Genève' and

‘papelars’ (which could be a pun on *Pape* and *papal*). ‘Caphars’, ‘Chattemites’ and other hypocrites give precedence to appearance over essence and to the material world over spiritual issues. To conclude, the monstrous children of Antiphysie emblemise the world upside-down.

More problematic is Antiphysie’s appropriation of the topos of *homo arbor inversa*, man as an inverted tree. According to Antiphysie, her children follow the natural order since they imitate the shape of trees with hair representing roots, and the body and limbs representing the trunk and branches; while men are shaped like inverted trees (Chambers 1961; Sozzi 1993: 175; Sozzi 2002). To be shaped like an inverted tree, however, reveals one of the most fundamental characteristics of humanity: the upward orientation of the human body roots it in heaven and brings him closer to God. As Chambers (1961: 294) puts it: ‘Plato and his readers saw man as an inverted tree because of his spiritual origin, purpose, and end.’ This idea was pictured in the emblem book *Mikrokosmos* as shown below. (Fig. 66) The man points towards heaven to signify his heavenly nature.



Figure 66: ‘Homo arbor inversa’ (Jode 1579: 35)

Chambers also mentions two other kinds of inverted tree: the Aristotelian, which emphasises naturalistic causes, and the topsy-turvy. He observes that Platonic and Aristotelian views influenced distinct traditions, patristics and philosophy of nature respectively; and sometimes converged as ‘both Aristotle and Plato had agreed that man’s proper position is the inverted one; he is and should be an *arbor invera*’ (Chambers 1961: 296). The opposite view – that the inverted tree represents man’s inversion – can be traced back to Seneca: ‘you are putting the tree-top where the root ought to be’; and a similar commonplace can be found in Ficino: ‘it is as if one fixed his head in the ground and raised his feet aloft’ (Chambers 1961: 297).

In Sozzi’s view, the tale of Antiphysie demonstrates that, contrary to Bakhtin’s insistence on the downward movement, Rabelais’s work is ‘puissamment vivifiée par un mouvement vers le haut’ (Sozzi 1993: 175). The countless examples of debasing, demeaning, grotesque and scatological images can be interpreted as obstacles to the upward movement or as satire against hypocrisy and bigotry.<sup>36</sup> I will now turn to two illustrations of Sozzi’s argument: Rabelais’s appropriation of the theory of microcosm for parodic purposes in the episode of the world in Pantagruel’s mouth and as a polemical tool in the island of Messere Gaster; and the Ennasés and Grippe-Minaud, which hinge on metaphors for the lower body stratum.

### 2.3.2 The Microcosmic Body in Rabelais

#### **World in Pantagruel's Mouth**

Rabelais’s first instance of the theory of microcosm takes place in *Pantagruel* when the giant, having defeated Anarche, decides to attack the Almyrodes. To protect his army from the

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<sup>36</sup> Rigolot (1998: 53) suggests another way of reading such episodes: ‘Rabelais aura évité le prêchi-prêcha des sermonneurs de tous bords par une prodigieuse invention narrative: celle de *l'équivoque généralisée*.’ For Rigolot, the fundamental ambiguity of Rabelais’s writing is based on ‘une esthétique du renversement’. (Rigolot 1998: 42)

rain, he covers it with his tongue. The narrator, Alcofrybas, enters Pantagruel's mouth and discovers a whole world in which he stays for six months. Drawing from his experience in Pantagruel's mouth, Alcofrybas writes a book, 'Histoire de Gorgias', and is made lord of Salmigondin by Pantagruel (330-333).

Being swallowed by a giant monster is a well-known motif that can be traced back to the story of Jonah and Lucian's *A True Story*, for instance. Auerbach (1953) has shown that Rabelais aims at overturning the reader's expectations and identifies the world in Pantagruel's mouth as an example of relativism. He argues that 'Rabelais's entire effort is directed toward playing with things and [...] tempting the reader out of his customary and definite way of regarding things, by showing him phenomena in utter confusion' (Auerbach 1953: 262). According to Auerbach, Rabelais's relativism is most visible in the shifts between the themes of the domestic and the discovery of the New World. Rabelais's relativism inverts the theme of the world upside-down by depicting a familiar world instead of the topsy-turvy one expected by the reader in this context (Rigolot 2006: 48-50).

The fact that a whole world is contained in Pantagruel's mouth also relates to the theory of microcosm, which postulates that man is a small world, and that to each body part corresponds a celestial body, a metal, etc. This tradition derives from classical and medieval natural philosophy enriched by Patrology, Scholasticism and alchemy (Saulnier 1947: 418-22). The theory of microcosm is particularly widespread and popular in France throughout the sixteenth century. Saulnier observes that a large number of stock metaphors – such as the comparison between the lady's eyes and the sun – are based on the equivalence between man and the world (Saulnier 1947: 423). The topos of the world upside-down is also closely related to the microcosm, since it assumes that social and cosmic disorders are connected.

As a trained physician, Rabelais is well aware of the theory of microcosm.<sup>37</sup> Saulnier argues that Rabelais's relationship with the *école de Lyon* might have led him to mention the theory of microcosm in the *Tiers Livre*. Panurge uses this theory to argue that debts play a central role in the harmony of the cosmic, physiological and socio-political spheres; a world without debt, he claims, would become a world upside-down. However, the world in Pantagruel's mouth offers an earlier example of Rabelais's use of microcosm. This episode is based on similar principles, but inverts them by connecting social upheaval to physiological (rather than cosmic) disorders. Pantagruel is not a microcosm representing the macrocosm, rather he contains a macrocosm which reflects him. Rabelais's appropriation of microcosm in this episode does not pertain to the Bakhtinian notions of 'debasement through the lower body stratum' or 'downward movement'. Instead, it likens the human body – in this case the throat region – with the cosmos.

As Antonioli points out, the description of the world in Pantagruel's mouth borrows from Galen's medical metaphors: 'il compare la bouche à une cavité percée de routes, l'œsophage à un isthme, l'estomac à un grenier, le corps tout entier à une ville marchande où chacun s'affaire à sa tâche, où règne un ordre divin, invisible et infaillible, immuable et spontané' (Antonioli 1976: 155). However, the world in Pantagruel constitutes an unstable microcosm. Its scale and topology constantly fluctuate: Pantagruel's teeth are compared to mountains, while his whole mouth is mistaken for a dovecote by pigeons. The problems of scale, proportions and perspective contribute to the contrast between the strangeness of this world and the familiarity of some of the elements it contains, thus disorienting and confusing the reader.<sup>38</sup> The inhabitants of the world in Pantagruel's mouth are subjected to the giant's

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<sup>37</sup> The microcosm is central to the medical theories of Galen and Hippocrates. Not only had these authors a considerable influence on sixteenth-century medicine, but Gryphe published works by Galen and Hippocrates commented by Rabelais in Lyon, in 1532. (Bouchet 1992)

<sup>38</sup> 'Les éléments qui servent habituellement de points de repère – les étapes, la durée des séjours dans les divers lieux, les ébauches de conversations avec les autochtones – contribuent à désorienter le lecteur, à dérober le sol sous ses pas et à faire disparaître le paysage sous son regard' (Lestringant 1989: 49).

health and well-being: when he suffers from bad breath, people die by the thousands, recalling the casualties of the plague. Weber (1993: 158-9) observes that this episode revolves around a series of binary oppositions : ‘campagne et ville, région malsaine et région édénique, en deça des monts et au-delà des monts’ (See also: Lestringant 1989). These binary oppositions can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, they relate to the theory of microcosm insofar as they indicate the impact of various zones of Pantagruel’s body on the social order. On the other, they reflect Rabelais’s anti-Italianism: he assigns pejorative characteristics to the region beyond the giant’s teeth, which refers to Italy, the land beyond the Alps.

Another divergence with the theory of microcosm is Rabelais’s focus on the throat: rather than depicting the relationships between all of the body parts and organs, the world in Pantagruel’s mouth is restricted to the throat area. For instance, the names of the cities – Aspharage, Laryngues and Pharyngues – all refer to the throat. Alcofrybas’s book ‘Histoire de Gorgias’ plays on the polysemy of *Gorgias*, which can mean both elegant and pertaining to the throat. Finally, the comic effect of the narrator’s conversation with Pantagruel at the end of the episode depends on the repetition of ‘vostre gorge’. Gaignebet (1979) links this repetition with the name Gargantua itself and interprets it as a reminiscence of free-mason rituals. A simpler explanation for Rabelais’s focus on the throat is that the microcosm is itself structured according to a binary opposition between the higher regions of Pantagruel’s body (mouth, throat, teeth, lips, etc.), which are more or less hospitable; and the lower regions, whose influence is nefarious (the giant’s digestive problems are responsible for the plague). In this episode, the intrusion of the lower body stratum is either naturalistic (as in the example above) or comic (as Alcofrybas’s defecation in Pantagruel’s throat clearly shows), but does not involve debasement or desecration. The passage, which offers a parodic reworking of the epic theme of the giant beast swallowing the hero and of the widespread theory of microcosm, clearly illustrates the upward movement described by Sozzi: Pantagruel’s mouth

becomes a whole world and enables Alcofrybas to develop relativist views, to travel, to write a successful book and to rise socially. To illustrate how Rabelais uses the theory of the microcosm on a more polemical context, I will now analyse the episode of Messere Gaster.

### **Messere Gaster**

In the episode of Gaster, Rabelais alludes to the theory of microcosm to illustrate the supremacy of the belly. I will argue that, in this episode, Rabelais's polemical use of the theory of microcosm is to be understood within the context of the Gallican crisis of 1551, and prefigures the Huguenot satire against the Pope during the religious wars. As a result, this episode provides a clear example of the shift from parody to polemic between *Pantagruel* and the *Quart Livre*.

Having visited the Papimanes and encountered the frozen words at sea, Pantagruel arrives in an Island ruled by Gaster, whose orders shake heaven and earth. Gaster is served by two kinds of people: the Engastrimythes (ventriloquists) and the Gastrolâtres (belly worshippers), who offer him a wide range of food in sacrifice. Pantagruel loathes Gaster, but holds his ingenuity responsible for human progress (671-687).

Pantagruel's encounter with Gaster – the belly, hunger – refers to, and parodies, a variety of classical and contemporary sources among which are Hesiod's *Works and Days*, Lemaire's *Concorde des deux langaiges* for the description of Gaster's manor and Plato's *Symposium* and its commentary by Ficino for Gaster as a parody of Love (Cave 1988). For Jeanneret (1994), Gaster embodies, like Love, the principle of *concordia discors* and invites the reader to distinguish two levels of signification. Gray observes that the allusion to Hesiod provides the pun 'vertu=ventre', which summarises Rabelais's main theme (Gray 1994: 172-76). The Gastrolâtres' sacrifice to Gaster can also be seen as a satire and critique of the Catholic Mass (Duval 1988; Krause 1999). I will focus on three levels of inversion in this

episode: the paradoxical praise of Gaster, the debasement of liturgy through the belly imagery, and the depictions of the Engastrimythes and the Gastrolâtres, inverted creatures.

The praise of Gaster ‘premier maistre es ars du monde’ is threefold: first, the narrator invokes classical authorities to illustrate Gaster’s cosmic powers; second, he observes the influence of Gaster over animals and humans; finally, Gaster is praised as the inventor of agriculture and the subsequent technological advances.<sup>39</sup> The main paradox consists in praising the belly above the rest of the body (Ogino 1989). A second level of signification enriches this observation. Several clues – including the relationship between Gaster and Penia, the praise of Gaster as master of the arts, and Rabelais’s direct allusion to Plato’s *Symposium* – contribute to identify Gaster with Love (Marichal 1956: 183-202). Jeanneret (1994) argues that this parallel highlights the complexity and polyvalence of Gaster. This association, which regards Gaster as an instance of *concordia discors*, is based on the binary oppositions that pervade the episode: the island is part inhospitable and sterile desert, part heavenly garden; Gaster can be seen as a terrifying idol or as the first master of the arts.<sup>40</sup> From these observations follow other oppositions between fertility and sterility, materialism and spirituality, fullness and vacuum, nature and anti-nature, literal and figurative meaning.

In order to explain the supremacy of Gaster, Rabelais alludes to Aesop’s fable *The Belly and the Members*. It illustrates the prominence of the belly over the rest of the human body: after they attempted to rebel against the belly, the limbs are forced to abdicate in order to survive. This fable places the belly and the lower body functions at the centre of the human anatomy. Based on the theory describing man as a microcosm, it is often interpreted as one of the first examples of the metaphor of the body politic (Harvey 2007). Rabelais already referred to this fable in Panurge’s paradoxical praise of debts in the *Tiers Livre*. In this passage,

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<sup>39</sup> Gaster is comparable to Adam’s fall in Scève’s *Microcosme* since they are both responsible for human technological advances. (Saulnier 1947)

<sup>40</sup> As Weber (1993) points out, Rabelais often builds his myths around such binary oppositions.

debt plays the same role as the belly, that is to say the harmonising and governing principle between all the other body parts. Since microcosm and macrocosm are interrelated, the same line of reasoning applies to the social and cosmic spheres.

The debate between the belly and the members triggers an allusion to the Council of Basel in 1431, prompted by the Gallican crisis of 1551.<sup>41</sup> The power relation between the Pope and the Council – the main stake of the Council of Basel – echoes the conflict between the belly and other body parts (Holt 2005: 7-50). Building on Cooper's study of the Gallican crisis of 1551 in relation to Papimanie and Marichal's analysis of the Gallican undertones of *Medamothi*, I contend that the episode of Gaster confirms and emphasises Rabelais's Gallican view (Marichal 1956: 106; Cooper 1998). Comparing Gaster with the Pope brings to mind the 'processus de deification du Dieu en terre, [...] ou carrément du Dieu Pape terre' (Cooper 1998: 317). Cooper also points out Du Moulin's attack against processions as evidence of Gallican satire against the Pope : '[II] s'est fait publiquement nommer Dieu en terre, soy faisant porter et ostenter plus dignement qu'un corps saint par luy faict et canonizé tel' (Du Moulin 1564: 407; Cooper 1998: 318). The satire against processions and against the materialism of the Pope recalls the Gastrolâtres' worship of Gaster and their sacrifice to Manduce, its effigy. Described as a disproportionate monster, Manduce has 'la teste plus grosse que tout le reste du corps, avecques amples, larges, et horricques maschoueres bien endentelées'. Rabelais's emphasis on Manduce's monstrous head can be interpreted as an attack against the Pope, the monstrous and devouring head of the Church body.

The debasement of the Pope and of religious institutions through their association with the lower body, especially with the belly, is a commonplace of the religious polemic in the sixteenth century. Several elements suggest that this episode attacks the Catholic liturgy on many levels. Duval points out the similarities between the Gastrolâtres' sacrifice and the

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<sup>41</sup> Examples of Gallican works of the period include: Du Moulin 1564 and Du Tillet 1594.

Eucharist: the ceremony follows the same protocol and the host and wine become a long list of victuals (Duval 1998). Also, their fear to ‘le Ventre offenser et emmaigrir’ evokes accusations of gluttony and greed against the clergy. The allusion to St Paul’s Epistle to the Philippians indicates that the passage may also be an attack against the materialism of the Eucharist. As I will show in chapter 3, such images gain more prominence as the religious and political tensions leading to the wars of religion increase.

The Gastrolâtres and the Engastrimythes are also inverted beings. For Jeanneret, Gaster’s worshippers represent the sterility of univocal and restrictive interpretation: ‘C’est l’estomac qui, dans ce monde renversé, s’empare du discours. [...] La parole libre et créatrice se trouve asservie au despotisme de la panse’ (Jeanneret 1994: 121). Duval considers that the Engastrimythes and the Gastrolâtres represent two aspects of the idolatry described by St Paul. The narrator, however, describes the Gastrolâtres as monsters representative of the variety of Nature. To do so, he compares the diversity among the Gastrolâtres, to the variety of seashells. This comparison – based on Erasmus’s adage ‘conchas legera’ (V, ii, 20) – works on several levels of meaning.

It connects them to the Sorbonne through the use of the expression ‘Gastrolâtres Coquillons’ since *coquillon* means small shell and designates the Sorbonne’s members’ small hat and a fool’s cap (*DMF*, s. v. ‘coquillon’). The Gastrolâtres, with their inverted beliefs and sacrifices, belong to the group of the ‘Sorbonagres, Sorbonigènes, Sorbonicoles, Sorboniformes.’ Much of the attacks against the Sorbonne in the period revolve around the notion of intestinal distress. In this case, Rabelais illustrates the ingestion preceding the ‘coliques sorbonniques’ (Persels 2003). The image of the seashell reveals another level of signification: seashells and Gastrolâtres are both empty shapes, voids to be filled. Emptiness, as the narrator indicates afterwards, is unnatural and threatens the order of things. As a result, the Gastrolâtres are described not only as greedy materialists, but also as monsters, foolish Sorbonne theologians and hollow creatures.

To conclude, I have shown that Rabelais's appropriation of the theory of microcosm reflects the historical context: in *Pantagruel*, it alludes to the discovery of the New World and parodies medical discourse; while, in the *Quart Livre*, it promotes Gallicanism and debases the Pope. My analysis shows that both passages are representative of the upward movement: the world in Pantagruel's mouth focuses on higher body function and enables Alcofrybas to educate himself and rise socially; while the episode of Gaster praises human ingenuity through Gaster and warns against the materialist and downward orientation of the Pope.

### 2.3.3 The Metaphorical Lower Body

#### **The Ennasés**

Images of the lower body stratum pervade Rabelais's work. For Bakhtin (1984: 23), the lower body stratum is associated with the cycle of death and renewal, and with 'unifying, degrading, uncrowning, and simultaneously regenerating functions.' As the significance of scatological images has already been studied at length (Charpentier 1992; Persels 1996; Frei 2011), I will concentrate on metaphorical images of the lower body in the *Quart Livre* and *Cinquième Livre*. I will argue that these images debunk and debase falsifications: the spiritual unions of the Ennasés are symbolically denounced as lustful and sterile; and the justice of the Chats-fourrez is associated with feces and sterile gold. Thus, these episodes demonstrate the escalation of Rabelais's polemical tone between the *Quart Livre* and *Cinquième Livre*, and the debasement of falsely elevated objects/notions (marital unions, justice, gold) characteristic of Sozzi's upward movement.

After Panurge's altercation with the merchant Dindenault, the Pantagruelians stop at the island Ennasin, named after its triangular shape, which also reflects the shape of the islanders' nose. The locals claim to be all parents and related to each other by strange alliances. The rest of the chapter consists in a detailed list of these mock alliances (556-560).

Telle (1952) considers that the anagram Ennasin (deprived of nose)/Essenien (a Jewish sect considered at the time as the origin of monasticism) is the key of the episode. He focuses on Rabelais's attack against monastic orders: the vulgar undertones of the strange alliances would denounce the carnal relationships among nuns and monks who hypocritically claim to pursue spiritual goals (See also: ed. Defaux 1994: 240). For Marichal (1953), Rabelais mocks the Neo-Platonist and mannerist vocabulary of love. This episode has also been read as a gratuitous play on the arbitrariness of signs, (Beaujour 1969: 38-9) and as a representation of the world upside-down announcing Antiphysie (Glauser 1966: 248). I will argue that Ennasin takes its name from its inhabitants' lack of the virtues of people gifted with a large nose: a strong character, wittiness and bravery. Such qualities are associated with the prominent nose of Frère Jean, for instance. Instead, the Ennasés are characterised by their abnormal unions and their unbridled sexuality.

The mock alliances of Ennasin are based on simple puns and popular proverbs taken literally. They are instances of silly weddings, which were often targeted by *charivaris*. One of these unions, between 'Un bacchelier en busche' and 'une jeune bachelette' (558), provides clear evidence of Rabelais's allusion to silly weddings and *charivaris* in this episode. As the lovers call each other 'Muse' and 'Corne', Panurge remarks: 'Acouplez les (dist Panurge) et leurs soufflez au cul. Ce sera un cornemuse' (558). Panurge's unpacking of the pun evokes the carnivalesque processions of the *Soufflaculs*:

[Les Soufflaculs] sont vêtus d'une longue chemise blanche de femme et coiffés d'un bonnet de nuit ; ils dansent à la queue leu leu en soufflant au derrière de celui qui les précède avec un soufflet de cuisine ; ils entonnent des chansons dont le refrain est : Boffa-li al quiou (Souffle-lui au cul) (Daumas 2008: 116).

Armed with bellows, the *Soufflaculs* target silly weddings, which they disrupt until they receive a compensation. They use bellows, which can be seen as symbolic phalluses, to mimic sodomy and humiliate the future husband and each other. Gaignebet (1974) interprets

bellows and bagpipes as a way, along with flatulent food and other instruments, to regulate the sacred winds. In any case, Panurge's mentions of bagpipes and of the *Soufflaculs* indicate that the unions described in this episode are foolish and belong to Carnival.

The first couple encountered by Pantagruel – an old man designated as 'ma fille' and a young girl called 'mon père' – is indicative of the two kinds of inversion at work in Ennasin: the improper union of an old man and a young girl and the divorce between things and their names. The other unions described in the chapter share a common pattern: men and women address themselves with names of trivial or gross objects semantically connected; then, a member of Pantagruel's crew observes that the combination of both names makes an obscene pun.

Unions such as these were condemned because they were deemed to deviate from moral and matrimonial norms and to threaten the cohesion and continuity of the community. In Ennasin, however, such unions are the norm and they guarantee the continuity of the community. The weird names the Ennasés call each other can be compared to puns or enigmas whose answer is always related to sexual intercourse. These unions can be considered as inverted for three reasons: first, they suggest carnal relations while they are supposed to embody spiritual bonding; second, they unite mismatched people; and last, they debase spiritual unions by comparing them with trivial objects.

The constant focus on the unbridled sexuality of the Ennasés seems at odds with their lack of nose insofar as the sizes of the nose and phallus are traditionally correlated. Marichal (1953) argues that the lack of nose and the nose shaped like an ace of clubs is a commonplace. To support his claim, he quotes part of the *Naséide* published in 1558 by Bérenger de la Tour d'Albenas. However, the expression does not appear anywhere else and Bérenger's *Naséide* is dedicated to Rabelais and refers to him directly. It is reasonable to infer that the image of the nose shaped like an ace of clubs is a Rabelaisian invention borrowed

by Bérrenger.<sup>42</sup> In the *Naséide*, a nose ‘comme un as de treffles’ points to the unflattering equivalence between the size of the nose and of the phallus:

Qui ha le nez contrefaict et bossé,  
Trop, ou trop peu, ou poinctu, ou moussé,  
Et comme un as de treffles se renfroingne,  
Des lieux publicz meu de honte il s’esloigne,  
Pour eviter les pernicious blasmes  
Qu’on luy impose, & mesmement les femmes (Marichal 1953: 158).

The correlation between the nose, or lack thereof, and the phallus is particularly problematic in the context of Ennasin and difficult to reconcile with the Ennasés’ sexuality. This apparent contradiction can be solved by considering that, in the world upside-down of Ennasin, words replace things. The unbridled sexuality of the Ennasés recalls Antiphysie, which, despite her countless children, is sterile.

Also significant is Rabelais’s mention of the ‘aultre monde’, which suggests a connection with the New World and polemic. Rabelais also uses this expression in the episode of the Isle Sonnante, which will be studied in more detail in section 3.4.2. This similitude can be explained by the fact that both episodes satirises the Church: ‘La grande famille d’Ennasin renvoie à un modèle, qu’elle déforme et travestit dans un but satirique, très probablement la famille institutionnelle et spirituelle du clergé (Lestringant 2001a: 93). A thought-provoking way of approaching the relationship between this episode and the New World is to compare it with the dedicatory epistle of the *Naséide*. Dedicated to ‘Alcofibras (sic) indien, Roy de Nasée’, the epistle presents the poem as a letter sent to the king of Nasée, a kingdom of the New World where everyone possesses exceptionally large noses. The author glosses over ‘l’estendue du Royaume, fertilité de la terre, somptuosité des palaix, et disposition de sa republique’ and focuses, instead, on the punishment of criminals: they are condemned to hold a large basin under their chins in order to serve as solar dials. The author

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<sup>42</sup> According to Lefranc, Bérrenger alludes to Rabelais’s focus on noses in his physical descriptions of characters (and possibly refers to Rabelais’s own appendage) in order to write a piece on famous, especially Rabelaisian, noses. (Lefranc 1925: 18-23)

wonders whether such an unrealistic people really exists, before recalling other monstrous people. Nasée, as its name clearly shows, has been conceived as the diametrical opposite of Ennasin and the portrait of Rabelais as a utopian king recalls, in reverse, the representation of Villegagnon as a cannibal from the New World in various polemical works of the religious wars, which will be studied in section 3.3. To this extent, Ennasin prefigures the polemic against the ‘France Antarctique’ and Villegagnon.

To conclude, this episode offers a striking example of the metaphorical lower body stratum by constantly alluding to sexuality and phalluses, but only through puns and oblique images. The contradiction between the Ennasés’ sexuality and their lack of nose/phallus points to Antiphysie. The reception of this episode connects it to a dystopic New World, potentially inhabited by clerics or monks.

### **Grippe-Minaud and the Chats-fourrez**

The monstrous bottom of the judge of the Chats-fourrez, Grippe-Minaud, will be the last example of metaphorical lower body image I will study. First, I will argue that the Chats-fourrez and Grippe-Minaud are inverted creatures, whose corruption is responsible for cosmic and social disorders. Second, I will show that greed is the main characteristic of these monsters and that it is directly related, for comic and polemical purposes, to metaphors and polysemic scatological images of the lower body, especially of the bottom.

In the *Cinquième Livre*, Pantagruel’s companions are made prisoners by the Chats-fourrez and their monstrous archduke Grippe-Minaud in a place called the ‘Guichet’, where they dispense a perverse justice motivated by greed. The Pantagruelians must answer Grippe-Minaud’s enigma to avoid certain death. Panurge explains the riddle and buys their freedom. (749-61)

The confrontation with Grippe-Minaud and the Chats-fourrez has been interpreted, on the one hand, as a satire of the justice system and as a potential alchemical allegory on the

other. Desan (2002a: 104-119; 2002b: 187-198) connects the justice system with economics and sees in this episode an attack against the greed and abuse of power of the justice system. Cambefort (2001) suggests a higher, alchemical meaning for this passage and interprets the perversion of the Chats-fourrez alongside the *nigredo*, the first step of the *Magnum opus*. For Menini (2014), the episode of the Chats-fourrez is related to the last chapter of the *Quart Livre*: eluding the satire of the justice system, he shows the parallels between both passages in terms of scatology and hermetism. Finally, Lestringant (2014) brings to light possible links between Grippe-Minaud, Marot's *L'Enfer* and a print by Baptiste Pellerin.

Grippe-Minaud and the Chats-fourrez are described as inverted beings, dispensing a kind of justice based on negative transformative inversions: 'Car parmy eux vice est vertu appellée: meschanceté est bonté surnommée: trahison a nom de feauté: larrecin est dict liberalité'. According to the narrator, they are responsible for all cataclysmic events, such as 'pestes [...], famine, ou guerres, vorages, cateclismes, conflagrations, mal'heur' (750). The influence of the Chats-fourrez's violence and greed is considered the most nefarious and prominent of all, beyond infanticide mothers, physicians, heretics, tyrants and the Pope. This hyperbolic criticism attains cosmic proportions when Grippe-Minaud warns the Pantagruelians that failing to answer the riddle would result in the earth opening itself to swallow them alive (752). The use of infernal imagery throughout the episode underlines the cosmic dimension of the Chats-fourrez's corruption. The place they inhabit is compared to lake Avernus, the entrance to Hell: 'facilement on y entroit, comme en Averne. A issir restoit la difficulté' (751). Grippe-Minaud's eyes are compared to a 'gueule d'enfer' – a theatrical device in religious plays and a prominent element in medieval and Renaissance representations of Hell. (See section 3.2.3).

The inverted justice of the Chats-fourrez is based on greed. The interplay between the judicial and economic spheres offers puns such as 'serrargent' for sergent (749).

Onomastics provides key information for understanding the character of Grippe-Minaud and the Chats-fourrez. The name of the archduke of the Chats-fourrez, which appeared in *Gargantua* in association with usurers (142), is linked to the verb *gripper* (to seize, to clutch): ‘Il semble bien que l’on puisse dès lors lire la première partie du nom de Grippe-Minaud comme une rapine, un vol d’argent’ (Desan 2002: 108). The second part of the name evokes a sum of money (Philipot 1907: 143). The Chats-fourrez are named after the coat lined with ermine characteristic of people in the justice system, but *fourrer* also suggests dissimulation as well as money counterfeiting. Greed is also suggested by Grippe-Minaud’s constant repetition of ‘orça’, which alludes to gold and signifies his obsession with money. Finally, as Desan argues, the exchange at the end of the episode between Panurge and the Chats-fourrez describes – as well as criticises – the transition between a system in which judges and lawyers are paid in kind with ‘espices’ or ‘epiceries’ towards a system based on gold (Desan 2002: 115-17). L’Hospital says that ‘Anciennement, en France, les juges ne prenoient rien des parties pour faire justice, si ce n’est ce qu’on appelloit espices, qui sont depuis converties, par une vilaine métamorphose, en or et en argent’ (Desan 2002: 117). This metamorphosis could be considered as an inverted alchemical *Magnum opus* whereby gold is obtained by trickery and corruption.

Rabelais’s satire of the justice system does not only underline the judges’ and lawyers’ greed, but also debases them through scatological images associated with lower body functions, especially defecation. The relationship between scatology and greed is made clear in the implied rhyme *cul/écu*. The obscene imagery related to the bottom and defecation is repeated throughout the episode: the Chats-fourrez ‘conchient tout’ (750); the word ‘guichet’ also designates the bottom and is used in the last chapter of the *Quart Livre* in that sense (‘le guichet du serrail on quel est à temps la matiere fecale retenue’: 698); Frère Jean’s intervention after Panurge’s resolution of the enigma (‘je souheterois que le trou de mon cul devienne febve, et au tour soit de ces cossons mangés.’ 756). Frere Jean also uses the curse

word ‘bran’, before calling the Chats-fourrez ‘mache-estrons, mache-foires, mache-merdes’ (758). Rabelais’s scatological imagery mocks the economic model at the basis of the justice system. The polysemy of the word Guichet suggests that money and goods, which are retained and stolen by the Chats-fourrez, are equivalent to fecal matter being accumulated in the viscera. The equivalence between goods, money and fecal matter also motivates Frère Jean’s name-calling. Cambefort argues that Rabelais’s insistence on the bottom in this passage can also be interpreted alchemically insofar as feces and bottom are symbolically related to the *nigredo*. This stage of the *Opus magnum*, according to Cambefort, ‘l’Œuvre au noir [...] se réfère au caractère rétrograde de l’opération effectuée [...]. Nous sommes en plein dans la problématique d’inversion, de régression, de retournement de notre épisode’ (Cambefort 2001: 182). Cave’s argument on the double-edgedness of gold sheds some light on Rabelais’s scatological debasement of the gold of Grippe-Minaud: the bribes obtained by the corrupt justice system are deprived of the spiritual value of Cave’s ‘or-charité’. It follows that Grippe-Minaud’s gold can be compared, as in L’Hospital’s analysis, to an inverted alchemical operation whereby gold loses its spiritual value. This conclusion connects the satirical and hermetic interpretations of this episode.

The character of Grippe-Minaud has also been the subject of various sixteenth-century emblematic and visual representations. Pellerin clearly displays the monstrous and scatological aspects of the Chats-fourrez’s justice in one of his prints inspired by Rabelais (Lestringant 2014). (Fig. 67) The illustration shows a couple bribing Grippe-Minaud, who is represented sitting at a table, leaning forward to clutch the goods with his bottom on display. A Chat-fourrez is sticking bellows in Grippe-Minaud’s bottom to do an enema, while a servant watches. On the right, dragons are packed into bags. The whole scene is dominated by an ominous gibet where two people are hung. Aneau’s emblem ‘Amphilepsis’ (to catch from both sides) presents a similar scene: a lawyer is taking payment from a couple while a servant is doing an enema. When asked about what he is doing, the lawyer answers: ‘Capiro

parte ab utraque simul' (I am dining from both ends). (Fig. 68) These visual images make explicit the scatological dimension of the episode of Grippe-Minaud and the Chats-fourrez and connects it to greed. The idea of 'dining from both ends' also offers an example of functional, bodily inversion: instead of being used to defecate, the bottom becomes a means to absorb even more riches.



*Figure 67: 'La Corruption d'un chat-fourrez dans l'isle de la Condemnation', Pellerin, B. (1551-1569) RF 54*

798, Louvre.



Figure 68: 'Amphilepsis' (Aneau 1552b: 23)

#### 2.3.4 Conclusion

In this section, I have analysed the grotesque body in relation to the topos of the world upside-down. By referring to Rabelais's appropriation of the theory of microcosm and to metaphorical images of the lower body stratum, I have shown that the Rabelaisian grotesque body is continuously associated with functional inversion: one speaks from the belly and defecates in the mouth. I have demonstrated that this kind of inversion of the human body functions can be interpreted as examples of upward movement (as in the world in Pantagruel's mouth) or as satire against downward, materialist impulses (as in Gaster, Ennasin and Grippe-Minaud). In doing so, I have illustrated the development of Rabelais's tone from parody (in *Pantagruel*) to satire and polemic (in the *Quart Livre* and *Cinquième Livre*). In order to examine the place of the *Tiers Livre*, I will now turn to one of its central theme, the wisdom of folly or *morosophie*.

## 2.4 WISDOM AND FOLLY

### 2.4.1 Wisdom of Folly

The emergence and development of the figure of the wise fool extends from late Middle Ages to Renaissance. Folly acquired a predominant, if not universal, status by the end of the fifteenth century. The notion of folly is central to the *Tiers Livre*, especially Panurge's *philautie* or self-centredness can be considered as 'ignorance de la parole divine', and, therefore, as foolish (Dupèbe: 1999: 96). Gendre (1978) provides a more speculative interpretation of Rabelaisian folly by diagnosing Panurge based on linguistic evidence. In this section, I will show the change of perspective in Rabelais's account of folly in the first three books through the evolution in Panurge's characterisation, and conclude with a hypothesis for the sudden shift in the depiction of folly in the *Quart Livre*.

Of crucial importance to Rabelais is Brant's *Ship of Fools*, which shows that most of the world was comprised of fools. The importance of folly and its paradoxical association with wisdom are consequences of a series of apologetic writings on the folly of Christ and the wisdom of folly, which I will briefly sketch below. The medieval Feast of Fools, predominantly clerical in nature, was based on St Paul's doctrine of the foolishness of Christ and aimed to elevate the humble and vice versa. This doctrine gave rise, during the fifteenth century, to theological justifications of foolishness and of the figure of the divine fool. One of the most widely read manuals praising foolishness and humility was Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi*. Kempis advocates humility and maintains that true wisdom consists in acknowledging one's ignorance and foolishness: 'Si tibi videtur quod multa scis et satis bene intelligis, scito tamen quia sunt multo plura quae nescis. Noli altum sapere, sed ignorantiam tuam magis fatere' (Kempis 1902-22: 8). (If you think that you know many things and have great understanding, then know for certain that there is much you do not know. So do not think highly of yourself, but confess your ignorance and folly.)

The complex interplay between folly and wisdom was theorised by Cusanus in his fundamental treatise *Of Learned Ignorance*: ‘For a man – even one very well versed in learning – will attain unto nothing more perfect than to be found to be most learned in the ignorance which is distinctively his. The more he knows that he is unknowing, the more learned he will be’ (Cusanus 1981: 9). The ability to generate knowledge and wisdom from self-questioning is central to the question of the coexistence of wisdom and folly that Cusanus calls *Of Learned Ignorance*, and informs, as I have shown earlier in the thesis, Erasmus’s *Moriae Encomium*. (See sections 1.3.2 and 1.4.2). The fool therefore becomes an ambiguous figure during Renaissance: ‘on the one hand, it remained a term of opprobrium or condescension (with a mercilessly enlarged application), on the other hand, it had become a term of praise and aspiration’ (Kaiser 1964: 11). Rabelais’s fools perfectly embody this ambiguity, as some of them attain wisdom by embracing folly, while others, like Panurge, never fully accept folly.

Kaiser’s chapter on Rabelais shows that the various consultations are meant to help Panurge achieve wise folly: ‘the story told by Rabelais is a story of *l’éducation du fou*’ (Kaiser 1964: 127). Drawing from Duval’s interpretation of the structure of the *Tiers Livre* as well as from Clark’s observation that this narrative belongs to the world of farce (see also: Duval 1997; Clark 1983; Koopmans 2006, Renner 2007b), Hayes (2010) argues that Pantagruel plays the role of trickster and attempts to cure Panurge of his self-centredness, or *philantie*. However, Panurge’s attempt fails and the farce is left unresolved. According to Hayes (2010), Rabelais appropriates farcical conventions, radically transforming them in the process and conflating them with evangelical humanist elements to produce a new form of farce, as well as a new form of humanist satire. The traditional farcical model, which seeks to reinforce the social order by punishing characters who transgress the norm, is subverted.

Rabelais places farcical structures and elements in a humanist context to depict alternatives to legal, educational, theological and social institutions (Hayes 2010: 1-22). I will

focus on the legal system and debates as representative examples in order to show the evolution of Panurge's characterisation and of the notion of folly.

#### 2.4.2 Foolish Trials

In this section, I will compare and contrast Bridoye's trial (*Tiers Livre*: 474-90) with the Baisecul and Humevesne trial (*Pantagruel*: 250-62). These trials share a significant number of characteristics: they are unintelligible, insist on the slowness of justice, are elegantly solved by Pantagruel, and present cases in which laws contradict themselves, called cases of *perplexitez* (Geonget 2006). However, Bridoye's trial overturns many of the aspects of the Baisecul – Humevesne trial. I will show how the conception of the fool changes from trickster to divine fool, and how the fool, who solves the dispute in *Pantagruel*, becomes the accused in the *Tiers Livre*.

Bridoye's trial constitutes a comical interlude between Panurge's final consultation with the fool Triboulet and the previous consultations with a variety of learned characters. Pantagruel decides to attend the trial of Bridoye with his companions. The judge Bridoye – accused of injustice – explains how and why he pronounces each sentence according to a throw of the dice. Having heard Bridoye's defence, Pantagruel pleads in his favour and underscores his old age, his *simplesse* and his otherwise impeccable record. Finally, he relates a story and concludes that cases of *perplexitez*, which are often overturned by human justice, are best solved by God and chance (474-490).

As Huchon points out, the trial between Baisecul and Humevesne belongs to the traditions of the *coq-à-l'âne* and of the medieval *fatrasie* (n. 1: 1282-1283; see also: Parkin 1985). The accumulation of nonsensical *galimatias* empties words from their meaning, and satirises the incoherence and obfuscation of legal glosses. Bridoye's line of defence is also unintelligible, but for different reasons: his line of defence gives well-reasoned arguments supported by an accumulation of legal references and *brocards*; however, he applies them

inappropriately and without understanding them. According to Cooper (2014), Bridoye's inappropriate use of legal references makes him guilty of extreme literalism. Unlike the Baisecul – Humevesne trial, the episode of Bridoye appears to follow proper procedures, while justifying misconducts (such as judging parties according to the amount of paperwork they produce, deliberately extending delays and throwing dice to make a decision). Thus, the satire of the Baisecul – Humevesne trial is mostly based on the use of an absurd and comical genre, namely the *coq-à-l'âne*, whereas Bridoye's trial becomes incoherent because of the excessive use of legal references, and by arguing logically – albeit inappropriately – to support an illogical behaviour: 'Bridoye fait indéniablement erreur dans ses jugements, mais ce n'est ni par incompetence, ni par vice de forme' (Geonget 2006: 103).

By setting this farcical and encomiastic story on divine folly in the legal system, Rabelais offers an important inversion: the fool – a character that is not required, nor expected, by definition, to abide by the law – is not only represented as perfectly competent in the letter of the law, but also transcends the limitations of the legal system. Kaiser, who considers Bridoye as a wise fool, distinguishes three main themes in this episode: the inadequacy of the law as a tool to understand or describe the human experience; the assumption that time reveals the truth, exemplified by a series of stories; and the opposition between reason and faith. In Kaiser's opinion, 'The lesson is that human reason cannot resolve [Panurge's] doubt and that time alone will provide the answer to his question about cuckoldry' (Kaiser 1964: 174). However, this episode is characterised as unresolved or open (Renner 2004; Renner 2006: 159), especially when compared to the trial between Baisecul and Humevesne: 'Both trials are intentionally absurd, yet while the nonsensical trial in *Pantagruel* leads to a resolution which satisfies the litigants and humiliates the legal establishment, in the case of Bridoye, it is difficult to determine who, if anyone, is being satirized' (Hayes 2010: 155-6).

These trials also diverge in their respective conclusion. Even though Pantagruel settles both cases, he does so in a completely different way. In the first trial, he gives the verdict, to the satisfaction of both parties, using the same incoherent language as the rest of the trial and satirises Baisecul and Humevesne as well as the legal institution. Pantagruel's crafty response to Baisecul and Humevesne's nonsensical verbiage portrays him as a fool, in the sense of trickster. In Bridoye's trial, however, Pantagruel depicts Bridoye as a prototypical divine fool, and therefore as God's instrument. His line of reasoning consists in blaming Bridoye's old age for turning him into a fool, and highlights the old judge's past record in order to present him as a fool following divine inspiration.

Pantagruel's leniency towards Bridoye supports his apology of fools and folly preceding this episode. To this extent, Bridoye's trial does not delay Panurge's consultation with the fool Triboulet, but prepares this fundamental episode. Bridoye's trial participates to the narrative structure of the *Tiers Livre* as a transitional episode between Panurge's consultations of learned characters and his final exchange with Triboulet. The subject of folly is introduced as Pantagruel convinces Panurge to seek the help of Triboulet. They proceed with a blazon of the fool, in which Pantagruel's language, distinctively apologetic, contrasts with Panurge's criticism. Screech points out the discrepancy between Pantagruel's and Panurge's language in this passage. For Screech, Pantagruel's appreciative language demonstrates that he recognises in Triboulet a divine and wise fool, a *morosophe*. Panurge's depreciative answers, however, are further proof that he cannot identify the wisdom of folly (Screech 1979: 341; Demonet-Launay 1988).

After the trial, both Panurge and Epistémon express doubts concerning Bridoye's method and results : 'Mais que diriez vous de cestuy heur des dez continue en succès de tant d'années ? Pour un ou deux jugemens ainsi donnez à l'aventure je ne me esbahirois, mesmement en matieres de soy ambiguës, intrinquées, perplexes, et obscures' (489).

According to Epistémon, the success of Bridoye's method is not, in itself, surprising, but only statistically improbable: in isolated cases or when human reason is too weak to grasp the whole issue, methods such as these could be valid. The response to Panurge and Epistémon reinforces and clarifies the status of Bridoye as a divine fool as well as superimposes the opposition between the fool and the legal system with a dichotomy between God and the devil (489).

Pantagruel's response contrasts Bridoye's 'simplicité et affection sincere' with the perverse complexity of the legal system. While the former is associated with heaven's powers, the latter, embodied by lawyers, prosecutors among others, is identified with the devil. From the traditional opposition between the fool, who is not bound by human laws due to his impairment, and the legal system, Pantagruel draws a series of dichotomies: simplicity/complexity, heaven/hell and truth/falsehood. To the sincerity of the judge, considered by Hayes as his redeeming feature, Pantagruel opposes the sophistry of lawyers, who can turn black into white. In this crucial explanation, Pantagruel reveals that it is not Bridoye who acts against the proper order of things, but the lawyers, prosecutors and advisors who overturn the order of nature by blurring 'phantastiquement' the distinction between the parties. The denunciation of rhetoric as something unchristian and unnatural constitutes the last warning for Panurge.

The comparison between Bridoye's trial and the Baisecul/Humevesne trial clearly demonstrates the fool's evolution from trickster to *morosophe*. Also significant is the shift from Pantagruel's use of *coq-à-l'âne* to solve a case of *perplexitez* to his blame toward rhetoric as a way to overturn nature. To confirm these observations, I will now turn to Panurge's foolish debates against Thaumaste, Nazedecabre and Triboullet.

### 2.4.3 Foolish Debates

The consultation with Nazedecabre (411-414) evokes the debate with Thaumaste (281-290) and foreshadows, to a certain extent, Panurge's consultation with the fool Triboulet (490-494). The debates against the mute and the fool in the *Tiers Livre* link back to Panurge's debate against Thaumaste to the extent that Panurge falls for his own previous tricks. These passages are all distinctively theatrical and feature farcical elements misinterpreted and mistaken for higher truths. I will argue that these episodes present further proof of Panurge's inability to become a *morosophe*.

The consultation with Triboulet, which represents the culmination of the mock consultations of the *Tiers Livre*, shares a number of similarities with earlier passages. For Hayes (2010: 150), 'it is impossible to miss in this episode the mirror reflection of Panurge and Thaumaste, in which the giant's companion humiliates and defeats the English scholar during a silent debate in which Panurge makes similarly vulgar gestures at Thaumaste.' In both cases a 'language of confusion and provocation' (Hayes 2010: 151) is used to trick the unfortunate victim. As I will show below, another related episode is the consultation of the mute Nazedecabre (408-415).

#### **Thaumaste and Nazedecabre**

The debate against Thaumaste (281-291) and the consultation with Nazedecabre are both instances of dialogues through signs rather than words. In the first example, the use of signs is motivated by the complexity of the debate, as Thaumaste explains: 'Mais je veulx disputer par signes seulement sans parler: car les matieres sont tant ardues, que les parolles humaines ne seroyent suffisantes à les expliquer à mon plaisir' (282). Pantagruel concurs and welcomes such a rejection of the conventions of public debate (283). Pantagruel's praise of the mute's counsel is similar insofar as it highlights the candour and authenticity of signs 'non faincts, fardez, ne affectez' and refutes the prominence of the spoken and written words over signs:

‘C’est abus dire que ayons language naturel. Les languagees sont par institutions arbitraires et convenences des peuples : les voix (comme disent les Dialecticiens) ne signifient naturellement, mais à plaisir’ (409). However, both episodes go against this argument: the debate with Thaumaste is based on misunderstandings and ambiguities either on Thaumaste’s or on the audience’s part; and Nazedecabre’s signs – like all the other consultations – are interpreted in diametrically different ways by Pantagruel and Panurge. As the anecdote of the ‘joueur de farces’ who can make himself understood by people of any language seems to imply, it is not signs as such that are universal, but comedy.

Even though the farcical progression of vulgar gestures is similar in both episodes, the debate with Thaumaste and the consultation with Nazedecabre are framed in different ways. The passages immediately before and after the debate show an agreement between Thaumaste and Pantagruel. The outcome of the debate, even though the title of the chapter indicates Panurge’s triumph over Thaumaste, does not seem to be at the expense of the Thaumaste, who praises Pantagruel for his wisdom and feasts with the giant. Although the lesson learned by Thaumaste remains unclear for the reader, the narrator indicates that the Englishman ‘en feist un grand livre imprimé à Londres’ (291). This result, similar to that of Alcofrybas after his trip in Pantagruel’s mouth, shows the mutually beneficial outcome of the debate. In short, Panurge, playing the fool, made the wise man Thaumaste wiser by demonstrating the wisdom of folly.

In the consultation with Nazedecabre, however, roles are reversed: Panurge is no longer a trickster, but is tricked himself. While Thaumaste’s brief interjection ‘Et si Mercure’ reveals that he finds a higher, hermetical meaning to his interlocutor’s vulgar gestures, Panurge’s answer to Nazedecabre displays his inability to understand the wisdom of folly. Instead of accepting Nazedecabre’s counsel, Panurge threatens him and labels him a fool, thus making himself look like a fool since the deaf-mute cannot hear anything. Even though

Panurge is humiliated by Nazedecabre in the same way as he humiliated Thaumaste, the reversal is not yet complete since the mute-deaf cannot be considered as a proper fool and Panurge is not confronted with his own folly.

### **Triboulet**

The consultation with Triboulet is key to understand the lesson of the *Tiers Livre*. This episode, also concerned with the rejection of rhetoric and its affiliation with sophistry, illustrates the distinction between the two kinds of folly: Triboulet's divine folly on the one hand, and Panurge's foolish eloquence on the other. His 'parolles rhetoriques et elegantes' (490) immediately trigger Triboulet's violent outburst: 'Par Dieu, Dieu, fol enraigé, guare moine, cornermuse de Buzançay' (491). This episode emphasises the farcical reversal of the role of Panurge, from trickster to humiliated victim. I will argue that this reversal proceeds from Panurge's inability to recognise wise folly.

As the last consultation of the *Tiers Livre*, Panurge's meeting with the fool Triboulet is of particular significance. After Bridoye's trial, Panurge seeks Triboulet's counsel and begins by giving him the traditional attributes of a fool – a wooden sword and a hog's bladder – along with a satchel, an apple, some wine and money. Once Triboulet has eaten and drunk, Panurge explains his business 'en paroles rhetoriques et elegantes.' Triboulet punches him, flirts him on the nose with the bladder, and curses while shaking his head (490-494).

His refutation of Triboulet's accusation of 'fol enraigé' provides a telling example of Panurge's misguided eloquence (493). With this learned response, Panurge displays the extent of his rhetorical abilities: his apparent concession to Triboulet's accusation is carefully qualified with the help of classical authorities. Basing his line of reasoning on the idea that the number of fools is infinite, Panurge offers a mathematical proof – reminiscent, in his reliance on the concept of infinite, of Cusa's *De Docta Ignorantia* – that everyone is foolish. Having established that he is a fool like everyone else, he argues that the only way he could

be a mad fool would be to deny his own folly. This circular line of reasoning aims at refuting folly by accepting it. Despite its undeniable elegance, Panurge's rebuttal itself is foolish. Unlike Thaumaste, who recognized the wisdom of folly and praised Pantagruel, Panurge denigrates Triboulet and is, ultimately, unable to overcome his self-centredness or *philautie*.

While everyone, as suggested by Panurge, can be considered a fool, to become a wise fool is another matter. As Kaiser (1964: 176) observes, 'In bringing Panurge and Triboulet face to face, Rabelais illustrates vividly the two kinds of folly, the good and the bad.' Panurge's farcical role reversal is a punishment for his excessive self-concern and an illustration of the dangers of sophistic rhetoric.

#### 2.4.4 Conclusion

I have shown that the *Tiers Livre* provides a change of perspective on earlier episodes. The shift between the *Tiers Livre* and Rabelais's previous books, often overemphasised because of the ten-year break between *Gargantua* and the *Tiers Livre*, is most visible in the characterisation of Panurge, which I have examined through the lens of folly. A more visible rupture in Rabelais's works occurs between the *Tiers Livre* and the *Quart Livre*: folly, an important theme of the first three books, seems to take a completely different form in the *Quart Livre*. The scholarship on folly in the *Quart Livre* is uncharacteristically scarce.<sup>43</sup> Gendre suggests that the *Quart Livre*'s depiction of fools diverges from the kind of fools and folly described in his earlier works. For Gendre (1978), the notion of folly in the *Quart Livre* can be traced back to Erasmus's *Encomium Moriae* and Brand's *Ship of Fools* insofar as it offers a polemical tool to criticise and satirise. Defaux (1976) considers that the monsters of the *Quart Livre* are reminiscent of Bosch's monsters, and argues that representing folly in such a way is rare in the sixteenth century. In the next chapters, I will argue that, on the contrary, Rabelais's

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<sup>43</sup> On the shift from the *Tiers Livre* to the *Quart Livre*, see also Smith 1987: 43-65.

satirical and polemical devices and his abundant use of the topos of the world upside-down prefigure the development of religious and socio-political polemic.

A useful way of considering the rupture between the first three books and the *Quart Livre* is to observe the generalisation of folly, inversion and perversion. Up to the *Tiers Livre*, Rabelais pictures various kinds of fools and the consequences of their folly in the world. Building on Defaux, who considers that 'le voyage du *Quart Livre* est déjà un voyage dans l'ordure, le grotesque et la folie du monde', (Defaux 1997: 559) I contend that the *Quart Livre* constitutes a world upside-down ruled by folly. As in Brand's *Ship of Fools*, the fools of the *Quart Livre* are multifaceted: they are Catholic or Protestant, followers of Carnival or Lent, belly worshippers and children of Antiphysie. The change of perspective in the *Quart Livre* represents social upheaval and provides an account of the increasing degradation of the world in the form of a fictional travel narrative.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have studied Rabelais's increasingly polemical stance through three main themes: the appropriation of carnivalesque rituals, the grotesque body (with reference to Rabelais's appropriation of the medical theory of microcosm, and to metaphors of the lower body), and the interplay of wisdom and folly.

I have shown that Rabelais adapts carnivalesque motifs and fight between Carnival and Lent according to his goals: in *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* the inversion of the social hierarchy permits the debasement of kings (who represent specific flaws: Anarche is deprived of authority, Picrochole is 'cholérique' and Panurge is self-centred) and the nationalist praise of poets and philosophers as agents of inversion. In the *Quart Livre*, Rabelais made the fight between Carnival and Lent more ambiguous and polemical by destabilising the function of each character in order to satirise religious dogmatism. My study of Rabelais's appropriation

of the theory of microcosm and of his use of metaphorical images of the lower body offered further evidence of the shift from parody, exemplified by the world in Pantagruel's mouth, to satire and polemic, illustrated by the emblematic examples of Gaster, Ennasin and Grippe-Minaud. I have also demonstrated that these episodes can be associated with the upward movement insofar as they satirise downward materialist impulses or exemplify social and spiritual elevation. My discussion of wisdom and folly has identified the *Tiers Livre* as the pivotal point between the tricksters of *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* and the generalised folly of the *Quart Livre*. A longer version of the uncrownings of Picrochole and Anarche, the story of Panurge associates his *philautie* with his inability to understand the wisdom of folly.

In the next chapters, I will examine the polemical use of the topos of the world upside-down in relation to the French religious wars. In chapter 4, I will discuss the religious polemic of the 1560s (especially the satirical image of the overturned cooking pot). In chapter 5, I will concentrate on the images of cosmic turmoil pervading social and political polemic during the religious wars.

## 3 RELIGIOUS POLEMIC

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The topos of the world upside-down in religious polemics during religious wars has attracted some critical attention (Scribner 1987: 71-103; Crouzet 1990a; Benedict 2007). In his study of Catholic propaganda in France, Racaut (2002) observes that Huguenots and Catholics often accused each other of turning the world upside-down.<sup>44</sup> However, Catholic and Huguenot uses of inversion diverge in significant ways. Crouzet associates Catholic violence with eschatological fear and militant millenarianism and interprets Huguenot violence as an attempt to purify the Church from its corruption (most notably through iconoclasm) and to debase it through laughter.

An emblematic example of the significance of the topos of the world upside-down in religious polemic is the lost morality play *Le Monde renversé* by the Guyet brothers. With three days of representation in Angers in 1550, *Le Monde renversé* did not survive in print: 'Les traits joyeux, brocards et facéties un peu trop libres ont rendu rares les copies qui on esté communiquées' (Picot 1887: art. 625). What is more, the play caused considerable trouble to the people involved in the production: they were charged with heresy, condemned to be burned at the stake six years later and were burned in effigy after they escaped. (See appendices 1 and 2). This anecdote does not only confirm the importance of the topos of the world upside-down, but also underlines the stakes of religious polemic in such troubled times.

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<sup>44</sup> Of particular interest is chapter 5: 'The world upside down, the femmelettes and the French Wars of Religion', which deals with the perceived role of women in the Reformation. Racaut shows that Catholic polemicists used the topos of the world upside-down to accuse Protestants of pandering to women. I have touched upon this notion in section 1.6.3 with reference to 'Le Senat d'Heliogabale; Contre ceux qui vivent souz l'Empire de leurs femmes' (Fig. 52).

The Swiss reformer Viret offers another illustration of the use of the topos of the world upside-down in *Le Monde à l'empire et le monde demoniacle* (1580). Based on the pun equating the *empereurs* with the *empireurs*, Viret's *Monde à l'empire* postulates that the world becomes steadily worse. Viret argues that the world is the opposite of what it was in ancient times and of what it should be: 'Ainsi dit-il, est il destine que toutes choses tombent en pis & retournent tout à rebours' (Viret 1580: 9). The eschatological fear described by Crouzet is clearly visible in Viret's account of the corruption of the world: 'Car je ne pense point que jamais le monde fust tant corrompu, qu'il est à present: car tout y va ce devant, derriere' (Viret 1580: 5). Viret invokes Diogenes as a classical model bearing witness to the overturning of the world: 'Il regardoit à ce qu'en ce temps-la Alexandre, surnommé le Grand, & les Macedoniens regnoyent, & montoient de bas en haut, & renversoient tout ce qui estoit au monde. [...] Mon Dieu, que diroit-il maintenant, s'il voyoit l'estat qui est au monde?' (Viret 1580: 5). Perversion, confusion, disorder, inversion and impending doom are the trademarks of such polemical writings.

The *Satyre Ménippée* provides a more complex example of the use of the topos of the world upside-down. This satire of the *Etats Généraux* of 1593, convened to discuss the succession of Henri III, criticises the excess of the Catholic League. According to Céard (1979: XX), 'la Ligue est présentée très exactement comme le monde renversé'. The authors of the *Satyre Ménippée* make use of negative transformative and functional inversion to denounce the League. In the *Harangue de Monsieur de Lyon*, for instance, the League is held responsible for overturning the world and turning everything into its opposite: vices have become virtues ('l'atheisme converty en ardeur de devotion; l'ignorance, en science [...] la concussion, en pieté et en jeusne; la volerie, en generosité et vaillance', 78), the social hierarchy has been overturned ('les valets devenus maistres; les petits estre faicts grands; les pauvres, riches; les humbles, insolents et orgueilleux; veoir ceux qui obeissoient commander', 78), and trivial or sacred objects have turned into weapons ('Les aunes des

boutiques sont tournées en pertuisanes : les escritoirs, en mosquets ; les breviaires, en rondaches ; les scapulaires, en corselets ; et les capuchons, en casques et salades !', 79).

It is my contention that inversion is central to the religious polemic pertaining to the religious wars. To analyse the different kinds of inversion at work in religious satire, I will focus on the trope of the overturned cooking pot. This trope, which remains largely understudied, was used by both sides of the conflicts in both written and visual forms. According to Lestringant (2004c: 425), 'la marmite sera l'une des images favorites de la satire calviniste jusqu'au début du XVIIe siècle' (See also: Benedict 1994, Persels 1999; Mellet and Mellet 2012).

I will begin by examining the many levels of signification of the cooking pot including biblical allusions, its function in medieval representations of Hell, and its association with cannibalism. I will show that the cooking pot was already part of the popular imagery before its rise to prominence as a polemical device in the second half of the sixteenth century. Its previous association with Hell and cannibalism made it a fitting image to satirise the Pope and the Church during the religious wars. Then, I will study the development of this image in relation to the topos of the world upside-down in the 1560s Protestant satires and in Rabelais's posthumous tradition. The overturned cooking pot combines the three kinds of inversion I examine in this thesis: as a symbol of the Church, it pertains to transformative inversion; the similarity between overturned cooking pots and bells is characteristic of functional inversion; and it is associated with behaviours against nature such as cannibalism. To conclude, I will show how Catholic polemicists, especially Beauxamis, have attempted to appropriate and overturn the papal cooking pot by reinterpreting it according to the Bible.

## 3.2 THE MOTIF OF THE COOKING POT

### 3.2.1 Introduction

In this section, I will show that the cooking pot offers a vast array of metaphorical possibilities. I will examine several mentions of cooking pots in the Bible as they shape the Catholic response to the Protestant polemic. Then, I will analyse the development of the cooking pot in medieval depictions of Hell. Cooking pots constitute an instrument of torture in which sinners are boiled. Through their progressive conflation with the image of the mouth of Hell, cooking pots gain prominence to the point of becoming the central element in various depictions of Hell. To conclude, I will discuss the association of cooking pots with cannibals and argue that it provides a strong polemical and satirical potential.

My inquiry will focus on the corpus related to *marmite* as this word appears in the title of a significant number of polemical and satirical works and can be said, therefore, to govern the trope.<sup>45</sup> Other synonymous containers, such as *chaudière*, *chaudron*, *poêle* and *bassin*, appear more consistently in non-polemical contexts. The inclusion of *marmite* in polemical and satirical language is justified by its surprising etymology. Originally an adjective, *marmite* signifies hypocritical, and derives from the onomatopoeia *marm* – evoking a muffled sound – and the word *mite*, which designates a cat. The word *marmite*, associated with *chattemite* (from *chatte* and *mite*, both meaning cat) designates someone pretending to be sweet and harmless like a cat. The shape of the *marmite* – deep and covered – may explain the semantic evolution from hypocritical to cooking pot (*TLF*: s. v. ‘marmite’; see also: Mellet and Mellet 2012). Also of interest is the saying *la marmite est renversée*, which can be found in seventeenth-century dictionaries: ‘La *marmite* est renversée, c’est à dire, on n’y va plus disner’ and ‘On dit, que *La marmite est renversée dans une maison*, pour dire, que L’ordinaire ne va plus’ (Furetière 1690: s. v.

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<sup>45</sup> The term *chaudron* appears in a predominantly culinary context and is occasionally associated with witchcraft, medicine and sexual intercourse.

‘marmite; Académie française 1694: s. v. ‘marmite’). The evolution of the use of *marmite renversée* from religious polemic to the domestic context is a good indicator of the prevalence of this phrase in the period.

### 3.2.2 Biblical Cooking Pots

In my study of biblical cooking pots, I will concentrate on the passages that were used and quoted in the polemic of the religious wars. Two reasons motivate this selection: first, it eliminates passages containing only an anecdotal allusion to cooking pots and focuses on those which were deemed relevant to religious polemic; second, it solves the issue of managing the discrepancies, linguistic or otherwise, between the different versions of the Bible circulating at that time. The biblical passages I will examine have been quoted and studied extensively by Beauxamis in his pamphlets against Reformation, as I will show in section 3.5. Calvin also commented on them, with occasional emphasis on cooking pots, in his lessons and commentaries (Calvin 1561: 249; Calvin 1565: 84-6; Calvin 1566: 1007).

The description of the Behemoth in Job refers to the cooking pot twice: ‘Une fumée sort de ses narines, Comme un vase qui bout, d’une chaudière ardente. Son soufflé allume les charbons, Sa gueule lance la flamme’ (Job 41.20-1); and ‘Il fait bouillir le fond de la mer comme une chaudière, Il l’agite comme un vase rempli de parfums’ (Job 41.31). The association between the monstrous creature described in these verses and the cooking pot provides an illustration of a widespread tradition, which I will develop in the next section, linking cooking pots with the mouth of gigantic monsters.

In the book of Jeremiah, the cooking pot becomes a symbol of disaster: ‘La parole de l’Éternel me fut adressée une seconde fois, en ces mots: Que vois-tu? Je répondis : Je vois une chaudière bouillante, du côté du septentrion. Et l’Éternel me dit : C’est du septentrion que la calamité se répandra sur tous les habitants du pays’ (Jer. 1.13-14). The significance of the image of the cooking pot is revealed later, as God destroys the Philistine : ‘Voici, des

eaux s'élèvent du septentrion, Elles sont comme un torrent qui déborde ; Elles inondent le pays et ce qu'il contient, Les villes et leurs habitants' (Jer. 47.2). In this example, the cooking pot is a sinister omen and sign of God's punishment of the wicked.

The cataclysmic dimension of the cooking pot is particularly visible in the book of Ezekiel. The cooking pot becomes an allegory for Jerusalem : 'La ville est la chaudière, et nous sommes la viande' (Ez. 11.3). The prophesied destruction of Jerusalem provides Beauxamis with the image of the overturned and melted cooking pot:

C'est pourquoi ainsi parle le Seigneur, l'Éternel : Malheur à la ville sanguinaire, chaudière pleine de rouille, et dont la rouille ne se détache pas ! [...] Mets la chaudière vide sur les charbons, afin qu'elle s'échauffe, que son airain devienne brûlant, que sa souillure se fonde au dedans, et que sa rouille se consume (Ez. 24.6-11).

As I have shown in section 1.6.3, Montenay and Bèze have adapted the image of the purification of the cooking pot by fire into emblems to describe the fate of martyrs and saints. Despite the equivalence by Jerusalem, Babylon and Rome, which permits various satirical parallels, the metaphor of Jerusalem as a cooking pot has not been appropriated by Protestant polemicists.

The last biblical verses I will mention allude to the connection between the cooking pot and cannibalism. In the book of Micah, the 'princes de la maison d'Israel' are designated as sinners and cannibals:

Vous haïssez le bien et vous aimez le mal ; Vous leur arrachez la peau et la chair de dessus les os. Ils dévorent la chair de mon peuple, Lui arrachent la peau, Et lui brisent les os ; Ils le mettent en pièces comme ce qu'on cuit dans un pot, Comme de la viande dans une chaudière (Mic. 3.1-3).

To conclude, although the word *marmite* is frequently used in sixteenth-century pamphlets (including in vernacular biblical quotations), it remains relatively absent from translations of the Bible. Before the 1560s, it only occurs two times in *La Bible nouvellement traduite* published in Basel in 1555 by Heruage. The context of both of these occurrences is

domestic and of little interest to this inquiry. Other translations use the more common word *chaudière* as in most examples above.

Given the scarcity of occurrences of *marmite* in translations of the Bible, the success of this image as one of the governing tropes of religious polemic demonstrates the crucial influence of the pre-existing iconographical and intertextual traditions pertaining to cooking pots. Protestant satire, whose aim is to mock and desecrate the Catholic Church and the practices associated with it, focuses on images of cooking pots that were already imbued with polemical potential. The originality of Catholic responses consists in identifying biblical cookings pots with Protestantism.

### 3.2.3 Infernal Cooking Pots

Of crucial importance to the development of the image of the cooking pot as a religious polemical device is the rich infernal iconography depicting sinners boiling in infernal cooking pots. The significance of medieval representations of the Last Judgment for the development of the cooking pot in religious polemic is twofold: on the one hand, it denounces the clergy by accusing it of greed – a sin whose conventional punishment consists in being boiled in a cooking pot – and, on the other, it associates cooking pots with demonic and gigantic mouths (Baltrusaitis 1955; Baschet 1985; Baschet 2003). The widespread availability of medieval infernal imagery in the sixteenth century further confirms its influence on satirical prints. The depictions of Hell that I will examine show how cooking pots have gradually occupied more and more space in Hell by merging with the mouth of Hell. I will conclude by analysing a series of illustrations from various manuscripts of Augustine's influential book: *De Civitate Dei contra paganos*. Despite their differences, these illustrations all focus on the cooking pot as an element essential to the depiction of Hell. Given the strong Augustinian stance of Calvinists, the focus of cooking pots in Augustinian representations of Hell supports the connection between medieval Hells and the satirical trope of the overturned cooking pot.

Baschet (2009) identifies two stages in the development of representations of Hell during the Middle Ages. Between the twelfth and the fourteenth century, representations of Hell focus on chaos and suffering circumscribed within a gigantic, devouring mouth, associated with the *gorgoneion* (Baltrusaitis 1955: 42). Then, during the fourteenth century in Italy and at the junction of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in France, a major shift occurred as representations of Hell increasingly focus on sinners and their respective punishment (Baschet 2009).



Figure 69: 'Apocalypse Glosée', de Sarum, (1240-1250) MS 403, BNF, 40r.

The double *gorgoneion* of the *Apocalypse glosée*, an Anglo-Norman manuscript from the beginning of the thirteenth century, provides an emblematic example of mouth of Hell. (Fig. 69) The gigantic and deformed mouth devours people and demons indiscriminately, containing and strictly delimiting Hell. According to Baschet (1983: 19), 'cette image, constituant essentiellement une mise en question du problème de la limite, propose une opération d'encadrement de l'enfer, largement déléguée à la gueule qui, tout en participant à

l'horreur infernale, en est aussi l'élément ordonnateur.' A significant number of the later representations of Hell kept the image of the devouring mouth, but sinners and their punishments became the focus of the image, and one of the main structuring elements of infernal topography.



Figure 70: (left) 'Double Lay de la fragilité d'humaine nature', Deschamps, E., (1380-1390) MS 20029 BNF: 19v.

Figure 71: (right) 'Le Chevalier errant', Saluces, T. de, (1301-1500) MS 12559 BNF: 191.

Extracted from a French translation of Lothaire de Segni's *De Miseria condicionis humane*, Fig. 70 shows a cooking pot filled with people inside a *gorgoneion*. In the foreground, three demons torment the damned: the first is about to throw someone who has been scratched into the cooking pot, the second stirs the pot, and the last demon maintains the fire with bellows. In this miniature, the damned are still an indiscriminate mass of bodies contained in the *gorgoneion*, which itself closely embraces the borders of the picture. The torments are neither differentiated nor explicit, and the only recognisable elements are the bellows and cooking pot. The anguish of the damned is more visible in Fig. 71: a variety of clerics struggle with toads and snakes while burning in a gigantic mouth. The perspective is completely different from Fig. 69. Instead of facing the reader, the *gorgoneion* faces Heaven. The lack of teeth is remarkable and creates a striking similarity between the mouth of Hell

and a cooking pot. Other examples, showing that the cooking pot is often reserved for the greedy and the clerics, include the frescoes of Albi's cathedral and the *Calendrier des Bergers*.

The examples provided below (Fig. 72 and 73) belong to Raoul de Presles's translation of *De Civitate Dei*. Despite their divergences, these miniatures attest the prominence of the cooking pot and constitute an important point of reference for the study of Calvinist iconography. These images all feature the cooking pot among other instruments of torture: demons are throwing sinners headlong into pits, ovens or cooking pots. The omnipresence of the cooking pot in this context points to the strategy of defamiliarisation of this common kitchen utensil described by Baschet (1985). In Fig. 72, the cooking pot, featuring prominently at the centre of the picture, is associated with the mouth of Hell, and to cannibalism: sitting on the rim of the cooking pot, the Devil devours, digests, and defecates the sinners boiling beneath him. As I will show in the next section, cooking pots are strongly linked to cannibals.



Figure 72: 'La Cité de Dieu', Presles, R. de (1486) BNF, MS FR. 28: 249v

Another miniature of the same manuscript offers a thought-provoking take on the representation of Hell. As opposed to the other miniatures I have selected, it shows the judgment of souls in addition to the punishment of sinners. The composition of the miniature follows the two diagonals, converging on the cooking pot in the *gorgoneion*: the first diagonal goes from the angel in the top right corner, descending from Heaven to strike a demon; and the second follows the demon in the top left corner. In this case, the *gorgoneion* does not invade the totality of the space, but remains in the middle of the war between Heaven and Hell. The cooking pot, full of clerics, completely fills the mouth of Hell. The emblematic satirical print – *Le Renversement de la grand marmite* – follows the same structure,

but represents another war: instead of striking the demon to protect the soul being judged, the angel will strike the cooking pot itself indicating a shift in the signification of the cooking pot from an infernal instrument of torture, to a symbol of Rome, the Pope and the Catholic Church. (See section 3.3.3).



Figure 73: 'La Cité de Dieu', Presles, R. de (1486) BNF, MS FR. 28: 2v

These examples show the prominence and the continuity of the cooking pot in representations of Hell. Despite the variations within late medieval representations of Hell, especially concerning the correspondance between various sins and punishments, certain conclusions can be drawn: first, tortures are conducted with familiar tools, cooking pots in particular, overturned from their usual uses; second, boiling in cooking pots is generally reserved for people guilty of greed or envy; third, there is a tendency for the cooking pot to remain the only element in the devouring mouth. For Baschet (1985), the intrusion of everyday instruments in Hell constitutes an attempt to make the congregation identify with sinners and to encourage them to confess. Associated with the punishment of the greedy clerics, the cooking pot was a powerful symbol of the eschatological fear prevalent in the medieval society. The sixteenth-century Protestant satirists have transposed some of the elements of the war between Heaven and Hell represented in medieval illustrations of the

Judgement of the soul to describe the ongoing war against the Catholic Church and the Pope, which will be emblematised by a cooking pot to be overturned.

### 3.2.4 The Cannibal's Cooking Pot

The close association of the cooking pot with cannibalism can be traced back to Staden's *True Story*, the account of his captivity among the Tupinambas published in 1557. More than the ethnological merits of Staden's *True Story*, which have been widely debated,<sup>46</sup> it is the influence the representation of the Tupinamba had on the perception of cannibals that will be the focus of my discussion. Of particular importance to the development of the image of the cooking pot is one of the most striking woodcut prints of Staden's *True History*. (Fig. 74)

This grotesque depiction of cannibalism differs from usual sixteenth-century images of cannibalism insofar as it involves a cooking pot rather than bodies or body parts skewered on a spit or grilled over a fire.<sup>47</sup> The last of eight images depicting cannibalism in the *True History*, this woodcut print is considered highly influential by Duffy and Metcalf: according to them from imagery of the New World, Staden's *True History* in particular, emerged a strong association between women, witchcraft and cannibalism, which they link with witch-hunting (Duffy and Metcalf 2013: 103-36). Zika (1997) also establishes a strong link between witches and cannibals, showing that a significant number of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century woodcut prints represent both cannibals and witches engaging in cannibal acts such as roasting people with spits and grills, or boiling them in cooking pots. I contend that such images have contributed to associating cooking pots with cannibalism.

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<sup>46</sup> Compare, for instance Forsyth 1985 and Whitehead 2000.

<sup>47</sup> Such images were particularly common in early sixteenth-century maps. See, for instance, M. Waldseemüller's *Carta Marina* of 1516 and the Grynaeus map, published in J. Huttich, *Novus Orbis Regionum* in 1532.



Figure 74: Cooking Pot in Staden's *True History*

The cannibal's cooking pot and its infernal counterpart collide in a depiction of Hell from an anonymous Portuguese painting from the beginning of the sixteenth century. (Fig. 75) This painting features the punishment and torture of characters embodying the seven deadly sins. In the centre, monks are boiled in a gigantic cooking pot. More surprising are the garments of the demon presiding over the scene (Fig. 76): his headdress, in particular, evokes the traditional headdress of the Tupinamba, as shown by the portrait of king Qyoniambec described in (Lestringant 2004a: 428-433). (Fig. 77)



Figure 75: 'Inferno', Anonymous (c. 1505-30) Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon.



Figure 77: 'Quoniambec', Thevet, A. (1584) *Les Vrais Pourtraicts*, G. Chaudière, 661r.



Figure 76: Detail from 'Inferno'

The incorporation of ethnographic details from New World imagery into depictions of Hell demonstrates the versatility and mobility of such images. Gaining prominence in the conventional representation of cannibals, the cooking pot becomes a deeply unsettling image. On the one hand, it is easily identified as a common household appliance, but, on the other, its relationship with infernal images and cannibalism implies horrifying applications. The process of defamiliarisation at work in these images have allowed the cooking pot to become a major element of religious polemic in the second half of the sixteenth century.

### 3.3 PROTESTANT SATIRES

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

The cooking pot – especially when it is overturned – constitutes one of the key images of prints and pamphlets in the French wars of religion (Benedict 1994; Lestringant 2004c). The Mellets' study of the use of the overturned cooking pot as an insult between 1560 and 1600 offers an overview of this motif and examines how it is produced from a linguistic point of view (Mellet and Mellet 2012). Much remains to be done to develop the scholarship on this topic. Benedict and Lestringant's articles focus on the print of the *Renversement de la grand marmite* without much emphasis on the treatment of this trope in other prints and in written pamphlets. While the Mellets propose to concentrate on written occurrences of the overturned cooking pot, their bibliography is, by the authors' own admission, incomplete. Furthermore, they misdate several works in their corpus: I have not been able to find a 1562 edition of *La Desolation des freres de robes grises pour la perte de la marmite qu'est renversee* (the only editions I have found are from 1563 and 1564); more importantly, Beauxamis's *Resolution sur certains pourtraictz* was published in 1562 and 1564, not 1572. Work remains to be done in order to offer a better sense of the scope of this trope.

Another important aspect of this topic that remains to be explored is the interplay between the cooking pot and the bell. In the *Renversement de la grand marmite*, as well as in other prints, the cooking pot is represented as an upside-down bell. The similar shape of these objects partially accounts for their association in the polemical prints and pamphlets of the period. The quarrel of the bells – a continuation of the iconoclasm of the Reformation – provides further evidence of the debasement of bells – a symbol for the Catholic Church – into cooking pots.

I will examine how the trope of the cooking pot is used in Protestant satires to debase the Catholic Church. As an appliance directly related to worldly concerns, the cooking pot

turns the spiritual dimension of the Church upside-down and denounces its excessive preoccupation with the temporal world. When it is considered as a symbol for the Church, it becomes an object to be overthrown. Because of the multiple readings it allows, the combination of the image of the cooking pot and the notion of inversion is particularly productive. I will examine how the different levels of signification of this image – a parodic liturgical vessel, the profit acquired by the Pope's greed and the institution of the Catholic Church – interact with each other in order to produce a complex and coherent discourse that encompasses some of the primary concerns of the Reformation at the beginning of the religious wars. In order to show the development of the trope, the examples below are presented chronologically.

### 3.3.2 Pamphlets and *Libelles*

#### **Satyres chrestiennes de la cuisine papale**

The Mellets (2012: 12-15) identify the *Satyres Chrestiennes de la cuisine papale* as the first pamphlet to use the cooking pot as an insult towards the Catholics. Published in Geneva by Badius in 1560, this anonymous pamphlet has been the object of several important studies, highlighting its distinctive brand of satire and polemic (Coulter 1959; Droz 1976; Giraud 1983; Crouzet 1990a: 673-683). The *Satyres chrestiennes* differ from previous Calvinist polemical writings insofar as it moves away from apologetic and theological arguments and directly attacks the Catholic Church (Chamay 2005: XI-XVIII). Instead of criticising – or responding to – a particular polemicist, the author of the *Satyres chrestiennes* aspires to the systematic destruction of the institution of the Church. Organised around the metaphor of the kitchen, the *Satyres chrestiennes* denounce the excess and sins of Catholicism. The author indicates that his focus on the kitchen derives from a proverb : 'Et lors m'est venu en pensée, qu'ainsi que suyvant le proverbe, à bien fonder une maison il faut commencer par la cuisine ; par le contraire, à la démolir il faut semblablement donner les premiers coups à la cuisine'

(Chamay 2005: 7). As the organising trope of the *Satyres chrestiennes*, the kitchen allows for the systematic debasement of the establishment and primary concepts of the Church by inverting its core values. To demonstrate that the Pope and his officers practice an inverted religion, the author of the *Satyres chrestiennes* uses the topos of the world upside-down: Rome becomes a kitchen, the clergy is composed of kitchen officers and cooks, the religious vessels are described as kitchen utensils and the Eucharist becomes a banquet ending in a brawl.

The cooking pot plays only a small role in the culinary imagery of the *Satyres chrestiennes*. The only mention of the word ‘marmite’ occurs in the satire devoted to the kitchen officers:

De là les vivandiers Convers,  
Ameinent chariots couvers,  
Pour emplir les larges marmites.  
Là pres sont marmitons hermites,  
Qui les pots brusquement escument (Chamay 2005: 39).

According to the Mellets, the description of the Pope’s kitchen follows ‘une représentation des lieux comme constituée de cercles concentriques aboutissant aux centres vertigineux des marmites’ (Mellet and Mellet 2012: 13). The pejorative characterisations of the clerics converging towards the cooking pots and bustling around the kitchen (‘vivandiers convers’, ‘marmitons hermites’, ‘carmes s’escarmouchans’, ‘souillars’, ‘rustres’ and ‘gouillars’) gives a negative connotation to cooking pots. Nothing indicates, however, that cooking pots in the *Satyres chrestiennes* condense all the reproaches addressed to the clergy. Rather, cooking pots contribute to the description of the world upside-down of the *Satyres chrestiennes* by adding to the representation of clerics as cooks, transubstantiation as cookery, and the Eucharist as a feast. The lack of indication concerning what the monks are pouring in the cooking pots brings to mind the etymological meaning of ‘marmite’ as deceitful, and alludes to the central theme of the ‘pot aux roses’ (14),<sup>48</sup> the secret wrongdoings of the Catholic Church.

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<sup>48</sup> See Jourdain (ed.) 1564.

Furthermore, the verb ‘escumer’ evokes the scrounger and, by extension, parasitism and greed (‘écumer le pot, la marmite. Vivre aux dépens de quelqu’un.’ *TLF*: s. v. ‘écumer’).

The *Satyres chrestiennes* mark a decisive turn in the development of polemical literature during the Reformation. The culinary and architectural metaphors as well as the complex verbal play indicate the influence of the *Grands Rhétoriciens*, and move away from the farcical model. The *Satyres chrestiennes* did not exhaust the potential of the cooking pot, but initiated a tradition revolving around this potent trope. I will show that later uses of the image of the cooking pot in Protestant pamphlets will show a greater degree of abstraction and generalisation as well as a more complex interplay of significations. In the next example, which was published one year after the *Satyres chrestiennes*, the cooking pot trope designates the illegitimate profits of the Pope.

### **La Comédie du pape malade et tirant à sa fin**

The morality play *La Comédie du pape malade et tirant à sa fin*, published by Badius in 1561, provides another example of violent satire against the Pope and the Catholic Church (See: Shaw 1934; Lestringant 2004c: 437-439; Bouteille-Meister 2010: 272-75). In his preface, the author, who published under the pseudonym Thrasibule Phenice, defends the structure of his play : ‘ayant esgard que j’escrivoye pour les simples, j’ai pensé qu’un fil continuel leur plairoit plus que ces interruptions qui se font és Scenes, & l’artifice qu’on tient és Comedies’ (6). Even though the play is not technically a comedy, the author justifies this title by foretelling the imminent demise of the Church and the upcoming victory of the Protestants after the persecutions they endured: ‘lors il y aura matiere de joye, comme c’est le naturel des Comedies d’avoir commencement fascheux, & issue joyeuse’ (7). The play shows the vain manoeuvres of the Pope and his followers, helped by Satan, to prevent the ruin of the Church.

In *La Comédie du pape malade*, the image of the cooking pot designates the material and temporal benefits acquired by the Pope and his followers through the sale of indulgences,

for instance. While it does not yet represent the Catholic Church as a whole, the cooking pot denotes its illegitimate accumulation of goods.

Le Pape  
[...]  
Et ont trouvé que du tout je devie  
Du droit chemin, & de la vraye sente  
Que ce Jesus à ses elus presente.  
Satan  
Ce qui est vray, mais il ne le faut dire  
Pour n'empescher la marmite de cuire,  
Qui nourrit tant de truyes & pourceaux,  
Et qui vous fait manger les bons morceaux (22).

Emphasised by Satan, the need for secrecy and hypocrisy is essential to maintaining the system of privileges that allows the Pope and its followers to get fat like pigs. The debasement of the Pope works on two levels: on the one hand, he is associated with Satan and openly admits diverting from the 'droit chemin, & de la vraye sente que ce Jesus à ses elus presente'; on the other, he is accused of maintaining a system that benefits him and his followers at the expense of the people.

The progression of the Pope's disease makes it increasingly difficult for him to keep the garbage he had been eating inside his belly. After many complaints, he vomits on stage a mixture of human flesh – as he ate 'tant d'orphelins' and drank 'le sang de mainte veuves' (30) – of clerics, liturgical objects, etc. To a certain extent, the Pope's belly has turned into a cooking pot representative of the Church. This episode brings together two main tropes of the Protestant satire: the papal cooking pot in which boil the various elements on which the Church feeds, and the sick body of Catholicism, which suffers from intestinal distress. The only possible ending, as the prologue indicates, is the Pope's death and the overturning of the cooking pot:

Mais le temps est venu qu'il faut que les marmites  
Grasses soyent mises jus, & ce grand cuisinier  
En enfer par Satan soit mené prisonnier (11).

At the beginning of the play, Satan confirms the reversal of the cooking pot in a lamentation:

Satan  
Adieu marmite, adieu la soupe,  
Adieu bon temps, adieu repos,  
Adieu les verres & les pots,  
Adieu putains, adieu commeres,  
Vous ne verrez plus les beaux peres (16).

*La Comédie du pape malade* shows the progression in the development of the image of the cooking pot in Protestant polemic as its association with the sins and illegitimate profits of the Church becomes clear. In the next examples, *L'Extrême-Onction de la marmite papale* (1562) and *La Polymachie des marmitons* (1563), the cooking pot becomes the organising feature of the satire and the notion of inversion gains importance.

### **L'Extrême-Onction de la marmite papale**

Written by Du Challard in 1562 in Lyon, *L'Extrême-Onction de la marmite papale* recounts the history of the Catholic Church from its beginning, before Moses, to its inevitable death. The author intends to demonstrate that 'hypocrisie, l'ambition, & l'avarice y ont de tout temps régné, & tenu le lieu plus haut & eminent' (6). The attack, which revolves around the Mass, mostly focuses on greed and illegitimate profit. The cooking pot plays an important part in this pamphlet and designates the Catholic Church and the profit it makes by diverting people from God.

The correlation between the cooking pot and greed in *L'Extrême-Onction* is reminiscent of the medieval depictions of Hell insofar as the punishment of the greedy consisted in being boiled in a cooking pot. Instead of the instrument used to punish the greedy, the cooking pot becomes, in *L'Extrême-Onction*, an institution fuelled by greed and cruelty. The author of the pamphlet points out greed and self-preservation as the prime motivation of the Pope and his followers: 'Qui les meut Messieurs? L'avarice, la cessation du gain qui se diminue, voire apres le feu qui s'esteint sous la Marmite' (20). The inevitable

overturning of the cooking pot entails a return to ‘la primitive Eglise établie par Jesus-Christ’ and radical austerity : ‘Si la Marmite a qui faut bailler le dernier sacrement est renversee, [...] a Dieu le banquet, a Dieu le jeu, la superfluité et la pompe mondaine’ (21). In these examples, the capitalisation of the word ‘Marmite’ shows a greater degree of abstraction than earlier occurrences and indicates that the word has become synonymous with the institution of the Catholic Church.

An important divergence from the previous examples is the realisation that the ‘pot aux roses’ is not only discovered, but also publicised by the Protestants, which makes them a greater enemy than atheists, Muslims and Jews: ‘Les Juifs luy apportent proffit, les Evangelistes le veulent oster, ils parlent trop avant de la Marmite: voila la cause, voila le point, voila le neud qui les rend bruslables’ (34). The persecutions and censorship of those who seek to ‘renverser & destruire les fondemens de [la] cuisine [papale], & esteindre totalement le feu sous [la] marmite [papale]’ (23) leads the author to fear the betrayal of his own allies: ‘Je ne me puis persuader que vous ayez fait tel commencement pour flechir, pour reculer & succumber maintenant, pour vous laisser gagner pour une gorge chaude & esculeé de potage de la marmite comme aucuns, vous laisser clorre le bec par un gras morceau’ (36).

In *L’Extrême-Onction*, the cooking pot becomes a metaphor for the Catholic Church and its illegitimate profits. The contrast between the wealth of the Pope and the poverty of Christ offers the binary opposition that most aptly summarises the criticism of the author against the Catholic Church. In the world upside-down of the Church, wealth, ambition and cruelty are above humility, poverty and spirituality. Fuelled by the lies of the Pope, its clerics and the martyrdom of Protestants, the cooking pot supports the material excess of the Church. The main concern of the author of *L’Extrême-Onction* consists in putting down the fire that maintains the cooking pot. The next example that I will consider goes further and depicts the Church as a cooking pot on the brink of being overthrown.

## La Polymachie des marmitons

Published by Saugrain in 1563 in Lyon, *La Polymachie des marmitons* explores the same themes as my previous examples. In this pamphlet, Satan, the Pope and the clergy prepare for war and deplore the impending overthrowing of the cooking pot. As Persels (1999: 40) points out, at this point ‘familiarity with the *marmite* motif is obviously assumed.’ Structured according to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, *La Polymachie* begins with a ‘proclamation pour lever des gens de guerre’ by Lucifer and features a variety of real and satirical members of the Catholic Church, including ‘archevesques’, ‘curez’, ‘carmes’, ‘celestins’ and ‘courtizanes, putains, & ribaudes des prestres’, each playing a different role in Lucifer’s army. Their main concern is the support of the papal cooking pot:

Deliberez de marcher soubz l’enseigne  
Du grand Pontife, & qu’aucun ne rechigne :  
Car s’il ne met bon ordre à la Marmite,  
Elle sera à ce coup desconfite (A2v).

In *La Polymachie*, the image of the cooking pot seems to have attained its full potential. Consistently capitalised, the ‘Marmite’ has little to do with the cooking pots boiling in the kitchen of the *Satyres Chrestiennes*. Instead, the cooking pot – systematically associated with verbs of destruction and images of disorder – represents the Pope’s desire to maintain an impossible status quo, even though it implies going to war against the rest of the world:

Nostre Marmite a perdu le bouillir,  
Encor chacun travaille à l’affaillir,  
Et luy bailler l’extreme & dernier ordre,  
Chacun s’effaye à la mettre en desordre :  
Mail il la fault, deussieus nous trespasser,  
Avec les mains la garder de verser (A4r).

While the other pamphlets that I have studied emphasise the risks of persecution that the author was bringing upon himself by publishing a piece against the Catholic Church, the author of *La Polymachie* insists on the isolation of the Pope and his clerics. Lucifer’s call to arms ends with an address to the readers, urging them to enrol in the Pope’s army: ‘Il se faut

addresser en la rue de fausse Religion, au logis de Madame Idolatrie, a l'enseigne d'Abus, & la demander le Prince des tenebres, & vous serez enrrolléz derechef.' The close relationship between the Pope and the devil, which is reminiscent of the *Comédie du pape malade*, brings to mind the medieval depiction of hell as a cooking pot. As in the *Comédie du pape malade*, the overthrowing of the cooking pot would force the Pope to be taken to hell, thus leaving one cooking pot for another:

Ils ne faudront ceste Marmite grande  
De soustenir, que lon ne la respande,  
Car si un coup elle va trebuscher,  
Il vous faudra retirer en Enfer (B3v).

The *Polymachie* satirises the Catholic Church by providing a lament and a call for vengeance against the Protestants. Readers are expected to be familiar with the recurrent trope of the papal cooking pot and its wide array of intertextual allusions. As in the previous examples, the cooking pot contributes to the depiction of a world turned upside-down. The gluttonous Pope and his army attempt to maintain their hold on the world and to establish hell on earth. To this extent, the insistence on the overturning of the papal cooking pot in the *Polymachie* reveals the eschatological hope of Protestants. In the next example, also written from a mock Catholic perspective, monks deplore the overturning and the loss of the cooking pot.

### **La Desolation des freres de robe grise**

Also published in Lyon in 1563, *La Desolation des freres de robe grise pour la perte de la marmite qu'est renversée* provides an example of lament song written from the Franciscans' point of view. According to Charbonnier (1919: 144), this song indicates that, in the Protestants' view, 'les ordres religieux étaient irrémédiablement entraînés dans le désastre de la Rome pontificale.' At first, the Franciscan monks, easily identifiable by their grey garments, refuse to believe that the papal cooking pot has been overturned:

Gardons les loix du benoist saint François  
 Pour vivre en paix, ainsi que petits roys ;  
 Portons l'habit,  
 Quoy qu'en l'habit  
 Journellement moquez nous y soyons ;  
 Il nous suffit,  
 Mais que proffit  
 Avec la vie et vestement ayons (Montaignon 1857: 141).

However, they soon realise that the illegitimate profits guaranteed by their affiliation to the papal cooking pot have ceased ('Nostre bissac, jadis tout plein d'andouilles,/N'est plus rien rapportant') and that their demise is imminent:

Plus de secours n'avons à ceste heure  
 En ce pays icy, [...]  
 O Luthere !  
 Temeraire,  
 Filz de l'Antechrist,  
 Qu'ilz soient bruslez, sans autre enqueste faire (Montaignon 1857: 143).

By the end of the song, the monks' dissimulation and deceit have become useless and the people, instructed by Protestantism, recognise the monks' imposture:

Dès maintenant la pluspart nous injure,  
 Et conjure,  
 Comme ordure  
 Plaine de malheur.  
 Si telle escolle encores longtemps dure,  
 La rasure,  
 Chose seure,  
 N'aura plus d'honneur (Montaignon 1857: 146-7).

More research is necessary in order to determine whether the *Desolation* parodies an existing song. As part of the song is written in macaronic Latin mixed with French words, it is possible to infer that the *Desolation* may parody a liturgical song. In the *Desolation*, the overturning of the cooking pot brings down the Franciscans, and reveals their hypocrisy. I will now turn to visual representations of the overturning of the papal cooking pot. These prints, which were circulated alongside written pamphlets and *libelles*, demonstrate the coherence between the multiple levels of signification of the overturning of the cooking pot.

### 3.3.3 Visual Images

#### **Celuy qui en Satan se fie james nen a que tronperie**

Le Challeux, otherwise known for his participation in Tortorel and Perrissin's *Quarante Tableaux*, is the author of the print *CELUY QUI EN SATAN SE FIE JAMES NEN A QUE TRONPERIE*, translated by Benedict as 'Those Who Trust in Satan Are Always Deceived', which appeared in Lyon at an unknown date. (Fig. 78) According to Benedict, (2007: 63) 'from its suggestion that the days of the Roman church are numbered, it would seem best to fit the Huguenot mood of the early 1560s.' The overturned cooking pot in the centre of the image supports Benedict's hypothesis. *CELUY QUI EN SATAN SE FIE* overturns the common motif of the tree of Jesse, which represents a tree growing from Jesse's side or navel and bearing the ancestors of Christ as fruits (Benedict 2007: 65). Le Challeux's print depicts a tree growing from the Pope's belly and bearing cardinals, bishops, monks and nuns brandishing satirical attributes such as kitchen utensils, meat, indulgences and a young infant, dressed as a bishop. Directly beneath the Pope at the top of the tree, a fat monk holds an upside-down cooking pot. In this image, the upside-down cooking pot represents a parodic bell and the imminent demise of the Church is represented by the Devil chopping off the tree. My next example focuses more clearly on the overturning of the cooking pot as a metaphor for the overthrowing of the Pope.



Figure 78: 'Celuy qui en Satan se fie, james nen a que tronperie', Le Challeux, J. (c. 1560) engraving, in (Benedict 2007: 64)

### **Le Renversement de la grand marmite**

In addition to the pamphlets that I have already examined, the image of the papal cooking pot is represented in a woodcut print that summarises and develops the most striking aspects of this trope. *Le Renversement de la grand marmite*, circulated in early 1562, condenses some of the important themes of Protestant satire: the corruption and greed of the clergy, the

overturning of the cooking pot by the gospel, the impending overthrowing of the Pope, and the martyrdom of Protestants.<sup>49</sup> (Fig. 79) By connecting these crucial aspects of Protestant attacks against the Pope, the *Renversement* displays a high degree of coherence and complexity.



Figure 79: 'Le Renversement de la grand marmite', engraving, Paris, BnF, Est Qb 1.

The *Renversement* revolves around a faltering and cracked cooking pot shaped as an upside-down bell. Inside the cooking pot, a concoction of mitres and tiaras is boiling, fuelled by the martyrs' burning bodies. In the lower left corner, members of the clergy – recognisable by their clothing and hairstyle – are desperately trying to support the cooking pot with broken pillars marked with the Pope's effigy. A hideous woman is stretching her arm in hope to collect some of the mixture leaking from the cooking pot. In the lower right corner, a monk and two pregnant nuns as well as several members of the faculty – recognisable by the shape of their hats and the ergots on their shoes – and their submissive students are also trying to

<sup>49</sup> On martyrs, see: Lestringant 2004b.

prevent the cooking pot from falling. In the upper left corner, a crowd of blindfolded people is confined and guarded by armed cardinals; above them, the Pope is overthrown and the symbols of his spiritual and temporal powers are taken away from him by hands extending from Heaven. In the upper right corner, an angel brandishing a feather and a book/sword and a bird overturn the cooking pot, while another angel welcome the spirits of the three martyrs into Heaven, where the Tetragrammaton YHWH is represented by mock Hebrew script. Finally, beneath the cooking pot is a text that provides a brief gloss of the image.

As Benedict's and Lestringant's studies demonstrate, the *Renversement* is saturated with allegorical and multi-layered imagery (Benedict 1994; Lestringant 2004c). The central cooking pot, shaped as an upside-down bell, offers a direct expression of the inversion of the Catholic Church, exemplified by a passage of the *Satyres chrestiennes*:

Grosses cloches sont chauderons,  
Dessus dessous mis à l'envers  
Qui bouillent toujours descouvers (79).

The inversion of the bell into a cooking pot serves a double purpose: on the one hand, it debases the Catholic Church by associating one of its components (bells) with gluttony and cooking; and on the other, it alludes to one of the most violent hotbed of religious tensions of the period: the quarrel of the bells. A form of iconoclasm, the Protestant attacks against bells are motivated by the opposition to Catholic idolatrous superstitions pertaining to bells, and by the fact that bells call people to mass. As Simonin argues, 'Loin d'être une question marginale, la querelle des cloches, moins connue que celles de images, prend [...] dans les années 1548 à 1563 un relief particulier' (Simonin 2001: 66). For Lestringant (2004: 427), 'Si la marmite papale ressemble à une cloche retournée, c'est qu'au départ la cloche est une marmite à l'envers, suspendue au-dessus de la tête des fidèles.' The striking association of upside-down bells and cooking pots will be further developed in other prints, especially from the *Songes drôlatiques de Pantagruel*. The topicality and visual power of this association have contributed to the fortune of the cooking pot trope.

The broken pillars used to maintain the cooking pot upright provide another example of multi-layered image (Lestringant 2004: 426). While their shape and the word ‘canons’ used in the poem evoke the Pope’s military power, they can also bring to mind canon law, which is on the brink of being overturned by the Gospel. Finally, Lestringant focuses on a figure in the background, which he identifies – thanks to its headpiece and to a note in Léry’s *Histoire d’un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*<sup>50</sup> – as Villegagnon. Also satirised in the *Comédie du pape malade*, Villegagnon suggests the failure of the *France Antarctique* and obliquely evokes another cooking pot and anthropophagous feast, that of the cannibals from the New World.

Less critical attention has been devoted to the characters underneath Villegagnon and the lustful monks. Dressed as members of the Faculty, the three characters are accompanied by two diminutive figures on all fours, who are probably students. (Fig. 80)



Figure 80: Detail from ‘Le Renversement de la grande marmite’.

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<sup>50</sup> ‘Partant si celuy ou ceux qui comme un sauvage, apres qu’il fu de retour par-deça, le firent peindre tout nud, au dessus du renversement de la grande marmite, eussent esté advertis de ceste belle robbe, il ne faut point douter que pour joyaux et ornemens, ils ne luy eussent aussi bien laissée qu’ils firent sa croix et son flageolet pendus à son col’ (Léry 1994: 191).

These characters allude to the role of the Sorbonne (often conflated with the Paris Faculty of Theology; see Farge: 1985) in the decadence of the Church. Interestingly, the piece of clothing revealed by the posture of the first character was called a ‘canon’, which adds another layer to the pun observed by Lestringant. The gaze of the students and the position of the professor call for attention and suggest not only a high degree of indecency, but also some scatological undertones. In many examples of sixteenth-century religious polemic, Persels (2003: 1093) observes ‘that Faith suffers from not just any illness but from a *colique* [...] provoked by a surfeit of the Sorbonnes’s [...] exegetical gloss in place of a plain and healthy diet of pure Gospel.’ The trope of the Church’s intestinal illness is commonplace and complement that of the cooking pot. That the main tropes of Protestant satire in the period were all related to ingestion and excretion – the papal kitchen, the cooking pot and intestinal distress – is significant and relates to the importance of the doctrine of transubstantiation as one of the primary points of contention between Catholics and Protestants (See: Scribner 1987: 277-301; Szabari 2009). While, as Persels (2003) points out, the early sixteenth-century medical polemic against Catholics and theologians from the Sorbonne suggests that healing was possible by virtue of a strict diet of gospel, Protestant polemic, from the 1560s onwards, clearly recommends the overturning of the Church.

### 3.3.4 Conclusion

In his analysis of the religious violence, Crouzet argues that the Protestant imagery and rituals aiming at the debasement of the Catholic Church possessed some elements of militant millenarianism (Crouzet 1990a: 639-669). His interpretation of the radicalisation of the Protestant polemic in the 1560s is widely based on Bakhtin and connects the eschatological dimension of Protestant discourse with a regenerative and revolutionary laughter. Instead of only exposing or attempting to cure the Catholic Church, the Reformation in the 1560s postulates that the end of the Catholic Church will lead to a new world order. This

eschatological hope can be linked to the Protestant takeover of Lyon led by the Baron des Adrets from 1562 to 1563, and explains the proliferation of Protestant pamphlets in Lyon during this period.

The eschatological turn taken by the Reformation is closely linked to the notion of inversion. The corruption and illness of the Church is thought to be a consequence of the accumulation of sins. As Crouzet (1990a: 650) puts it : 'le monde à l'envers, monde de l'excès et d'oubli de l'ancienne simplicité, se perçoit tel aussi au travers de l'état de débilité générale des corps.' In addition to predict the end of the Church, Protestant polemic aspires to invert what has been previously inverted, which is clearly visible in the trope of the reversal of the cooking pot. Both of these aspects of Protestant polemic rely on laughter to expose, debase and transform the corruption of the Church and the Catholics: 'Le but du rire est de les agresser, de désacraliser la religion qu'ils servent et défendent en prouvant que cette religion est leur ventre. Mais le rire, face aux Abus, est conçu comme un moyen d'enseigner, de faire éclater une vérité difficile à faire percevoir à tous les esprits' (Crouzet 1990a: 677).

The comic and satirical elements of Protestant polemic are at odds with the doctrine of austerity and iconoclasm usually associated with Protestantism. Relying on Bakhtin's notion of carnivalesque, Crouzet (1990a) insists on the regenerative and subversive power of laughter. Persels argues that the crude humour and scatological images were a means to propagate the message to all strata of the society inasmuch as their physicality grounded them in the people's everyday experiences.<sup>51</sup> Given the prominence of carnivalesque and grotesque themes in Protestant polemic, it comes as no surprise that Rabelais remained popular, even after his death in 1553. In the next section, I will examine representative examples of Rabelais's posthumous tradition and their relation to Protestant polemic.

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<sup>51</sup> 'The Sorbonnic trots are not just funny; their grounding in the way sixteenth-century men and women lived their lives and their faith and in the way these interacted render them as apt as any metaphor for figuring confessional distress and its relief, in terms any one of the "simple" was evidently considered astute enough to grasp' (Persels 2003: 1109).

## 3.4 RABELAIS'S POSTHUMOUS TRADITION

### 3.4.1 Introduction

A significant number of books have been, rightly or wrongly, attributed to, heavily influenced by or placed under the sign of Rabelais (Grève 1961, Grève 2003). His characters have had a life of their own after his death, and his distinctive style has often been imitated. I will focus on two examples of posthumous works with polemical undertones. The first one, *L'Isle Sonnante*, is authorial and has been published on its own in 1562 or 1563 and as a part of the *Cinquième Livre*.<sup>52</sup> The second work I will concentrate on, published by Breton under the name of François Rabelais, is a series of monstrous emblems called *Les Songes drôlatiques de Pantagruel* and attributed to Desprez. These examples proceed from the same historical context, make use of the same imagery, and propagate similar ideas as the examples studied above.

### 3.4.2 *L'Isle Sonnante*

Published between 1562 and 1563, *L'Isle Sonnante* provides a continuation of the quest of Pantagruel, Panurge and their companions (729-746). Perpetually ringing with the sound of bells, the Isle Sonnante is inhabited by a whole range of birds whose names evoke the clerical hierarchy of the Catholic Church. This episode can be read as a critique of various aspects of the Church, including Lent, monastic and chivalric orders, and the Pope. In an important contribution to the history of this volume, Simonin provides solid evidence that *L'Isle Sonnante* was published as a piece of Protestant polemic. First, in terms of editorial practices, it was published without royal privilege and without indication concerning the identity of the publishers (Simonin 2001: 58-59). Secondly, Simonin observes 'une coïncidence temporelle entre l'impression de ce texte et la guerre de pamphlets, au vrai surtout la très forte vague de

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<sup>52</sup> On the authenticity of the *Cinquième Livre*, see Petrossian 1976; Le Dimet 1981; Huchon 1981; Cooper 2001.

livrets protestants et condéens induite par le massacre de Vassy' (Simonin 2001: 60). Another significant contextual element is the quarrel of the bells, a continuation of the better known quarrel of the images. In the mid-sixteenth century, bells – and the various beliefs and traditions related to them – constitute one of the focal points of the opposition between Catholics and Protestants (Simonin 2001: 63-66; Lestringant 2001: 93-94)<sup>53</sup> Given the historical context and the satirical content of *L'Isle Sonnante*, its publication in 1562-63 may be understood as an attempt from the editor to capitalise on the polemical climate as well as on Rabelais's reputation. As Simonin (2001: 60) says: 'Aussi, loin de fuir le caractère clandestin, de littérature de controverse, de *L'Isle sonnante* telle qu'il la publiait, il s'en est, à l'opposé, flatté et aidé.'

Even though its polemical character cannot be denied, *L'Isle Sonnante* remains more complex than the pamphlets I have mentioned so far. According to Lestringant, 'Ce contre-monde permet de dénoncer à la suite la hiérarchie ecclésiastique, les ordres nouveaux, les ordres de chevaleries ou "gourmanderies", l'avidité, la glotonnerie, la paresse et la luxure censées régner à la cour du pape' (Lestringant 2001: 95). As a polemical representation of the Catholic Church, the Isle Sonnante can be considered as a world turned upside-down. Of particular interest with regards to the polemical impact of this episode is the question of the exchange between this world upside-down and 'l'autre monde', the denomination of its inhabitants to designate the world of Pantagruel and his companions. This label, which seems paradoxical, evokes the episode happening the world in Pantagruel's mouth (section 2.3.2) and on the island of Ennasin (section 2.3.3). However, in this case, the Isle Sonnante is not oddly familiar, but, on the contrary, strange, monstrous and inverted. There are two modalities of exchange between these two opposite worlds. The first is economic: as they spend their time 'à gaudir, gazouiller et chanter' rather than cultivating the land, the

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<sup>53</sup> For a sixteenth-century example related to the quarrel of the bells, see, for instance, Viret 1544.

inhabitants of the Isle Sonnante steal from the other world and become ‘un monde stérile et sans génération, sans culture et sans renouvellement, un monde qui ne s’accroît que de la destruction de l’autre’ (Lestringant 2001: 96-97). The second is related to migration dynamics: the Isle Sonnante receives the rejects from the other world. As a result, it is inhabited by monstrous people, comparable to the children of Antiphysic: ‘ils sont bossus, borgnes, boiteux, manchots, podagres, contrefaits, et maleficies, poix inutile de la terre’ (734). When Pantagruel asks whether some of these birds ever fly back to where they come from, he gets an answer that resonates with religious polemic:

Depuis certaines eclipses s’en est revolé une grande mouée par vertu des constellations celestes. Cela de rien ne nous melancolie, le demeurant n’en a que plus grande pitance. [...] Nous en trouvasme quelques uns reellement, et en recerchant d’aventure rencontraisme un pot aux roses descouvert (736).

According to Lestringant (2001: 95), this passage constitutes ‘une allusion à la Réforme en pleine phase conquérante’. The people who abandoned the Isle Sonnante, however, did so for fear of the eschatological signs rather than to follow their religious conviction. Moreover, the remaining clerics ‘n’en a que plus grande pitance’. These elements allude to the discovery of the ‘pot aux roses’, the first step toward the overturning of the papal cooking pot. This expression, which Huchon does not interpret in her edition, evokes the central theme of the *Satyres chrestiennes*: the uncovering of the true nature of the Pope. The clerics who found this ‘pot aux roses descouvert’ do not seem to understand the implications of this fact. For Rabelais’s readers, however, this echo of the *Satyres chrestiennes* re-activates the trope of the cooking pot.

Rabelais uses the polemical trope of the cooking pot in a slightly different manner than the other examples mentioned in this chapter. The episode begins as Pantagruel and his companions hear the ringing of bells: ‘entendismes un bruit de loing venant, frequent et tumultueux, et nous sembloit à l’ouïr que fussent cloches grosses, petites et mediocres’ (843). This initial observation is reinforced by the navigators’ allusion to the Erasmian adage

*Dodonaicum aes* (I, i, 7): ‘Nous doubtions que feust Dodone, avecques ses chauderons, ou le porticque dit Heptaphone, en Olympie’. This adage permits the comparison between ringing bells and cooking pots. (See also section 1.4.3). The identification of bells to cooking pots becomes more significant shortly thereafter, with another of Pantagruel’s mistaken suppositions about the source and motivation for the constant ringing of bells:

Je doute, dist Pantagruel, que là quelque compagnie d’abeilles ayt commencé prendre vol en l’air, pour lesquelles revocquer le voisinage faict ce tribalement de poilles, chaudrons, bassins, cimbales corybantiques de Cybele mere grande des dieux (729).

Huchon signals that ‘cimbales corybantiques’ refer to instruments said to maintain a swarm of bees in a fixed place in Virgil’s *Georgics* (n. 8: 1622). Again, an adage brings together the sound of bells and kitchen utensils, especially cooking pots. This association is allowed by – and reinforces – the fact that the Isle Sonnante represents a world turned upside-down. By emphasising the importance of bells in his satire of Catholic liturgy, and by suggesting that bells are, in fact, upside-down cooking pots, Rabelais refers to the tradition I examine throughout this chapter. In the next section, I will provide an example of visual polemic falsely attributed to Rabelais, which also makes abundant use of the overturned cooking pot.

### 3.4.3 The *Songes drôlatiques de Pantagruel*

Published in 1565 by Breton, a major Calvinist printer in Paris, the *Songes drôlatiques de Pantagruel* regroup a series of prints depicting monstrous creatures. Despite being attributed to Rabelais in the preface, these prints were probably drawn by Desprez. As opposed to emblem books, this collection of images resists interpretation since prints are left without commentary and the preface does not present a clear program. The author of the preface leaves the question of interpretation in the hands of his readers ‘pour en declarer le sens mystique ou allegorique’ (ed. Jeanneret 2004: 52). I will argue that allusions to the upside-down cooking pot indicates that the monsters of the *Songes drôlatiques* can be analysed with reference to Protestant polemic.

In his introduction to the *Songes drôlatiques*, Jeanneret defends the openness of these images and argues that – in the absence of a coherent and continuous allegorical or polemical thread – they should be considered as ways to exorcise and minimise the fear of monsters (ed. Jeanneret 2004: 39-47). Others have argued that the proliferation of Catholic elements in the *Songes drôlatiques* and Breton’s religious affiliation justify a polemical interpretation of these prints (Wildenstein 1959; Grève 1961: 181-183). Various recognisable themes permeate the *Songes drôlatiques*, such as oversized or absent body parts (Spinks 2011), hybrids and grylls (ed. Jeanneret 2004: 15-23), and the diversity of clothes and headpieces (Jones 2006). A more polemical reading of the *Songes drôlatiques* emphasises armed and religious monsters. In order to demonstrate that the *Songes drôlatiques* have been influenced by the cooking pot trope, I will focus on some striking instances of kitchen utensils and, especially, cooking pots.

Examples of cooking pots as well as various containers and kitchen utensils abound in the *Songes*, either as mere accessories, prostheses or as anthropomorphised beings.<sup>54</sup> I will concentrate on two instances: in the first, the creature tends to a cooking pot (Fig. 81, while in the second image, the cooking pot itself becomes the monster. (Fig. 82)



Figure 81: ‘Songe XCVII’ (ed. Jeanneret 2004: 150)



Figure 82: ‘Songe XLIV’ (ed. Jeanneret 2004: 97)

<sup>54</sup> For cooking pot creatures, see: XXII (p. 75), XLVII (p. 100), CIII (p. 156); and for other kitchen utensils or containers, see: XX (p. 73), XXXIII (p. 86), XLII (p. 95), LXI (p. 114), LXIV (p. 117), LXVII (p. 120), LXXVIII (p. 131), CVIII (p. 161), CXX (p. 173).

The nineteenth-century commentator Lesclide considers the creature of the first image as a ‘personnification de la gourmandise monacale’ (ed. Lesclide 1869: XCVII). The creature wears a monk’s robe and frock and licks a spoon. The cooking pot itself seems more significant: rather than a cooking pot, it consists in a leaking upside-down bell. The similarity with the *Renversement de la grand marmite* is striking. As Lesclide aptly observes, the leak can be interpreted as ‘les premiers coups [portés] à la marmite ecclésiastique.’ Lesclide’s identification of the second figure as Grandgousier is less helpful (ed. Lesclide 1869: XLIV). This creature has the face of an old man and the body of a cooking pot. Of the four legs of the cooking pot, one seems alive and moving while the other are static. The creature eats the content of its own belly with a spoon. This image seems to allude to the topos of the papal cooking pot and focuses on the Pope’s gluttony. It can also refer to medieval representations of the Devil: to punish the sinners, he eats, digests and defecates them in a cooking pot.



Figure 83: ‘Songe XXXII’ (ed. Jeanneret 2004: 85)



Figure 84: ‘Songe CV’ (ed. Jeanneret 2004: 158)

I will now examine two creatures shaped like bells.<sup>55</sup> As I have mentioned before, bells were a point of contention between Catholic and Protestant. (Fig. 83; 84) They symbolised the power of Rome and were surrounded by an array of superstitions. Also

<sup>55</sup> For other bell-shaped creatures, see: I (p. 54), VII (p. 60), XIV (p. 67), XIX (p. 72), LXXI (p. 124), LXXII (p. 125).

important is the similarity between bells and cooking pots in terms of shape. As a result, bell-shaped creatures would have triggered an immediate reaction from sixteenth-century readers.

Lesclide, whose dubious methodology consists in associating each creature with a character from Rabelais or with a historical figure, identifies the first image as Quaresmeprenant (ed. Lesclide 1869: XXXII) and the second as the Pope (under the name of its parodic incarnation in *L'Isle Sonnante*, the Papegaut) (ed. Lesclide 1869: CV). While these attributions are doubtful at best, they shed light on crucial aspects of both images. By brandishing a fish, the first creature, which stands tenuously on a stick resting on trestles, shows its association with Lent. Its oversized tongue and its bell shape indicates that the satire focuses on proselytism, and its horned hat, as an attribute of fools, denotes the foolishness of the creature's discourse.

The fragile balance of the first monster is completely overthrown in the second print: the creature is falling head over heels. On the bell, which serves as a cap, the word 'cornar' is visible. *Cornard* can refer to a man cheated by his wife, a fool, and to a carnivalesque society active in Rouen. The object held by the creature is difficult to identify. According to Lesclide, 'Ce fantoche ventru tient de la main droite une longue clé qui se termine en fourche, symbole de l'enfer qui est un de ses moyens de gouvernement, ou simple rateau destiné à ramener vers Rome les aumônes de l'Europe catholique' (ed. Lesclide 1869: CV). Even though the meaning of these figures is difficult to ascertain, they clearly evoke the quarrel of the bells and the polemical tradition surrounding cooking pots.

#### 3.4.4 Conclusion

In this section, I have examined two examples of sixteenth-century works pertaining to Rabelais's posthumous tradition in order to show how Protestant polemic used Rabelais's distinctive style and favourite themes as well as his reputation to debase Catholicism. To do so, I have studied adaptations of the image of the overturned cooking pot in a Rabelaisian

context. The argument of chapter 2, whereby Rabelais's work is characterised by a shift toward polemic, is confirmed by the publication, soon after his death, of polemical pieces. To demonstrate the impact and prevalence of the cooking pot trope, I will now turn to its appropriation by Catholic polemicists.

## 3.5 CATHOLIC RESPONSES

### 3.5.1 Introduction

Catholic polemicists have attempted to overturn the trope of the cooking pot and to use it against Protestants as early as 1562. Not only does it demonstrate the pervasive influence of the image of the cooking pot in religious polemic in the last third of the sixteenth century, but it also shows the versatility of this trope. This side of the cooking pot trope has not attracted much critical attention and its importance is often downplayed. Commenting on the publication of Beauxamis's *Resolution* in 1562, Benedict (1981: 56) argues that, despite Beauxamis's effort, 'the phrases "*marmite*" or "*marmiton*" quickly became standard terms of derision used by the Huguenots to denote the Catholic Church and its clergy.' On the contrary, Lestringant believes that Beauxamis's publication of the *Resolution* overstates the significance of the *Renversement de la grand marmite*.<sup>56</sup>

The main argument of the Catholic polemicists is that Protestants have turned the world upside-down. For instance, Sorbin, in his *Homélie sur l'interprétation des dix commandements*, denounces the role of the 'faux tesmoins' – the Protestants – according to whom 'Les tesmoins sont appelez faulsaies' (Sorbin 1570a: 156). The accusation is accompanied by a short catalogue of the inflammatory pamphlets against the Catholic Church:

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<sup>56</sup> 'Autre tentative de retournement du même ordre : au *Renversement de la grand marmite* répondra un libelle du carme Thomas Beauxamis, s'efforçant de prouver : « par le discours de l'écriture sainte et l'expresse parole de Dieu » que le nom de Marmite convient mieux à la nouvelle Eglise qu'à l'ancienne – ce qui est accorder au placard anonyme une confiance bien grande et une foi presque aveugle' (Lestringant 2004c: 447).

Mais je vous prie d'ou pensez vous ester sortiz les livres qu'ils baptisent, tantost du nom de Marmite, tantost d'un Alcoran des cordeliers, d'une Anatomie de Messe, & autres semblables qu'ils remplissent d'injures, de reproches, & fauces accusations, si ce n'est du sang des plus anciens, ou payens, ou heretiques ? (Sorbin 1570a: 156).

In response to these pamphlets, Catholic polemicists attempted to appropriate the cooking pot trope. Even though there are fewer examples of the use of this trope in Catholic than in Protestant polemic, they are an integral part of this tradition and participate in the development of the image of the cooking pot. Significant pieces using this trope include – but are not restricted to –Beauxamis's pamphlets *Resolution* and *La Marmite renversée et fondue*, and the print below conserved in L'Estoille's *Figures et Drolleries de la Ligue*. (Fig. 85)



Figure 85: 'La Marmite renuerscée des huguenots, Politiques Atheistes, Espernonistes, Libertins', engraving, (L'Estoille 1589-1606: 19v)

This image borrows some of the imagery of the *Renversement*: the cooking pot at the centre of the print looks like an upside-down bell filled with tiny characters. However, its subject – the assassination of Henri III – is circumstantial and political rather than eschatological. The composition of the picture is particularly telling: it shows Henri III being assassinated by the monk Clément while trying to prevent his cooking pot from being overturned; on the other side, d’Espéron is blowing on the fire underneath the cooking pot with bellows while another character is bringing more fuel. The posture of the king suggests that his murder will bring down the cooking pot and the accumulation of characters on the left of the image might mean that the king’s death will lead to the downfall of his morally corrupt court. Also telling is the suggestive posture of D’Espéron: the position of his sword, in particular, could be interpreted as a sign of lust and homosexuality, thus indicating sexual inversion. In this print, the cooking pot trope is not only deployed against Protestant, but also encompasses each enemy of the Catholic League: ‘huguenots, Politiques, Atheïstes, Espéronistes, Libertins.’ According to Benedict (1994: 113), this print, which ‘reflète le sentiment de soulagement et de triomphe éprouvé par de nombreux Ligueurs parisiens après l’assassinat du roi’, could be the last example of visual image pertaining to the cooking pot trope during the religious wars.

The examples I will examine show how the cooking pot trope has been appropriated by Catholic polemicists, especially Beauxamis. I will focus on the way Beauxamis uses references to cooking pots in the Bible to support his attack against Protestantism. Then, I will show that, despite Lestringant’s comment that ‘Dans tous les cas se perd, en définitive, l’ombre des Cannibales authentiques du Brésil,’ (Lestringant 2004c: 447) the association between cooking pot and cannibalism was exploited productively by Catholic polemic.

### 3.5.2 Biblical References

The most prominent example of Catholic polemical work seeking to overturn the cooking pot trope consists in Beauxamis's short book *Resolution sur certains Pourtraictz et libelles intitulez du nom de Marmitte* published in Paris in 1562 by De Marnet. Beauxamis revised it, and published an augmented version ten years later under the title *La Marmitte renversee et fondue*.<sup>57</sup> His initial project is to demonstrate that the Protestant use of the cooking pot trope was not supported by the Scriptures.

Ad ce qu'il soit manifeste combine est inique ceste cauillation, j'ay assemble en ce petit traicté toutes les Marmittes, desquelles est parlé en la bible soub figure : monstrant evidentement quelles sont entendues des sectes heretiques, & que le nom de Marmitte selon l'intelligence de l'Escripture, doit ester impute à leur Eglise nouvelle. Enquoy tu seras juge quelle des deux parts doit estre de ce nom appelee, ou le Clergé du Pape, aquoy il ny a nulle Escripture confirmative : ou ceste Eglise nouvelle, laquelle par tout tesmoignage est condamnee (Beauxamis 1562: 1).

Beauxamis provides an exegesis of a selection of biblical passages involving cooking pots leading to the inevitable identification of the cooking pot with Protestantism. The various attributes surrounding the cooking – the fire burning underneath it, the wind sustaining the fire, the broth, flesh, and bones boiling in it – are associated with aspects of the Protestant liturgy or perceived influence on society. By writing in the vernacular, Beauxamis attains a wider and less educated audience than if he had written the *Resolution* in Latin. Moreover, paraphrasing the Bible into French enables him to insert a number of references to cooking pots. For instance, in order to evoke the disorders brought about by Protestantism, Beauxamis paraphrases and comments Job 41 as follows:

Le Bouillon de ceste Marmitte, ainsi que la fume d'icelle nous donne entendre Job au susdit chapitre : disant, qu'il est excite & esmeu du bat de la queue de Behemoth, ainsi qu'escume & bouillonne la mer, battue par la Balaine. Ce bouillon excessivement impetueux que signifie il en l'Eglise libertine & sathanique, sinon les seditions, troubles, meurtres, voleries, sacagementz,

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<sup>57</sup> Beauxamis also published other polemical pamphlets against Protestants, such as the *Histoire des sectes* (1570).

brigandailles, conjurations, portz darmes, & autres exorbitantes actions & fructz de ces nouveaux evangelistes ? (Beauxamis 1562: 6).

While the instances of Protestant polemic I studied above used the cooking pot trope to debase and insult the Pope and the Catholic Church, Beauxamis's rhetorical strategy is more deliberative than epideictic. His demonstration exploits the lack of references to the Scriptures in Protestant polemic with regards to cooking pots. However, the efficacy of this pamphlet may have been affected by its highly abstract subject matter: no reference is made to contemporary events, and the social disorders are mentioned in general terms. This lack will be corrected in his revision of the *Resolution*, published ten years later, as I will show in the next section.

### 3.5.3 Cooking Pots and Cannibalism

Another example of the Catholic appropriation of the cooking pot trope consists in assimilating Protestant cruelty, especially cannibalism, with cooking pots. This line of attack presents two main advantages for Catholic polemic: on the one hand, it overturns the common accusation of cannibalism against Catholics, and on the other, it takes advantage of an existing connection between cooking pots and cannibalism. I will show how Protestant war crimes are linked to cannibalism and cooking pots in Beauxamis's *Marmite renversee et fondue* and in a print from L'Estoille's *Figures et Drolleries de la Ligue*.

In the *Marmite renversee et fondue*, Beauxamis recycles most of his text from 1562 and adds a short section on past heresies – such as Waldensianism and Hussitism – and a substantial development of French recent history (Beauxamis 1572: 13v-20v). His aim is to expose the Protestant war crimes in order to prove that they should be considered as the *Marmite* and therefore should be destroyed.<sup>58</sup> Beauxamis's historical narrative intermingles

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<sup>58</sup> 'Mais laissant là les anciennes heresies, je viendray à celle qui de nostre temps tourmente ce pays, & tous circonvoisins [...] pour monstres combien elle est sanguinaire, nonobstant qu'assez tout le monde le tesmoignage: je toucheray icy sommairement aucunes de leurs executions, renvoyant à la plaine histoire le narré lamentable des troubles de nostre France' (Beauxamis 1572: 13v).

factual account of events – such as, for instance, the Conjunction of Amboise, multiple edicts, and the battle of Jarnac – and a catalogue of the atrocities committed by the Protestants, from acts of iconoclasm to cruelty towards priests and, more generally, Catholics:

En d'aucuns lieux ils enfouissaient tous vifs les catholiques, trenchoient les enfans en deux, fendoient le ventre aux prestres & en tiroient le cueur hors & le brusloient. Ils levoient à plusieurs des lanieres & les faisoient rostir : ils brusloient à d'autres les plantes des pieds, ils surfondoient les autres de gresse chaude, ils faisoient les autres mourir de faim, & leur commandoient nonobstant se presenter au bout de leur table, & de remuer les machoueres sans avoir aucune viande en la bouche (Beauxamis 1572: 16v).

These cruel tortures are reminiscent of the behaviours imputed to cannibals from the New World. Cannibalism, in this instance, is implied by the roasting of the Catholics' flesh. Of particular interest is the contrast between the depiction of Protestants as cannibals and torturers on the one hand, and that of the Catholics dying of inanition on the other. This passage is but one of the many instances in which Protestants are described as 'riches luxurieux', 'hommes libertins & desbordez de toute licence', 'plus gras d'entre les porcs Sardanapalistes' (Beauxamis 1572: 6v). In short, Beauxamis associates Protestants with flesh boiling in a cooking pot. He concludes by urging for the destruction of the Protestant cooking pot:

Ce seroit une histoire infinie qui voudroit de point en point rechercher les inhumanitez, expliquer les massacres, deceler leurs conspirations, & desseings. Il me suffit d'avoir en brief touché les beaux fruicts de leur christ empistolé, & de leur secte meurtriere, pour verifier que suivant la parole de Dieu ils sont la cité de sang, la Marmite eschauffée, laquelle pour ses cruautez nostre Dieu commande estre renversée & fondue (Beauxamis 1572: 20v).

While the *Resolution* was a demonstration based on biblical exegesis, the *Marmite renversee* can be read as an act of accusation followed by a divine sentence. The overturning of the cooking pot is not perceived as an imminent resolution of the religious and socio-political troubles as in Protestant polemic, but as a divine commandment in reaction to the political and religious situation in France.

The print called ‘La cruauté en faisant mourir les catholiques’ – kept by L’Estoile in his collection of pamphlets and prints by the Catholic League in his *Figures et Drolleries de la Ligue* – also depicts a scene of cannibalism:



Figure 86: ‘La cruauté en faisant mourir les catholiques’, engraving (L’Estoile 1589-1606: 4v)

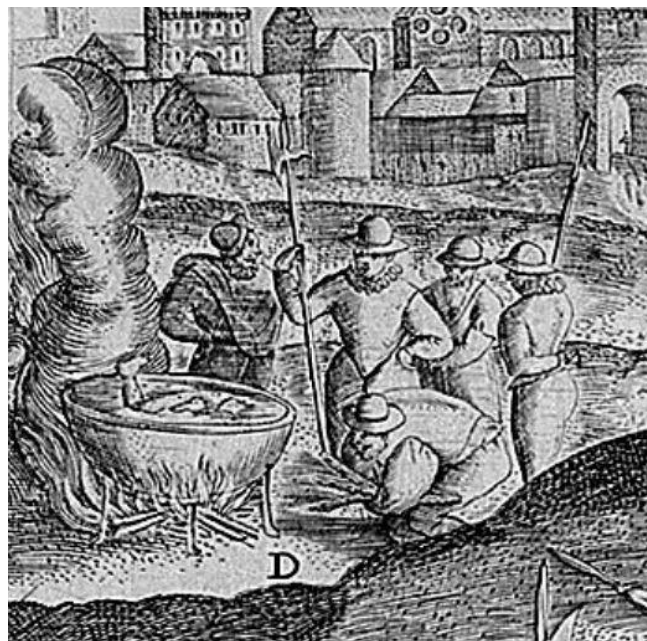


Figure 87: Detail from ‘La cruauté en faisant mourir les catholiques’

According to the notice, after being hung to death, the Catholics' bodies are cut into pieces and 'leurs testes et membres jettez dans les chaudrons & marmittes, se cuisent et parbouillissent.' Again, the tortures, the implied cannibalism and the use of the cooking pot evoke the cannibals of the New World. Comparing Protestants with the cannibals of the New World also introduces the notion of novelty in religion, which constitutes one of the commonplaces of the religious polemic.

Another example of Catholic use of cannibalism and cooking pot in religious polemic repeats the Protestant arguments with a great degree of precision in order to overturn them. Published in 1583, the *Sainctes Exhortations sur tous les Evangiles du Caresme* by Ignace le Gault provides a complete reversal of the metaphor of the Church as a kitchen:

Leur Dieu c'est leur ventre, le temple où ils l'adorent c'est le poulmon, l'Autel sur lequel ils offrent leurs sacrifices est l'auge d'un pourceau, le Prestre est le cuisinier, leur saint Esprit est la lueur & netteté, les graces les saupiquets, & diverses saulses, leur propheties sont les rots : Les vertus Theologales de ceste prophane Religion sont, *Agape in cacabis fervet, fides in culina calet, spes in ferculis iacet*. Vostre charité est bouillante dans les marmites, la foy brusle dans la cuisine, l'esperance gist & consiste aux plats & aux mets (Gault 1583: 101).

While this metaphor had been an attack on the Mass and the Eucharist in Protestant polemical pamphlets such as the *Satyres chrestiennes*, Le Gault manages to overturn the attack by focusing on another point of contention between Catholics and Protestants: Lent. The rejection of Lent by Protestants motivates the extended metaphor of God as belly and Protestantism as a kitchen. Another similar example is included in Pierre Matthieu's *Histoires des derniers troubles de France* (1600). In a sonnet describing the vices of the stereotypical *Politique*, Matthieu accuses the 'masqué Politique' of 'Sonner l'estat & non la pieté,/Forger son Dieu du fonds de la marmite.' Synonymous with material goods, the cooking pot rhymes with and is associated with hypocrisy ('faire la chatemite' and later '& n'estre qu'hipocrite'). The archaic and modern meanings of *marmite* collide in this poem.

### 3.5.4 Conclusion

In this section, I have shown that the cooking pot trope has been appropriated by Catholic polemicists in an attempt to overturn it and apply it to Protestantism. I have demonstrated two ways in which Catholic polemicists have done so: the re-interpretation of the trope through the lens of the Bible, and the overturning of the trope through the identification of Protestants with cannibals. Also worth mentioning is that the cooking pot trope did not lose its satirical potential with the end of the religious wars, but has been used throughout the seventeenth-century.

## 3.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have demonstrated the crucial importance of the topos of the world upside-down for the polemic of the French religious wars. To do so, I focused on the trope of the overturning of the papal cooking pot. I have shown that Protestant polemicists used the symbol of the cooking pot, which was already associated with representations of Hell, greed and cannibals, to debase, desecrate and mock the Catholic Church and the Pope. With my study of the various pamphlets and prints using this trope, I have shown the different levels of interpretation of this images, its coherence and complexity. Finally, I have examined the Catholic response, which have sought to overturn this trope. In the next chapter, I will examine the role of the topos of the world upside-down in representations of social and political disorders.

## 4 SOCIAL AND COSMIC DISORDERS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

An important number of Renaissance texts explore the relationships between man, God and the cosmos, and postulate that they mirror each other. The hypothesised similarity between macrocosm and microcosm enabled the Renaissance poets to describe the religious and civil conflicts as cosmic upheaval. For classical authors, the association of the topos of cosmic upheaval with conflicts and social turmoil has been especially pregnant.<sup>59</sup> Social and political disorders cause a chaos of cosmic proportions: not only are all social, domestic, judicial and political norms overturned, but the laws of nature are broken. This view connects to the widespread belief in the imminent end of the world. It suggests that cosmic events overturning the laws of nature – such events can be based on reality (solar eclipse, comet) or be cataclysmic (the fall of stars, the drying up of the sea, mountains becoming plains) – constitute signs of socio-political disorders.

An important part of the apocalyptic language is based on *adynata* and describes natural disasters, such as floods, fires, absolute darkness, earthquakes and meteors (Victoria 2009: 322-25). The *Enigme en prophétie*, which concludes Rabelais's *Gargantua*, offers an emblematic example of the reworking of the theme of apocalyptic cosmic upheaval within a social framework. The enigma, which depicts a world upside-down, predicts great troubles and upheaval before urging the chosen people to remain steadfast and promising them a reward. Following the poem, two contradictory interpretations are offered: Gargantua connects it with the persecution of evangelical Christians; Frère Jean, on the contrary, interprets key passages of the poem as the phases of a game of tennis (150-153). The enigma

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<sup>59</sup> See, for instance, Theognis 2003: I, v. 283-294, p. 74; Thucydides 2007: 343-345; Lucan 1992: I, v. 663-669; II, v. 145-153.

alludes to biblical accounts of the end of the world. Screech (1956: 397) found echoes of Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 in the enigma, and considers it as ‘a very free adaptation of parts of these accounts of the End of the World.’ According to Screech, Saint-Gelais used apocalyptic language to describe a game of tennis and Rabelais exploited this system of biblical references to make a serious allusion to intolerance and persecutions against Evangelical Christians.

In this chapter, I will argue that the topos of the world upside-down and, more precisely, depictions of cosmic upheaval and eschatological signs, such as natural disasters and monsters, are central to describing and understanding the social and political troubles at the junction of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. I will focus on Ronsard’s *Discours sur les misères de ce temps*, Du Bartas’s *Sepmaine* and D’Aubigné’s *Tragiques* in order to show that descriptions of social turmoil revolve around the notion that France has become a world upside-down. Then, I will show that this view hinges on the perceived proliferation of eschatological signs such as natural disasters, cosmic events and monstrous births.

## 4.2 FRANCE AS A WORLD UPSIDE-DOWN

### 4.2.1 Introduction

The perceived connection between social and cosmic upheaval provides a crucial metaphor for reflecting on the French religious wars. However, the way in which cosmic and social disorders are depicted in relation to each other depends on the political and religious inclination of the author. To illustrate how accounts of social turmoil diverge from one another, I will concentrate on two main examples: Ronsard’s *Discours* and D’Aubigné’s *Tragiques*. These emblematic examples are opposed in two significant ways: Ronsard’s *Discours* constitute an important work of Catholic polemic written at the beginning of the religious wars, while D’Aubigné’s *Tragiques* is an instance of Protestant polemic from the end of the

wars (See: Duval 1991b). I will show the extent to which their respective use of the topos of the world upside-down diverges, as they identify different causes of social troubles and advocate for different resolutions. As a result, I will argue that the use of the topos of the world upside-down can reveal two opposite attitudes regarding social troubles in sixteenth-century France: Ronsard's *Discours* points out disorders caused by hubris and promotes the restoration of order; D'Aubigné's *Tragiques* postulate that the world is denatured beyond repair and awaits a second inversion, which would overthrow the overturned world.

#### 4.2.2 Hubris and Social Disorders

Heavily influenced by the troubled context of the early 1560s, Ronsard published, in 1562-63, various polemical pieces that were later combined under the title *Discours sur les misères de ce temps*.<sup>60</sup> While they are political in nature, Ronsard's *Discours* contribute to his ambitious cosmological poetry initiated by the *Hymnes*. As Quainton (1980: 7) argues, the *Discours* integrate contemporary conflicts in a 'cosmic and social framework'. As opposed to D'Aubigné – who postulates that the perverted world of sixteenth-century France is on the brink of destruction – Ronsard praises political, cosmic and social harmony as much as he deplores the breakdown of the social order. I will show that Ronsard considers Protestantism as the foremost menace against the social and political order. Building on Quainton's identification of hubris as Ronsard's main criticism against Protestants, I will argue that it also consists in the foremost cause of the disruption of the natural order of things. The monster Opinion, which Ronsard considers as responsible for encouraging the hubris of Protestants and for causing the disorders that I will describe below, will be examined in section 4.4.4.

Ronsard uses the topos of the world upside-down as a way to describe and denounce the upheaval brought about by the Protestants. In the following examples from the *Discours*,

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<sup>60</sup> On the wider issue of Ronsard's political and polemical poetry, see Weber 1955; Lebègue 1966; Higman 1973; Rigolot 1990.

the kind of inversion at play in Ronsard's world upside-down is predominantly that pertaining to improper behaviours caused by hubris: the prevalence of sin, the dissolution of family relationships and the disruption of the social hierarchy. 'Ayant perdu sa reigle et sa forme ancienne' the world is out of bounds. Protestantism, which Ronsard designates as 'vaine piperie', overturns the binary oppositions that should structure society: authority is replaced by desire and greed; lust and gluttony rule over faith and truth; and the exterior (which Ronsard associates with materialism) is more important than the interior (the spiritual) (Lm XI, 19; Lm XI, 63).

In this world overturned by vices, anyone can live as they see fit, without following the immutable laws of God and Nature. It is not vice itself that Ronsard denounces, but 'vice desreglé', meaning excessive and uncontrolled desires triggered by the 'erreur incensé': the hubris of Protestantism. Phrases such as 'à sa guise' or 'selon ta fantaisie'<sup>61</sup> indicate the precedence of personal will over the laws of Nature. Quainton summarises Ronsard's argument on the negative effects of Protestant hubris as follows: 'when the traditional authorities and stabilising forces (Law, Religion, Monarchy) are questioned in the name of hubris and overthrown in favour of novelty and change, the result is a diseased society' (Quainton 1980: 23). Ronsard establishes a catalogue of the various perversions of society to illustrate the fragmentation of the social order. Family ties – as well as relationships between husband and wife or master and servant – are broken and family members turn against each other. The dissolution of family relationship is a common metaphor of the civil wars, based on the notion of the country as a family (Lm XI, 63; Lm XI, 19) (Moreau 2004).

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<sup>61</sup> See *Responce* (1051: v. 307-12):  
Qui rends Dieu partial selon ta fantaisie,  
Qui es melancholique et plein de frenaisie,  
Qui fais de l'habile homme, et qui aux innocens  
Interprètes, malin, l'Evangile à ton sens ?  
Qui as comme un brigand la justice oppressée,  
Et c'en-dessus-dessous la France renversée? (Lm, XI, 116)

Another example of disorder brought about by hubris is the inversion of the social hierarchy. People no longer fulfil their professional duties :

‘L’artizan par ce monstre a laissé sa boutique,  
Le pasteur ses brebis, l’advocat sa pratique,  
Sa nef le marinier, sa foyre le marchand’ (Lm XI, 19).

The result of this obvious lack of respect for the natural and immutable order of things is the dissolution of the social order and values: ‘Et tout à l’abandon va sans ordre et sans loy’ (Lm XI, 19). For Ronsard, the world has been lured into madness by Protestants and no one is safe from this dangerous seduction: ‘tout est renversé des grands jusqu’aux petits!’ (Lm XI, 63). The eloquence of Luther is responsible for ‘cent sortes de vices’ and for the overturning of the world. When he evokes Luther – whose actions are supposed to rectify the inversions of the Catholic Church with a second inversion – Ronsard maintains that Protestantism has worsened the situation instead of fixing it (Lm XI, 63).

Ronsard’s use of the topos of the world upside-down in the *Discours* revolves around the deploration of the current state of society, and denounces Protestantism as a mistake, a seduction and a social madness based on hubris. Two conclusions can be derived from these observations: French society, during the religious wars, is a world upside-down; Ronsard, however, seems to believe that it is possible to go back to a state of social harmony by departing from the disruptive ideas of Protestantism, and embracing the authority of the king. As Demerson (1978: 17) argues: ‘La notion centrale qui inspire désormais la satire ronsardienne n’est plus le ressentiment de l’idéal bafoué, mais le sens de la responsabilité de l’écrivain; le poète satirique est un éveilleur de conscience’ (See also: Gendre 1997). I will now turn to D’Aubigné, who believes, on the contrary, that society is perverted beyond salvation.

### 4.2.3 Perverting Nature

Mostly written between 1577 and 1616, *Les Tragiques* were deeply influenced by the troubles of their time. The first three books (*Misères*, *Princes* and *La Chambre dorée*) depict a world turned upside-down by perversion; the last two books (*Vengeances* and *Jugement*) show the second inversion of the world and the accomplishment of God's plan. In between those two opposite poles, *Feux* and *Fers* evoke the martyrdom and bloody conflicts occurring while God postpones his retribution, waiting for the world to be utterly corrupted.<sup>62</sup>

In the *Tragiques*, D'Aubigné depicts a society going actively against nature. The keyword of Protestant polemic is not hubris, but perversion. Céard indicates two lines that encapsulate D'Aubigné's view of the topos of the world upside-down: 'Comme au monde à l'envers,/Le vieil pere est fouëtté de son enfant pervers' (I, 236-7). According to Céard (1979: 118), 'La rime *envers/pervers* est riche de sens : l'inversion est perversion.' In this radical and violent interpretation of the world upside-down, improper behaviours become a case of transformative inversion as the people who act against nature are depicted as animals or monsters (Pineaux 1983). D'Aubigné uses animalistic metaphors as well as depictions of cannibalism and infanticides to show a society in which man has become its own worst enemy. According to Céard (1979: 119), 'Cette perversion générale est cause de *dénaturation* ; les victimes elles-mêmes ne se contentent pas de subir, elles s'altèrent et se changent.' This metamorphosis is a movement against the natural order of things and, more generally, against nature itself.

The theme of animalisation of society pervades the *Tragiques* and illustrates the violent dislocation of social and family ties and the cannibalistic drive of a society turning against itself. In the society described by D'Aubigné, 'L'homme n'est plus un homme' and 'Les loups, et les renards, et les bestes sauvages/Tiennent place d'humains' (I, 325-6). Particularly telling

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<sup>62</sup> On martyrs in d'Aubigné, see Coates 1992: 117-145.

is the contrast between the good king who hunts down wolves, and the tyrant who is characterised as a wolf: 'Le bon chasse les loups, l'autre est loup du troupeau' (II, 495). The social contract which presents the king as a father for his people is overturned as 'Les Roys qui sont du peuple et les Roys et les peres/Du troupeau domesticq sont les loups sanguinaires' (I, 196-8). One of the most striking examples of the relationship between the animalisation of human beings and cosmic/social disorders is D'Aubigné's description of the cannibal mother.

This passage depicts the emotional torments of a mother torn between her mother instinct and her cannibalistic urges. The allusion to cannibalism differs from the polemical use of such images described in chapter 3. Rather, with his extensive portrait of the cannibal mother, D'Aubigné seeks to elicit not only disgust and terror in his readers, but also empathy and compassion. In addition to describing her terrifying actions, the poet spends considerable time highlighting the mother's struggle, conflicting feelings and extreme embodied reactions. She is presented both as a cannibalistic infanticide, and as a victim of the world upside-down incapable of resisting her urges. As such, she provides a clear example of negative transformative inversion: from loving mother, she turns into a she-wolf and a non-mother. A series of inversions following the same principle accompany this transformation as each element of motherhood is distorted. For instance, at the beginning of the passage, the poet compares the unswathing of the baby to the dislocation of the laws of Nature: 'les barbares doigts,/Qui s'en vont destacher de nature les loix' (I, 503-4). This gesture is characteristic of the world upside-down and initiates the processes of denaturation and animalisation that govern the depiction of these 'meres non-meres'.

The binary opposition between giving life and committing murder is dramatised by the conflict between infanticide and hunger occurring in the mother's heart (I, 515-18). This opposition – the impossible choice between hunger and murder that overthrows the

mother's senses and reason – is manifested through conflicting feelings as well as what Céard calls 'une terrible dialectique du dedans et du dehors.' Consumed by a furious hunger, the mother is forced to take back the life she gave, and to absorb the baby she delivered by consuming her own child. The developing perversion of the cannibal mother is depicted in two significant ways: on the one hand, her denominations illustrate her gradual transformation from mother to non-mother and from woman to she-wolf; on the other, the progression of her state of being and actions goes from conflicted feelings, to invective and, ultimately, murder and cannibalism. The rhymes 'aimee'/'affamee' and 'nature'/'sepulture' indicate a shift from love to hunger and from life to death (I, 518-26).

The transgression of the cannibal mother has cosmic repercussions : 'On dit que le manger de Thyeste pareil/Fit noircir, et fuir, et cacher le Soleil' (I, 543-4). As I will show in section X, the occultation of the sun is a common sign manifesting, through the overturning of the cosmic order, the imminence of the end of time. The cannibal mother also connects to the wider historical context: first, her actions refer to the exactions committed during the religious wars; second, as in a number of images of family dislocation, she can be seen as a metaphor of the people turning against itself during the French religious wars. In one of the best-known passages of the *Tragiques*, D'Aubigné already represents France as a weeping mother unable to reconcile her warring sons (See: I, 89-130. Lestringant and Monferran 2013: 95-102; see also: Gadoffre 1997). The portrait of the cannibal mother can, therefore, be considered as an allegory of France turning against her own children (Moreau 2004). Both D'Aubigné and Ronsard use similar images of family dislocation. D'Aubigné's higher degree of characterisation, however, makes the portrait of the cannibal mother more pathetic and violent.

In the next section, I will show that D'Aubigné offers, in the *Tragiques*, an example of the Protestant eschatological hope that I have described in chapter 3 insofar as it advocates a second inversion to overturn the world upside-down of the religious wars.

#### 4.2.4 The Second Inversion

As I have demonstrated in chapter 3, an important part of Protestant polemic argues that the Church and the Pope have turned the world upside-down and calls for a second inversion – sometimes represented by the overturning of the papal cooking pot – to restore order. In the first dialogue of Viret's *Le Monde à l'Empire et le Monde demoniacle*, Hierosme tells an anecdote according to which Diogenes asked to be buried face down so as to be facing up after the restoration of the proper order of the world (Viret 1580)<sup>63</sup> This anecdote serves as a pretext for denouncing the disorders of the present time. Tobie reacts to Hierosme's story by wondering what Diogenes would say, 'Car ce qu'il voyoit pour lors, n'estoit que jeu & passe-temps, au pris de ce qui y est à présent. Car il n'y est rien demeuré entier, que tout n'y soit perverty & confus' (Viret 1580: 6). Céard, who contends that this second inversion encapsulates the purpose of the *Tragiques*, describes it as '[un] mouvement en retour par lequel sera rétabli ce qui était détruit, et redressé ce qui était renversé, ce nouveau renversement qui remettra le monde à l'endroit' (Céard 1979: 125).

To illustrate how the second inversion is thought to restore the natural order of things by overturning the world upside-down, I will focus on God's punishment of Nebuchadnezzar, related by D'Aubigné in *Vengeances* (VI, 369-426). The process of animalisation is again at work, but, instead of showing someone reverting back to animality as a symptom of social disorders, Nebuchadnezzar's punishment involves his transformation into a wild beast as a consequence of his bestial behaviour and lack of respect towards God. The kind of inversion at work in the restoration of the proper order of things differs from

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<sup>63</sup> A similar exchange can be found in Viret's earlier work *Dialogues du desordre qui est a present au monde* (1545).

transformative inversion, insofar as it does not turn people or objects into twisted versions of themselves but reveals their true essence instead.

Drawing from Nebuchadnezzar's portrayal in the book of Daniel, D'Aubigné recounts the Babylonian king's dream prefiguring his seven years of insanity: the downfall of a gigantic tree.<sup>64</sup> The reason for Nebuchadnezzar's fit of madness is his hubris and lack of humility towards God after his numerous victories: 'Ne connoissant plus rien digne de sa conquête/Levoit contre le ciel son orgueilleuse teste' (VI, 382). The punishment of Nebuchadnezzar is framed by a warning to kings that God will overturn the world: 'Apprenez de luy Rois, Princes, et potentats,/Quelle peine a le ciel à briser voz estats' (VI, 381-2). Nebuchadnezzar serves as an example of God's power, and typifies the second inversion accompanying the end of the world: 'Apprenez abbatus que le Dieu favourable/Qui verse l'eslevé, hausse le miserable' (VI, 425-6). This motif, as I have shown in section 1.4.3, is common in the emblem tradition.

God's punishment of Nebuchadnezzar revolves around two instances of transformative inversion: the debasement of his kingly attributes on the one hand, (VI, 593-9) and the application of punishments reflexive of his crimes on the other (VI, 411-5). This passage makes abundant use of accumulation, repetitions and effects of symmetry. The process of animalisation is pushed to its limits as the narrator systematically negates Nebuchadnezzar's status: from king and prince, the Babylonian tyrant turns into a simple human, then a wild beast and finally neither one, nor the other. D'Aubigné deploys a rich linguistic and rhetorical apparatus to express inversion: a combination of repetition and negation ('Ce Roy n'est donc plus Roy'); oxymoron ('Son Palais est le souil d'une puante boue'); the inversion of subject and object ('Tel qu'il a poursuyvi maintenant le poursuit'); and the inversion of the passive and active verbal voices ('Chasseur il est chassé: il fit fuir, il

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<sup>64</sup> On the significance of dreams in D'Aubigné's *Tragiques*, see: Quainton 1990a.

fuit’) (Kotler 2004). The intricate phonic and rhythmic correspondences underline the chiasmic structure of key verses, and participate in the matching of sins and punishments. For instance, the verse ‘Chasseur il est chassé: il fit fuir, il fuit’ follows a chiasmic rhythmic pattern highlighted by metric variations and alliterations. A different kind of chiasm can be found in the following verse: ‘Il n’est homme ne beste, et craint la beste, et l’homme’: not only are the words *beste* and *homme* repeated in reverse, but they successively appear in a negative and then a positive conjunction. This complex linguistic and rhetorical play on verbal and symbolic inversion translates into words the divine punishment and shows how it fits into the natural order of things.

The second inversion at work in the *Tragiques* is characteristic of Protestant polemic, and constitutes an example of eschatological hope. This notion is based on the belief that only a divine retribution of cataclysmic proportion can save the world from its corruption and accumulation of sins.

#### 4.2.5 Conclusion

In this section, I have shown, with reference to Ronsard’s *Discours* and D’Aubigné’s *Tragiques*, that the topos of the world upside-down offers a potent metaphor to describe and deplore the social and political disorders of sixteenth-century France. Both Ronsard and D’Aubigné describe the dislocation of family relationships at length, and consider this phenomenon as evidence of the overturning of society. However, as I have demonstrated, they hold diverging views about the causes and solutions to the social turmoil. Ronsard holds the hubris of Protestants for responsible, while D’Aubigné describes the process of denaturation, whereby victims of the world upside-down perpetuate the cycle of destruction and inversion. For Ronsard, only cosmic, political and social unity can restore the harmony of the world, while D’Aubigné calls for divine retribution, in the form of a second inversion. In the next section,

I will show that these views are connected to the belief in the imminent end of time, which is confirmed by the proliferation of eschatological signs.

### 4.3 MILLENARIANISM AND APOCALYPSE

#### 4.3.1 Introduction

In this section, I will examine how cosmic signs preceding the end of time – such as floods, fires, eclipses, comets and the fall of the stars – depict a world turned upside-down, and have been connected to social disorders. A potential model for connecting cosmic upheaval to civil disorders is Lucan's *Civil War*. Images of chaos, cosmic turmoil and cataclysmic storms pervade the *Civil War*, and denounce Roman civil war as an aberration. The editor of the 1564 Latin edition, Poelmann, underlines the popularity and significance of the *Civil War* at times of civil wars, especially the French religious wars, during which this edition was composed. According to Bailbé, the widespread influence of Lucan on French literature during the religious wars corresponds to 'la fin du rêve humaniste d'harmonie heureuse' and highlights 'la fonction capitale de l'imagination et d'une vision dynamique du monde' (Bailbé 1980: 92).

In order to analyse the influence of millenarian views on depictions of social disorders, I will study the increasingly political use of representations of eschatological signs in poetry. Then, I will focus on two specific examples of eschatological signs – the chaos caused by warring elements before the creation of the world and after its destruction, and the appearance of comets – in order to demonstrate how classical natural philosophy, Christian eschatology, and the observation of actual cosmic events contributed to shaping the climate of eschatological fear of the religious wars.

### 4.3.2 Eschatological Signs

According to millenarian views, the imminence of the end of the world is predicted by signs such as disasters: floods, fires, plagues and wars; and cosmic disorders: eclipses, meteors and comets. These signs combine two kinds of transformative inversion: the laws of nature behave erratically (e.g. stars suddenly appearing or dying, eclipse), which leads to other inversions (e.g. day turns into night, seas turn into mountains). The prevalence of these signs in poetry provides evidence of the cosmic fear related to the religious wars. By focusing on emblematic examples from Ronsard, Du Bartas, De Billy, and D'Aubigné, I will examine the various functions of eschatological signs: literary in Ronsard's *Iles Fortunées*, cathartic in Du Bartas's *Semaine*, proselytic in De Billy's *Six Livres du Second Advenement*, and polemical in D'Aubigné's *Tragiques*.

#### **Ronsard**

Ronsard's *Iles Fortunées* is based on the myth of the Golden Age and brings together influences from classical sources, such as Horace's *Epode XVI*, from contemporary accounts of the New World and from the troubled historical context (Lm, V, 175-191). The depictions of eschatological signs at the beginning of the poem evoke social and political disorders. These signs have a literary function: they predict the aggravation of the socio-political troubles in Europe, and permit the differentiation between two representations of the world upside-down: the utopian fortunate islands and war-torn Europe (See Demerson 1970).

The fortunate islands bear a close resemblance to the classical Elysian Fields and to the land of Cockaigne: since it is a world without sin, people do not need to work to gather food, they remain young and healthy and even the seasonal cycle is suspended (Quainton 1980: 105-6; see also: Armstrong 1968). The fortunate islands, however, differ from the world in Pantagruel's mouth or the various islands visited by the Pantagruelians: while Rabelais uses travel narrative to satirise contemporary Europe, Ronsard seeks to escape it.

The fortunate islands are, to some extent, a world upside-down: French people are dark-skinned and Mores are light-skinned, lambs and lions are friends, etc. However, Ronsard contrasts this positive inversion to the negative inversion occurring in France by listing ominous omens: comets, horrible planets, rains of fire and blood, earthquakes and storms.

These cosmic signs announce war in Europe, and provide the justification for travelling to the fortunate islands: 'Puis qu'Enyon d'une effroyable trope/Pieds contre-mont bouleverse l'Europe'. However, Ronsard's depiction of eschatological signs is not grounded in reality. Instead, it constitutes a useful literary device insofar as it establishes the binary opposition between the positive world upside-down of the fortunate islands and its negative counterpart in Europe. As Céard and Pouey-Mounou observe, Ronsard's later treatment of eschatological signs, in the *Discours à la Roynne* and in the *Elegie à des Antels*, for instance, refers, to a certain extent, to actual events and links them to prediction: 'la liste des presages célestes fait place à des événements terrestres, comme pour mettre en acte les écrits de Nostradamus' (Pouey-Mounou 2002: 401; see also Calin 1974; Céard 1996: 214-220). From literary predictions to scientifically informed observations, the evolution of Ronsard's use of eschatological signs confirms the influence of the increasingly troubled historical context on his poetry.

### **Du Bartas**

Combining elements from the *Apocalypse* and from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Du Bartas's description of the end of the world at the beginning of the *Sepmaine* makes abundant use of the topos of the world upside-down in order to trigger a strong emotional response. According to Lestringant (2001b: 245), 'Du Bartas préfère à la raison l'émotion, au raisonnement didactique la stupeur d'un tableau inouï' (See also: Lestringant 1998).

The chilling and pathetic images of cosmic upheaval described by Du Bartas are based on transformative inversion, and invert binary oppositions: mountains become valleys, seas turn into deserts, and day becomes night:

Phoebus s'emparera du noir char de la Lune:  
Les estoiles cherront. Le desordre, la nuict,  
La frayeur, le trespas, la tempeste, le bruit,  
Entreront en quartier' (I, 364-366).

Another inversion occurs at the end of the passage, as Du Bartas compares the end of the world to the great flood: 'Ne fera de ce Tout qu'un bucher flamboyant,/Comme il n'en fit jadis qu'un marez ondoyant' (I, 369-370). In addition to demonstrate the imminence of the end of the world, the disorders depicted by Du Bartas make its destruction sensible: animated by a series of action verbs ('crouleront', 'dissoudront', 'croistront', 'tariront', 'mugleront', 's'espaisira', 'se voilera', 'cherront', 'entreront'), the text becomes more dynamic and more evocative. The use of the future tense also increases tension and drama. Finally, Du Bartas's striking imagery, such as the image of agonising whales howling in dried up, burnt deserts, elicits strong emotions like pity and terror. The hyperbolic cosmic and natural disorders in the apocalypse of the *Sepmaine* are not realistic, nor do they allude to real cosmic events; instead, they serve a cathartic function as they stem, as Lestringant suggests, from a need to experiment with small-scale worlds to exorcise eschatological fear.<sup>65</sup>

### **De Billy**

Published in 1576, De Billy's *Second Advenement* constitutes the first example of French apocalyptic epic poetry. This substantial text is divided into six sections: the first book describes the corruption of the world before the Apocalypse; the second lists eschatological

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<sup>65</sup> 'Ce monde qui naît et meurt n'est pas le monde réel, mais sa miniature, un modèle réduit que l'on démonte et remonte à volonté, pour tenter d'en saisir les mécanismes incompréhensibles' (Lestringant 2001b: 250) See also: Lestringant 1998.

signs, and depicts the Second Coming and the resurrection of the dead; the third and fourth books focus on the Last Judgement; and the fifth and sixth books describe Heaven and Hell.

To indicate the imminence of the end of the world, De Billy lists a series of increasingly threatening eschatological signs: infertility of the land, death of cattle, earthquakes, storms, and fires. Finally, De Billy concludes his striking accumulation by a depiction of cosmic turmoil – the darkening of the Sun and Earth, and the fall of the stars – aggravated by conflicts and plagues. These disasters serve two purposes: on the one hand, they cleanse the world from its corruption; and on the other, they announce the Last Judgement and the Second Coming (II, 13-64).

As highlighted by his mention of ‘guerres civiles’, De Billy establishes a parallel between present and eschatological times. The purpose of *Second Advenement* is more proselytic than polemical: the topos of the world upside-down, instead of being used to debase the Protestants, shows the extent to which humanity, which has stopped contributing to God’s plan, has gone astray. Victoria insists on the fact that the connection between present conflicts and the end of time is not only a conventional reaction to the social, religious and political troubles in France, but also serves a pedagogical purpose: ‘La charge eschatologique des deux premiers livres du *Second Advenement* constitue également un moyen de provoquer une réaction salutaire, une conversion plus profonde du chrétien’ (Victoria 2006: 80). To this extent, in the *Second Advenement*, the function of eschatological signs consists in strengthening the reader’s faith or in prompting them to convert to Catholicism.

### **D’Aubigné**

A more polemical use of eschatological signs can be found in religious sermons and in D’Aubigné’s *Tragiques* (See: Forsyth 2005: 80-135; Victoria 2009: 123-230). D’Aubigné’s apocalypticism has been studied at length (Weber 1993; Fanlo 1990; Fragonard 2004; Forsyth 2005, Victoria 2009: 225-230): the social and cosmic disorders of the time provide a justification for the suffering of the Huguenots; and confirm the divine plan whereby the

Catholic oppressors will be overthrown, and the proper order of the world will be restored. In the *Tragiques*, eschatological signs are both indications of the end of time, and effects of the accumulation of sins.

In *Misères*, which summarises ‘l’estat piteux de nos calamitez’, the hyperbolic depiction of cosmic disorders combines biblical and classical allusions with references to sixteenth-century events and characters. For instance, eschatological signs permeate the portraits of Catherine de’ Medici and of the cardinal of Lorraine: a comet, acts of witchcraft, astrologers’ predictions, prophetic emblems, and an extraordinary storm (I, 699-1020, Fanlo 1990; Forsyth 2005). Forsyth (2005: 137-162) shows the the accumulation of cosmic and social disorders can be considered through three main lenses: apocalyptic, epic and satirical. As a result, the status of the eschatological sign becomes more complex: although it remains prophetic and emotionally charged, the epic and satirical dimensions of D’Aubigné’s poetry add other levels of signification. On the one hand, eschatological signs become evidence of the war between good and evil, and of the divine retribution against sinners; and on the other, they attack, debase and mock the world upside-down of the Catholics, the French rulers and the justice system. Although D’Aubigné seeks to elicit strong emotions, his goals differ from that of De Billy or Du Bartas: he aims at comforting the Protestants with an eschatological theodicy, and attacking the Catholics with satirical images.

Having examined the different functions (literary, cathartic, proselytic and polemical) of eschatological signs in poetry through representative examples, I will now turn to a more detailed study of two categories of signs linked to the world upside-down: primeval chaos and comets.

### 4.3.3 Primeval Chaos and Warring Elements

In this section, I will examine the reversion of the world back to primeval chaos as a metaphor for civil disorders. Chaos – characterised by dullness, lack of order and warring

elements – designates the first state of the universe, before the organisation of matter into complementary elements. In apocalyptic epic poetry, Genesis and Apocalypse are closely linked, and the destruction of the world follows the same stages as its creation in reverse. As a result, the use of chaos and warring elements to represent socio-political disorders is indicative of the prominence of the topos of the world upside-down, and highlights the climate of eschatological fear. I will argue that Lucan's *Civil War* provides a classical model for linking civil wars with the reversion back to primeval chaos. Then, I will examine the development of this image in Du Bartas, Ronsard, and D'Aubigné.

### **Classical Sources**

Sixteenth-century writers describing the return to primeval chaos have been influenced by Genesis I, Plato's *Timaeus* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (I, 5-37), but the most decisive classical source of inspiration is Lucan's *Civil War*, which shows the connection between cosmic and social upheaval, and presents civil wars as the result of Rome's hubris. In book I, the gods decide on the fall of Rome, which has overgrown its strength, leading to a return to primeval chaos, and to the breaking of cosmic laws (stars crash against one another, earth and sea collide, the Moon overtakes the Sun) (1.78-91). Lucan goes back to this image throughout the description of the Roman civil war in book V, VI and VII in relation to prophetic storms, witches' powers and the war itself (e.g. V: 629-641; VII: 39-46). I will show how this classical commonplace has been incorporated in the description of the disorders of the religious wars.

### **Du Bartas**

Du Bartas's establishes a parallel between the beginning and the end of time. In Du Bartas's *Sepmaine*, the description of 'Ce Chaos de Chaos, un tas mal entassé' borrows largely from natural philosophy and classical descriptions of Hell. By multiplying images of disorder and binary oppositions, he provides a naturalistic account of primeval chaos based on the doctrine of *concordia discors* (I, 226-36). At this embryonic stage of the world, the harmony

between contraries is not yet realised: the four elements of nature (earth, water, air and fire) and a variety of binary opposed elements (liquidity/dryness, round/sharp, hard/soft, bitter/sweet) are at war against each other, but instead of creating harmony they remain disorderly and soulless. 'Tout estoit sans beauté, sans reglement, sans flamme./Tout estoit sans façon, sans mouvement, sans ame' (I, 243-4).

Two conclusions can be drawn from this analysis: first, Du Bartas's description of primeval chaos does not connect to civil disorders, but provides a naturalistic account of the phenomenon bridging natural philosophy and Christianity; second, the widespread success of the *Sepmaine* has contributed to the popularity of this theme in poetry.

### **Ronsard**

In *La Paix au Roy Henry II*, Ronsard provides an example of the relationship between cosmic upheaval and social troubles (Lm IX, 103). Before the divine intervention which bounds discord in Hell, the world was in a state of disorder: 'Monceau que du nom grec on nomme le Chaos,/Sans forme, sans beauté, lourde et pesante masse'. Again, primeval chaos is characterised by the war between opposite elements. By ordering opposites and maintaining a balance between flux and stability in the universe, Peace brings the conflict between the warring elements to an end (see: Céard 1989; Céard 1992). However, as Ronsard warns Henri II later in the poem, God may unleash discord on the world in order to punish men for their sins. However, before doing so, Heaven sends a series of cosmic signs to warn people of their impending doom, and to urge them to change their ways.

In this poem, Ronsard connects eschatological signs, primeval chaos and socio-political disorders. *La Paix*, however, refers to the end of the Italian War by virtue of the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis. As the title suggests, the focus of this poem is to celebrate and promote peace, rather than deploring the troubles of the time.

## D'Aubigné

In *Vengeances*, after the death of the cardinal of Lorraine, the gates of Hell are opened for him to be brought to Hell and tortured. The opening of the gates of Hell by the elements turns the world upside-down, and brings it back to its state of primeval chaos: 'La terre s'en creva, la mer enfla ses monts,/Ses monts et non ses flots pour couler par ses fonds [...] L'Enfer en triompha, l'air et la terre et l'onde/Refaisant le cahos qui fut avant le monde' (VI, 1055-6, 1061-62). This miniature Apocalypse precedes the conclusion of *Vengeances* and follows the account of the divine punishment of the wicked. D'Aubigné presents the warring elements as actors in the coming Apocalypse, bringing about chaos. In *Vengeances*, the four elements participate in the punishment of the cardinal of Lorraine by opening the gates of Hell, and overturning the world, which prefigures the end of the world and the accomplishment of God's will.<sup>66</sup>

The Apocalypse is described towards the end of *Jugement*. As the world is overturned, the elements become victims, rather than harbingers, of cosmic disorders: 'Tout se cache de peur, le feu s'enfuit dans l'air,/L'air en l'eau, l'eau en terre, au funebre mesler,/Tout beau perd sa couleur' (VII, 929-31). This cosmic breakdown restores the divine order: the previous (inverted) order of things and social hierarchy are overturned. The new order 'Nous presente le riche en bas precipité/Mendiant du Lazare au plus haut lieu monté' (VII, 1113-4). While the blessed reside in Heaven, a place of harmony and perfection, the damned are sent to Hell, another world upside-down in which death is suspended to prolong torments eternally.

D'Aubigné's vision of Hell is more complex than an accumulation of tortures. An important part of the torment of the damned is its everlasting renewal. Whereas cosmic turmoil of the Apocalypse broke down the principle of life; in Hell, it makes death die and prevents the damned from interrupting their torments by killing themselves: 'La mort morte

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<sup>66</sup> A similar theme can be found in Ronsard's *Les Elemens ennemis de l'hydre*.

ne peux vous tuer, vous saisir./[...] Courez au feu brusler ? le feu vous gelera ;/Noyez-vous ? l'eau est feu, l'eau vous embrazera' (VII, 1014-15, 1017-18). As in *Vengeances*, the four elements participate in the punishment of the sinners by overturning the natural order of things.

In the *Tragiques*, the themes of the reversion back to primeval chaos and of warring elements are prominently used in relation to the end of time. The influence of Lucan's *Civil War* is more visible than in the previous examples I have examined because D'Aubigné directly refers to civil wars.

In this section, I have shown that Du Bartas, Ronsard and D'Aubigné use the theme of primeval chaos in different ways, and point to different, albeit overlapping, sources. The relationship between the state of the world before Creation and after the end of time explains the widespread influence of the *Sepmaine*, a poem about Creation, in propagating this theme in apocalyptic poetry. The divergences, in terms of audience, tone and aims, between Ronsard's *La Paix* and D'Aubigné's *Tragiques* demonstrate the influence of the historical context, and confirm that troubled times produce troubled texts. I will now turn to the example of comets to examine the depiction of observable cosmic events in poetry.

#### 4.3.4 Comets

Comets offer an emblematic example of the way in which contemporary cosmic events have been linked to the socio-political situation. As I have shown in the previous section, other cosmic and natural events – such as eclipses, floods or fires – can be interpreted as eschatological signs. Being amongst the least common and the most visible cosmic events, comets are imbued with particular significance. Since they were considered as unpredictable and erratic events disturbing the harmony of heaven, comets were frequently associated with

disorders of any kind.<sup>67</sup> The apparition of a superfluous heavenly luminary thus correlates with a major natural or political disruption. For this reason, pamphleteers have used comets as polemical tools to blame their opponents for their sins and to predict their defeat; and as moralising tools to convince people to change their sinful ways. The large number of comets appearing during the sixteenth century instigated an even larger number of publications seeking to define these celestial objects, and to explain their signification by relying on a combination of religious dogma and classical natural philosophy (Pantin 1995). I will show how classical and Christian interpretations of comets reinforced sixteenth-century militant millenarianism, and how they contributed to religious and political polemics by predicting disasters.<sup>68</sup>

### Classical Sources

Aristotle's *Meteorologica* provides the most influential classical explanation of the formation of comets: hot and dry exhalations from earth can combust in the higher regions of the atmosphere, thus producing comets because of the circular movement of the sky. Other important classical works on comets are Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, which offers a catalogue of the different types of comets along with historical examples without analysing their causes or essence; and Seneca's treatise *De Cometis*, which challenges the Aristotelian view and seeks to prove the periodicity of the phenomenon. The constant of each theory is that comets are closely linked to catastrophes such as earthquakes and draughts. While most treatises indicate that comets cause catastrophic events, Aristotle argues that both comets and natural catastrophes share the same underlying cause. Schechner observes that the connection between comets and imminent disasters had a deep impact on Roman politics: 'Divination

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<sup>67</sup> The only exception is the Star of Bethlehem.

<sup>68</sup> The distinction between scientific, literary and religious works on comets is blurry during the sixteenth century. Schmidt considers that scientific treatises on comets occupy a unique place in scientific literature because of their religious undertones: 'Les traités sur les comètes, des plus modestes aux plus savants, étaient les seuls dans la littérature astronomique à comporter presque inmanquablement des prières, des appels à la clémence divine et à l'amendement des pécheurs et à avancer des raisons religieuses pour justifier leurs choix théoriques' (Schmidt 1970: 467).

from comets legitimated the Julian house, flattered ambitious men, perhaps fortified conspirators, and justified political purges' (Schechner 1999: 26). As I will show below, the socio-political impact of comets is also significant in sixteenth-century France, especially during the religious wars.

### **Comets as Eschatological Signs**

The vast majority of the French books on this topic are published within a year of the observation of a comet. The size and place of observation of the comet and the significance of the political context are good factors to explain the relative number of publications after each comet. While the number of publications on the 1528, 1556 and 1558 comets is limited, the comet of 1577 represents a major event, widely documented through various editions (Hellman 1944: 248-306). The large number of pamphlets and iconographic representations of this comet shows the reception of this cosmic event. Other works revolve around the comets of 1582, 1585 and 1596.

Comets are, above all, considered as signs of an imminent catastrophe. Depending on the author, these signs can be of natural or divine origin, and can prophesize a natural, socio-political or eschatological disaster. Representing the dominant view of the period, De Billy's *Description et ample discours prognostic du comète* considers the 1577 comet as a divine warning:

Il ne se trouvera aucun, si ce n'est par adventure quelque Athee Epicurien, qui ne confesse franchement, que la fureur de la justice de Dieu est enflammee contre noz pechez, et qu'il prepare de lascher la bonde de son ire contre noz vices : voyans tant des Eclipses, meteores, vision, Cometes se monstrent tous de suite (Billy 1578: 4r).

De Billy argues that comets are cosmic signs presaging a global catastrophe in punishment of everyone's sins. This view simply considers comets as any other eschatological signs. I will now turn to interpretations of comets as divine retribution.

## Comets as Divine Retribution

Schmidt (1970) also indicates that numerous texts on the 1577 comets, such as Vigenère's *Traicté des comètes* and Liberati's *Discours de la comete*, allude to a passage of the Epistle to the Romans (1: 18-20): 'L'ire de Dieu se manifeste du ciel sur toutes les meschancetez et desraisons de ceux qui detiennent sa verité en une injustice'. The notion of the comets as divine retribution is also clearly visible in one of its iconographic representations: the comet as a sword brandished by God to punish the sinners. (Fig. 88)

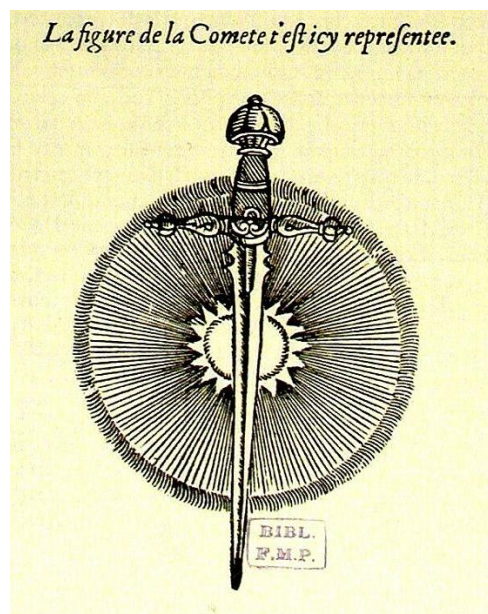


Figure 88: 'Les Oeuvres d'Ambroise Paré... divisées en vingt huit livres', Paré, A. (1585), engraving, G. Buon, Paris, 1093.

Other iconographic representations include: a star with a long tail and the head of a bearded man. This last image derives from the metaphorical description of the tail of the comet as long hair or as a beard. The multiplication of cosmic signs, especially comets, in the sixteenth century and the ensuing apocalyptic atmosphere are clearly visible in an engraving from the *Prodigiorum ac ostentorum chronicon* (Fig. 89): the hand of God, coming from heaven, brandishes a sword with a star at its tip; a multitude of smaller swords and bearded severed heads surrounds it. In addition to representing smaller comets, the severed heads could point

towards the widespread belief, which I will examine below, that comets often announced the death of an important person.

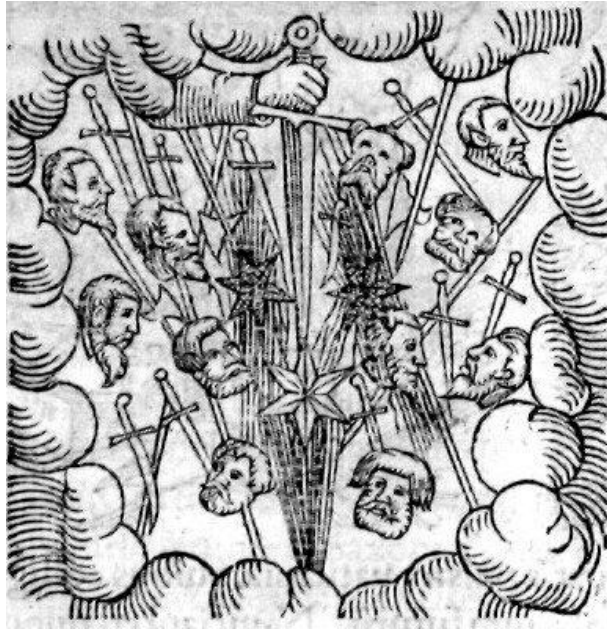


Figure 89: 'Prodigiorum ac ostentorum chronicon', Lycosthenes and Wolffhart (1557) engraving, Petrus, Basel, 534.

### Comets as Presage of Death

Both Ronsard and Sorel bring together the 1558 comet and Henri II's death. In Ronsard's *Elegie à des Autels* (Lm, X, 348-362) the comet itself is the sign of the king's death : 'On a veu la comette ardente demeurer/Droit sur notre país : et du ciel descendante/Tomber à Saint Germain une collonne ardente'. However, Sorel combines two apocalyptic signs to express a similar idea: a comet and the obscuring of a heavenly luminary (in this case, the comet instead of the sun).

avant que le desastre  
Tombast dessus le chef, (ô mémoire marastre)  
De Henri le vainqueur, vaincu par l'un des siens  
Combien vis tu tomber de feus aetheriens :  
Et hors le naturel se noircir la Comete,  
D'une si grande mort tresassuré Prophete (Sorel 1568: B1v).

The belief that a comet might announce the death of a significant character also spread to the royal court. De l'Estoile relates that Catherine de' Medici feared that the 1577 comet was foretelling her death : 'Ces fols d'astrologues disaient qu'elle présageait la mort

d'une reine ou de quelque grande dame, avec quelque remarquable et insigne malheur. Ce qu'ayant entendu, la reine-mère entra incontinent en frayeur et appréhension que ce fût elle.' It is clear, from his use of the adjective 'fol' to describe the astrologer, that De l'Estoile did not share such belief. Later in his *Journal du Règne d'Henri III*, he quotes an epigram written by a 'docte courtisan' about Catherine's fear:

De cometa anni 1577. Ad reginam matrem.  
Spargeret audaces cum tristis in aethere crines,  
Venturique daret signa cometa mali,  
Ecce sua Regina timens male conscia vitae,  
Credidit invisum poscere fata caput.  
Quid, Regina, times ? Namque haec mala si qua minatur,  
Longa timenda tua est, non tibi vita brevis ! (L'Estoile 1992: 221).

On the comet of the year 1577. To the Queen-mother. Even as the fatal comet was spreading its audacious hair and was announcing a disaster to come, the queen, fearing for her life because of her bad conscience believed that destiny was claiming her hated head. What, queen, are you afraid? If this comet threatens us with some calamity, be afraid that your life be long, and not brief. (My translation)

This example demonstrates that even a sceptical account of millenarian beliefs could be used to propagate subversive and polemical views. Schechner (1999) indicates that comets were often used to predict the death of one's political adversary (either to compel them to change their ways, or to weaken their influence) and to strengthen the resolve of conspirators planning a political assassination. The political significance of comets as warning signs of social upheaval goes beyond prefiguring someone's death. I will now turn to interpretations giving a wider political impact to the appearance of comets.

### **Comets and Social Disorders**

Crespin gives a precise political meaning to the 1577 comet:

O Villes Libertines qui ne voulez recognoistre nul Roy ne Prince en ce temps que doit venir le Ciele doré il vous faudra ester obeissans au roy malgré vostre volonté, et pource qu'il soit cogneu par ceux du suyvant aage, prenez de moy ce don en tesmoignage (Crespin 1578: B2v).

In this case, Crespin uses the comet to promote a conservative, rather than a subversive, agenda. Especially significant is the mention of the ‘Ciecle doré’ or Golden Age: this legend refers to first stage of human existence on earth according to the Greek and Roman mythologies, a period of harmony, peace and abundance. The Golden Age is prophesised to come back after the end of time as a result of the divine inversion which will restore the proper order of things. In this regard, Crespin’s political conservatism diverges from more polemical pamphlets on the same matter, not only in terms of political inclination, but also because of the precise scope of his warnings. In the prologue of this *Epistre*, Crespin underlines the disruptive potential of almanachs and astrological predictions : ‘Il y a trois ans qu’il n’a composé Almanachz n’y a intention pour l’advenir d’en faire pour l’occasion de la fausseté que y commettent en son nom au mespris des Princes & respubliques’. In doing so, Crespin attempts to discredit Nostradamus’s works, while, at the same time, capitalising on his name by appropriating it and calling him an impostor.

Another striking and apocalyptic account of the 1577 comet is probably that provided in Du Bartas’s *Sepmaine*:

Peux-tu voir d’un œil sec ce feu prodigieux  
 Qui nous rend chasque soir effroyable les cieux?  
 Cest astre chevelu, qui menace la terre  
 De peste, guerre, faim, trois pointes du tonnerre,  
 Qu’en sa plus grand’fureur Dieu foudroye sur nous? (II, 823-27).

This example provides further evidence of the millenarian climate of the times comparing the tail of the comet to the three banes of God – plague, war and famine – unleashed by the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. Keywords such as ‘effroyable’, ‘tonnerre’, ‘fureur’ and ‘foudroye’ evoke fear and violence. Crouzet (1990a: 101-153) describes French culture on the brink of the religious wars as a ‘civilisation de l’angoisse astrologique’ in which the observation of cosmic disorders and their interpretations as signs of social upheaval do not only sustain a climate of eschatological fear, but constitute self-fulfilling prophecies. As the

most striking of these cosmic disruptions, comets constitute, for the sixteenth-century astrologer, pamphleteer or polemicist, an emblematic sign of the world upside-down and of the troubles to come.

#### 4.3.5 Conclusion

In this section, I have analysed the depiction and socio-political impact of eschatological signs. I have shown that poets of the period bring together elements from a variety of sources, including Lucan's *Civil War* and other classical works, natural philosophy and actual events, in order to depict a world in turmoil. The prominence of cosmic signs in poetry pertaining to the religious wars is evidence of the influence of millenarianism, and of the climate of eschatological fear. To show this convergence of influences at work, I have studied in more detail the representations of two types of eschatological signs: the return to a state of primeval chaos, and the appearance of comets. In the next section, I will analyse the significance of monsters, another kind of eschatological sign, in polemic.

### 4.4 MONSTERS AND POLEMIC

#### 4.4.1 Introduction

The significance of Renaissance monsters is twofold: they can be considered as examples of the variety of God's work, and as eschatological signs of cosmic and social turmoil (Céard 1996: vii-xii). In this section, I will concentrate on monsters as manifestation of the breaking of the laws of nature, and as signs of cosmic and social disorders. Monsters can be derived from a variety of sources: classical mythology, biblical imagery and biological anomalies. They also come in various shapes: mythological and biblical creatures, embodied abstract concepts, and historical characters. Despite their heterogeneity, inversion is a common feature of monsters: either they are the product of a world upside-down or they are agents of inversion, overturning the world. As a result, describing one's enemies as monsters is a common

polemical strategy. For instance, the pope-ass and the monk-calf – famously described in pamphlets from Luther and Melanchthon – constitute polemical tropes used by both Catholics and Protestants throughout the Reformation (Fig. 95, see Buck 2014).

In order to show the double inversion at play in sixteenth-century polemical monsters, I will focus on four examples presenting monsters as inverted beings as well as agents of inversion: the *Gigantes*, the Antichrist, Ronsard's *Opinion* and D'Aubigné's portraits of the Valois. With these examples, I will cover classical, religious, and political monsters in order to demonstrate that the topos of the world upside-down provides a useful unifying principle to an otherwise heterogeneous topic.

#### 4.4.2 *Gigantes*

The giant is a complex and ancient character, which is often linked to creation myths, and can be traced back to classical, biblical and folkloric traditions (eds Closson and White Le Goff 2007: 7-14). The convergence of these traditions is particularly visible in the genealogy of the giant Pantagruel (219-222); Sainéan (1922-3). points out the biblical, classical and medieval sources of Rabelais for this passage.<sup>69</sup> In this section, I will focus on the revolt of the *Gigantes*, which bring about cosmic turmoil and seek to overturn heaven and the gods, as it provides a popular classical model to depict rebellion and hubris during the sixteenth and seventeenth century.

Despite its heterogeneity, gigantism is consistently associated with a set of specific characteristics and values: giants are related to earth and to chthonian powers (mountains, caves and volcanoes). This connection is manifested – in the case of the classical *Gigantes* – by the feet in shape of snakes. They are also commonly linked with chaos, transgression and hubris. To this extent, the *Gigantomachia* offers a significant amount of polemical and satirical potential. It enables polemicists to point out how one's enemies threaten the cosmic order

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<sup>69</sup> Rabelais also alludes to *Gigantes* in the episode of warring Andouilles. See section 2.2.3.

of the world, to predict their demise, or to comfort the king's authority (Céard 1988; Céard 1989; Ordine 2004). I will focus on the sixteenth-century adaptations of the *Gigantomachia*, and argue that *Gigantes* constitute a particularly striking example of monsters considered as agents of inversion insofar as they seek to overturn the gods.

### **Cosmic Disorders**

Céard (1988; 1996) and Pouey-Mounou (2005; 2007) show that *Gigantes*, especially in Ronsard, overturn the cosmic order of the world. According to Pouey-Mounou, Ronsard's cosmos is always threatened to be devoured by the abyss. Images of verticality and vertigo are linked to the risk of being swallowed by the depths and toppled by *Gigantes*: 'Vivant de gigantomachies renouvelées, le cosmos ronsardien est [...] un colosse aux pieds de brume' (Pouey-Mounou 2002: 172). *Gigantes* are associated, in the *Hymnes* and in the *Ode à Michel de l'Hospital* (Lm, III, 126), to chaos and discord. For instance, in the *Hymne de l'Hyver* (Lm, XII, 68-86), *Gigantes* fight alongside Winter against Jupiter, and cause cosmic upheaval by turning plains into mountains and spitting flames up to heaven. After defeating Winter and his allies, Jupiter forgives the offenders and allows Winter to rule the earth periodically. Céard (1988) argues that Winter, by releasing the *Gigantes*, underlines the necessity of *concordia discors*, the balancing of discordant and harmonious elements. If we consider that, for Ronsard, the Sun is often the symbol of the king and that Winter is the absence of royal power, the *Gigantes* of the *Hymne de l'Hyver* represent cosmic as well as political chaos. Céard generalises this observation:

'les Géants figurent la tendance au chaos [...] comme une sorte d'agressivité sourde, de résistance active qui ne peut être maîtrisée que par la force également active de Dieu, des Rois, des héros, des poètes, de toutes ces puissances d'ordre toujours vigilantes' (Céard 1988: 231).

### **Hubris**

In addition to representing the chaos threatening the cosmic order and balance of the world, the *Gigantomachia* provides a moral illustration of the dangers of hubris and ambition. The

moralising dimension of the *Gigantes* is made clear in Alciato's emblem 'Sapientia humana, stultitia est apud Deum', which depicts a monster – half man, half snake – identified with the first king of Athens, Cecrops, and assimilated with the *Gigantes*. (Fig. 90) According to the French commentary, the monster designates 'ung homme sage en soy,/qui terre aimant, ne tient ne Dieu, ne Foy.' The binary opposition between the serpentine lower body, which represents the concern for base things and the man's high eye line, which signifies divine nature, shows the ambiguity of the *Gigantes*. Of particular interest in this emblem is the blending of a distinctively Christian motto with a picture and an epigram based on classical mythology.



Figure 90: 'La Sapience humaine est folle envers Dieu' (Alciato 1549: 22)

The emblem represented above evokes the struggle between *Gigantes* and the Olympian gods. Aneau uses this myth in his emblems 'Natura optima dux sequenda' (Fig. 91) and 'Crassa ignorantia' (Fig. 92) in two ways: to encourage the reader to follow the order

of nature; and to denounce people focused on earthly rather than divine matters.<sup>70</sup> According to Aneau, the *Gigantomachia* represents an attempt to overturn the natural order of things: *Gigantes*, who naturally belong to the earth, tried to conquer the sky, the domain of the Olympian gods, by stacking mountains upon mountains to reach the skies. In Aneau's emblems, *Gigantes* do not directly designate the Protestants, but they already denounce the upside-down religion of people placing too much emphasis on the material world and on the rituals, and not enough on spiritual practice.

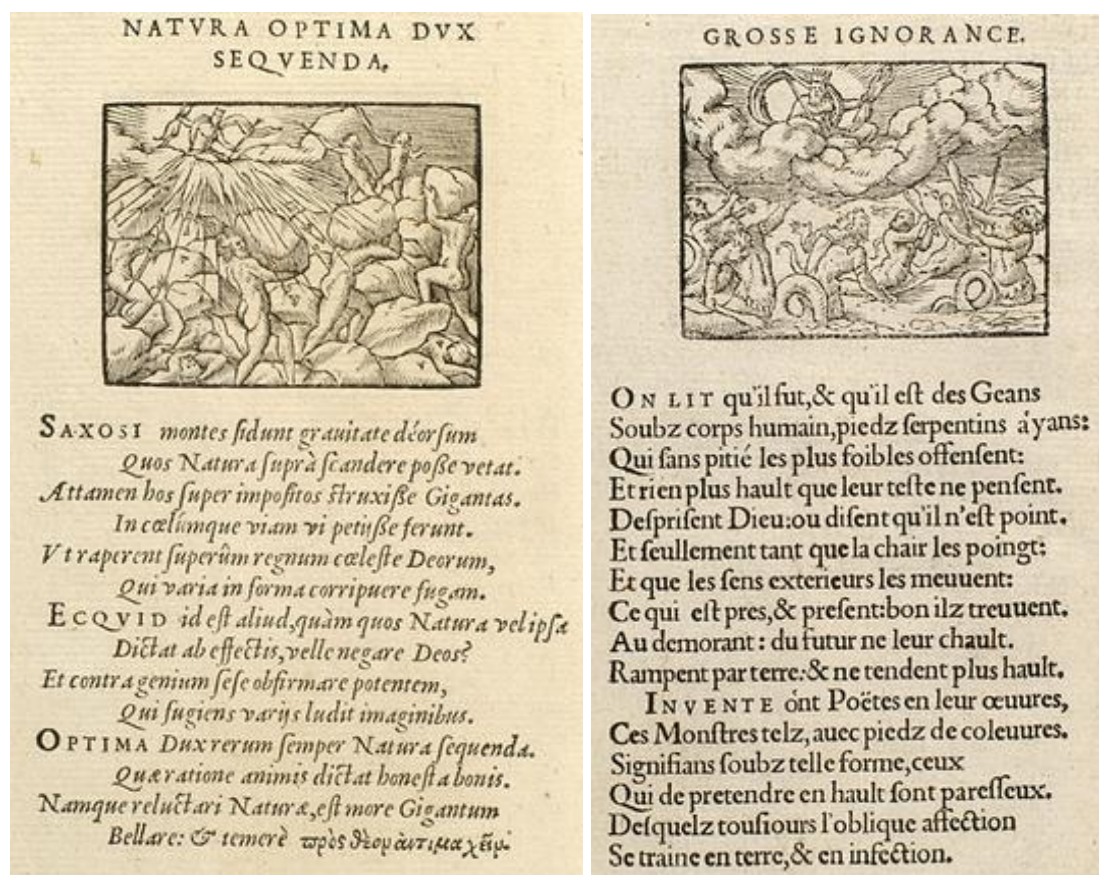


Figure 91: 'Natura optima dux sequenda' (Aneau 1552b: 56) Figure 92: 'Grosse Ignorance' (Aneau 1552a: 78)

<sup>70</sup> The association of the *Gigantes* with Ignorance can also be found in Du Bellay's *Musagnoemachie* – the fight between the Muses and Ignorance – which contains an example of *Gigantomachia*. The denunciation of the *Gigantes'* hubris is also the subject of two sonnets from Du Bellay's *Antiquitez de Rome*. In sonnets four and twelve, Du Bellay alludes to the *Gigantomachia* and compares Rome's crushed ambition with the hubris of the *Gigantes*. (Bellay 2003: 221-235; Bellay 2012)

## **Gigantes and Politics**

According to Rae, the *Gigantes*' monstrous bodies reflect their excessive and hubristic behaviour. *Gigantes* serve, in political allegories, as 'a warning to all political enemies' (Rae 2010: 10). She argues that 'The moral, religious and political use of the myth was particularly significant for the emperor Charles V. In 1533 and 1536 his business in Genoa was conducted in the Sala di Giove of the Palazzo Andrea Doria underneath Perino's *Gigantomachia* fresco' (Rae 2010: 13). (Fig. 93) Receiving guests in a room painted with such frescoes enhances the political impact of the *Gigantomachia* and turns the myth into an allegory: Jupiter becomes a symbol for Charles V and the *Gigantes* represent his adversaries.

The frescoes of del Vaga (Fig. 93) and Romano (Fig. 94), represented below, are representative of this type of scenes: the gods, armed with spears, occupy the upper part of the painting and look down on the *Gigantes* and on the onlooker; the *Gigantes* remain prostrate on the ground to signify their defeat (Painesi 2015). As Romano's fresco clearly shows, the question of scale is of tremendous importance: although the *Gigantes* are beaten and humiliated by the gods, they remain much larger than the onlooker. In both cases, the people entering the room find themselves among the *Gigantes*, as if they were the object of the gods' ire. In short, the theme, scale and composition of these frescoes confirm the political potential of paintings such as these by highlighting the *Gigantes*' hubris, and by comparing their revolt against the gods as any kind of opposition to the king.



Figure 93: 'Zeus destroying the Titans', Vaga, P. del (1532), Palazzo Andrea Doria, Fassolo



Figure 94: 'War of the Gods against the Giants', Romano, G. (1532) Palazzo del Tè, Mantova.

## **Gigantes and the Religious Wars**

Joukovsky-Micha (1967) demonstrates that the *Gigantomachia* was an extremely popular theme for sixteenth-century French and Neo-Latin poets. She argues that the religious wars, because of its similarity with the *Gigantomachia*, contributed to its widespread success:

La tentative des géants est la révolte des Huguenots. C'est la notion de sacrilège qui permet l'assimilation. Les guerres civiles sont impies à tous les sens du terme. Elles ont pour cause un refus de reconnaître la religion établie. Elles constituent une révolte contre le pouvoir divin du monarque. Elles entraînent des luttes fratricides (Joukovsky-Micha 1967: 71).

The parallel between Protestants and *Gigantes* is particularly visible in Ronsard's *Discours à la Roynne*: these 'nouveaux Rabbins' are punished 'd'estre trop curieux./Et d'avoir eschellé comme Geants les cieux' (Lm, XI, 63: 153-154). In the *Remonstrance*, the *Gigantes*/Protestants are closely associated with the overturning of the world by Luther: 'De là sont procedés ces Geants qui eschellent/Le Ciel, & au combat les Dieux mesmes appellent' (Lm, XI, 19: 347-348). Céard considers that the parallel between *Gigantes* and Protestants is not only caused by hubris, but also by heresy: 'La démesure qui fait fi de Dieu et de sa loi porte un autre nom: l'impiété, ou même l'hérésie' (Céard 1988: 226). In the *Ode à Michel de l'Hospital*, the *Gigantes* – designated as a 'troupe heretique' screaming in a 'gouffre beant' – are identified with the damned in Hell and with Protestant heretics. The recurrence of the punishment of the *Gigantes*, either crushed or struck by Jupiter's lightning bolt, serves as a cautionary tale to all seditious people and, especially, to the Protestants (Pouey-Mounou 2007).

In this section, I have shown that *Gigantes* constitute a particularly versatile and popular model of agents of inversion during the sixteenth century. I have analysed how *Gigantes* are depicted in relation to the world upside-down in cosmic, moral, political and religious terms. I will now examine the development of the Antichrist, another central figure of sixteenth-century polemical teratology.

### 4.4.3 The Papal Antichrist

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Antichrist had acquired ‘multiple meanings: theological, apocalyptic, historical, polemical, and antipapal’ (Buck 2011: 73). Much of the polemical impact of the Antichrist derives from the notion of the papal Antichrist, first suggested in Fiore’s exegesis of the seven-headed dragon of the Apocalypse in his *Book of the Figures*, and from Wyclif’s binary oppositions between Christ and the Pope known as the Antichrist antitheses (Buck 2011: 72-100). Also of significance is Nicholas of Dresden’s *Tabulae veteris et novi coloris*.<sup>71</sup> Published in 1412 and heavily influenced by Wyclif, it catalogues the differences between the primitive and contemporary Church. I will show that the evolution of the characterisation of the papal Antichrist throughout the sixteenth century is based on a shift from allegorical chimera to disruptive force of inversion. While early descriptions insist on the monstrous attributes of the Antichrist, linking them to various sins, later representations focus on its desire to overturn nature, the state and religion. This shift from moral allegory to polemical image is emblematic of the influence of the troubled historical context.

#### **Moral Allegory**

The monstrous attributes of the Antichrist are described in great detail in Brunfels’s *De Antichristo & membrorum eius anatomia* – a collection of commonplaces followed by an anatomy of the Antichrist – probably dating back to early fifteenth century but published in 1524.<sup>72</sup> As the Antichrist is dissected, each body part – from head to tail – is described and interpreted as a sign of evil. For the author of *De antichristo anatomia*, the Antichrist belongs to the category of the allegorical monsters: each trait of its chimerical body is representative of an abstract and evil feature.

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<sup>71</sup> Sometimes referred to as *Cortina de Antichristo*.

<sup>72</sup> See Buck 2011: 340-368.

In 1523, Melanchthon's *The Pope-Ass Explained* and Luther's *The Monk-Calf* were published jointly under the title *Deutung der zwo greulichen Figuren, Baptesels zu Rom und Mönchkalbs zu Freiberg in Meissen funden*. (Fig. 95) Melanchthon's Pope-ass monster and Cranach's accompanying illustration are based on a historical anecdote according to which a chimerical monster was found on the banks of the Tiber in 1496. The commentary shares a number of characteristics with *De antichristo anatomia*: the Antichrist's weird anatomy becomes a pretext for allegorical exegesis of the vices of papacy. The creature possesses the head of an ass, the right hand of an elephant, the left hand of a human, the naked belly and breasts of a female, the right foot of an ox, the left foot of a gryphon and a dragon neck and head for a tail. Melanchthon's pamphlet merges the historical anecdote with the allegorical and polemical level of interpretation of the figure of the Antichrist.

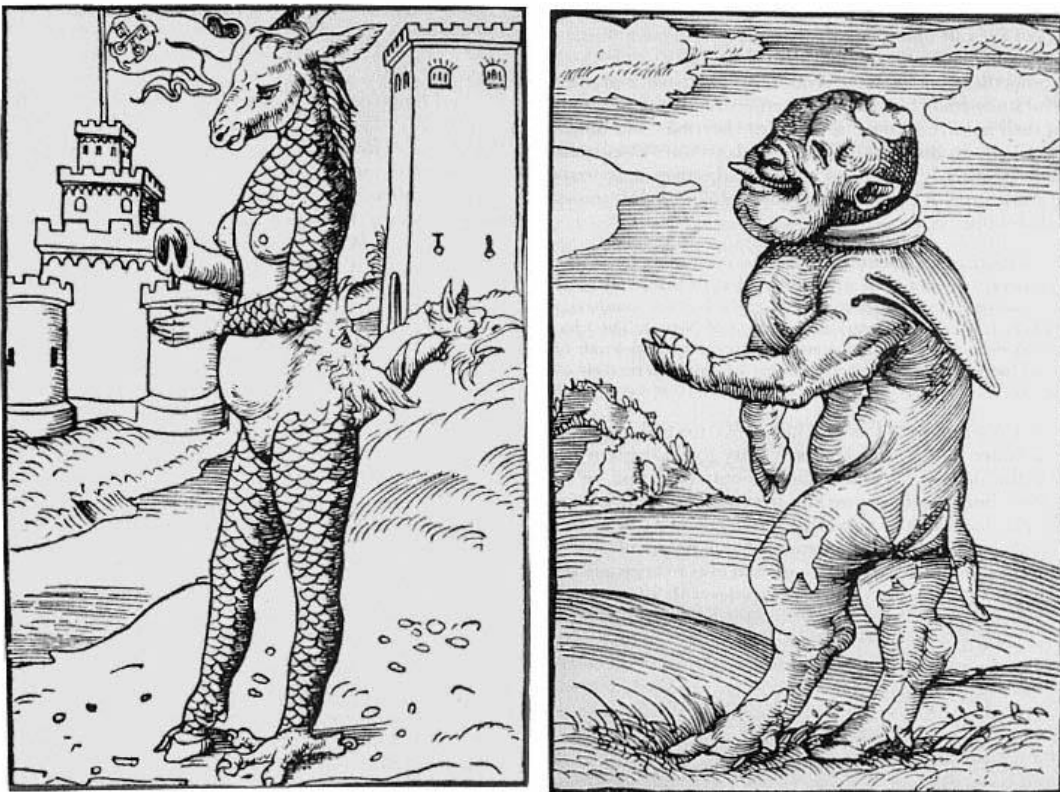


Figure 95: 'Pope-Ass and Monk-Calf' Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon, (1523) Wittenberg,

The widespread success of this monster will lead counter-reformer Sorbin to overturn Melanchthon's antipapal message and attack Protestantism instead (Sorbin 1570:

75-89). (Fig. 96) Buck summarises Sorbin’s brief interpretation of the monster’s body parts: ‘The creature’s talon stands for robbery and rapine; its bovine food represents pleasures; the female belly and breasts denote female lusts; the scales on the monster’s body [...] stand for the kings and princes who support the heretics’ (Buck 2011: 186). This example clearly illustrates the characterisation of the papal Antichrist as an allegorical chimera. While the Roman monster of 1496 was considered an ominous sign, its subsequent polemical representations offer instances of satirical attacks depicting the Pope or the Protestants as inverted and unnatural beings.



Figure 96: ‘The Papal Antichrist’ (Sorbin 1570: 75)

### Agent of Inversion

In *L’Anti-Christ et l’Anti-Papesse*, counter-reformer Florimond de Raemond quotes the description of the Antichrist from De Billy’s *Second Advenement*. On the one hand, it is described as a ‘monstre si hideux’, a tall man ‘difforme’ and ‘vilain de figure’, made ‘en despit de nature’; on the other, rebellion against God and hubris makes him a tyrant

[...] qui s’osoit egaller  
 Au Dieu de l’univers, et dont tout l’exercice  
 Estoit de renverser tout droict, toute justice,  
 De guerroyer la Foy, d’extirper en tout lieu  
 Tout bien, toute vertu, tout service de Dieu’ (I, 145-149).

A physiognomic interpretation of the Antichrist's face (mostly his fiery eyes and his 'front plein d'un orgueil felon' connects its monstrous appearance and its behavioural traits ('audace', 'orgueil' and 'impudence'). This example is clearly representative of the shift from allegorical monster to agent of inversion. Although the author still calls the Antichrist a 'monstre de nature', (Raemond 1599: 30v) the creature is not composite, and his physical features are interpreted with regards to behavioural characteristics rather than general moral qualities. More importantly, much emphasis is placed on the Antichrist's desire to overturn God and justice.

In the *Tragiques*, the function of the papal Antichrist as a force for inversion and its relationship with the world upside-down gain prominence. Rather than being monstrous, the papal Antichrist does monstrous, unnatural and inverted things. A strong chiasmic structure runs through the passage and underlines the importance of the theme of inversion and the overturning of binary oppositions (I, 1233-1244). Governed by transformative inversion, the papal Antichrist's various transgressions of the natural, political and divine order are arranged by order of importance: he inverts the judicial system by transforming justice into injustice, saving the wicked and cursing the blessed ('Je dispense, dit-il, du droit contre le droict'); then morality ('j'authorise le vice'); he proceeds by upsetting the political order ('Je fai de bouë un Roy, je mets les Rois aux fanges'); he claims power over saints and angels before ('Je fai les Saints, sous moy obeïssent les Anges'); and above God ('Je puis (cause premiere à tout cet univers)/ Mettre l'enfer au ciel et le ciel aux enfers') (139-40: 1235-44). Recognisable by his ambition and rebellion against the natural and divine order, D'Aubigné's papal Antichrist perfectly embodies the topos of the world upside-down.<sup>73</sup>

In this section, I have examined the development of the figure of the Antichrist throughout the sixteenth century. I have argued that the shift from his medieval

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<sup>73</sup> 'Le Pape, en effet, assure qu'il est en son pouvoir de renverser l'ordre du monde, en des vers dont chacun illustre exactement le topos du monde à l'envers' (Céard, 1979: 122-3).

representation as an allegorical composite monster, to the sixteenth-century view of the Antichrist as an agent of inversion seeking to overturn politics, religion and justice demonstrates the influence of the topos of the world upside-down, and of the historical context, on the representation of monsters. I will now turn to Ronsard's *Opinion*, which offers an example of an allegory turned into a monster.

#### 4.4.4 Ronsard's *Opinion*

As many critics pointed out, monsters are central to the works of Ronsard (Céard 1996: 192-225; Pouey-Mounou 2002: 417-461; Pouey-Mounou 2005; Williams 2011: 75-120). Interpreted as divine signs or as incarnations of the creative forces of disorder and creation, Ronsard's monsters are borrowed from classical mythology (*Gigantes*, harpies, hydra, and medusa) or medieval folklore (werewolf). More provocative is the allegorical monster *Opinion*. As opposed to other allegorical monsters – such as the Pope-ass or the Ravenna monster – Ronsard's *Opinion* is not a composite creature meant to be interpreted allegorically, but an allegory turned into a monster. Another crucial difference is that Ronsard does not provide a systematic interpretation of each part of his allegory. For Bellenger, Ronsard's use of allegory in his polemical poetry enables him to go beyond the constraints of historical poetry<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, Ménager claims that 'Tout devient parfaitement transparent quand les noms propres chargés d'histoire individuelle, laissent la place aux noms communs, porteurs de signification générale' (Ménager 1979: 226).

Even though the allegorical description of *Opinion* seems timeless, Ronsard considers the monster responsible for the social and cosmic disorders of his time. For Quainton, *Opinion* is a 'monster of hubris who is the sole cause not only of the social, religious and civil upheaval, but of the destruction of cosmic harmony and beauty' (Quainton

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<sup>74</sup> 'Autrement dit, dans cette poésie décidément « engagée », Ronsard procède en abolissant momentanément la perspective temporelle, comme pour mieux dégager de la singularité des événements leur vérité. Parole de poète, parole de prophète, qui pour se faire entendre sort de l'histoire et choisit le langage de l'allégorie' (Bellenger 1976: 75).

1980: 23). Since I have already described the kinds of inversion and turmoil brought about by Opinion in section 4.2.2. I will focus on the elements of its description that make it an inverted being. More specifically, I will argue that the second description of Opinion provides a stronger polemical impact than the first. Then, I will examine the relationship between Opinion and Protestantism, and show how Montmeja appropriates the monster in order to attack the Pope.

### Two Polemical Descriptions of Opinion

Opinion is described twice in the *Discours*: first, its origin and infancy, in the *Discours à la Roynne* (Lm, XI, 19); then, this time with its descendants, in the *Remonstrance* (Lm, XI, 63). In both cases, Opinion is described as a hybrid, a winged female monster similar to the sirens, combining personifications of sins ('Dame Présomption', 'Cuidier', 'Orgueil', 'Fantasie', 'Jeunesse', 'Erreur' and 'Manie'), classical references ('Jupiter' and 'Sereine'),<sup>75</sup> monstrous attributes (wings, a hundred tongues, fiery eyes) and elemental features (her body parts are made of wool, cotton, lead, glass or smoke). Although each element of the allegory is, in itself, easily understandable, Opinion's discontinuous body goes beyond simple hybridity and evokes, to a certain extent, the anatomy of Quaresmeprenant: both monsters are embodied allegories, which are difficult to imagine, thrive on disorders, and invert the social and cosmic order. However, rather than destabilising meaning like Quaresmeprenant, Opinion has a strong polemical impact, which increases from one version of the allegory to the other. In the *Discours à la Roynne*, Ronsard emphasises the duplicity and hypocrisy of Opinion by structuring the description around a series of oppositions between interior and exterior:

Son cœur estoit couvé de vaine affection,  
Et sous un pauvre habit cachoit l'ambition ;  
Son visage estoit beau comme d'une Sereine ;  
D'une parole douce avoit la bouche pleine (Lm, XI, 19: 141-144).

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<sup>75</sup> It could also have been influenced by Virgil's Fame, Ariosto's Fraud or the classical allegories of Discord. (Vianey 1903: 474)

In the *Remonstrance*, the allegory ‘exteriorise l’agressivité latente de ce corps désuni’ (Pouey-Mounou 2002: 409) as the monster goes from hypocritical and insidious to openly belligerent ‘Elle a la bouche ouverte, et cent langues dedans,/Sa poitrine est de plomb, ses yeux prompts et ardans’ (Lm, XI, 63: 250-1).

### **Opinion and Protestantism**

Ronsard’s mentions of Wyclif, Hus and Luther clearly demonstrate that Opinion and Protestantism are closely connected. For Bellenger, the sixteenth-century connotations of *opinion* refer to ‘fragilité, présomption, imposture’ and point towards ‘la conviction non fondée en raison’. It is useful to bear in mind, however, that Opinion and Protestantism are distinct. The monster made Protestantism possible since ‘Elle se vint loger par estranges moyens/Dedans le cabinet des Theologiens,/[...] A fin de les punir d’estre trop curieux/Et d’avoir eschellé comme Geants les cieux’ (Lm, XI, 19: 149-154). Opinion acts as a trigger, stimulating the theologians’ hubris with ‘cent nouveaux passages’ until they rebel against the proper order of things, like the *Gigantes*. A thought-provoking consequence of Ronsard’s idea of making Opinion the ancestor of Protestantism is that it does not only compare Protestants to *Gigantes*, but also assigns secular roots to Protestantism by making the union of the furious Jupiter and ‘Dame Présomption’ its point of origin.

### **The Reception of Opinion**

The Protestant polemic against Ronsard systematically tries to appropriate or overturn the allegory of Opinion (Pineaux 1958). Such process, as I have shown in chapter 3, is common and attests to the success and impact of an image. The most successful adaptation of Ronsard’s monster, according to Pineaux, can be found in the second part of the *Response aux calomnies* by Montmeja (under the pseudonym of Mont-Dieu). To replace Opinion, Montmeja describes two allegorical monsters ‘Papauté’ and his daughter ‘Messe’. Montmeja recycles Ronsard’s basic model and makes Papacy the daughter of ‘Superstition’ and ‘Franc-

Arbitre' and the Pope's wife. His description insists on the satirical attributes of the Pope and the Catholic Church mentioned earlier in the thesis: superstition, ignorance, focus on ritual and materialism, transubstantiation, and cannibalism. (See section 3.3). Montmeja's monstrous allegories are more focused and more effective than Ronsard's Opinion: instead of generic features, they make use of attributes specifically associated with Catholicism.<sup>76</sup> While Ronsard's Opinion seemed to generalise and dehumanise the cause of the social troubles, Montmeja turns well-known institutions into monsters.

Ronsard's Opinion, as I have demonstrated in this section, offers a distinctive example of monstrous allegory. In order to highlight the complexity and weakened polemical impact of Ronsard's Opinion, I have analysed its various components and shown that they are discontinuous and disjointed. I have demonstrated that, on the contrary, Montmeja's appropriation of the monster is more coherent, thus making his attack against Catholicism more focused and significant. In the next section, I will concentrate on D'Aubigné's depiction of the Valois as a representative example of monstrous human beings.

#### 4.4.5 The Monstrous Valois

Monstrous human beings, which include anonymous characters, the cannibal mother, for instance, and historical figures, such as the 'reistre noir', Catherine de' Medici and her son Henri III, are crucial elements of satire in the *Tragiques*. They do not only exacerbate D'Aubigné's polemical charge against political, religious or social institutions, but also designate the people guilty of turning the world upside-down. I will focus on two examples of historical characters being depicted as monsters: Catherine de' Medici and Henri III. I will show that both of them are portrayed as inverted and denatured beings responsible for overturning the world. Catherine is considered guilty of inverting the religious and political

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<sup>76</sup> 'Ce que Ronsard disait de l'Opinion pouvait s'appliquer à n'importe quel monstre, [...] la description du protestant ne peut – me semble-t-il – viser que l'Eglise catholique ; ce qui lui donne une force polémique beaucoup plus grande' (Pineaux 1958: 40).

order described, as she is thought to be conspiring with demons to rule over France. Henri III is depicted as a tyrant whose primary vices pertain to gender inversion: homosexuality, transvestism and hermaphroditism.

### **Catherine de' Medici**

Catherine de' Medici was at the centre of French political life for an important part of the sixteenth century, especially from the coronation in 1559 of Francis II, her oldest son. Even though recent works in history have attempted to rehabilitate her (Crouzet 2005), she has been heavily criticised and mocked through a significant number of polemical pamphlets. In his chronicle *Registre-Journal du règne d'Henri III*, L'Estoile mentions some of these pamphlets such as *L'Alithie*, *Le Resveille matin des François*, *Le Toxain des massacreurs*, *Le Regnard decouvert*, and *La Vie Sainte Katherine* (L'Estoile 1992: 110). L'Estoile relates that this last example 'fust aussi bien receuilli des catholiques que des huguenos (tant le nom de ceste femme estoit odieux au peuple)' (L'Estoile 1992: 85). More specifically, Catherine was blamed for her participation in some of the bloodiest episodes of the religious wars, such as the Conjunction of Amboise and the St-Bartholomew's Day massacre, and for having allegedly poisoned her son Francis II. Among the multiple aspects of Catherine's monstrous portrayal in the *Tragiques*, I will focus on one of the most representative of her role in overturning the world: the accusation of witchcraft (Céard 1979: 122; Closson 2000: 109-113, 240-248).

Early modern witchcraft is determined by a set of inverted rituals and behaviours. In a seminal article connecting carnivalesque festivities and demonology, Clark explores some of the most important inversions at play in the demonologists' understanding of witchcraft: the inversion or destruction of familial and marital relationships, the ability to transform oneself or others into animals, and the upsetting of the weather (Clark 1980: 118). According to Clark, this ability to turn the world upside-down is to be understood, like all other cases of inversion, as a political act linked to archetypal disobedience (Clark 1980: 118). The accusation of witchcraft against Catherine de' Medici is exemplary of Clark's argument in

two significant ways: it displays a variety of inverted behaviours and a desire to overturn the world, and witchcraft is perceived as a deeply political issue. D'Aubigné amplifies the main accusations made by demonologists against witches to offer a striking depiction of Catherine as a witch of almost unlimited cosmic powers (I, 887-98).

D'Aubigné's description of Catherine mixes references to classical and medieval monsters, such as the Erinyes and the basilisk, with examples of malevolent magic or *maleficium*. Catherine's *maleficium* is closely related to the senses – her breath, her touch, her gaze and her screams are lethal:

C'est la peste de l'air, l'Eryne envenimee,  
Elle infecte le ciel par la noire fumee  
Qui sort de ses nareaux, ell' haleine les fleurs,  
Les fleurs perdent d'un coup la vie, et les couleurs:  
Son toucher est mortel, la pestifere tüe (I, 889-893).

It is also associated with natural disasters and the overturning of the laws of nature ('[...] l'enragee/Tourne la terre en cendre, et en sang l'eau change'). The corruption she brings about is exemplified by her desire to change 'en discord l'accord des elements,' which is one of the most representative traits of the *maleficium* accord to Clark (1980: 120) 'Witches, with demonic aid, were assumed to interfere with elements and climate to achieve especially hurtful or unseasonable reversals.' In his edition of the *Tragiques*, Fanlo indicates references to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Lucian's *Civil War* in this passage.<sup>77</sup> This hypothesis is supported by parallel between Catherine and Erichtho's necromantic rituals (I, 902-13).

Raising the dead is another example of transformative inversion: not only does Catherine overturn the dichotomy between life and death, but she also usurps God's power by attempting to breathe life into the dead:

La nuit elle se veautre aux hideux cimetières  
[...] Desterre sans effroy les effroyables corps,  
Puis remplissant les os de la force des Diabes,

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<sup>77</sup> See also Closson 2000: 109-113.

Les fait saillir en pieds, terreux, espouvantables (I, 903, 906-8).

Although, as Fanlo remarks, Catherine shares a number of characteristics with Lucian's Erichtho, their respective roles are different: while Erichtho offers her services to Sextus Pompeius in order to predict the outcome of the battle of Pharsalus, Catherine is herself a person of considerable political influence. She cannot be considered as an outcast witch – like Erichtho – nor is she motivated by rebellion or disobedience.

D'Aubigné blames Catherine for having usurped the political power in France. As Céard puts it: 'Elle croit contraindre les forces infernales à la servir, mais ce n'est qu'une illusion satanique: [...] ils lui ont inspiré la « rage de régner » pour mieux régner par elle' (Céard 1979: 122). Among the elements highlighted to support the accusation of usurpation, the most important are her Italian descent, her gender and the alleged poisoning of Henri II and Francis II. Hence, to put 'Le diademe saint sur la teste insolente,/Le sacré sceptre au poing d'une femme impuissante' (104: 733) is not only considered as usurpation, but also as social and political inversion. To explain this world turned upside-down, D'Aubigné uses, in the case of Catherine de' Medici, witchcraft as a frame of reference.

### **Henri III**

Polemical pamphlets and prints against Henri III abound, and a significant number of studies have been devoted to this subject (Cameron 1978; Sauzet 1992; Boucher 2006). Duprat (2002) argues that the violent campaign against Henri III culminated after the assassination of the Duke of Guise in 1588 and, ultimately, led to Henri III's own assassination by the monk Clément in 1589. Her study of sixty polemical texts and images reveals a wide repertory of insults related to the demonic, magical and antichristic aspects of Henri III. Poirier (1996: 109-161) focuses on accusations of sodomy and sexual inversion based on the king's relationship with his favourites, or *mignons*. I will concentrate on these accusations as they

revolve around improper behaviours inverting the natural order of things, and are emblematic of the polemical images directed against Henri III.

It is essential to bear in mind, as Gray (2000: 134) observes, that ‘the word “homosexuality” did not exist in French before 1891 – only the idea of sexual inversion, usually described as sodomy.’ However, he also argues against the idea that ‘past proscriptions of a set of sex acts perpetrated by individuals, collectively subsumed under the category of sodomy, were displaced in the nineteenth century by the perception that homosexuality is a way of being’ (Gray 2000: 135). Rather, Gray shows that homosexual acts were considered as sins in sixteenth-century France and, as such ‘were viewed as a momentary stepping beyond or across the bounds of nature’ (Gray 2000: 136). Finally, he explains the legal actions taken against homosexuals as a way to prevent natural disasters brought about by the repetitions of acts against nature.

Gender inversion is a recurring theme of the polemic against Henri III. Significant examples include, for instance, L’Estoile’s account of Henri III’s reaction to the Protestant counter-league in February 1577: ‘Cependant le Roy faisoit tournois, joustes et ballets et force masquarades, où il se trouvoit ordinairement habillé en femme’ (L’Estoile 1992: 142). Other violent attacks portray Henri III as a monstrous hermaphrodite. (Fig. 97)



Figure 97: 'Portrait monstrueux et allégorique d'Henri III', in Duprat 2002: 113.

Duprat (2002: 113) signals that this picture appears in *Les sorcelleries de Henri de Valois* and *Charmes et caractères de sorcellerie de Henri de Valois*. Similar images circulated widely during Henri III's reign. The portrait aggregates allegorical elements: wings, claws and tail to indicate demonic affiliation, a feline head to denote cruelty, a rosary for religious hypocrisy and naked female breasts to designate hermaphroditism, inverted sexuality and lust. Crouzet (1990b) argues that the polemic against Henri III aims at unveiling the sins of the king.<sup>78</sup> To this extent, the image above may be understood not as a hyperbolic attack against Henri III, but as an allegorical representation of his sins: mainly cruelty, hypocrisy, vanity, lubricity, and inversion.

D'Aubigné also intends to unveil the king's sins and, in particular, his inversion of gender and sexuality. The satire highlights the signs of Henri III's dissimulation, such as clothes and make up, and shows how they reveal the king's true nature:

Son visage de blanc et de rouge empasté,  
Son chef tout empoutré nous monstrerent l'idée,  
En la place d'un Roy, d'une putain fardee' (II, 782-4).

The impropriety of the king's attributes reflects that of his sexual inclination:

Ainsy bien emmanché il porta tout ce jour  
Cet habit monstrueux, pareil à son amour:  
Si qu'au premier abord, chacun estoit en peine  
S'il voioit un Roy femme ou bien un homme Reyne' (II, 793-6).

By describing the king as a transvestite, D'Aubigné seeks to dispute his legitimacy. The chiasm between 'Roy femme' and 'homme Reyne' does not only satirise the king's cross-dressing habits, but also presents Henri III as an ambiguous, if not duplicitous, character. Despite this apparent ambiguity, there could be no doubt for D'Aubigné that Henri III is an inverted being as both 'Roy femme' and 'homme Reyne' are self-contradictory titles. Henri

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<sup>78</sup> See also, Duprat 2000: 103-116.

III's perversion goes even further than transvestism and sexual inversion. While his mother was reluctant to do good and enthusiastic about evil ('Pour bien-faire craint tout, pour nuire ne craint rien'), Henri III is compelled to sin by witnessing virtue: 'Et la vertu au vice haste ce lasche coeur'. This moral inversion is illustrated by the king's predatory behaviour towards children: 'Si bien qu'à la royalle il vole des enfans,/Pour s'eschauffer sur eux en la fleur de leurs ans' (II, 809-10).

Another way of unveiling Henri III's sins consists in debunking the novelty of such behaviours by associating it with tyrants of Antiquity (II, 815-20). Religious polemic often seeks to identify the adversary with novelty. D'Aubigné's attack against Henri III both uncovers the king's monstrosity, hidden behind 'noms nouveaux' and 'nouvelles formes' and historicises such behaviours by mentioning tyrants such as Nero and Sardanapalus. In addition to comparing the state of France to the Roman decadence, D'Aubigné's allusions to Nero may refer to the belief that: 'l'Anti-christ sera Neron, qui ressuscitera pour venir persecuter l'Eglise, à fin que tout ainsi qu'il a taché de l'estouffer à la naissance, il essaye de l'estaindre du tout en sa vieillesse: & comme il a esté le premier bourreau des Chrestiens, il soit aussi le dernier' (Raemond 1599: 30v). According to Fragonard (1992: 54), D'Aubigné considers Henri III as 'l'antichrétien exemplaire'. This allusion shows an even more radical attack against the king as he is obliquely designated as the Antichrist. The rich subtext of D'Aubigné's classical references inscribes Henri III in the context of perversion, persecution and eschatological fear.

By inverting the proper order of the world or acting against nature, human beings can turn into monsters. In this section, I have provided two representative examples of D'Aubigné's human monsters: Catherine de' Medici and her son Henri III. Both of them belong to the world upside-down insofar as they are characterised as inverted beings seeking to overturn the cosmic, political and religious order.

#### 4.4.6 Conclusion

In this section, I have analysed four kinds of Renaissance monsters: the *Gigantes*, which provide an important model for representing hubris; the papal Antichrist, an important element of religious polemic; Ronsard's *Opinion*, another monster related to hubris; and D'Aubigné's description of Catherine de' Medici and Henri III. To conclude, inversion is central to Renaissance teratology as monsters are systematically depicted as inverted beings or agents of inversion. An important aspect of the depiction of monsters as agents of inversion is the crucial influence of hubris: *Gigantes*, the Antichrist, *Opinion*, and Catherine de' Medici are all examples of hubristic creatures in rebellion against God and against the proper order of the world. Also worth noting is that the topos of the world upside-down is especially prominent in depictions of monsters in polemical contexts.

#### 4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that the topos of the world upside-down is central to describing socio-political turmoil. To do so, I have assessed the influence of millenarian views on the poetry pertaining to the religious wars. With reference to examples from Ronsard and D'Aubigné, I have showed that France, during the religious wars, has been depicted as a world upside-down. To support this observation, I have examined how poets (Ronsard, Du Bartas, De Billy, and D'Aubigné) have represented and used eschatological signs, such as eclipses, floods, fires, plagues, the return to primeval chaos, and comets. I have also provided a more detailed study of monsters, a particular case of eschatological signs, to confirm the prominence of the topos of the world upside-down in depictions of cosmic, social, political and religious upheaval. In doing so, I have confirmed my initial hypothesis whereby troubled times produce troubled texts.

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

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This thesis demonstrates how the troubled socio-political and religious context of sixteenth-century France correlates with the recrudescence and ‘polemisation’ of the topos of the world upside-down. The study of adages and emblems pertaining to inversion throughout the sixteenth century provides diachronic evidence of the shift of the topos of the world upside-down from moralising and comic device to polemical tool. The pattern of Rabelais’s body of work supports this observation, and displays a similar evolution, thus mirroring the historical context. The examination of the use of the topos of the world upside-down in religious polemic and in descriptions of socio-political disorders provides synchronic evidence of the prominence of this topos during the French religious wars. The motif of the overturning of the papal cooking pot and the perceived correlation between cosmic signs of disorders and social turmoil highlight the polemical and satirical impact of the topos of the world upside-down during the religious wars. From these observations, it is reasonable to infer that the use of the topos of the world upside-down has changed in accordance to the historical context between the early sixteenth century and the beginning of the religious wars. While recent studies have argued that the world upside-down has inspired social, political, religious, and scientific change by provoking a change of perspective, I have showed that the hypothesis whereby troubled times produce troubled texts provides a more accurate account of the development of this topos in sixteenth-century France.

A corollary is that, as the influence of the historical context on the world upside-down is significant, the use of this topos has substantially changed throughout history. Fra Affinati d’Acuto’s theological treatise *Le Monde renversé san-dessus dessous* (published in Italy in 1602 and translated into French in 1610) provides clear evidence of the change of attitude regarding the topos of the world upside-down. In the *Avertissement au Lecteur*, the author states his intention :

Encore que le titre de ce livre semble un peu bizarre, neantmoins les discours en sont doctes & judicieux. L'intention de l'Autheur est de montrer par vives raisons que le peché a introduit une telle confusion dans le monde, qu'on peut justment dire que toutes choses y vont à la renverse (Affinati 1610: A2r).

Although the main objective of *Le Monde renversé* – to make sinning detestable by describing it as inverted – is closely related to the kind of arguments and images at work in the polemic of the religious wars, the author considers the title as ‘un peu bizarre’. Considering the widespread popularity of the topos of the world upside-down during the sixteenth century, such a statement is surprising. For the critic Launay, who studies *Le Monde renversé* in her contribution to the 1977 conference on the world upside-down, ‘De “bizarre” à “baroque”, il n’y a pas loin’ (Launay 1979: 141). I argue that the author’s mention of the ‘bizarrerie’ of the world upside-down reveals a crucial mutation of the topos of the world upside-down. The word ‘bizarre’, I contend, can be more productively compared to ‘bigarré’ since they share both phonic semantic similarities: ‘bizarre’ (also written ‘bigearre’) signifies ‘Fantasticall, toyish, odde, humorous, [...] divers, or diversified in fashion, or in colour’, while ‘bigarré’ means ‘Diversified, varied, mingled, of many colours’ (Cotgrave: s. n. ‘bizarre’).

From this comparison, it is possible to infer that the topos of the world upside-down has been perceived, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, as a device both odd and composite. While most occurrences of the world upside-down throughout the sixteenth century are based on the strict inversion of a system of binary oppositions, ‘bizarrerie’ and ‘bigarrure’ point to a more ambiguous way of perceiving inversion. This ambiguity proceeds from a broader paradigm shift occurring at the end of the sixteenth century: with the end of the religious wars, the system of binary oppositions that underlies the world upside-down has disintegrated. Defaux clearly identifies this phenomenon in Montaigne’s *Essais*:

rien ne peut être chez Montaigne ni renversant ni renversé puisque chez lui, dès l’origine, dès le moment où il se met à écrire les *Essais*, tout l’est déjà, et que la hiérarchie traditionnelle, le système d’oppositions binaires [...] et les différences que ce système suppose [...] sont proprement éliminés (Defaux 1990: 870).

This new way of conceiving the world upside-down postulates that the perception of the world, rather than the world itself, is inverted. Tabourot's *Apophetegmes du Sieur Gaulard*, first published in 1586, offer a clear example of the beginnings of this way of considering inversion. This collection of comic anecdotes revolves around Gaulard, a self-centred, goofy and absurd character, which Polizzi (2000: 187) considers as 'l'incarnation de l'incongru dans un personnage, dont le portrait [...] met en scène, à partir du motif du « monde renversé », une thématique utopique dénoncée par sa confrontation à la réalité.' Gaulard's tendency to interpret everything from his own subjective point of view alludes to a form of extreme solipsism, as in this example:

Il se mit une fois à l'estrier droit d'un carrosse, pour aller par la ville : et se remit au mesme estrier à son retour. Dont luy advint une opinion certaine, voyant que les maisons qu'il avoit veu devant ses yeux en allant, estoient derriere en revenant ; et celles de derriere, devant ses yeux : qu'elles avoient changé de lieu, et mesmes que la maison de laquelle il estoit party, n'estoit pas du mesme costé que lors qu'il avoit monté dans le coche ou carrosse. Il croiroit aisement, quand de dessus l'eau on arrive à terre, que la terre et les montaignes s'approchent, et que le vaisseau ne bouge (Tabourot 2004: 202).

The comical effect is produced by the discrepancy between Gaulard's subjective perspective and reality. Tabourot insists on three central features of Gaulard's character: his inability to perceive the outside world objectively; his exclusive reliance on his senses; and, his upside-down perception of the world around him. This example clearly demonstrates how, at the end of the sixteenth century, the topos of the world upside-down starts to point to subjective perceptions instead of being applied to society.

The topos of the world upside-down is an easily identifiable theme in literature and visual arts, and has fascinated authors, artists, philosophers and critics from the Antiquity to the present days. This thesis demonstrates that considering the context in which the world upside-down is used is essential to understanding its significance.





## APPENDIX II: TRANSCRIPTION OF THE GUYET TRIAL

1556 (22 août). – Angers.

**Sentence capitale rendue par Me Remy Ambroys, président en la cour du Parlement de Provence, commissaire du roi pour le fait des hérésies, à la requête du procureur, à l'encontre de nombreux habitants d'Angers, accusés d'hérésie.**

Arch. mun. Angers, BB 27, f°59-62.

Veü les proces criminelz faictz a la requeste du procureur du roy, appelez avec nous maistres Mathieu Ory inquisiteur general de la foy en ce royaume et René Vallin viccayre et official de l'evesque d'Angiers, a l'encontre de Maistres Francois Chacebeuf, Jehan Gentil, ung appellé le seigneur Desespoir, aultre appellé le seigneur de Longueville et des Roziers, maistre Leonard Le Royer seigneur du Jaulnay, Jehanne de Crespy sa femme, Lezin Guiet, Gilles Doysseau appoticquaire et Mathelme Cupif sa femme, André Henry notaire et sa femme, Guillaume Prieur Orpheuvre, Thomas Delaillee, Anne Million sa femme, Marie Bicle cousine d'icelle Millon, Jacques Descuillard parchemynier, ung nommé Le Sire orphevre nagueres demorant Angiers rue Bauldriere, Estienne Deheoyz marchand drappier, Michel Delaillee sergent royal, Guillaume Dupont mercyer, Jehanne Peju sa femme, Cimonne chambriere dudict Lezin Guyet, Jehan Bouju dict Boutleau tailleur, Francoise Bordier femme de maistre Jehan Devonereux seigneur du Cormier, Denys Boismort dict Le Grant, Denys Pierre Viredoux appoticquaire, Jacques Lemeignan, ung nommé maistre Vincent nagueres pedagogue des enfans dudict Lezin Guyet, ung nommé Fleury aussi nagueres pedagogue des enfans de maistre Francois Gaultier seigneur du Rotay, ung surnommé Le Liepvre nagueres demorant au colliege de la Porte de Fer d'Angiers, Marcial Guyet, Jehan Deflottes, Jehan Yvon dict d'Andrye, Jehan Allain, la femme de René Belhomme drappier et Roberde Sinault sa chambriere, accusez de crime d'heresie, defaillans,

les charges et informations par nous faictes, decretz de prinse de corps, adjournemens a trois briefz jours, defaulx et contoumaces contre lesdictz deffailans, sentences et jugemens interlocutoires par nous donnez les XXIIIe et XXVIIe jours de juing et dernier jour de juillet derreniers passez, exploictz et rellations sur ce faictz par Jehan Corbineau sergent royal, defaulx sur ce obtenus, recollemens de tesmoings, conclusions dudict procureur du roy, les lectres patantes du roy des XXVIIe avril, XXVIIIe may et XIXe jours de juing derniers passez contenant nostre commission et tout consideré par nostre jugement,

appelez en icellui les lieutenans general criminel et particullier, conseillers et advocatz du siege royal et presidial d'Angiers estans en nombre de vingt ung, avons dict et disons que lesdicts deffaulz ont esté et sont bien et deument obtenuz et pour le proffilt d'iceulx que lesdicts maistres Francois Chacebeuf, Jehan Gentil, lesdicts appelez, les sieur Desespoir, le sieur de Longueville et Desrouziers sont actains et convaincuiz d'avoir, en assemblees de gens et conventiculles faictes tant de jour que de nuict es maisons privees, tant en ceste ville d'Angiers que hors et es environs d'icelle, presché, dogmatisé et faict certaine forme de prieres contre nostre sainte foy et religion chrestienne, les saintz sacremens, traditions et cerymonies de l'eglise chrestienne et catholicque, lesdicts maistre Leonard Leroyer, Jehanne de Crespy sa femme, Lezin Guyet, Gilles Doysseau, Mathelme Cupif sa femme, André Henry et sa femme, Guillaume Prieur, Thomas Delaillee, Anne Millon sa femme, Jacques Decuillard, d'avoir baillé et presté leurs maisons et chambres pour faire lesdictes assemblees, prieres et predications, assisté et adheré a icelles, mal parlé et blaphemé contre nostre sainte foy et religion chrestienne, lesdicts Cire orpheuvre, Estienne Deheryz et Michel Delaillee sergent, d'avoir assisté et adheré esdictes predications et assemblees, faict la collecte en icelles pour certains prisonniers pour heresie qu'ilz disoient estre leurs confreres et aussi d'avoir tenu propos hereticques et oultre lesdicts Cire et Deheryz d'avoir invité et convié les aultres a se trouver esdictes assemblees et predications, lesdicts Marie Bicle cousine

dudict Thomas Delaillee, sa femme Jehanne Peju, Simonne servante de Lezin Guyet, Jehan Bouju dict Boyleau, Francoise Bordier et Denys Boismort d'avoir assisté esdictes predications et assemblees illicites et mal parlé contre les saintz sacremens, traditions et cerimonyes de nostredicte sainte foy et religion chrestienne et lesdicts Pierre Viredoux, Jacques Lemeignan, les nommez Vincent Fleury et surnommé [Le Liepvre] d'avoir mal parlé contre le saint Sacrement de l'autel et tenu aultres propos scandalleux et hereticques, pour reparation desquelx cas, crimes et delictz, les avons condampnez et condempnons a estre ars et bruslez vifz en la place du marché de ceste ville d'Angiers et declairons leurs biens acquis et confisquez au roy et quant ausdicts Guillaume Dupont, Jehan de Flottes et Jehan Yvon dict d'Andrye, la femme de René Belhomme et Roberde Sinault sa chambriere, sont actains et convaincu respectivement d'avoir assisté et adhéré esdictes assemblees et predications et forme de prieres et mal parlé contre nostre sainte foy, pour reparation desquelx cas les avons condampnez et condempnons, assavoir lesdicts Dupont, de Flottes, Guyet et Yvon a estre panduz et estranglez es potances qui seront dressees en la place dudict marché publicq d'Angiers et leurs corps estre ars et bruslez et si desclairons leurs biens acquis et confisquez au roy et que lesdictes femme et chambriere et de René Belhomme abjureront en la maniere acoustumee toute heresie par davant l'evesque d'Angiers et inquisiteur general de la foy ou leurs viccaires. Et ce faict, chacune d'icelles ayans en leurs mains ung cierge de cire ardent du poix d'une livre, en jour de dimanche, a huict heures du matin assisteront en une messe du Saint Sacrement qui sera dicte en l'eglise parochial Saint-Maurice d'Angiers et leur est enjoinct de bien et catholicquement vivre sur peine du feu et quant audict Jehan Allain, disons qu'il est actainct et convaincu d'avoir mal parlé contre nostre sainte foy et religion chrestienne, pour reparation de quoy, le condempnons a faire amende honorable, teste et piedz nudz et en chemise, tenant en ses mains une torche de cire ardante du poix de deux livres et estre mené des prisons royaulx d'Angiers davant le grant portal de l'eglise cathedrale d'Angiers, a jour de dimanche, yssue de la grand messe et illec estant a genoulx demander

pardon a Dieu, au roy et a justice de ce que dessus et de abjurer toute heresie en la maniere susdicte, luy enjoignant bien et catholicquement vivre sur peine du feu. Et l'avons bany et banisson du royaume pour deux ans.

Et pour ce que lesdicts condampnez sont absens et fugitifz, ordonnons que ce present jugement sera executé par figure et est inhibé et deffendu a toutes personnes de quelque estat, quallité et condition qu'ils soient, de menacer, injurier, baptre, oultrager par eulx ne par aultre ceulx qui ont porté ou porteront tesmoignage, faict et feront desclarations ou poursuite contre les chargez d'heresie, ne user d'aucune vengeance directement ou indirectement en leurs personnes ne en leurs biens sur peine de la hard et autre arbitraire.

Et sera la presente sentence et jugement leue par les lieux et carrefourgs de ceste ville d'Angiers et publiee en l'auditoire de cestedicte ville, l'audiance du siege presidial tenant et enregistree au greffe criminel.

Faict a Angiers par nous Remy Ambroys, conseiller du roy, president en sa court de parlement de Provence, et par ledict sieur commissaire depputé en ceste partie, permutation audict procureur du roy, le XXII<sup>e</sup> jour d'aoust M V<sup>C</sup> cinquante six.

(signé): Lecaron, greffier en ladicte commission.

Transcription established with the help of Sylvain Bertoldi, archiviste-paléographe, conservateur en chef du patrimoine, directeur des Archives de la Ville d'Angers

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