

THE CARNIVALESQUE BANQUET OF BÉROALDE DE VERVILLE

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## ABSTRACT

Le Moyen de Parvenir, one of the last works of Béroalde de Verville, a late XVIth century poet and prose writer, consists entirely of a lively and disconnected banquet conversation interwoven with an author/narrator's commentaries and asides to the reader. Through both its form and its content the book creates an atmosphere of profound disorder and of mocking irreverence. The resulting difficulty and apparent frivolity of the work have caused it to be disregarded by many critics. This study seeks to examine Le Moyen de Parvenir from a new perspective, using the elements of disorder and irreverence to discover the unity and purpose behind Béroalde's unusual presentation. To this end it is noted that the same disturbing elements also dominate a social phenomenon of the time: the popular festival. Archetypal festivals such as Carnival and the Feast of Fools, as well as the related fool-societies reveal a festive tradition which is characterized by special liberties and attitudes. These festive privileges include free speech, blatant sensuality, gratuitous actions, and

mocking irreverence, all of which combine to create a traditional representation of chaos.

Closer examination reveals that Béroalde's literary work and the social phenomenon have much in common. Both contain abundant feasting, wine and laughter in an uninhibited atmosphere. The disruption of everyday time and space, the confusion of identities, and the ambivalently mocking attitude present in the festival appear in several aspects of the text. These include the world created by the author, the relationship between the author and his reader, and the act of composition itself. Béroalde's characters also exploit the festive privilege of sacrilege, turning everyday objects of worship and respect upside-down and ridiculing them. They also use ridicule and laughter to overturn another mainstay of society, the social hierarchy. All members of society are made to display their particular follies. The guiding morality is physical pleasure, and the banqueters sharply condemn those who do not, or who cannot, join in the spirit of celebration. In place of rigidity and repression Béroalde proposes a world of laughter and freedom. The festive elasticity of both the social and the literary frameworks created in his text demonstrate this proposal.

The carnivalesque perspective also gives new meaning to the title of the book. Béroalde is shown to provide not only a "moyen de parvenir" for the individual, but for the



society as a whole, and even for the reader. Just as the festive occasion alters the everyday environment and permits the individual to release tensions which are usually held in check by reason or by social restrictions, so the atmosphere created in the book provides a similar opportunity for both characters and reader. Through recognition and acceptance of the irrational, emotional side of human nature, Béroalde demonstrates an understanding of the social purpose of festive disorder and its positive contribution to the health of the whole society. While Béroalde the artist uses the festive tradition to represent an aspect of life around him, Béroalde the humanist uses the same tradition to express his discoveries on human nature and on the nature of society. Thus through the medium of a carnivalesque banquet, the promise of the title is fulfilled, and the voice of a tolerant and conservative observer of the human comedy unveils his "secret" in Le Moyen de Parvenir.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The chaotic structure, irreverent tone and fast-paced dialogue of Le Moyen de Parvenir have pleased or confused many readers since its publication (c. 1610) and have established the singular reputation of the author, François Béroalde de Verville. One critic pronounces it the "oddest, queerest book in the world", then states that he believes it to be a masterpiece.<sup>1</sup> Another describes the work as "fermée sur elle-même, mais comme une carrosse à trente-six portières", and finds its irrational qualities to be profoundly disturbing.<sup>2</sup> The apparent chaos within the text may have been influenced by the profoundly unstable religious, political and social environment of the times during which the author lived. But the way in which the impression of disorder is expressed also closely resembles the traditional representation of chaos found in many

festivals of the time with which Béroalde would have been familiar. The volatile, carnivalesque aspects of the book suggest a deeper association of the literary work and the social phenomenon. This study will attempt to discover and analyse such an association with the objective of giving a new perspective on the content and purpose of Béroalde's controversial work.

Religious discord and political instability plagued Europe of the late XVIth century. Béroalde's own life spanned the beginning and the end of the religious wars in France, and during this time he was personally committed to first one, then the other of the two major religions. Born April 27, 1556 into the Protestant family of Marie Eletz and Matthieu Brouard, dit Béroalde,<sup>3</sup> he was christened François. His father, a respected intellectual, directed a small school for boys at what is now n° 2 bis rue des Eccles in Paris. Béroalde was attending his father's classes in company with Agrippa d'Aubigné and Pierre l'Estcile in 1562 when the outbreak of the first war forced the family to flee to Orleans. There Matthieu Brouard became lecturer of Hebrew under the protection of Renée de France. Béroalde's mother died of the plague which swept through the city shortly after they arrived, but François and his father survived and remained in Orleans for four years, leaving only when the third civil war forced them to move again. From 1568 to 1572 father and son changed residences several times, and were

once again in Orleans when the Saint-Bartholomew massacre occurred in August, 1572.

Late in 1572 Béroalde went to Geneva, probably at the urging of his father who felt that his Protestant son would be safer there than in France. Eventually Matthieu Erouard himself came to Geneva where he was received as bourgeois de Genève. Until his death in 1576 Béroalde's father was a close friend of the stern Calvinist, Théodore de Bèze. Béroalde himself remained in Geneva until at least 1578. His interests during this period ranged from medical studies to languages, horology and alchemy. From 1578 to 1583 Béroalde did some writing, part of which has been lost, and travelled between Lyons, Geneva, Anjou and Paris, finally settling in Tours. Several of his works produced during this period were published in 1583, among them a philosophical essay, L'Idée de la République which exposes his political views to be those of a tolerant conservative. A scientific enquiry, Recherches de la pierre philosophale, and poetry such as Les Soupirs amoureux and Stances de la mort were published together with several other works under the title of Les Appréhensions spirituelles (1583). Later, after he had become a resident of Tours, and perhaps for monetary reasons, he translated the Diane of Montemayor and a work by Juste Lipse, both published in 1592. At this time he was also writing his long novel in five parts, Les Aventures de Floride (1593-96), in the florid style of Montemayor.

Although born and educated a Protestant, Béroalde renounced this faith and became a Catholic at a time between his father's death in 1576, and 1593, the year in which he was named canon of Saint-Gatien at Tours. This appointment ensured his financial security and allowed him to indulge his literary talents for his own pleasure without being forced to use them for financial gain. Very little is known about this period of his life, except that he was able to publish several works. Among these are Le Cabinet de Minerve (1596), a republication of a few earlier poems and essays combined with new thoughts on various topics inspired by the memories, readings and general observations of the author, and La Sérodokimasie (1600), a long poem written to aid the campaign initiated by Henri IV to promote the declining silk industry of Tours. A translation, Le Songe de Polyphile (1600) from the work of the same name by Francesco Colonna, demonstrates Béroalde's familiarity with the Renaissance concept of an idealized past surrounded by architectural perfection and decorative allegories. Other works of his later period are Le Voyage des Princes fortunez (1600), in which the reader is introduced to oriental occultism through the allegorical adventures of Béroalde's mysterious protagonists, Le Palais des Curieux (1612), which touches on a variety of disparate subjects, such as etymology, alchemy and Platonic love, and the controversial Le Moyen de

Parvenir (1610?),<sup>4</sup> a book which not only dominates Béroalde's literary reputation, but also colours his moral reputation.

In this work the author/narrator, who imagines himself at a banquet with over three hundred garrulous guests, records the lively conversation and frequently ribald anecdotes being told around him, while adding his own commentaries and directing asides to the reader. The presentation creates the immediate impression of disorder as the conversation grows into a compendium of gratuitous associations, tangential digressions, and paradoxical statements. The mention of Jean Bodin as one of those present for example (I:19),<sup>5</sup> is enough to direct the wandering narrative away from the introduction of the arriving guests and into a digression on the devil, taking as a transition the fact that Bodin had authored a book on demons.<sup>6</sup> From there the narrator discusses the outward appearance of the devil, and the tricks little devils play on chambermaids, before returning abruptly to the guest list.

Shifting truths and paradoxical statements add to the confusion. Béroalde introduces the guests as "ces gens de bien" (I:43) and later states "il n'y a point ici de gens de bien" (II:186). He claims to speak only the truth in his book, under penalty of death, but then says that even under such a penalty he expects to remain safe and sound: "ce que

je vous dis est vray, & s'il n'est vray, je puisse mourir devant toute la compagnie, demeurant aussi sain & sauf que je fus jamais" (I:74). In another passage one speaker threatens to take anachronistic revenge on a companion for an affront which took place next year: "si tout estoit permis je vous battrois bien à ceste heure pour me vanger de l'affront que l'annee qui vient vous me fistes en Grece" (I:239).

These examples illustrate the mood of the work which gives the impression of being in constant flux, with truth being as variable as time and place. Stylistic details, surprising comparisons, exaggerations and constant wordplay add to the unpredictable, playful way in which the book develops. Béroalde compares the age of a lovely young lady to that of "un vieil bœuf" (I:27), affirming that the comparison is valid since the girl was fifteen or sixteen years old. The word "vestale" is flippantly altered to "vesse" (I:288), "stoïque" becomes "sotique" (I:283) and "en Suisse" is changed to "en sottise" (I:226). Other details such as an unusually long word, (pseudosevangeliquelipapistoranabaptistilogiesuitanorbiterondepuritain, II:201), exaggerated numerical precision, (trois mil quatre cens vingt & deux escus dix-sept sols une pite, II:147), and numerous lists of synonyms add a burlesque, and frequently irreverent, element to the text.

The stylistic and structural eccentricities of Le Moyen



de Parvenir are blended with a humorously ambivalent attitude towards social institutions and towards human nature in general. The ambivalence is fostered by the polyphonic quality of the book which allows various speakers to give the impression of approving folly, self-indulgence, and even corruption, while the attitude of others is outrage or contemptuous cynicism. The position of the author himself is difficult to define. He seems to vacillate between approval and condemnation of the sacrilegious acts and ribald sequences which abound in the dialogue. At times the author feels obliged to justify the subject matter of his book, but his excuses can leave the reader wondering if his rationalization is serious, if it is meant as a parody of such an excuse, or if his intent is to mock the reader:

. . . les paroles ne sont point sales, il n'y a que l'intelligence; quand vous ouïrez une parole, recevez-la & la portez à une belle intelligence, & lors elle sera belle, nette, & pure.

--Mais cela fasche les oreilles.

--Si les oreilles estoient pures & nettes, cela ne les incommoderoit point: un estron incommode-t'il le Soleil, bien que ses rayons s'y jettent? Sachez aussi . . . que si on estoit ces paroles d'ici, ce banquet seroit imparfait. Seriez-vous bien aise que l'on vous ostast le cul pource qu'il est puant & le sera jusqu'à la mort? Vous seriez un bel homme sans cul! Il faut suivre Nature, ainsi nostre discours la suit . .

.. (II:76)

Béroalde also sidesteps the hypothetical accusation of irreverence or even atheism by claiming to fall upon his topics by chance, like the groping player of blind man's buff: "On m'a dit qu'il y a eu quelques malctrus qui ont

dit, 'Voici les traits d'Ateiste.' En dea je n'en sçay rien, je m'en raporte à eux: si j'ay renccontré à dire leur naïveté, ç'a esté sans le sçavoir, je joué au colimmaillard, je prens ce que je trouve" (II:259).

Despite Béroalde's explanations and justifications, critics of Le Moyen de Parvenir have formed their own discerning and often disparate opinions. Guillaume Colletet, a XVIIth century literary biographer who admires Béroalde for his intelligence and devotion to knowledge, appears nonetheless to be the instigator of the rumour that Béroalde led a wild and extravagant life in the taverns of Tours. This opinion seems to be based mainly on the tone and subject matter of Le Moyen de Parvenir.<sup>7</sup> It is significant however, that between the publication of Le Moyen de Parvenir and Colletet's biography (c. 1650), there had been a refining influence at work in French literary taste and in the cultured individual's standard of propriety. V.L. Saulnier, who has done a more recent evaluation of Le Moyen de Parvenir, cautions that Colletet's reaction is most likely conditioned by his own times.<sup>8</sup>

Evaluations of Le Moyen de Parvenir range from extravagant admiration to open disapproval, the latter opinion seeming not to have prevented nearly forty editions from appearing, most of them within a century and a half of first publication.<sup>9</sup> Colletet, one of the earliest critics, deplores the unrefined vocabulary and the impiety,

qualifying it as "un certain livre non seulement infâme, pour les mots de gueulle et les salletez qu'il contient, mais encore abominable pour les profanations et ses impietez".<sup>10</sup> Colletet's opinion is echoed by his contemporary, Charles Sorel, who wrote an unfavourable evaluation of Le Moyen de Parvenir some forty years after the publication of his own Francion which in tone and subject matter could be likened in several places to Béroalde's work.<sup>11</sup> His opinion seems to reflect the change in literary taste during the first half of the XVIIth century. The judgements of Nicéron in the XVIIIth century<sup>12</sup> and of Haag in the XIXth reflect the same attitude.<sup>13</sup> However, contemporaries of Haag were finding a new appreciation for humour and short tales, à la vieille gauloise, and Le Moyen de Parvenir benefited from the renewed interest. A. Rivière is representative of this new opinion when in 1885 he invites the public to read his edited collection of tales from Le Moyen de Parvenir, promising that they contain the rollicking vigour of "pantagruélisme".<sup>14</sup> Honoré de Balzac in the XIXth century praises Béroalde along with Marguerite de Navarre, Boccaccio, Rabelais, Ariosto and La Fontaine in the preface to his Contes drolatiques, and places Le Moyen de Parvenir among "ces livres antiques où respire le parfum d'une naïveté jeune et où se trouvent le nerf comique dont notre théâtre est privé, l'expression vive et drue qui peint sans

périphrase et que personne n'ose plus cser."<sup>15</sup>

Much of the critical work devoted to Le Moyen de Parvenir concentrates on the question of attribution, a problem posed by the omission of the author's name in the early editions, and by Béroalde's disclaimer published in his work, Le palais des Curieux (1612).<sup>16</sup> In this statement he denies having written the work entitled Le Moyen de Parvenir currently in circulation, but admits that he did intend to publish a book of that name and that the manuscript had in fact been stolen from him. This disclaimer and the facts surrounding it leave room for many doubts however, and a diversity of opinion has formed around the question of authorship. The critical arguments for and against Béroalde's paternity are summarized in Saulnier's article in which the critic convincingly concludes, "le Parvenir est l'oeuvre de Béroalde, et de Béroalde seul. Rien ne permet d'en douter, tout invite à le croire".<sup>17</sup>

Among the relatively recent studies of Le Moyen de Parvenir are several significant contributions. Herbert Reiche's dissertation (Leipzig, 1912)<sup>18</sup> treats the question of attribution and also contains a commentary on the style and a valuable listing of the sources of many of the anecdotes and comments in the text. In a long article published in Problèmes littéraires du seizième siècle (1927), Lazare Sainéan examines Le Moyen de Parvenir primarily from a philological point of view.<sup>19</sup> His

comprehensive analysis is organized around provincialisms, specialized vocabulary, erotica verba, and other expressions. V.L. Saulnier's contribution, "Etude sur Béroalde de Verville" (1944), cited above,<sup>20</sup> is a work of major importance and provides a well-documented base for further study of Béroalde and of Le Moyen de Parvenir. In a shorter article, Robert de Valette describes the book as deeply disturbing, not because of its tone or subject matter, but because the irrational elements of the text finally gain the upper hand and engulf the author.<sup>21</sup> Valette believes that Béroalde's stated intent to "faire une satire universelle où on reprend les vices de chascun" is lost in the torrent of words. Janis Pallister's Ph.D. dissertation (1964, published 1971) reviews the problem of authorship and then concentrates on the "baroque" elements of the text.<sup>22</sup> Her study contains an examination of the title page and the chapter titles, as well as a close reading of the first and last chapters. In another Ph.D. dissertation (1973), Robert Cohen discusses Béroalde's originality as a rhetorician and as a literary artist.<sup>23</sup> He competently demonstrates that Béroalde's rhetoric is designed not only to avoid the misfortunes of censorship, but to instruct and to entertain a public of varied backgrounds, from the sophisticated to the unlettered.

The present study of Le Moyen de Parvenir differs from previous ones in that it focuses specifically on the

irrational progress of the dialogue, the chaotic atmosphere and the rowdy ribaldry of the conversations. These elements have distressed and delighted generation of readers, and have attracted the attention of literary critics, despite whose efforts the volatile qualities still obscure the book with disturbing and confusing ambivalence. As one concentrates on these elements of disorder and liberated sensuality, however, certain themes and patterns begin to detach themselves from the chaos. As they emerge, they demonstrate a striking affinity with a particular aspect of the social and artistic life of Péroalde's time: the exuberant popular festivals and the pervasive cult of fools.

Festival as a frame of reference for artistic expression has been explored previously by scholars such as E. K. Chambers (1903),<sup>24</sup> Enid Welsford (1927, 1935),<sup>25</sup> C.L. Barber (1959),<sup>26</sup> and Mikhail Bakhtin (1968).<sup>27</sup> Chambers's thorough study, The Medieval Stage, documents the close relationship between festivals, the fool-societies and the theatre. Welsford's works encompass the broad field of festivals and fools, and their relationship to literature and art. In The Court Masque she traces the Renaissance customs of courtly masquerades and celebrations from their origins in early pagan society to their various forms in the XVIth century, concluding that festive customs had a profound effect on the literature of the time. In a later work entitled The Fool Welsford concentrates on the social

and literary development of the fool and of fool-societies. Of particular interest to the present study is a chapter on "Misrule" (pp. 376-98).

C. L. Barber, in Shakespeare's Festive Comedy, applies his theories on the festival and literature to the light-hearted comedies of Shakespeare. He demonstrates that similar to many Renaissance festivals, Shakespeare's comedies contain "saturnalian" patterns which comprise inversion, statement-counterstatement and a mechanism termed "through release to clarification". The latter procedure leads the participants through a humorous and often chaotic release of emotion to a clearer understanding of a certain situation. Barber finds that the saturnalian patterns came to Shakespeare from many sources, both artistic and literary. Like Welsford, Barber finds that the patterns were employed by the theatrical fools and can also be found in the socio-literary cult of fools, although he believes the purest expression of these patterns appears in the festival itself. He includes as examples Candlemas, Halloween, marriages and wakes. Barber shows that irrationality, mirth and liberated sensuality are integral parts of the comedy/festival, an observation which is of interest to our analysis of Le Moyen de Parvenir.

Bakhtin's analysis of Rabelais, entitled Rabelais and His World, begins with the premise that changes in cultural outlook established a new sense of propriety between

Rabelais' time and the XVIIth century. Thus the aspect of Rabelais' work identified as popular humour was either rebuked for its coarseness by succeeding generations, or glossed over in attempts to prove that Rabelais was mainly a serious author who sometimes clothed his arguments in broad comedy as a cover. By studying Rabelais in the light of popular culture however, Bakhtin reveals a new depth and unity in Rabelais as a comic artist. Bakhtin traces the history of laughter to Rabelais and beyond, emphasizing the popular tradition which links Rabelais' work to ancient as well as contemporary authors and to popular festive customs. He believes that popular tradition is the key to Rabelais' work, and that the changing attitude towards this tradition accounts for the inability of later generations to comprehend the popular humour of Rabelais. In his definition of popular humour, Bakhtin, like Barber, perceives the festival as a paradigm. Although he incorporates many traditional festivals into his study, Bakhtin concentrates on Carnival as the archetypal festival in his analysis. He believes it to be the strongest and most representative festival of the age, and demonstrates how carnivalesque behaviour and speech also extend into other areas of life, the open marketplace, village fairs, or corner taverns. Bakhtin then shows how this festive behaviour appears in Rabelais' humour, a perspective which gives new depth and continuity to Rabelais' work.



The provoking discoveries made in the above studies stimulated an examination of Le Moyen de Parvenir from a similar viewpoint. As the analysis proceeded, certain relationships between the festive event and the images, themes and patterns in Le Moyen de Parvenir began to emerge. The present study is the result of this examination, and will attempt to provide a new perspective on the puzzling aspects of Béroalde's book. This analysis will first concentrate on the cultural phenomenon of the festival and the related cult of fools, demonstrating the historical antecedents and the various forms they assumed during the Medieval and Renaissance periods. This will be followed by a comparative examination of the festive atmosphere which Béroalde creates in Le Moyen de Parvenir and that of traditional popular festivals. The study will then concentrate on the spirit of sacrilege and irreverence displayed by Béroalde's speakers and by the characters within the anecdotes told at the banquet in order to reveal another affinity with the popular festival and the cult of fools. Subsequently, attitudes towards society and human nature expressed in Le Moyen de Parvenir will be examined using the festive tradition as a guide, with the intention of discovering not only how, but to what purpose Béroalde uses festive patterns, themes and images in his work.

## CHAPTER I: NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Machen, "Introduction" to his translation of Le Moyen de Parvenir, The Way to Attain (Carbonnek, Priv. print., 1929) p. 13.

<sup>2</sup> R. Valette, "Le Moyen de parvenir" Cahiers du Sud, 385 (1965), p. 293.

<sup>3</sup> Béroalde's father changed his name to please a patron who found Brouard barbare. See Charles Royer in his edition of Le Moyen de Parvenir, (1896; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1970) "Notice", p. X, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> There is no known first edition of Le Moyen de Parvenir, and the earliest copies have no date in the frontespiece. It is generally thought to be between 1610 and 1629, usually given as 1610. See V. L. Saulnier, "Etude sur Béroalde de Verville", Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance, 5 (1944), p. 317.

<sup>5</sup> References in parentheses refer to the volume then the page of the Royer edition of Le Moyen de Parvenir (see above note 3). This method will be used throughout.

<sup>6</sup> See Jean Bodin, Démonomanie des sorciers, (Paris: J. DuPuys, 1580). The success of this work can be measured by the six editions which appeared before 1600.

<sup>7</sup> Guillaume Colletet, "Vie de Béroalde de Verville", in Vies des poètes tourangeaux (B. N. Ms. N. A. F. Fr. 3074), p. 13. Colletet states, "Jamais l'antique Lucian, ne le moderne Rabelais n'eurent des sentiments plus dereglez, ny ne les descouvrirent avecque plus de liberté. . . . Sa dignité de chanoine ne luy fit en aucune sorte (quitter) sa première forme de vivre, et au contraire qu'ayant plus de moyen de fournir aux frais de ses vcluptez, il donna plus commodément aux movemens impétueux de ses sens et de ses passions desreglées tout ce qu'ils exigèrent de luy".

<sup>8</sup> Saulnier, "Etude", p. 250, states: "Béroalde est d'un temps qui sent le Béarnais, où l'on mange avec ses doigts et où l'on rit très fort. On ne trouve pas inconvenant de passer du cercle où l'on cause, de la bibliothèque ou du cabinet de travail, voire même de la chaire, aux séances de

bien boire. Ce genre de gaîté n'implique pas paillardise, mais peut facilement en faire naître la légende."

<sup>9</sup> The introduction to the Royer edition contains a descriptive listing of all editions of Le Moyen de Parvenir to 1896. V.L. Saulnier completes this listing to 1944 in his article. In 1970 Slatkine Reprints of Geneva reissued the 1896 Paris edition of Charles Royer, the edition used for this study.

<sup>10</sup> Colletet, "Vie", p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> Bibliothèque française (Paris: Compagnie des libraires du Palais, 1664), pp. 173-74.

<sup>12</sup> "Béroalde de Verville" in Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des hommes illustres, (Paris: Briasson, 1736), XXXIV, 232-237.

<sup>13</sup> Eugène and Emile Haag, La France protestante (1877; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1966), II, 407.

<sup>14</sup> Armand Rivière, Rabelaisiana (Paris: Marpion et Flammarion, 1885), p. 51.

<sup>15</sup> Contes drolatiques, in Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), XI, 433.

<sup>16</sup> Le Palais des curieux, (Paris: Guillemot et Thiboust, 1612), p. 461.

<sup>17</sup> Saulnier, "Etude", p. 291.

<sup>18</sup> "Le Moyen de Parvenir" von Béroalde de Verville mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Quellen- und Verfasserfrage: Ein Beitrag zur französ. Novellistik. Leipzig: Diss. 1912 (Coburg: Rossteuscher, 1913).

<sup>19</sup> "Le Moyen de Parvenir", Paris: Boccard, 1927.

<sup>20</sup> See above note 8.

<sup>21</sup> "Le Moyen de Parvenir", Cahiers du Sud, 385 (1965), 283-94.

<sup>22</sup> The World View of Béroalde de Verville Diss. Minnesota 1964 (Paris: Vrin, 1971).

<sup>23</sup> The Use of Rhetoric in Béroalde de Verville's 'Le Moyen de Parvenir', Diss. Chicago 1973.

<sup>24</sup> The Medieval Stage, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903).

<sup>25</sup> The Court Masque: A Study in the Relationship between Poetry and the Revels (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962) first published 1927. The Eccl: His Social and Literary History (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1966). First published 1935.

<sup>26</sup> Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and its Relations to Social Custom (Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1963). First published 1959.

<sup>27</sup> Rabelais and His World, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968). First published in Russian 1965.

## CHAPTER II

## THE POPULAR FESTIVE SPIRIT

Festival is a time when people cease their normal activity and enter into a different world, a world where they are allowed to escape from themselves temporarily and become another. It is a time when people give themselves over to excesses of every kind, as Roger Caillois describes:

La fête, en effet, ne comporte pas seulement des débauches de consommation, de la bouche et du sexe, mais aussi des débauches d'expression, du verbe et du geste. Cris, railleries, injures, va-et-vient de plaisanteries grossières, obscènes ou sacrilèges, entre un public et un cortège qui le traverse (comme au second jour des Anthestéries, aux Lénéennes, aux Grands Mystères, au carnaval, à la fête médiévale des fous), assauts de quolibets entre le groupe des femmes et celui des hommes . . . constituent les principaux excès de parole.<sup>1</sup>

The shouts, insults, obscenities and sacrilegious remarks which enliven the Feast of Fools and Carnival mentioned by Caillois are also found to some degree in all public festivals of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in France.

They are part of the riotous disorder and debauchery which characterize the popular festive spirit. Nearly every festival, whether religious or secular in origin, whether predominantly solemn or essentially frivolous, contains elements of this irreverent exuberance, even if only on the fringes. During such festivals as Carnival and the Feast of Fools, that disorderly and licentious spirit dominates the celebration, resulting in sacrilege and inversion of the social hierarchy. These two festivals, while not the only examples of the popular festive spirit, provide the most clearly defined forms of it, and as such, they will be used as prototypes of the aspect of the festival which is of primary interest to this study.

Before concentrating on the Feast of Fools and on Carnival however, it is important to emphasize the general role of the festival both as a time of collective rejoicing and as a cohesive, uniting cultural force. Celebrations and displays of pageantry played an important part in the fulfilment of society's spiritual and emotional needs in a way no longer necessary, nor possible today. Johan Huizinga makes this point in describing the significance of the festival in late XVth century society:

. . . it is important to realize the function of festivals in the society of that time. They still preserved something of the meaning that they have in primitive societies, that of the supreme expression of their culture, the highest mode of collective enjoyment, and an assertion of solidarity. . . . Modern man is free, when he pleases, to seek his

favourite distractions individually, in books, music, art, or nature. On the other hand, at a time when the higher pleasures were neither numerous nor accessible to all, people felt the need of such collective rejoicings at festivals. The more crushing the misery of daily life, the stronger the stimulants that will be needed to produce that intoxication with beauty and delight without which life would be unbearable.<sup>2</sup>

Festivals took place throughout the year, and many were organized around events in the Christian liturgical calendar. They include the Feast of the Nativity (December 25), the Epiphany (January 6), Candlemas (February 2), and the Annunciation (March 25). Carnival in early spring was essentially a lay festival, though closely linked to the annual cycle of religious festivals. It was followed by the rigours of Lent, which in turn led to the Easter festivities. Forty days after the drama of Holy Week, the Feast of the Ascension took place, followed by Pentecost and Corpus Christi. The Nativity of St. John the Baptist was celebrated near the summer solstice (June 24). In the fall, festivals to the dead, Michaelmas (September 29), All Saints (November 1) and All Souls (November 2), mingled with harvest celebrations and led once again into the festivities of the Christmas season.<sup>3</sup>

Although most of these religious celebrations provided the occasion for pious reverence and contemplation, they also had a lighter side which was governed by laughter. The dual nature of these celebrations is noted by Enid Welsford:

"The great seasonal festivals in Christian Europe have a twofold aspect: on the one hand they are occasions for solemn worship, on the other hand they are wild times of feasting, lawlessness and buffoonery".<sup>4</sup> At times the sacred aspect of the festival was all but engulfed by the irreverent, popular spirit. Huizinga quotes an eyewitness of the Corpus Christi procession who laments the deeply ingrained dissoluteness of the crowd and the fact that "processions were disgraced by ribaldry, mockery and drinking".<sup>5</sup>

In addition to the universal Christian holidays, different towns and villages had their own celebrations such as patron saints' days or the anniversaries of church consecrations. Special events, such as the official entry of royalty into a town or an aristocratic marriage, provided the occasion for popular rejoicing alongside the official ceremonies of awe-inspiring pageantry. Village fairs, market days, and even informal gatherings in local taverns also provided an opportunity to dip into the vast fund of festive exuberance which characterized the Feast of Fools and Carnival.<sup>6</sup>

Although not part of the official religious celebrations, the Feast of Fools was closely attached to the Church. In different locations this colourful celebration was called the Feast of the Innocents, the Feast of the Circumcision, the Feast of the Sub-deacons, or the Feast of



the Ass, but all were placed under a generic title, the Feast of Fools.<sup>7</sup> This festival usually took place between Christmas and Twelfth Night, but was not strictly limited to this time period.<sup>8</sup> Except for the occasional mock-religious procession through the town, the festivities took place in the church itself, or just outside, and the participants were members of the lower clergy. These celebrants took advantage of the festive freedom granted them to mock their superiors, to ridicule church rites and to indulge in gluttonous feasting. The popular tone of the celebration was due not only to the feast's origins in folk festivals, but was also encouraged by the mentality of the participants. E.K. Chambers describes the background of these men and the resulting effect on the festival:

The vicars and their associates were probably an ill-educated and ill-paid class. Certainly they were difficult to discipline; and it is not surprising that their rare holiday, of which the expenses were met partly by the chapter, partly by dues levied upon themselves or upon the bystanders, was an occasion for popular rather than refined merrymaking. That it should perpetuate or absorb folk customs was also, considering the peasant or small bourgeois extraction of such men, quite natural.<sup>9</sup>

Since the Feast of Fools was celebrated by the clergy, the lay congregation participated mainly as observers. However, their own festival, Carnival or Shrovetide, soon followed. This festival actually began just after the Epiphany, thus technically lasting for over a month; but

the most intense celebration took place during the last week before Ash Wednesday, and culminated on Mardi Gras. It ended abruptly, at least officially, with the commencement of Lent. In the negation of usual social values, and in the irreverent parody and licence which characterized the festivities, the tone of this celebration closely resembled the Feast of Fools. Similar to that of the Feast of Fools, the Carnival crowd was largely popular. Unlike the Feast of Fools however, Carnival was predominantly a secular festival, but it was still impossible to take it out of a Christian framework or to separate it from the influence of the Church. Carnival is also closely linked to the Christian liturgical calendar, and its annual celebration served as a counter-balance for the stringencies of Lent.

One of the most consistent themes of the popular festival, and one which is in evidence in both the Feast of Fools and Carnival, is that of a world turned upside-down. This alteration of everyday social roles and values is accomplished not only by distorting them but by directly reversing them. Even more than the desire to transgress the normal social strictures, the essential mechanism behind the festive experience is to invert or reverse the rules. In a study of the folk festival, Roger Cailllois asserts that this behaviour expresses the desire to return to a legendary period of creative chaos:

Actes interdits et actes outrés ne semblent pas suffire

à marquer la différence entre le temps du déchaînement et le temps de la règle. On leur adjoint les actes à rebours. On s'ingénie à se conduire de façon exactement contraire au comportement normal. L'inversion de tous les rapports paraît la preuve évidente du retour du Chaos, de l'époque de la fluidité et de la confusion.<sup>10</sup>

The Feast of Fools and Carnival exemplify this observation; the dominant pattern in both is inversion, and the resulting atmosphere is one of liberated festivity. Similarly, as Chambers finds, in the Feast of Fools "the ruling idea of the feast is the inversion of status, and the performance, inevitably burlesque, by the inferior clergy of functions properly belonging to their betters".<sup>11</sup> In a study devoted to Carnival, Julio Baroja calls attention to the same pattern in that festival, and observes that it extends to an inversion of the normal order of things in general:

Desde un punto de vista social, lo que imperaba era una violencia establecida, un desenfreno de hechos y de palabras que se ajustaba a formas específicas; así, la inversión del orden normal de las cosas tenía un papel primordial en la fiesta . . . Es el mundo en el que el orden de las cosas está invertido.<sup>12</sup>

The contrast between the everyday world of order and the festive world of chaos induced specifically by inversion or exchange of opposites leads many observers of the popular festival to link the Feast of Fools and Carnival to ancient Greek and Roman festivals. Beginning with an inversion of the social hierarchy, an upside-down atmosphere dominates several ancient festivals. Masters and slaves exchanged

places during the Greek Cronia<sup>13</sup> and the Hyakinthis,<sup>14</sup> as well as during the Roman Saturnalia and the Kalends.<sup>15</sup> Of these, the Saturnalian festival is most often cited as a direct ancestor of the Feast of Fools and of Carnival.<sup>16</sup> A brief description of the Saturnalia as known to Macrobius suggests the origins of social inversion and lavish feasting. This festival is a reenactment of the legendary reign of Saturn:

His reign is said to have been a time of great happiness, both on account of the universal plenty that then prevailed and because as yet there was no division into bond and free--as one may gather from the complete license enjoyed by slaves at the Saturnalia.<sup>17</sup>

For in houses where religious usages are observed it is the practice at the Saturnalia to compliment the slaves by first providing for them a dinner prepared as though for the master, and it is not until this meal is over that the table is spread again for the head of the household.<sup>18</sup>

From this description it appears that there was a legendary kingdom of Saturn whom the people worshipped as a god. During his reign there had been no social hierarchy, slavery being instituted later after the departure of the god. Thus, as a tribute to Saturn slavery was abolished during the Saturnalian festival; masters and slaves dined together or the masters waited on their servants. The exchange between masters and slaves was, as mentioned above, also a part of several other festivals.

The ancient theme of social inversion asserts itself in the early moments of the Feast of Fools when the ecclesiastic

hierarchy undergoes an exchange of top and bottom. As the celebrants chant a verse from the Magnificat, "Deposuit potentes de sede: et exaltavit humiles",<sup>19</sup> a member of the lower clergy is comically invested with the powers of a high office such as bishop. The mock bishop or mock Pope symbolizes the inversion of everyday social ranks. The literal application of the "Deposuit" signals the beginning of the time when the clerks and sub-deacons, normally on the lower rungs of the church hierarchy, can parody their superiors and mock official rites.

While Carnival does not begin with a Biblical reference to the exchange of social positions, it does share with the Feast of Fools the idea of a mock ruler and reversal of social privileges. Again the dominus festi, or festive ruler, symbolizes the inversion of the hierarchy by his very presence, for in him poverty, folly, and the lower classes are raised to the highest social rank. Following his example the people are urged to mock the authorities and to behave in an irrational manner. This ephemeral ruler did not appear suddenly in the Feast of Fools or Carnival. He had antecedents in many ancient festivals as well as in most other Medieval and Renaissance folk festivals. During the Roman Saturnalia a mock king represented and directed the folly much as did his Medieval and Renaissance descendants. In Lucian's Saturnalia the God, Cronus, explains to the author the functions and advantages of being the mock king:

Again, to become sole king of all with a win at the knuckle-bones, so that you not only escape silly orders but can give them yourself, telling one man to shout out something disgraceful about himself, another to dance naked, pick up the flute-girl and carry her three times round the house . . .<sup>20</sup>

This mad and merry mock ruler has been traced to an even earlier tragic figure who was brutally uncrowned and killed at the end of the festival because he served as a scapegoat for the ills and evils of the society.<sup>21</sup> In subsequent Roman festivals the rite of expiation was discharged by a dummy, leaving only the rule of folly for the flesh and blood dominus to carry out. Although free to insult and deride the mock ruler, the crowd no longer harmed him physically, and he in turn mocked and taunted his "subjects". The custom of insulting and deriding the mock ruler was still in existence in Medieval and Renaissance festivals.

The leader of the folly and the sacrificial victim thus become two elements of the festival, and each develops separately. In Carnival an effigy is beaten or burned in the last hours before Lent begins. This figure is no longer a sacrificed king, but becomes the carrier of evil in the society, a scapegoat. He is death, darkness, sin and chaos, and his symbolic death signifies the expulsion of these elements from the society. The mock king, however, becomes a lord of folly, and the festival itself a time of madness following his example. The King of Carnival, the Lord of Misrule, the Bishop of Fools, the Pope of Fools, the May

Queen and King, and the many other mad, mock rulers of the festivals of Medieval and Renaissance France follow the traditional pattern set by the ancient dominus festi. The original function forgotten, the forms continue, developing a life of their own.

Suspension of the hierarchy during popular festivities is also facilitated by the widespread use of the mask, another ancient tradition.<sup>22</sup> Use of a mask permitted the revellers to choose their position on the social ladder, thus in effect contributing to the ephemeral overturning of that vertical structure. The wearer of the mask leaves his everyday identity behind and assumes another role, perhaps one forbidden to him in everyday life. During the Feast of Fools for example a lowly sub-deacon becomes a bishop or a vicar the Pope, and during Carnival stable boys play the lord, and street vendors become ladies. Participating aristocrats may appear as paupers, vendors or clowns should they wish certain inhabitual freedoms of movement. Thus the usual social hierarchy is negated and ridiculed as persons of any station, age, or sex appear as beggars, ghosts, caricatured nobility, stable-boys with dung-filled brooms, sharp-tongued servant girls, monks, kings or fools.<sup>23</sup>

The mask is also a form of role-playing which permits repressed desires and fears to be exteriorized in a socially acceptable manner. This function is emphasized by Julio Baroja:

El hecho fundamental de poder enmascarse le ha permitido al ser humano, hombre o mujer, cambiar de carácter durante unos días o unas horas . . . , a veces hasta cambiar de sexo. Inversiones de todas clases, "introyecciones", proyecciones y otros hechos turbios, de los que nos hablan hoy los psicólogos y psicoanalistas, podrían ser ilustrados probablemente a la luz de las licencias carnavalescas.<sup>24</sup>

A man might dress as an old fool or a cuckold, intending to parody his neighbor in that costume; or perhaps he identifies with the cuckold in order to exteriorize his own fears of becoming one.<sup>25</sup> Dressing as a devil may express a desire to manipulate others through fear, or perhaps this, too, exteriorizes and exorcizes the wearer's fear through identification with the source of terror. Whatever the motivation, it could be expressed vividly and anonymously during Carnival.

Disguise not only allows the wearer to assume a different position in the social hierarchy and to exteriorize normally suppressed feelings, but it also allows him to do so anonymously. Anonymity assures impunity, even though that freedom is already granted in principle by the festival. The mask facilitates freedom of movement and uninhibited action, as the wearer moves through the Carnival crowd unrecognized by anyone. In disguise an individual could utter insults or obscenities, speak nonsense, or even voice his own serious and personal opinions with added comfort. This anonymity, which permitted mobility and freedom of expression, led to an extension of the mask into



extra-carnival life as well. Outside the festival it became a fad, first in Italy<sup>26</sup> and then in France. During the reign of Francois I, disguise and carnivalesque liberties were even used by the king himself to gain entrance into the house of ladies whose attentions he desired.<sup>27</sup> However, out of the context of Carnival the mask retained only the privileges of anonymity, and lost much of its power to transform the personality of the wearer himself.

Reversal of everyday behaviour begins with the dismissal of work,<sup>28</sup> followed by a period of sacrilege and self-indulgence which reverses everyday rules of conduct and prudence. A letter cited below illustrates the irreverence and license of the Feast of Fools, as described in 1445 by the Faculty of Theology in Paris. In this description, the dominant pattern of behaviour is one of reversal; everyday roles and habitual actions are replaced by their opposites. The participants dress as fantastic creatures or clowns. Some clerics wear feminine attire, and the few laymen among them dress as priests and nuns. In this guise they commit blatant sacrilege by gorging themselves with food on the altar, by bathing themselves in dung, by assuming indecent postures and by uttering scurrilous verses:

On voyoit les Clers & les Prêtres faire en cette Fête un mélange afreux de folies & d'impietez pendant le service Divin, où ils n'assistoient ce jour là qu'en habits de Mascarade & de Comedie. Les uns étoient masquez, ou avec des visages barbouillés qui faisoient peur, ou qui faisoient rire; les autres en habits de femmes ou de pantomimes, tels que font les Ministres du

Theatre. Ils dansoient dans le Choeur en entrant, & chantoient des chansons obscènes. Les Diacres & les Sou-diacres prenoient plaisir à manger des boudins & des saucices sur l'Autel, au nez du Prêtre célébrant: ils jouoient à ses yeux aux Cartes & aux Dez: ils mettoient dans l'Encensoir quelques morceaux de vieilles savates, pour lui faire respirer une mauvaise odeur. Après la Messe, chacun couroit, sautoit & dansoit par l'Eglise avec tant d'impudence, que quelques uns n'avoient pas honte de se porter à toutes sortes d'indécences, & de se depcuiller entierement; ensuite ils se faisoient trainer par les rues dans des tonereaux pleines d'ordures, où ils prencient plaisir d'en jeter à la populace qui s'assembloit autour d'eux. Ils s'arrêtoient & faisoient de leurs corps des mouvemens & des postures lascives, qu'ils accompagnoient de paroles impudiques. Les plus libertins d'entre les Séculiers, se méloient parmi le Clergé, pour faire aussi quelques personages de foux en habits Ecclésiastiques, de Moines & de Religieuses.<sup>29</sup>

The sacrilegious acts are strongly marked by inversion, or an exchange of opposites: obscene songs replace pious ones, men dress as women, a foul smell replaces the scent of incense, and the authority of the officiating priest is directly flouted by the dice players. Other activities which took place during the Feast of Fools repeat the pattern; they include the custom of wearing clothing inside-out or upside-down, of holding the prayerbook upside-down, of placing a mock bishop on a donkey facing the animal's tail<sup>30</sup> or carrying excrement ceremoniously on a pillow.<sup>31</sup>

In the sacrilegious acts, in the riotous feast, and in the indecent gestures which took place in the Feast of Fools, a materializing and downward shift in emphasis occurs. From spiritual and intellectual values usually

identified with the head, attention is directed towards the tangible, material side of life which has to do with the digestive and reproductive system. Emphasis turns to the consuming, eliminating, copulating and reproducing body. During the festival, usual rules of continence and repression are suspended, and in their place an indulgent hedonism appears. Feasting and sexual license characterize the festive world in which the functions and satisfactions of the body suddenly become central. By eating black-pudding on the altar the celebrants turn an object, which belongs to the spiritual and contemplative side of life, into an accessory of a material, sensual experience. The obscene gestures call attention to the lower body parts which are ignored during normal church ceremonies. Through these and similar actions usual attitudes and roles are ridiculed, changed and reversed.

The feast itself signifies the replacement of self-denial by self-indulgence. The festive banquet is central to nearly every popular festival. Hunger and the privations of daily life have no place in this environment, in fact, over-eating and over-drinking are encouraged by the abundance gathered together for the occasion. It has been suggested that the over-indulgence originally had a symbolic meaning, and that through mimesis, the participants hoped to "prognosticate or cause a year of plentiful fare".<sup>32</sup> Other observers consider the ancient feasts to be a nostalgic

recreation of a distant Golden Age of plenty.<sup>33</sup> Banqueting excesses of Carnival were no doubt intensified by recognition of the approaching Lenten fast. This atmosphere of carnivalesque feasting is caught in a description of that festival in XVIth century England portraying the banquet as an annual occasion for over-indulgence and gluttony, both gastronomical and verbal:

Now when at length the pleasant time of Shrcvetide  
comes in place,  
And cruell fasting dayes at hande approch with solemne  
grace:  
Then olde and yong are both as mad, as ghestes of  
Bacchus feast,  
And foure dayes long they tipples square, and feede and  
never reast.  
Downe goes the Hogges in every place, and puddings  
every wheare  
Do swarme: the Dice are shakte and tost, and Cardes  
apace they teare:  
In every house are showtes and cryes, and mirth, and  
revell route,  
And dainty tables spred, and all be set with ghestes  
about.<sup>34</sup>

The sexual licence apparent during Carnival and related festivals represents another aspect of the sensual, material side of life which is given priority by the celebration. Like other elements of the festival, it also stems from a long tradition originating in ancient fertility rites and spring festivals which continued under different names despite the disapproval of the Christian church. Chambers believes that "it may be taken for granted that the summer festivals knew from the beginning that element of sexual

license which fourteen centuries of Christianity have not wholly been able to banish".<sup>35</sup> But regardless of origin, the relaxation of sexual inhibitions accompanying the other liberties granted by the festival focuses even more attention on the body.

A parallel freedom was granted on the verbal level where an erotic, scatological vocabulary appears, and subjects forbidden in polite conversation become central. A XVIth century conteur, Tabouret des Accords, testifies to the verbal liberty of Carnival: "Je sçay un conte que je ne dirois pas si je n'estois près de Karesme-presnant, où la liberté du jour permet de parler un peu grassement".<sup>36</sup> Naogeorgus concurs, stating that during Carnival "The tongue is set at libertie, and hath no kinde of stay".<sup>37</sup> Unbound by the usual rules of propriety, carnivalesque speech also flaunted rules of logic and syntax, and employed not only insult and obscenity, but also nonsense in the expression of its freedom. Carnivalesque discourse abounds with cog-à-l'âne, repetition, detailed enumeration, paradoxical statements and nonsense words. It is the kind of uninhibited speech expected from that favoured festive personage, the fool. Such verbal composition is designed to sollicit the sympathy, collaboration and most of all the laughter of the listening crowd who delight in the transgression of usual norms. Bakhtin, who discovers this "liberated" speech in the work of Rabelais, links it directly with carnivalesque free

speech which belonged to the popular idiom of the time.<sup>38</sup>

The tone of the popular festival is licentious and irreverent, and its participants are not kind to those who do not, or who cannot, join in the uninhibited celebration. The satirical mocking of the crowd is directed at both secular and religious authorities, as well as at the kill-joys who represent the rigid attitudes of the extra-festive world in general. These attitudes of seriousness, sobriety, piety and hypocrisy are personified by those who abstain from sensual pleasures and adopt an ascetic, self-righteous attitude, or who hypocritically pretend to be pious. This stance contrasts with the popular-festive mentality which urges candid indulgence of the senses, gives free rein to the gastronomic and sexual appetites, and tolerates inebriated irrationality. In 1444 at Troyes, the clergy of St. Stephen's Church were told by the bishop and two canons to reduce their festive activities. They did not comply, and even presented a jeu de personnages ridiculing the three church officials under the names of Hypocrisie, Faintise, and Faux-semblant.<sup>39</sup> Bakhtin points out episodes in the work of Rabelais in which this same attitude is evident. For example, the kill-joys who refuse to take part in popular festivities are violently punished in the figure of Tappecoue, the ecclesiastic who refuses to lend his official vestments to the festival.<sup>40</sup>

Carnival and related festivals created a fluid,

permissive world full of spontaneous gaiety and merriment, but the absence of restraints also encouraged underlying currents of aggression and violence normally held in check. Physical violence and hostility frequently erupted as inhibitions vanished. At times the violence was unintentional; the press of the crowd was often so great that people were carried along in spite of themselves and even trampled underfoot if they were unlucky. Physical danger was also present due to the absence of law enforcement, and personal vengeance sometimes found an ally in Carnival. Emotions were close to the surface and a friendly confetti battle could develop quickly into a large scale riot. Thrashings even took place within the church walls, according to some sources.<sup>41</sup>

Given the violent undercurrents of Carnival, the fear of imminent death was justified. The suspension of rules and the subsequent chaos served as a warning of what can happen in the absence of the established authorities. In this sense, Carnival, which is often seen as the revenge of the oppressed on the system which oppresses them, shows itself to be a conservative agent, reinforcing the existing order by demonstrating the undesirable aspects of freedom from laws and class structure. While Bakhtin does not emphasize this conservative element of Carnival in his study, preferring instead to stress the revolutionary aspect of Carnival, other observers have analysed this concept which

will be discussed later in this chapter.<sup>42</sup>

On the cosmic level, death and danger were also thought to threaten the revellers. This feature is common to a long list of pagan and Christian festivals.<sup>43</sup> The spectre of death and spirits of the dead were believed to mingle among the festive crowd, particularly during Carnival. This crowd itself, an unfamiliar sea of masked faces, lent an extra-worldly atmosphere to the festival and added credence to the feeling that spirits were afoot. The disorderly situation thus reinforced the impression of chaos on a grand scale.<sup>44</sup>

During Carnival universal superstitions and fear of the unknown found a scapegoat in the form of the Carnival dummy, a symbol of death and chaos. Fittingly, one of the last actions of the Carnival crowd is to take this effigy to a public place and ceremoniously destroy it. This is the symbolic victory of the united community over chaos and fear, and also the signal for a return to order. Another symbol of evil and ill-will, the devil, was often given a realistic, nearly human form in the festivities. The person wearing this costume danced comically for the people, allowing them to see him as an inferior, misshapen version of themselves, capable only of grotesque movements. Their laughter arose from this feeling of superiority over a once terrifying and powerful enemy reduced to a ludicrous clown. Also, since laughter implies a complicity with others,<sup>45</sup> the individual could find reassurance and group solidarity as



the former source of universal terror suffered the jeers, taunts and mockery of the laughing crowd.

The verbal counterpart of physical violence takes form as insults and invective. Antecedents of this form of carnivalesque abuse have been noted in other, older festivals by observers such as Caillois, who evokes the characteristic "cris, railleries, injures, va-et-vient de plaisanteries grossières, obscènes ou sacrilèges, entre un public et un cortège qui le traverse".<sup>46</sup> The tenor of the insults is described in more detail by T.O. Wright, who again draws the parallel between ancient practices and Carnival:

The most popular celebrations of the people of Greece, were the Dionysiac festivals, and the phallic rites and processions which accompanied them, in which the chief actors assumed the disguise of satyrs and fawns, covering themselves with goat-skins, and disfiguring their faces by rubbing them over with the lees of wine. Thus, in the guise of noisy bacchanals, they displayed an unrestrained licentiousness of gesture and language, uttering indecent jests and abusive speeches, in which they spared nobody. This portion of the ceremony was the especial attribute of a part of the performers, who accompanied the procession in waggon, and acted something like dramatic performances, in which they uttered an abundance of loose extempore satire on those who passed or who accompanied the procession, a little in the style of the modern carnivals.<sup>47</sup>

Although generally tolerated, the chaotic, irreverent tenor of the popular festivals, and of the Feast of Fools in particular, did not endear them to the ecclesiastical authorities. The Feast of Fools, however, survived centuries

of opposition from certain segments of the church. Such durability in the face of long-standing condemnation provides an object of speculation for observers of this phenomenon. One of the earliest documented official oppositions to the celebration of mock ceremonies in the church took place in 633 at the Council of Toledo, and one of the last condemnations of the Feast of Fools was issued by the Council of Bordeaux in 1620. Repeated condemnations, which seemed to have little or no effect, are listed by Du Tilliot in his study of the Feast of Fools.<sup>48</sup> There are records of the Feast of Fools within church walls as late as the XVIIth century, although by the end of the XVth century many churches had abandoned the practice.<sup>49</sup> One explanation of its durability is that wholehearted condemnation was withheld because the credo of the festival, exaltation of the humble, was too close to the Church's own doctrine to be denied.<sup>50</sup> Literal application of the verse from the Magnificat, "Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles", epitomizes the Feast of Fools. Inversion of the hierarchy illustrates the Christian concept of the Day of Judgment when the meek and humble of the earth shall replace the mighty on their thrones.

The durability of these festivals has also been interpreted as an attempt on the part of the Church to expropriate the enthusiasm of the people, to divert their energy into the Church instead of against it. This was

frequently the policy in regard to the assimilation of pagan festivals.<sup>51</sup> Although many ecclesiastical authorities opposed these "foolish" outbursts, there were defenders who saw a useful social function in these celebrations:

Nos prédécesseurs, . . . qui étoient de Grands Personnages, ont permis cette Fête, vivons comme eux, & faisons ces choses sérieusement, mais par jeu seulement, & pour nous divertir, selon l'ancienne coutume; afin que la folie qui nous est naturelle, & qui semble née avec nous, s'emporte & s'écoule par là, du moins une fois chaque année. Les Tonneaux de vin créveroient, si on ne leur ouvroit quelquefois la bonde ou le fosset, pour leur donner de l'air. Or nous sommes de vieux vaisseaux & des tonneaux mal reliez, que le vin de la sagesse feroit rompre, si nous le laissons bouillir ainsi par une dévotion continuelle au service Divin: Il lui faut donner quelque air & quelque relâchement, de peur qu'il ne se perde & ne se répande sans profit. C'est pour cela que nous donnons quelques jours aux jeux & aux bouffonneries, afin de retourner ensuite avec plus de joye & de ferveur, à l'étude & aux exercices de la Religion.<sup>52</sup>

The above apologist recognizes a fundamental human need to indulge in folly, "qui nous est naturelle, & qui semble née avec nous", and sees the annual celebration of the Feast of Fools as a traditionally sanctioned safety valve for tensions which build up in the social system. It is an occasion to release pent-up emotions in order that the work of the society, and in particular that of the Church, might continue with renewed vigour. Far from being revolutionary, the festival can serve a conservative function in society.

In a stable society with a strong religion common to all, the irreverent popular festival thus poses no serious threat to the status quo. In fact, as the apologist suggests

above, it strengthens established values by providing a temporary release from pressures and tension created by daily life. C.L. Barber, who has studied the popular festival, also notes this phenomenon:

In a monolithic society, a Lord of Misrule can be put back in his place after the revel with relative ease. The festive burlesque of solemn sanctities does not seriously threaten social values in a monolithic culture, because the license depends utterly upon what it mocks: liberty is unable to envisage any alternative to the accepted order except the standing of it on its head". 53

J. Huizinga concurs, stating that "the excesses and abuses resulting from an extreme familiarity with things holy, as well as the insolent mingling of pleasure with religion, are generally characteristic of periods of unshaken faith and of a deeply religious culture". 54

However, as the society of the late Middle Ages witnessed the fragmentation of their concept of the universe, the freedoms granted during the popular festivals began to threaten the power of the established authorities. An increasing awareness of this danger helped to drive the Feast of Fools out of the Church in the late XVth century. But even when expelled from the churches, the Feast of Fools did not cease, but spilled out into the streets giving added life to other popular celebrations such as Carnival. The festivities took on a more secular quality under the leadership of members of the lay community who formed themselves into fool-societies called the confréries des

sots, or the sociétés joyeuses. These societies continued the long tradition of mocking celebration in an upside-down environment, while extending their scope beyond the parody of ecclesiastical life to include the whole of society.<sup>55</sup> Their membership also extended to many prominent bourgeois of the town, and even on occasion included royalty.<sup>56</sup> Some societies such as the Basoche or the Enfants-sans-scuci in Paris were composed primarily of young clerks or students and grew into semi-professional dramatic troupes.<sup>57</sup> Thus, while the tone remained foolish and irreverent, the satire took on a more cultivated quality which Enid Welsford refers to as the "intellectualization of folly".<sup>58</sup>

The fool-societies were also a more permanent organization, and their reign was extended from a short festive period to the whole year. They became the "fools in residence" of the various towns and cities. Each of these organizations gathered under the tutelage of a leader similar to the Saturnalian mock ruler, the mock bishop, and the Carnival King and Queen. In the fool-societies this leader was usually known as a "Roi des Fous", "Le Prince des Sots", "Mère Folle" or "Mère Sotte".<sup>59</sup> The main activities of the fool-society became the organization of their own banquets, processions and the presentation of short satirical sketches for public occasions. They also helped to organize Carnival masquerades and official celebrations.<sup>60</sup>

The Infanterie Dijonnaise studied by Du Tillicet

provides a prototype of these societies. Directly descended from the Feast of Fools expelled from the ducal chapel in Burgundy in 1552, the Infanterie Dijonnaise was composed of several hundred men of varied professions. They organized an annual procession and a banquet as well as performing short theatrical presentations for the public of Dijon. Their motto was "Stultorum numerus est infinitus", stressing the universality of folly. These societies were still active after the publication of Le Moyen de Parvenir about 1610, and while there is no evidence that Ééroalde was a member of such a society, he would have been aware of their existence and activities. The activities of the Infanterie Dijonnaise, for example, are documented until 1626.<sup>61</sup> Although the festivals continued, by the late XVIIth century their situation vis-à-vis the authorities was precarious. After a period of civil unrest which left both the political as well as the religious foundations of the country shaken, festive freedom, though guaranteed by tradition, had to disguise itself more carefully. Folly and intoxication were stressed during the festivals, since fools and drunkards cannot be held responsible for their behaviour.<sup>62</sup> Freedom of speech with impunity could be turned to trenchant satire and parody of the authorities or of official truths, with a purpose to permanently changing the society thus mocked and satirized. All of this could be carried out under the cover of innocent festive laughter and foolish prattle.

The spirit of the Feast of Fools, Carnival, and the fool-societies left its mark on many artistic creations of the time, particularly the comic theatre. From the short street scenes which accompanied the festive processions, to the soties, the sermons joyeux, the monologue, and the farces, the mocking and irreverent laughter of the popular festival is found.<sup>63</sup> The same spirit can be identified in other literary genres. In the Roman de Renart, Aucassin et Nicolette, the Narrenschiff by Sebastian Brandt, Moriae Encomium by Erasmus and in Rabelais' works for example, the upside-down world of festive folly and freedom reappears.<sup>64</sup> As demonstrated by the work of Chambers, Welsford, Barber and Bakhtin, an awareness of festive patterns can provide a new perspective on the literary representation of chaos and folly. The present study will explore the carnivalesque elements in Le Moyen de Parvenir beginning in the following chapter with an examination of the details which contribute to the festive atmosphere of Béroalde's symposium.

## CHAPTER II: NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Roger Caillois. L'Homme et le Sacré. (Paris: Gallimard, 1955), p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> Johan Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages, (Harmondsworth: Peregrine, 1968), p. 239.

<sup>3</sup> For a more detailed description of Christian festivities see E.O. James, Seasonal Feasts and Festivals, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1961), pp. 200-280.

<sup>4</sup> Enid Welsford, The Fool, p. 70, continues to describe this double aspect in the two major festival seasons: "Shrovetide is a season when a good Christian confesses his sins, but it is also the Carnival, when the sober citizen will put on a mask and adopt the behaviour of the fool; the Christmas season was once an equally wild time".

<sup>5</sup> Huizinga, Waning, p. 155.

<sup>6</sup> See Bakhtin, Rabelais, p. 154 and pp. 219-20.

<sup>7</sup> The Feast of the Innocents was so called because it fell on the anniversary of Herod's legendary slaying of the innocent children, December 28. For a similar reason the celebration was sometimes called the Feast of the Circumcision which fell on January 1. The Feast of the Sub-Deacons is named for the participants, while the Feast of the Ass refers to the burlesque entry of an ass into the church "while the prose of the ass was chanted". (Welsford, The Fool, p. 202). For further information on the generic title, Feast of Fools, see Chambers, Stage, Vol. I, pp. 274-5 and p. 323, and Sir James Frazer, The Scapegoat (The Golden Bough IX), (London: MacMillan, 1933), p. 334.

<sup>8</sup> There are a few records of its celebration in May and at other times of the year. See John Flinn, Le Roman de Renart, (Toronto: U. of T. Press, 1963), p. 83.

<sup>9</sup> E.K. Chambers, Stage, Vol. I, pp. 324-25.

<sup>10</sup> Caillois, Sacré, pp. 155-56. He also states, pp. 145-46, "Cet entracte d'universelle confusion que constitue la fête apparaît ainsi réellement comme la durée de la suspension de l'ordre du monde. C'est pourquoi les excès sont alors permis. Il importe d'agir à l'encontre des



règles. Tout doit être effectué à l'envers".

<sup>11</sup> Chambers, Stage, I, p. 325.

<sup>12</sup> Julio Baroja. El Carnaval, (Madrid: Taurus, 1965), p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> The Roman god, Saturn is the equivalent of the Greek Cronus, thus the same customs regarding them both are frequently identical.

<sup>14</sup> The Hyakinthis was a Greek festival dedicated to an agrarian god of the same name. Held in May, it lasted for three days.

<sup>15</sup> The festivities of the Kalends signaled the Roman New Year. Chambers, Stage, I, p. 330, believes them to be the ancestor of the Feast of Fools, citing as evidence the masks, the exchange of masters and slaves, and the date.

<sup>16</sup> See Goethe, Italian Journey, trans. W.H. Auden and Elizabeth Mayer, (London: Collins, 1962), p. 446, Frazer, Scapegoat, pp. 313, 346; Welsford, The Fool, p. 12; James, Seasonal Feasts, p. 177; Cailliois, Sacré, p. 157. Others such as Chambers, prefer to cite the Roman Kalends as the direct ancestor, see above note 15.

<sup>17</sup> Macrobius, Saturnalia, Ed. Percival Vaughan Davies (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1969), p. 59.

<sup>18</sup> Macrobius, p. 158.

<sup>19</sup> See The Holy Bible (King James version), St. Luke I:52 "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree."

<sup>20</sup> Lucian, Saturnalia in The Works of Lucian, VI, ed. A.M. Harmon, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1959), p. 93.

<sup>21</sup> Frazer, Scapegoat, pp. 306-08.

<sup>22</sup> The mask is one of the oldest and most universal devices used to symbolically transform the wearer, as is demonstrated in the work of Frazer, Scapegoat, who describes masks used from ancient Greece to Mexico, pp. 246, 287, 381-2, 384. H. Villetard, Remarques sur la fête des fous (Paris: Picard, 1911), p. 9, and Chambers, Stage, I, p. 330, associate the medieval custom of masking specifically with the Roman Kalends. In commenting on the use of masks during the Feast of Fools, Chambers, p. 327, states: "These masks,

indeed, are perhaps the one feature of the feast which called down the most unqualified condemnation from the ecclesiastical authorities. We shall not be far wrong if we assume them to have been beast-masks, and to have taken the place of the actual skins and heads of sacrificial animals, here, as so often, worn at the feast by the worshippers".

<sup>23</sup> A colourful description of XVIth century Carnival masking is found in the Popishe Kingdome by Naogeorgus (Thomas Kirchmaier) cited here in the 1570 English translation by B. Googe, from the original Latin edition (1553), (London. Trubner, 1879), p. 329; The author, a Protestant, takes obvious delight in citing the folly in which Catholics indulge on this occasion:

But some againe the dreadfull shape of devils on them  
take,  
And chase such as they meete, and make pccre boyes for  
fear to quake.  
Some naked runne about the streetes, their faces hid  
alone,  
With visars close, that so disguise, they might be  
knowne of none.  
Both men and women chaunge their weede, the men in  
maydes aray,  
And wanton wenches drest like men, doe travell by the  
way,  
And to their neighbours houses go, or where it likes  
them best,  
Perhaps unto some auncient friend or olde acquainted  
ghest,  
Unknowne, and speaking but fewe wordes, the meate  
devour they up,  
That is before them set, and cleane they swinge of  
every cup.  
Some runne about the streets attyrde like Monks, and  
some like kings,  
Accompanied with pompe and garde, and other stately  
things.  
Some hatch yong fooles as hennes do egges with good and  
speedie lucke,  
Or as the Goose doth use to do, or as the quacking  
ducke.  
Some like wilde beastes doe runne abrode in skinnes  
that divers bee  
Arayde, and eke with lothsome shapes, that dreadfull  
are to see:  
They counterfet both Beares and Wcolves, and Lions  
fierce in fight,  
And raging Bulles. Some play the Cranes with wings &  
stilts upright.

Some like the filthie forme of Apes, and some like  
fooles are drest,  
Which best beseeme these Papistes all, that thus keepe  
Bacchus feast.

<sup>24</sup> Baroja, Carnaval, p. 23.

<sup>25</sup> Goethe, pp. 453-4, describes an ingenious Carnival mask which he observed at the Roman Carnival of 1788. The wearer of this mask stopped in front of the houses of certain married men, and by a clever device inside the mask was able to cause two little horns with tiny bells to protrude and retract, much to the amusement of the onlookers.

<sup>26</sup> Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, (New York: Harper, 1958), p. 220, states that at one time masks in Italy were worn from October to Lent.

<sup>27</sup> See Marguerite de Navarre, L'Heptaméron, ed. Michel Francois (Paris: Garnier, 1967) XXV Nouvelle, p. 204, and Welsford, The Court Masque, p. 137. Edmond Bonnafé, Etudes sur la vie privée de la Renaissance, (Paris: L.H. May, 1898), p. 175, also remarks on the privileges taken by masked aristocrats.

<sup>28</sup> Baroja, p. 45, comments, "Es el de Carnaval también un tiempo durante el cual no debían llevarse a cabo determinados trabajos. Así, en Asturias, las mujeres, que comenzaban a hilar en reuniones por septiembre, al llegar el Carnaval seguían reuniéndose en los 'filandones', pero no hilaban. En Castilla, . . . corrían estos refranes: 'Es buen hilar, de San Miguel a Navidad: de marzo, ayuso, no rabea bien el huso', 'Día de Santa Inés, mujeres, no hilés'. . . En Cataluña han corrido ideas semejantes." See also Chambers, pp. 146-47.

<sup>29</sup> Du Tilliot, Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la fête des fous (Lausanne: Bosquet, 1741), pp. 5-6. Du Tilliot further describes this feast by citing a letter of the Parisian faculty of theology, pp. 7-8.

<sup>30</sup> Chambers, Stage, I, pp. 317-21, cites an account of the bishop and the beast given by the reformer John Huss who had taken part in the Feast of Fools as a boy.

<sup>31</sup> Naegeorgus, p. 330, records another irreverence: "But others beare a tordé, that on a Cushion scft they lay,/ And one there is that with a flap doth keepe the flies away./ I would there might an other be an officer of those,/"

Whose roome might serve to take away the scent from every nose."

<sup>32</sup> Chambers, Stage, I, p. 266. Caillcis, Sacré, p. 146, concurs: "Deux raisons concourent à rendre recommandable dans ces circonstances la débauche et la folie. Pour être plus sûr de retrouver les conditions d'existence du passé mythique, on s'ingénie à faire le contraire de ce qu'on fait habituellement. D'autre part, toute exubérance manifeste un surcroît de vigueur qui ne peut qu'apporter l'abondance et la prospérité au renouveau attendu".

<sup>33</sup> Macrobius, Saturnalia, p. 590, affirms that the Saturnalia recalls the Golden Age of Saturn; Bakhtin, Rabelais, pp. 7-10, sees the concept of a Golden Age continuing in an unbroken line into medieval and Renaissance festivals.

<sup>34</sup> Naogeorgus, Popishe Kingdome, p. 329.

<sup>35</sup> Chambers, Stage, I, p. 145.

<sup>36</sup> Tabouret des Accords, Escraignes Dijonnaises, cited by Edmond Huguet, Dictionnaire de la langue française du XVIe siècle, (Paris: Champion, 1925), VI, p. 98.

<sup>37</sup> Naogeorgus, p. 329.

<sup>38</sup> Bakhtin, Rabelais, pp. 187-88, describes this linguistic freedom as the "unofficial" speech: "Abuses, curses, profanities, and improprieties are the unofficial elements of speech. They were and are still conceived as a breach of the established norms of verbal address; they refuse to conform to conventions, to etiquette, civility, respectability. These elements of freedom, if present in sufficient numbers and with a precise intention, exercise a strong influence on the entire contents of language. Such speech forms, liberated from norms, hierarchies, and prohibitions of established idiom, become themselves a peculiar argot and create a special collectivity, a group of people initiated in familiar intercourse, who are frank and free in expressing themselves verbally. The marketplace crowd was such a collectivity, especially the festive, carnivalesque crowd at the fair". Julia Kristeva, Le Texte du Roman (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1970), pp. 65-67, further develops Bakhtin's concept of carnivalesque speech. See also Lambert Porter, La Fatrasie et le fatras (Geneva: Droz, 1960), pp. 2-68, for a discussion of nonsense language.

<sup>39</sup> Chambers, Stage, I, p. 296.

<sup>40</sup> Bakhtin, Rabelais, pp. 263-68.

<sup>41</sup> Nacgeorgus, Popishe Kingdome, p. 333, describes Shrovetide thrashings:

From Thurseday then till Easter come, the fondest toyes have place

Wherin these cathlikes think themselves, great men of wondrous grace

First three days space the belles are wilde, in silence for to lie,

When from the toppes of hawtie towres, with clappers lowd they crie.

The boyes in every streat doe runne, and noyses great they make.

While as in calling men to Church their wooden clappers shake.

Three nightes at midnight up they rise, their Mattens for to heare,

Appoynted well with clubbes and staves, and stones in order theare:

The Sexten straightwayes putteth out the candles speedely,

And straight the Priest with rustie throte, alowde begins to cry.

Then furious rage begins to spring, and hurlyburly rise,

On pewes and deskes and seates they bounce, & beate in dredfullwise:

Thou wouldst suppose they were possest, with sprights and devills all,

Or fury such as forceth them, that upon Bacchus call.

Some beaten downe with clubbes and staves, among the pewes do ly

And others almost brainde with stones, or wounded mortally.

Well serves the darcknesse for these deedes, and thereto doth agree,

The fashions like of every one, that thus enraged bee.

<sup>42</sup> See below, pp. 40-42.

<sup>43</sup> The presence of death or of the spirits of the dead appear in many pagan and Christian festivals such as the Greek Anestheria, Thesmophoria and Bacchanalia, the Roman Parentalia, Lemuria, Laturalia and Kalends, and the Christian Michaelmas, All Souls and All Saints. See Frazer, Scapegoat, pp. 154-6.

<sup>44</sup> In a section of his study cited above Caillouis discusses the legendary time of creative chacs which is in the mythical past of several different anthropological groups; see "Chaos et l'age d'or" in Sacré, pp. 133-36.

<sup>45</sup> Henri Bergson, Le Rire (Paris: P.U.F., 1940), p. 5.

<sup>46</sup> Sacre, p. 155.

<sup>47</sup> Thomas O. Wright, A History of caricature and grotesque in literature and art (London: Virtue Bros., 1865), p. 11.

<sup>48</sup> Du Tilliot, Mémoires, pp. 3-4 and p. 31ff. A humorous footnote to the official attempts to eradicate the Feast of Fools is the elaborate order issued at Sens regulating the feast. Chambers, p. 298, quotes that impropriety and dissonant singing were forbidden, and that "not more than three buckets of water at the most must be poured over the precentor stultorum at Vespers".

<sup>49</sup> Du Tilliot, pp. 22-23, quotes an eye-witness account of such a festival in Antibes around 1643.

<sup>50</sup> Villetard, pp. 9-10, states this possibility: "Dans ces folies et ces licences du peuple, il se cachait cependant une pensée philosophique. C'est que la supériorité des riches, la puissance des grands ne saurait durer toujours; c'est que, aux humbles et aux petits, il doit être octroyé quelques jours de compensation. Il y avait, dans une telle pensée, trop de conformité avec sa propre doctrine, pour que l'Eglise s'opposât, du moins en principe, à ces distractions et à ces fêtes joyeuses". With the advent of Christianity and its subsequent official adoption, pagan exuberance was not necessarily discouraged, but rather channeled, into Christian forms. New Christian symbols arose to fill already developed cultural molds. For example, ceremonies surrounding the familiar pagan legend of a beneficent god (Osiris, Dionysus) who dies, and returns with the spring to the accompaniment of a festival, were easily adapted to Christian thought. Likewise the worship of feminine deities reappears in the Marian cult. For further study see Frazer, Scapegoat, p. 328, and J. Seznec, The Survival of the Pagan Gods (New York: Harper, 1961).

<sup>51</sup> See E. O. James, Seasonal Feasts, p. 269.

<sup>52</sup> Du Tilliot, Mémoires, p. 30. Villetard, Remarques, p. 7, cites Pope Léon, another apologist who excuses human folly. Jean-Richard Bloch, a latter day Carnival critic

echoes that thought "une fête était une respiration entre deux couples, une parenthèse ouverte pour la liberté humaine entre deux tentatives de restriction morale". "Carnaval est mort" Essais esthétiques (Paris: Gallimard, 1920), p.119.

<sup>53</sup> Barber, Comedy pp. 213-14.

<sup>54</sup> Huizinga, Waning, pp. 156-57.

<sup>55</sup> Petit de Julleville, Répertoire du théâtre comique en France au moyen-âge (Paris: Cerf, 1886), p. 106, supports this idea: "A la parodie de la hiérarchie et de la liturgie ecclésiastiques, ils [les confréries des sots] font succéder la parodie de la société tout entière".

<sup>56</sup> Du Tilliot, pp. 68-70, has reprinted the "Acte de réception de Henri de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, Premier Prince du Sang . . . 1626".

<sup>57</sup> See Petit de Julleville, Les Comédiens en France au moyen-âge, (Paris: Cerf, 1885), p. 88 and p. 144.

<sup>58</sup> Welsford, Fool, p. 318.

<sup>59</sup> Chambers, Stage, I, p. 373, lists the various titles given the rulers of the different fool societies.

<sup>60</sup> Petit de Julleville, Comédiens, p. 247, and Welsford, Masque, p. 22.

<sup>61</sup> Welsford, Fool, p. 208, cites suppression of the Infanterie Dijonnaise by Louis XIII in 1630. See also Petit de Julleville, Comédie, p. 154.

<sup>62</sup> Welsford, Fool, p. 204.

<sup>63</sup> Petit de Julleville, Répertoire, p. 105, finds the sottie to be closely associated with the Feast of Fools: "s'il est un genre de comédie dont l'origine peut être cherchée dans ces burlesques solennités, c'est la sottie. les sots sont les anciens célébrants de la fête des fous jetés hors de l'église par les conciles indignés; puis rassemblées sur la place publique ou dans le prochain carrefour pour y continuer la fête".

<sup>64</sup> Roman de Renart, Branches X-XI, ed. Mario Roques (Paris: Champion, 1960). Aucassin et Nicolette. Ed. Herman Sucher (New York: G. E. Stechert and Co., 1936). Ship of Fools, (Narrenschiff), Trans. E.h. Zeydel (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1936). The Praise of Folly, (Moriae

Encomium), Trans. T. Chalonier (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965). Rabelais, Oeuvres complètes, ed. Pierre Jourda (Paris: Garnier, 1962).



## CHAPTER III

## THE CARNIVALESQUE ATMOSPHERE OF BÉRCALDE'S BANQUET

A carnivalesque mood animates Le Moyen de Parvenir. The setting is a banquet in which wine and words flow liberally, and the general atmosphere is consciously one of uninhibited merriment. The guests and the hosts are in a holiday mood as their conversation, their anecdotes, and the many exhortations to drink reveal. Broad laughter and ribald tales dominate the festivities, and nothing is sacred before the mocking, irreverent dialogue of the group assembled. Allegorical characters such as "le Mortel", "Chose" and "la Bonne Intention", together with speakers disguised as such famous personages as Socrates, Petronius, Rabelais, and Ronsard evoke the shifting identities of a Carnival masquerade. A carnivalesque ruling couple can be discerned in "La Sophie" and "le pere spirituel"<sup>1</sup> who host the banquet and attempt to guide the conversation. Fools and folly

abound, and at times the banquet very closely resembles a meeting of one of the fool-societies.<sup>2</sup> The heterogeneity of the group of revellers, composed of ancient philosophers, contemporary poets, Catholics, Protestants, and a variety of others, matches the festive chaos of their environment. The many voices blend and lose their individual identities in the inebriated uproar of the feast.

Similar to a festival, this volatile, uninhibited symposium exposes a sensuous and playful side of human nature. Occasionally, as in Carnival, the violence which is normally contained just beneath the surface by social inhibitions is also released. Numerous calls to order are necessary, but they are invariably followed by invitations to drink and be merry. The popular preoccupation with the human body and its functions frequently provides material for banquet conversations and anecdotes. Stock characters such as the gullible cuckold, the pedant scholar, the unfaithful wife, and the licentious cleric recreate familiar comic situations in many short narrations during the banquet conversation. These short tales and anecdotes focus the attention and provoke the laughter of the festive group gathered at the banquet. These narrations have a parallel in Carnival during which an impromptu scene staged on the street or a presentation of popular comic theatre catches the attention of the laughing crowd.

The polyphonic narrative is not woven together into a

cohesive plot, but is left unfinished like a colourful tapestry with narrative threads left dangling. The over-all impression is of a lively and inebriated chaos. In his presentation of the banquet Béroalde creates an upside-down world which exists apart from ordinary, everyday life, and which is in many ways the world of the festival. This chapter will examine the details which contribute to this impression beginning with the dislocation of time and space.

In all festivals there is a conscious effort to establish a new environment apart from the everyday world. One way to accomplish this is to alter the familiar pattern of normal life by disconnecting the celebration from ordinary time and space. Celebrants are invited to forget the linear progression of time and to enjoy the present with no thought for the future. Within the festival, time becomes irrelevant and space takes on a new dimension, as reality and imagination overlap. While reading Le Moyen de Parvenir one has the impression that time and space are deliberately indefinite and vague. The author offers few details of the time of the events which take place, or of the physical setting, and those details which he includes contribute more to the confusion than to the clarification of the narrative. The exact time and place of the symposium remain obscure throughout, and facts concerning the creation and existence of the book itself in time and space are vague and imprecise as well. In order to substantiate the impression of

purposeful temporal and spacial disorder, Bércaalde's treatment of time in Le Moyen de Parvenir will be closely examined first, followed by his presentation of spacial references.

In the everyday world, time is conceived as an instrument of measurement and can be used to locate specific events along an advancing line known as historical time. The author of Le Moyen de Parvenir however, seeks to deny his reader this instrument by purposely obscuring the value of time in his work, and as a result the date of the events which take place at the banquet remain uncertain and enigmatic to the end. The first references to a date in relation to the events of the banquet contain no specific information, even though the author teasingly pretends they do. This occurs in the opening sentence in which great attention is given to the specific moment in time when the banquet invitations are issued:

Car est il, que ce fut au temps, au siecle, en l'indication, en l'Aere, en l'Hegire, en l'hebdomade, au lustre, en l'Olimpiade, en l'an, au terme, au mois, en la sepmaine, au jour, à l'heure, à la minute, & justement à l'instant que par l'avis & progres du Daimon des spheres les esteufs descheurent de credit, & qu'au lieu d'eux furent avancees les molles balles, au prejudice de la noble antiquité, qui se jouoit si joliment. (I:3-4)

The torrent of nouns presumably aims to define a certain date, but in reality points nowhere, surrounding it with a comic importance. By use of overprecision (from the "Aere" to the "instant") and of exaggerated diversity (from the

exotic and strange "Hegire", "hebdomade", "Olimpiade" to the common "minute"), the mock definition of the date parodies accounts of more serious convocations. The date in question is that upon which the "esteufs descheurent de credit", an anticlimax in that it is not immediately recognizable as an event of universal importance.<sup>3</sup> It is disconcerting, after the crescendo of introductory nouns, to find their point of reference is obscure and seemingly ridiculous. The time of the banquet is thus lost in a burlesque mock epic introduction.

The ill-defined period is mentioned a second time in the same paragraph, again with no definite indications: "Et bien en cet excellent periode il avint ce que vous sçavez, & je vous jure sans jurer, que tout est vray" (I:4). The "excellent periode" has not yet been defined as the author pretends, and neither can the reader supply the rest of the information which the author teasingly attributes to him: "il avint ce que vous sçavez". The reader does not know what happened, and the narrator's assurance "que tout est vray", adds a particular note of flippancy to this circular statement.

The next mention of the date occurs several sentences later and again contains the same playful, teasing lack of information:

Il fut donc en ceste saison sonné, trompé, trompeté, corné, (comme vous voudrez, prenez au goust de vostre ratte) & crié, huché, dit & proclamé avec la trompe

philosophique, que toutes ames qui avoient serment à la Sophie se trouvassent au lieu susdit. (I:5)

The time of the meeting, "ceste saison", has not been previously clarified as the author here assumes, and the date remains ambiguous, in spite of his pretense at defining it. In all the above comments related to placing the action of his book on specific points in time, the author's intention seems to be directed towards obscuring the time rather than clarifying it.

While creating an aura of vagueness around the time of the events within the book, the author pursues a similar course regarding the composition and publication of the book itself. Comments to this effect are sprinkled throughout the book from the first page to the last. Béroalde makes a point of mentioning both the publication and composition in association with time, but again the information he divulges is only pseudo-specific, and in reality obscures the issue instead of clearing it. The first indication of this attitude is to be found on the title page, where instead of giving the actual date of publication, the author equivocally states, "Imprimee Cette Annee".<sup>4</sup> The deliberate refusal to state an exact date indicates the author's desire to give his book a special temporal status.<sup>5</sup>

The date of composition is obscured even more than that of the publication. In the liminary quatrain following the title page Béroalde indicates that the composition of the

book may not even have taken place:

Si Madame m'eust survécu,  
J'eusses commencé cet ouvrage.

This hypothetical statement lends an air of uncertainty to the act of composition. The author is asking the reader to believe that the book presently being read has not yet been written. He repeats this upsetting chronological idea in another passage:

Que ne sçavois-je ces belles responses, & ces doctrines, je suis fort desplaisant, & meurs de regret, que je n'attendis à écrire pour estre le secretaire de ce sympose, qui m'eut plus apporté de reputation, que n'en aurent tous les escrivans ensemble. Or c'est tout un, j'ay la copie des discours & voila comment je me tiens . . . à ces futures sentences qui sont ja escrites. (I:216)

The "belles responses" and "doctrines" to which he refers are contained in the conversations which form the text of Le Moyen de Parvenir. They are already a reality in the same way as the book which the reader holds is obviously not just a future possibility as the author suggests in the opening verse. The "futures sentences qui sont ja escrites" cannot be relegated to the problematic future either, for they are already recorded; in fact they constitute most of the material of the Le Moyen de Parvenir which the author does not seem to realize he has written.

In the last chapter of the book during the author's closing statements, there is another attempt to place Le Moyen de Parvenir in the indefinite future; it is projected out of the realm of present reality and into the world of

fantasy and illusion. Béroalde writes:

Je me mettray à faire un beau livre, où je vous diray  
la verité tout au rebours des autres, & d'une façon si  
belle que je le publieray apres ma mort, afin que l'on  
voye que j'y diray de bonnes choses, que je n'entendray  
non plus que vous autres. (II:260)

It is obvious that the "beau livre" which he intends someday to write and publish is none other than the one just drawing to a close. This paradox is repeated on the final page in a last effort to displace the text temporally:

Et afin que je puisse un jour commencer ce volume, je  
mettray ici un tronc, tel qu'il est en nostre ville,  
aupres le portail de la grande Eglise:

Vous qui avez mine d'estre homs,

Et qui semblez estre hommases:

Apportez quatre gros és troncs,

Afin que l'oeuvre se parface.

Et je vous promets que vous y gagnerez: & davantage, y  
apprendrez tout ce qu'il y a de bon en ce monde; ce que  
je vous prouveray en toutes & maintes sortes. (II:261)

On this thought the author terminates the book which he says someday he intends to begin. The circle is complete, and the issue of time has acquired the vague, unstable quality which Béroalde deliberately set about to give it.

The location of Béroalde's banquet in space also appears purposefully vague, and as such helps to obscure the distinctions between reality and imagination. Again, it is a matter of the author's evasive definition. Although a place is not previously mentioned in the text, he refers to it in the first announcement of the convocation as the "lieu susdit" (I:5).<sup>6</sup> A place is mentioned soon after, "nous fusmes tous resolu de nous trouver chez le bon homme nostre



pere spirituel" (I:5), but this reference to the location leaves too much room for speculation to be of use in establishing a physical setting for the banquet. "Nostre pere spirituel" implies a spiritual leader of some sort, and the meeting which he hosts has been interpreted variously by critics as a mock representation of a religious convocation, a papal symposium,<sup>7</sup> or an alchemical congress,<sup>8</sup> all timely subjects in Béroalde's age. The "pere spirituel" would then be either a divine leader or an adept in the occult sciences. If this is the case, the meeting place would be in a location associated with the designated leader, and all members of the invited group would be familiar with the place.

While the above interpretations of the meeting as a parody of religious or occult symposiums are indeed plausible sources of inspiration, there is also another kind of meeting which is similar to that portrayed in Le Mcyen de Parvenir and which is suggested by the epithet "pere spirituel". This title may include a deliberate play on the word spirituel, perhaps referring to one of the great wits of the time, such as the leader of a fool-society who was traditionally elected from the most clever and quick-witted members of the company. If Béroalde's meeting was inspired by the burlesque reunions of such groups, Béroalde would not have had to initiate parody as a point of view because these organizations are already dedicated to parody.

and folly. Le Moyen de Parvenir would then be a variant of an already established form of parody, and the "pere spirituel", the equivalent of a Prince des Sots who exercised a reign of folly in the tradition of the festival's mock rulers.<sup>9</sup> This kind of "spirituel" leader reigned also over the fool-societies such as the Infanterie Dijonnaise. The invitations sent out to this company of Dijon promise a banquet to be hosted by "le bon Père" who promises to encourage the festive atmosphere.<sup>10</sup> The meeting in Le Moyen de Parvenir may have been inspired by such reunions which were held in a special chamber set aside for their revels. But since this enigmatic mention of a location, "chez nostre pere spirituel", is one of the few details offered concerning the place of the banquet, any attempt to precisely define a location must necessarily remain studied speculation.

There is, however, a brief description of the room in which the symposium is to take place. The immediate impression it creates is that of a chamber decorated for some courtly festival:

Nous fusmes introduits en une belle grande sale paree, comme dit l'autre, autant à l'antique qu'à la moderne, tout y estoit avec grace fort bien retaconné, & avec simmetrie parfaite, & ce pour donner autorité & lustre à l'avanture & aux discours, & pour enfler nostre dessein de plus de majesté. (I:10)

This description is reminiscent of the far longer passages on architecture and decor which fill the pages of the widely

read pastoral novels of the time, a form to which Ééroalde had himself added two well-received contributions.<sup>11</sup> The physical setting described above is one of order and elegance, but this impression is quickly overturned and forgotten in the chaotic and uneven conversations which follow. There is no courtly pastoral pageant or orderly display of knowledge in Le Moyen de Parvenir; instead the reader is surrounded with a disorderly and anarchistic babble of voices. It is as though an elegantly decorated chariot is glimpsed in a Carnival procession, but its display of allegorical harmony is quickly engulfed by the motley crowd as the parade moves on. In this context, Béroalde's misleading description of elegance and harmony can only be construed as another attempt to obscure the setting of the banquet, a setting which remains vague and enigmatic throughout.

There is one aspect of the physical setting which could be called precise; that is the relationship between the chamber and the space around it. At one point in the narrative several of the guests leave the banquet hall, go into another room, and then return:

Quelques uns de la compagnie, pour faire une pause recreative, se donnerent le petit mot du guet; c'estoit la fleur des sages, qui firent un complot de gayeté pour faire rire la compagnie, & allerent en une autre chambre inventer une comedie à l'Italienne. (I:218)

Cette petite bande entra de mesme ... (I:221)

The movement to another room indicates the banquet chamber

has a specific physical location in relation to another room. Entries and exits lend a definite air of reality to the vaguely described banquet room.<sup>12</sup> The reality of the space within the hall is also acknowledged by the fact that the speakers at one end of the table cannot hear the others due to the distance between them as one guest remarks: "Il y en a à ce bout de table qui disent possible les memes choses que nous disons ici, mais ils les enfilent d'autre sorte" (II:132). "Erasmus" informs those at his end of the table that "Homer" cannot hear them: Erasmus "Cheut. il [Homere] est là avec du Bartas qui en conte, il ne nous oit pas" (I:148). These comments stress the relative distance between the speakers at the table.

We also learn that the symposium takes place in an enclosed space separated from the outside world. However vague its physical conditions, the room exists as a finite space. The host of the banquet emphasizes the distinction between the inner and outer space in an announcement to the assembly:

J'ay fait fermer la porte, il n'entrera meshuy personne ceans, nous sommes en liberté; la dispanse. i. le verrouil & la barre sont mis à la porte, aucun n'entrera icy, si le Diable ne le jette par la cheminee. (I:137)

The closed chamber, sealed off from the laws of the outside world, provides the opportunity for participants to speak freely and openly. The freedom afforded by the locked door is satirically likened to the "petit exercice de la

religion" during which time the door is locked and those inside indulge themselves during fast days:

C'est que nous clouons, barrons, bouclons & fermons bien la porte, quand (comme ceux de la Religion) nous voulons manger de la chair aux jours deffendus: tel est le petit exercice d'autant que la grand est aller au presche. (I:138)

The locked room provides a liberty not allowed on the outside, for once inside the participants may flout authority with impunity. The freedom created by closing off relations with the outer world in Le Moyen de Parvenir parallels the freedom effected within the separate world of the festival as opposed to the constraints of the extra-festive world. All those who enter into the carnivalesque world, which is marked off within a limited time and space, are granted extraordinary freedoms. The outer world enters into Carnival only to be mocked and derided, or to be driven out. In Le Moyen de Parvenir on one occasion a doctor from Oxford comes to the door of the banquet room and requests a word with the host:

. . . voila la serviteuse qui nous vint dire que quequ'un estoit à la porte, pour entrer ou sortir . . . Ceste fille nous vint dire qu'il y avoit à la porte un personnage, qui vouloit parler au bon homme: aussi tost il alla à lui, puis revint, & nous dit . . . C'est un docteur d'Oxford, qui n'est pas encor resolu s'il se doit faire Catholique ou Huguenot; & il demande à parler à quelque Apôstre, s'il y en a ceans. --Vrayment non, dismes nous, il n'y en a point icy, ils nous empescheroient de faire bonne chere, & puis ils auroient honte de l'ordre hierarchique, & du criblement des ministres. (II:236)

The English doctor is not allowed to enter, but the host

does leave the room to consult with him. This incident again illustrates the relationship between the festive chamber and the rest of the world. In keeping with carnivalesque practices however, the conscience-searching doctor is sent away. He is not permitted to enter the festive hall with his distinctly uncarnivalesque problem, "s'il se doit faire Catholique ou Huguenot", nor are serious apostles allowed to enter. Serious contemplation of religious matters as well as the official "ordre hierarchique" belong to the outer world, and that is excluded from Le Moyen de Parvenir as it is from Carnival.

Movement in and out of the exclusive space designated for the symposium helps to make this space tangible and concrete. At various other points in the discussion, callers try to enter from the outside. Some do so successfully, and others are turned away. Late in the banquet a great noise is heard when de Beze, an invited guest, arrives from the outside:

Aussi que je demandois à boire, voila un grand bruit .  
 . . C'est de Beze qui vient d'arriver, & Aeneas Silvius  
 l'est allé recevoir. (II:251-252)

At another moment a demonic visitor gains entry from the outside. He entertains the company in conversation and subsequently exits (II:129-31).

The narrator, who is a guest at the banquet, also leaves at one point. This departure, while it does reinforce the concept of a closed chamber, also presents a new spacial

anomaly. Throughout most of the text this narrator is physically present in the banquet hall, participating in the banquet talk, and at the same time describing the proceedings to the reader as they happen. However, it appears that the reader is not "present", but is outside since the author must subsequently leave the room to speak with him:

Or çà, mes bons amis, vivons en liberté, nostre convive s'acheve, ils sont sur le dessert: je suis un peu sorti pour le vous dire. (II:259)

The key word in this passage is "sorti"; why does the narrator leave the banquet to come out and speak to the reader at this point when for hundreds of pages this has not been necessary? Is Béroalde perhaps alluding to an exit from the fictional framework he has created? He seems to playfully invite the reader to watch the creative process, while reminding him of his role as passive observer in contrast to the active role of the author/narrator. He may also want to create yet another spatial dimension by stressing the distance between himself and his creation as well as between this creation and the reader. While this question remains unresolved in the text, the exit of the narrator adds yet more elasticity to the concept of space in Le Moyen de Parvenir.

The relationship between the author and his work suggested above can be taken one step further. The ambiguity of the physical setting supports an interpretation of the

banquet gathering which is suggested, though not developed, by Paul Lacroix in his edition of le Moyen de Parvenir. A statement in Béroalde's first chapter, "Parquoy nous fusmes tous resolu de nous trouver chez le bon homme nostre pere spirituel . . ." (I:5), prompts Lacroix's statement: "C'est de lui-même sans doute que Béroalde de Verville veut parler sous le nom du Bonhomme, pere spirituel. Il était alors chanoine de Saint-Gatien de Tours".<sup>13</sup> In an extension of this idea the epithet "pere spirituel" may indeed apply to Béroalde himself, host to a mental saturnalia and spiritual father and creator of his characters. The meeting could take place in his mind, with the author himself as leader of the folly. Support for this interpretation can be found one chapter after the first mention of the "pere spirituel" when the narrator mentions the relationship between himself and the banquet guests awaiting the opening of the festivities: "Mes gens sont là qui m'attendent" (I:9). It is as though they are waiting for the author to begin creating roles for "his" characters:

Mes gens sont là qui m'attendent; sont messieurs dea, ils sont à moy, est il pas vray, ne sommes nous pas les uns aux autres, dittes vous pas bon jour mnsieur? il est donc vostre sieur, & partant vous le maistre du chantier où l'on sie: ainsi nous disons bon jour, cu adieu Madame, ma comere, & on nous dit mon amy, mon hoste; & de mesmes nous sommes aux autres, & nous à eux, & pource ils sont à moy, ils sont donc mes gens, qui avec moy & moy avec eux nous truvames tous, & toutes, chez nostre pere se Puissetuer,<sup>14</sup> que Madame avoit choisy pour y celebrer cet admirable banquet. (I:9)



The narrator does quickly alter the meaning of "mes gens" in this passage through wordplay on monsieur and mon scieur, but this kind of sudden change of direction within a statement is typical of Le Moyen de Parvenir, and the first impression of "mes gens" should be retained as it initially reads, as well as the way the author subsequently twists it.

The banquet setting could thus easily represent the imaginary world of the author. This possibility is reinforced by a later statement suggesting a "chanoine" who is also creator of a world, perhaps referring to the literary world in Le Moyen de Parvenir: ". . . le faisant du monde qui est le Chanoine" (I:304). If the banquet hall described is conceived as Béroalde's mind, the decorations "autant à l'antique qu'à la moderne" of the "belle grande sale paree" (I:10) could refer to the author's studies, encompassing both ancient and contemporary knowledge in the manner of Renaissance scholars. One could expect an orderly display of knowledge to follow this description of harmony. However, the impression of order and elegance in this mental interior is completely overturned by the saturnalia which enlivens the following pages of the text. It is as though the author has produced an inebriated stream-of-consciousness novel, with ideas appearing as banqueting characters who vie for attention.

Within the special temporal and spacial climate created in Le Moyen de Parvenir there are other similarities between

this work and the festival. Comments which occur early in the text indicate that the gathering will resemble that of a fraternity of fools performing a sotie, or celebrating in the tradition of Carnival. The obligatory call to assemble as well as the expressed devotion of the guests to a special ruler and to a common "foolish" cause are declared in the burlesque tone of carnival. These elements reinforce the parallel between Le Moyen de Parvenir and the festive reunions of the fool-societies. The first mention of the meeting suggests such an affinity:

Il fut donc en cest saison sonné, trompé, trompeté, corné, (comme vous voudrez, prenez au goust de vostre ratte) & crié, huché, dit & proclamé avec la trompe philosophique, que toutes ames qui avoient serment à la Sophie se trouvassent au lieu susdit, ainsi qu'il avoit esté ordonné & promis avec serment solennel, comme il est ordinaire és affaires serieuses de la benoïste coustume des Sages; pour assurance dequoy les enfans de la science avoient mis la main au symbole de la conscience. Parquoy nous fusmes tous resclus de nous trouver chez le bon homme nostre pere spirituel, parce qu'il avoit esté ordonné & jugé en dernier ressort de serrure, d'horloge, de cranequin, de rouet, de routissoir, d'arbaleste, & que les defaillans seroient mis à la nois, à la noisette, au noyau, & à l'amende. A cet esclat de mandement je ne faillismes à nous trouver, aussi avions nous promis de nous bien chercher pour cet effect; & puis je l'avions juré, & sçachez que c'est un grand peché de faillir parmi nous, pource que nous suyons uniquement la regle de perfection en promesse. (I:5)

The exaggeration, repetition, lists and word play which give this passage its humorous tone are also common to documents of the fool-society of Dijon, the Infanterie Dijonnaise. Any serious quality attributed to the gathering by the vocabulary, "serment solennel", "affaires serieuses",

"coustume des Sages", is undermined by the exaggeration and wordplay of the context. Instead of one or two terms to describe the fanfare which accompanies the announcement of the meeting, the author uses eight: "sonné, trompé, trompeté, etc.", creating a comic effect through exaggeration. He uses this same technique two more times in the same sentence: "en dernier ressort de serrure, etc.", and "les defaillans seroient mis à la nois, etc.". Each time the disproportionate list produces the same humorous results. Wordplay exists within each list of words; repetition of initial sounds for example appear in "trompé-trompeté", "rouet-routissoir" and "ncis-noisette-noyau". Words having the same function in the sentence are multiplied, and sound clusters are repeated just as they are in the literature of the fool-societies. The soties performed by these societies traditionally are filled with repetitious language, frequently beginning with a listing of all the kinds of fools who are invited.<sup>15</sup> Repetitious language also fills the sotie: "Qu'on rompe, qu'on brise, qu'on casse, qu'on frappe à tort et à travers" illustrates this tendency in a sotie by Gringore.<sup>16</sup>

The obligatory nature of the assembly in Le Moyen de Parvenir recalls the conventional reminder of compulsory attendance at the meetings of the fool-societies. The guests in Le Moyen de Parvenir appear to be members of an organization to which they feel morally obligated. "C'est un

grand peché de faillir parmi nous", as the narrator intimates, and it is also humorously announced in a cascade of wordplay that absent members will be subjected at least to a fine: "les defaillans sercient mis à la nois, à la noisette, au noyau, & à l'amende" (I:5). The variations of the word nois (nut) end in a pun based on the homonymic clash between amende (fine) and amande (almond). Compulsory attendance enforced by humorous threats appears in the fool-societies also. Pressures were applied to members of the Infanterie Dijonnaise to emphasize the importance of attendance: "Si quelque absent, Se vouloit prevaloir d'excuse, Il sera traité comme buze."<sup>17</sup> They were also subject to a fine like the defaulting guests of Le Moyen de Parvenir: "Si quelqu'un reçu dans la Compagnie, s'en absentoit, il devoit apporter une excuse légitime, sinon il étoit condamné à une amande de vingt Livres."<sup>18</sup>

Not only are Béroalde's merrymakers devoted to their fraternity, but they also express allegiance to a leader, the mysterious "Sophie". She is also called "Madame, l'unique entre les sages" (I:9), and reigns over the convocation together with "le pere spirituel". Although never clearly identified in Le Moyen de Parvenir, this couple recalls the traditional mock rulers who presided merrily over popular festivals. The narrator begins by stating that all of the guests are "ames qui avcient serment à la Sophie" (I:5). Her name, "la Sophie", indicates an

allegorical identification with wisdom, but other excellent qualities are also assigned to her:

Madame qui est l'unique entre les sages, la perle des entendues, & le parangon de perfection (reconnaissez la par ces epitetes, & ne vous enquerez plus qui elle est) nous festoyoit, & prenoit grand plasir de nous avoir pour son contentement. (I:11-12)

The epithet "la Sophie" and the reference to her respected position, "l'unique parmi les sages", appear to be ironical tributes however. Even though she does not indulge in obscenities, "Madame" exhibits the same trivial mind as the other guests, and it is apparent from the start that her devoted followers manifest a far greater affinity with folly than with wisdom. This "Madame Sophie" in turn would be at home in the varicoloured costume of Mère Sotte or Mère Folle.

The impassioned devotion of Béroalde's guests to their leader recalls the praise lavished upon the Mère Folle of Dijon.<sup>19</sup> A closer look at the introduction of this ruler in Béroalde's announcement reveals that she is associated with a trumpet; "trompé, trompété" are mentioned, and "la trompe philosophique" calls the faithful to her side (I:5). That instrument was also associated with Mère Folle and "her" activities.<sup>20</sup> Madame Sophie's ruling partner, "nostre pere spirituel", also has a carnivalesque counterpart. As the host in Le Moyen de Parvenir he assiduously applies himself to the task of seeing that the company does not neglect the food and wine on the table; the image he creates for himself

is that of Mère Folle's frequent spiritual companion, Roger Bon Temps.<sup>21</sup> At Dijon, as Du Tilliot's study shows, Bon Temps' role was that of banquet host.<sup>22</sup>

The garrulous individuals called together around "Madame" demonstrate by their extravagant conversation and their foolish behaviour that they serve her well. Firstly, their names, like that of Madame Sophie, create a misleading initial impression, because their actions and words do not correspond to the names. The problematic identities of these speakers evoke the shifting Carnival masquerade. Their names, which do not fit their actions and conversation, are worn like Carnival masks. Over two hundred of the banquet guests are identified with the names of famous men and women from different ages. Among these "guests" assembled are Socrates, Rabelais, Alexander the Great, Sapho, Jan Hus, Petronius, Paracelsus, Margot (probably Marguerite de Valcis),<sup>23</sup> Boccaccio, Hercules and Calvin.<sup>24</sup> The inclusion of famous guests was frequently the practice of authors of symposia.<sup>25</sup> However, Béroalde taxes the credulity of his reader when "Calvin" for example, boasts of the wine he would like to consume (II:156), when "Socrates" becomes the foppish master of etiquette at the banquet (I:18), and "Demosthenes" dispenses obscene advice (I:21). It is usually impossible to identify the relationship between the speaker and his famous name; in fact, without their names the speakers would be nearly indistinguishable one from another.

Besides the illustrious speakers, allegorical characters, such as "Chose", "l'Autre", "Le Mortel", etc., join in the banquet and converse like the others. The voices behind the names could belong to any inebriated wag or inglorious drinker. The celebrants rarely attempt to play the roles their names imply, and several details indicate that the guests in Le Moyen de Parvenir are in disguise. Even though the narrator introduces the guests as celebrities, he hints that the names function only as masks:

. . . nous sommes, nous qui parlons, de ce temps; nous y sommes en tenons & y vivons, si ne sommes trompez.  
(I:11)

Et encor, messieurs, un mot en passant: croyez-vous pas que toutes ces bonnes gens fussent ici, & que mesmes ceux du temps à venir y estoient? Nous avons celé les noms de quelques uns, de peur qu'ils fussent reconnus .  
. . . (I:226)<sup>26</sup>

The obviously artificial quality of the banqueters' assumed identities reinforces the impression of a Carnival masquerade.

The mask in Carnival functions as an agent of liberation, releasing an inner being, and it serves the same purpose in Le Moyen de Parvenir. As Roger Caillois explains, the major function of a Carnival mask is not to appear as a realistic imitation of reality, but to provide a cover which hides the everyday identity of a person while the true personality emerges:

Au Carnaval, le masque ne cherche pas à faire croire

qu'il est un vrai marquis, un vrai toréador, un vrai Peau Rouge, il cherche à faire peur et à mettre à profit la licence ambiante, elle-même résultat du fait que le masque dissimule le personnage social et libère la personnalité véritable.<sup>27</sup>

It is the "licence ambiante" which the disguised characters in Le Moyen de Parvenir seek to exploit. Through their behavior and conversation they show themselves to be of a uniformly coarse mentality. Though many of them wear the names of famous sages of all times, behind the names they are revealed as common boors whose main goal in life is to amuse and indulge themselves in the manner of Carnival celebrants who throw themselves headlong into the festivities.

The identities of other characters, both the guests and those in the anecdotes, evoke the theatrical side of Carnival. Many of them are identified either by name, "Le Mortel", "La Jeune Fille", "La Bonne Intention", or by type, such as the gullible cuckold or his conniving wife. Such characters appear frequently in the farces, soties, sermons joyeux, burlesque monologues, and in the comic scenes of the mystery or morality plays. The characters which people Le Moyen de Parvenir, both those around the banquet table and those in the anecdotes, often have counterparts in the comic theatre. Some of the banquet guests have allegorical names which recall the morality plays, "La Bonne Intention, La Jeune Fille, L'Autre, Bienvenu, Chose, Cetui-cy". Other



guests are identified by profession only ("les Medecins", "l'Avocat"), a common practice in the fabliaux, farces, and soties.

In the miracle plays the protagonist sometimes makes a pact with the devil, who is also a frequent stage character.<sup>28</sup> In Le Moyen de Parvenir, Frostibus, "lieutenant general de tous les Diables", calls on Luther and intimates that he has some sort of pact with the reformer: " Frostibus vient gay & gaillard mettre les deux mains sur les espauls de Luther, & lui dit; 'Et bien, monsieur de l'autre monde, quoy, que dittes-vous des gentilleses que nous avons faites par delà en nostre enfance?'" (II:128). Frostibus' description of the plight of the unfortunate tenants of the underworld casts them as the comic "pauvres diables" of the diableries, as he pleads with Luther: " . . . me faire la faveur qu'il n'y ait plus personne damné, tous les diables vous en prient, . . . d'autant qu'il y a desja tant de damnez en Enfer, que les pauvres diables couchent dehors." (II:129-30)

Other familiar characters from the comic stage also appear in the anecdotes told by the banqueters. These stock characters, and the familiar situations they recreate recall the competitive, jovial world of the farce and the closely related fabliau.<sup>29</sup> The gullible cuckold, frequently seen in comic presentations, appears many times in Le Moyen de Parvenir, as does his unfaithful wife.<sup>30</sup> The text is also

replete with lusty clerics, young and old, with pedants, imposters, and hypocrites.<sup>31</sup> The fools of the soties are amply represented as well, both around the banquet table and in the tales and anecdotes. All of these characters remain undeveloped, quickly drawn caricatures similar to the characters in the farces. Each is given very little time or opportunity for development, since their function is to represent an idea or an attitude which is usually presented briefly and humorously, then discarded.

Like uninhibited festival participants, the guests in Le Moyen de Parvenir assemble in a light-hearted mood. The author sets this mood by defining the meaning of play in the first chapter then applying it to the guests. According to Béroalde's definition, play functions like the mask and like wine. It removes inhibitions and allows the true inner being to manifest itself. Even a devil could not hide his essential nature if at play: "il vous feroit voir ses cornes". At play, a person's defenses are relaxed, and he can enjoy himself without fear:

N'est-ce point au jeu où l'ame se dilate pour faire voir ses conceptions? Si un diable jouoit avec vous il ne se pourroit feindre, il vous feroit voir ses cornes. Mais qu'est ce que jouer? C'est se delecter sans penser en mal. (I:4)

The open disclosure of one's inner self described above closely resembles a description of the effect laughter works on the inhibitions, a theory which Béroalde includes in the

Cabinet de Minerve.<sup>32</sup> Play and games imply a certain honesty and trusting innocence, according to the narrator of Le Moyen de Parvenir. As if to illustrate this point the guests are at play in the kitchen when first introduced. In presenting them at play, the author implies that he is depicting their essential, inner beings, stripped of hypocrisy and in a mood for innocent enjoyment:

Ouy dea, je vous ay osté de peine si vous en estes capables, & vous feray remarquer ceux qui assisterent en ce notable sympose, au moins je vous en nommeray quelques uns, si je ne me souviens de tous: je vous enverray à la cuisine où ils sont, ou bien autre part, à jouer, comme les sages de Grece, au franc du quarreau avec les pages & les laquais. (I:17)

When first introduced, the honourable guests are playing hopscotch, not only among themselves, but with the servants, in true saturnalian fashion.<sup>33</sup> The behaviour of these guests reveals them to be from the same boisterous, largely uneducated group which makes up the majority of the Carnival crowd.<sup>34</sup> Their actions, which consist of eating, drinking, making rude noises, telling coarse tales, and competing with each other for attention, belong more to Carnival than to an intellectual symposium.

Another link between Le Moyen de Parvenir and the festival is provided by the event for which the guests have assembled; the occasion is a banquet, "cet admirable banquet" (I:9), ce notable sympose" (I:17). However it is not a tranquil repast, but instead a saturnalian revel, and

emphasis is placed on the consuming, triumphant physical body of the traditional carnivalesque feasts.<sup>35</sup> This banquet setting allows the author of Le Moyen de Parvenir to dwell on the tangible, physical delights of the feast, emphasizing the appeal to the senses and at the same time explicit the carefree mood of the feast.

The collective feast has played an important part in carnivalesque festivals since their ancient origins when the festival depended on major agricultural events of the year. Though the transfer of the festival to urban environments sometimes altered it slightly, the essential ingredients, one of which was the feast, remained.<sup>36</sup> A banquet creates the comfortable situation in which man and his environment are particularly compatible, for nature on that occasion, at other times harsh, is seen at her most generous. The heavily laden banquet table represents a certain human victory over nature. Participants in such feasts are temporarily freed from basic anxieties about their physical survival. They leave work and resourceful accumulation of goods behind in order to consume the fruits of their labour. An atmosphere of plenty, reminiscent of a Golden Age such as the Land of Cockaigne<sup>37</sup> is recreated by the abundance of food and drink offered to the emancipated celebrants. Popular religious festivals, village fairs, and other carnivalesque celebrations in XVith century France still included feasting in the festivities.<sup>38</sup> The banquet for members and guests was

also an important event on the social calendar of the fcol-societies, and they openly promoted a gastronomic value system.<sup>39</sup> In the letters of reception sent out to successful candidates of the Infanterie Dijonnaise the new members are complimented on their prandial virtues which make them compatible with the rest of the company. Candidates are praised for such qualities as:

Toutes les allegresses de Machoires, finesses, galantise, hardiesse, suffisance, & expérience des dents qui pourroient être requises à un Mignon de Cabaret.<sup>40</sup>

In accordance with tradition, food and drink abound in Le Moyen de Parvenir, and the banqueters all participate with uninhibited enthusiasm in the collective activities of eating and drinking: "Il n'y a personne qui ne tasche à faire son profit, & sur tout boivant & mangeant" (II:238). With burlesque enthusiasm the narrator praises those guests who excell in the art of dining. Socrates, he says, carries out his "devoir des maschoires" to high satisfaction, and the "Archidiacre" does so well that he would deserve to be Pope if only he could officiate as well before the altar as he does at table:

Je vous diray que Socrate estoit present à ce banquet où il fit fort bien son devoir des maschoires. A propos de nostre Archidiacre, qui s'y scayt tres-bien escrimer, & vrament s'il tenoit aussi bien à cheval qu'à table, il seroit le meilleur Escuyer de France, & bien plus, s'il officioit ou pouvoit officier autant parfaitement à un grand Autel qu'à une table, il meriteroit d'estre Pape. (I:17)<sup>41</sup>

Amid the abundance of food and drink present on the table, the successful guest comes equipped with nimble jaws like Socrates in the above passage. He is quickly joined by the others as the narrator's concise description of the opening activity discloses: "Nous nous mismes à estofer des maschoires" (I:23). The banqueting is continually encouraged by the host of the banquet, "le Bon homme", with such comments as, "soyez les bien ventrus, la panse fait l'homme" (I:138). He also encourages by example: "et bien boivons & me donnez un petit de ceste croute de pasté, ce que j'en fais pour espargner le pain" (II:133). One time he is so busy preparing a dish of crayfish that the narrator must speak for him: "Je le dirai pour lui, parce qu'il est empesché à frire l'esprit d'un demi cent d'escrevisses, à la mode de Bourges" (II:236). Throughout the text there are many references to the food and wine being consumed by the company.<sup>42</sup>

Images of the banqueting body permeate the vocabulary used in the conversations. The victoribus, consuming body emerges in Diogenes' speech:

Vous lourdaux mes amis du foye, cousins de la ratte & mignons des petites tripes foireuses, ignorez-vous que d'ici à quelques siècles ce sympose ne soit selon son merite tenu pour authentique, autant ou plus que toutes les falanderies grecques qui vous font bon ventre? (I:128)

Images of the inner organs of the body in this passage (" le foye, la ratte, des petites tripes foireuses, bon ventre") underline the material, corporal aspect of the feast. Moreover, Diogenes uses these terms to address his friends affectionately, "mes amis du foye, etc.", implying their complicity in the feasting aspect of the symposium. He also describes intellectual pleasure in gastronomic terms. The imaginary stories or "falanderies", of Greece please the audience like a good meal:". . . qui vous font bon ventre".

Like Rabelais, the author of Le Moyen de Parvenir combines the creation of his book with food and drink. In the "Prologue" to Gargantua Rabelais describes the act of writing his book:

Car, à la composition de ce livre seigneurial, je ne perdiz ne employay oncques plus, ny aultre temps que celluy qui estoit estably à prendre ma refection corporelle, sçavoir est beuvant et mangeant. . . . L'odeur du vin, ô combien plus est friant, riant, priant, plus celeste et delicieuse que d'huile! <sup>43</sup>

Béroalde also presents the idea of the author who joyously feasts while writing when he reminds the reader that respected ancient authors wrote while drinking and laughing. In the same spirit as Rabelais' dismissal of serious, plodding work as unpleasant "oil" in the above passage, Béroalde satirizes his contemporaries who so solemnly study the ancient books, books that were written as the authors drank and laughed: ". . . vous donnez vous tant de peine à grifonner le papier, pour le barbouiller de commentaires sur

tant de folies des poètes & orateurs, & fouillauccefres qui les ont escrites en boivant & se riant" (I:129). It was perhaps the "Prologue" of Rabelais' Tiers Livre which inspired Béroalde to write of the ancient imbibing authors. Those who become too involved in the serious, joyless side of literature do not understand the work in its proper context. An unfortunate fate awaits them: "Ils deviennent animaux fantastiques, & resveurs, comme la plus part de nos sçavans qui sont tant veaux, que les diables aux heures de recreation en font des contes pour rire" (I:129).

In another passage Béroalde links the act of composition with the consumption of food. The style of this book, its tendency to jump erratically from subject to subject, and the variety of topics it includes in a disorderly fashion are compared to the dining habits of a certain "bon homme Guyon":

On luy donnoit de tout ce qu'il luy falloit, qu'il mettoit en son escuelle, pain, chair, scuppe, potage, soupe, potage, vin, sert, dessert ensemble; & on luy disoit, "Pourquoy ne mangez-vous & boivez d'ordre & à part? --Ha ha, disoit-il, lourdaut mon amy puis qu'ils se doivent mesler au ventre, il n'y a point de danger de luy envoyer tout desja meslé," De mesme cecy doit estre meslé en vostre cervelle, il le vous faut bailler tout meslé; le personnage qui vous produit en tout honneur ces saincts memoires de perfection, a pensé que le texte ne valloit pas mieux que le commentaire, parquoy il les a fait aller ensemble. (I:36)

In this manner the reader is somewhat inelegantly invited to digest the work in its present form, with no regard for order.



Béroualde's choice of a banquet setting is not unique. This framework appears in many ancient works and is frequently the organizing structure of works by Béroualde's contemporaries. His choice of a banquet setting thus reflects not only the literary vogue of the time, but has ample literary precedents. Ancient Greek and Roman writers frequently used the symposium as a forum for dialogued display of ideas. Works by Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch, Petronius, Athenaeus, and Macrobius for example, all exploit the banquet setting.<sup>44</sup> It became increasingly popular in Béroualde's century to loosely bind together a series of tales, anecdotes or imaginary dialogue within a conversational framework, in part due to the popularity of the ancients. Works by Marguerite de Navarre, Jacques Yver, Nicolas de Cholières, Bénigne Poissenot, and Guillaume Bouchet demonstrate this tendency.<sup>45</sup> Among the different situations in which a group of speakers could be gathered, the banquet was one of the most effective. But Béroualde expands his table and his conversations far beyond that of his contemporaries.

The symposium which takes place in Le Moyen de Parvenir not only exploits the open, malleable framework of prandial literature which precedes it, but it pushes that framework even farther. Not just a few speakers, but nearly four-hundred claim the attention of the reader. Their

conversation is carried forward by inebriated momentum and capricious wordplay rather than by the logical development of ideas which characterizes other works in this form. The active, competitive atmosphere of Bérchalde's symposium is described in a passage which telescopes the action of the banquet into one sentence:

Et que faisoient tant de bonnes gens de loisir? Voire, mais que fit-on là? On parla, on mangea, on beut, on fit st, on se teut, on fit du bruit, on protesta, on rencontra, on rit, on baailla, on entendit, on distputa, on cracha, on moucha, on s'estonna, on s'esbahit, on admira, on gaussa, on raporta, on entendit, on broüilla, on s'esclaircit, on debattit, on s'accorda, on trinca l'un à l'autre, on s'accorda, on cria tout bas, on se teut tout haut, on se mocqua, on murmura, on s'avisa, on se reprit, on se contenta, on passa le temps, on douta, on redouta, on s'assagit, on devint, on parvint. (I:43)

As can be seen in this passage, even though the framework of Le Moyen de Parvenir may be similar to that of other literary symposiums written or read in the XVIth century, the banquet of Le Moyen de Parvenir has more in common with an animated Carnival than with a traditional symposium.

In the tradition of the Saturnalia, Béroalde's banquet provides a setting conducive to spontaneous activity and free talk,<sup>46</sup> and it does so aided by wine. Wine, a traditional ingredient in the festival, frees the imagination and loosens the tongue. It lowers inhibitions and encourages a foolishness not normally tolerated. Wine flows liberally both at the banquet table and throughout the anecdotes in the dialogue of Le Moyen de Parvenir, and its

effects are felt in the volatile, uninhibited conversation. Its presence at the banquet and its role in the conversations reveal wine to be a unifying leitmotiv and one of the major elements in the creation of the carnivalesque atmosphere in Le Moyen de Parvenir. Since drinking constitutes one of the major activities at the banquet set by Béroalde, wine is established as an important ingredient very early. It is the first detail attended to after the arrival of the guests. The meeting begins only after certain preparations have been made, and care of the wine is one of these preparations: "quand nous fusmes assemblez, que tout fut prest, le vin dans les vaisseaux plongez en l'eau fraische pour se rafraischir, aussi le pratique autrement seroit boire à cloche pied" (I:13). A spiraling digression on the subject of wine then covers three pages in these opening paragraphs.<sup>47</sup> This sets the scene for the "doctes buveurs" (I:16) who assemble around the banquet table and partake generously, reinforcing their fraternity with "la liqueur arrousante, la douce rosee de nature, le sucre de l'Aurcre" (I:142).

Cries for more wine and exhortations to drink are heard throughout the book, creating the impression of a spontaneous, authentic bacchanalia. The guests incite each other to consume more: "Tais toi pauvre cheval & boys" (I:128), and urgently request more wine from anyone who will bring it: "Je te prie, page, laquais, novice, enfant de

choeur, leuron de l'Antechrist; qui que tu scis, donne moy à boire" (I:126). Interjections such as these punctuate the text, constantly reminding the reader that a drinking bout is in progress. The speakers pause to catch their breath in the giddy conversation, "O ça, j'ay assez parlé sans boire, ça, page, baille m'en" (II:253), and with each pause they refresh themselves with wine. They ask for more food and drink, integrating the banquet into their conversations: "Eh bien, boivons, & me donnez un petit de cest crouste de pasté" (II:133).<sup>48</sup> "Erasmus" uses a call to drink as an excuse to quiet the others so that he may speak: "Boivez un trait tout plain, & me laissez dire ou j'oublieray tout" (I:147). The host frequently urges the company to drink, admonishing them for talking too much and neglecting their glasses: "Nous ne boivons point; hola! Vous causez assez" (II:186). At another point he loudly interrupts the party and silences Petronius who is about to speak:

Petronius voulut dire sa ratelee, mais il rengaina son discours par la bouche, pource que le bon homme nostre hoste vint criant tout haut comme un belier esgaré; "ça enfans, ça ça Messieurs, c'est assez causé, il faut se reposer à l'Italano sermonisme: boivons & faisons une pause aux discours". (I:137)

At other times he intervenes to delay a discussion until the glasses have been raised again, postponing a topic with a call to drink: "Remettez-le à tantost que nous aurons beu" (I:142).<sup>49</sup> He also cuts short a discussion decisively in the same manner: "Or boivez pour decider cette affaire" (II:70),

and generally assures that wine is not neglected amid the prodigious verbal outpouring of the banquet.<sup>50</sup>

Alongside the obvious importance of wine physically present on the banquet table, it frequently recurs as a topic of table conversation, indicating its high priority in the minds of the banqueters. Wine sometimes appears as the topic for inconsequential or fatuous verbal exchanges:

. . . vas chatoûiller ce flaccon de vin, & me dis s'il est masle ou femelle. --Ouy da, il y a malse & femelle de vin; le blanc est le masle. (II:247)

Mais encor, nostre maistre vous qui sçavez que le pain est plus ancien que le vin, d'où vient qu'estant le pain en la bouche, il est long temps à se demener ça & là, avant que trouver le chemin de la vallee, & le vin tout incontinent le trouve? --Ce mystere n'est pas de vostre religion: C'est pour ce qu'il y a plus d'esprit en une pinte de vin, qu'il n'y a en un bcisseau de bled. (I:15)<sup>51</sup>

Cries for more wine and exhortations to drink are also complemented by commentaries on the sensual delights of drinking. As the banquet begins, the promise of future pleasure gleams prophetically from the bottles arranged on the banquet table: "Les vaisseaux estoient dignement arrangez selon leur merite, ne plus ne moins que les vers des Sybiles,<sup>52</sup> couvrans sous leur sainte cabale les plus savoureuses intelligences du bien futur." (I:15). The "bien futur" becomes more tangible as the guests indulge not only in consuming the beverage, but in describing the pleasures to be derived from drinking wine. One speaker wishes to

prolong the pleasure by extending his palate to exaggerated proportions. He expresses this wish through a play on the word palais (palace-palate):

Ne sçais-tu point que depuis que le vin a joint l'epiglotte il n'est plus favorable; il convient, pour bien souhaiter en cet affaire, desirer avoir le palais aussi long que celui de Paris, . . . afin que la liqueur arrousante, la douce rosee de nature, le sucre de l'Aurore, on sentit une vraye rage de bien, tandis qu'elle passeroit par ces coulis infractueux. (I:142)

The "vraye rage de bien" described by this speaker is put into other words by the narrator who also speaks of the pleasure he derives from the act of imbibing: "Sçavez-vous bien pourquoi j'ayme tant à boire? c'est pource que j'ay une belle joye quand il me pleut dans le ventre." (I:145). Unlike the animals, pleasure prompts man to drink even when not thirsty:

Hercules. Pourquoy est-ce qu'un asne ne boit pas s'il n'a soif?

Calvin. Faites vostre proposition vive.

Hercules. Je ne m'esbahis si tu fus heretique; va, je te le diray, c'est pource qu'il ne boit que de l'eau; que s'il beuvoit du vin, il boiroit à tous momens, comme un bon Theologien. . . (II:28-29)<sup>53</sup>

The immediate satisfaction of the senses provided by wine recommends it highly to the pleasure seeking revellers in Le Moyen de Parvenir. The physical need indicated by thirst is not a necessary factor, nor is a special occasion necessary, as the following riddle illustrates:

"En quel temps le vin est il meilleur ou bon? Dittes Messieurs. --C'est, dit l'un quand on a grand soif;" l'autre, "C'est en esté. --Voire, dit frere Anselme,

c'est en hyver au soir quand on s'est bien routi aupres de feu." Albert le Grand. --Vous n'y estes pas, c'est quand on le boit, que l'on le jette à poignee dans le corps." (I:141-2) <sup>54</sup>

The pleasures of wine are often mentioned along with those of laughter. The two are described as "les orgues de la liesse" (I:108). Both are essential elements of Carnival and add to the festive atmosphere. Drinking and laughter are two of the four "cardinal virtues" of this company: "Laissons ces Theologiens avec leurs vertus Theologales; quant à nous, suivons les quatre Cardinales, qui sont, Rire, Manger, Boire, & Dormir. Telles sont nos vertus." (I:299) <sup>55</sup> These festive virtues (laughter, eating, and drinking) also enumerated by the fool-society of Dijon, <sup>56</sup> abound in Le Moyen de Parvenir. The host expressly combines laughter and wine in a burlesque travesty of legal jargon, urging the company to avail themselves of their rightful pleasures:

En depit de toutes sortes de sots, boivons, rions, ce sont des accidens de concomitance, liasons de compagnies, relations legitimes, consequences d'usufruict, c'est nostre part quand nous y sommes; & de fait rire c'est ce qui contente le plus, & qui couste le moins; s'il en estoit ainsi de boire, le bcn vin ne cousteroit gueres. (I:140)

In this invitation to drink and laugh there is an attempt to justify enjoyment of them both; the pseudolegalistic jargon, "accidens de concomitance, liasons de compagnies, relations legitimes, consequences d'usufruict", emphasizes in a comic fashion the legitimate right the guests have to wine and

laughter.<sup>57</sup>

The tipplers also associate wine with erotic pleasures, suggesting its aphrodisiac properties. The ardent fishwives, colourfully described by the host, are lusty winebibbers: "Voyez, je vous prie, les poissonnieres, lesquelles pour avoir tousjours la main en l'eau, & feu au cul, ont les jouës vermeilles, elles sont gaillardes, aimant le bon vin, tousjours estans en appetit." (II:71) Another speaker dips into the carnivalesque fund of ribald expressions and states coarsely: "Voire, vin chauffé & cas frotté<sup>58</sup> ne tendent qu'à pauvreté"<sup>59</sup> (II:33).

Not only is imbibing a major banquet activity, and the pleasure it brings a source of conversation, but the virtues to be found in this element encourage drinking and supply yet another subject of discussion. The speakers claim that it enhances the individual both physically and spiritually. The narrator urges his friends, including the reader to seek good health in wine: "Or mes chers amis que j'aime de toute ma fressure . . . vivons & boivons selon nos merites, il ne nous faudra point de besicles sur les aureilles pour en destourner le rhume, ny de cotton dans le nez pour l'empescher." (I:85). Wine, like laughter, is said to promote well-being: "le rire pour l'ame, & le vin pour le corps" (I:140). Wine can even help cure the body: "Ceux qui sont un peu malades, & se renforcent à boire & à manger guarissent; aussi l'on ne meurt que de faute de boire &



manger, & bref de s'abstenir de faire les vertus Cardinales." (II:120).<sup>60</sup>

Good health is not the only virtue the speakers attribute to wine; they suggest that through wine one can also improve the intellect, for truth is found in wine. A variation on the theme of in vino veritas appears in the first discussion of wine:

Ayez de bons flacons, pour y trouver par leur moyen la verité, comme fit Democrite, qui enda la trouva au fonds du puits. Le Roy avoit fait faire un puits, qui respondoit à une vieille carriere, cù Democrite alloit souvent se raffraischir. En ce puits on raffraischisoit le vin du Roy; Democrite s'en apperceut, & alla avant d'estre aveugle joliment prendre le bon vin gisant en flacons dans l'eau du puits, & trouva que c'estoit la verité que le vin valloit mieux que l'eau. (I:15)<sup>61</sup>

The "truth" discovered in this account is not the all-encompassing truth which is divine knowledge or wisdom,<sup>62</sup> but instead, in a very limited meaning of the word, this truth merely establishes a relative value of wine. Truth and wine are connected in two other passages; each time "truth" is used in a different context, but the resulting statement always promotes drinking.

Wine, it is suggested, also possesses the power to be of spiritual benefit to the consumer. Early in the text, wine is endowed with prophetic qualities through comparison with "les vers des Sybiles",<sup>63</sup> and invested with a sense of mystery, understood only by the initiates. The narrator, in tones of self-parody, pretends to be above the common

people, referring to them as "bonnes gens, qui ne sçavent pas les mysteres mysterieux du vin, comme nous autres philosophes" (I:16). This mock heroic stance, "nous autres philosophes", parodies the attitude of the alchemists, astrologers, and others who seek an esoteric, revealed truth. Criticism of hermetic charlatans can be found elsewhere in Le Moyen de Parvenir as well as in other of Béroalde's works.<sup>64</sup>

These enigmatic suggestions of spiritual qualities lead to more developed statements in which the virtues attributed to wine give it a mock religious aura. The author facetiously associates wine with Catholicism and water with heresy: "Boire du vin, c'est estre bon Catholique, y mettre trop d'eau est se sentir de l'heresie, ne boire que de l'eau, & avoir le vin en haine, est pure heresie noyable, approchant de l'atheisme." (I:62). This kind of association is what one would expect from the carnivalesque parodies such as "Le Sermon de bien-boire", "L'Invitatore bachique", or during travesties of the religious services performed during the Feast of Fools.<sup>65</sup> According to the narrator in Le Moyen de Parvenir, drinking is thus fully approved, even encouraged by the Catholic church. As for the Protestants, the reader must assume that the words of Calvin are meant to indicate his sect's attitude on the subject of wine: "Calvin: Ne sçavez vous pas que je boy & mange si peu qu'il me faut estre en repos pour pasturer? avisez, je ne mange

pas tant que beaucoup de personnes, & si tout le vin du monde estoit là, je n'en boirois pas le quart." (II:156). Use of ironic understatement, "je n'en boirois pas le quart", humorously reveals the reformer's leanings. Both attitudes reflect the same assessment of the topic: Indulge! Drinking thus has the approval of the religious sects represented at the banquet, and all guests are encouraged to drink "en bon Theologien". Only the representatives of the sober outside world disapprove, but they are dismissed as heretics because of their preference for water, the element of sobriety: "ne boire que de l'eau, & avoir le vin en haine, est pure heresie noyable" (I:62). Those who do not partake could never join in the inebriated whirlwind of the banquet, but these sober souls are banished to the straight-sided world outside.

In another passage, the legendary rowdy, Hercules taunts Calvin for being too sober: "tu venisti sobrius ad evertendam rempublicam" (II:29). In this case Hercules seems to refer to Calvin's reputation outside the banquet rather than his present behaviour. Sobriety has no place in the world established inside their hall, because it would upset the carnival within. The faithful convene inside, inspired and carried away by the object of their praises. The eulogy sometimes approaches the intonation of a litany, and the act of raising a glass acquires the value of a sacrament: "C'est le bon vin de Madame qui me fait ainsi dire, O liqueur

prophetique, benigne humeur qui nous fait doctes, radoucis nos adversitez, & resjouïs les coeurs qui ont faute de consolation salulaire" (I:310).<sup>66</sup>

The invocation of wine as a pacifying agent, "benigne humeur qui nous fait doctes, radoucis nos adversitez . . .", repeats the message of the seeming non sequitur outburst by the narrator in his introductory statements:

Qui a pensez vous, esté cause de la guerre de Troye, du siege de Babylon, de la ruine de Thebes, de la venue de l'Antechrist, & de tant d'autres malheurs dont les vrayes & fausses histoires nous amusent? Bouteilles cassees, & vin respandu. (I:16)

Lack of wine resulted, according to this informant, in war and other examples of human discord. The implications are clear; wine contributes to the cause of human peace, and thus is a positive and valuable substance.

The pacifying powers of wine are in fact put to the test within the banquet itself. Anger and the threat of violence, always close to the surface in the liberation of a carnivalesque environment,<sup>67</sup> threaten the present banquet. Although wine may be partly responsible for the volatility of the company's emotions, at the same time it serves another important function as a pacifier. Rage so overcomes one character, Alcibiades, that he loses the power to articulate properly: "Non, ou je me contamine, je m'abomine, je deteste, je trante mille, je precipite, j'horrible, je . . . " (I:288). Unable to continue, he ends the utterance,

presumably because the words, which were already scrambled, no longer came at all. His anger paralyzes his power of speech. Another character however, calms him and offers wine as a cure: "O taisez, taisez vous. Faictes le boire, qu'il ne soit enragé". Wine thus helps to soothe his anger and recall his senses.

Another altercation, this time between Uldric and Scot, is also subjected to the curative effects of wine. Uldric loses his temper and calls Scot an ignorant liar: "Vous en avez menti, au respect de Dieu" (I:156). The hostess attempts to quell the outburst by exhorting them to drink: "Quoy, qu'est-ce là, voire, & faut-il que les gens doctes vivent ainsi? Boivez & vous accordez" (I:156). Uldric is calmed by her suggestion and retires to his drink, promising to be quiet: "Or soit ce qui en pourra estre, je me tay, & vous en laisse tout faire, je m'en vois me consoler avec le flacon, je vous fay juge de tout Madame" (I:156). Thus wine, which frees the inhibitions and releases the passions can also serve to soothe emotions, quiet tempers and consolidate the feelings of friendship.

As mentioned above, laughter is sometimes closely associated with wine, but on its own adds to the cacophony of festive sound. Laughter and festive noise are also present at the banquet and add to the impression of carnival. One chapter is appropriately entitled "Risee", an epithet well-suited to the mood of the symposium.

Democrites, the laughing philosopher, is one of the first of the famous guests to be introduced (I:15). Outbursts of laughter are often heard as the merry-makers express their amusement during the feast. Interjections such as "Ha, he hi hi e e e" (II:128), and "Ha ha he, ça ça" (II:191), etc., punctuate the dialogue.<sup>68</sup> The reader is constantly reminded of a laughing Carnival crowd, not only by these noisy peals of laughter frequently interjected into the narrative, but by the author's description of the guest's activities: "Toute la compagnie s'esmeut à rire, & nous nous trouvasmes joyeux & alegres comme une belle troupe de jeunes ou nouveaux Cardinaux" (I:206). The company is highly amused by Socrates at another point, and they do not attempt to restrain their laughter:

Tout le monde jusques aux Anges & aux serpens, sans les pierres & cailloux qui en creverent, se mit à rire si fort, que la mule du Curé saint Eustache en foira de si pure joye, que la vie en faillit par le fondement. (I:221-22)

The loss of physical control as an extreme result of laughter was a documented physiological reaction at the time.<sup>69</sup> In this text it adds to the impression of uncontrollable and inebriated hilarity in the symposium.

Laughter also enters into the banquet as a subject of conversation. The dialogue touches on the virtues of laughter and describes them in terms similar to the praise offered to wine.<sup>70</sup> The curative effects of laughter, like

those attributed to wine, were highly regarded by some authorities in Béroalde's time.<sup>71</sup> Whether Béroalde, as a medical doctor, was familiar with academic theory on this issue, or if the association came to him from popular sources,<sup>72</sup> he includes anecdotes in which laughter is a remedy:

Ainsi que Madame estoit tres-malade, & que l'on pensoit qu'elle expirast, environ la minuict on vint appeller monsieur le Docteur, que se jette du lict; or a-t'il une coustume de dormir sans chemise . . . . Il se leve en sursaut, & pour aller secourir Madame il met sur ses espaulles le manteau de son vallet, premier trouvé, . . . . Le manteau ne lui passoit pas le nombril, & ce personnage entra en la chambre, où Prestres, Gentilhommes, Dames & autres estoient. A son entree, tout chacun se mit à rire, . . . & Madame qui revint à ce bruit eut la mesme vision que les autres, s'en prit si fort à rire qu'elle fit un pet & fut guarie. (II:125)

An ailing minister is also cured when a humorous remark at his bedside prompts him to laugh: "Ce bon Ministre se print si fort à rire, qu'il fut tout guery . . . ." (I:54). The recovery of these persons illustrates the positive value of laughing, and thus encourages by example the torrents of boisterous laughter which carry along the narrative.

Throughout the book festive noise is present. Besides the outbursts of spontaneous laughter, the characters interrupt each other and noisily call attention to themselves. The conversation is boisterous and competitive; they even go so far as to equate speech with life, saying that he who drinks must stop speaking, for the silence is

like flirting with death. One could almost say the banquet is built on the precept Je parle, donc je suis:

"Va te promener, & me dis la raison qui fait que l'on boit les uns aux autres. --C'est pource que celui qui boit perd la parole, & devant qu'il lui avienne, il prie que l'on l'assiste s'il lui survencit danger, tandis qu'il est ainsi entre la vie & la mort, comme une ame qui sort de Purgatoire, ou qui pense y aller. (I:225)

The verbal competition causes Erasmus to complain: "Il y a plus de cinquante ans que je n'avois tant parlé sans estre escouté" (I:146). Sometimes voices are raised above the level of the din to attract attention. The host uses this technique: ". . . Le bon homme nostre hoste vint criant tout haut comme un belier esgaré, 'Ça enfans, ça ça Messieurs, c'est assez causé . . ." (I:137). At other times voices are lowered, to pass on a private communication.<sup>73</sup> The variance in pitch amid the hubbub reminds the reader that the banquet in progress has an acoustic dimension.

Other sounds also interrupt the banquet, some of which are distinctly carnivalesque:

Ainsi que je demandois à boire, vcila un grand bruit. --Quoi, dismes nous, est là le resultat de quelque Pape qui se fait, ou le Tedeum d'un fait tout nouveau? --Non, ce dit Calepin, c'est que l'on vient de couper le cou à Caresme, & nous en ouions le bruit qui en retentit de l'Eglise nostre Dame de Paris à Nantes. (II:251)

The noise heard above the laughter and the noisy conversation evokes the Shrovetide season, for it is said to be that of a carnivalesque execution, "on vient de couper le



cou à Careseme".

All of the above elements, dislocated time and space, masquerading characters, food, wine and festive noise contribute to the carnivalesque atmosphere of Ééroalde's banquet. Upon closer inspection the impression of a festival is substantiated by numerous details. The regularity of time is intentionally disrupted, lending a vague, indefinite quality to the banquet. The place is also obscured, even though it is clearly separated from the outside world. The author himself steps in and out of the loose narrative, posing as both creator and participant, frequently reminding the reader of his guiding presence and of the creative process. The figures of a festive queen and king or of a Mère Sotte and a père bon temps are present in Ééroalde's Madame Sophie and le pere spirituel. The uninhibited behaviour of the guests also implies a festival or a fol-society meeting in progress. A great variety of characters are introduced wearing their identities like Carnival masks or costumes of the popular theatre, and supernatural creatures also mingle among the revellers. Traditionally part of the festival, the banquet emphasizes the material aspect of the body and provides an excuse for festive conversation. The conspicuous presence of wine, both on the table and in the conversation, also adds to the carnivalesque atmosphere. In addition to these factors the boisterous laughter and festive noise of the company serve

to complete the impression of a liberated celebration which Béroalde presents to his reader.

In order to discover how the festive atmosphere serves Béroalde's purpose, the following chapter will turn to the content of the conversation around the table. Specifically, it will concentrate on the attitude of irreverence and sacrilege which Le Moyen de Parvenir shares with festive events like the Feast of Fools, Carnival and the activities of the fool-societies.

## CHAPTER III: NOTES

<sup>1</sup> No attempt has been made to modernize quotations from the text; therefore accents, spelling and punctuation as they stand in the text are respected.

<sup>2</sup> See above pp. 42-45.

<sup>3</sup> Béroalde mentions a change from the estoeuf to the balle in Le Palais des curieux (1612), as if it were a familiar subject, but does not give any more details about it. E. H. Clouzot, in "La Date du Moyen de Parvenir", (Revue des Etudes Rabelaisiennes, 9 (1911), 141-43. Clouzot documents the event to which Béroalde refers: "l'éteuf . . . était une balle de cuir remplie de bourre très serrée dont on se servait au jeu de paume, l'ancêtre de notre tennis moderne. Sa fabrication occupait un certain nombre d'ouvriers appelés esteufiers groupés en corporation. Est-il donc vrai qu'à un moment donné une question de mode ait substitué à cette balle classique une balle plus molle et bouleversé ainsi les traditions de ce jeu quasi-nationale? Le fait est parfaitement exact. Il se trouve relaté dans le récit de voyage d'un Anglais, Robert Dallington, qui, aux environs de l'année 1598, vint passer quelques temps à Paris. . . . 'Vous observez que leurs balles sont en coton; mode qu'ils ont adopté depuis sept ans: auparavant, elles étaient en cuir comme chez nous.' . . . c'est donc vers 1591 que s'est introduit cette mode nouvelle dans les règles du jeu de paume." Despite the accuracy of this observation the date in question is not a universally recognized event, and the mention of a changeover to "molles balles" as a reference point by which to locate Béroalde's banquet symposium in time retains its tone of parody through exaggerated precision.

<sup>4</sup> Time is playfully disrupted in another passage which concerns the publication of this book, see II:260, cited below p. 62.

<sup>5</sup> A date of publication was not necessarily included on the frontispiece of books published during Béroalde's time, and the lack of a date would not indicate a deliberate omission. In this case however, the "date" of publication is purposefully mentioned, demonstrating that the precise details are willfully withheld.

<sup>6</sup> See above p. 60.

<sup>7</sup> V.L. Saulnier, "Etude", p. 309, assumes a

relationship between Le Moyen de Parvenir and the numerous conferences held around 1577 during which the question of the Eucharist was discussed. Several were held in Switzerland where Béroalde was residing at that time. J. Pallister, World View, p. 104, also imagines a religious gathering, but she believes it may be a papal symposium. R. Cohen, Rhetoric, p. 27, suggests a papal assembly. The Council of Trent is mentioned in the text (I:110, II:70), giving weight to these theories.

<sup>8</sup> Saulnier, pp. 295-95, also notes the similarity between Le Moyen de Parvenir and the medieval Turba philosophorum, a work consisting of the conversation at an alchemical symposium: "On sait que ce livre, qui s'offre comme une adaptation abrégée du Synode de la Philosophie de Pythagoras, figure un congrès d'alchimistes, présentés sous les noms des philosophes grecs antiques . . . d'ailleurs déformés par leurs transcriptions successives de grec en arabe et en latin. . . . On touche là du doigt, conclut W. Ganzenmüller, l'effort fait pour établir un rapport (des doctrines alchimiques) avec la philosophie grecque, rapport qui demeure ici tout à fait superficiel, limité aux noms, en effet ce que chaque philosophe expose n'a rien à faire avec ses propres doctrines!" Le procédé de Béroalde n'est-il pas une transposition burlesque du même procédé en un livre dont toute la présentation n'est que parodie?". Many of the speakers in Le Moyen de Parvenir are famous alchemists: Paracelsus, Lulle, Geber, Agrippa. Béroalde was known to have an interest in alchemy and had written a treatise on the subject, Les Recherches de la Pierre philosophale, 1583.

<sup>9</sup> See Heinrich Schneegans (Strassburg: Trübner, 1894), Geschichte der Grotesken Satire, p. 289. He briefly notes a resemblance between Béroalde's style and that of Mère Folle but does not elaborate.

<sup>10</sup> Du Tilliot, Mémoires, published several invitations to banquets of the Infanterie Dijonnaise, for example "Invitation pour se trouver à l'Assemblée de l'Infanterie Dijonnaise", pp. 83-85:

Je viens de la part de la Mère,  
Mère aux Foux, & Sages prospère,  
Vous dire que depuis long-tems,  
Elle n'a vû son cher Bon-Tems,  
Voici le jour qui nous éveille,  
Qui l'entend ne faut qu'une oreille;  
Le bon Père est si curieux  
De rendre ses Enfants heureux,  
Qu'il ne veut pas que l'on leur vende,  
Chapon, Perdrix, Canard, ni viande,

Quelle qu'elle soit à ce jur,  
 Crainte de perdre son amour,  
 Plus qu'il faut à ce que sa table  
 Soit en toute sorte agréable . . . . .

<sup>11</sup> Béroalde had translated two of these pastoral novels, La Diane (1592) by Jorge de Montemayor, and Le Songe de Polyphile (1600) by Francesco Colonna. He also wrote a long novel in the same style, Les Aventures de Floride, which appeared in six volumes from 1593-1596.

<sup>12</sup> See also I:194, "Epanimondas" returns to the table.

<sup>13</sup> Le Moyen de Parvenir, ed. Paul Lacroix (Paris: Gosselin, 1841), p. 2, note 5.

<sup>14</sup> Royer, (Index, p. 311) hesitantly suggests that "nostre pere se Puissetuer" is a pun on "nostre pere spirituel", a speculation repeated by Saulnier, "Etude", p. 155.

<sup>15</sup> Sound clusters such as "alicament-alimentez" and "allegresse-vitesse" occur in the following quotation from the Infanterie Dijonnaise. This and similar documents also reflect the burlesque tone of Béroalde's convocation in numerous examples of exaggeration and strings of similar words. "Les Superlatiques & Mirelifiques Loppinans de L'Infanterie dijonnaise; A tous Foux, Archifoux, Lunatiques, Eventez, Minimes, Crochus, Almanachs vieux & ncueux, à qui en voudra; Salut & gard; Santé, Escus, Ducats, Pistolles, Jacobus & autres Espèces. Etant imbus, & alicament alimentez de la viande solide, & autres espèces pansadices selon le tems, & dignement informez de la légéreté des sens, moeurs, allegresse & vitesse des machoires, hardiesse, friandise, galantise, suffisance & expérience des dents." Du Tilliot, Mémoires, p. 77.

<sup>16</sup> See for example the opening monologue in the Jeu du Prince des Sots by Gringore: "Sotz lunatiques, Sotz estourdis, Sotz sages, Sotz de villes, de chasteaulx, de villages, Sotz rassotez, Sotz nyais, Sotz subtilz, Sotz amoureux, Sotz priviez, Sotz sauvages, Sotz vieux, ncueux, et Sotz de toutes ages, . . . Sottes dames et Sottes damoiselles, Sottes vieilles, Sottes jeunes, ncouvelles, . . . Le Mardy Gras jouera le Prince aux Halles". Oeuvres complètes de Gringore, (Paris: Jannet, 1858), pp. 201-2.

<sup>17</sup> Cited by Du Tilliot, Mémoires, p. 83. (buse refers to a dim-witted person.)

<sup>18</sup> Du Tilliot, p. 66.

<sup>19</sup> In the "Sottie des Trompeurs" all those invited are urged to spare no trouble in attending the celebration: "S'il y a closture / Qui vous garde que icy ne povez pas, / Abbatez tout, rompez, faictes ouverture, / Et acccurez plus viste que le pas". Ancien Théâtre v. 2, p. 244. Words spoken by the Roy des Sots in the sotie of his name, illustrate the mandatory quality of the invitation sent out to those devoted to him, p. 223:

Pourquoy, sus peine de l'amende,  
Soyent en present ou absens  
Maintenant viennent tous, sans  
Delay ne estat demander,  
Ne procureur pour eulx mander,  
Car ainsi me plaist estre faict,  
Ou aultrement de leur forfaict  
Les faire griefment pugnir.  
Pensez doncques tous de venir  
Devant que encourir mon ire.

<sup>20</sup> Du Tilliot, Mémoires, pp. 88-9, includes a sonnet addressed to the Mère Folle of Dijon, probably in the early XVIIth century. It indicates the sort of respect this figure inspired:

Mere, le seul objet de nôtre Infanterie,  
Par qui les sages Foux respirent à l'envi,  
Autant que le Soleil dans l'Olympe reluit,  
Ainsi puissent durer & ton los & ta vie!

Que tous ces vieux Suppots, qui vers toi se rallient  
Puissent s'éterniser dans l'oublieuse nuit!  
Que l'on n'entende rien retentir que le bruit,  
De trompette & Tambour de la Mère-Folle!

Bref, bref, cher Nourrisson d'Apollon & Minerve,  
Pour qui les sages Foux du siècle se réveillent,  
Les Tutelaires Dieux puissent favoriser,

Toujours vos beaux desseins, & chez vous les graces  
Puissent sympathiser, & toujours trouver places,  
Et tous vos vœux enfin toujours autoriser!

<sup>21</sup> See the above sonnet, lines 7-8. The Enfans de Bon-Temps, a fool-society of Geneva, performed soties in 1523 and 1524 in which Mère Sotte and Bon Temps are mother and father figures. See Enid Welsford, The Fool, pp. 226-28.

<sup>22</sup> Du Tilliot, Mémoires, pp. 90, 105, 107.

<sup>23</sup> Le Moyen de Parvenir, Garnier edition (Paris: Garnier, n.d.), p. 192, note 2.

<sup>24</sup> Royer includes an index of names cited in his edition of Le Moyen de Parvenir, II:277-303.

<sup>25</sup> Ancient authors in particular included famous personnages in their symposia, see below, note 45. The medieval Turba philosophorum cited by Saulnier also imagines the conversation of a congress of famous alchemists, see above, note 8.

<sup>26</sup> See also I:302, 303.

<sup>27</sup> Roger Caillois, Les Jeux et les hommes (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), pp. 42-3.

<sup>28</sup> See for example, Le Miracle de Théophile, Ed. Robert Harden (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1967), pp. 57-84. Three XIIIth century anecdotes about pacts with the devil are also found in Mensa Philosophica attributed to Michael Scott, trans. Arthur S. Way (London: Macmillan, 1936), pp. 7-8.

<sup>29</sup> Petit de Julleville, La Comédie et les mœurs en France au moyen-âge (1886; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1968), pp. 54-55. He confirms the link between the fabliaux and the farces: "L'influence des fabliaux sur les farces est incontestée. L'esprit des deux genres est sensiblement le même. Le fabliau raconte vivement dans un rythme court et dans un style aisé, une aventure plaisante; la farce s'empare du même fait, et, dans le même style et la même mesure, elle met en dialogue et en scène ce que le fabliau avait raconté. Ajoutons, ce qui est frappant, que l'époque où l'on cesse de composer des fabliaux est précisément celle où l'on commence à écrire les farces; le XIIIe siècle et le XIVE appartiennent aux fabliaux; le XVe siècle et le XVIe aux farces."

<sup>30</sup> See for example I:257,268; II:60, 78, 217, 221.

<sup>31</sup> See for example I:7-8, 77, 173, 182, 244, etc.

<sup>32</sup> "Qui rit, il dilate son esprit, son coeur s'ouvre, et, ses pensées se manifestans, parvient comme en l'âge de désirable innocence, sans fard et sans donner occasion de sinistre jugement . . . En riant de coeur franc, on fait voir ce qu'il y a de bon en ce petit cabinet d'affection, . . . Rire désirablement, c'est estre en une dilatation de courage, ravi comme au ciel en comble de liesse." Cited by

Saulnier, "Etude", p. 279.

<sup>33</sup> The Saturnalian festival is remembered for its annual overturning of the social hierarchy. See above pp. 25-26.

<sup>34</sup> During Carnival and related festivals such as the Feast of Fools the inversion of the social hierarchy elevated the lower classes to ephemeral positions of authority. It was this group which then left their imprint on the style of the festival.

<sup>35</sup> See above Chapter II, p. 33.

<sup>36</sup> E. O. James, Seasonal Feasts, p. 134, states that in ancient Greece . . . "a festival was in very truth a feast, as indeed it often still is in the more rustic and remote parts of Greece, feasting being combined with music, dancing, games and merrymaking . . .". James also observes, p. 319, that "In the folk feasts the ancient ritual performed with such deadly earnestness in the Fertile Crescent before it passed into peasant Europe by way of the Eastern Mediterranean, the Danube and the Atlantic littoral, survived in Masquerades, dances, and customs, partly serious and partly frivolous, but retaining the essential features and structure of the earlier observances. In the process of diffusion it lost much of its earlier stern reality and more sinister elements, becoming the occasion for popular relaxation, dancing, games, feasting, carnival and revelry in a serio-comic vein."

<sup>37</sup> See the fabliau "Le Pays de Cockaigne", in Fabliaux et contes des poètes français des XI, XII, XIII, XIV, et XVe siècles, D.M. Méon, ed. (Paris: Warée, 1808), v. 4, pp. 175-81. And "Het Luilekkerland" ("The Land of Cockaigne"), a painting by Peter Breughel (1567).

<sup>38</sup> Bakhtin mentions the many village fairs celebrated in the XVIth century, Rabelais, p. 79. One has only to remember the fairs of Lyon during which Rabelais sold his writings, and the wedding banquets, one of which is turned into a carnivalesque thrashing scene by Rabelais, Le Quart Livre, XV (Garnier ed., II, 81-84). Feasting was also an important part of the activities of the fowl-societies in the XVIth century.

<sup>39</sup> A certain gentleman is requested to appear before the Infanterie Dijonnaise and if he comes armed, they hope it will only be with banquet accessories:

S'il vient qu'il n'apporte point d'armes,



Car les Foux craignent les allarmes,  
Si ce n'est avec bons jambons,  
Patez, bouteilles, & Flaccons. (Du Tilliot, p. 86).

<sup>40</sup> Du Tilliot, Mémoires, p. 72. He also illustrates the emphasis placed on banqueting abilities in another passage, p. 74: ". . . La légèreté des sens, mœurs, allegresse de machoires, vitesse, hardiesse, galantise, friandise, suffisance & experience tant des dents qu'autres membres".

<sup>41</sup> A mock heroic treatment of eating and drinking appears also in the documents of the Infanterie Dijonnaise cited by Du Tilliot, p. 81. A candidate is praised for his "Faits heroiques, sa dextérité au maniment des Armes Bachiques . . .".

<sup>42</sup> There are several direct references to the banquet in progress, and many specific mentions of the food and wine being consumed; see for example I:8,17,23,42,145,216; II:132,162,236,259, et passim.

<sup>43</sup> Rabelais, Gargantua, (Garnier ed., I, 9). See also Le Tiers Livre "Prologue", (I, 398-99): "Icy beuvant je delibere, je discours, je resoulz et concluds. Après l'epilogue je riz, j'escripz, je compose, je boy. Ennius beuvant escrivoit, escrivant beuvoit. Aeschylus . . . Beuvoit composant, beuvant composoit. Homere jamais n'escrivit à jeun. Caton jamais n'escrivit que après boyre."

<sup>44</sup> Plato (Symposium, c. 384-369 B.C.) recounts in dialogue form the conversation and events at a banquet; among other well known men of the time present is Socrates, also a prominent guest at Béroalde's banquet. Xenophon (Symposium, c. 350 B.C.) was also inspired by the memory of Socrates' behaviour at a banquet. The guest list is composed mainly of historical personages. Plutarch (Symposiasts, c. 46-120 A.D.) wrote an imaginary prandial conversation between wise men, some of them famous thinkers who lived three centuries before the author. Petronius, d. 65 A.D., composed the Satiricon which includes the famous "Dinner with Trimalcio". The fragment containing the feast scene could have inspired Béroalde if he had access to a copy of it. (The work was not officially discovered until 1633.) Athenaeus (Deipnosophists, c. 200 AD.) gives a lengthy record of banquet conversation touching on every aspect of the life of his time. Macrobius (Saturnalia, c. 400 A.D.) relates the conversation which takes place at an imaginary banquet held during the Saturnalian festival. Though his guests do not behave in saturnalian fashion as do Béroalde's, they give valuable information on the customs

surrounding that festival.

<sup>45</sup> The loosely woven framework was used by many authors of the XVth century. Marguerite de Navarre (L'Heptaméron, 1559) causes her speakers to gather due to a flood which interrupts their various journeys; Jacques Iver (Le Printemps, 1572) groups his speakers in a country château. Bénigne Poissenot (L'Esté, 1583) imagines a conversation of students; Nicolas de Cholières (Les Matinées, 1585; Les Après-dînées, 1587) structures his works around a series of morning and after-dinner conversations, and Guillaume Bouchet (Les Soirées, 1584-98) records the evening conversations of a group of bourgeois in Poitiers.

<sup>46</sup> Lucian, Saturnalia, p. 95, gives an example of festive free talk. The god Cronus reproaches the Priest (the author) for an indiscreet question: "If it were not festival-time, my man, and if you weren't allowed to get drunk and cheek your masters with impunity, you would have found out that I'm allowed to be angry at any rate--asking such questions and showing no respect for a grey-haired old god like me!"

<sup>47</sup> I:13-16.

<sup>48</sup> See also I:145, "... Je desire me refectiionner d'un peu de viande & de liqueur".

<sup>49</sup> See also II:120, "Boivons un bon coup, puis nous sçaurons cela".

<sup>50</sup> Other reminders of the wine being consumed by the banquet guests are scattered throughout the text, I:140, "boivons, lavons le cou par dedans"; I:141, "A cela il beut"; I:145, "Boivons et gay"; II:251, "Ainsi que je demandois à boire"; see also I:155, I:202, etc.

<sup>51</sup> A pointless discussion about the wine consumed at a previous banquet given by Seneca covers a page of dialogue, I:142. Another discussion covers the relative merits of wine and water: "... Quand un homme entre où l'on disne, lequel est le plus excellent si on lui present de l'eau ou du vin?" The guests consider this problem seriously, and it is even suggested that it was debated by the Council of Trent: "O la belle proposition! O le beau problemesme notable, qui fut debattu au Concile de trois dixaines!" (II:70).

<sup>52</sup> Sybiles: ancient prophetesses.

<sup>53</sup> "Boire en Theologien" is an expression defined by

Bakhtin (Rabelais, p. 216) as an example of debasing travesty; it means "a good drinking bout".

<sup>54</sup> Another short exchange illustrates the olfactory pleasure wine brings: "Vous n'avez point parlé de l'odeur du vin? --N'importe, pource qu'il ne peut faillir de sentir bon" (II:248).

<sup>55</sup> See also II:120, ". . . L'on ne meurt que de faute de boire & manger, & bref de faire les vertus Cardinales".

<sup>56</sup> In the "Institution de Maître Jean Fachon" cited by Du Tilliot, Mémoires, p. 81, the new member is welcomed only after having taken a pledge: "Protestation par lui faite sur le Chaperon de bien vivre, boire, manger & rire".

<sup>57</sup> See also Rabelais' dedication to the readers of Gargantua, (Garnier ed., I, 3):

Mieulx est de ris que de larmes escripre,  
Pour ce que rire est le propre de l'homme.

<sup>58</sup> Royer edition, Glossary (II:315), "cas: au sens libre".

<sup>59</sup> See Le Moyen de Parvenir, Garnier edition, p. 17, note 1, "pauvreté: faire l'amour". Éroalde whimsically traces the etymology of this expression, I:63.

<sup>60</sup> Éroalde promotes the health-giving powers of wine in another of his works, Le Palais des Curieux, 1612: "Je veux enseigner un beau secret à ceux qui ne savent pas: Mettez du sel bien net dans de bon vin . . . ce vin est le plus exquis preservatif que l'on puisse imaginer contre la peste . . .", p. 514. Wine was promoted as conducive to good health much earlier in the history of prandial literature also. A XIIIth century guide to banqueting attributed to Michael Scott, Mensa Philosophica, (trans. Arthur S. Way) quotes ancient authorities in the promotion of wine. Quoting Isaac, an Arabic-speaking Jewish scholar of the Xth century and Rasis, an Arab medical scholar also of the Xth century, Scott concludes that by wine "health and strength are prolonged", p. 7-8.

<sup>61</sup> Rabelais mentions the discovery of truth at the bottom of a well twice, Pantagruel, XVIII (Garnier ed., I, 315), and Le Tiers Livre, XXXVI (I, 552), but Éroalde has added the element of wine.

<sup>62</sup> The theme in vino veritas is also exploited by Rabelais in his Cinquième Livre, XXXVI (Garnier ed., II,

425-26). He uses "truth" in a broad sense: "En fin des degrez rencontrasmes un portal de fin Jaspe . . . En la face duquel estoit en letres Ioniques d'cr trespeur, escrite cette sentence . . . 'en vin verite'." The truth alluded to is universal and philosophic, unlike the reduced "truth" found in Béroalde's wine; the latter seems to be mocking the adage, in vino veritas.

<sup>63</sup> Cited above, p. 92

<sup>64</sup> See I:161, 165, 223 and II:147. In Le Palais des Curieux (1612), p.293, Béroalde lashes out against ignorant alchemists: "Et c'est à fin que la vanité de ces doctes qui gastent toute notre cabale, ne paroisse, & que leur bestise ne soit decouverte, . . . ils tiennent leurs secrets cachez, lesquels ne sont points, ou bien seront quelques vetilles importunes, rapetassees des anciennes folies des premiers fous. . . . Vous cognoistrez aysement les hommes de telles feces, ce seroit dommage de dire farine". He also states in the same work, p. 191, that he highly respects the honest and competent alchemists.

<sup>65</sup> Petit de Julleville, La Comédie et les mœurs en France au moyen-âge, (1886; rpt. Geneva: Slatkine, 1968), p.75.

<sup>66</sup> Another passage also includes terms of divine adoration: "Allez à l'escole, & sçachez, apprenez, entendez & notez, comme Monsieur de Beze me l'a appris, que la quatriesme clef fondamentale des trois clefs communes, est la divine, douce, humaine & sainte harmonie, est la bonne clef de la cave; c'est la sainte et harmonieuse clef, c'est la fidelle et parfaite" (I:113).

<sup>67</sup> See above pp. 37-38.

<sup>68</sup> Other such outbursts can be found throughout the text, for example, I:106, II:158.

<sup>69</sup> Laurent Joubert, Le Traité du Ris (Paris: N. Chesneau, 1579), discusses the physiological effects of laughter and devotes a chapter to "D'où vient qu'on pisse, fiante, & sue à force de rire", p. 127 ff. Also p. 139.

<sup>70</sup> Béroalde gives a mock scientific description of the effect laughter has on the company: "Nous rismes si fort & à propos, que le boyau culier se dilatant en la voye du sphinter qui se relascha . . . " (II:154). The tone also recalls Rableais' attitude towards laughter: see above, notes 44 and 57.

<sup>71</sup> Joubert, Traité, p. 330, cites cases in which laughter cures patients: in a chapter devoted to the subject, "Quel bien apporte le Ris, & si quelque malade peut guerir à force de rire". He concludes, "comme l'être joyeux, & prompt à rire, signifie un bon naturel, & pureté de sang, ainsi par contre, cela aide à la santé du corps & de l'esprit"; he also quotes, "le traessain conseil de Marsile Ficin, où il exhorte ces amis en cette sorte: 'Vivés joyeusement, dit-il. Le ciel vous ha créés fasson de rire... Il vous conservera aussi par vottre liesse.'" Joubert also cites Quintilien on this subject, p. 7: "On ha vù des malades guerir par ce seul remede".

<sup>72</sup> The theme of laughter as a remedy was also widespread in popular literature. See for example the fabliaux, "Le vilain Mire", Recueil général et complet des fabliaux des XIII et XIVe siècles, Anatole de Montaiglon and Gaston Raynaud, eds., (Paris: Librairie des bibliophiles, 1878) III, 156-69.

<sup>73</sup> I:148, cited above, p. 66.

## CHAPTER IV

FESTIVE SACRILEGE IN LE MOYEN DE PARVENIR

Carnavalesque celebrations of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance were characterized by sacrilegious mockery and uninhibited self-indulgence. The free and audacious festive sacrilege was an expression of the unofficial aspect of religion, and provided a contrast to the formal, "official" religion which inspired awe, respect and obedience in everyday life. The solemn ceremonies, the fear-provoking descriptions of Hell, and the exhortations to suffer pain and depravations on earth in preparation for future Paradise were all overturned during the festival. At that time, everything having to do with the formal religion was irreverently inverted to the accompaniment of mocking laughter.

Paradoxical as it may appear on the surface, this traditional inversion of religion was deeply rooted in a

profound faith. Carnavalesque sacrilege was part of a carefully balanced tension, and actually served to reinforce the official religion by providing a kind of social safety valve.<sup>1</sup> This concept is formulated by the defender of the Feast of Fools quoted earlier in this study, who compares humans to wine barrels which would burst without the periodical release of pressure provided by festive "folie": "Or nous sommes de vieux vaisseaux & des tonneaux mal reliez, que le vin de la sagesse feroit rompre si nous le laissions bouillir ainsi par une dévction continuelle au service Divin."<sup>2</sup> He then concludes that after the festival, the celebrants can return to everyday life and worship "avec plus de joye & de ferveur".

The spirit of festive sacrilege is evidence during the Feast of Fools and other celebrations described earlier<sup>3</sup> carries over into popular speech and into literature. Informal language is filled with examples of such sacrilege in the form of blasphemous equivocations, travesties of the Scriptures and wordplay on the names of saints.<sup>4</sup> The same spirit also animates many literary works which are either directly or indirectly associated with Carnival. They include for example the many literary accounts of the battle between Carnival and Lent,<sup>5</sup> the mock religious rites in the Roman de Renart,<sup>6</sup> the blasphemous rejection of Heaven by the young hero in Aucassin et Nicolette,<sup>7</sup> and the liberties of the sermons joyeux.<sup>8</sup>

Frequently, the agent of sacred inversion is depicted as an ecclesiastic, and this person's failure to live up to his holy vows of self-denial and chastity brings ridicule upon the sacred way of life he represents as well as upon himself. The unfailing laughter which this stereotyped ecclesiastic provokes seems to arise not only from the pleasure inherent in mocking the sacred, but also from a strong aversion felt by the common people for those men and women pledged to a passive and chaste ecclesiastic life: "A preacher who inveighed against the ecclesiastical state was sure of being applauded. . . . There is no more effective means of reviving attention when the congregation is dropping off to sleep, or suffering from heat or cold. Everybody instantly becomes attentive and cheerful."<sup>9</sup> Thus the comic representation of a monk displaying his base qualities and breaking his sacred vows was met with laughing approval in many fabliaux, farces and satirical works. Marot's "Frère Lubin", Rabelais' "Frère Jean", and many of Béroalde's worldly ecclesiastics issue from this current of characterization.<sup>10</sup>

The portrait of religious life which begins to emerge from Le Moyen de Parvenir is drawn lightly and with humour, emphasizing the human element in religion. In order to examine the treatment of the sacred in Le Moyen de Parvenir, this study will first focus on Béroalde's use of



traditionally inverted forms: travesties of the Scriptures or of religious rites, amusingly irreverent occurrences in the church, and ridicule of the clergy.

The elements of traditional inversion in Le Moyen de Parvenir, while not presented in an orderly manner, are easily identifiable. These examples of blatant irreverence set the mood of flippant sacrilege which is retained throughout. One of the most obvious explications of the tradition of festive sacrilege is the use of travestied Scriptures. In these examples the sacred text is plunged from the sublime to the ridiculous by a direct reversal of meaning; Biblical passages are turned to parody and appear to promote the "vices" they were meant to forbid. A verse from the gospel of St. Matthew is reversed, urging the opposite of Christian forgiveness: ". . . selon que l'Evangile s'enseigne aux gens d'Eglise: si on vous frappe en une joue, baillez une belle & forte jouee en l'autre" (II:107).<sup>11</sup> After this statement, "Luther" reinforces the revised interpretation, citing the religious brothers, as authorities: "Quand j'estois d'Eglise, je l'oyois ainsi interpreter, inter fratres, penes quos est l'intelligence des Escritures" (II:107). Also in parody of the Scriptures well-known Christian commandments are irreverently reversed in order to accommodate a more worldly morality: "Pere et mere honoreras, afin d'avoir bien de l'argent. L'oeuvre de chair n'accompliras qu'avec les belles seulement. Faux

tesmoinage ne diras qu'en mariage seulement" (I:269).<sup>12</sup>

Deliberate misinterpretation of a Biblical text taken out of context also drastically alters the meaning of a text while not actually changing the words. The narrator shows that he is well aware of the sacrilege involved in this practice when he states that he cannot tell a certain anecdote containing an inversion of the Scripture because it would be blasphemous; of course, while explaining what it is he must not say, the tale is out:

Si je n'avois peur de blasphemer, je dirois quelque chose des cinq Religieuses qui furent baillées à gouverner à frere Notonville, qui les engrossa toutes, & comme on l'en tançoit il dit, "Quinque & c. Tu m'as baillé cinq talens, j'en ay gagné cinq autres". (II:53)<sup>13</sup>

A phrase from Genesis, I:28, "soyez feconds, multipliez, remplissez la terre . . .", is also taken out of context and then used to promote amorous indulgence and the natural cycle of life. The new interpretation of the phrase manages to combine festive sacrilege and the popular aversion for monks:

Voire ne faut il pas bien s'esbattre, & principalement à jeux auxquels il convient: n'est il pas dit: Croissez, multipliez & remplissez la terre! Et qu'est-ce sinon qu'il est enjoint par nature aux petits de croistre, aux forts & de bon aage competant de multiplier, & aux vieillards de se laisser mcurir pour emplir la terre? Et cela aussi appartient à ceux qui veulent faire les vieux, à ces idicts vcuez cafards & inutiles, qui ne font que scandalizer le bon monde de Dieu. (II:13)

In the latter part of this statement, the vehement disapproval of those who keep their vows of chastity, and

repress sensuality, expresses the same kind of hostility which is directed towards those sober souls who do not or cannot join the Carnival.<sup>14</sup>

A lighter example of scriptural reversal features a brash young monk who is caught with a young girl perpetuating the monkish reputation of concupiscence. When upbraided by his superiors, like Frere Notonville above (p. 120), this young man quotes the Bible. By combining a verse from Isaiah (40:6) with his vow of poverty he manages to justify his behavior while inverting the rules of his order:

La nuict passee il y eut un moine dur, gay, & galland, qui fut surpris avec une garce, j'ay quasi dit avec une grace, il n'y a que transposition de lettres; il s'estoit esbatu avec elle, cum commento, & la sauce. Ses superieurs lui remonstrèrent qu'il avoit offencé. En s'excusant il demonstra que non, disant qu'il s'estoit, selon la pauvreté de l'Ordre couché sur un boiteau de foin, quia omnis caro feonum, toute chair est foin: concluez. (I:73)<sup>15</sup>

In the same manner, Béroalde's speakers invert religious texts in Latin. These travestied Latin phrases from the liturgy or the Scriptures recall the spirit of the Feast of Fools during which the lower clergy parodied the Latin texts and phrases which governed their daily life. As mentioned above,<sup>16</sup> the Feast of Fools began with a verse in Latin taken from the Magnificat, "Deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles", which was chanted and subsequently applied literally. Like Rabelais who exploited this technique before him,<sup>17</sup> Béroalde sometimes inverts a Latin

text for comic effect and to illustrate the ignorance of the clergy. Various speakers report the speech they have heard from certain ecclesiastics:

Le coq de nostre parroisse voulant dire à l'Evengile gloria tibi Domini, faisoit le docteur & disoit, gloria edit homines. (II:106)<sup>18</sup>

Ce Latin est pareil a celui du Vicaire de Chamberi, qui lisoit l'Evangile des cinq pains; & au lieu de dire, "Ut quisque accipiat modicum," il dit: "Accipiat modium." (II:232)<sup>19</sup>

Other examples are provided by the ingenuousness of the people who confuse the meaning of a language they do not understand with their own familiar vocabulary. In this way sacred text is brought into focus on a lower, tangible level, and in the transposition the passage acquires a tint of irony. When an old servant woman misinterprets the Kyrie as "o cul ridé" (II:213), she transfers the sublime to the ridiculous. Similarly a young mother finds a name for her fatherless son through a misinterpretation of the Scripture during mass:

. . . Jaquette du Mans . . . fit un enfant sans sçavoir le nom ny le surnom du pere, dequoy elle estoit fort dolente; son enfant fut nommé Adam; un jour qu'elle estoit au sermon elle ouyt le prescheur qui s'effiloit d'alleguer l'escriture, & disoit, "Adam ubi es?" ceste fillette sortit tout incontinent de là tres-aise de sçavoir le surnom de son fils: on luy avoit dit que les prescheurs sçavoient tout, parquoy elle nomma depuis son fils Adam de biais. (I:143)<sup>20</sup>

Along with the Latin liturgy, the Christian saints were travestied. The cult of the saints, which by the late XVth

century had succeeded in making the saints real and familiar personages in the contemporary religion,<sup>21</sup> also helped to remove them from a position of awe and mystery in the minds of the people even outside the festival. This kind of familiarity when no longer restricted to festive occasions was bound to cloud the division between the sacred and the profane in some minds. Béroalde cites the case of a peasant woman, who while receiving the last rites reveals her naive concept of the saints: ". . . la femme se mouroit, & le Prestre lui disoit qu'elle alloit en Paradis, où elle verroit les bons saincts, avec lesquels elle seroit: 'A ha, dit elle, il n'est que d'estre parmi le monde qu'on cognoist'" (II:113).

Sacred and profane elements become so close through the cult of the saints that even some members of the clergy who come from humble backgrounds, cannot clearly distinguish between the venerated spirits and living persons. A credulous parish priest at once concludes that the statues of the saints, in company with the figure of the devil under St. Michael, have descended from their places in the church to eat the goose which he had stolen and hidden there. Actually, in his absence, his valet and chambermaid have led their friends in for a feast and then greased the mouths and hands of the statues and put them near the remains of the meal. Upon his return the ignorant and corrupt priest "forgives" all of the saints as he might a wayward

parishoner, all but the devil:

Il entra en l'Eglise, & voyant tant de saints autour de son coffre à l'oye, "O ho, dit il, & qui, tous les diables, vous a mis là?" Estant approché & les voyans ainsi, gras par le muscle & les mains, & la cuisse en la gorge du diable, la lui arracha, disant, "Vilain que tu és, je ne me souci pas des autres, mais toi, j'en aimerois mieux estrangler que tu l'eusses, & da, j'en tasterai": comme il la savourcit, il se va scuenir de sa faute, si qu'il sonna les cloches pour appeler le peuple à ce grand miracle. (II:109)

Familiarity with the saints also led to the more conscious impiety of corrupting their names by coarse puns. The phrase "to honor St. Mamik" came to mean going to see a mistress, and St. Vitus was a phallic reference.<sup>22</sup> This casual impiety with saints' names appears in Le Moyen de Parvenir in a phallic reference to the "verges de St. Benoist" (I:64),<sup>23</sup> and in a deliberate corruption of Saint Luke's name to "Seigneur Luxu" (II:218).<sup>24</sup> To make someone into "un vrai Saint Christophe de Pasques fleuris" (I:142) meant to make a fool of them,<sup>25</sup> and St. Gilles is linked to cowardly behaviour, "Faire Gilles" (I:120) meaning to turn and run away.<sup>26</sup>

The derivation of the expression, "faire Gilles", provokes a discussion on what it would be like to lead a saintly life. The prospect is roundly derided in this conversation of Béroalde's shrewd and worldly guests who consider the elevated attitude of a saint and his voluntary rejection of material wealth and physical comforts to be pure folly, nothing more. "Scaliger" begins the discussion:

. . . pourquoy est-ce que quand quelqu'un s'en est fuy on dit "il a fait gilles?"  
 Protagoras. C'est pource que saint Gilles s'enfuit de son païs, & se cacha de peur d'estre fait Roy.  
 Epaminondas. O de par plus de cinq cens mille cornes de coqu, j'aimerois mieux n'estre point tant saint; j'aimerois mieux estre Roy qu'hermite. Et quoy il y a tant de gens qui se donnent au Diable, poil & tout, pour devenir grands; & y en a d'autres qui sous le voile de religion, faisant un affront à la Fortune contristent le bonheur! Foin je ne passeray point outre, je ne me rendray jamais en communauté que de Princes & grands Seigneurs, d'autant que je n'ay point le coeur à la gaymanderie. J'en sçay bon gré à ce bcn Cordelier frere Hugonis qui au commencement de l'establissement des Capucins se faschoit de leur future pauvreté, & tout en colere nous dit: "Si nous qui avons le diable au corps ne pouvons vivre, que feront en fin ces pauvres gens?" (I:120-21)

Other sacrilegious comments in Le Mcyen de Parvenir reflect a carnivalesque image of the Afterlife. The official images of Heaven and Hell, whether represented on church walls or in the sermons, depict the former as a place of static bliss and the latter as a fiery pit of horror and pain.<sup>27</sup> Both are awe-inspiring and clearly beyond human control. The vivid portrayal of the Underworld in particular exploits the universal fear of the unknown, of death, darkness and evil. During Carnival however, there is a collective effort to counter the fear by comically inverting the official images of Hell and of evil. The diableries for example, introduce devils on the stage, but only as harmless buffoons, and the spectators enthusiastically participate in the collective relief provided by laughter which overcomes the fear.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the devils who figure in Le Mcyen de

Parvenir are essentially harmless and comic creatures. Patterned on human dimensions, they are not at all terrifying. The first mention of a devil for example, supposes him relaxing at play, candid and harmless: "Si un diable jouoit avec vous il ne se pourroit feindre, il vous feroit voir ses cornes" (I:4). Other images of the infernal inhabitants picture them laughing: ". . . la plus part de nos sçavans . . . sont tant veaux, que les diables aux heures de recreation en font des contes pour rire" (I:129), and merry like "Frostibus", who is allowed to enter and speak with the banqueting company because he is "bon Diable" and comes in "gay & gaillard" (II:128).

The devils are not without malice, but they are mischievous rather than fiendishly evil. Typical of the deeds attributed to them is that of kneeling beside chambermaids and encouraging them to gossip during mass, but doing so with great care, "de peur de se pocher les yeux" since they reputedly had eyes on their knees (I:19-20). This reduces them to grotesque little creatures whose physical bodies ludicrously restrict their activities. Another prank of the devil is to mischievously trick a peasant into spoiling his bed (I:219).

The devil figures prominently in informal vocabulary also, and this invocation of the devil in informal language parallels the act of jeering him familiarly during the diableries. Saying the name of the devil in conversation or



directly insulting the "devils" cavorting on the stage both constitute a direct confrontation with a source of terror, but under these conditions the individual knows he will emerge victorious and laughing with the comfort of being surrounded by others who share his experience. Doubtless the invocation of the devil in familiar speech was done at first with a strong feeling of transgression, but as it passed into the popular idiom it lost some of its strength through overuse. Such expressions as "que Diable" (I:170), "pauvre Diable" (II:131), "de par le Diable" (II:34), "tous les Diables" (II:109), frequently punctuate the dialogue in Le Moyen de Parvenir. The expression is sometimes softened, from "diable" to "diantre", and the way this euphemism is employed indicates there is still some sense of transgression in the word diable. One character objects to the weakening of the word to "diantre" because it flatters the devil. He affirms that the devil should be directly invoked: "Ne le flattez point, nommez le Diable tout à fait" (I:172). This speaker recognizes that reluctance to say "diable" belies a fear and respect associated with that name. This is the fear and awe which the festive spirit seeks to overcome.

The glimpses of Hell which Béroalde allows his reader do not evoke an Underworld of unspeakable horror. Suffering and torture in fact are not even mentioned. Instead, the main inconvenience seems to be that it is overcrowded.

According to "Frostibus" there is hardly room for the devils themselves: "il y a desia tant de damnez en Enfer, que les pauvres diables couchent dehors" (II:129-30). Play and laughter exist in that infernal environment as well. As mentioned above (p. 26), the inhabitants have time to relax, "heures de recreation", which they spend telling funny stories (I:129). Thus both the Underworld and its inhabitants are taken down from their menacing positions and made familiar and laughable.

The official image of Paradise is also altered to more familiar proportions. It is a naive peasant who brings the lofty concept down to earth, for he imagines Heaven only as an extension of his terrestrial life. The distance created by awe of the supernatural is entirely missing as he makes plans for his activities in Paradise:

Le pauvre bon homme des champs estoit au lit de la mort, le Prestre lui preschoit la resurrection, afin qu'il n'eut point de regret à cette vie, & suivant son propos lui disoit, qu'apres le jugement il n'y auroit plus ny montagne ny vallee. "O c, dit le paisan, il sera donc beau charroyer". (II:112)

This man's wife judges the advantages of Heaven in equally familiar and terrestrial terms:

Un peu apres aussi la femme se mouroit, & le Prestre lui doit qu'elle alloit en Paradis, où elle verroit les bons saints, avec lesquels elle seroit: "a ha, dit elle, il n'est que d'estre parmi le monde qu'on cognoist". (II:112-13)

The static and beautiful celestial world painted by

official doctrine actually seems to bore some of the people, who dare to voice their opinion under the protection of festive privilege. Rejection of the official Paradise for a more worldly concept disagrees with official church dogma, for it concentrates on earthbound joys and allows celebrants to escape from sobering thoughts of the Afterlife. An outstanding example of irreverent inversion of the official Paradise is found in the XIIIth century chante-fable, Aucassin et Nicolette in which Aucassin expresses contempt for the Christian Paradise full of old priests and maimed beggars. He prefers an extension of his aristocratic world which he believes must be in Hell.<sup>29</sup> One speaker in Le Moyen de Parvenir is even more audacious. He compares God's world to man's and finds the latter better: "Je sçay qu'il y a un autre univers que Dieu a fait: mais nous, id est, nos peres, les hommes & femmes, en avons bien fait un autre plus accompli . . . ." (I:164).<sup>30</sup>

Invocation of the deity also rings with a certain amount of carnivalesque laughter. The power of prayer ironically brings a certain chief almoner the inverse of what he asks. When told that he has unfortunately contracted "la verole", he cries out to his diagnostician: "Helas Maistre Gaspard mon ami, j'avois tousjours prié ce bon Dieu qu'il m'en gardast", to which his companion replies with irony: "Aussi a il fait, Monsieur, il vous a gardé de la plus fine" (I:143). Another prayer is also ironically

answered:

Tesmoin le triste Augurel qui se mit en une Eglise pour prier Dieu, qui lui donnast la pierre philosophale. . . . Il y fut jusques à l'autre midi sonné, qu'il se dépita fort, et va dire "Dieu donne moi du bran!" Et voila un oiseau qui lui va esmentir dans la bouche. "A ha, dit il, je n'avois plus que cet instant que je n'ay pas bien rencontré." (II:93)

Oaths solemnly taken before God as a witness were taken seriously, particularly in a superstitious age, but festive sacrilege touched on these oaths as well. A strong sense of transgression still hung about them however, as can be sensed in the following anecdote. "Drouet" has stolen a kettle from "Colin" who brings the case before the judge. "Bodion", the judge, asks for a sworn statement and "Drouet" braves the loss of his soul for the kettle:

Bodion lui commande de jurer sur sa part de paradis, s'il a ce chaudron; lui qui n'y pretendoit possible rien, je ne di pas au chaudron, se met en estat de jurer: comme il juroit, le bon Colin luy disoit tout bas, en le tirant par le bras, "He, compere, ne jure pas; he, compere, tu perds ton ame"; & Drouet lui respondit en l'oreille, "Et toy, ton chaudron." (II:20)

In another anecdote a wife urges her husband to swear falsely before a judge that he did not owe the plaintiff any money. Béroalde's guests cynically agree that he should take the false oath, and then "buy" back his lost soul by giving some of his dishonestly earned money to the pccr:

Le juge fit jurer maistre Nicolas pour sçavoir la verité; ce pauvre bonne personne d'homme n'oscit & se faignoit; sa femme estoit derriere, qui lui disoit: "Jure, vilain, jure, puis qu'il y a à gagner; tu jures

si souvent que tu ne gagnes rien."

--S'il eust jure qu'eust-ce esté?

Menot. Il eut gagné les dix-sept francs qui lui eussent fait profit; & il en eut donné cinq ou six sols aux pauvres, & cela l'eut garenti de la perte de son ame. (II:21)

Irreverence before God does not, however, reach the level of that shown the devil, who is materialized and ridiculed, nor does it match the irreverent familiarity with which the saints were treated. Neither God nor Christ appear in caricatured form in Le Moyen de Parvenir, and although the vocabulary contains expressions such as "je prie Dieu" or "remercier Dieu" (II:99), these expressions indicate respect rather than daring as in the use of a phrase such as "de par le diable". This attitude concurs with the spirit of Medieval and Renaissance festive sacrilege which was usually content to invert the sacred through ridiculing the rites and representatives of the church rather than through an attempt to invert the deity as well.<sup>31</sup> Strongly blasphemous oaths, such as the Burgundian, "Je renie Dieu",<sup>32</sup> are not uttered in Le Moyen de Parvenir, indicating that the author prefers to keep the sacrilege fairly light.

Church rites and customs suffer the same irreverent inversion as the Scriptures and the official images of Heaven and Hell. The distance created between the people and the sacred by the formal and solemn aspect of religion is breached by laughter in Le Moyen de Parvenir, just as it was

during the burlesque mass of the Feast of Fools or during the sermons joyeux. Béroalde continues the tradition of festive inversion in many anecdotes and comments which illustrate a comically equivocal relationship between the official rites and the laughing people.

One anecdote is strongly reminiscent of a ceremony held during the Feast of Fools in which an ass is either introduced into the church or his braying is imitated in the mock mass.<sup>33</sup> In Le Moyen de Parvenir it is chance which introduces the animal into the church, but the event evokes the same image of amusing sacrilege. It occurs on a Sunday, when many people are gathered in the church for mass; a thirsty mule happens by, brazenly enters, and plunges its "horrifique musle" into the basin of holy water. The tale is told with obvious delight in the act of desecration:

. . . s'approchant de l'Eglise, elle receut une odeur debonnaire de l'eau benite, qui l'attirant par la conduite magnetique de sa saveur, la fit en dépit des chevaucheurs entrer en l'Eglise: il estoit Dimanche, heure de Sermon où grand monde estoit convenu, & nonobstant ce peuple & resistance des baudouineux, la mule dure de teste, & oppressee d'alteration, donna jusques au benoistier, où elle mit & enfonça son horrifique musle. (II:25)

The unthinkable impiety of this act during a solemn celebration is shown by the congregation's refusal to believe it could be a real mule. They take it for a vision, a transporter of penitent souls, prompting the banqueters (and the reader) to smile indulgently at their gullibility:

Le peuple qui void l'effronterie de ce maudit animal, .

. . . pense que ce soit un spectre, portant quelques ames jadis heretiques, mais ores penitentes, qui viennent chercher le doux refrigeratoire des bien-heureux (laissez-la boire) & deja chacun pensoit qu'il se soit quelque esmotion (laissez boire la mule) ou autre acte merveilleux de commotion spirituelle: mais la beste fut modeste, si qu'ayant legitiment bien beu, selon sa vacation, se retira sans autre ceremonie. (II:25)

Whether Catholic mass or Protestant service, the solemn celebration of the faith centres around the sermon; thus that discourse naturally became an object of festive irreverence. During the Feast of Fools and on other festive occasions, mock sermons enlivened the atmosphere. The satirical tone of these irreverent monologues can also be found in the sermons joyeux of the comic theatre.<sup>34</sup> Fércalde includes a discourse from the pulpit similar to a sermon joyeux by its reversal of the usual message and its parody of the official sermon. The minister of Strasbourg who delivers this sermon urges the people in contradictory terms to continue the carnivalesque activities of drinking, dancing, and carousing. Each exhortation terminates with a tongue-in-cheek plea for moderation:

Quand vous dancez il semble que vous vouliez jeter vostre teste aux cieux & vos jambes aux diables, dancez modestement; quand vous boivez, vous gargouillez comme pourceaux; hee pauvres gens enyvrez vous, mais que se soit sobrement; jurez pieusement, maudissez flatteusement, battez mignardement, & paillardiez chastement, vous donnant au diable avec honneur, & vous esjouyssez de tous sujets sans en abuser. (I:140-41)

This process of inversion brings the pious aspect of the sermon down to the popular festive level by turning the

moral code usually promoted by the Church into a mockery of contradictions.

Another anecdote asserts a carnivalesque preference for irrationality instead of rigid logic and reasoned behaviour. A parish of simple villagers have their minister dismissed because he advocated piety and sobriety, and condemned their "foolish" ways: "qui sans cesse leur reprochoit leur ignorance & indecence de moeurs, leur reprochant qu'il n'i avoit ne rime ni raison en leurs affaires" (I:174). These parishioners receive a new clergyman who meets with their approval because they see in him the right amount of folly: "Monsieur, vous estes agreable à tous nos autres, tant pource que vous estes bel homme, que principalement à cause qu'il n'i a ni rime ni raison à tout vostre fait" (I:175).

The time spent in required inactivity during the sermon also merits satirical comments. One speaker complains of boredom, "la plus longue heure du jour est celle du sermon", and suggests alleviating the problem by enjoying a good meal during the sermon. The flagrant irreverence is heightened by his tongue-in-cheek admission that he has rejected the idea of working at that hour because he is a good Protestant and thus must adhere strictly to the rules: "pour l'accourcir ou appetisser sans perte de temps, est de desjeuner tandis qu'on presche; le prescheur aura fait, & ennuyé plusieurs personnes, que vous n'aurez pas eu le loisir d'achever; & puis à telle heure, je ne voudrois travailler, tant je suis



bon réformé" (II:234). A similarly impious viewpoint is reflected in another example of a travestied worship service in Le Moyen de Parvenir. The anecdote focuses on the indifference and the ignorance displayed both in the pulpit and in the congregation as the "Curé de Busançois" addresses his parishioners:

Je vous prescherois aujourd'hui, mais nous n'avons pas le loisir: toutesfois je vous diray un bout de sermon que nous diviserons en trois parties. La première, je l'entens & vous ne l'entendez pas. La seconde, vous l'entendez & je ne l'entens pas. La troisième, ni vous ni moy ne l'entendons. La première que j'entens & que vous n'entendez pas, c'est que vous faciez rebastir le presbytere. La seconde que vous entendez & que je n'entens pas, c'est que vous entendez que je chasse ma chambrière, & je ne l'entens pas. La troisième que vous ni moy n'entendons, est l'Evangile d'aujourd'hui. Adieu. (I:171)

The laughing irreverence of Bérvalde's characters extends to the ridicule of other religious customs also. The idea of Lenten fasting for example, is turned to a time of riotous banqueting and called "le petit exercice de la religion". The custom is described in the host's account of his last Lenten feast:

Or ça j'ay apposé & controillé la juste dispense huguenotique, ainsi que nous faisons à Paris le carême passé, quand en pleine taverne nous faisons le petit exercice de la religion.

--Qu'est-ce à dire cela?

--Vous qui sçavez tous les misteres sacrez estes vous si beste que vous ne sçavez pas ceci, veu qu'il se pratique en de bons cloistres? C'est que nous clouons, barrons, bouclons & fermons bien la porte, quand (comme ceux de la Religion) nous voulons manger de la chair aux jour deffendus: tel est le petit exercice, d'autant que le grand est aller au presche. (I:138)

The topic of "le petit exercice", the secretive banqueting practised during Lent, recurs as the conversation progresses. One of Béroalde's guests, Pighius, likens the practice to the Geneva Protestants' secretive celebration of Carnival: "Je m'en souviens, nous estions à Geneve, & folatrans en nostre logis à caresme prenant en cachette, comme on fait en ce païs, lors qu'en caresme l'on fait le petit exercice" (II:153). Luther, musing on his former days as a monk, admits that he too observed "le petit exercice" (II:191). In a statement which expresses the attitude of a typical guest, a juggling of words casually reverses the spirit of the Lenten law of abstinence in order to urge indulgence: "mes amis ne mangez point de chair les jours deffendus, mais jeusnez, & puis toute nuict faites bonne chere, avec de bonne chair morte & vive, les nuits ne sont point des jours, partant point deffendus" (I:138).

The Catholic confession too provides material for laughter. One worldly ecclesiastic agrees to conduct a grotesque confessional for an expiring hound at the request of its fond and wealthy master:

"Or çà, mon ami chien, voulez vous pas mourir en chien de bien?" & lui pressant l'oreille le chien huchoit assez haut, "Ouan, ouan, ouan. -- Demandez vous pas pardon à vostre maistre de l'avoir trompee mangeant le gibier quelquesfois? -- Ouan, ouan, an, an." (II:159).

After more in the same vein, the dog is absolved, the monk handsomely rewarded, and the sacred rite turned into a

mockery.<sup>35</sup> One penitent finds that the rite of confession excites instead of deters the sin of lust, as the parish priest confessing him describes the sin of luxure in detail:

Ce compagnon un cure confessoit un jour un Maistre des requestes, & lui parloit du peché de luxure, l'en interrogeant selon les lois de Benedicti;<sup>36</sup> & comme il lui en parloit exactement, M. Le maistre des Requestes lui dit; "Mon Confesseur, mon ami, je vous prie ne me parlez plus de cela, vous me faites arser." (II:179)

The sacrament of marriage seems to have been made only to be broken. As cited above, the Gospel is reversed to accommodate marital infidelity: "Faux tesmoignage ne diras qu'en mariage seulement".<sup>37</sup> The holy aspect of the marriage sacrament is slyly displayed as irrelevant during the ingenuous observation that "le mariage du Diable", or unofficial union, produces children just as does "le mariage de par Dieu": "... ceux qui ne se marient qu'au mariage du Diable, ne se laissent pas d'avoir des enfans" (II:119).<sup>38</sup> Financial concerns are put above the sacrament when one speaker recommends avoidance of official marriage and extolls unofficial liaisons such as those enjoyed by the "libres Ecclesiastiques" who are able to partake of the pleasures of marriage while escaping the financial burden (I:109). This statement again underscores the antagonism between the secular man and the ecclesiastic, and opens the discussion to Béroalde's portrayal of ecclesiastics.

Conventional festive sacrilege which comically inverts the church liturgy and dogma is joined by an equally strong

mockery of those entrusted with ecclesiastic offices. This traditional ridicule appears in Le Moyen de Parvenir in irreverent references to the Pope or other high officials and even more frequently, in satirical exposures of the lower clergy's pecadillos. The unflagging interest is perhaps due to a combination of vicarious festive sacrilege and of the discovery of human weakness in those who are supposed to set a pious example for the lay society to follow. Béroalde's laughing exposure of the failings of various ecclesiastics and theologians constitutes a major part of his book, and he himself states that his writings will cease to exist when human corruption is brought to an end. The human corruption he describes in the following passage originates mainly with ecclesiastics:

. . . en verité ces écrits cesseront & ne seront plus quand les vices cesseront, & que toutes sortes de gens ne feront plus de folie. L'ambition & l'impiété des grands, l'ignorance des Prestres, les prescriptions des Ministres, le désordre des Moines, l'envie des Chanoines, la fausse science des Docteurs, les usures des Huguenots, les piperies des Papistes, & toute autre contradiction que fait naître ces beaux Commentaires .  
 . . . (II:165)

Some references to the clergy have no purpose other than the immediate humour of the irreverence, such as in the following unflattering association: ". . . il ne peut avoir en un corps deux culs, non plus que deux Papes à Rome" (I:39). In others, the facetiousness has more substance. The Pope allegedly delivers a hypocritical promise to a group of

petitioners, pledging to grant their request, "moyennant que les annees auroient vingt & quatre mois" (II:93). A similar verbal hypocrisy shows through another ecclesiastic vestment of a certain "Monsieur de Lusson" who sidesteps the issue of putting his own sermon into practice. His former secretary, also a guest at the banquet, reminds him of the event:

Voire, Monsieur, il y eust un pauvre qui cuît vostre sermon quand vous preschastes, que qui auroit deux robes qu'il en donnast une au pauvre: le pauvre tout consolé vous oyoit avec grande attention, estant merueilleusement aise; apres que vous fustes retourné au logis, le pauvre vous vint voir, vous fit une ample & grande reverence, vous racontant qu'il avoit fort profité à vostre exhortation, dont il se consoloit du tout. "Je suis bien aise, dictes vous, mon fils, que vous soyez si bon Cretien. --Mais Monsieur, dit il, vous avez dit que qui aura deux robes en donne une au pauvre, je vous supplie me donner la plus meschante que vous ayez. --O ho luy dites vous, as tu esté au commencement du sermon? --Non, dit il, Monsieur. --A ha, repliquastes vous, si vous eussiez esté au commencement du sermon vous eussiez ouy, in illo tempore, c'est à dire en ce temps là; je preschois que cela se faisoit en ce là jadis, & non pour le present. (I:93-4)

This hypocritical clergyman baffles the ignorant pauper with a bit of Latin and then neatly reverses the essence of his message from the pulpit.

A sudden exposure of worldliness in those whose thoughts should be directed elsewhere had shocked and delighted the people for many generations before Béroalde, and he recognizes that the convention is already trite. In an example of self mockery, he has one of his speakers criticize the overuse of clerical tales, charging that it stems from lack of anything better to say:

Je vous prie ne parlons ny en bien ny en mal des Ecclesiastiques, laissons les là sans les draper comme les heretiques qui ne sçavent faire un bon conte. s'il n'y a quelque Moine, Prestre ou Ministre sur le mestier: si bien je vouldois dire sur les rangs; vous voila bien ahuri pour une parole. (I:110-111)

These words have little effect on the conversation however, and another speaker quickly jumps in to justify commentaries on the clergy affirming that the assembly does not mean to cause a disturbance, but only intends to correct faults where they occur: "nul ne parle ceans pour scandaliser ains pour edifier & corriger s'il est besoin". In the same passage, yet another voice concurs: "Or là avant n'espargnons personne, aussi bien tous ont failli" (I:111). Later, "Assuerus" states that the clergy are used as the whipping boy for the sins of others just as if ". . . battant le chien devant le lion" (I:311). He then praises the clergy: "c'est que nous galoperons les Ecclesiastiques, qui sont parfaicts en leur vie, afin d'intimider les ames par les choses qu'ils diront", and terminates the justification with a facetious statement in which he explains that since the ecclesiastics are obviously innocent of any blame, they will charitably allow themselves to be used in the present anecdotes:

. . . donques ces bons messieurs fils aïsnez de la sainte maison, ne prendront point en mauvaise part qu'on tourne la parabole sur eux, afin que leur charité soit recogneuë, & qu'estans innocens, ils veulent bien estre accusez, & chastiez de ce qu'ils n'ont pas fait; afin que les coeurs vicieux ayent honte, & se corrigent voyant la bonté de ceux qui portent leurs iniquitez. (I:311)

Thus by touting an elevated purpose behind his lively portrayal of moral failings the author uses the virtue of edification as a justification for the subject matter of his work.

Convention portrays ecclesiastics as lazy, gluttonous, and concupiscent, and Béroalde does not disappoint his reader. Throughout the text gluttonous priests and monks abound, such as the one mentioned above who steals the goose.<sup>39</sup> Several descriptive expressions emphasize this stereotyped image; "rigoler comme un pere" is used to mean lavish feasting, and to drink "comme un bon Theologien" (II:133) is to consume great quantities. Contrary to the proverb "l'habit ne fait pas le moine", Béroalde's celebrants find that the monk's robe is indeed capable of drastically altering human character, and usually for the worse: ". . . prenez le plus simple homme du monde, . . . jettez luy un froc sur les espaulles, vous le verrez incontinent devenir hagard, hardy & effronté" (I:106). But Béroalde gives a reason for their behaviour; it is the repressed, unnatural life these men are forced to adopt. A mild-mannered young man turns into an insolent rebel just after entering a monastery. The father of the young man in question is called in by the superiors, and the son explains his behaviour by example:

Il va prendre un petit mouton mignon qui estoit au preau, & l'envelopa de son froc, puis vint à son pere, & luy monstra; ce mouton bondissoit, sautoit, faisoit

l'enragé. "Et bien mon pere que dites vous de cela? J'estois jadis un mouton comme cestui-la, aujourd'huy j'ay le froc qui me fait ainsi petiller, & bon jour, pourvoyez y." (I:107)

A graphic, vertical inversion plunges the clergy from their divinely inspired holy vows down to idleness and disobedience, then further down to union with the devil:

. . . il n'y a gens qui soient plus sur leur cul que moines & gens benis, ministres & sçavans, qui estudient assis, & qui au lieu de conserver les saintes ordres qui leur ont este conferer, les quittent & abandonnant l'ordre de Dieu se rangent aux ordres du diable, qui leur confere grace d'estre plus ribaux que jamais, & plus putain que les autres gens. (I:278)

The sexual licence of the ecclesiastics is also displayed, emphasizing their failure to observe the chastity vow. An abbess leeringly recounts her many affairs to a young nun (II:10). Another high ranking churchwoman also ignores her vow of chastity. She intercepts a message from a local abbot to three of the nuns in her charge by pretending it is for herself, while all the time she is well aware that it is not, for she is loved by the bishop, and a mere abbot would not dare to make advances: "elle sçavoit bien que ce n'estoit pas pour elle, d'autant qu'un Abbé n'eut pas osé entreprendre sur les brisees de l'Evesque de Lombiers qui l'aymoit" (II:6).

Many tales and comments reveal priests living openly with their common law wives, "ces sages et prudens Prestres qui nomment leur breviaire leur femme" (I:52). The domestic



normalcy of the situation is humorously illustrated by the comment of one priest's "wife" as she stands before the oven: "Helas! Encore si ce n'estoit nos messes, je ne sçay que je ferions" (I:291). These women also assume the social status of their churchman: ". . . elles se tiennent si bien pour femmes, que si celles des Vicaires treuvent celles des messieurs, elles leur feront honneur, & celles des Chanoines suivent la dignité & rang de leur monsieur" (I:291). One banquet guest recounts an anecdote illustrating the extent of such ecclesiastic habits; a young initiate explains that he does not yet have a "wife" because he has not yet been officially instated:

Je m'en rapporte à l'antique de Mair-moutier, qui se plaignoit que tous ses moines estoient paillards & avoient des garces; & voyant passer un jeune dispos qui traversoit vers la boulangerie, "Je gage, dit il, que mesme ce petit rustre en a une"; il l'appela, & moineau d'approcher; il lui dit: "Avez vous pas aussi une garce comme les autres? --Non, monsieur, dit il faisant une grande reverence, je ne suis pas encor in sacris." (I:278)

The banquet conversation also touches on churchmen who covet the wives of their parishioners. The parish priest of Saint Clement reveals himself to be a spiritual ancestor of Molière's Tartuffe by his comments on the enticing attire of the local women: "en da, ny moi, ny mes Vicaires ne sommes pas Anges, cela nous tente" (II:145).<sup>40</sup> Some churchmen are more daring and actively pursue the local wives. A Protestant minister twists a rule to conform to his wishes,

much like the wayward monks mentioned above,<sup>41</sup> to give his actions an air of legality:

Il y avoit un certain Monsieur de la Tour, Ministre en ce Poictou, lequel par hazard, comme le liable est subtil à seduire les enfans de Dieu, ayant advisé une belle femme qui ne luy appartenoit pas, & qui avoit pere & mere, il la convoita suivant l'intention du canon 17. Du 1174. Concile, qui demonstre que la fille d'autrui n'est point defendue, parquoy il la bescogna toute vive. (I:104)

Magdelaine, one of the banqueters, tells of a certain licentious curé of Toulouse who courted a local wife: "Quand je tenois escole d'escrire a Toulouse, avec les chanoines de S.Sernin, d'entre lesquels il y en avoit un qui estoit Curé là aupres & entretenoit la premiere femme de mon mari, laquelle estoit belle" (I:256).

Other churchmen described in Le Moyen de Parvenir find their feminine parishioners less willing. After a lively scenario, one hapless parish priest finds himself sitting entirely naked on a rafter in the good wife's house with her husband and all of the parish standing below gazing curiously upwards. The husband, pointing to the embarrassed clergyman, cries, "Jamais je ne vy un tel Jan avec mes poules" (II:50), and the neighbors, who pretend not to recognize the malefactor, give him a sound beating. In another tale which is wound through the dialogue, a priest is outwitted by a young wife who resists his advances, then appears to yield, only to trick him out of four measures of

grain. All of this takes place with her husband's smiling approval (II:50-60).

The worldly sons and daughters of the church are also aware of the power of money, and many succumb to its attraction. One bright young cleric recognizes the efficacy of bribery in church affairs and quickly persuades a church official to give him a benefice over two other candidates, not by answering Biblical questions, but by setting gold on the examining table. The senior churchman is overjoyed: "Eh bien mon bon amy, . . . il faut que tu ayes le benefice; vrayment vous estes docte, vous estes en danger d'estre un jour Pape . . ." (I:116)

Ecclesiastics are also accused of simony, bartering the sacred for personal gain. On this last point, the tone darkens and the broad, indulgent laughter begins to fade. It is as though a cynical smile replaces the author's laugh as one speaker, "Quelqu'un", specifies that the serious problem is not that money is paid out for benefices, but rather that priests are taking money for the distribution of the sacraments:

Vous Prelats . . . sçachez que ce volume est fait pour vous jeter la paille en l'oeil, afin que vous abatiez la Simonie. "He bien, diront-ils, on ne baillera plus d'argent pour les Benefices, on n'entendra plus les Escritures." Ce n'est pas la le mal, il faut faire des Prestres qui ne prennent point d'argent pour distribuer les Sacremens & autres operations Ecclesiastics. (I:174)

This statement seems to be a direct and urgent plea for

reform, which in the process attributes a more serious purpose to the book. However, the futility of such a laudable attempt is demonstrated by the reception this idea receives. It is as if the author turns on his own idealistic intentions of correcting corruption by exposing it in his writings, and mocks himself. Immediately following this eloquent outburst denouncing simony, Socrates breaks in with a nearly incoherent threat of violence: "Or là, fendez, frappez, tirez, faites de belles defonceades d'entendement. Cent mille petits Diablotins de deçà & delà des monts qui vous extravagant, vous puissent casser des noix, que la gorge vous coupe le cou, il n'i a ni rime ne raison en vostre fait". Thus the suggestion of reform is overwhelmed by violent threats and nonsense. One last mention of reform in this passage illustrates the futility of such an attempt. Following Socrates' outburst and a digression on irrationality a speaker evokes the image of a quixotic reformer, "monsieur le Commissaire, qui estes venu reformer les pavez qui usent trop de souliers" (I:175), which leaves the reader with the impression that the outraged "Quelqu'un" who deplores simony is just such a starry-eyed reformer. The development of this passage demonstrates the fate of the reform movement. The well-intentioned suggestion for moderate ecclesiastical reform which would suppress simony precipitates Socrates' violent, irrational outburst. This in turn generates a digression on irrationality and leads to

the final satirical image of futile reform: reforming cobblestones which wear out the soles of shoes. In the progression of this passage Béroalde demonstrates that even modest and well-intended suggestions cannot be viewed dispassionately because in a time when religious thought is highly polarized even justified alterations in the system ultimately worsen the situation.

This pattern of optimistic suggestion for religious reform followed by negative reaction is repeated in another conversation by Béroalde's guests. In a passage quoted earlier<sup>42</sup> the author announces that his book was prompted by the existence of vice in the society, particularly in religious society. Here, as in other places,<sup>43</sup> he suggests that the purpose of Le Moyen de Parvenir is to expose, and thereby help to correct, social evils. However, the indignant monologue in this passage is followed by the reply of "Hotoman" in which the author's efforts for reform are compared to the well-intentioned but naive attempts of a monk to correct a worldly worshipper:

Hotoman. Vous me faites souvenir de ce moine de S. Denys en France, qui voulut faire l'entendu, voyant maistre Thierry de Hery à genoux, tourné vers la figure de Charles huictieme. Le Moine lui dit, "Monsieur mon ami, vous faillez, ce n'est pas l'image d'un Saint que celle devant qui vous priez. --Je le sçay bien, dit-il, je ne suis pas si beste que vous; je cognois que c'est la representation du Roy Charles VIII, pour l'ame duquel je prie, parce qu'il a apporté la verole en France; ce qui m'a fait gagner six ou sept mille livres de rente." Ce Moine-là pensoit estre bien sçavant. (II:165)

The futility of the author's intent to correct through exposure is emphasized by the smiling irony of the final comment, "ce Moine-la pensoit estre bien scavant".

The mocking reception which greets calls for religious reform in Le Moyen de Parvenir suggests a disenchantment with the idea of reform in general. This idea is natural in an age which had heard the idealistic arguments of Protestant and Catholic leaders, and had then suffered the consequences of the deadly serious religious zealotry of both the Reformists and the Counter-Reformists. The misery resulting from the religious wars (1562-1598) as well as the severity with which both sides attempted to regulate the lives of the people begin to make the former Catholic laxity seem by far the lesser evil. A complaint of recent undesirable changes runs through the book as a continuing leitmotiv, and the speakers usually attach the blame either directly or indirectly to attempted revision of the religious system. This complaint, introduced in the second sentence of the first chapter, alludes to the wars and other troubles brought on by "ces inventeurs de nouveautez", or the religious reformers.<sup>44</sup> The troubles attributed to these misguided reformers are reported with burlesque extravagance; they are blamed for all ills, including "guerres", "maux", and "veroles":

. . . confuz soient les inventeurs de nouveautez, qui gastent la jeunesse, & contre les bonnes ccoustumes troublent nos jeux. . . . Beaucoup de maux sont venus

à cause de ce changement, qui troublera l'intelligence des histoires, & gauchira toute la mappe-monde. Voyez combien desja sont venus de troubles, guerres, maux, veroles & telles petites mignardises qui chatouillent merveilleusement les personnes pour les faire rire. (I:4)

Among other statements deploring the changes in religious custom is one which wryly notes that the faith of the French, once so firm, is currently being profoundly shaken:

. . . Autrefois j'eusse juré sur mes oeufs de Pasques, qu'il n'y avoit point de moyen de troubler la foy des François; mais aujourd'hui je ne m'esbahi plus de rien. Si je sçavois que vous deussiez faire profit de ce que je dirai, nous autres vieilles gens ne prenons pas plaisir à parler pour neant, & que vous ne m'accusassiez de ce que je dirai, je vous alleguerois quelque chose de rare & notable. Certes je despire la pauvre Eglise Romaine qui se demolit, & sur tout pour un point & un acte qui se commet en France. (II:94)

He continues this statement to implicate "messieurs du grand parti" (the Catholics)<sup>45</sup> for the trouble, laments the fact that there are no longer any good Catholics, and then foresees the decline of the Church: ". . . Adieu mere sainte Eglise" (II:95). The irony of this passage is coloured with humour ("j'eusse juré sur mes oeufs de Pasques, qu'il n'y avoit point de moyen de troubler la foy des François. . .") which lightens the pessimistic concluding sentence deploring the demise of the French Catholic Church.

Contemporary corruption of the true faith is described again near the end of the book in a passage which charges

that there are no more sincere worshippers; those who appear to take religion seriously are either fools or hypocrites: ". . . si ce n'est sottise, que c'est pour la commodité: tellement que pieté, sainteté, justice, aumosne & toutes telles vertus, ou actions qui en dependent, ne sont practiquees que par le desir qui tend à la commodité, sous le voile d'hipocrisie" (II:233). The way to advance is to exploit religion as do these hypocrites. They have found a way to exploit God himself for their selfish ends, "le moyen de se faire du bien au despens du pauvre homme" (II:233). One of Béroalde's speakers maintains that religion is only a cover for the wars that these depraved men wage to further their own ambitions. He refers to them as "ceux qui sous ombre de religion font la guerre pour maintenir leur ambition" (II:175).

At times the author is content to gently ridicule religious zealots of both sides, as in the description of a great debate on trivia in which both Protestant ministers and Catholic monks appear foolish: ". . . il y avoit grand debat entre les Moines & les Ministres pour decider, qui estoit le mieux dit, C'est demie vie que d'estre scul, ou c'est demie vie que de rire; sur quoy ils se confondoient, comme heretiques" (I:79-80). At other times he loses patience with them. Citing the losses of the Protestants at the St. Bartholomew Day massacre and the figurative losses of the Catholics due to the Satire Ménippée, he explodes



with an exasperated "au Diable le coüillon qui demeurera de ces sortes de gens qui gastent tout" (II:133). He also quietly concludes that there are far better things to do in this world than to go to war over religious theory. After the account of a ridiculous "theological" debate in Geneva a sensible banqueter surmises: "Et puis faictes la guerre pour cela; allez vous battre, allez vous damner pour telles gens; j'aimerois mieux aller travailler à ma journée & faire un petit de bon fruit en ce monde" (II:208). This attitude is perfectly consistent with a comment in Le Palais des curieux in which Béroalde puts the religious debate into perspective: "Je voy aujourd'hui les catholiques & les protestans qui debatent, si ce sont Docteurs c'est leur estat: il les faut laisser faire, & en tirer plaisir . . .".<sup>46</sup>

In order to defame a fellow guest, one speaker links him ignominiously to both the reform and the devil at the same time: "Quel satan & reformateur es tu?" (II:15). In the same vein, another incident reveals the reformer, Luther, to be in league with the devil. Addressing Luther on familiar terms, "mon Luther, mon capitaine, mon ami", a devil named Frostibus enters the banquet hall, comes up to the reformer, and directly addresses that banqueter in the presence of the others, explaining how religion can be used to further satanic plans for the world:

En quelque país où il y a une des quatre religions

establie, je fais declarer heretique comme fromage de Milan ceux qui n'en sont point, & puis on les grille, & cela vient bien à mon goust, d'autant que le fromage grillé est plus voluptueux au palais que l'autre. (II:129)

The attitude of the banqueters towards religion is to accept either Catholicism or Protestantism, and then to get on with the pleasure of living. As the examination of Le Moyen de Parvenir continues, this attitude gains in importance. This idea of tolerance, and even of indifference, is apparent in the selection of the guests, for only those who have already chosen a religion are admitted. Others must remain outside: ". . . & fut dit que qui que ce fust qui heurteroit demeureroit dehors, s'il n'estoit de l'une ou de l'autre religion, ex professo" (II:131). Frostibus is afraid to stay very long for fear of becoming either "heretique ou Papiste" (II:130), for his work is better done in the gray zone of conflict between the two. There is no room at Béroalde's banquet for those who agonize over the decision, like the Doctor of Oxford, "qui n'est pas encor resolu s'il se doit faire Catholique ou Huguenot" (II:236). This conscientious and confused person asks the advice of the company on this matter, but they send him away with a mocking message: "afin de lui donner quelque contentement, on lui fit une paraphrase apostrophique pour son desjeuner, qu'il s'en soulat s'il peut" (II:237). This doctor's major failing is that he takes the matter far too

seriously, and is thus the perfect victim for the grim-faced fanatics whom Béroalde abhors.

Reported changes of religious affiliation for frivolous reasons, however, do not upset the banqueters who accept amorous or gastronomic motives for conversion as normal. Certain Huguenots have become Catholic, while monks have turned to Protestantism, and the reason, according to the commentator, has nothing to do with theology: ". . . Ce que ceux cy en ont fait est pour se mieux entendre en garces" (I:181). This speaker continues on this theme to include another conversion, this one for gastronomic reasons: "Quant au Juif il l'a fait pour avoir congé de manger du lard & du salé, afin de trouver le vin meilleur" (I:181).

In general the banquet dialogue expresses a feeling of hostility towards serious Reformers and the Counter-Reformers, because they needlessly ban laughter and innocent pleasure from the lives of others. This attitude is strongly stated in a vehement invective accusing religious dogmatists of hair-splitting, impudence, lack of generosity and a determination to drag others down with them into melancholy:

. . . vous Messieurs qui faites des consciences à prendre mouches, & vieux affamez de vaine reputanation? Goulus de folle gloire, qui vous demange? L'impudence à l'ombre de l'eau lemanique ou Tiberine, tandis que vous tuez le coeur & le corps à charrier les ames vers la melancholie, tachant aussi de nous faire payer la voicture quand le diable vous emportera, qui sechez de paillardie envie dont vous regorgez, comme le savon des leures des gueux<sup>47</sup> qui bient sur le grand trimard. (I:128)

These strong terms denounce the direction which religious revision has taken. Those who guide the movement assume monstrous forms. They are so intent on their own personal glory that they forget human proportions and turn life around them into a sad affair: "vous vous tuez le coeur & le corps à charrier les ames vers la melancholie". One character, who has the name of that ancient drinker, Hercules, criticizes the sober, humourless attitude of the Protestants by accusing Calvin of upsetting the country with his sobriety: "Tu venisti sobrius ad evertendam rempublicam" (II:29), he says to the severe reformer of Geneva. The innocent playfulness of the banqueters' environment would indeed be upset by an apostle of sobriety and serious thought, and their hostile reaction to such a possibility is understandable. Two other speakers, De Beze and Aeneas Sylvius, both authors of libertine works in their youths, admit in Béroalde's text that they left frivolity, joy and love behind when they began to take religion more seriously.<sup>48</sup> This conversation is initiated by the "melancolique" kill-joy, Genebrad, who addresses the two authors: "Eh bien, leur dit il, vous avez bien fait des folies estans jeunes, vous avez escrit d'amour & de lubricité que plusieurs ont tourné en sens reprouvé: il est vray que les bien doctes, & qui ne sont point pedans ont trouvé vos escrits bons, mais il y avoit de l'eccés" (II:252). After this condemnation both authors disclaim

their youthful works:

--Va, dit Silvius, n'estois-je pas jeune & folet, despost de la braguette, & relevé de gentillesse, quand j'escrivois mes gallantries? Mais depuis, j'ay condamné tout cela, & le desavoué.

--Et moy, dit De Beze, je n'ay que faire de m'en excuser, je suis gentil homme, à ce que je dis & comme je l'ay tousjours tesmoigné quand les Notaires m'ont demandé ou escrit mes qualitez. Et bien, j'ay esté gallant en jeunesse, aussi j'estois Prieur, delibéré comme un assieur de meuriers; mais depuis que je fu Reformé, je retransché toutes mes foliettes joyeuses: & tout ainsi qu'un bienheureux Jcsué, je fis une belle circoncision de mes oeuvres juveniles faictes à la Catholique. (II:252)

As they are finishing this protestation of good faith however, the author notices that their confession is undercut by laughter around them: "Tandis qu'ils disoient cela, je voyois les compagnons de Genebrad qui se mocquient . . ." (II:253). The sober, serious side of religion is not allowed to prevail.

Béroalde's condemnation of joyless sobriety and misdirected proselytizing is illustrated vividly in one of the most striking tales in Le Moyen de Parvenir. It involves a religious fanatic, depicted as a wandering penitent, and his unfortunate victim, a village woman. The penitent arrives in a village, announces his religious opinions, and asks one of the villagers to beat him in order to help expiate his sins: "Madame, estant trebuché en extremité de creuse devotion, j'ay bonne envie d'estre folletté réellement & de fait par quinze matinees consecutives; s'il vous plaist

me faire ce bien d'en prendre la peine, je vous donneray douze beaux escus, & un escu pour les verges" (I:63). This woman refuses, but a neighbor, Madame Laurence, agrees to the task. Then every morning at seven o'clock the penitent arrives and is beaten for half an hour. The author intimates that Madame Laurence, who carries out the punishment, would rather have another kind of relationship with the penitent, for she is a woman of libertine morals.<sup>49</sup> However, the masochistic atonement continues as contracted until it is over: "Le temps & la fesserie accomplie, le fessé paya fort bien la fesseuse & s'en alla." From the light tone of the narrative, which stops to comment on the woman's wayward character, and indulges in wordplay such as "fesserie-fessé-fesseuse", this tale appears to be yet another of Féroalde's ribald narratives which reflect the carnivalesque atmosphere of the banquet, and the penitent just another of the odd characters who people the pages of Le Moyen de Parvenir.

The narrative continues amicably in this vein, setting Madame Laurence on her way through the forest to an amorous tryst with a monk of St. Denys, and comically describing how she loves him: "elle l'aimoit de bon foye, de bon coeur, . . . de bonne cuisse, & de bon ventre" (I:65), but then events take a different course. She comes upon the penitent who is waiting for her with a stern, reproachful look:

Cest homme qui avoit eu la fessée au prix de son argent vint à elle, & lui dit, "Mettez pied à terre;" & lui faisant une reverence de basse taille, avec un visage

dechiqueté de mines remonstrantes, passémenté de rides de reprehensions, la prit & l'empoigne, & s'assit sur une pierre de chemin, la met sur son genouille le cul à mont, la troussé comme une petite fille qui va à l'escole chez un monstueux, & la fesse à nud avec de bonnes & sanglantes verges sur son cul de derriere: elle n'en vid rien, & en ceste action lui repoussa fort & ferme le fondement. . . . Apres la fessade accomplie, le jeune homme remit Madame Laurence sur la beste, . . . recommandant l'ame de Laurence à la bonne grace. La pauvrete revint avec grand frayeur & se mit au lict, où elle ne fut que cinq jours, finis, lesquels elle mourut comme une vache qui trepasse. Heé quelle fessée! Quel applicateur de stigmates sensuels! O liable si cela me plairoit, j'aimerois mieux que tels fcüetteurs, foüettez, foüettans attendissent à naistre apres le jugement. Or le foütté foüettard conduisit la fcüettee de belles benedictions, en luy disant, "Adieu ma douce amie, ci apres soyez sage, bien-heureuses sont les personnes bien-foüettantes, & bien foüettees." (I:66-67)

The narrative style retains its bantering tone, with asides from the author ("Heé quelle fessée!"), grotesque comparisons ("elle mourut comme une vache qui trepasse"), and whimsical wordplay ("foüetteurs, fcüettez, foüettans" etc.). However, the action consists of more than a burlesque parody of innocent exuberance. The grim-faced wanderer not only practices self-mortification, but forces his self-castigation on others, actually killing Madame Laurence in order to "cure" her. The narrator expresses his opinion of such fanatics in ironic understatement, saying that he wishes that such "whipped, whipping whippers" would wait to be born until after Judgement Day. Though expressed in a different manner, this attitude echoes the repulsion expressed in the outburst of invective against reformers quoted earlier.<sup>50</sup> That invective, directed at religious

enthusiasts who concentrate on the dark, joyless side of religion could have been made for the grim penitent.

Other examples also illustrate the somber side of rigid piety. The cold, otherworldly attitude of a priest who tries to console a recently widowed woman prevents any exchange of human warmth and compassion for her loss. To him the death of her husband is superfluous next to the fact that the man died with the proper rites: "He bien, madame combien vous devez vous consoler, & remercier Dieu de ce que monsieur vostre mari est mort bon Catholique, qu'il a eu les droits de l'Eglise! Soyez joyeuse de cela, madame ma chere dame . . . ." (II:99). An anonymous voice then asks: "Que pensa ceste pauvre dame?". The answer is direct and laconic: "Que ce Prestre fut insensé" (II:100). Both of these cases (the penitent, the recent widow) evoke a concluding comment from an outside observer who points out the cold and rigid side of religion which is demonstrated by the narrative. This severe, unfeeling aspect of religion contrasts sharply with the warm, joyful atmosphere of the banquet where guilt and sin are forgiven and forgotten in favour of innocent pleasures. In these passages Béroalde rejects inhuman piety and promotes a robust enthusiasm for life.

A negative reaction appears again in response to a call for reform within the Church. In this case the "offensive" practices could be considered relatively harmless, but the would-be reformer is highly insensed: "Et que tous les mille



diabiles, pourquoi endurez vous que l'on die la messe paresseuse, la messe seche, & ce qui est bien plus joli, que les Prestres ayent des amies sans fraude?" (II:98). The reaction to this complaint is quick and angry.<sup>51</sup> It seems to come from one who has grown impatient with the excesses committed in the name of reform: "Allez, monsieur, allez dormir, vous n'etes pas assez sage pour renverser nos bonnes coustumes . . ." (II:98).

The angry rejection of reform is the expression of a conservative mentality which is at the core of Le Moyen de Parvenir. While the old ways may have their imperfections, the new ones have proven to be worse. The would-be reformer above is accused of lacking the wisdom to overturn established practices. The many complaints in Le Moyen de Parvenir about the attempts to revise religious customs suggest that no one has been wise enough yet to alter the traditional system successfully. In fact, the results of the attempts to suppress "offensive" habits such as those in the passage immediately above (II:98), are the permanent perversion of the faith.

The logical extension of this idea is to promote retention of the old customs along with the imperfections. Confronted with the humourless severity of the Reformers and the Counter-Reformers and the laxity of manners and morals under the old system, the author emphasizes the advantages of the old ways. His argument concentrates on one aspect of

reform in particular: repression of sexual energy. Both Protestant and Catholic attitudes are criticized. The Protestant attitude is reflected in a comment on the moral strictness in Geneva: ". . . Comme ceux de Geneve qui veulent que ceux qui vont demeurer en leur ville, ayent lettres d'habitation authentiquee, & toutefois ils ne veulent pas qu'on habite"<sup>52</sup> (I:230). After the Council of Trent, efforts to curtail corruption in the religious orders grew stronger. The vow of chastity, one of the most obvious and most vulnerable to failure, began to be more strictly enforced. Some of the speakers in Le Moyen de Parvenir are in favour of stricter enforcement (for example the one who complains that "des Prestres ayent des amies sans fraude", II:98), but his opinion is overridden by others who feel that it only exchanges one situation for something more onerous. The problem is, they explain, that when the natural vitality is frustrated, the energy in question is channeled into dangerous thoughts; it is spent searching out vices in others, using the Reformation or Counter-Reformation as a cover:

. . . sçachez que Cloistriers qui n'aiment point les femmes, sont tousjours apres à relecher quelque vieille heresie, sous ombre de decriser sur la reformation, parlant des vices qu'ils imputent aux autres, lesquels sont plus tolerables que les leurs. He bien, s'accomoder avec femmes n'est pas tant de mal, que de troubler la Chrestienté. (I:297).

The same idea is expressed again by a speaker who links fervent preaching to sexual repression:

. . . un homme de conscience, ayant foulé sous soy la concupiscence, & enfoncé le fort de Satan, cù il aura escrasé la tentation, elle s'en fera tellement allée qu'il aura les femmes en horreur, tant qu'il en ait affaire, & c'est alors qu'il fera rage de prescher. (I:318)

A parallel exists between comments such as these and the tale of how the devil lost the ability to reproduce in the normal manner, and thus was forced to reproduce by the head. In this tale a sculptor is commissioned to do a scene of St. Michael with the vanquished devil. Not knowing much about church doctrine, he commits "heresie", for his representation of the nude devil is too literal for the church fathers to accept. The sculptor's work is criticized as a "chose moult honteuse a voir aux yeux delicats de ces pudiques filles" (I:122). A meeting is held during which it is decided to deprive the statue of the offending parts. A latinized order is sent down: "Coupibus coëllibus rasibus du culibus à Diabolus" (I:123), and the act is carried out, but the results have unfortunate effects on the "diabolic race", and on mankind. This incident, claims the speaker, is the cause of the heresies which presently infest the world, because once deprived of the ability to reproduce normally, the devils' sexual energy is diverted and sent to the head, and they now engender dangerous thoughts in the minds of men and women:

Mais de ceci . . . est avvenu un grand malheur; c'est que tels Diabls ne peuvent plus rien engendrer par le

bas, partant ils engendrent à ceste heure par le haut toutes les meschantes opinions & heresies qu'ils vous font concevoir en vos testes. (I:123-4)

The banqueters concur. Instead of twisting sexual energy into unhealthy practices and melancholy thoughts, they give indulgent approval to those, like the two young monks below, who find a harmless natural outlet for their exuberance and vitality. These exemplary monks meet two young girls in an inn, and as arranged, the girls follow them upstairs where they all enjoy themselves "en habilité, gayeté, vigueur & fermeté de nature" and not from "infirmité":

. . . & se placerent avec toute humilité auprès des freres qui les attendoient, non tachez de l'infirmité naturelle, (aussi ce n'est pas de tel biais que l'on peche comme certains malotrus de Docteurs veulent prouver, pour deguiser leur puante ambition, ou triste avarice) mais en habilité, gayeté, vigueur, & fermeté de nature, . . . (I:309) 53

The attitude expressed in the above passage rejects the viewpoint of the rigid reformers and instead conforms to the indulgent and natural methods of reestablishing balance promoted by the popular festivals. The natural and healthy joys of the body are set in opposition to the unnatural repression and rigidity which fosters sins of a more serious order. The author stresses this method as the natural solution, rejecting hypocritical repression and recommending "la belle egalité & proportion que Dieu a ordonnee":

Il y a plusieurs pauvres & quelques jeuneurs d'amour ou de force, qui ne boivent point, & d'autres boivent pour

eux, & pissent aussi pour eux. Il y a infinies nonains, plusieurs moines, quelques filles de bien, qui n'osent, ou ne peuvent, ou ne trouvent à le faire, & il y en a qui suppleent à tel défaut; & notez en charité que si les loix estoient fidelles, & qu'il n'y eut point tant de contraintes, & d'hypocrisies, que tels excez n'adviendront pas; & je vous prie de prendre garde à ce que, si vous retournez à vos charges, tout scit remis à la belle egalité & proportion que Dieu a ordonnee, à ce que par vos insolences il n'y ait plus tant de causes de pechez & de punissions." (II:192)

It is better to let the old system be, and to either participate in the Carnival or at least sit back and listen to a few harmless tales of delinquent monks, than to turn to melancholy thoughts of theology which lead to abuses:

. . . l'heresie . . . Sera esteinte comme feu de paille sur l'eau, quand on aura tousjours quelque conte de Moine qui fera rire, au lieu de s'aller amuser melancoliquement à esgratigner la Theologie pour en abuser. (I:308)

The pragmatic attitude expressed in these quotations echoes the "safety valve" philosophy formulated in defense of the excesses of the Feast of Fools.<sup>54</sup> Voices of compromise and reason in Le Moyen de Parvenir express the same understanding of a human need to release energy through frivolity and laughter.

Béroalde presents a variety of attitudes on the religious question in Le Moyen de Parvenir. Some voices present the traditional carnivalesque inversions of the sacred, others call for serious religious reform, and still others satirically refute the would-be reformers with accounts of the Reform and Counter-Reform movements'

failures. Finally, there is a call for the return to the old ways in which there is room for human frivolity, self-indulgence and festive sacrilege.

A similar attitude permeates Béroalde's presentation of lay society, which will be examined in the following chapter. As in religious matters, repression and rigidity in secular areas become the objects of mocking laughter, and the kill-joys who represent the anti-carnival world similarly assume the traditional role of festive scapegoats.

## CHAPTER IV: NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See above pp. 40-42.

<sup>2</sup> See above p. 41.

<sup>3</sup> See above pp. 31-32 for examples.

<sup>4</sup> Huizinga, Waning, p. 163, comments on the familiarity with which the saints were treated: "The veneration of the saints has its place among the more outward manifestations of faith. It is subject to the influences of popular fancy rather than of theology, and they sometimes deprive it of its dignity". Mikhail Bakhtin, Rabelais, pp. 190-92, notes the frequent travesty of saints' names in the "unofficial" language of Rabelais' speakers.

<sup>5</sup> See for example, D. M. Méon, ed. La Bataille de Karesme et de Charnage in Fabliaux, iv, 80-99. Gregoire Lozinski, La Bataille de Caresme et de Charnage, (Paris: Champion, 1933), lists several literary interpretations of the "battle" between Carnival and Lent, including El Libro de buen amor by Juan Ruiz (c. 1350), Le Diable de la chair et de Carmetrant by Jean Molinet (1485), and Le Testament de Carmetrant by Jehan d'Abundance (c. 1540). See also Carême prenant by Benoët du Lac (1595), listed by Petit de Julleville in Répertoire, pp. 43-44, who describes it as a "tragicomédie facétieuse en quatre langues touchant plusieurs abus de ce temps".

<sup>6</sup> See Le Roman de Renart, Branches X-XI, ed. Mario Roques, (Paris: Champion, 1960), p. 75:

Dans prestres, il est la feste as fous  
Si fera on demain des chous  
Grant departie a Bahieus,  
Allez et si verrez les geus.

Chambers, Stage, Vol. I, p. 289, states: "The Roman de Renard is witness to the existence of such a feast, the Feast of Fools with jeux and tippling at Bayeux about 1200." See also John Flinn, The Roman de Renart, (University of Toronto Press, 1963), pp. 78-89, who also notes the resemblance between the Feast of Fools and Branche XII of the Roman de Renart.

<sup>7</sup> Aucassin et Nicolette, critical edition by Hermann Sucher (New York: G. E. Stechert & Co., 1936), pp. 8-9.

<sup>8</sup> See above p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> Huizinga, Waning, pp. 172-3. He continues to state that "The soul of the masses, not yet completely christianized, had never altogether forgotten the aversion felt by the savage for the man who may not fight and must remain chaste."

<sup>10</sup> See for example the character of "Frère Lubin" drawn by Clément Marot in Ballade III, Oeuvres diverses, critical edition by C.A. Mayer, (London: Athlone Press, 1966), pp. 142-3.

<sup>11</sup> La Sainte Bible, St. Matthew (5:39) "Eh bien! Moi je vous dis de ne pas tenir tête au méchant: au contraire, quelqu'un te donne-t-il un soufflet sur la joue droite, tends-lui encore l'autre."

<sup>12</sup> Exodus (20:12) "Honore ton père et ta mère, afin d'avoir longue vie sur terre que Yahvé ton Dieu te donne." (20:16) "Tu ne porteras témoignage mensonger contre ton prochain." The remaining verse adapted by Bércaalde is either invented by the author or modeled after verse 20:9 or 20:14 of Exodus which are: "... le septième jour ... tu n'feras aucun ouvrage ...", and "Tu ne commettras pas d'adultère."

<sup>13</sup> St. Matthew (25:20) "Celui qui avait reçu les cinq talents s'avança et présenta cinq autres talents: 'Seigneur, dit-il, tu m'as confié cinq talents: voici cinq autres talents que j'ai gagnés.'"

<sup>14</sup> See above pp. 36, 67-68.

<sup>15</sup> Isaiah (40:6) "Une voix ordonne: 'Crie!' et je répondis: 'Que crierai-je?' -- 'Toute chair est comme l'herbe et sa délicatesse est celle de la fleur des champs. (40:7) L'herbe sèche la fleur se fane lorsque le souffle de Yahvé passe sur elle. (oui, le peuple, c'est l'herbe.) (40:8) L'herbe sèche, la fleur se fane, mais la parole de notre Dieu demeure toujours.'"

<sup>16</sup> See above p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> Bakhtin, Rabelais, p. 86, remarks that Rabelais incorporates Latin phrases into the speech of his characters to help create an atmosphere of familiarity and festive irreverence; venite apotemus replaces venite adoremus for example, and "sitio" one of Christ's last words on the cross, is used by an inebriated drinker to ask for more wine.



18 "Gloria tibi Domini" (glory be to God) is changed to "gloria edit homines" (glory produces man).

19 This travesty is taken from the sermon on the mount recounted in St. Matthew (15:19) and St. John (14:9). The crowd assembled to hear the sermon is invited to share the little food that there is, and it is found to be ample fare. The play on words in le Moyen de Parvenir is between "modicum", a scanty amount, and "modium", a full measure.

20 Genesis (3:9) "Yahvé Dieu appela l'homme: 'Où es-tu?' dit-il."

21 Huizinga, Waning, p. 161 states that the saints were seen as real and familiar people, and that the church statues were even dressed in costumes of the time and region.

22 See above note 4, and Bakhtin, Rabelais, p. 87. Henri Estienne, L'Apologie pour Héroclote, (Paris: Liseux, 1879) I, 171-172, complains of "ceux qui applicquèrent à leurs chansons de paillardise et la sainte escriture, et les docteurs anciens".

23 See Royer, Glossary ii:355.

24 This passage mocks both the saint and the parable of the prodigal son (St. Luke, 12): ". . . L'enfant prodigue . . . se nommoit le Seigneur Luxu, comme vous voyez en ses portraits, S. Luc XII, c'est à dire, Sire ou seigneur luxu". (II:218-19)

25 "St. Christophe de Pasques fleuris: c'est un âne", Royer Glossary (II:318).

26 The expression "faire gilles" perhaps originates in the behaviour of a seventh century saint of that name who fled from the honours the king wished to bestow upon him.

27 The concept of Heaven and Hell in the mind of the faithful is clearly described by Francois Villon in the "Ballade pour prier Nostre Dame", in Le Testament (Paris: Champion, 1932)), pp. 40-41:

"Femme je suis pauvrete et ancienne  
Qui riens ne sçay; oncques lettre ne lus.  
Au moustier voy dont suis parcisienne  
Paradis paint, où sont harpes et lus,  
Et ung enfer où dampnez scnt bcullus;  
L'ung me fait paour, l'autre joye et liesse."

These images are also crystallized by H. Bosch in his

paintings, (c. 1500), "The Last Judgement" and "The Garden of Earthly Delights".

<sup>28</sup> See above pp. 38-39.

<sup>29</sup> see above note 6.

<sup>30</sup> Henri Estienne, Hérodote, I, 185, describes a similar irreverence: "Je n'ay point parlé de ceux qui abusent vilainement de ce passage, Caelum cœli Domini, terram autem decit filiis hominum (c'est à dire, Les cieux sont au Seigneur: mais il a donné la terre aux fils des hommes), pour nier la providence de Dieu par laquelle il gouverne les hommes et toutes choses qui sont en ce monde, selon son bon plaisir. . . . 'Nous voudrions bien que Dieu guardast son paradis pour soy, et qu'il nous laissast demeurer ici à nostre aise.'"

<sup>31</sup> Studies by Frazer show that inversion by public reviling and execution of the deity, who inhabited the person of the king, did take place in some primitive cultures, and developed into mere mocking of temporal authorities later. Frazer, Scapegoat, pp. 1, 5, 59.

<sup>32</sup> Huizinga, Waning, p. 257, cites the Burgundian, "Je renie Dieu", as one of the strongest oaths.

<sup>33</sup> see above Chapter II, note 7.

<sup>34</sup> See Petit de Julleville, "Catalogue des monologues et des sermons joyeux" in Répertoire, pp. 259-292.

<sup>35</sup> cf. Rutebeuf, Li Testament de l'Asne, in which the avidity of a priest leads him to corrupt sacred rites in a similar manner.

<sup>36</sup> Jean Benedicti, La Somme des péchés et le remède d'iceux (Lyon: Charles Pesnot, 1584). This work was known for its detailed descriptions of various kinds of sins. See Le Moyen de Parvenir, Garnier ed., p. 309, note 4.

<sup>37</sup> see above pp. 119-120.

<sup>38</sup> See a similar passage, II:169.

<sup>39</sup> see above pp. 123-24.

<sup>40</sup> cf. Le Tartuffe (Paris: Larousse, 1965), Acte III, scene iii, l.970: "Mais madame, après tout, je ne suis pas un ange."

<sup>41</sup> See above pp. 120-21.

<sup>42</sup> See above p. 138, (II:165).

<sup>43</sup> See also II:163.

<sup>44</sup> Paul Lacroix, in his edition of Le Moyen de Parvenir (Paris: Gosselin, 1841), identifies the "inventeurs de nouveautez" with "les ministres protestants", p. 1, note 4.

<sup>45</sup> Garnier edition, p. 286, note 1.

<sup>46</sup> Le Palais des Curieux, p. 538.

<sup>47</sup> This passage is explained in the Garnier edition, p. 86, note 3: "Les gueux mâchent du savon pour mieux simuler l'épilepsie par l'écume qui sortait de leur bouche."

<sup>48</sup> Aeneas Sylvius, who became Pope Pius II, wrote Remedio amoris in his youth. Théodore de Bèze was the author of Juvenalia, a collection of bacchic and licentious epigrammes published in an expurgated edition in 1576. See the Garnier edition, p. 101, note 2 and p. 400, note 1.

<sup>49</sup> "Laurence le trouvant gras & frais, eust bien voulu qu'il l'eust fouëtée de verges de saint Bencist . . . ." (I:64).

<sup>50</sup> See above p. 153.

<sup>51</sup> Royer lists this entire passage under one speaker. The Lacroix and Garnier editions however, separate them into two statements from different speakers, which seems more logical. (See Lacroix and Garnier editions, pages 285 and 288 respectively.)

<sup>52</sup> See Royer Glossary, II:333: "habiter: au sens libre".

<sup>53</sup> Sensuality is encouraged in another passage which emphasizes that sexual activity is good and natural, not evil and inspired by the devil (I:243-44).

<sup>54</sup> See above p. 41.

## CHAPTER V

SOCIETY AS CARNIVAL IN LE MOYEN DE PARVENIR

The many voices heard in Le Moyen de Parvenir frequently exploit traditional festive privileges in order to mock and ridicule their contemporaries, particularly those above them in the social hierarchy. This is usually accomplished by presenting certain individuals who are respected in everyday life for their social position, wealth, political power, or elevated personal qualities, and then either pointing out incongruous weaknesses or making degrading associations in order to provoke the laughter of a third person (observer, listener or reader) as witness of their social descent. Enlisting the mocking laughter of others against a victim is a civilized form of aggression, one so effective that to employ it against important people could be dangerous unless under the protective sanctions of festive privilege. This aggressive humour provides an outlet

for hostilities as described by Sigmund Freud in his analysis of wit and jokes in society:

Since we have been obliged to renounce the expression of hostility by deeds-- held back by the passionless third person, in whose interest it is that personal security shall be preserved--we have, just as in the case of sexual aggressiveness, developed a new technique of invective, which aims at enlisting this third person against our enemy. By making our enemy small, inferior, despicable or comic, we achieve in a roundabout way the enjoyment of overcoming him--to which the third person, who has made no efforts, bears witness by his laughter.<sup>1</sup>

Laughter motivated in this way arises not only from a feeling of superiority, but from the subject's sudden fall from an elevated stance to mediocrity.<sup>2</sup> In Carnival, degradation and laughter work together to accomplish the inversion of the social hierarchy and the ridicule of certain individuals. An affront may take place either literally or verbally, since the forms of festive aggression vary. They may include beatings in the manner of slapstick comedy and attempts to physically degrade or humiliate the victim, while at other times the victim's social reputation is lowered. This may occur either through his own actions which expose him as less virtuous than he would have others believe, or through defaming accusations and insults directed at him by another character.

Amid the boisterous laughter there are certain voices, similar to those who plead for religious reform mentioned above,<sup>3</sup> who plaintively call for justice, reform, and human

kindness, but they are covered by laughter and by other voices, darkly satirical in tone, who announce the failure of attempts to mend the social system or to improve human nature. Instead of dwelling on the need for institutional reform or merely bewailing the evil which men do, these speakers reject any rigid approach to social problems and encourage a return to carnivalesque flexibility which promotes a natural resolution of tensions. Through the experience of festive freedoms, people can be shown both the limitations and joys of living in human society. This chapter seeks to determine the ways in which Béroalde uses the principle of carnivalesque freedom as a socializing mechanism, first to probe the irrational element in human nature and then to discover the best way to integrate this element into human relationships. The material of this chapter will be presented in two parts. The first will examine three forms of social aggression associated with festive liberties (violence, physical humiliation and defamation of character) which appear in Le Moyen de Parvenir. The second part will analyse how this aggression functions as a socializing force against different groups and individuals in society who do not conform to the openly self-indulgent and laughing spirit which ultimately prevails at Béroalde's banquet as it does in Carnival.

Among the forms which festive aggressivity assumes the most conspicuous is the traditionally sanctioned violence.\*

It exists in the carnivalesque environment both as an accomplished action and as a verbal threat to carry out such action. Also included in this category is the expressed wish to cast a victim down to the Underworld where pain and misery await him. Festive beatings differ vastly from violence for profit or vengeance since a particularly ambivalent attitude which is both playful and hostile accompanies them. While the physical abuse often results in reducing the victim to a passive state where he is incapable of retaliating, it is accomplished while laughing. Even the battered victim is laughable, like the victims of beatings in the farces. In Le Moyen de Parvenir this violent yet laughable hostility first appears in the author's relationship with his reader, and then extends to the guests' relationships with each other. The most vivid accounts of violence, however, occur in the tales and anecdotes which are set in the world outside the banquet.

The author exposes a violent aspect of his own nature early in the text as he threatens the overly curious reader with bodily injury: "Si vous me pressez je vous defenceraï trois ou quatre ruades toutes brodees de cremois. . ." (I:4). Later in a passage which recalls the teasing abuse and misfortune which Rabelais sometimes calls down upon readers who doubt his words,<sup>5</sup> Béroalde wishes the incredulous reader further "incommoditez":

Que si quelques mauvais opiniastres, incredules,

heretiques, stupides, consciencieux, faussonniers, ou autre ribaudaille ne me veut croire, je parle à vous qui estes de telle qualité; & vous dy que si vous ne me croyez, que je veux & qu'en guise de perscne demy-saincte, chacun pour soy, vous puissiez recevoir une bonne secouade d'estrapade qui vous dure une semaine, redoublant tousjours pour mignarder vostre constance, ou une gesne de rage de fondement, ou une cuisson de carnosité intollerable, ou un chatouillement de fines gouttes, ou passion colique, voire tout ensemble avec toutes autres sortes d'incommoditez à là saulce d'Allemagne, tant à vostre requeste je vous donne remede, & ne vous scandalisiez si en l'exces de mes charitez, je vous souhaite avec si bonne & sainte affection, tel & si grande bien." (I:54-55)

Béroalde then offers the chastized reader his bock as a consolation, but then ironically discloses its ambiguous value. The reader's condition, he says, will be the same, better, or worse for having read the book: "Ainsi ce mal vous reussira en bien, à cause que vous scuvenant de ce livre en vos rigueurs, vous y aurez recours, & vous vous en trouverez ou de mesme, ou mieux, ou pis, au grand advantage du salut de vostre ame, si vous en sçavez bien user" (I:55). Another threat begins with a flattering remark to the appreciative reader, and then develops into a petulant menace: "ça icy, bons amis du coeur, gens dociles qui savourez le bien que Dieu donne, voyez, cette analogie d'harmonie parfaite: si quelqu'un ne prend plaisir à ce banquet, & aux beautez qu'il a produictes, qu'il se fasse fouetter . . ." (I:59).<sup>6</sup>

He not only threatens his imagined critics with bodily injury, but expressly wishes them thrown down to Hell as a reprisal, all of which he expresses with humour. In one



passage he expands on the topic of the devil's costume and then suddenly turns on an imagined disbelieving reader, laughingly sending him down to Hell, ostensibly to locate a devil and bring him back for proof of contradiction: "... & si vous ne me croyez, allez en Enfer m'en querir un vestu à la nouvelle mode, & me le monstrez tout vif & habillé, & puis me dementez" (I:19). This teasingly humorous antagonism exemplifies the ambivalence of carnivalesque aggression. It assaults the victim vigourously, but it does so while laughing, thus managing to sustain an atmosphere which is both playful and hostile. Béroalde retains this ambivalent attitude throughout the book, warning his critics towards the end that "tout ce qui est ici avancé, est tenu pour tres-vray sans qu'il y faille, ou soit receu d'y contredire; & si quelqu'un y contredit, qu'il s'aïlle faire canoniser en Enfer" (II:214).

Although the undercurrent of violence at the banquet is held to occasional threats and insults, and never develops into actual physical conflict, the banquet guests display a certain amount of hostility among themselves. Incidents in which "Alcibiades", "Uldric", and "Socrates" lose their tempers are cited above.<sup>7</sup> In each case their rage passes quickly however, after colouring the atmosphere with potential violence. There seems to be an unwritten agreement to refrain from violence at the banquet table as is illustrated in the dialogue between "Diogenes" and

"Alexandre":

Diogenes: Tout est permis ici, nous sommes pair & compagnon, on doit faire & dire ici tout ce qu'on peut & pense.

Alexandre: Vous y perdriez, pauvre homme pource que si tout estoit permis je vous battrois bien a ceste heure pour me vanger de l'affront que l'annee qui vient vous me fistes en Grece. (I:239)

This exchange indicates that "Alexandre" is restraining violent feelings within himself because he is not permitted to attack "Diogenes". Words thus take the place of physical contact, and the desire to attack the victim is satisfied by verbal threats or expressions such as "va, prens une eschelle, & t'en va à tous les diables" (I:13), "le Diable t'emportera" (I:170), or "va à tous les Diables & nous laisse" (II:129).

While the author and the banquet speakers manage to avoid physical violence and confine their hostilities to verbal assaults, the characters who people the many tales and anecdotes are not so restrained. Carnivalesque beatings, injuries and even killings are laughingly carried out on victims who spring up again reinvigorated, or whose demise is obscured by comic effects and absurd circumstances.<sup>8</sup> Even in the case of the severely chastized "Madame Laurence" described earlier,<sup>9</sup> there is an attempt to undercut the serious consequences with humour. Her death takes on burlesque overtones due to the incongruities which are associated with it: "La pauvrete revint avec grand frayeur, & se mit au lict, où elle ne fut que cinq jours, finis

lesquels elle mourut comme une vache qui trespasse" (I:66).

The juxtaposition of the afflicted woman and a dying cow produces a ludicrous effect. It does not allow the reader to see the dying person as a truly human being, arousing sympathy and pity. Instead she is depicted as a physically comic object, and the death scene becomes ludicrous. A further incongruity is produced by the way in which the soul leaves her body. It was common belief that the soul escaped upwards from the mouth of the deceased, but in this situation the exit is explicitly and humorously reversed: "Voilà comme la pauvre Laurence a change d'air, & avoit à sa mort une merveille notable, une chose esmerveilleuse: C'est que son ame sortit de son corps par l'endroit<sup>10</sup> proportionnel & semblable à celui par lequel toutes les autres ames s'en vont" (I:67).

Playful puns and exaggeration negate the brutality done a long-suffering wife of Geneva by her officer husband. The cruel beatings exceed whatever punishment she may deserve for nagging him. In fact the beatings exist more for the sake of wordplay than for vengeance. Poised ambivalently between animosity and laughter this account of carnivalesque violence illustrates the possibilities of interpreting orders literally:

Cest officer avoit une femme assez fascheuse, & qui le tourmentoit: il la battit plusieurs fois & à dur; dont elle se contrista, & menaça son mari du Consistoire, qui est le purgatoire des Huguenots. Remis qu'il fut au consistoire, il y alla; & on lui remonstra que cela

n'estoit pas beau de battre sa femme. 'Elle estoit battable, dit-il.' 'Allez, allez, lui dit le diseur . . . retirez vous, & qu'il y ait de la mesure en vcs actions, & qu'on n'oye plus parler de vous!'

Il retint fort bien ce congé, & quelques jours apres sa femme soy faisant forte du Consistcire, se mit à faire la meschante, & il la battit: mais avec quoy? Avec une aulne, . . . & la frotta dos & ventre sur ses habillemens. (II:214-15)

After the second beating the wife complains again, and the husband is once more reprimanded, but he excuses himself by claiming to have followed instructions to the letter: "Monsieur, je ne lui ay fait que ce que vous m'avez commandé, je l'ay battuë par mesure" (II:215). He is sent away with the suggestion to correct her in another way: "Allez, dit le Presidant Clerc, remonstrez lui avec l'Ecriture sainte, ou bien on vous mettra leans" (II:216). Again taking the advice literally, "il la batit, mais ce fut avec un gros Nouveau Testament couvert de bois & ferré". Once again he is scolded and sent away with another order: "en fin lui fut prononcé à peine de punition corporelle, qu'il n'eut plus à chastier sa femme que de la langue" (II:216). He also follows the letter of this command and not the spirit: "A jan, il n'y faillit pas, d'autant que quand elle le fascha, il prit une langue de boeuf fumeé, dont il la battit tant, que le diable eut le cul, & le Consistoire la teste, & leur allez demander qu'ils en ont fait (II:216). The blows the wife receives resemble the farcical thrashings of Carnival. There is little attempt to describe the pain or

to give realistic details about the affair because the beatings exist only to illustrate the literal interpretation of the court's orders. One would not be surprised to hear of the wife's sudden recovery, as happens in the following case, but since this wife's fate interests the author as little as the pain she endures, the curious reader is flippantly advised to find out for himself what happens to her, ("& leur allez demander qu'ils en ont fait").

Another unfortunate woman who antagonizes her husband also becomes the object of violent physical abuse, but her punishment by injury and "death" is followed by subsequent "ressurrection". This episode fits into the traditional pattern of carnivalesque violence in which the victim revives like Guignol of the puppet theatre. In Le Moyen de Parvenir either the victim's demise is glossed over with comic detail, as in the case of "Laurence" and of the wife of Geneva, or there is a quick recovery as in the case below:

. . . La femme du pauvre Aeschines, . . . par despit de son mari ne vouloit manger les pois qu'un à un: son mari vouloit qu'elle les mangeast en quantité, elle ne le vouloit pas; par quoy son mari la battit, dont depuis elle fit la malade, & en fin la morte. A! Dame, on la porta en terre, & comme on lui jetta la terre sur les genoux, elle eut frayeur, & comme demandant pardon, se mit à crier; 'Je les mangeray trois à trois.' Les Prestres qui l'ouient, & les autres pensant qu'elle les voulut manger ainsi, s'enfuirent. (II:176)

The comic resources employed above are those of the farce; the ridiculous situation ("par despit de son mari ne

vouloit manger les pois qu'un à un") is coupled with comic overreaction (the beating and feigned death) and the final misunderstanding ("Je les mangeray trois à trois"). The violence exists mainly for laughter's sake and therefore recedes into the background as interest is focused on the humorous highlights.<sup>11</sup>

Following violence, the second form of festive aggression is a physical degradation or humiliation of the victim. Based on the body, the attack almost invariably implies some kind of exchange of head and anus. Sometimes for example, functions normally associated with the head, such as thinking and perceptual interaction with the outside world, exchange position and functions with the lower parts of the body. Much of the scatological expressions and degrading insults in Le Moyen de Parvenir can be ranged under this category of festive aggression.

The exchange of the head and the buttocks is a traditional gesture of debasement and ridicule meant to comically insult the receiver and incite laughter from other observers. In a study of ritual laughter S. Reinach refers to it as "Baubo's gesture", in memory of a legendary old innkeeper who performed this gesture in front of the ill and grieving goddess, Demeter. In her astonishment at such audacity, the goddess momentarily forgets the loss of her daughter and laughs, thus curing her illness.<sup>12</sup> It is also with this gesture that the Sybil of Panzoust terminates her

interview with Panurge in Rabelais' Tiers Livre.<sup>13</sup> In Le Moyen de Parvenir an aging vendor performs this comically defiant gesture in front of a group of men who are mocking her:

Nous lui demandasmes, 'Madame, avez vcus des brides à veaux? --Il faut voir, messieurs, s'il vous plaist;' . . . A la fin estant montee sur une escabelle, & ayant le dos vers nous, elle nous dit, 'Messieurs, j'ay de mauvais enfans qui les ont brouillees & demanchees, si que je ne les peux trouver toutes entieres,' & disant cela, avec une souplesse prompte & premeditee va lever ses robes & sa chemise, & nous manifestier son gros cul ample & fessu, nous disant; 'Au mcins, messieurs, voila les mords.' (II:243)

Frequently the physical humiliation involves two persons, one of whom (the victim) is explicitly inverted in relation to the other. Béroalde recounts several anecdotes in which one or more characters inadvertently finds himself in this comically degrading position. One such incident, perhaps inspired by a similar account in Jean Eouchet's Serees,<sup>14</sup> concerns a husband and wife, a chamberpot, and a crab all humorously combined to embarrass the couple. It begins as the wife rises during the night and goes to the chamberpot in the dark. Unfortunately the crab which was intended for a coming meal has escaped and crawled into the chamberpot, and as the woman takes a position over it, the crab raises its claw and takes hold of her. The husband who attempts to see the problem in the darkness is seized by the nose and held in an embarrassingly inverted position in relation to his wife, until they are released by the

servants who discover them:

Cela est si sensible qu'elle s'en escria si haut qu'elle esveilla son mary, qui lui demanda qu'elle avoit: "Helas! Dit elle, je suis perdue"; elle soupiroit & n'osoit le dire, toutesfois la douleur lui fit declarer que quelque fantaisie la mcrdoit au bord de son cas; monsieur ayant fait apporter de la chandelle, & veu l'effet és parties naturelles de sa femme, "pay, ma mie, pay, dit il, je luy feray bien lascher prise, je sçay le secret, il ne faut que souffler contre"; il se mit à souffler, & le cancre levant l'autre bras l'empoigna à la leure d'aupres du nez. Il faisoit beau voir ceste remembrance, il avoit le nez bien pres du cela de sa femme, il pouvoit bien voir si d'autres y estoient, il n'eut pas este coqu sans son advis. Le valet de chambre qui survins avec des ciseaux coupa les deux bras du cancre, & mit monsieur & madame en liberté. (I:246-47)

In another instance, the highwayman, Bersaut, and his men humiliate a group of traveling priests in a similar manner:

Bersaut passant au dessous de la Bennerie, rencontra une nuee de Prestres qui venoient d'un gaiganage; lui bien accompagné les environne, & leur demanda d'où ils venoient; Prestres estonnez ne sçavoient presque que dire, tant ils avoient peur. "Or ça ça, dit Bersaut à un page, pied à terre " & au bon homme de Curé de Barace qui estoit for aagé, "Sus bon homme, cul bas, là, destachez vos chausses;" il penscit devoir estre escouillé. Quand les chausses furent baissees, le page au commandement de son maistre attacha le derriere de la chemise aux reins; adonc il fit baisser le Curé, comme quand on joué au frapemain cu à la fausse compagnie: puis, "Ça enfans, à l'ofrande " Tous les autres Prestres vindrent baiser le cul, & mirent leur argent au chapeau du page. la ceremonie accomplie, il leur demanda, "Eh bien, enfans, me cogncissez vcus? -- Ouy, vous estes le bon monsieur Bersaut. --Allez, dit il, allez, & faictes vostre devoir sçyez gens de bien." (II:156-57)

Many of the verbal insults which punctuate Le Moyen de Parvenir are derived from variations on the embarrassingly inverted body. Typical of such disrespectful remarks is one



character's insulting taunt to another: "Si vostre nez estoit en mon cul, vous ne verriez que des fesses" (I:224) or "Frappez de vostre nez en mon cul" (I:317). There is no need to cite the many other expressions for they resemble these in tone and content.<sup>15</sup>

Correlative to the humiliation produced by physical inversion of the body is scatological degradation which also serves to embarrass or insult the victim. Drawing attention to the victim's physical need to eliminate waste, or associating him with excrement in some other way is one of the most primitive of comic degradations. The dung-throwing and familiar scatological taunts of Carnival serve as prototypes for the many examples of this degradation in Le Moyen de Parvenir.<sup>16</sup>

Béroalde's guests affirm the universal human dependence on the body's digestive system, stressing a kind of human equality through body functions. "Stadius" informs "Le Mortel" of a need common to all those who possess a mortal body: "O pauvre animal mortel mon amy, ne sçais tu pas bien qu'ayans un corps il faut qu'il se vuide . . ." (II:162). Such associations make dignity or detachment impossible, and subject everyone to the familiar laughter of others. This ridicule also effects a kind of physical "inversion" due to the shift in emphasis. The difference between the thought, speech or moral attitude of the subject and the automatic physical functions he performs is paralleled by a spacial

division between those functions as well, for the more abstract and refined functions are credited to the head and heart located in the upper body, while the lower parts of the body, including the digestive tract and the anus, perform the automatic physical functions. This sudden change in the level of attention from moral to physical serves to humiliate the victim and to provoke laughter from the observers.<sup>17</sup>

In Le Moyen de Parvenir the same scenario is repeated in two anecdotes, both taking place in an unfamiliar and unlit house in which two friends have stopped for the night. In one case it is "Plato" and his friend "Perdiac" (I:187), and in the other it is two of the king's gentlemen (II:227). One of the friends arises during the night and goes to what he believes to be the chamber pot; invariably, it is his friend's bedstead, and the resulting accident accomplishes the latter's degradation. "l'un songeait qu'il se noyait & l'autre songeait qu'il pissoit" (II:227), begins the comedy of errors. The sleeper who dreams he is drowning awakes, misjudges the situation, and melodramatically bids farewell to the world, unaware that his elevated stance should be one of humiliation instead: he begins "haletant, & s'esveillant, & se trouvant tout mouillé, se prit à crier: 'Helas, il est donc vray! O adieu, tous mes amis de ce monde'" (II:227). A similar mistake in judgement also makes Perdiac the object of mockery, although the laughing witnesses to his case

include not only the reader, but a group of young ladies as well (I:188).

Similarly, scatological degradation provides material for a variety of insults in Le Moyen de Parvenir, ranging from direct and crude expressions such as "que la merde vous puisse baiser" (I:218), to supposedly unintentional but insulting verbal slips, "merde en vos lipes," in place of "melancolique" (I:135), and include more contorted statements, "c'est un estron qui vous puisse servir de masque à Caresme-presnant" (I:253).<sup>18</sup> It is this procedure that Béroalde uses to laughingly debase his own publisher: "Ainsi ceux qui ont imprimé ceci, sont commissaires d'excremens. Ceci est la fiante de mon esprit, . . . ." (II:162). Even the reader does not escape this degradation. The author intimates a rather vaguely stated "secret", and then informs him that, "il m'est échappé de vous dire cela, le Diable me l'a tiré du cul, pour le mettre en vostre bouche . . . ." (II:133).

The lower parts of the body are sometimes shown in control of the entire person, dominating his mind and will. In the manner of Bergson's "mécanique plaqué sur le vivant",<sup>19</sup> an image which presents the body's domination of the will, the beauty and dignity of no one in Le Moyen de Parvenir escapes potential connection with debasing bodily functions such as defecation or flatulation. Béroalde offers the reader the spectacle of a formal aristocratic dinner at

which an embarrassed churchman tries desperately yet ultimately fails to control his bladder (II:90). In another passage an important Church official suffers a gross indignity: "mais qui fut celui qui rit tant, qu'il en fianta en ses chausses? --Ce fut mon compere le Cardinal moine" (II:153). An anecdote also depicts a serving girl, Margot, who becomes so tense while trying to repress an urge to flatulate in the presence of her employers that she crushes in her hand the egg she was about to serve them, and fails to control her urge as well (II:105).

At the same time there is an effort to emphasize the body's lower parts and functions by mock encomium; the praise lavished on "monsieur le Cul" exemplifies this tendency:

Or mon bel ami, sans cul on ne fait rien, sçavez-vous pas que c'est la base & le vray milieu du corps, le mignon de l'ame, d'autant que s'il ne se porte bien, & que ses affaires soient incommodees, elle s'en desplaist & s'enfuit par là; je parle pour les doctes. Or donc, doctes, venez ici succer la moelle de doctrine, venez apprendre les beaux secrets, sans vous amuser à brider les chevaux au rebours, id est leur mettant le mors au cul; tout ce qui se fait en ce monde est pour exercer monsieur le Cul . . . (I:194-95).

One speaker insists that there is a sixth sense: "C'est le sens du cul" (I:132) and others speak out to defend what they believe to be this little appreciated, but necessary part of the body.<sup>20</sup> Actions of the lower body are also idealized by a pseudo-scholarly fantasy reminiscent of

Pantagruel's flatulent creativity:<sup>21</sup>

. . . Quand la terre est en chaleur & forte rage d'engendrer, il se faut bien garder de laisser tomber des pets, tesmoin Dioscoride escrit en veau, au livre des herbes nouvelles, lequel dit que les plantes ont des odeurs differentes selon tels accidens, & mesmes les beautez & douceurs des fleurs en sont derivees, comme l'a bien remarqué Paracelse en ses Mineurs; & afin que je vous en embouche, je vous mets devant le nez ceste belle fleur, la couronne imperiale, qui nasquit d'une vesse que fit une grand' Dame estant fille & belle; apres avoir mangé des confitures musquées elle fit une capriolle qui causa ce bel accident. (I:23-24)

Scatological associations are also employed to ridicule respected objects and abstract concepts as well as persons. The elevated and abstract connotations of the word liberty also undergo a degrading association in the address of "Messire Gilles" to the company as he compares liberty to the odour of the privy: ". . . O belles pensees, gracieuses cervelles, nous sommes ici comme chez le Roy Assuerus, la liberté nous sert de guide, comme la senteur pour aller au retraits, chacun dit & fait ici ce qu'il veut & peut" (I:120). The works of the poet Baïf are degraded in this way by Ronsard who characterizes Baïf's writings by speaking of them along with privy paper:<sup>22</sup>

Tu es un beaufaiseur de mines, je cuidois dire de mimes, tu es un grand Docteur, tu nous en veux conter, & encor l'crire; va va, j'ay plus usé de papier à me torcher le cul que tu n'en as employé à escrire tout ce que tu pensois sçavoir. (II:15)

A similar association degrades Papal Bulls. Far from being treated with reverence, they are casually put into the category of potential swabs, along with the minutes of the

Consistory meeting and notes from the religious Chapter:

Je vous dirai la raison pourquoy les Turcs ne se torchent point le cul de papier; c'est de peur que ce papier soit une bulle du Pape, ou quelque relation de consistoire, ou conclusion de Chapitre, dequci si on s'estoit efflaire le fondement, sans doute on auroit les hemorroïdes. (II:102)

The author of Le Moyen de Parvenir also muses on the probable fate of his book: "Avisiez-y, doctes, parce que souvent vos labeurs, vos bons livres sont employez à faire des cornets d'espices, ou des mouchoirs de cul, & ne peut advenir pis à cestui-ci . . ." (II:163). On several occasions he impresses upon the reader the scatological quality of the book as though parrying any criticism of it in advance. Should anyone call it scatological, he will be correct, for Béroalde claims that "le Diable me l'a tiré du cul" (II:133), and "ceci est le fiante de mon esprit" (II:162). In the closing verse, he uses a homonymic pun és troncs/estrons, in soliciting scatological contributions from the reader towards the completion of the work:

Vous qui avez mine d'estre homs,  
Et qui semblez estre hommasses:  
Apportez quatre gros és troncs,  
Afin que l'oeuvre se parface. (II:261)

Together with violent attacks and physical degradation, the festive aggression and burlesque mockery in Le Moyen de Parvenir assumes a third form. This usually takes place as an attack on the victim's reputation. The intellectual,

moral, and spiritual qualities which elevate the character of some men and women above others are turned upside-down and shown to be folly, self-indulgence, or hypocrisy. Again, no one is immune, and in fact the more elevated the attitude or social position of the victim, the more applauded is his humiliation. The reason for which festive aggression turns against these people is not necessarily because they are part of the upper classes who misuse their power in everyday life. Instead, the "crime" these victims commit to provoke mocking revenge is one of social rigidity. This phenomenon is described by Bergson in Le Rire: "Un vice souple serait moins facile à ridiculiser qu'une vertu inflexible. C'est la raideur qui est suspecte à la société."<sup>23</sup> These persons in Le Moyen de Parvenir who adopt rigid postures are quickly pulled down to more "human" postures either by their own actions which reveal them to be ridiculously near-sighted or hypocritical, or through the comically defaming allegations of other characters.

A money-mad publisher of Geneva reveals how his obsession with wealth has warped his sense of human proportion. Even when his life is close to ending, his guiding passion, avarice, prevents him from realizing that despite his wealth and "important" work, he is mortal like other men: "Ha, mon amy, dit il au Chyrurgien, si je viens à mourir de ceste maladie, je perdray plus de mille florins à ceste foire de Francfort" (II:250). In another moment of

crisis feminine modesty and dignity is quickly exposed as only a pose. The incident begins when a soldier enters the home of a canon during a house-to-house military search. Discovering the lady of the house and her maid asleep, he cries loudly, "Par la double rouge creste du coq, je fouteray tout ceans de par le Roy". The servant dramatically throws herself between the man and her mistress: "Helas, monsieur, pour Dieu ne faites rien à madame, elle se trouve si mal, je vous prie d'avoir patience". At this the lady in question pulls back the curtain and shatters the image of her created by the girl's defense: "Voire, mamie, & dea, pourquoi non moy aussi bien qu'à vous, puis que c'est de par le Roy?" (II:18).

Defaming epithets and descriptions also turn the honour and reputations of many characters into laughing matter in Le Moyen de Parvenir. Wise men, such as the celebrated scholar Erasmus ("ce fou de Flamand" I:145), are shown as fools or hypocrites, and the philosopher, Socrates is also labelled a fool (II:221). An emissary from the devil detracts from the honour of the reformer, Luther, by addressing him on intimate terms: "mon Luther, mon capitaine, mon ami" (II:129), while proud husbands are derided with the ultimate insult: cuckold. Another derogatory verbal insult frequently used to ridicule a victim is the bestial epithet. "Ceste canaille des sages" (I:171) and "ces grosses bestes de prescheurs" (I:132) refer



respectively to intellectuals and members of the clergy, while all of womankind is condescendingly described as "l'animal de société" (I:288). The psychological satisfaction accomplished by these insults comes from exposing the victim as the opposite of what he pretends to be. This is always a degradation of his superior or indifferent attitude, changing it to an inferior or dependant one through transference of the ideal to the petty, the honest to the dishonest, the intellectual to the physical, and so forth.

The three general categories of carnivalized aggression described above, violence, physical humiliation, and moral dishonour, provide the basic patterns for the laughing and aggressive social interaction in Le Moyen de Parvenir. The remainder of this chapter will examine the way in which these patterns are used to invert the social hierarchy, to equalize human relationships, and ultimately, to socialize those who deviate from the festive group. The first element in this presentation of Béroalde's approach will be the display of social inequalities. Most of these inequalities are functions of the class structure, and the validity of that structure, otherwise known as the social hierarchy, is abolished by emphasizing universal human traits (body functions, folly, death) which cross class barriers. Finally Béroalde's speakers attack society group by group, a process which leads to the promotion of a common morality based on

the predominance of innocent and universally accessible sensual pleasures.

Béroalde states that he intends his book to contain a comprehensive portrait of the social injustice around him, affirming that Le Moyen de Parvenir ". . . n'est escrit que pour la juste demonstration de ce qui est; d'autant que l'on void ici la bestise des Grands de ce temps, la sottise des habiles gens, l'impudence des doctes, & la meschanceté des autres" (II:163).<sup>24</sup> To this end Béroalde's banquet host urges the guests to accomplish the task before them and satirically expose the ills of the world: "Usons nostre temps avec la ponce de bien seance, ou le grez de sagesse, & que cependant nostre satire soit perpetuelle, pour decouvrir les affaires du mauvais monde" (I:154). He claims that their efforts will be appreciated by "les bonnes gens qui gemissent sous la tyrannie des gros" for whom the book is written. This audience of exploited good people will see the truth in Le Moyen de Parvenir: "ils verront en nos discours comme nous descouvrons le tombeau de la verité" (I:154).

Many of the specific social injustices mentioned originate in the class structure. Béroalde describes the little consideration masters have for their servants in one passage. The servants are cold in the winter and too hot in the summer, because they are always given their master's out of season clothing: "voila comment leur bien va à retours", he concludes (II:250). He also notes the relative sexual

freedom of the upper classes whose amorous exploits are condoned with honour in contrast to the disapproval cast upon the same activities of the lower classes. In the former case, love affairs are called "galantise", while in the latter they are "adultere, ou paillardise, ou rapt":

C'est que les grands, & ceux & celles qui ont des Juges leurs amis, si d'aventure vont s'exercer le bout autre part, ou faire amonner l'ouverture speculative apres nature, cela leur est joliment imputé à faire l'amour en tout honneur & galantise: mais si c'est quelque pauvre diable, cela sera dit adultere ou paillardise, ou rapt; & puis vous ferez à ces Justinians de tous les diables. (I:294)

Social inequalities of the everyday world are brought into focus in Le Moyen de Parvenir in order that they might be satirically discredited. This is accomplished in certain passages by stressing the universality of the human condition, and ridiculing the pretense of superiority upon which the idea of a social hierarchy rests. These arguments frequently emphasize the universality of body functions which are common to all members of society. One fantasy illustrating this approach represents a bizarre class-structured situation and is narrated with both irony and burlesque humour. The ridiculous impossibility of restricting sexual reproduction to the upper class by carefully rationing genitalia becomes even more ludicrous through details of how this was enforced. The passage ends with a tongue-in-cheek explanation of why some great lords resemble valets:

Lubec est une ville fort bien policee, & où il n'y a point de pauvres, & la raison occasionnee en est de ce que toutes les personnes ne font comme icy, & sur tout pour le commun: de sorte que ceux & celles qui naissent de bas lieu ou de petites gens n'ont rien entre les jambes, les masles qu'un petit tuyau insensible, & les femelles qu'un petit pertuis à pisser y ayant es endroits formels de certaines cicatrices à ressort esquelles on peut appliquer les outils naturels de generation s'il en est besoin; & tels membres sont conservez par la Republique avec grande diligence & soin; . . . De ces outils lors qu'il en est necessité on les louë, parquoi on les appelle hanniers qui servent à la commodité des gens de basse condition, pour avoir des enfans & faire des serviteurs, de peur que l'engence s'en perde, . . . Que s'il avient que ceux qui les demandent soient si necessiteux qu'ils devenissent gueux, on leur refuse: par ainsi veu l'esgard de cette bonne police, il n'y a point de cagnardiers; mesme, ce qui est bien utile, les valets ne les chambrieres n'en ont point; il est vray que gratis on leur preste en les mariant apres avoir bien servi, & aussi bien souvent avant que les marier monsieur & madame leur prestent les leurs par plaisir, ce qui est chose qui fait moult bon voir; . . . il advient à cause de ces prests, qu'il y a des grands seigneurs qui ressemblent à des valets. (I:280-81)

Another equalizer of the social ranks is vividly illustrated by the danse macabre, a performance frequently seen on the stage or in pictures of the XVth and XVIth centuries.<sup>25</sup> It features "le mort", who grasps the hand of an actor representing a rank, profession, or stage in life, and pulls him into the dance. Soon a series of people fill the stage, all linked together by hands and by the same movements, thus demonstrating that no one is above the levelling experience of death. In his first reference to the danse macabre, Béroalde stresses the vulnerability of powerful civil authorities before the greatest equalizer. In contrast to their favoured positions on earth, final justice

is done as these once powerful men are led downward to the Underworld, and not upward to Paradise:

"Da, da, il est bon, s'il n'y avoit que les gens de justice qui allassent en paradis! Et c'est le contraire, & je l'ay veu en la Dance Macabree de Fubourg, où les Presidens, Conseillers, Avocats, Procureurs, & clerks, sont par les sergents conduits en enfer, & t'en guette (II:82-83).

Neither good looks nor youth, qualities which enhance social prestige, make any impression on the implacable common enemy as Béroalde shows in an encounter between Death and the young man:

. . . à Dole à la dance Macaber, il y a la Mort qui parle à un beau jeune homme, & lui dit,  
A, galan, galan,  
Que tu es fringan,  
S'il te faut-il meurre.

Et il respond:

Et, mort arrogant,  
Prens tout mon argean,  
Et me laisse queurre. (II:257-58)

The universality of folly, another familiar carnivalesque theme, also places all men and women in the same category regardless of class or personal traits. The reader of Le Moyen de Parvenir is told that the whole world is in fact a land of fools: "A ce que je voy le pays des sots n'est pas une isle, c'est le monde mesme, & hors d'iceluy" (II:86). This observation is reinforced in a dialogue which connects hypocrisy and folly:

Madame. Que dites-vous là?

--Je demandois s'il y avoit des bordeaux en vostre pays, madame.

Madame. Non, dea il n'y en a point, mais il y a des maisons d'honneur, où l'on se resjouyt avec les dames, & quelques dames d'honneur deputees pour cela en tirent rentes pour nourrir des Moines.

--C'est donc en ce pays-là où Moine signifie larron, comme en l'isle des sots sot signifie monsieur; & de fait si je vous dirois: "Bon jour, sot," ce seroit autant que vous dire, "Bona dies, monsieur." Savonarola. Mais l'isle des sots est par tout, & celle des fous est au delà. (II:168)

A monologue on the universality of folly which claims the attention of the banqueters extends the reign of folly not only to different professions, but across international boundaries:

Je vous diray pourtant, vous demandant excuse, qu'il y aura icy assez de place pour tous les fous, pourveu qu'on les y mette l'un apres l'autre. En Allemagne les Allemans y mettront leurs fous, en France les François, en Angleterre les Anglois, En Espagne les Espagnols, en Souisse les Italiens, en Turquie le reste; & puis que l'on fasse si grande chere qu'on voudra, soit en droit, soit en musique, soit en canon, soit en Theologie, soit en gendarmerie ou marchandise, ou medecine, ou toute telle autre sorte que vous imaginerez . . . . (II:199)

Along with the effort to equalize the social hierarchy through demonstration of universal human traits, Eéroalde also inverts the social structure group by group. Before describing the treatment of royalty, the aristocracy, and others lower on the social ladder, there is a special category of persons who first become objects of attack in Le Moyen de Parvenir. These are the famous guests present at the banquet. As noted above,<sup>26</sup> they are identified by the names of famous statesmen, churchmen, scholars and others. There is, however, a great discrepancy between expectations raised by the famous names and the actual performance of the

banqueters. From the beginning their behaviour shows them to be foolish and crude. Class barriers which separate them from the servants are overtly destroyed as all concerned join in an unsophisticated game of hopscotch in the kitchen.<sup>27</sup> Early description of their activities further damages their reputations. "Pliny" behaves in a particularly undignified manner; "Demosthenes", supposedly a great orator, speaks like a peasant and expounds on trivia, and "Aristotle", the great logician, behaves irrationally:

Pline s'avança selon la rente d'honneur qui luy estoit due, ainsi qu'il paroissoit par un contract passé par dessous les ponts de Rome; c'est un homme notable & de prix, il est le premier inventeur de pisser honorablement contre les murailles des autres. Tandis que l'on murmuroit le recevant, voicy arriver le bon Demosthene. "J'y fusmes, dismes nous, j'en fusmes bien aise, dautant qu'il est certain que j'apprendrons beaucoup de bonnes choses, comme desja il y parut." En entrant il se mit a discourir, & nous enseigna que c'est qu'honeste homme, le definissant ainsi qu'il se trouve au Talmud; honneste personne est celle qui ayant fianté se torche le cul avec un torchoir le tenant de la main gauche. Aristote depit de n'avoir troyve ceste belle definition se noya . . . (I:20-21)

The guests are introduced as members of an exclusive fraternity which is dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge; they are all "ames qui avoient serment à la Sophie", "enfants de la science", "des sages" (I:5), and "scientifiques personnes & discrettes" (I:42). It appears that they are to be considered as a group of dignified learned men, gathered together for a noble purpose. However, their foppish and flatulent behaviour upon arrival casts an early doubt upon

their quality:

Chacun y entrant avisa à son devoir, par ce moyen nous exerçames un notable conflict de reverences, dont les petardes sentoient je ne sçay quoy de la musique ancienne & pratiquant mille vetilles d'humilitez, avec une friponne escopeterie de langage courtisannifié fismes plusieurs belles entrees & rencntres . . .  
.. (I:9)

These famous philosophers, statesmen, and sages are thrown down from their legendary pedestals and brought to the common, material level. On equal ground with the least celebrated member of society, the guests enjoy food and wine like common men and women. In spite of statements of the symposium's elevated purpose the notable company does not assume an air of disinterested wisdom, but is instead intensely involved in petty details of the carnival atmosphere around them. Their energetic behaviour reflects the unfettered and disrespectful atmosphere in which these characters move. Eating, drinking, and the babble of ribald or inconsequential discourse constitute the major activity of the banqueters. The famous personalities evoked are also shown to be fools like anyone else, illustrating the motto of the fool-societies: "stultorum numerus est infinitus". Socrates, a frequent speaker loses all claim to the great respect he inspired in Renaissance scholars and instead is shown to be among the most foolish in a mad world; "achevez", one speaker urges him, "je vous prie, Socrates, comme le plus fou" (I:221).

The guests are sometimes described in degrading bestial



terms. In one passage addressed to the reader, enjoining him to honour this work and those in it, the guests are compared to chickens in a coop: ". . . & prenez garde à ce que cet honneur soit distribué honnestement aux scientifiques personnes & discrettes qui sont en ce banquet, comme poules en muë" (I:42). Their state of awareness is given a canine quality: "Ils avoient les yeux ouverts comme chiens qui chassent aux puces" (I:43), and their laughter is also bestial: ". . . Toute la belle compagnie se prit à rire comme un troupeau de fenesseaux" (II:13).<sup>28</sup> At other times the author plays on the double meaning of bête to endow his guests with an air of animalistic stupidity: ". . . Je fais parler les bestes" (II:258). Thus the famous personalities who have distinguished themselves as political and intellectual leaders are brought down into the common fold and even lower.

Reversal of the social hierarchy is a familiar convention in Carnival. Through this procedure the class structure is temporarily dismantled as figures of authority are stripped of power, prestige, and virtue to become the objects of mocking laughter. In place of the dignity and respect which ideally define the ruling aristocracy, the opposite extremes are revealed. Reason is replaced by folly, noble postures are turned to ridicule, and bodily functions dominate the mind and will. The presence of a popular mentality can be detected in the following anecdotes which

take advantage of the carnivalesque tradition of sanctioned revenge on authority. The weapon is neither reason nor force, but laughter.

In Le Moyen de Parvenir, the established authorities of the outside world are either absent, or present only in travestied forms which project them as foolish or common. Justinian, a mad Roman emperor,<sup>29</sup> exemplifies the earthly ruler. He is interchangeable with the fool, as are all emperors, according to the text: ". . . l'empereur Justinian qui gouverne encor le monde fou, est devenu fou durant sa vie, par ainsi les fous sont Empereurs & è conversc" (II:257). This ruler's name is also linked to folly through a pun on Justinian and niais; the composed adjective, "Justiniaisement" (I:155), is used in context as a synonym for "foolishly". Another speaker alludes to the rumoured madness of the Spanish Emperor, Charles V: "Vous me faictes souvenir d'un voyage que nous fismes en Espagne l'annee que l'Empereur devint fou" (II:69).<sup>30</sup> In a statement that would have been dangerous for an author who had not shrouded himself in the variegated colours of the fool, Ééroalde makes a condescending reference to the French king, characterizing him as a sympathetic person, but one who is unable to govern due to his ignorance and susceptibility to unwise counselors, "ces meschans escommuniez qui font tant mettre de daces & impôts sur le peuple au desceu du Roy, le pauvre homme qui ne l'entend pas . . . ." (I:48).

Traditional fool-kings are mentioned in Le Moyen de Parvenir also, and their presence, even if only in brief references, adds to the theme of inverted royalty. These mad, mock rulers are the "Roy des veaux" (II:242) and the "Roy des gueux" (I:130,199). Though undeveloped, these epithets call to mind the traditional inversion of authority simply by repetition of the mock titles. A similar reference not only brings to mind the fool-king, but derisively pulls contemporary royalty further down by reversing the words in the title and irreverently characterizing rulers as "ces gueux de Rois" (I:199). La Reine des Foies-pilées, the mad queen of the comic theatre, is mentioned on two occasions (I:122,127). Application of this title to a lady of the court, "Madame des Manigances", inverts aristocratic dignity by juxtaposing the lady and the fool-queen, even though the reason for the remark has nothing to do with the former's behaviour. She gains the title because " . . . . à la court elle estoit plus chichement habillée que les autres" (I:127).

Another traditional attack on the ruler diverts attention from the king as a superior being to the image of him suffering the same dictates and indignities of the body as commoners. Several references depict the king taking mercury treatments, the usual remedy for syphilis.<sup>31</sup> The revelation of the king's disease not only illustrates that

he is physically vulnerable like anyone else, but focuses attention on the lower parts of the body, thus following the pattern of inversion described above.<sup>32</sup> One speaker, while recounting matters having to do with Tours, mentions that the king was also in that city: ". . . à Tours, où pour lors estoit le Roy qui venoit de fixer le Mercure" (II:135). The same fact comes out in a later passing comment: "Quand le Roy venoit de fixer le Mercure, il vint en cest belle maison" (II:148).<sup>33</sup> Charles VIII is subject to a similar association in another anecdote.<sup>34</sup>

The queen is also subject to attacks of festive inversion through defamation of character and attempts to show her dominated by lust. The virtue of the queenly title undergoes a downward change of status as a lady of the streets vigorously declares her own honour to be above that of the Queen of Egypt. A bystander recounts the incident:

Aussi je me souviens que l'annee que j'estois Recteur de l'Université de Paris, . . . Je vy pendre une maquerelle de bourg de Four, la raison estoit qu'elle se battoit avec une autre qui lui dit, "Ha, chienne, tu veux icy faire de la Roynie d'Egypte. --Tu as menty, dit elle, je suis femme de bien." (I:202)<sup>35</sup>

Ingenuous insults also uncrown the ruling class, attributing common minor vices to them with a familiar nod of complicity. A peasant woman compares her husband to the king and sees no difference: "Foy de damoiselle, disoit ma mere pensant ses pourceaux, mon mari est aussi noble que le Roy, il aime bien à ne rien faire, & se donner du plaisir"

(II:203). In another incident, a simple peasant, flattered with the patronizing attentions of the Queen, ingenuously assaults the royal dignity by assuming that the Queen like others has come to seek the amorous favours of the local canon:

. . . Madame la Royne de France, . . . allant à Chartres en voyage, pour avoir lignee, & suivant un beau chemin fait expres, parce qu'elle alloit à pied, elle s'assit pour se reposer, que voici passer une belle grande païsanne des champs, qui cheminoit comme un prestre Breton; la Royne l'arreste, & lui dit, "Bon jour, mamie, où allez vous? --Je vay à Chartres, madame. --Que faire? --Vendre du lait & des herbes. --D'où estes vous, mamie? --Je suis d'icy aupres, madame. --Estes vous mariee? --Ouy, madame, Dieu mercy & la voutre. Mais, madame, ne vous desplaise, dittes moi s'il vous plaist qui vous estes? --Je suis la Royne, mamie. --A ha a, madame la Royne, excusez moi s'il vous plaist, si je ne vous ay fait l'onneur que je devas: mais, madame la Royne, vous allez à pied; & où allez vous, madame la Royne, mais ne vous deplaise? --Je vay à Chartres, mamie, pour aller en ceste belle Eglise prier Dieu, à ce qui lui plaise que j'aye des enfans. --Helas, madame la Royne, ne laissez pas de vous en retourner, ce grand Chanoine qui les faiscit est mort, on n'y en fait plus." (II:241)

The ladies and gentlemen of the court, as well as members of the minor aristocracy, receive the same treatment as royalty. One of a certain duke's servants muses on a violent fate for his master: ". . . je voudrois que le Duc mon bon maistre fut en la gueule du loup & que j'en eusse la peau pleine d'escus, gros souppier, j'entens la peau du loup" (I:130-31). Other commentaries are content to malign the nobility by exposing them as fools, such as "monsieur de Vendosme" whose condition is discussed by a doctor and the prior:

. . . Monsieur de Vendosme, qui estant malade & degousté vouloit manger du ris: ce que disant à son medecin il lui accorda; le Prieur adjousta qu'il eut bien voulu qu'on y eut mis du safran: "Eien, dit le medecin, mais il n'y en faut guere. --Ncn, respondit le Prieur, il me feroit mal," Et de fait je vy un jour un cheval qui en estoit trop charge, il en devint fou. -- Estimez vous pour cela que ce Seigneur fut fol? --ncn pas du tout, mais il tenoit un peu de la febve . .  
.."<sup>36</sup> (II:115)

If not by folly, the noble class is degraded by direct insults. A provincial lady is naively insulted by one of her farmer's daughters: "La fille de ce mestayer apporta des prunes à nostre femme, qui lui dit; 'Il n'en falloit point, mamie. --C'est vostre gresse, madameselle, prenez-les s'il vous plaist, aussi bien nos pourceaux n'en veulent point.'" (II:71-72) The lady complains to the farmer's wife who only insults her further by confirming the girl's story. A similar kind of ingenuously insulting offering is recounted in the unappetizing anecdote of the valet who absent-mindedly spits in his master's wine before serving it (II:253).<sup>37</sup>

Continuing down the social ladder, the next to be dislodged from their elevated positions are those individuals and groups of individuals who have power and authority in civil matters. These are the men who are charged with interpreting and enforcing the laws of the country: the governors, judges, lawyers, and even constables. Many of these officials provoke fear and hatred by their corruption and abuse of power. During Carnival

however, the people have a momentary revenge, and those individuals who normally have sweeping power over the lives of those around them become the helpless objects of sanctioned mockery. The many cases of such mockery in Le Moyen de Parvenir again demonstrate the accord between Béroalde's work and the carnival tradition.

The husband humiliated by the actions of a crab in a chamberpot,<sup>38</sup> happens to be a governor, and this position of power heightens his fall. Those who occupy the senior posts of Chancellor and President of the realm are also ridiculed. They are dismissed as fools who drive others to folly:

Toutesfois je vous proteste que s'il y avoit autant d'honneur qu'aux folies d'estre Chancelier ou premier President, ou de telle autre qualité de fous qui foussoient les autres fous, il n'y auroit gueres de bons esprits qui ne fissent paricistre, que, quisque abundat in suo sensu, c'est à dire, chacun est, sera, ou est dit, ou deviendra, s'il ne l'est, fou par la teste. (I:166)

But even worse than those who govern, are those who are associated with the courts. The perversity of judges and their associates is emphasized by the author's mock hesitation to even write about them, alleging them far more dangerous than churchmen: "... encor les ecclesiastiques sont traictables, ils ne font que excommunier, cela va & vient comme eau claire; mais ces gens de justice font tache d'huile, que le diable y ait part. Mon ami, laissons-les, achevons ces contes" (II:17). Despite this warning, he does write about them however, taking obvious pleasure in their

carnavalesque humiliations. In a passage cited above they are shown being led not to Paradise, but down into Hell as a final vindication of the people.<sup>39</sup> Even the lowly constable, whose duty it was to lead prisoners to jail, merits a punishment of this sort: ". . . il est vray que quand un sergent se meurt son ame va droit entre les mains de Proserpine Reine d'Enfer" (II:213).

Another group in the social system which commands respect, if not fear, in everyday life is made up of the scholars, academicians, philosophers, scientists and poets who comprise the intelligentsia. This group is frequently the target of social inversion which casts them into ridicule for both personal and professional failings. Although far less exalted than a king, these men enjoyed a position of prestige in the society and assumed a superior attitude vis-à-vis the less educated. The enviably privileged position of the professional scholar is noted by one of Béroalde's speakers. After a scholar, "Durandus", makes a sacrilegious pun, "Marot" complains, "Si j'avois dit cela je serois gasté, ainsi tout est permis aux docteurs" (I:114). Again, like that of Carnival, the dominant attitude in Le Moyen de Parvenir is a popular, unsophisticated delight in the humiliation of the privileged intellectuals.

The narrator establishes that he is not one of this group, "je ne suis pas de ces petits doctoreaux, dont it est escrit, J'ay une teste de Docteur à disner" (I:58). He is



also proud that his book is not pedantic like others: ". . . vous ne trouverez point en cecy du truandage de pedentisme, comme és autres, plaines du ravodage de fclle doctrine qui n'apporte point à disner" (I:51). The link he establishes between himself and the common people against the intellectuals is strengthened by his insistence on using French in place of Latin which the common people do not understand: "Disons en bon François sans que rien nous eschappe" (I:140). Elsewhere he states: "Par despit, je diray mon histoire en langage que tout le monde entendra . . ." (I:178).

However, the persistence with which he denigrates learned men, both with carnivalesque mockery and in more serious criticism, leads the reader to suspect that Béroalde's own observation on those who criticize others can be applied to himself, for he too is an intellectual: "Ordinairement ceux qui mesdisent de Prestres ou de Ministres, en ont esté, & ce qu'ils en disent de mal, est pour faire croire qu'ils en sont esloignez" (II:189). It is perhaps the scholar in him that makes Béroalde devote so much of his narrative to them. Like Béroalde, learned men are often churchmen as well, and just as in his capacity as churchman he is able to see the failings of the religious life, he is also able to effectively caricature the weak points in the lives of intellectuals. Béroalde adopts a traditional carnivalesque approach to scholars in much of

his work, and in this he assumes the role of the common man who regards the sage as foolish, lazy and willfully incomprehensible.

One way of mocking the sage is to portray him as a fool, the opposite of what he aspires to be. This may be done by a simple epithet, juxtaposing two contrasting terms, "sage/fou", as is frequently seen in the comic theatre and the fool-societies.<sup>40</sup> Scholars in Le Moyen de Parvenir are repeatedly labelled with this traditional oxymoron. They are referred to as "messieurs les gens de lettres, qui sont si tres-sçavans qu'ils en sont tout sots" (I:7); they are made to look so bestial and foolish that even the devils laugh at them: ". . . la plus part de nos sçavans . . . sont tant veaux, que les diables aux heures de recreation en font des contes pour rire" (I:129).<sup>41</sup> One exasperated speaker uses the formula to pull the learned men down from their pedestals, and then flippantly wishes them even further down on the vertical plane by sending them to the Devil: "ceste canaille de sages nous fera devenir fous, au Diable l'importunité de ces pedans!" (I:170).

Not only are the learned men degraded by direct insults and epithets which accuse them of incompetence, but they themselves appear in caricatured form to illustrate the inversion of their reputations. It is as though these personages have been given a role to play in a sottie. They enter draped in the robes of wisdom, but soon reveal the

variegated costume of the fool beneath. Béroalde reveals the key to this pattern of inversion as he muses, "pensez la belle chose que c'est de mettre des igncrans au rang des doctes, c'est pour avoir de belles interpretations" (I:173). This suggestion is brought to life by several examples. Early in the text, learned men attempt to explain the cause of the disastrous times which have befallen the country; their answers reveal them to be totally illogical in their reasoning, and equally as irrational in the resulting explanations. Their pattern of thought reads like a farcical coq-à-l'âne:

Voyez combien desja en sont venus de troubles, guerres, maux, veroles & telles petites mignardises qui chatouillent malheureusement les personnes pour les faire rire. Tant de sages qui estudent aux aventures attribuent tels effects à d'autres causes, comme au retranchement des dix jours,<sup>42</sup> depuis quoy on n'a fait vendanges que par rencontre de saison, aux pullulations d'heresies, depuis lesquelles les bosses n'ont peu estre plattes, aux revoltes des grands qui sont occasion que fillettes ont hanté les cloistres, & les menagers les tavernes, aux haussement des tailles, durant quoy les vieilles gens ne font que rechigner, & infinitez autres sotises, . . . (I:4)

An account of an academic debate held by sign language in Geneva lowers a sage far beneath the level of abstract ideas and shows his thoughts to be only threats of physical violence.<sup>43</sup> In this debate one of the contestants is a miller dressed in "une robbe ministrale & un bonnet consistorial". He assumes the pose of a Protestant intellectual for the occasion. The other is a scavant in

residence at Geneva. They dispute on a platform in front of an audience, and after a few questions the sage concedes defeat. "Adonc le sçavant tout ravi en admiration se retira, puis dit qu'il avait trouvé le plus docte homme du monde: & tant que ce bruit a duré, l'escole de Geneve a esté en reputation" (II:207). Scholastic argument must have seemed just so much hocus-pocus to the average man, and even to the cynically shrewd observer. In this case it turns out to be exactly that, for when the miller is taken aside and asked to explain the proceedings, he confirms any doubts that the debate had high or complex meaning:

Voire, c'est un fin homme, il m'a menacé de m'arracher les deux yeux, & m'enlever le nez, & je lui ay monstre le poing avec quoi je l'assommerois; & comme il m'a veu en colere, il m'a présenté une pomme pour m'appaiser comme un enfant, je lui ay fait voir que je n'avois que faire de lui, & que j'avois du pain qui valloit mieux. (II:207)

The "debate" had actually been only a string of insults and threats to do bodily harm to the other. In lowering himself to the level of common insults, the sage reveals himself to be the inverse of the image expected of him.

Pretentious language and academic jargon provide another way to mock the lettered class. The language used by poets, academicians, theologians and alchemists becomes the object of parody. Again, the author looks at it from the inside, as one who knows how ridiculous and clumsy scholastic style can become in the grasp of some who use it. He views it from the outside, however, posing as an

uneducated member of society who cannot understand the jargon, the faulty Latin, nor the complex language, and judges it all to be pretentious and ridiculous. "Allons viste", the host urges, "la soupe se mange, je pindarise, je cuidois dire on mange la soupe" (I:8). At another moment one speaker announces, "j'entre en fureur poétique", followed by a doggerel rhyme (II:242). A servant girl's imitation of a verse by Ronsard to Cassandre humorously mocks the poet and his work. It also illustrates the way the uneducated interpret poetry: "L'autre jour nostre servante chantoit un air de Ronsard, où il y a, D'un gosier, &c. Elle disoit: 'D'un gosier, mange leurier, j'cy crier dans le coffre ma Calandre.'" (II:232).<sup>44</sup>

The highly refined, précieux manner of speaking which developed in aristocratic circles and certain poetic groups during the late XVIth century also becomes the object of parody in Le Moyen de Parvenir. This complex and refined linguistic style is categorized as "poetic", and it is a poet, Jodelle,<sup>45</sup> who initiates the inversion. By criticizing the artificial language of another guest who is also a poet he transfers the description of the language to a corporal plane and exaggerates the pretentious tone to make it appear ridiculous. Another speaker, "Tacite", interrupts to soften this criticism of the "poet" by admitting that while he is unnecessarily indirect, he means well:

Jodelle. Quand je vous oy ainsi paillarder sur

vostre outrecuidance de bien dire, il m'est advis que vous me pissez aux oreilles; que diable ne parlez vous droit sans aller ainsi leschonnant les fripponneries du sot langage. Je pense vous oyant, estre aupres du beau saint Jean, racontant comme il fut à la chasse, "Nous apperceusmes le Lepore qui s'estoit manifesté: mais pource qu'il se reintegra, nous ne le peusmes apprehender." C'est comme ces Badaux de Paris à la bataille de Senlis, qui ayant leurs bastons à feu sur le haut de l'eschine, demandoient: "Où est l'adverse partie, elle ne comparoistre pas?" Encor la Gcibaude parla mieux venant à monsieur le Gouverneur pour s'excuser de la taxe où l'on l'avoit employee pour les fortifications: "Monseigneur, je suis une pauvre femme en veuvesse, je vous prie avoir pitié & compcnction de moy, on m'a trop cauterisee pour les fornications."

Tacite. Laissez dire nostre poete: que voulez-vous, le bon preud'homme il savatte nostre langage, toutefois il dit bien, mais il va un peu de costé. (II:9)<sup>46</sup>

The author mocks the language and incompetence of academicians in an early comment, stating that they are not to be given much attention, although they will be seen about their ridiculous work. "Mais je vous prie ne vous amusez pas à ces messieurs les gens de lettres, qui sont si tres-sçavans qu'ils en sont tout sots. Vous les verrez hallebardans avec de grands lambeaux de Latin effarcuchans les fauvettes" (I:7-8). In an aside to scholars after he has included a Latin phrase in the text, the author says: "& dea je parle aux doctes s'ils le peuvent entendre" (II:250), thus insinuating that they would not be able to understand Latin. Travestied bits of scholastic Latin are heard from time to time in other conversations as well, sometimes as in the following example where rhyming nonsense words suggesting a variation on cornu (cuckold) replace the Latin:

"cornifetu, cornifetu, mon amy," c'est a dire, quod differtur, non aufertur" (II:231).<sup>47</sup> This particular example elicits a response from another speaker: "Comme vous parlez Latin" (II:231). The opinion that scholastic Latin hinders rather than facilitates the formulation and communication of ideas is expressed by a personnage referred to as "Nic. Nan." In response to a criticism by "Ramus":

Ramus. Que ne dittes-vous cela en Latin? Raphelangius se moquera encores de vous tant vous estes sot.  
 Nic. Nan. C'est assez, mon bon maistre; j'ay, comme disoit Ambroise Paré, assez de Latin tout fait, mais je n'en scaurois faire qu'à fine force. Au Diable le Latin, il m'a tout enmusiqué la fessure de l'entendoire, & parfois je suis vraiment un grand sot.  
 (II:175)

Béroalde conveys by example the dull and ponderous medium in which these men work. The pretention and obscurity which penetrates their language contrasts strangely with the lively and natural dialogue in most of the book. In an illustration of belaboured scholastic style the narrator addresses his public in a harangue overloaded with dependant clauses, unnessesary repetition, and elaborate detail, all of which leads to a final descriptive image of the wisdom being passed along as akin to a pound of butter:

. . . La vraye matiere, & la juste quinte essence dont le magifique usage est tel, que l'on vient en l'obtenant à bout de toutes entreprises, on obtient, en l'ayant, ce qu'on pourchasse, & on fait ce qu'on veut. Parquoy vous avez en sommes succinctement tout du long, proportionnement au petit pied & sans allegorie, les elemens, principes, fondemens, raisons, resolutions, evidences, puissances & causes de parvenir tout du long à l'usage de Geneve, imprimé à Rome, &

sans rien requerrir, comme une gnille de beurre frais.  
(I:166-67) <sup>48</sup>

Béroalde is pleased to be able to offer his work to the people in the language which they can understand, thus reversing the alienation fostered by scholars between the people and knowledge. He even suggests keeping this knowledge from the scholars in an urgent monologue which erupts into a colourful invective against those who hoard and abuse science; such men are degraded by comparison with fools, animals, and criminals:

CE LIVRE EST LE CENTRE DE TOUS LES LIVRES; vcila la parole secrete qui doit estre decouverte au temps d'Helie, ainsi que disent les Alchemistes; tenez le fort caché & vous gardez des pates pelues de ces enfarinez,<sup>49</sup> qui gourmandent la science & l'emplissent d'abbus: estrangez vous de ces pifres presomptueux, qui voyans les bonnes personnes desireuses de se calfeutrer le cerveau d'un peu de bonne lecture & profitable s'en scandalisent: chassez ces escorcheurs de latin, ces escarteleux de sentences, ces maquereaux de passages poëtiques qu'ils produisent & prostituent à tous venans; gardez-vous de ces entrelardeurs de Theologie alegorique, de ces effondreux d'argumens, & de tous ceux qui aiguissent les remonstrances sur la meule d'hypocrisie; fuyez telles bestes, & ne leur communiquez point ce rare thresor, ains le commettez à gens de bien, comme gens de bien ont pris la peine de le vous donner, non pour en abuser . . . . (I:51-52)

Some of the mockery is directed specifically at the alchemists, with whom Béroalde also had first hand acquaintance.<sup>50</sup> In an example of physical inversion alchemists are ridiculed as "ces tristes enfumez . . . desquels le cul paroist pour mieux scuffler" (I:165), or are dismissed as fools, "fous de haute alkimie" (I:223), and



their true motivation is exposed as avarice or lust. Examples of garbled alchemical jargon parody the esoteric terms used by those seekers of the Philosopher's Stone. Alchemical expressions such as "quintessentiellement", "la cinquieme essence necessaire", "soporiferentes" confuse the text during such parodies (I:161). Finally, they are made to mock themselves: "Je reviens à ceste pierre", says an unidentified alchemist, "d'autant que je suis alquemiste, aussi les alquemistes ont la pierre en la teste" (II:147). Criticism of unworthy alchemists can be found elsewhere in Béroalde's writings as well, although nowhere is it treated with the comic tone of Le Moyen de Parvenir.<sup>51</sup>

The laughing equalization of the social hierarchy does not stop with the satirical exposure of the famous guests, the political elite, and the intellectuals. There is in fact hardly a group in society which is not touched by some form of mockery. For example the medical profession, with which Béroalde again was associated, is humorously berated. The most typical degradation in their case is one suggested by the scatological diagnostic procedures of the profession. In these comments the reader's attention is directed from the purpose of the diagnosis to the material the doctor must examine: ". . . Comme les Medecins qui regardent & espluchent les ejections des autres" (I:21); they are similarly associated in a passing comment: ". . . la merde, cela eut bien servi aux medecins" (II:147). Sometimes they

are ridiculed in other ways, such as in the following case in which an aged peasant plays a joke on a surgeon:

. . . le chirurgien vit un viel paysan qui se plaignoit d'une douleur en la joue, "O, luy dit-il, vien, je te la guariray, je t'arracheray la dent qui te fait mal. --Pargoy vous ne scauriez. --Pardienne si feray. --Je gage demi escu que non, le voila. --Je gage que si. --Or, allons." Quand ils furent en la boutique, & que le patient sur la chaire, le barbier se met à regarder en sa bouche, & n'y trouva aucune dent; "Et qu'est-ce, dit-il, que cela? --C'est que j'ay gagné, dit le pied gris, il y a plus de dix ans que je n'ay pas une dent." (II:84)

Neither are the tradesmen neglected; they too are denounced as dishonest and unworthy, then comically inverted. In some examples complaints are issued against a range of professions at once. Everyone is characterized by the opposite of his profession's ideal virtue: ". . . L'infidelité des marchands, la desloyauté des gens de Justice, les impostures des Medecins, les volleries des Financiers, la tromperie des Artisans, la perfidie des Precepteurs . . . Toutes ces sortes ne sont pas gens de bien" (I:215).

With the levelling of social class distinctions human relationships are also equalized. Everyone is humcrously revealed to be equally susceptible to pretentious posturing, to devious self-advancement and particularly to the demands and limitations of the human body. Once this universal equality is established, a new permissive morality emerges, following the pattern of festival. As these universal human qualities are being established, the attitude of Bércaide's

prandial group becomes more apparently that of a Carnival crowd. Consistently, rigidity is the object of attack, and the weapon of ridicule is employed against those who deviate from the festive norm of flexibility and open gratification of desires.

The treatment of two opposing attitudes towards sexual indulgence typifies the socializing method behind the laughter and mockery. The two opinions, rigid repression of the body and liberated indulgence, are most clearly presented in the many comments and tales about women, since women in Le Moyen de Parvenir are depicted either as prudes or prostitutes, illustrating the extreme of each attitude. If a woman has a reputation as a "femme de bien", she is derided as foolish and cold, but if she takes a lover she loses any claim to moral virtue and finds herself the object of derision and mockery. If she is discrete about body functions, she is mocked, but if depicted performing them she is comically degraded. The commentary presents both the perversions of those who repress their sensuality and humorous cases of failure to suppress natural impulses.

In an effort to separate themselves from bodily functions, some women described in Ééroalde's anecdotes adopt a reserved and discrete attitude. This attitude, which seeks to avoid not only sexual activity, but other functions of the body such as digestion and elimination creates an alienation between mind and body which Carnival seeks to

heal. Those who attempt to place themselves above physical necessities are quickly brought down to the common level. They are reminded, as is "Le Mortel" above,<sup>52</sup> that their bodies function like all others, human or even animal. Two of the banqueters discuss feminine prudery, and speculate on whether women would like to be rid of the offending parts of their bodies: "Vrament voire, pensez-vous qu'elles seroient aises si elles n'avoient point de cul?" (II:169).<sup>53</sup> Other banqueters relate satirically that there are schools in Geneva that help women overcome the shame of such functions. (I:180), and that in Alsace, far from feeling humiliated by such functions, the women gather together to perform them in public: ". . . & c'est au Vendredi que elles s'assemblent au matin toutes par bandes. . . & selon leur dignité s'en vont en pisserie comme on va à la foire" (I:179). The result of their activity takes on fabulous proportions, reminiscent of the creation of Pyrenean hot springs by Pantagruel's urine:<sup>54</sup>

Estant arrivees ces femmes au lieu de la pissuere ou pissoterie, elles se disposent comme les montagnes d'Angleterre chacune où elle est, y gardant dignitez, prerogatives & honneur, ainsi qu'ez actes publics & notables, ne plus ne moins que se mettent les chevaliers en leur rang le jour de leur ceremonie; en ceste commodité abondamment, joyeusement & à la copieuse Benigne decharge des reins, elles vuident leurs vessies & pissent tant que ceste riviere en est faite & continuee, & de la les Alemans, Flamans & Anglais font venir la bonne eau pour faire la biere, la plus double & de plus haut goust. (I:180)

Alienation from the body finds its most typical expression in the image of a proud young woman rigidly warding off any association between herself and physical functions. Such attitudes are incompatible with the festive morality of the book and are either humorously altered or discredited by mockery. One young woman attending a wedding celebration is even afraid to dance or to approach the refreshment table for fear of dishonour: "toutes les autres dancoient, & elle point, & ne s'oscit approcher de la colation pour faire de la merde avec les dens comme les autres" (I:135). She is not allowed to maintain this position however, and is tricked into great intimacies with a wily "cousin" (I:135-36). The author mocks the attitude of another young woman as she prudishly tries to protect herself from any suggestion which might associate her with animalistic qualities. He describes her condescendingly as ". . . Conscience, belle courtisane, qui ne vouloit pas que ma petite chienne fut une creature, & ne lui plaisoit pas d'estre animal: 'Hoy, disoit elle, Bichonne n'est point creature, & je ne suis point animal'" (I:266). The narrator clearly finds her disdainful distinction naively amusing.

In Le Moyen de Parvenir the women who attempt to restrain themselves sexually in order to maintain their reputation of "femme de bien" are ridiculed. Such women are accused of stupidity: "ces sottes femmes de bien" (I:257), of frigidity: "vrament elle n'aime point le desduit, aussi

je ne prens pas plaisir d'avoir affaire à elle" (I:254), and even of insanity: ". . . la fille de nostre Juge, laquelle est si pucelle que son pucelage lui monte si fort en la teste qu'elle en est folle" (II:184).<sup>55</sup> Such women are frequently ill-humoured:

Qu'est-ce que peut faire une femme de bien que du bruit en une maison? Elles ne font que rechigner, elles sont ennemies de tout exercice vertueux: bref ces tant femmes de bien seront pour dix escus de mesnage en une maison, & y feront pour cent escus de vilennies, tant elles sont seches de courtoisie. Depuis qu'une femme a juré, "Par la merci-Dieu je suis femme de bien de mon corps!" On n'en scauroit plus chevir, on ne lui ose plus rien dire. (II:35)

They are also hypocritical as other accounts reveal. Following the account of a priest's maid who bitterly complains that she has been raped by three men of the town, the honourable wife of a solid citizen coldly displays an attitude of studied hypocrisy:

. . . la fille se plaignoit qu'elle avoit esté ainsi devergondee; & on le contoit à quelques honnestes femmes: en la compagnie estoit la femme d'un President, qui oyant ce conte de tant de fois, respondit & dit: "Au Diable soit la carogne tant elle estoit aise! Cela n'advierdroit pas si tost à une femme de bien." (I:319)

As for the opposite group of women, those who candidly take pleasure in their bodies, they are all classified insultingly under the general label of prostitute. This insult is an aggressive act, attempting to degrade the woman's public image. While the way to insult a man is through an affront to his virility, a woman is attacked by accusing her of lax sexual mores. This distinction is noted

by one of the speakers: "Pouquoy est-ce que quand on nomme un homme sot il s'estime coquu? & si on appelle une femme vesse, elle pensera estre putain?" (II:168-69). A name-calling match between husband and wife shows that each is aware of the other's vulnerability: "'Ha putain, fit-il. 'Ha coquu,' fit-elle. 'Ha ha,' fit-il. 'A a,' fit-elle.'" (I:256).

Béroalde's speakers frequently sprinkle their colourful dialogues on the topic of women with this insult. Once the affront has been unleashed, however, the attitude towards these women is surprisingly indulgent. Though this insult is often applied to women in Le Moyen de Parvenir, it begins to lose some of its strength as the attitudes of the narrator and the guests become clearer. Husbands are to blame for the wandering of their wives, argues one speaker who describes the second wife of a bad husband to illustrate the point. Though at first a virtuous woman, the husband's behaviour soon made her no better than any other woman: "... la second estoit une des plus femmes de bien de la terre, & elle ne fut pas si tost avec lui, que l'astre de cet homme ne la rangea au poinct des soeurs"<sup>56</sup> (I:258)

Women manage to assert themselves, by availing themselves of pleasures of the body. One newly wedded husband proudly recounts his promiscuous earlier days, but discovers that his new wife's career already equals his. The morning after the wedding many women come to their house,

bringing with them hearth cakes. The wife asks what this can mean, and he replies that "c'estoit un adieu que lui disoient toutes les femmes, filles & garces qu'il avoit accolees". She scolds him for not having told her sooner: "He da, dit elle, vous avez grand tort que vous ne me l'avez dit, j'en eusse averty tous ceux qui me l'ont fait, ils m'eussent apporté du vin, nous eussions eu à boire & à manger pour d'icy à Pasques" (II:187). Many other tales of amorous adventures depict the triumph of women who are not afraid to admit erotic attractions. Even though these women must endure the insults and mockery of their society, the author tacitly approves of their actions, since they are obeying nature rather than putting restrictions on it. The most foolish are those who abstain.

Tales of forgiving husbands illustrate the way conjugal relationships can fare when not too tightly restricted by unnatural constraints and antagonism. Room for human joys and weaknesses is found in the following passages. They show warmth instead of distrust and hatred between the sexes. A wife on her sickbed fearfully confesses that she has been unfaithful, but her husband's quick thinking reaction is the opposite of what one would expect:

"Mon ami, je vous ay tousjours esté obeissante & douce, je croi que vous ne vous plaignez point de moi? --Non, mamie, resjouyssez vous & revenez au monde. --O mon ami, je suis fort dolente & ennuyée d'une faute que je vous ay faite; mon cher mari, je ne vous en ay fait qu'une, je vous prie de me la pardonner. --Las, mamie, prenez courage, il n'y a rien que bien. --Mais, mon



ami, la faute est grande. --C'est tout un, je la vous pardonne. --Helas, mon ami, ce petit garçon n'est pas de vostre fait, c'est Poulet qui me le fit le jour qu'il tailla nostre treille l'annee passee. --O c, mamie, & dites moi, estoit il nostre journee? --Ouy, mon ami. --O bien, o bien, mamie, c'est tout un: puis qu'il estoit à nostre journee, & que nous l'avons paye, l'enfant est à nous, d'autant que ce qu'il faisoit estoit pour nous; reposez en paix & ne vous affligez plus." (II:209)

Another husband reveals that he is pleased with the fact that his wife is "un peu putain" because it means he is treated better, and with good humour:

Mais à propos de putains, il faut que je vous fasse un conte de ma femme qui estoit un peu putain: elle n'estoit pas de ces enormes putains qui en font mestier, mais de ces femmes de bien qui cnt un ami d'honneur. Et bien j'estois tousjours le maistre, on me craignoit; quand je venois de la ville, ma femme venoit à moi, me tastoit la teste: "Vous est eschauffé, mon fils. Mon ami, il faut un peu prendre de vin; voici monsieur tel, qui vous estoit venu voir, il prendra la patience avec vous." Et bien j'estois mignardé. Et qui plus est, mes servantes & mes vallets le faisoient un petit; cela estoit cause que je les trouvais tousjours à la maison à faire leur besogne; si cela n'eut point esté, ils fussent allez au loin chercher provision, aux despens de tout ce qu'ils m'eussent peu desrober. Tels sont les justes & bons fruicts de l'honneste & chaste paillardise, dont les effects ne succedent qu'aux ames pacifiques & qui ont du courage. (II:190-91)

These tales reverse insults and restraints by turning them into laughter, and by creating a capacity for self-mockery. They infuse an indulgent elasticity into human relationships in a manner not unlike the permissive indulgence granted by Carnival.

Regardless of sex, social group, or position in the hierarchy, certain character flaws bring ridicule upon their

owners and provoke the implicit laughter of the festive group. These passages usually follow the well-worn theme of trompeur trompé, in which a character sets a devious trap for another, but ultimately finds himself caught in it instead.<sup>57</sup> A group of greedy canons are outwitted by a generous, though worldly-wise priest who had offered to give them a bottle of wine to celebrate Saint Genevieve's Day. The canons decide to take advantage of the offer and send an enormous bottle to be filled:

Les compagnons estans à la veille du jour proposé, envoyèrent un gros vallet à monsieur le Penitencier, le prier qu'il luy pleust, selon sa promesse, leur donner la bouteille de vin; ainsi dit on. Or ils avoient fait provision d'une opulente bouteille, qui ne tencit gueres moins que celle des Capucins, où il entroit presque un quart de vin. (II:230)

Thinking quickly, the precentor sends the valet to find the maid who is to fill the bottle, and then slips a stone into the bottle. When the valet returns the precentor tells him to rinse the bottle to be filled. The valet does so, but when he shakes the bottle, the stone shatters it. The precentor expresses mock sympathy, and has the maid bring a particular bottle to replace it. However, the replacement only holds a third of a pint! The old priest fills it and sends the valet off with a mocking message to the canons: "Allez, dit-il, ils en auront une autre fois cornifetu, cornifetu, mon amy", c'est à dire, quod differtur, non aufertur."<sup>58</sup>

The theme of trompeur/trompé arises again in another narrative in which a hypocritical and mercenary hostess receives a just reward for her services to a guest with strange powers. It begins as an old man asks her for a night's lodging, but being of a miserly nature, she refuses, using her husband's disapproval as an excuse. The man goes on until he meets another housewife. The second woman receives him better: "il fut receu fort honcrablement, & bien traicté de la pauvre femme qui le mit en un bon lit, ceste bonne femme!" In the morning he thanks his hostess profusely and she renews the offer of hospitality. He then grants her a favour through magical powers:

Madame, je vous rends graces infinies de tant de bien & d'amitie, je prie le bon Dieu qu'il lui plaise vous benir, si que la premiere besogne que vous ferez aujourd'huy lui soit tant agreable que ne puissiez tout le jour faire autre chose." Il partit: & elle qui n'y pensoit point, l'ayant recommandé à Dieu, se fit apporter un peu de buée qu'elle avoit estendu le jour precedent, & se mit à ployer son linge, & tant ploya, & encor tant ploya, que tant plus elle ployoit plus il y avoit à ployer, & ployoit tousjours: tellement qu'elle avoit de grands monceaux de toutes sortes de linge qui multiplioit au touchement de ses mains. Par hazard celle qui avoit refusé le bon homme vint querir quelque chose chez la Gousson, & la voyant empeschee lui dit: "He bien, ma mie la Gousson, que faictes vous?" Lame, elle lui conta toute d'avanture & cause de ce grand bien: adonques l'autre fut bien estonnee & fort triste d'avoir laisse passer une telle commodité; parquci sans faire semblant, elle s'en va & puis se mit au chemin cù elle pensoit trouver ce personnage; & suivant par avis son train, ayant sceu en s'en enquestant qu'il estoit allé vers Vieille-ville, elle faiscit mine de cueillir des herbes pour sa vache; puis l'ayant apperceu elle fait de l'estonnee; elle s'approche de lui, & lui dit: "Helas, Monsieur, que je suis aise de vous avoir trouvé, que faictes vous icy à vous morfondre? En da, le bon Dieu a bien changé mon mari, & je ne le sçavois

pas; quand je lui dis hier que je vous avois escnduit, il me cuida venir meschef tant il me tança. Je loue le bon Dieu de son amendement; je vçus prie ne le prendre point en mauvaise part, mais de nous faire ce bien de venir ce soir loger chez nous. (I:183-4)

He agrees to return with her, spends the night, and grants her the same parting favour in the morning. She prepares to receive a large, free pile of linen, and sends the maid to fetch the dirty laundry so that the multiplication may begin. However, she is soon disappointed.

La chambriere ayant tout apporté, vcila que la Page voulant mettre la main à l'oeuvre, s'avisa d'aller pisser afin de ne se desbaucher pçint: ainsi toute en haste elle sort en sa court où elle s'acroupit pour pisser: mais ce fut icy une efficace terrible, d'autant qu'elle commença pisserie, qui continua tout le jçur. Jan, elle avoit dit qu'elle auroit force linge, mais elle coula force eau, & fit ce ruisseau qui passe au pied des Loges, & va jusques aux Indes.

Although humorous reversals and revelations provide most of the material on the subject of social interaction in Le Moyen de Parvenir, there are some speakers who do not laugh indulgently at human failings, but appear to take them seriously. This same attitude was heard in relation to ecclesiastical wrongdoings.<sup>59</sup> They justly claim that people are selfishly aggressive and irrational, sacrificing their own integrity and the well-being of others in the struggle to get ahead: ". . . c'est pitié absoluë, que pour estre grand & gagner, il faut ruiner la vertu & le prochain. O quelle misere! Que les hommes sont diables aux hommes! Quiconque ne croira point qu'il y ait de diables, qui aille au Palais & à la Court" (I:152). This plaintive voice

continues to deplore the lack of charity people grant each other in a world where ruthless competition reigns, and where despite the energy expended, faults in the social structure still remain: "ainsi plusieurs sont riches du malheur des autres, desquels jamais la faute n'est cachée ou diminuée ou destournée, ains multipliée abondamment" (I:154).

Despite the truth and sincerity of the statement, this voice receives little support from the others, and his tirade is powerless to effect any change in the banquet atmosphere. Instead it is swept away by the laughter which surrounds it. In fact, one speaker observes, it is far better to confront the world as a fool, since it is very rare and unfortunate to see a fool condemned to be hanged. Those who find themselves in serious trouble are the clever people: "... ainsi que ces beaux esprits & tant habiles gens qui se font pendre" (II:164). For this reason Béroalde concludes that he himself would like to be considered a fool:

He bien, à propos de vous, messieurs, vous direz que je suis fou; je voudrais le pouvoir devenir; pource que si tost que je le serois, je serois exempt du feu si on me disoit heretique; delivré de prison, si je devois; non sujet au Consistoire ou à la Mercuriale, ou à la reprimende. (II:257)

In summary, Béroalde's text demonstrates a festive attitude towards the release of hostile aggressions, first clothing them in laughter and then using them as a

socializing force. Violence, physical humiliation and moral dishonour are carried out with hostile, though humorous ambivalence. These forms of festive aggression work to accomplish the levelling of social ranks and the deflation of individual pretensions of superiority. Everyone is revealed to be of the same self-centered morality so that all may indulge openly and without guilt. The most universal human quality is the physical body, which unites all members of society through common physical characteristics and needs. The functions, limitations and desires of the body are familiar to all. The material aspect of the body (eating, drinking, eliminating) which appears in the festival is welcomed enthusiastically, and the body is freely indulged in Béroalde's banquet. The universally limiting factor of physical death reminds the participants that physical pleasures cannot be enjoyed forever, and should be exploited immediately. There is a particularly tolerant attitude towards sexual indulgence and innocent folly in Le Moyen de Parvenir also. This attitude implies a liberation of both mind and body which is not permitted outside of a festive context.

Throughout the banqueters' conversation there are warnings that the festive freedoms which provide for the necessary release of social tensions are being threatened. As in the case of religious reform, the author again seems wary of any social attitudes which imply rigidity because

the way of life they promote has a tendency to escape the control of those who initiate them and merely replace an imperfect system by a more repressive one. Instead, he recommends flexible carnivalesque solutions to problems caused by social tension: the natural cures for social ills, he suggests, are laughter and a return to tangible, sensual pleasures.

## CHAPTER V: NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Sigmund Freud, Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious (New York: Norton, 1960), p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> Henri Bergson, Le Rire (Paris: P.U.F., 1940), p. 95, notes A. Bain's analysis of the cause of laughter: "le risible naitrait 'quand on nous présente une chose, auparavant respectée, comme médiocre et vile'".

<sup>3</sup> See above pp. 145-47.

<sup>4</sup> See above pp. 38-38.

<sup>5</sup> See Rabelais' "Prologue" to Pantagruel, in Oeuvres complètes (Paris: Garnier, 1962), v. I, pp. 219.

<sup>6</sup> Béroalde calls misfortune down upon his critics in another passage: "Moines, Prestres, Ministres &c. Presidens, Conseillers, Avocats, &c. Marchands, Ouvriers, Artisans, &c. De quelque estat, qualité & condition qu'ils soient, qui diront mal des memoires du Moyen de Parvenir, seront atteints & convaincus de tous crimes que la sottise embrasse, que l'impudence couve, & l'hypocrisie nourrit, &c." (II:76).

<sup>7</sup> See above pp. 98-99.

<sup>8</sup> Bakhtin, pp. 199-206, cites the beatings of the "Chicanous" and the marriage banquet thrashings in Seigneur Basché's castle as examples of this ambivalent violence. See Rabelais, Le Quart Livre, XI-XIII and XIV-XVI (Garnier ed., II, 67-74 and 79-88).

<sup>9</sup> See above pp. 155-57.

<sup>10</sup> "l'anus", Garnier edition, p. 44, note 1.

<sup>11</sup> The painful injuries a baron suffers are similarly glossed over by laughter, because the anecdote is told only for the comic details (II:104-5).

<sup>12</sup> Salomon Reinach, "Le Rire rituel", in Cultes, mythes et religions (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1912), Vol. IV, pp. 115-16. Reinach also cites an incident described by Plutarch in which a group of patriotic women repel both an attacking enemy and a tidal wave by performing this gesture: "héros et



flots reculèrent, épouvantés", p. 117. Bakhtin, Rabelais, p. 373, discusses this gesture and observes that the greeting of an observer with the buttocks in place of the face has long been a prevalent insult, and is "one of the most common uncrowning gestures throughout the world".

<sup>13</sup> "Ces parolles dictes, se retira en sa tesniere, et sus le perron de la porte se recourra, robe, cotte et chemise jusques aux escelles, et leurs monstroient son cul". Le Tiers Livre, XVIII (Garnier ed., I, 473).

<sup>14</sup> Herbert Reiche, Le Moyen de Parvenir von Fércalde de Verville, p. 31, traces this incident to Guillaume Bouchet's Serées, part 6.

<sup>15</sup> See for example, I:206, 245 or II:471.

<sup>16</sup> See above p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> Bergson, Le Rire, p. 39, states, "Est comique tout incident qui appelle notre attention sur le physique d'une personne alors que le moral est en cause".

<sup>18</sup> Further examples can be found in the text: I:21, 113, 167, 304, and II:133, 161, 200, 203, etc.

<sup>19</sup> See Bergson, Le Rire, pp. 29-39 and p. 43.

<sup>20</sup> The narrator for example, claims it as the mark of his equality with the other guests: "Je m'assis aussi bien qu'un autre, d'autant que j'ay un cul, joint que sans cul nul ne pourroit avoir seance entre gens d'honneur" (I:22), and another guests reminds his listeners of its necessity: "Seriez-vous bien aise que l'on vous ostast le cul pource qu'il est puant, & le sera jusqu'a la mort? Vous seriez un bel homme sans cul!" (II:76).

<sup>21</sup> cf. Rabelais, Pantagruel, XXVII (Garnier ed., I, 352). In which Pantagruel's flatus creates little men and women.

<sup>22</sup> These characters are probably intended to be Jean-Antoine Baïf (1532-89) and Pierre de Ronsard (1524-85), humanists and poets of the Pléiade group.

<sup>23</sup> Bergson, Le Rire, pp. 105-6.

<sup>24</sup> This passage is similar to a complaint made to the clergy, (II:165), quoted above p. 138.

<sup>25</sup> Johan Huizinga, Waning, p. 141, describes the Danse Macabre as a social equalizer: "While it reminded the spectators of the frailty and the vanity of earthly things, the death-dance at the same time preached social equality as the Middle Ages understood it, Death levelling the various ranks and professions".

<sup>26</sup> See above p. 76.

<sup>27</sup> I:76, cited above p. 81.

<sup>28</sup> "Feneseaux" is interpreted as faons in the Garnier edition of Le Moyen de Parvenir, p. 229, note 2.

<sup>29</sup> The speaker is probably referring to Justinian, the controversial Roman emperor (527-565).

<sup>30</sup> Charles V of Spain (1500-1558) relinquished the crown and retired to a monastery where it was rumoured, perhaps without foundation, that he had gone mad. See the Garnier edition, p. 267, note 1.

<sup>31</sup> This may be a direct allusion to the French king, Francis I, who reportedly suffered from syphilis. See Bakhtin, p. 113.

<sup>32</sup> See above p. 185.

<sup>33</sup> It is noted in the Garnier edition that "Mercure" refers not only to the treatment for syphilis, but also to the Mercure de France, a journal which began to appear in 1605. This does not significantly alter the original implication however, but does make it more ambivalent.

<sup>34</sup> See II:165.

<sup>35</sup> The Queen of Egypte, perhaps Cleopatra, is slighted in another passage. She asks a courtier his opinion of women, and in his general evaluation he replies: "Puis qu'il vous plaist, Madame, par la mordong toutes femmes sont putains. --O ho, dit la Reine, & moy? --A ha, Madame, Vous estes la Reine" (I:72).

<sup>36</sup> Madness was associated with both saffron and with beans at the time, thus the mention of "safran" and of "la febve" in this passage is used to suggest the man's insane condition.

<sup>37</sup> See for example the anecdotes of the four ladies of the court insulted by a mere magistrate, and of Rodrigue, an

ill-mannered picaro who insults the king, and is handsomely rewarded, II:255 and I:149-51 respectively.

<sup>38</sup> See above, pp. 181-82.

<sup>39</sup> See above p. 195, (II:82-83).

<sup>40</sup> See for example above, Chapter III, note 17, for references to "wise fools".

<sup>41</sup> See also I:39, "un sage conseille bien un fou", and I:208, "vous estes si sage que vous en estes fou".

<sup>42</sup> This refers to the shortening of the Julian calendar by ten days in 1581. See the Garnier edition, p. 1, note 3.

<sup>43</sup> cf. The debate between Panurge and Thomaste, the English academician, in Rabelais' Pantagruel, XIX, in which Panurge's gestures are all obscene. (Garnier ed., I, 319-21).

<sup>44</sup> See "Chanson" in Les Amours de Cassandre, Oeuvres Complètes (Paris:Gallimard, 1950), Vol. I, p. 103:

D'un gosier masche-laurier  
J'oy crier  
Dans Lycofron ma Cassandre  
Qui prophetize aux Troyens  
Les moyens  
Qui les réduiront en cendre. . . .

<sup>45</sup> Etienne Jodelle, poet and playwright (1532-1573).

<sup>46</sup> cf. Rabelais, Pantagruel, VI, (Garnier ed., I, 244-47), in which Pantagruel meets a Limousin scholar speaking the pseudo-Latin of contemporary scholars.

<sup>47</sup> See below, note 58.

<sup>48</sup> Similar parodies can be found on pages I:50, 227, and 242-3.

<sup>49</sup> Carnival clowns and stage fools often floured their faces as part of their costume. See Welsford, Masque, p. 14, note 1.

<sup>50</sup> Béroalde studied alchemy and had written a treatise on the subject, Recherches de la pierre philosophale (1583).

<sup>51</sup> See above Chapter III, note 65.

<sup>52</sup> See above p. 183, (II:162).

<sup>53</sup> Men are also taunted with this alternative. See above note 20, (II:76).

<sup>54</sup> Rabelais, Pantagruel, ch. XXXIII (Garnier ed., I, 383).

<sup>55</sup> Even a remote contact with a woman who is a virgin at the age of twenty-five and a half is demonstrated to be mortally dangerous to a young Gascon who has been wounded: "Le pauvre Gascon se vint faire penser à Tours de sa morsure, playe & contusion; mais il ne lui servit de rien, parce qu'il en mourut, d'autant que l'appareil qui fut mis sur sa blessure, avoit esté appliqué sur la chemise d'une fille, qui estoit pucelle à vingt-cinq ans & demi, & que de la mesme on avoit fait le charpis qui avoit mis le feu par tout" (II:29-30).

<sup>56</sup> See Royer, Glossary, II:131, "soeur: garce". The opinion expressed in this statement, that a wife's behaviour depends on the treatment she receives from her husband, repeats the advice Panurge receives from Hippothadée when he inquires about his prospective wife. Rabelais, Le Tiers Livre, XXX (Garnier ed., I, 528).

<sup>57</sup> Bergson, who analyzes this comic situation, classifies the "dupeur-dupé" or "voleur-volé" under the rubric of inversion, noting that it involves an exchange or "interversiion" of roles and circumstances: "Il s'agit toujours, au fond, d'une interversion de rôles, et d'une situation qui se retourne contre celui qui la crée". Le Rire, p. 72.

<sup>58</sup> The precentor's words, "cornifetu . . .", suggest an insult by the similarity with cornu, or "cuckold", as well as riming with the mocking Latin phrase which means roughly, "that which has been put into pieces cannot be carried away".

<sup>59</sup> See above p. 145.

## CHAPTER VI

## CONCLUSION

Béroalde's Le Moyen de Parvenir creates an impression of profound disorder and ebullient irreverence. This impression is projected both by the kind of world developed in Béroalde's work and by his presentation of it. While these distracting qualities have confused or annoyed many readers of Le Moyen de Parvenir, they seem to us to be of primary importance in understanding the work. In attempting to discover the nature of the disorder and irrationality in Le Moyen de Parvenir the socio-literary studies of Chambers, Welsford, Barber and Bakhtin provided the initiative for a comparative study between the literary work and the social phenomenon of the popular festival which it most closely resembles. An examination of the Feast of Fools, Carnival and the fool-societies reveals a festive tradition characterized by the special liberties of free speech,

blatant sensuality and gratuitous actions. Through these festive freedoms, a traditional representation of chaos is expressed. Symbolic of the free and mocking festive spirit, the figure of the fool who is present throughout Le Moyen de Parvenir as in festival personifies the special freedoms. A closer analysis of the festival reveals its paradoxically positive social role, showing that a period of legalized folly actually strengthens the social structure. Festival liberties and a festive attitude also benefit the individual by helping him to maintain an emotional and mental balance.

The relationship between Le Moyen de Parvenir and the festival begins with the elements which contribute to the general atmosphere. Similar to Carnival and to the Feast of Fools, Béroalde's banquet takes place in a special festive atmosphere in which time and space lose their everyday meaning and in which the border between reality and illusion disappears. The deliberate disruption of temporal and spacial references is indicative of a break with the usual rules of logic and reason in Le Moyen de Parvenir. In this irregular atmosphere suspended in time and space Béroalde places hundreds of voices belonging to living and dead personages as well as to allegorical or supernatural creatures. They move in and out of the dialogue like masked revellers in a Carnival parade. Wine, feasting and peals of laughter complete the festive atmosphere.

Béroalde's characters exploit traditional festive

privileges to indulge in a drinking bout accompanied by liberated table talk. In the dialogue everyday objects of worship, respect or fear are turned upside-down and ridiculed. The Bible is irreverently parodied, Church rites are mocked, and ecclesiastics are humorously characterized as ignorant, greedy and licentious. While the latter are excused for these human, even festive sins by the banqueters, there is sharp condemnation of those who take religion too seriously. These sober souls are denounced and firmly excluded from Béroalde's banquet where laughter and joy dominate.

In addition to religion Béroalde's satire also touches on another mainstay of society, the social hierarchy. Those at the top of that vertical structure are humorously brought down to a common level through festive violence, humiliation and dishonour. Everyone is shown to be of the same self-centered morality and to be equally susceptible to functions and appetites of the body. By the same token, they are all equally deserving of guiltless and joyous self-fulfilment. Again Béroalde displays a particularly harsh judgement of those authorities and zealots who would condemn and suppress such warranted enjoyment.

In place of the personal repression and social turmoil brought on by the rigidity of those in power, whether earnest reformers or corrupt officials, Béroalde proposes the elasticity of festival which creates an essentially

harmless chaos based on laughter and freedom. The good-natured chaos projected by the book is thus shown to be a purposeful creation based on Béroalde's acquaintance with traditional fools and festivals and on his sympathetic understanding of the irrational factors in human nature. Faced with the irrationalities of human society and with individual failings, Béroalde's reaction is to accept the disorder and aggression by stressing the creativity of chaos and laughter. In this way he develops a positive and optimistic outlook on life.

The carnivalesque perspective also gives new meaning to the title of Béroalde's work. The title suggests that the way to succeed, or parvenir, will be discussed in this book, and this promise is reinforced in many passages throughout the text claiming that one can find "le moyen de parvenir" within its pages. At first one is inclined to join the critics who complain that the book has been badly misnamed,<sup>1</sup> or that the author is mocking the reader, for the means to succeed vary widely. But after closer examination, the title seems aptly formulated, since Béroalde not only provides a "moyen de parvenir" for the individual, but also for society as a whole.

For the individual the "success" promised is essentially that of self-fulfilment. The way to succeed is by adopting the carnivalesque attitude towards life demonstrated in the text. Béroalde's work offers the



opportunity to indulge in an uninhibited release of inner passions and of tensions which are usually held in check by reason and by social restrictions. Just as upon festive occasions the individual is allowed to throw off inhibitions and to exteriorize the natural, emotional being within himself, the reader of Le Moyen de Parvenir is invited to participate in Béroalde's literary recreation of this event. The word parvenir does not necessarily imply material wealth or social status in his text, although they are not discounted as means to an end. Instead, the common goal of Béroalde's many characters is the attainment of an emotionally liberated mental state in which the human being can fulfil himself to the greatest extent. This goal is attained by being natural, with no pretensions, no inhibitions, and no compunction to delay self-gratification. Béroalde's characters are emotionally and sensually open to the world and do not allow themselves to be constrained by religious or social regulations which demand abstract commitments and sobriety. They eat, drink, and laugh heartily, but remain detached from the great issues which tore France apart in Béroalde's time: religion and civil war.

The carnivalesque attitude which Béroalde proposes carries with it immense psychological benefits. Introduction of the irrational into one's psychological framework permits a resigned acceptance of what one cannot change and a will

to appreciate the small, but attainable, joys of life. One of the speakers summarizes this attitude in the following way: "il n'est que de faire grand chere & de resjouyr, c'est vivre cela" (II:54). The formula is not unlike the call to enjoy life and the advice to retain a certain detachment which is found in Rabelais' definitions of "pantagruélisme". Rabelais advises his aspiring "Pantagruélistes" to "vivre en paix, joye, santé, faisans tousjours grande chere", and urges them to adopt a "certaine gayeté d'esprit conficte en mespris des choses fortuites".<sup>2</sup> The many voices heard in Béroalde's conversation echo this "pantagruelistic" ideal which is also that of the festival.

The promise of the author to provide the reader with a "moyen de parvenir" is doubly fulfilled as Bercalde presents his reader with examples of the carnivalesque attitude, and then he attempts to plunge him into the unstable, irrational world of the festival. The incoherent style and erratic progress of the text bring the reader into the environment by throwing him off balance in the same ways in which the unfamiliar setting and altered regulations disorient Carnival participants. Once introduced into Béroalde's world, the reader is further made to feel a part of the banquet proceedings by the author's numerous asides addressed directly to him. Then the fast tempo of the conversation, the cog-à-l'âne dialogues, the lively tales, and finally the entire atmosphere of liberated sensuality

combine to simulate a festive experience for the reader. Béroalde's intent is to draw the reader closer to the action as though pushing him into the uninhibited Carnival crowd. The reader is surrounded by a large group of individuals all gone slightly mad, for Béroalde's narrator and the banquet guests represent that irrational, self-indulgent side of human nature displayed in the traditional fool.

By emphasizing the "foolish" aspects of human nature and by pulling the reader and the characters closer together, Béroalde demonstrates that the reader need not be ashamed of the fool and glutton within himself. Enid Welsford summarizes this special role of the fool in terms that clarify the relationship between Béroalde's personages and the reader:

The Fool is an unabashed glutton and coward and knave, he is--as we say-- a natural; we laugh at him and enjoy a pleasant sense of superiority; he looks at us oddly and we suspect that he is our alter ego; he winks at us and we are delighted at the discovery that we also are gluttons and cowards and knaves. The rogue has freed us from shame. More than that, he has persuaded us that wasted affection, thwarted ambition, latent guilt are mere delusions to be laughed away.<sup>3</sup>

By allowing people to play the fool and indulge the sensual being within each of them, a new flexibility is introduced into their lives. They are permitted to liberate their "natural" selves without shame, and to laugh at the naturalness in others without malice. Instead of condoning attempts to repress the aggressive, selfish, and often

irrational aspect of human nature, Béroalde advocates the natural release of this energy through traditionally sanctioned excess. In this way frustrated energy can be turned into harmless aggression and laughter in place of destructive hostilities.

Béroalde's attitude not only helps the individual towards fulfilment, but it works to benefit society as a whole. Through Le Moyen de Parvenir Béroalde demonstrates an understanding of the social purpose of festive disorder which the medieval defender of the Feast of Fools explains in his reference to human beings as "de gros tonneaux mal reliez".<sup>4</sup> The attitude which Béroalde promotes provides a "moyen de parvenir" for the entire social system. Festive release and chaos paradoxically serve to stabilize the very society they seem to invert, for they function as a kind of social safety valve. Béroalde expresses nostalgia for a time in the past during which the church and state were strong enough to allow the people festive liberties instead of tightening regulations on thought, speech, and action. He voices alarm at the loss of an elasticity which was present in former days. In the tradition of festival, Béroalde's version of that past "Golden Age" is a carnivalesque gathering. Through the medium of festival, the promise of the title is fulfilled, as the voice of a tolerant and conservative observer of the human comedy unveils his "secret" in Le Moyen de Parvenir. Béroalde's ultimate

message converges with the final position adopted by his contemporary, Michel de Montaigne, who also advocates a tolerant and conservative attitude towards affairs of church and state as an alternative to dangerous social hostility and instability.<sup>5</sup> This conclusion also helps to reintegrate Le Moyen de Parvenir with Béroalde's other works, notably with his philosophical treatise, L'Idée de la République (1583), in which tolerance and conservatism dominate.

While Béroalde offers the wisdom of the festive tradition as the way to succeed in maintaining the emotional balance of the individual and the political stability of the society, this concept also expands beyond the context of Le Moyen de Parvenir. By recognizing the importance of accepting the irrational and of integrating it into both one's personal outlook and into social relationships, Béroalde reveals a philosophy which has wider applications. Through his festive outlook he sees a way to cope with the irrationalities of human nature and with the uncertainties of the human condition.

In conclusion, it is through recognition of how Béroalde the humanist and the artist used the popular festive tradition to express his impression of life around him that the value of these observations becomes clearer. He has fused the social phenomena of festival and the cult of fools with his own desire to comment on society to form a colourful and vibrant tapestry which comes into sharper

focus when viewed through the perspective of Carnival. As an artist, he has found a way to deal with the illusive aspects of life such as irrationality and uncertainty. Through his attempts to express this side of human life he joins other writers, both before and after him, who share his preoccupations. The festive themes and patterns revealed in Le Moyen de Parvenir may also open up new perspectives on many other works whose authors choose to meet the absurdities of life with an open mind, a sense of humour, and above all with the ambivalent yet effective wisdom of the fool.

## CHAPTER VI: NOTES

<sup>1</sup> See above pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup> See Pantagruel, XXXIV, (Garnier ed., I, 387) and Le Tiers Livre, "Prologue" (II, 11-12).

<sup>2</sup> Welsford, Fool, p. 322.

<sup>4</sup> See above p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> See in particular "De l'Experience", in Essais, Livre III, ch. 13, (Paris: Garnier, 1962), Vol. II, 516-578.

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