Experiences of bodily disorder in French books 1573-1592

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CONTENTS

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ABSTRACT

Mary Douglas, in *Purity and Danger* and Elizabeth Grosz, in *Volatile Bodies* concur that the human body whose boundaries are traversed or transgressed is troubling, threatening and risky. The threats to which Douglas and Grosz separately refer are largely ideological and cultural threats, but their identification of the problematic nature of ruptured or unusual bodily boundaries is nevertheless relevant to the analysis of the actual bodily disorder with which this thesis is concerned. Disease, cannibalism and monstrosity are forms of bodily behaviour or conditions in which boundaries are inherently, or are rendered, unclear, and in the sixteenth-century books of Ambroise Paré, Jean de Léry and Michel de Montaigne, the question of the disorderly nature of these three physical phenomena is addressed.

A fundamental feature of the books produced by these three writers is the emphasis on the experience of the form of bodily disorder in question on which the written account is based. Paré, a surgeon, treated plague patients and dissected monstrous specimens before writing about his experiences in his *Œuvres complètes*; Léry observed the practice of cannibalism in Brazil before returning to Europe and witnessing the consumption of human flesh during the siege of Sancerre; and Montaigne, whose final essay is significantly entitled 'De l'experience', develops a method of writing, or *essaying*, which involves the writer attempting to evaluate critically all received experiences and information before arriving at his own conclusion.

The depiction of cannibalism, monstrosity and disease in the books of these three writers will be examined using a methodology developed around the principles of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism. The particular relevance of this literary theory to the theme of the disordered body in French sixteenth-century books is the emphasis that Bakhtin also places on the writer's experience of his subject matter. In addition, Bakhtin argues that writers experience an impulse to consummate, in other words to define, explain and contextualise, and present as complete the world they observe. This thesis argues that the question of bodily boundaries raised by Douglas and Grosz can be addressed by Bakhtinian theory, and seeks to illustrate the ways in which Paré, Léry and Montaigne exhibit an awareness of the problem of the disordered body, and develop narrative strategies to overcome it which correspond to the functions of a Bakhtinian Author.

[1]

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

> Considerant la conduite de la besongne d'un peintre que j'ay, il m'a pris l'envie de l'ensuivre. Il choisit le plus bel endroit et milieu de chaque paroy, pour y loger un tableau élabouré de toute sa suffisance; et le vuide tout au tour, il le remplit de crotesques, qui sont peintures fantasques, n'ayant grâce qu'en la varieté et estrangeté. Que sont ce icy aussi, à la verité, que crotesques et corps monstrueux, rappiecez de divers membres, sans certaine figure, n'ayants ordre, suite ny proportion que fortuite?
>
> Michel de Montaigne
> 'De l'amitié'

In observing his painter at work, Montaigne's attention is caught by two features of the artwork evolving before his eyes. He notices the 'varieté et estrangeté' of the characteristic *grotesques*, the marvellous creatures and exotic objects that can be seen around the edges of Renaissance paintings, tapestries, emblems and frontispieces like the one pictured above. The inspiration for the

[1] F. Liceti, *De monstrorum natura, causis et differentiis libri duo* (Padua: 1634), frontispiece.

painted grotesques is gathered from a variety of sources, and they are assembled in an apparently random fashion to surround the painter's masterpiece. Despite their bizarre and haphazard appearance, 'sans certaine figure, n'ayants ordre, suite ny proportion que fortuite', the grotesques form a frame for another of the artist's paintings, 'un tableau élabouré de toute sa suffisance', far superior in quality and impact to the peripheral grotesques. In themselves they are shapeless, disparate and irregular, but together they provide the structure for the masterpiece; they contain it, and give it unity and completeness by forming its borders. This paradox of the grotesques, which are simultaneously erratic and orderly, is symbolic of what Ann Blair identifies as the 'dual commitment to order and variety' within texts of the Renaissance.[2]

Indeed, the themes of variety and order are prevalent in writing during the sixteenth century. Variety can be seen in the explosion of information from the ancient texts being translated and printed in the vernacular, the discovery of peoples and territories in the New World, and the development of scientific knowledge in Europe. Order is evident in the organising principles and structures according to and within which this wealth of knowledge and information was presented: new vocabulary to incorporate new ideas, alphabetical ordering and thematic titles, headings and sub-headings, and even the covers of printed books. The two features of variety and order cohabit in the writing of the Renaissance, and their simultaneous existence is nowhere more in evidence than in the common-place book. As Ann Moss explains in her *Printed Common-place Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*, the common-place book was a notebook in

[2] A. Blair, *The Theater of Nature: Jean Bodin and Renaissance Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) p.30.

which facts, quotations and proverbs were collected and arranged under subject headings.[3] This form of 'systematic storage' of ideas, likened to the jars of herbal remedies arranged on the apothecary's shelves, allowed information contained within the sections of the commonplace book to be located easily, and in this way the collection served as an aide-mémoire, a personal reference book to be consulted on any number of topics.[4] A further analogy can be drawn between the commonplace book and the cabinet of curiosities described by Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, in which bizarre and exotic specimens were stored and preserved by fascinated collectors like the surgeon Ambroise Paré.[5] Indeed, Montaigne's *Essais* themselves are evidence of this appetite for miscellany, both in the range of topic headings into which he divides his work, and in the diversity of sources from which he takes inspiration. He depicts his *Essais* as a collection of curious and multifarious grotesques, the frame within which he intends to present the work of his great friend Etienne de la Boëtie.[6]

Ann Blair, in her book *The Theater of Nature: Jean Bodin and Renaissance Science*, presents the consideration of these themes of variety and order as a fruitful approach to the study of Renaissance works on the subject of what she calls 'natural philosophy'.[7] Although the aim of her book is to create a 'detailed still picture' of Jean Bodin's *Universae Naturae Theatrum*, she prefaces her close analysis of her chosen writer's work with a comprehensive and valuable survey of the profusion of writing about the natural world during the sixteenth century, and

[3] A. Moss (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
[4] A. Moss, *Printed Common-place Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*, p.191.
[5] L. Daston and K. Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998).
[6] Montaigne's relationship with La Boëtie and the role it plays in the *Essais* will be discussed in Chapter Five.
[7] A. Blair, *The Theater of Nature: Jean Bodin and Renaissance Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

highlights the themes and preoccupations mentioned above that recur in the work of numerous authors. Of course the central focus of Blair's book is the work of Jean Bodin, and she argues that the *Universae Naturae Theatrum* can be seen in many ways to typify the writing of the period. In particular, she makes reference to the use of the commonplace topos of the theatre of nature in the title, a metaphor which displays the natural world as a spectacle, full of marvels and curiosities, yet which is in addition ordered, directed and occurs within the physical boundaries of the stage.

In her discussion of Bodin's key contemporary texts, Blair focuses on the preoccupation typically exhibited by their writers with presenting a *copia* of as many fascinating details and remarkable case studies as possible at the same time as implementing a cogent organising principle. She identifies the 'struggle characteristic of the late Renaissance of bringing order and coherence to ever-increasing quantities of knowledge'[8], and the problematic existence of 'a large field of particulars'[9] guaranteed to capture the interest of the reader, but slippery enough to elude taxonomy and categorisation. In books which seek to be, simultaneously, pedagogical and engaging, both informative and entertaining,[10] the 'dual commitment' to which Blair refers requires writers to negotiate the difficult boundary between *copia* and structure. In addition, Blair points out that the liminary material of these texts can be equally problematic. On one hand, paratexts (prefaces, dedicatory letters and so on) can reveal the writer's purpose in writing, and his moral, religious or polemical agenda for example. On the other hand, the paratext can be a source of difficulty when it comes to establishing the genre in

[8] A. Blair, *The Theater of Nature: Jean Bodin and Renaissance Science*, p.7.
[9] *Ibid.* p.30.
[10] *Ibid.* p.33.

which a particular text can be said to belong. Two texts containing material relating to different subject areas may express the same moral or polemical objective, just as two texts written on the same subject may be intended to serve distinct purposes and different readers. In the light of this observation, Blair discusses the difficulty of categorising Renaissance writing, the characteristically 'hybrid and uncanonical' texts which are created in response to a fertile and heterogeneous field of information and a propensity for clarity and order.[11]

Blair's method of overcoming this generic slipperiness is to concentrate her analysis on the approach of one writer to his chosen subject matter, noting the influence of his contemporary writers and texts exhibiting similar tendencies, but at the same time refraining from attempting to shoe-horn Jean Bodin and his work into what Blair would consider to be contrived and inappropriate categories of definition. Blair's construction of the 'detailed still picture of what it meant to "do physics" for Jean Bodin'[12] involves the consideration of the literary and scientific context from which his book emerges, as well as its writer's 'personal idiosyncrasies [and] the baggage of his previous historical and political interests.'[13]

Rather than focusing on the work of a single writer, as Blair does, I will concentrate instead on manifestations of one form of the characteristic variety of sixteenth-century France: the disordered body. Within the frame of reference of this thesis, a term as sweeping and all-embracing as *disordered* will require some careful definition. The disorder of the bodies to which this thesis will refer stems exclusively from physical features or tangible patterns of bodily behaviour. The

[11] A. Blair, *The Theater of Nature*,. p.15.
[12] *Ibid.* p.4.
[13] *Ibid.* p.48.

dependence of the components of disorder on materially evident information is crucial, particularly in the light of Blair's demonstration of the difficulties associated with identification and classification in Renaissance texts. Three types of disorder will be considered here: disease, monstrosity and cannibalism, and these phenomena have been selected as the focus of this thesis because of their inherent physicality, and because of the curiosity, fear and fascination they aroused among writers and readers in the sixteenth century.

Evidence of the profusion of ideas about these bodily phenomena can be found in the abundance of scholarly writing that exists about the themes of disease, monstrosity and cannibalism in early modern books. The monstrous body has long attracted the interest of researchers, and Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, in *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750*, consider monstrous births and other exotic races and creatures in travel literature, scientific writing and popular texts, focusing on the responses of the observers and readers of monstrosity.[14] Equally, Dudley Wilson's *Signs and Portents: Monstrous Births from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* documents the evidence of monstrous births in popular and learned writing across a similarly broad timescale.[15] However, it is unquestionably Jean Céard, whose seminal work *La Nature et les prodiges: l'insolite au XVIe siècle, en France* set the precedent for the study of Early Modern monstrosity, who most comprehensively investigates the monster and its meaning in sixteenth-century France.[16]

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[14] (New York: Zone Books, 1998); see also L. Daston and K. Park, 'Unnatural Conceptions: The Study of Monsters in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France and England' in *Past and Present: A Journal of Historical Studies* (no.92, August 1981) p.20-54.

[15] (London and New York: Routledge, 1993).

[16] (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1977). Other useful studies of monstrosity include K.A. Hoffman, 'Sutured Bodies: Counterfeit Marvels in Early Modern Europe' in *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* (Volume 24, 2002); J. Bondeson, *A Cabinet of Medical Curiosities* (New York: W.W.

Anthony Grafton's *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery*, and the volume of essays entitled *New World Encounters* and edited by Stephen Greenblatt, contain examples of much of the current thinking about cultural behaviour and the practice of cannibalism in the New World.[17] However, it is unquestionably Frank Lestringant, author of *L'Expérience huguenote au nouveau monde (XVIe Siècle)*, who has written most extensively on the discovery of the New World and its indigenous inhabitants.[18] For the most part, Lestringant focuses on the figures of Jean de Léry and André Thevet, and the anthropological emphasis of Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil* and Thevet's *Cosmographie universelle.* Another of Lestringant's key interests is the European perception of cannibalism among the peoples of the New World, to which he devotes his 1994 book *Le Cannibale: Grandeur et décadence.*[19] In *Une sainte horreur, ou le voyage en Eucharistie XVIe-XVIIIe siècle*, Lestringant develops his investigation of cannibalism and draws an association between this New World practice and the controversy surrounding the Eucharist in Europe during the Wars of Religion.[20]

Equally, the subject of disease in sixteenth-century France has been investigated from a number of perspectives, and there now exists a comprehensive and varied body of literature on this feature of Early Modern life. Laurence Brockliss and Colin Jones's 1997 collaborative work *The Medical World of Early Modern France*, is a broad-ranging survey of human illness, medical education and

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Norton, 1999); O. Impey and A. MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); P.G. Platt, ed., *Wonders, Marvels, and Monsters in Early Modern Culture* (London: Associated University Presses, 1999).

[17] (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992).

[18] (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1996).

[19] (Paris: Librairie Académique Perrin, 1994).

[20] (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1996).

training, and public health systems, which unites and develops the earlier work of other scholars in the area of the history of medicine.[21] Nancy Siraisi, in her book *Mediaeval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice*, portrays the world of 'professional' medicine, tracking the awareness of disease and its treatment, and medical education and training, from local *sages-femmes* to the learned physician in university medical faculties.[22] The specific role (or roles) of women in medical life in Renaissance France is documented by Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore in *Un Corps, un destin: la femme dans la médecine de la Renaissance.*[23] Lucien Febvre, Robert Mandrou and Natalie Davis have written seminal works on a second angle of disease: the experience of health and illness from the point of view of the patient. All three, among others, investigate issues of diet, physical activity and the effects of weather conditions, farming methods and public hygiene on Early Modern health.[24] Most recently, Ian Maclean's *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance: The Case of Learned Medicine* has expanded considerably existing work on the theory, philosophy and meaning of disease during the Early Modern era.[25]

Within the field of current research into the world of medicine in the early modern era, one area appears to have received particular attention, and that is the area of anatomy. Books including Andrew Cunningham's *The Anatomical Renaissance: The Resurrection of the Anatomical Projects of the Ancients*, Andrea Carlino's *Books of the Body: Anatomical Ritual and Renaissance Learning*, and Jonathan Sawday's *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* reveal firstly

[21] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
[22] (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
[23] (Paris: Champion, 1993). See also S. Broomhall, *Women's Medical Work in Early Modern France* (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 2005).
[24] L. Febvre, *Life in Renaissance France* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979); R. Mandrou, *Introduction à la France moderne 1500-1640: essai de psychologie historique* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1974); N.Z. Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (London: Duckworth, 1975).
[25] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

that the dissection of the human body was a prevalent feature of early modern medical culture. Secondly, these books suggest that the understanding of the body through the process of anatomy had a significant effect on the wider art and culture of the Renaissance, in which images of the emblazoned human body frequently appear. Indeed, the central theme of Karen Sorsby's book, *Representations of the Body in French Renaissance Poetry*, is the 'sixteenth-century alliance of anatomy and poetry', or in other words the tendency among poets of the sixteenth century to perform acts of metaphorical dissection: '[Poets] were nonetheless aware that one of their principal roles was to reveal the structure of the body and other secrets of the universe'.[26] Indeed, Sawday highlights this far-reaching influence of anatomy when he writes that 'the human body may, in the Renaissance, have been 'emblazoned' or embellished through art and poetry. But to 'emblazon' a body is also to hack it to pieces'.[27] What Sawday highlights, here, is the uncomfortable relationship that inevitably exists between celebrating new knowledge of the human body through art, and the radical process of dissection, devastating in bodily terms, which must be carried out first. It would appear from this that, while the outcomes of anatomy are, in artistic terms at least, positive and advantageous, the dissection, or the fragmentation and destruction of the human body remains a profoundly troubling prospect, and this, I would suggest, is a notion that is particularly pertinent to the present thesis.

Each of the forms of bodily disorder I mention above are characterised by the particular physical signs and symptoms they exhibit, and, although the diseased body, the monstrous body and the cannibal's body (or indeed the body he

[26] K.Sorsby, *Representations of the Body in French Renaissance Poetry* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999).
[27] J. Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. ix.

cannibalises) may appear at first to display very different physical characteristics, they are, I would argue, connected by the issue of bodily boundaries. If we consider each type of disordered body in terms of its boundaries and material integrity, what we discover is the following. Disease in the body, for example, has long been considered to involve imbalance, in other words, an excess or lack of some substance, and this is an idea proposed by Aristotle in the *Nichomachean Ethics* when he writes that 'it is the nature of [...] things to be destroyed by defect and excess, as we see in the case of strength and health'.[28] Indeed, in the sixteenth-century imagination with which we are concerned here, all forms of ailment, physical, mental and even emotional, are considered to involve an imbalance of some kind, primarily, it was thought, an excess or lack of one of the four humours: blood, black bile, yellow bile and phlegm. According to humour theory, the health of the body relies on *eucrasia*, or the state in which all four humours are in balance, and illness is the result of *dyscrasia*, a humour imbalance, typically a harmful excess of one of the four fluids that were believed to permeate the body influencing its health or illness. Methods typically used to treat illness during this era, including blood letting, cupping, induced vomiting and sweating, further highlight the belief in the toxicity of imbalance, and suggest that it was considered necessary in many cases to drain the body of a noxious presence in order to restore the patient's health, in other words, to correct the body's internal humour balance using approved modes of moving material across the body's boundaries. In the light of this, I would suggest that, for the sixteenth-century writers with whose work we are concerned here, the nature of disease revolves firmly around the issue of what is contained, or indeed what is missing from within the body's boundaries.

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[28] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book II, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 2 vols., ed. J. Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) p.1744.

In *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*, Mary Douglas considers this issue of the risk or threat that the disordered human body appears to represent.[29] In chapter seven, entitled 'External Boundaries', Douglas argues that the body's margins are meaningful; in some cultures they are powerful and in others vulnerable. Furthermore, she contends that 'bodily refuse [can be] a symbol of danger and of power', and goes on to explain this when she writes:

> All margins are dangerous. If they are pulled this way or that the shape of the fundamental experience is altered [...] We should expect the orifices of the body to symbolise its specially vulnerable points. Matter issuing from them is marginal stuff of the most obvious kind. Spittle, blood, milk, urine, faeces or tears by simply issuing forth have traversed the boundary of the body.[30]

Douglas argues further that the production of these bodily fluids is frequently seen as 'body pollution' or 'dirt' in different cultures. In the introduction to her book, she explains that 'dirt is essentially disorder [...] Dirt offends against order. Eliminating it is not a negative movement, but a positive effort to organise the environment'.[31] There are, I would suggest, strong parallels between the way Douglas proposes of thinking about the body and its boundaries and sixteenth-century ideas about disease because both models of disorder highlight the movement or (im)balance of bodily fluids as the source of the problem. Moreover, I would argue that Douglas' reference here to the elimination of the disorder that

[29] M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980).
[30] *Ibid.*, p.120-21.
[31] *Ibid.*, p.2.

is caused by problematic bodily fluids as a means of restoring order to the environment corresponds closely to the methods of treating disease in the sixteenth century which involved, for the most part, extracting what were believed to be harmful excesses of fluid.

As far as the body of the monster, the second form of corporeal disorder which will be addressed by the present thesis, is concerned, the question of bodily fluids which is central to the issue of disease is largely irrelevant. The matter of the body's boundaries or its physical outline is, however, fundamental to its monstrous nature. Dudley Wilson points out that the term 'monster' (or 'monstre') indicates the word's roots in the Latin verb *monere*, meaning to presage or notify, and suggests that the term developed because the birth of monstrous creatures, in other words whose bodies were in some respect unusual or deformed, was often considered to be a sign or omen.[32] The physical characteristics of a body which could, in the sixteenth century, lead to it being defined as monstrous are many, but typically include missing or superfluous limbs, a lack or excess of body hair, or some element of hybridity. Conjoined twins and hermaphrodites are, however, the forms of physical condition which most frequently appear in accounts of monstrosity in the early modern era, and the feature that is common to all of these so-called monstrous conditions is the abnormal nature of their bodily appearance. Let us return at this point to Aristotle's statement in the *Nichomachean Ethics* that 'defect or excess' is destructive in nature, and consider his subsequent claim that 'excess is a form of failure, and so is defect, while the intermediate is praised and is a form of success; and both these things are characteristics of excellence.

[32] D. Wilson, *Signs and Portents*, p.6.

Therefore excellence is a kind of mean, since it aims at what is intermediate'.[33] What Aristotle's definition suggests is that deviation from what is intermediate or normal, a concept that is otherwise known as the *mean*, is negative and problematic, and nowhere is this more in evidence on a bodily scale than the countable, quantifiable excess or lack that is embodied by the figure of the monster. The outline of the monster's body is thus seen as a deformed or distorted version of the human mean, or, to use Mary Douglas' terms, the margins of the body appear to have been 'pulled this way or that' resulting in a body that is abnormal or disfigured.

While the body of the monster is inherently disordered, in that specimens are usually born already exhibiting the physical characteristics that make it monstrous, the bodily consequences of cannibalism are not innate, but rather are inflicted on the body as a result of the cannibalistic act. In fact, the margins of at least two bodies are affected by the act of cannibalism, in other words, the body of the consumer and the body he consumes. The body of the consumed is fragmented and distributed to one or more consumers and as such permanently loses its integrity as it is shattered entirely by the cannibalistic process. The body of the consumer, likewise, undergoes permanent and substantial change when it ingests the body of another human being because material belonging to another body is digested and absorbed into the consumer's own flesh. In this way, I would argue that cannibalism blurs the boundaries and compromises the individuality and unity of each of the human bodies involved. For both participants the boundaries of the body are fundamentally altered, and this, in Mary Douglas' argument, could be seen as a form of 'bodily pollution' or 'dirt'. Furthermore, in her book entitled

[33] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, p.1747-48.

Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism, Elizabeth Grosz provides a similar interpretation of the problematic nature of blurred bodily boundaries and makes particular reference to the risk associated with the penetration of one human body by another.[34] Grosz focuses, as the title of her book suggests, on the sexual penetration of the body and, as such, the argument she constructs – in which she ultimately concludes that the female body poses a threat to masculinity because, in contrast to the *penetrating* male body, it is designed to be *penetrated* – centres firmly around questions of gender and sexual identity. While, like sexual activity, cannibalism does involve the penetration of one body by the flesh of another, the practice of consuming human bodies is not sexualised, at least in the sixteenth-century accounts which will be examined in the present thesis, and questions of gender and the embodied threat it represents according to Grosz's argument are simply not raised. The problem of the blurred and fractured bodily boundaries that result from the act of cannibalism remain, however, and the cannibal retains its image in the sixteenth-century imagination as a murderous and savage figure from whose anthropophagous behaviour ensues profound and terrifying bodily disorder.

Disease, monstrosity and cannibalism can therefore be seen to share a fundamental characteristic and that is the destructive or disorderly impact that each of these physical phenomena exerts on the boundaries of the human body. Mary Douglas and Elizabeth Grosz both argue that this interference with the body's margins is troubling and even threatening, but it is important to highlight the fact that the risk to which both of these scholars refer is largely ideological. The source of the threat is the unbounded body, but the effect of the threat is, in both cases,

[34] E. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994) p.192-201.

cultural, social or psychological. When it comes to the specific types of bodily disorder with which the present thesis is concerned, the risk that the disordered body represents is, by contrast, material, tangible and real.

In Chapter Two, the presentation of disease and monstrosity found in the *Œuvres complètes* written by the surgeon Ambroise Paré will be explored, and a close reading of two books from this collection will form the majority of the analysis. In addition to exploring the theories of bodily disorder found in the prefatory material to Paré's *Œuvres*, I will analyse the methods and strategies Paré employs in *De la peste* and *Des monstres et prodiges* to address the bodily phenomena of plague and monstrosity. My reason for selecting these two books in particular from the almost thirty separate treatises into which Paré divides his *Œuvres* is that, in *De la peste* and *Des monstres et prodiges* can be found the most evocative and sensory descriptions of the bodily disorders with which Paré is concerned. In *De la peste*, more so than in his books about leprosy or syphilis, for example, Paré paints a terrifying picture of the devastating influence exerted by the plague on the boundaries of the human body, and in *Des monstres et prodiges*, the meticulous detail with which Paré describes an extensive configuration of bizarre and grotesque specimens, combined with the ubiquitous and often fanciful illustrations that accompany the text, ensures that the reader's curiosity is stimulated by the visual and written depictions of Paré's monstrous case studies.

Chapter Three will address the phenomenon of human cannibalism. Three separate cannibalistic episodes will be explored, but all of them are recounted by the same writer: the explorer and Calvinist missionary, Jean de Léry. Over a period of some twenty years, Léry had the misfortune to witness a series of acts of

cannibalism in two locations. Firstly, during the late 1550s, Léry spent several years as a missionary in Brazil living among the Toupinamba tribe, whose anthropophagous rituals are recorded in Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil.* Léry also bears witness in this book to a second, more disturbing form of cannibalism he encounters, which is the participation by a group of European settlers in the tribal cannibalistic rituals of the indigenous New World inhabitants. This book, of which Claude Lévi-Strauss later made extensive use in his famous work of anthropology *Tristes Tropiques*, was not published until 1578, more than two decades after Léry's original experiences in Brazil. Between his New World adventure and the eventual publication of the *Histoire d'un voyage*, Léry found himself trapped in the town of Sancerre during the year-long siege of 1573, and here observed a third act of cannibalism: the consumption of a child's body by her starving parents. In Chapter Three, I will analyse each of these episodes separately in order firstly to identify the narrative strategies that Léry uses to present this most gory and invasive of bodily practices, and secondly to highlight how the different context in which each act is performed influences the interpretation Léry provides of all three individual moments of cannibalism.

The final sixteenth-century writer whose books will be considered in the course of the present thesis is Michel de Montaigne. In Chapter Four, I will firstly illustrate how the books, and perhaps more importantly, the experiences of Ambroise Paré and Jean de Léry influenced Montaigne's writing of his *Essais*, in which all three of our themes – disease, monstrosity and cannibalism – are explored. To accompany our analysis of the many manifestations of the disordered body in the *Essais*, which were written for publication and therefore for public consumption, we will also consider relevant moments from Montaigne's *Journal de*

voyage, the private diary he kept between 1580 and 1581 of his journey through France, Switzerland, Germany and Italy on which he embarked in order to find relief from the painful kidney stones which plagued him. In Chapter Five, I will explore how Montaigne makes use of his own experience and the experiences of others, about which he learns through reading, in order to depict the cannibal and the monster, and in addition how he uses these two disordered figures as metaphors throughout the *Essais*. Finally, in Chapter Six, I will turn to Montaigne's method of addressing the theme of disease, accounts of which appear in his earlier writing as, to a certain extent, an abstract notion and, from time to time, a biting critique of the contemporary world of medicine, but become, as Montaigne ages, an increasingly reflective and introspective means of dealing with the approach of death.

So what is it, other than the fact that they all address the question of problematic bodily disorder, that connects these three writers, and what is the scholarly benefit of considering this configuration of books written by Ambroise Paré, Jean de Léry and Michel de Montaigne in particular? The answer, I would suggest, is that they are united by the ways in which the experience of bodily disorder features in their books, and by the importance of close sensory contact between the writer or observer and the disordered bodies he observes. In his capacity as a surgeon, for instance, Paré experiences extensive physical contact with the bodily conditions about which he writes, and records his own methods of performing surgery, treating patients and dissecting monstrous specimens throughout the *Œuvres*. Indeed, his status as a surgeon sets him apart from the majority of other sixteenth-century medical writers who are, for the most part, physicians. As Nancy Siraisi explains in *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, the

strict hierarchy that existed in the world of medicine of the sixteenth century dictated that the theory of disease was the responsibility of the physician, who was educated in the ideas and methods of Galen and Hippocrates at a university medical faculty, but, crucially, whose direct experience of the reality of disease was limited as a consequence of the academic, theoretical emphasis of their role. Surgeons, by contrast, were very directly concerned with the physical treatment of illnesses and injuries, and their material involvement with patients led them, according to Siraisi, to be considered more as manual labourers than as learned men.[35] Therefore, in writing the *Œuvres*, Paré in effect comes to straddle the division between the roles of the surgeon and the physician, and the result of this bilateral action of both physically addressing bodily disorder and writing about it, as I will explain in Chapter Two, is that physical experience in Paré's book is the bedrock on which his story of bodily disorder is built.

Equally, the *Histoire d'un voyage* is, as its title implies, a largely chronological account of the events, but also the sights, sounds, flavours and sensations Léry experiences during his journey to the New World. The book is emphatically an eyewitness account of the Brazilian territory and culture, and Léry's intense and visual description of the cannibalism performed by the indigenous inhabitants of Brazil is, I would argue, authenticated by the writer's proximity to the activities he recounts. But, furthermore, Léry's subsequent experience of the cannibalism of a child by her parents in the town of Sancerre – which, we recall he both witnesses and records in the *Histoire mémorable* before finally writing about his experiences in Brazil – sets him apart, I would suggest, from figures such as André Thevet, a royal

[35] See N. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1990) p.17-47 and p.153-186, and L. Brockliss & C. Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) Chapters 2-4.

cosmographer who travelled to Brazil at the same time as Léry and describes his experiences of the same environment in the *Cosmographie universelle*.[36] I contend that the difference between Thevet's book, for example, and Léry's books lies in the extent to which Léry experiences the rupturing of the human body through cannibalism, and I will explore in Chapter Three the way in which he describes the palpable, bodily consequences for him of witnessing these acts.

Experience is, famously, fundamental to Montaigne's process of writing, as the final essay of his collection is entitled 'De l'experience', and even the title of his book, the *Essais*, suggests the process he carries out of trying, testing and sounding out ideas himself before arriving at a conclusion. Books written by both Ambroise Paré and Jean de Léry were present in Montaigne's famous library, among the books he purchased for himself and those he inherited from his friend Etienne de la Boëtie, and I will demonstrate in the coming chapters of the present thesis that the particular affinity that exists between Montaigne and writers such as Paré and Léry inheres in the activity in which they all engage of 'essaying' the material about which they choose to write. I will demonstrate in Chapters Five and Six that, with reference to the disordered body in particular, Montaigne not only uses his sensory experiences as a catalyst for his writing, but also consciously seeks out further experiences of cannibalism, monstrosity and disease in order to maximise the veracity and authenticity of his writing.

The discussion of each of the texts in this thesis raises the question of the relationship or correspondence that occurs between and within the many stages in the lifespan of each whole experience, by which term I mean the initial experience

[36] A. Thevet, *La Cosmographie universelle* (Paris: P. L'huillier and G. Chaudière, 1575).

of the disordered body and the process of writing in response to that experience. The chronology of Léry's experiences in Brazil and Sancerre ensure, as I have already suggested, that although the incidents of cannibalism he witnesses occur almost twenty years apart and on different continents, they remain connected and there is a reciprocal relationship between Léry's two books as a result. The nature of Montaigne's *Essais*, which were written and re-written over a period of more than a decade, can be seen as a conversation between its writer's current thoughts and his earlier ones. Equally, Montaigne's direct use of and more subtle allusions to the writing of other figures, including Paré and Léry, represents another form of dialogue between one book and another.

This issue of the dialogue between and within texts is central to the theory of dialogism which was developed by Mikhail Bakhtin in the early twentieth century, and this is the first of a number of key themes in Bakhtinian literary theory that will be used to illuminate aspects the books of Paré, Léry and Montaigne in the course of the present thesis.[37] Of course, any mention of Mikhail Bakhtin in relation to sixteenth-century books will inevitably bring to mind *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin's exposition of the phenomenon of the carnival in early modern Europe and his analysis of the cultural role played by this 'temporary suspension of all hierarchic distinctions and barriers among men [...] and of the prohibitions of usual life'.[38] While an exploration of the carnivalesque elements of the phenomena of sixteenth-century cannibalism, monstrosity and disease would unquestionably be a fruitful avenue of inquiry, especially considering the subversive and disorderly nature of the carnival, I will focus, for the purposes of

[37] M. Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990).
[38] M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. H. Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) p.15.

the present thesis, on what a methodology constructed using Bakhtin's theory of dialogism can illuminate with regard to the issue of the disordered body in the narratives of Paré, Léry and Montaigne.

One of the fundamental components of Bakhtinian dialogism is the conception of existence, the life of the subject, as a dialogue between the subject, 'I', and the world. As Michael Holquist points out, Bakhtin identifies this relationship as a dialogue because the observed world is a stimulus that provokes a response from the observer, the subject. Paraphrasing Bakhtin's essay entitled 'Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity', Holquist writes that

> my responses [to the world] begin to have a pattern, the dialogue I have with existence begins to assume the form of a text, a kind of book. A book, moreover, that belongs to a genre. In antiquity, too, the world was often conceived as a book, the text of *libri naturae*. Bakhtin conceives existence as the kind of book we call a novel, or more accurately as many novels [...] for all of us write our own such text, a text that is then called our life. Bakhtin uses the literary genre of the novel as an allegory for representing existence as the condition of authoring.[39]

In essence, what Bakhtin proposes is a model of experience in which every individual, or subject, is an Author and his experience of the environment around him is a Novel constructed in response to the world.[40] In the construction of the

[39] *Ibid.*, p.30.
[40] For the purposes of the present thesis, the first letter of Bakhtinian terms will be capitalised. This will allow the reader to distinguish easily between the generic and the Bakhtinian definitions of terms such as Author, Hero and Novel.

Author's Novel of existence, the presence of a Hero, a focus for the Author's attention, is essential:

> An author is the uniquely active form-giving energy that is manifested not in a psychologically conceived consciousness, but in a durably valid cultural product, and his active, productive reaction is manifested in the structures it generates – in the structure of the active vision of a hero as a definite whole, in the structure of his image, in the rhythm of disclosing him, in the structure of intonating, and in the selection of meaning-bearing features.[41]

Bakhtin establishes a binary opposition between the Author who observes and the Hero who is observed. In observing the Hero, the Author incorporates him into his Novel, so, in other words, the Hero is Authored. In order for this to happen, Bakhtin argues that the Author must hold a position outside the Hero, as the Author's internal experiencing of himself is different to his experience of everything outside himself. As Holquist explains, 'I experience time as open and always as yet *un*-completed, and I am always at the *center* of space'.[42] The Author cannot achieve an awareness of his own finite nature in terms of time (his lifespan) and space (the complete outline of his own body) because of the location of his consciousness inside himself. The Hero, by contrast, is experienced by the Author as a whole because of what Bakhtin calls the 'excess of seeing': 'I lack any representation of my own outward image, whereas images of *other* participants in my fantasy, even the most secondary ones, present themselves to me at times with remarkable clarity and completeness'.[43] He develops this theme of the contrast

[41] M. Bakhtin, *Dialogism*, p.8.
[42] *Ibid.*, p.26.
[43] *Ibid.*, p.28.

between the amorphous nature of the Author and the clear outline of the Hero, writing,

> The other is given to me entirely enclosed *in* the world external to me; he is given to me as a constituent in it that is totally delimited on all sides in space. Moreover, at each given moment, I experience distinctly all of his boundaries, encompass all of him visually and can encompass all of him tangibly. I see the line that delineates his head against the background of the outside world and see all of the lines that delimit his body in the outside world. The other, *all* of him, is laid out before me in the exhaustive completeness as a thing among other things *in* the world external to me, without exceeding in any way the bounds of that world, and without in any way violating its visible, tangible plastic-pictorial unity.[44]

In the writing of the Novel of existence, the Author's role, therefore, is to complete the Hero, to identify the boundaries of the Hero and form him as a consummate whole. This completion of the Hero is a process involving two distinct but simultaneous stages. Firstly, the Author projects himself into the Hero: 'I must empathize or project myself into this other human being, see his world axiologically from within him as *he* sees this world; I must put myself in his place'.[45] Secondly, the Author leaves the position into which he has projected himself and returns to himself and consummates the Hero: 'after returning to my own place, [I] 'fill in' [the Hero's] horizon through that excess of seeing which opens out from this, my own, place outside him. I must enframe him, create a consummating

[44] M. Bakhtin, *Dialogism*, p.36.
[45] *Ibid.* p.25.

environment for him out of this excess of my own seeing, knowing, desiring, and feeling'.[46]

Although he applies his theory largely to the Russian fictional novel genre of the nineteenth century, the fundamental principles of Bakhtin's theory explained here are equally pertinent to the analysis of the sixteenth-century texts in this thesis. The concept of dialogue is, as I have suggested, a useful model for depicting the world of the disordered body as the stimulus to which Paré, Léry and Montaigne respond by writing. The body itself, and existing ideas and writing about the body, combine to become the Hero, and I would suggest that the specific form of disorder that the cannibal, monster and diseased body exhibit provides the stimulus for the act of Authoring precisely because of their *un*bounded nature. The writers of these accounts of bodily disorder are, therefore, Authors, and I will argue that, in writing about their chosen Heroes, Paré, Léry and Montaigne perform the two functions of the Author that Bakhtin defines: firstly, a projection into the Hero's position in order to experience the world from the Hero's perspective, and secondly a withdrawal to a position outside the Hero, from where the Author can identify the temporal and spatial detail of the Hero's world.

If, in addition, we recall the problem that the disordered body represents according to Mary Douglas and Elizabeth Grosz, the relevance of Bakhtin's notion of Author and Hero further increases. The threat embodied by cannibalism, monstrosity and disease revolves, I have argued, around the issue of the transgression of the body's boundaries, and I would suggest that the problem involving the disordered body that is raised by Douglas and Grosz can be

[46] *Ibid.* p.25.

addressed by developing a methodology for reading accounts of bodily disorder which is based on the principles of Bakhtin's dialogic theory.

The analysis in this thesis of the work of Paré, Léry and Montaigne, will therefore involve the parallel consideration of these two of Bakhtin's central themes. I will argue that dialogism is a useful and effective model for exploring the relationship between the writer and his subject matter, and will demonstrate that the action of the Author in Bakhtin's theory of the Novel of existence, to consummate and complete his Hero, is an accurate depiction of the process undertaken by the writers considered in this thesis, whose Heroes are the intrinsically disordered and unbounded bodies which are afflicted by disease, display elements of monstrosity, or are involved in cannibalism. The central objective of the present thesis is therefore to examine the Authors' struggle to present the inherently unbounded, chaotic and threatening presence of the disordered body in a coherent, consummated and stable form, and finally to illustrate how Bakhtin's analysis of the relationship between the Author and the Hero is a fruitful and illuminating perspective from which to study the appearance of disordered bodies in the books of three French writers.

CHAPTER TWO

Ambroise Paré: The *Œuvres complètes*

> Donc de tout ce que j'ay veu et cogneu, par l'espace dudit temps, j'ay fait une entiere recollection.[1]

It would be both difficult and inappropriate to attempt to label the specific vocation to which Ambroise Paré believed himself to be called, but the progression of his career and, more importantly, the texts he published, reveal his motivation and the principles according to which he conducted his professional life. Having been apprenticed to M. Vialot, the Master Barber Surgeon of Vitré, at the age of 13, Paré moved to Paris in 1531 to continue his training in surgery. He is thought to have begun an internship at the renowned Hôtel-Dieu in 1533 where he remained until he started to practise surgery in 1535. In 1537, Paré entered service as an army surgeon, and spent the next thirty years alternately treating wounds on the battlefield during times of war, and attending to the illnesses and injuries of patients in Paris during periods of relative calm. His surgical expertise was later in constant demand while the first of the Wars of Religion was being fought between April 1562 and March 1563. Paré was licensed as a Master Barber Surgeon in 1541,

[1] A. Paré, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. J.F. Malgaigne, 3 vols. (Paris: J.-B. Baillière, 1840-41), 'Au lecteur', p.8.

and from the time of his appointment as the king's Surgeon-in-Ordinary in 1552, he enjoyed a close relationship with the royal court. Along with Andreas Vesalius, he was consulted in the treatment of Henri II's ultimately fatal head injury, inflicted during a tournament by the Duke of Montgomery. As the Surgeon-in-Ordinary to the king, he performed the autopsies on and embalmed the bodies of Henri II and François II, and later served as Premier-Surgeon and Valet-de-Chambre to both Charles IX and Henri III. Despite being held in high esteem at the courts of four French kings, Paré did not enjoy continual popularity with other sources of authority. He attempted to unite the various branches and guilds of surgery throughout France under the authority of a single figure, the King's Premier-Surgeon, a movement supported by the King's Physicians, but was prevented from doing so following outraged protests from the Paris Faculty of Medicine and the College of Surgeons in 1567.

The portfolio of Paré's publications is equally noteworthy. His first surgical treatise, *La Méthode de traicter les playes faictes par harquebutes*, was published in August 1545, and was followed in June 1549 by his *Briefve collection.*[2] The early 1550s saw the publication of second editions of both texts.[3] In 1568, Paré's *Traicté de la peste* was published, and was reissued in 1580, the year in which Paré served on the Paris Plague Commission, and witnessed an estimated 60,000 citizens of Paris die from what is thought to be bubonic plague and influenza within a period of six months. The *Traicté de la peste* was also included as a chapter in the first edition of Paré's *Œuvres*, which appeared in print in 1575 in spite of the attempt by the Faculty of

[2] *Briefve Collection de l'administration anatomique: avec la maniere de de coioindre les os : et d'extraire les infants tât mors que vivans du ventre de la mere* (Paris: Guillaume Cavellat, 1549).
[3] The second edition of *Briefve collection* was published in March 1550 and the second edition of *La méthode de traicter les playes faictes par harquebutes* was published in March 1552.

Medicine to ban its publication. Paré submitted the proposed second edition of the volume to the Faculty in April 1578, and it was published in February 1579. Following the appearance of the second volume of the *Œuvres*, the Faculty Dean Etienne Gourmelen published his own, Latin, work on surgery, *Chirurgicae artis, ex Hippocrates, cum aliorum veterum medicorum decretis ... Libri, III*,[4] which contained an attack on the surgical discoveries and practices promoted by Paré. Paré responded to this criticism later the same year by writing the *Apologie, et traicté contenant les voyages faicts en divers lieux* which was later published as part of the fourth edition of the *Œuvres*. In January 1582, the third edition of Paré's complete works appeared, translated from French into Latin by Jacques Guillemeau; the fourth, French edition, the last version to be overseen by the author and containing the *Apologie*, was published in 1585. Numerous later editions and translations of Paré's work were produced, and for the purposes of this study I will mainly use J. F. Malgaigne's French version of the text as the basis for the discussion, with additional references to earlier editions published during Paré's lifetime when relevant passages or illustrations have been omitted by Malgaigne.

This chapter will explore the questions of categorisation, definition, division and the tension between order and disorder raised by Paré's examination of his chosen subject matter. It will also address the issue of the text in context, and how Paré and his work challenge existing delineations and structures, theoretical and cultural. The prefatory material to the *Œuvres* will be analysed in this chapter because the dedicatory letters and introduction contain the expression of Paré's theoretical approach to his material and strategy in writing the text. The chapter will also examine two books of the *Œuvres*, the *Livre traictant de la peste* and

[4] Published in Paris in 1580.

the *Livre traictant des monstres et prodiges*, in order to explore how Paré applies the general principles of physical order and disorder expressed in his introduction to the specific case studies of plague and monstrosity.

The Strategy behind the *Œuvres*: Paré's Preface

> L'homme n'estant point nay pour soy seulement, ny pour son seul profit, Nature luy a donné un instinct et inclination naturelle à aimer son semblable [...] tellement que de cette mutuelle affection est venue cette loy non escrite mais gravée en nos cœurs [...] tousjours j'ay eu cette charité gravée en mon ame, que la commodité de mon frere et mon prochain m'a esté agreable.[5]

The opening lines of the volume of Paré's complete works first published in 1575 reveal the motivation behind the surgeon's commitment to investigating bodily disorder and to enhancing the existing stock of medical understanding. Man, he tells us, is naturally predisposed to love his fellow man, possessing as he does a God-given desire to protect and maintain the quality of human life. This characteristic of human nature is defined by Paré in the quotation above as an instinct, an innate tendency to behave in a particular way, and the medium through which he manifests his particular 'inclination naturelle' is surgery. His surgical practice, by way of which he makes a physical contribution to the improvement of his patients' health, is accompanied by the written account of his knowledge and experience as a surgeon. Furthermore, although he writes in the vernacular principally through personal necessity, the fact that his book was translated into Latin during Paré's lifetime is proof that he could certainly have avoided publishing it in French. Indeed Paré passes to others the task of translating his book into Latin. Referring to his contemporaries in the medical community, he writes in his dedicatory letter to Henri III that 'la plupart [...] souhaittoient que cette piece fust

[5] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, 'Au lecteur', p.7.

en Latin [...] ce que je n'empesche point que quelqu'un d'entre eux ne le fasse, si bon luy semble'.[6] A few pages later, in his address to the reader, Paré explains that 'je n'ay voulu aussi l'escrire en autre langage que le vulgaire de notre nation [...] j'ay appris, que les sciences sont composées de choses, non de paroles'.[7] What Paré is suggesting here is that the language in which his book is written is not as important as the reality and experience of surgery and bodily disorder, but the decision to proceed in the vernacular ensured nevertheless that the *Œuvres* would be accessible to men like Paré, that is, motivated to learn but, crucially, lacking the knowledge of Latin that would grant them access to academic medical books. Surgical action and the printed word are, therefore, the tools at Paré's disposal, and he uses both in an effort to achieve the objective he establishes in his preface: to restore order to the disordered human body, whether through therapeutic action he performs himself, or through providing other practitioners with the knowledge necessary to do the same.

The preface to the *Œuvres* performs an explicit function. In it, Paré sets out clearly for his reader the principles according to which he works and these are, unsurprisingly, heavily influenced by the Christian ideas he held. In writing this philosophical introduction, Paré ensures that everything that is to follow – explanations of many disorders, their causes, symptoms and cures, case studies, illustrations, and so on – is projected onto the matrix of language and concepts that he constructs in his preface.

[6] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, dedicatory letter to Henri III, p.4.
[7] *Ibid.*, 'Au lecteur', p.14.

But this background of Christian doctrine, the impact of which extends from Paré's preface through the rest of his *Œuvres*, is a pre-existing structure of connections and interpretations that Paré himself has inherited. Let us consider the contrasting images of the body, which recall the biblical depiction of the paradoxical nature of Man, that appear in the following extract from the preface:

> de toutes les œuvres de Dieu, le corps de l'homme est *le plus parfait*, comprenant en soy l'harmonie accomplie des choses contraires, lesquelles accommodées selon leur office, font leur accord *le plus beau et excellent* qu'on sçauroit desirer [...] d'autre costé il y auroit dequoy rabaisser son orgeuil, voyant que l'ame ostée de ce beau chef-d'oeuvre, ce n'est plus qu'un vaisseau plein de corruption, et *la plus fresle* chose de la terre.[8]

What we recognise here is a very familiar depiction of the human body as a paradoxical entity. Using superlative adjectives (which I have italicised in the quotation above), Paré presents the body as the sophisticated creation of the divine craftsman, designed in his own image, which is at the same time the finite and material component of the human being, prone to weakness, disease and deformity. Paré is careful to explain that the latter category of human characteristics does not, however, constitute an imperfection in the design. In this echo of the concept of Man presented by Augustine, Paré denies the understanding of this type of physical event as a flaw within God's creation; the body remains, for him, a 'beau chef-d'œuvre'. Similarly, Augustine, in Book XVI of the *City of God*, has claimed previously that God does not make mistakes, and to consider illness or deformity as an error or accident would be to accuse God of

[8] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, 'Au lecteur', p.15-16. Italics mine.

being an 'imperfectly skilled craftsman'[9]. Moreover, Paré argues that bodily disorder has been deliberately installed in nature in order to serve a purpose, which can be discerned by attentive observation and divinely-revealed truth. In Book XXI of his *Œuvres*, for example, the *Livre traictant de la Peste* (which will be examined in more detail in the next part of this chapter), Paré expresses his conviction regarding the cause of this frightening disease:

> C'est une chose resolue entre les vrais Chrestiens, ausquels l'Eternel a revelé les secrets de sa sapience, que la peste, et autres maladies qui adviennent ordinairement aux hommes, procedent de la main de Dieu [...] *Quelle adversité sera en la Cité, que le Seigneur n'aye faite?* [...] C'est la main de Dieu qui, par son juste jugement, darde du ciel ceste peste et contagion, pour nous chastier de nos offenses et iniquités, selon la menace qui est contenue en l'Escriture.[10]

The force of Paré's conviction that disorder is the work of God is evident here, where the ideological content of the preface, namely the Christian doctrine relating to the nature of man's physical reality, is powerfully reiterated.

Like Augustine before him, Paré is convinced that nature is continually and permanently subject to God's will and intervention, an idea that attributes meaning and significance to all natural events, even (indeed especially) to the most unpleasant of physical ailments. In his *City of God*, Augustine reminds his reader that 'we must believe with complete conviction that omnipotent God can do

[9] *City of God*, Book XVI, chapter 8, p.664.
[10] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.352-54.

anything he pleases, by way of either punishing or of helping', which communicates not only a belief in God's absolute power over his own creation, but also his willingness to intervene in its progress, and to do so for a reason.[11] Augustine clarifies this notion in Book XXII, claiming that 'of course, the sole purpose of [physical] deformity is to give yet another proof of the penal condition of mortals in this life'.[12] By way of this assertion, Augustine establishes a firm link between the hardship and struggle associated with human physicality, and God's intention both to punish and reform the beings he has created. Paré too associates the experience of illness with ideas of chastisement and progression, presenting it as an incitement for the patient to reflect, to 'soigneusement mediter', on the reasons behind God's decision to inflict this condition:

> la cognoissance des afflictions qui nous sont envoyées de Dieu, nous achemine à une droite intelligence de sa justice sur nos pechés, à fin qu'à l'exemple de David, nous nous humilions sous sa main puissante, pour garder que nostre ame ne peche par impatience.[13]

The willingness on the part of the patient and doctor to observe and reflect on cases of illness, combined with the understanding of the affliction as revealed by God, allow insight to be gained into this bodily expression of sin and divine justice. So we see that illness, in Paré's argument, fulfils a number of divine purposes. Firstly, the experience of physical discomfort punishes the transgressor of moral laws, but for the sufferer who is prepared to analyse his condition more attentively (as Paré encourages his reader to do by reflecting on the physical nature of man),

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[11] *City of God*, Book XVIII, chapter 18, p.782.
[12] *City of God*, Book XXII, chapter 19, p.1060.
[13] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.352.

illness performs a pedagogical and redemptive function in addition to punishing his sinful transgression.[14] The physical and spiritual experience of illness constitutes a process through which sufferers are alerted to their moral wrongdoing, and are given the opportunity both to repent and to avoid the repetition of their erroneous behaviour in the future. This sense of nature's ability to aid human progression towards improvement and, eventually, moral perfection recalls the Aristotelian theory of the *telos* of all organisms, which, as we have seen are understood to follow a natural progression from the state of imperfection or potentiality to the state of perfection or reality.[15] Aristotle's argument depicting the constructive impetus of nature is developed by Paré, whose perspective – distinct from that of Aristotle because, crucially, Paré is a Christian – leads him to interpret this impulse of nature as a divinely-imposed movement toward virtue. The repetition of the adjective 'bon' in the following extract from chapter two of *De la peste* ('Des causes divines de la peste') reveals the author's understanding of all God's interventions in nature as a method of channelling human behaviour and guiding it towards morality: 's'il veut punir les hommes à cause de leurs pechés, à fin de leur monstrer sa justice [...] il change sans difficulté cest ordre [de nature] quand *bon* luy semble, et le fait servir à sa volonté, selon qu'il voit estre *bon* et juste'.[16]

As well as fulfilling the role of a trigger for reflection and moral improvement, illness and other forms of physical disorder are described by Paré in a more general sense as being evidence of God's power. God, we recall, is capable

[14] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, 'Au lecteur', p.15 : 'et m'estonne, que les hommes sont si fols, que de rechercher ce qui n'est sujet à leur connoissance, que par conjecture, et qu'ils s'arrestent au nombre certain des estoiles, qui selon l'Escriture saincte sont innombrables: veulent sçavoir le cours des cieux, les mouvements du Soleil at de la Lune, les dimensions de la terre: et cependant ne se soucient de se cognoistre eux mesmes, et de sçavoir l'excellence et merveilleuse composition de leurs corps'.
[15] Aristotle, *Physics*, Book II, p.339: 'action for an end is present in things which come to be and are by Nature'.
[16] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.353.

of inflicting physical disorders 'sans difficulté [et] quand bon luy semble', a display of power intended to inspire awe and its spiritually-improving consequences in the human observer.[17] If God is the origin of disorder in Paré's mind, he is also the cure, and Paré did not consequently rely entirely on his own surgical dexterity to cure his patients. The motto 'je l'ay pensé, Dieu l'a guari', repeated in several places in Paré's volume *Voyages Faicts en Divers Lieux*, exposes the surgeon's belief in God's ultimate power to cure disease, and his understanding of his own position as an agent of God's will.

Paré's preface, then, is the conscious expression of the avowedly Christian ethos behind its author's work, both surgical and documentary. Disorder is seen as a physical manifestation of the fall from perfection, and there is a striking analogy to be drawn between the work of the surgeon, as Paré sees it, and that of a cleric, responsible for the maintaining or restoring the health of the soul. For Paré, the human body, like the soul, is intrinsically weak and subject to corruption, the redemption (or restoration of the original order) of which takes place as a result of divine action. In the case of the corrupted bodies he encounters in his work, Paré sees his own role as that of an agent of God's will. Christian doctrine, and more specifically Paré's faith in it, informs the surgeon's perception of the material reality in which he finds himself and inevitably colours his interpretation of it. Moreover, the appearance of these long-standing Christian ideas in the preface also colours our future interpretation of the rest of the *Œuvres* as its readers. As the present chapter will later argue in more depth, bodily disorder is thus projected onto a background of deeply-rooted theological concepts and is described in the existing language of religious discourse. Causes and cures, the alpha and omega of

[17] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.353.

disorder, emerge from this Christian framework and, as a result, must inevitably be understood within it.

If, at this point, we turn to consider the aforementioned features of Paré's introduction from the perspective afforded by Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of Author and Hero, we become aware of another dimension to the role and impact of the preface. Bakhtin, we recall, explores the way in which we experience and make sense of the world, and, in the case of figures like Paré, the way in which we may subsequently write about that lived experience. Authoring, the term Bakhtin uses to define this process of making sense of our surroundings, involves identifying a Hero, a central figure who inhabits the observed world. The role of the Author involves two distinct but simultaneous actions regarding the Hero: the first is to project himself into the Hero and experience the world from this perspective, and the second is to consider the Hero from a distant position, and from here construct his (that is, the Hero's) spatial and temporal context. Bakhtin describes this second action as filling in the space behind the Hero's head, in other words, identifying the contents and boundaries of the Hero's world, details of which the Hero himself may not or cannot be aware. Bakhtin argues that, as the Hero is only able to conceive of himself from a position inside himself, he is incapable of seeing himself as a whole. His lifespan is an eternal mystery to him because he has no memory of his birth, nor will he be able meaningfully to experience his death. Equally, his body remains amorphous to him because, being inside it, he is physically incapable of seeing its entire outline. This being the case, an Author is required, Bakhtin claims, to 'consummate' the Hero, in other words, deliberately to observe him in his context and thereby to overcome his spatial and temporal ambiguities. In doing so, Bakhtin implies that the completion of the Hero and the

clarification of the world he inhabits are necessary and desirable processes. Indeed Bakhtin is clear that Authoring, as it is defined in *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*, is not limited to the conscious process of making sense of the world through writing. Bakhtin uses this term also to describe the constant, subliminal process in which we are all engaged of observing and absorbing the world around us. If we accept Bakhtin's claim that Authoring is a function our minds perform unconsciously (in other words, that we are in possession of an innate tendency to identify the imperfection of the Heroes we observe, and then to Author them), we begin inevitably to see a parallel between this subliminal 'consummation' of the unconsummated Hero and Paré's 'inclination naturelle' to address the problem of the disordered human body.

So in the world of Paré's experience, who or what is the Hero to be Authored? Without question, it is not the individual person or specific group of characters which appear as Heroes in the works of literary fiction to which Bakhtin makes particular reference in *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity*. Indeed, we are dealing here with a completely different genre of writing from, for example, the Russian novel of the nineteenth century. Paré's book does not contain the elements of narrative, characterisation, ideology and so on that we recognise as constituents of the fictional novel, but it is the purpose of the present thesis to demonstrate that in his role as both a surgeon and a writer, Paré is, nevertheless, the Author of a Bakhtinian Novel of experience, its Hero the disordered body he observes and is engaged in trying to heal, and that this concept of the relationship between Author and Hero illuminates important elements of Paré's work which would otherwise remain inaccessible.

We have seen that in the preface to the *Œuvres* Paré conveys the idea of the original form of the human body as designed by God, and that he uses the language of perfection to do so. The body in its healthy state is connected to 'harmonie' and 'accord'; it is moreover a masterpiece, 'beau', 'excellent' and 'parfaict'. When, by contrast, it is unhealthy, the body turns into 'la plus fresle chose de la terre'. Its original physical integrity and strength are depleted, it becomes weak, vulnerable and 'corrompu', and this, I would argue, is the point at which Paré's language leads us to conclude that the body displays the characteristics of a Hero.

In the sixteenth-century imagination, all forms of physical ailment involve an imbalance of some kind, primarily, it was thought, an excess or lack of one of the four humours. Disorder, in other words, destroys the 'harmonie' of the body and requires the attention of a figure like Paré to restore its original balance. In order to tackle the disorders with which he is faced, the medical practitioner must explore the physical circumstances in which they have appeared, both bodily and environmental. In other words, he must establish a spatial context for the disorder. Equally, the effective treatment of a disorder involves understanding its progression: its causes, its symptoms, how it changes over time and the treatments that will ultimately restore order to the afflicted body.[18] I would argue that this reveals a need on the part of the practitioner to understand disorder as a condition with a source and an outcome, with a beginning and an end. In short, it is a condition with a temporal context.

[18] See I. Maclean, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Spatial and temporal detail appears frequently in Paré's discussion of the disorders and case histories about which he writes, and by including this information he is in effect engaged in the process of Authoring. In his Novel, bodily disorder is the Hero whose world is delineated by the Author when he provides the detail of the temporal and spatial environment inhabited by the Hero. However, Paré's Authoring extends beyond this theoretical approach to establishing the Hero's environment because it is to the problematic boundaries of the disordered body itself that Paré principally devotes his attention. His Authoring of the Hero of his Novel takes place on a physical level and he actually restores (or at least attempts to restore) a material balance. In other words, Paré 'consummates' the Hero bodily, and this preoccupation with the 'filling-in' of the body's boundaries is very much in evidence in book seventeen of the *Œuvres*, entitled *Le Dix-septiéme Livre traitant des moyens et artifices d'adjouster ce qui defaut naturellement ou par accident.*[19] The title of this book, more so than that of any other in the *Œuvres*, addresses explicitly the issue of bodily disorder when reference is made directly to 'ce qui defaut'. In this book, instead of explaining ailments caused by small and, to the untrained eye, invisible imbalances in the patient's complexion as he does throughout the rest of the *Œuvres*, Paré addresses the issue of visibly incomplete bodily boundaries in the form of missing limbs and organs. Book seventeen contains a collection of descriptions and illustrations of items such as artificial eyes, teeth, noses and ears, and prosthetic hands, arms, legs and feet, as well as a false tongue to be worn if the patient's own is missing. While some of the listed implements perform a physical function such as improving the mobility or dexterity of the patient, such as the prosthetic hand and leg designed by Paré, others perform what appears to be a purely cosmetic function. For example, the

[19] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.603-22.

replacement ear Paré describes is accompanied by the advice that the injured person will be able either to use the attachment, 'ou le malade laissera croistre ses cheveux longs, ou portera une calotte'.[20] By proposing these two methods of disguising the missing organ as alternatives to using the replacement ear pictured in the book, Paré is implying that the sole purpose of the false ear is to create the appearance of a normal bodily outline. I would therefore argue that, if we view this part of the text through the optic provided by Bakhtin's theory, we can conclude that Paré is Authoring a Hero, in that he identifies a problematic gap in the bodily boundary and fills it in with a tangible replacement, thereby 'consummating' the Hero in material terms.

With this preliminary investigation of the preface to the *Œuvres* and several disparate moments throughout the book, I have begun to demonstrate how the concepts and terminology provided by Bakhtin allow us to read Paré differently. By casting him as an Author, and viewing bodily disorder as a problematic Hero within an unbounded and unclear world, we are able to identify the essential yearning to restore order and balance that drives Paré's surgical and written work. Indeed, it is the fact that he is both surgeon and writer, and that the features of Bakhtinian Authorship can be seen in both of these pursuits, which connects Paré to the other two figures, Jean de Léry and Michel de Montaigne, whose work will be considered in the course of the present thesis. Unlike the Authors of fiction whom Bakhtin describes in his essay, these three sixteenth-century writers do not, I will argue, have an *imagined* experience of the Hero of their Novels, but rather an *embodied* experience. This chapter will now go on to explore the intimate, material

[20] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.610-11.

relationship between Paré the Author and the Hero of his Novel in two books of the *Œuvres Complètes*: *De la peste* (Book 24) and *Des monstres et prodiges* (Book 19).

A Divine Disorder: the *Livre traictant de la Peste*

The year 1568 saw the publication of the first edition of Ambroise Paré's vernacular treatise entitled *Livre traictant de la peste.* He had witnessed the outbreak of plague at Lyons in 1564 while there in his capacity as Premier Surgeon and Valet-de-Chambre to Charles IX, and the observations he recorded while at Lyons form the basis of his treatise on the plague, which also appeared as a chapter in his volume of complete works, and was reissued as an individual volume in 1580. In that same year, Paré served on the Paris Plague Commission, and witnessed an estimated 60,000 citizens of Paris die from what is thought to be bubonic plague within a period of six months.

The devastating physical and demographic effects of this disease are familiar ingredients in both academic and popular writing of this period, and its symptoms were well documented. Having contracted the plague bacterium, the victim would begin to experience chest pains, coughing, nausea and breathing difficulties. Over the next two to three days, these symptoms would intensify, and the victim would develop a high fever, suffer internal bleeding and hard, painful, egg-sized buboes would appear all over the body. After five days, the victim would have slipped from exhaustion to delirium, coma and finally death. The symptoms of the disease could render the body of the victim virtually unrecognisable, and Laurence Brockliss and Colin Jones, in *The Medical World of Early Modern France*, describe how, in the last stages of the disease, 'the boundedness of the body

exploded into a polychromatic cascade of morbid bodily fluids and weeping buboes'.[21] But the caustic impact of the disease did not end with the destruction of the body it attacked, or in other words, with the annihilation of the individual. With an infected flea able to transfer up to 24,000 plague bacteria in one bite, the disease spread rapidly through families and communities, and the mortality rate among its victims could be up to 90%. Jean-Noel Biraben, in *Les Hommes et la peste en France*, reports that around seven hundred French localities experienced outbreaks of plague during the second half of the sixteenth century, and a serious outbreak would typically affect up to two-thirds of a town's population.[22]

Paré observed at close hand the virulence of this disease and the terror it stimulated in all who witnessed its progression through the human body and the body social, and the language he uses to record these observations is markedly different from that used elsewhere in the *Œuvres* to describe other diseases. In the *Livre traittant de la petite verolle, rougeolle, et vers des petits enfans, et de la lepre*, for example, Paré addresses the same questions of cause, symptom and cure as he does in *De la peste*, but the tone and character of the two books are completely different.[23] In the former, the emotional and evocative content of the latter (which will be considered later in the present chapter) is conspicuous by its absence.[24] A second book of the

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[21] L. Brockliss & C. Jones *The Medical World of Early Modern France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) p.39.

[22] J.-N. Biraben, *Les Hommes et la peste en France et dans les pays européens et méditerranéens*, 2 vols., (Paris: Mouton, 1975).

[23] *Livre traittant de la petite verolle, rougeolle, et vers des petits enfans, et de la lepre*, Book 22, p.256-82.

[24] Similarly, the conclusion to the *Livre traittant de la petite verolle, rougeolle, & vers des petits enfans, & de la lepre* exemplifies the typical style and content of the books of the *Œuvres* in which diseases other than the plague are explored. As the quotation below demonstrates, the accounts given of diseases other than the plague tend to report detail sparely and dispassionately, unlike the descriptions of the plague which the present chapter will consider in more detail. 'Les causes de la lepre sont trois, à sçavoir primitive, antecedente et conjoincte. La cause primitive est double, à sçavoir celle qui est introduite au ventre de la mere, comme lors que quelqu'un est engendré au temps des menstrues, ou qu'il a esté fait de la semence d'un pere

Œuvres to which we can usefully compare *De la peste* is the *Livre traitant de la grosse verolle dite maladie venerienne, et des accidens qui adviennent à icelle* because an important feature common to these two books in particular is the moral comment Paré includes in them.[25] Although in Paré's argument all illnesses fall into the category of natural phenomena that occur as a result of divine will, and are therefore linked to questions of transgression and the restoration of moral order (as the preface to the *Œuvres* states), plague and syphilis receive greater attention in terms of their moral and religious associations than do other diseases. Describing the symptoms of syphilis in the first chapter of the book ('Description de la verolle') Paré emphasises its (im)moral dimension when he writes about the disease's 'qualité *occulte*' and explains that it affects the body's 'parties *honteuses*'.[26] Equally, when he turns to the causes of syphilis in the chapter entitled 'Des causes de la verolle', the status of the disease as an agent of God's retribution is clear:

> Il y a deux causes de la verolle. La premiere vient par une qualité specifique et occulte, laquelle n'est sujette à aucune demonstration: on la peut toutesfois attribuer à l'ire de Dieu, lequel a permis que ceste maladie tombast sus le genre humain, pour refrener leur lasciveté et desbordée concupiscence.[27]

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ou mere lepreux, et partant on la peut asseurément dire estre une maladie hereditaire : car un ladre engendre un ladre [...] Pareillement ceste maladie peut venir d'autres causes, à sçavoir, pour faire sa demeure en lieux maritimes, où l'air estant coustumierement espais et nebuleux, rend par succession de temps telle toute l'habitude de nostre corps, selon le dire d'Hippocrates. *Que quel est l'air, tel sont les esprits*, tels sont nos humeurs. Ou pour l'habitude des lieux et pays trop chauds, dont nostre sang devient aduste et bruslé : ou lieux trop froids, dont il devient espais, tardif & et congelé : ainsi voyons nous en quelque partie d'Allemagne beaucoup de ladres, et en Afrique et Espagne plus qu'au reste du monde, et en nostre Languedoc, Provence et Guyenne plus qu'au reste de la France'. 'Des causes de lepre' (chapter VIII) p.272.

[25] *Ibid.*, Book 16, p.526-602.

[26] *Ibid.*, p.527, emphasis mine.

[27] *Ibid.*, p.528.

This, however, is as much moral comment as Paré includes in his book on syphilis, and the rest of the description of the disease proceeds in the same clinical, factual style as we have seen used in the book devoted to leprosy, for example.[28] *De la peste*, by contrast, contains many more such references as well as extensive discussions of the moral, social and religious significance of the plague and it is a book which emerges from the *Œuvres* as a considerably more evocative and emotional piece of prose than the other accounts mentioned above. For instance, we read in *De la peste* that the plague is 'une maladie venant de l'ire de Dieu, furieuse, tempestative, hastive, monstrueuse', and the cumulative effect of the forceful listing of these adjectives, as well as the vivid adjectives themselves, give an intensity to Paré's description that is missing from his accounts of other illnesses.[29]

In addition, plague is an illness whose nature and essence remain beyond the understanding of even the most well-qualified and experienced members of Paré's contemporary medical community, an inscrutability to which he alerts us when he writes that 'l'essence de ce venin pestiferé est inconneu et inexplicable'.[30] Its enigmatic nature means that plague undermines the authority of current medical understanding, and Paré even claims that it cannot be defined according to the existing system of disease classification, and in fact that it constitutes an entirely new and distinct category of illness. Indeed, his descriptions of the plague and its symptoms focus on the shocking, dramatic and mysterious physical

[28] The quotation from the section entitled 'Description de la verolle', which refers to the 'parties honteuses', is followed by a list of other physical symptoms of syphilis in which no further moral comment appears.
[29] *Ibid.*, p.350. In fact, the quotation above does not appear in the 1575 and 1579 editions of the *Œuvres*, and is instead included for the first time in the 1585 edition of Paré's book. The appearance of this addendum, which introduces a new, religious element to the first chapter and its description of the plague, may be the consequence of Paré's experience of the deadly epidemics of plague and influenza that dominated Paris in 1580.
[30] *Ibid.*, p.351.

manifestations of the disease that set it apart from the other illnesses about which he writes. A margin note in the 1585 edition of *De la peste* alerts the reader to the unfathomable nature of the disease; it reads, 'La peste n'est pas tousjours d'une mesme sorte'.[31] Then, in the main body of the text, Paré explains this remark by enumerating the multiple names by which the phenomenon of *peste* is also identified: 'on lui a donné divers noms, à sçavoir *fiévre pestilente, caquesangue, coqueluche, suette, trousse-galant, bosse, charbon, pourpre*, et autres'.[32] Again we see him using a list, this time of the many guises under which the plague masquerades, and in doing so he stresses once more the problem of recognising and understanding this condition 'inconneu et inexplicable'.

Montaigne asks in 'De l'experience',

> Qui a veu des enfans essayans de renger à certain nombre une masse d'argent-vif: plus ils le pressent et pestrissent et s'estudient à le contraindre à leur loy, plus ils irritent la liberté de ce genereux metal: il fuit à leur art et se va menuisant et esparpillant au delà de tout compte.[33]

The frustrating experience imagined by Montaigne of attempting to contain a substance whose nature is unsettled and volatile is one that is shared by Paré. In *De la peste*, the plague is erratic and protean, constantly resisting definition and evading the conceptual grasp of the medical community. Paré's mode of writing about the disease indicates that it frustrates him as a writer because he is unable adequately to

[31] A. Paré, *Œuvres complètes* (1585), p.829.
[32] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, (1840-41), p.351. If we compare this list of alternative names for plague (which is, in effect, endless as a result of the concluding 'et autres') to the single alternative term for syphilis ('la grosse verolle dite maladie venerienne'), we see that plague outnumbers other diseases by far in terms of the aliases by which it is known.
[33] Montaigne, 'De l'experience' (III.13) p.1043.

address in language the problem it poses. This textual difficulty persists, and furthermore is reflected, I will now argue, in the way in which plague is treated in physical, bodily terms by Paré.

In the chapters of *De la peste* in which the bodily reality of plague is considered, Paré includes, among other things, details of the changes in the colour and appearance of the afflicted person, the texture of the skin and the odours emanating from the patient's body. Of particular relevance to the present thesis are the references Paré makes to the visible changes in the body which come in the form of vividly-coloured 'carboncles' and 'bubons' that emerge on the surface of the body and change the colour, shape and outline of the victim.[34] In addition, the plague is given an emphatically liquid character in Paré's account. He describes it flowing through the body 'par le mouvement qui luy est naturel, venant à s'espandre en la masse sanguinaire où sont contenus les humeurs', and other images of fluid motion are also used, such as 'les sueurs et vomissements' and the 'flux de sang par le nez et par autres parties du corps', the discharging of liquids which doctors deliberately bring about in order to drain the body of the noxious substances it contains.[35] The tendency here to allude to the liquid characteristics of plague is arguably nothing more than Paré using the familiar language and concepts of his time. He is articulating his ideas within the framework of the accepted theory that illness was the result of an imbalance in the body's humours or fluids. Nevertheless, I would argue that this explanation does nothing to diminish the powerful effect of understanding and depicting plague as liquid in character. The configuration of images I have identified in Paré's portrait of the

[34] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.351.
[35] *Ibid.*, p.351.

disease (of contagion spreading through flowing blood, pus-filled buboes growing on the skin, the sweating and vomiting of the victim and so on) in effect tracks the process by which the healthy and contained human body is completely transformed by the plague. The result is that the body moves from a solid state into liquid as its physical integrity dissolves and it turns into a porous vessel leaking malodorous and pestilent fluids.

Moreover, Paré's account of the treatments typically employed in response to plague reveals how they too contribute to the disintegration of the body's normal structure. The absence of any truly effective remedy meant that patients were routinely subjected, as we are told in Paré's account, to induced vomiting, sweating and bleeding, and had their buboes and swellings drained of pus. Confounded by this virulent disease ('Comment sera-il possible à un Chirurgien pouvoir guarir ceste contagion par vraye methode, attendu que sa cause ne peut estre conneuë?'), Paré writes that the medical practitioner 'tasche et s'efforce de chasser et pousser dehors les matieres que le venin a corrompu [...] au grand soulagement des parties nobles'.[36] The reason he gives for the use of these purgative treatments is that 'si le tout (ou la plus grande partie) peut estre ainsi poussée dehors sans rentrer au dedans, le patient peut eschapper du danger.'[37] The practitioner's action in altering what is contained within the diseased body reflects the belief that there is an imbalance in the patient's complexion that must be redressed before health, in other words the correct balance of humours, can be restored, but, crucially, the practitioner must penetrate the boundaries of the body and physically remove the offending substance to achieve this. I would argue,

[36] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.352.
[37] *Ibid.*, p.352.

therefore, that the forms of treatment that Paré describes have an important feature in common with the disease itself, and that is the fact that both processes (i.e. the plague's assault on the body and the practitioner's intervention) involve the movement of material between the inside and outside of the body, and both therefore contribute to the weakening of the body's structure and the blurring of its normal, healthy boundaries.

The human body, crucially, is not the only structure whose stability is undermined in *De la peste* by the presence of the plague. If we turn towards the end of the book we read Paré's description of how it also triggers the breakdown of the traditional bonds of family and personal responsibility. In social groups in which the plague is present, Paré notes that

> On n'est reconneu des vassaux, sujets, ou serviteurs qu'on ait: chacun tourne le dos, et personne n'y oseroit aller: mesmes le pere abandonne l'enfant, et l'enfant le pere: le mary la femme, et la femme le mary: le frere la sœur, et la sœur le frere: voire ceux que vous pensez les plus intimes et feables amis, en ce temps vous abandonnent pour l'horreur et danger de ceste maladie. Et s'il y a quelqu'un qui meu de pitié et charité chrestienne, ou pour la consanguinité, vueille s'avancer pour secourir et visiter un malade, il n'aura aprés parent ny amy qui le vueille frequenter ny approcher.[38]

Mutual abandonment is described happening in almost every human relationship, and the repeated, almost chiastic structure of phrases such as 'le mary la femme, &

[38] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.459.

la femme le mary' reinforces the reciprocity and therefore the completeness of the social and familial destruction that take place under these conditions. Moreover, plague appears to shatter domestic relationships with both a vertical connection, in other words between parents and children, and servants and masters, and those linked horizontally, such as brothers and sisters, as well as close friends. The damage done by plague in the domestic arena is thus profound and comprehensive.

In addition to the personal links ruptured as a result of outbreaks of plague, official relationships of authority and responsibility are depicted breaking down, and Paré gives what appears to be largely anecdotal evidence of magistrates, doctors and members of the clergy fleeing their wards and parishes at the first signs of plague.

> [...] les plus opulents, mesmes les magistrats, et autres qui ont quelque autorité au gouvernement de la chose publique, s'absentent ordinairement des premiers, et se retirent ailleurs de sorte que la justice n'est plus administrée, n'y estant personne à qui on la puisse requerir.[39]

The scale and frequency of such departures is impossible to establish accurately, but according to Paré, the disappearance of the recognised representatives of authority triggered the disintegration of order within the affected communities. He writes that 'la justice n'est plus administrée', that crimes such as robbery and murder go uninvestigated and unpunished, and he expresses anger at priests and doctors whose decision to neglect their duty of care for reasons of self-

[39] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.458.

preservation leaves the communities for which they are responsible bereft of any medical or spiritual guidance.[40] Trade also falls victim to the onslaught of the disease, and Paré reminds us that

> aussi tost que la peste est en quelque province, tout commerce de marchandise, dont les hommes ont besoin de s'entretenir par aide reciproque des uns et des autres, vient à estre interrompu et delaissé: car nul ne se veut hazarder de venir rien apporter au lieu où est la peste, de peur de perdre sa vie.[41]

Once again, the destructive trajectory of the plague is described as acute and far-reaching, and the patterns of language in the parts of the text in which public relationships appear create the same effect as I identified earlier with respect to the private domain. In the passage quoted directly above, Paré writes using superlatives to convey the extremity of the situation in plague-struck areas, of which he made mention in the earlier extract; he remarks, for example, that *all* trade ceases to take place and in addition that *no one* is prepared to risk visiting infected places. Indeed, the figure of reciprocity which featured in the first extract reappears here in the second, but on this occasion Paré initially uses the image in reverse. The reciprocal relationship that exists between merchants and their customers is portrayed here as constructive and symbiotic through the use of the reflexive 's'entretenir' and the positive language of help and sustenance. This constructive exchange, however, is brought to a halt as a result of the plague. The effect of this is that the structure of the sentence reflects the phenomenon Paré

[40] For example, p.458: 'et adonc les meschans ameinent bien une autre peste: car ils entrent és maisons, et y pillent et desrobent à leur aise impunément, et coupent le plus souvent la gorge aux malades, voire aux sains mesmes, à fin de n'estre conneus et accusés aprés'.
[41] *Ibid.*, p.458.

observes. The relationships and exchanges that allow social groups to function properly, described in the first part of the sentence, are undermined and damaged by the plague, a process suggested in the second clause.

It is clear, then, that Paré's account allows the reader to track the destructive progress of the plague right from its roots inside the body of its victims. Beginning with the corrosion of the internal organs, the disease proceeds to break down the external membrane of the human body. It becomes visible as a damaging presence, stimulates fear in the mind of the observer and creates a climate of panic in which traditional codes of behaviour are disrupted, and conventional patterns of activity, communication and exchange are suspended. In this crisis situation, forces of cultural cohesion, such as family loyalty, vocational duty and official responsibility fail to function as self-preservation and survival become the individual's priority. Paré illustrates how the presence of the plague blurs and dissolves the bonds and boundaries that, under normal circumstances, provide stability and order, both physically and socially. Plague is, therefore, a disorder that destroys the body and which, in addition, has a disruptive impact on the sites of human experience and activity: the family, the community and so on.

I have argued above that, in Paré's description of the plague and its effects, the disease is depicted as a phenomenon which evades the physical and conceptual grasp of the medical practitioner who is unable to cure it, and is equally incapable of defining it according to the customary method of classifying disease. Moreover, I have shown how the motifs of fluidity, disruption and transgression, both ideological and embodied, appear repeatedly throughout *De la peste*, and how the configuration of these images succeeds in convincing the reader of Paré's claim

that the plague is radically different from all other illnesses. As a Hero, plague appears to inhabit a world that is separate from that in which the other diseases Paré describes in the *Œuvres* exist, and the result of this, I suggest, is that Paré is compelled to adopt a different approach in order to Author his experience of this baffling and extraordinary disease. The ways in which the structure, fabric and content of Paré's writing (both the *Œuvres* as a whole and *De la peste* in particular) reflects the nature of its plague-Hero will now be explored.

The language in which Paré's writes is initially the most obvious and striking way in which his book varies from the norm, and, as I established at the beginning of the present chapter, there are two main reasons for his choice of French over Latin. In the dedication that appears at the beginning of the *Œuvres*, Paré explains that, although he has been encouraged to produce a Latin version of his work, he has decided to leave this task to someone whose command of the Latin language is better than his own. This first explanation for the use of French rather than Latin comes about, therefore, largely as a result of necessity, but Paré's second reason for using the vernacular is clearly a deliberate choice. The intended readers of the *Œuvres* are the 'pauvres escholiers' who do not benefit from the humanist education which would allow them access to books written in Latin, an experience which Paré shared. In using the vernacular to grant these readers access to information about medicine and surgery which was previously unavailable to them, Paré in effect deviates from the norm in terms of both language and readership, and this new accessibility of knowledge is unquestionably one of the most revolutionary aspects of the *Œuvres*.

More significant, however, was Paré's decision to write about illness in the first place. He was a surgeon (albeit one of the most well-known in European history, who also served at the courts of four French kings), and as such was not considered qualified to discuss theories of illness. As Nancy Siraisi explains in *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, there was a strict hierarchy and division of labour within the medical community of the era, and the roles and duties of each type of practitioner were clearly defined. The theory of disease was the responsibility of the physician, who was educated in the ideas and methods of Galen and Hippocrates at a university medical faculty, and typically had little or no direct contact with the reality of disease. Surgeons, by contrast, were concerned with the physical treatment of illnesses and injuries, and their material involvement with patients led them, according to Siraisi, to be considered more as manual labourers than as learned men.[42]

Paré's decision to venture into the territory of theory therefore undermined this medical structure, and his transgression of the boundary between surgeon and physician was noted by the Paris Faculté de Médecine, whose members took legal action against him in 1575 in an attempt to stop the publication of the first volume of his *Œuvres*. In his biography of Paré, Wallace Hamby notes that, after the printing of the *Œuvres* had been completed, officials from the Faculté tried to prevent the book from being sold and distributed in a number of ways. They objected strongly to the content of the book and attempted to discredit Paré both professionally and morally, questioning his status as a surgeon and accusing him of

[42] See N. Siraisi, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1990) p.17-47 and p.153-186, and L. Brockliss & C. Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) Chapters 2-4.

writing about indecent matters.[43] Paré defended himself by writing a pamphlet entitled *Response de M. Ambroise Paré, Premier Chirurgien du Roy, aux calomnies d'aucuns médicines et chirurgiens, touchant ses oeuvres*, in which he accused the Faculté of, among other things, objecting to the use of 'plain understandable French, since they feared that such information broadcast would tend to make their services less necessary'.[44] The dispute between Paré and the Faculté lasted for several months, but as Hamby points out, the final verdict does not appear to have been recorded.[45] While it would undoubtedly slake our curiosity to discover how the case was finally closed, it is the detail and ferocity of the dispute, rather than its outcome, that is of greater relevance to the present thesis. It is clear from the Faculté's accusations and Paré's defence of his work that both parties were aware of the fact that the *Œuvres* constituted the crossing of an important line. Paré's book appeared to threaten the existing boundary between the physician and the surgeon, and therefore to weaken the structure of the contemporary medical world. Indeed, in his defence of his book, Paré recognises the threat that his work represented when he acknowledges that 'les Medecins disoient que j'avois passé les bornes et limites de la Chirurgie [...] or je leur demanderois volontiers qui a fait le partage de la Medecine et de la Chirurgie'.[46]

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[43] W. Hamby, *Ambroise Paré: Surgeon of the Renaissance* (St. Louis: Warren H. Green, 1967), p.153-56. The following quotation from Hamby's biography (p.153) reveals the considerable lengths to which the Faculté was prepared to go in order to prevent the publication of the *Œuvres* and indeed, it would appear, to discredit its author. 'On 5 May, officials of the Faculté demanded of the Parlement their right to pass judgement upon the book prior to its sale. On 28 May, they invoked a decree of 1535 to the effect that books on medicine and surgery could not be published without their approval. They emphasized that Paré was an uneducated barber-surgeon who had been admitted inappropriately to the College of Surgery of St. Côme. They implied that the College should join them in their protest [...] On 9 July, before University deputies, Gourmelin, Dean of the Faculté, condemned the book as immoral and contrary to the best interests of the State.'

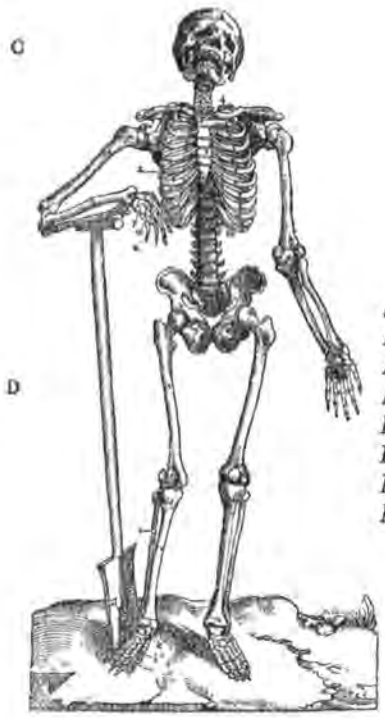
[44] *Ibid.*, p.154.

[45] *Ibid.*, p.155. Hamby cites Le Paulmier as his source for this information, and concludes: 'Apparently a settlement was made, for the book went on sale and was promptly sold out'.

[46] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, Au lecteur, p.12.

What the *Œuvres* represents, therefore, is a body of work that does not fit comfortably into any existing corpus of medical books. The language in which it is written and the mismatch between its author and subject matter challenge the conventions according to which contemporary books about the human body were written, and in effect transfer the *Œuvres* into a category of their own. Violating existing methods of categorisation and definition and belonging to a distinctive and problematic genre are characteristics that I would argue are shared by the book and the plague as we have seen it described by Paré. Therefore, in the same way as the book is perceived by the Faculté to be both idiosyncratic and threatening to the structures of the contemporary medical community, the plague, according to Paré, belongs to 'un quatriesme genre de maladie' and causes the disintegration of the body's structure. The impact of the *Œuvres* as a whole, I suggest, is in many ways similar to that of the plague, and the themes of distinctiveness and the crossing of established boundaries that are connected with the plague can also be identified in the fabric and content of *De la peste* specifically.

The following image and text can be found at the end of the chapter on plague in the 1579 and 1585 editions of the *Œuvres.*



47

The image of the skeleton, which is holding a spade and gesturing to a freshly-dug grave (visible in the bottom left-hand corner of the picture), is taken from a large collection of similar drawings found in *De humani corporis fabrica*, published in 1543 and written by Andreas Vesalius, who commissioned the drawings for his publication from artists at the studio of Titian in order to guarantee the excellent quality and accuracy of the representations of the body. The original images in Vesalius' book were accompanied by comprehensive Latin descriptions of the composition of the body's skeletal and muscular systems. Vesalius' aim was to produce what would be, in effect, a human dissection in print that would be as useful to the student of anatomy as a real cadaver. Paré's first recorded contact with Vesalius was in June 1559 when both men were consulted in the treatment of the head injury sustained during a tournament by Henri II, and it is very likely that,

[47] The image of the skeleton and open grave does not appear in Malgaigne's edition. The rhyme that accompanies it appears on p.464.

by the time of this meeting, Paré was already familiar with Vesalius' *Fabrica*, although the publication in August 1559 of the first French edition would have rendered the text still more accessible to the non-Latin speaking Paré.

The juxtaposition of the image borrowed from Vesalius and the text, a short, proverbial rhyme rich in moral and religious language, is a visually striking example of the ways in which existing categories and lines of definition become blurred in Paré's text. There is a powerful clash of genres between Vesalius' technical, anatomical drawing and the religious comment that accompanies it, but this coexistence of contrasting perspectives is in fact a characteristic feature of Paré's work. Additionally, his choice of this image in particular from the broad range of similar drawings in Vesalius' work is a significant one. J.B. Saunders and C. O'Malley, in *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels*, point out that in this image 'the skeleton, the spade and the open grave constitute a motive derived from ancient traditional sources in the personification of Death and the Danse Macabre'. Moreover, these elements of the drawing are potent and traditionally recognisable reminders of the story of man's fall from grace.[48] Although Vesalius apparently had practical reasons for having the spade included in the drawing, he was undoubtedly aware of the associations such items would prompt in the mind of his readers, and this association was not lost on Paré.[49] By placing Vesalius' image beside the short proverbial extract in the conclusion to *De la peste*, Paré transcends the division between the technical and pedagogical work of Vesalius, and the religious and liturgical prose it accompanies. Furthermore, the

[48] J. Saunders & C. O'Malley, *The Illustrations from the Works of Andreas Vesalius of Brussels* (New York & Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1950) p. 84-85.
[49] J. Saunders & C. O'Malley (1950) 'In the chapter on the articulation of the skeleton, Vesalius recommends the insertion into the mounting board of a spear, scythe, trident or similar object to which the hand of the specimen is attached. Its purpose is not only to add decorative value but also to provide additional security and stability to the skeleton.' p.84.

transposition of the image into Paré's chapter alters the definition of the image itself. It is located at the end of the remarkably lengthy concluding section to *De la peste* in which the themes of sin, repentance and punishment dominate. Toward the end of *De la peste*, Paré advises his reader, for example, to

> recourir promptement au remede qui est seul et general: c'est que grands et petits de bonne heure implorions la misericorde de Dieu par confession et desplaisance de nos forfaits, avec certaine deliberation et propos de nous amender et donner gloire au nom de Dieu, cherchans en tout et par tout de luy obeïr et complaire suivant sa sainte parole.[50]

The positioning of the Vesalian skeleton at the end of this unrestrained religious and moral rhetoric changes completely the picture's original intended function and significance and it becomes a symbol of something entirely different. It is no longer simply an accurate representation of the human skeleton because its moral and religious associations inevitably strike the reader when the picture is viewed in this alternative context. Another line of distinction between categories becomes blurred here, because the image is variously and simultaneously several different things: a meticulous anatomical drawing, a pictorial teaching aid, a familiar visual metaphor for the narrative of man's fall from grace and an evocative illustration to conclude Paré's lengthy treatise.

The confusion of genres which we can identify in the use of the Vesalian skeleton and the proverbial rhyme is typical of Paré's work, and the combined

[50] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.462. The style and content of this quotation are typical of the several pages of material found at the end of *De la peste*.

image and text represent a kind of mise-en-abyme of the book as a whole. The prefatory material to the *Œuvres*, as I explained in the previous section of the present chapter, is predominantly religious in language and content. It is littered with quotations from and references to Scripture, and describes medicine and surgery as vocations into which practitioners, like priests, are called and ordained, which we see when Paré advocates that a person should follow the 'vacation, à laquelle il a pleu à Dieu de l'appeler'.[51] Like the preface, *De la peste* contains extensive religious comment and, in the original editions, the margin notes to several of its chapters are dominated by references to bible verses relevant to Paré's medical argument, but, crucially, the frequency of biblical references and the intensity of moral comment are notably greater in *De la peste*, especially in its closing pages, than in the rest of the *Œuvres*. Plague is the only illness which is specifically described as having a divine cause and this relationship is highlighted, for example, by the title of the second chapter of *De la peste*: it is entitled 'Des causes divines de la Peste'. Although Paré announces in the preface to the *Œuvres* that all diseases are the result of divine will, and explicitly connects some, like syphilis, with moral transgression, plague stands out in the book as the illness that is most strenuously and emphatically linked to issues of sin and divine punishment. Indeed, in the 1585 edition of the *Œuvres*, Paré adds a short phrase to the original opening lines of the first chapter of *De la peste* which reinforces this unique relationship between plague and divine will: 'Peste est une maladie *venant de l'ire de Dieu*, furieuse, tempestative, hastive, monstrueuse'.[52] The two brief moments in the text to which I have drawn attention here are small but important signs of Paré's view of plague as a vehicle of communication between God and man. Equally, the

[51] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, dedication to Henri III, p.1.
[52] I have italicised the phrase that was later added by Paré. This phrase is absent from the 1575 and 1579 editions. It appears in the 1585 edition on p.829, and in Malgaigne's edition (1840-41) p.350.

reader continually finds himself being directed throughout *De la peste* to passages from scripture in which God's intention to punish human sin with plagues of festering boils, among other afflictions, is documented. The greatest concentration of scriptural references is found in Chapter II of *De la peste* in which Paré uses both margin notes and the main body of the text to direct his reader to the books of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Kings and Psalms in order to substantiate his claims that God controls the natural world and uses its elements as agents of his will.

> Par ces exemples donc, il appert clairement que Dieu dispose de ses creatures selon son bon plaisir [...] Or, comme le Seigneur se sert de ces choses inferieures pour estre ministres de sa volonté, et tesmoignages de sa grace à ceux qui le craignent, aussi elles luy servent de heraults et executeurs de sa justice, pour punir les iniquités et offenses des pecheurs [...] pour le dire en un mot, c'est la main de Dieu, qui par son juste jugement, darde du ciel ceste peste et contagion, pour nous chastier de nos offenses et iniquités, selon la menace qui est contenue en l'Escriture.[53]

The quotation above is followed in the text by a lengthy summary of specific Bible verses in which plagues appear as agents of God's vengeance, after which Paré writes:

> Concluons donc que la peste et autres maladies dangereuses, sont tesmoignage de la fureur divine sur les pechés, idolatries et superstitions

[53] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.354.

qui regnent en la terre, comme mesmes un autheur profane est contraint de confesser qu'il y a quelque chose de divin aux maladies.[54]

The role of disease in general as a vehicle used by God to punish man is mentioned once again here, but, it is the plague in particular that is, for Paré, the ultimate example of this function. It appears, capitalised, at the beginning of the sentence above and the other 'maladies dangereuses' and 'maladies' that Paré identifies as being signs of God's anger remain unspecified here and Paré does not expand on this brief reference to them anywhere else in the text. Plague stands out, therefore, as a singular and uniquely bewildering disorder of the body that is inextricably linked in Paré's mind to moral and religious transgression.

In considering together the two elements of the text I have identified above, in other words the juxtaposition of the Vesalian skeleton and the proverbial rhyme located at the end of *De la peste*, and the persistent use of religious language and imagery to describe this disease in a book about disorders of the body, it becomes clear that there is a problematic fusion of genres in Paré's work. As the Faculté de Médecine's objections to the *Œuvres* suggest, Paré is guilty of stepping over an academic boundary because he is a surgeon whose act of writing about disease encroaches on the traditional territory of the physician. In *De la peste* specifically, the mixture of medical, scriptural and at times moral content within the text can be read as a further blurring of established boundaries, in this case between the duties of those with responsibility for the health of the soul and those with concern for the health of the body. Therefore, if we subscribe to the interpretation of these features of the text as processes by which traditional

[54] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.355.

boundaries, both theoretical and practical, are crossed, it is possible to conclude that Paré's act of writing about the plague in the way he does reflects the themes of destruction and fragmentation with which the disease is associated. However, it is precisely the composite and hybrid nature of *De la peste*, and the fact that it contains medical, surgical, moral and religious perspectives, that I would suggest brings order to the otherwise disordered and disorderly presence of plague as it is depicted by Paré.

As I argued above, the introduction to the *Œuvres* is evidence of the influence of Paré's religious belief on his approach to the disorders of the human body with which he concerns himself professionally. In accordance with Christian doctrine, and in particular with the account of creation in the book of Genesis, Paré explains to his reader that God created an ordered universe and a structured natural world. As we have seen, Paré's position is that God, having created all matter, continues to be the author of all natural processes. Furthermore, nature is permanently subject to God's will and intervention, an idea that attributes meaning to all natural events, including illness. In addition, Paré is careful to point out that God does not only govern the natural world, but furthermore that he corrects imperfections and transgressions in nature and actively steers all its processes towards goodness. Paré draws the conclusion, therefore, that even those experiences perceived by humanity to be unpleasant and disorderly, in other words disease, are the effects of divine will. The practice of medicine in all its forms is depicted both as a vocation and an instinct, implanted in man by God, to maintain and restore the original order of nature when it has been disrupted. God engenders physical disorder, but also provides man with the inclination to rectify it, by way of material treatments to restore the humour balance of the patient, or spiritual

practices, such as prayer and fasting. Paré's view of the nature of disease encompasses both physical and spiritual elements, and his approach to the treatment of illness therefore implicitly involves addressing both of these dimensions. In other words, when he treats the body physically, Paré is, according to his own argument, performing the work that God intends him to do. Moreover, Paré identifies prayer and repentance explicitly as the 'souverain remede' for plague specifically and in doing so places this disease firmly in the realm of religious phenomena.

Illnesses of the body, when considered in isolation by the observer, may be a source and symbol of disorder, and this is certainly true in the case of plague as it is represented in *De la peste.* However, I would suggest that if we read *De la peste* with the principles and terminology of Bakhtin's theory of Author and Hero in mind, we can see that it in fact proposes an alternative perspective which casts the disease in an entirely different role. When illness is considered, not as an individual event, but rather as one stage within the larger process of divine intervention in the physical world, its purpose as a form of communication from God can be understood, and its disorderly impact minimised as it is transformed into a constituent of order. This role of physical disorder as a deliberate and necessary component in the process of restoring order is made especially clear in the treatise on the plague. In the other books on illnesses included in his volume of works, such as his treatise on leprosy, Paré limits himself to describing the natural causes of the disease, its physical symptoms and the methods by which it can be managed. The book on the plague, on the other hand, has, as I have argued above, a considerably more religious framework. Not content to allow the general introduction to the volume to explain the divine dimension of this particular

disorder, Paré repeats much of the religious material found in the preface to the whole volume in the introduction to *De la peste*. He devotes the second chapter of the book to 'les causes divines de la peste' explaining that 'la peste et autres maladies, qui adviennent ordinairement aux hommes, procedent de la main de Dieu, ainsi que le Prophete nous enseigne: Quelle adversité sera en la cité que le Seigneur n'aye faite?'[55] The conclusion to the book is a lengthy sermon on the moral transgressions understood to have provoked this manifestation of God's anger, which contains urgent reminders to repent, and has as its final image the Vesalian skeleton and its accompanying moral warning.[56] The explicitly religious content in the text and paratext of *De la peste* is conspicuous by its absence from most of the other books in the *Œuvres*, and in the book on leprosy and syphilis, only one brief moral comment relating to the sexual nature of syphilis is included, although this book must inevitably still be read in the light of the religious context of illness established in the prefatory material to the volume. *De la Peste* opens, closes and is punctuated throughout with scriptural references and religious comment, creating a structure which ensures that all material on this particular disease must be read in the light of Christian doctrine. In this way, the framework of the book, constructed around explicitly religious scaffolding, imposes a textual order on the material relating to the disease.

The principles and language of Bakhtin's theory of Author and Hero allow us to see this relationship between the subject matter, text and context of *De la peste* in a different light. What this book represents is a written account of Paré's lived experience, as a medical practitioner witnessing the spread of a devastating

[55] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.352.
[56] Equally, the margin notes that accompany later chapters in the sixteenth-century editions are largely religious in tone and guide the reader to verses in scripture which support Paré's accounts of the plague, and his argument.

and complicated disease. The plague victim's body is, I suggest, the Bakhtinian Hero of this Novel because it is the central focus of the Author's attention and of his written account. The body is observed by Paré, the Author, whose role, according to Bakhtin's model, is firstly to experience the Hero from the Hero's perspective, and secondly to make sense of, or Author, this experience by placing it within a clearly-defined spatial and temporal context and filling in the detail of the world it inhabits. The first role of the Author is carried out by Paré as a matter of course. As Nancy Siraisi points out, the sixteenth-century surgeon was considered in many ways to be a manual labourer owing to the level of physical contact that typically took place between surgeons and their patients. From this notion of the surgeon and Paré's description of the symptoms of the plague found in Chapter I of *De la peste*, we can extrapolate the physical nature of the experience Paré had of the plague. I argued earlier in the present chapter that Paré attributes a liquid nature to the plague through his description of the way in which the infection appears to him to dissolve the contained human body until it becomes little more than a quantity of fluid: blood, sweat, vomit and pus. In treating a plague victim exhibiting the symptoms he reports, Paré's experience of the Hero in visual and olfactory terms is acute. He describes, for example, the body of a patient dead from plague as 'cest horrible spectacle du corps rempli de vermine et pourriture, avec une grande puanteur charongneuse', a description that includes the sight and smell of the Hero.[57] Moreover, his description of the treatments typically used on plague victims, such as induced bleeding, sweating and vomiting, reveals that they involve the surgeon touching the patient, and so the experience is also tactile. As the Author of this Novel, I suggest, Paré undergoes as bodily and sensory an experience of the Hero as would be possible for him without

[57] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.459.

contracting the disease himself, and he does so in the presence of the Hero while its narrative is still unfolding. In spatial and temporal terms, therefore, the Author temporarily inhabits the same context as the Hero, and we can see this as a moment at which Paré projects himself into the world of the Hero in order to experience it at first hand.

The second stage in the process of Bakhtinian Authoring can also be identified in *De la peste.* Paré's role as a surgeon is to assess the imbalance in the patient's complexion and to perform the purgative treatments he describes in order to restore the correct balance of fluids and humours within the boundaries of the patient's body. Viewed in Bahktinian terms, this process can be read as a form of consummation whereby the Author is required to fill in the gaps in the figure of the Hero in order to present him as a whole and complete object. The aim of the Author in the case of plague is to restore to health, or completeness, the bodily boundaries of the Hero and the material contents of that body. I suggest, therefore, that the second stage of Authoring is performed in physical terms in the narrative of Paré's Novel of experience, but I would also argue that it takes place at an additional, documentary level. Authoring, Bakhtin tells us, involves the establishment of a clear spatial and temporal context for the Hero, in other words, the clarification of the boundaries of the world the Hero inhabits. In Paré's Novel, the spatial context of the plague is identified as a familiar domestic and social environment which is inhabited by the figure of the plague victim, as well as other generic characters such as husbands, wives, masters, servants, tradesmen, public officials and so on.[58] We have already seen this configuration of the typical

[58] On a number of occasions, Paré does refer to the location of specific events relating to the plague, but these references are exceptions to the general rule by which he writes. He writes, for

characters that surround the victim in the passage in which Paré describes the plague-induced collapse of familial and social relationships. In naming 'le pere [...] l'enfant', 'le mary [...] la femme', 'le frere [...] la sœur' and 'les plus feables amis', Paré is, in fact, filling in the detail of the domestic stage on which the plague narrative is played out. Similarly, the wider, urban setting in which the plague takes hold is invoked when Paré mentions figures such as 'les Medecins, Chirurgiens et Barbiers esleus pour penser les malades', 'les Magistrats, et autres qui ont quelque auctorité au gouvernement de la chose publique', 'les marchands', and 'les meschants', opportunists who, during times of plague, 'entrent és maisons, et y pillent et desrobent à leur aise impunément'.[59] I would argue that the Hero's spatial context is established through the enumeration of these generic secondary characters who share the same space, and whose presence defines that space as a domestic, urban, mercantile or communal setting. The Hero's spatial context is therefore identified and Authored in a number of ways. The plague victim's body is the principal site on which the plague story develops in *De la peste*, but from this central point, additional locations, like the home and the market-place, also become settings for plague activity. I argued earlier in the present chapter that Paré's account depicts the plague dissolving the body, family and community, and must therefore conclude that, in Bakhtinian terms, the Hero in this Novel demolishes its own world. However, this destructive relationship between the Hero and his spatial context does not affect the process of Authoring, and, in spite of the fact that the physical setting will inevitably be destroyed by the Hero, the Author, nevertheless, identifies a physical context for the Hero's story in the text.

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example, 'Qui en voudra des exemples bien recentes, il en pourra sçavoir des habitans de Lyon', and refers also to events recorded in Paris. *Ibid.*, p.458-59.

[59] *Ibid.*, chapter 52, 'Discours des incommodités que la peste apporte entre les homes, et du souverain remede', p.457-61.

In addition to the spatial location, Authoring involves establishing the Hero's temporal context. This means that the Author must determine the lifespan of the Hero in order to be able to see him as a temporal whole with a beginning and an end. In *De la peste*, the temporal Authoring takes place in a more obvious way than does the establishment of the Hero's spatial context, but the manner in which Paré identifies the plague's lifespan is considerably more significant than this straightforwardness might suggest. Firstly, the structure of *De la peste* contributes to the creation of the plague's temporal context. The first chapter of *De la peste* is entitled 'Description de la Peste', and the second chapter 'Des causes divines de la Peste'. Therefore, once Paré has established for his reader the basic nature of the disease, he turns first to its causes in order to Author it.[60] He begins, therefore, at the point at which the disease first becomes apparent in the body of the victim, in other words, at the beginning of the Hero's lifespan. Equally, and as we have already seen, the conclusion to *De la peste* is the Vesalian skeleton and the proverbial rhyme that appears next to it. The skeleton, spade and open grave, we recall, are obvious visual metaphors for death, the danse macabre and man's fall from grace, and the rhyme next to this evocative illustration refers explicitly to 'la Mort'. Having opened with a description of the plague which suggests the generation of the Hero, the book closes with a reminder of human mortality, and this movement from birth to death is, in effect, a lifespan. Moreover, the lifespan of the Hero is not simply a temporal fact in Paré's narrative because it is presented within the wider structure of the Christian religion. The starting point of the Hero's story is, I have argued, Paré's description of the causes of the plague; these are identified in the title of the book's second chapter as 'divines' and the plague is described in the first line of the chapter as 'venant de l'ire de Dieu'. The end of the

[60] This is the structure Paré typically uses in his books on diseases.

plague narrative is death, but more specifically, it is the death of the human body, and both the image and the rhyme anticipate an emphatically Christian epilogue to the Hero's story. The image is a reminder to the reader of man's miserable condition and the need to repent in order to return to a state of grace, and in the rhyme, death represents both a human end and a Christian beginning ('Fin de toutes miseres/Et commencement de la vie eternelle'). The Hero's temporal context is established, therefore, as a stage of limited duration within the larger time frame of Christian eternity. The plague narrative opens, closes and is punctuated heavily throughout with Christian concepts and language, and this pervasive conceptual framework firstly allows a temporal outline to be drawn around the Hero, and subsequently brings a form of order and meaning to a phenomenon that Paré depicts as uniquely destructive and chaotic.

I have argued that the two stages of Bakhtinian Authoring can be identified in *De la peste* and that, in experiencing and writing about the plague, Paré exhibits the characteristics of an Author engaged in the process of consummating the Hero he observes. The body of the plague victim represents a physical problem which Paré addresses in two ways, as a surgeon and as a writer, and in carrying out the functions of these two roles, he is required to bring order to a conceptual and embodied disorder. Bakhtin suggests that Authoring is not necessarily a conscious activity on the part of the Author, but rather that it is an organic process through which the observer makes sense of the Hero he observes, and this, I would argue, is true of Paré's approach to the plague. He responds to the problematic phenomenon he observes by providing details of the Hero's world and establishing its spatial and temporal boundaries, and thus the process by which *De la peste* is written amounts to an unconscious yet definite form of Authoring. In the

following section of the present chapter, I will explore the ways in which Paré performs these same functions of the Bakhtinian Author in a second and very different book of the *Œuvres*: *Des monstres et prodiges.*

The Monstrous Body

At first sight, Paré's *Livre traitant des monstres et prodiges*, first published as part of the 1575 edition of the *Œuvres*, appears to be fundamentally different from all of the other books in the collection, including *De la peste. Des monstres et prodiges* is a varied compendium of definitions and descriptions of numerous cases of bizarre and deformed bodies collected by Paré from a wide range of sources. Perhaps the most immediately striking feature of *Des monstres et prodiges* is the profusion of illustrations that it contains, which sets this book apart in visual terms from the majority of the other books in the *Œuvres*. Illustrations, we recall, do feature intermittently throughout the *Œuvres* in books such as *De la peste* and *Le dix-septiéme livre traitant des moyens et artifices d'adjouster ce qui defaut naturellement ou par accident* which were mentioned earlier in the present chapter, but the frequency of images in *Des monstres et prodiges* is notably greater than in these other books.[61] The visual impact of the profusion of illustrations it contains is underlined by the brevity of the passages of text in the book, and this relatively small quantity of explanatory writing in *Des monstres et prodiges* is another feature that distinguishes it from the other books in the collection. Furthermore, the majority of the text that is included in this book consists of concise definitions or short written descriptions, and the main purpose of these appears to be to elucidate the illustrations of the monsters and marvels that Paré wants to showcase while, by contrast, the pictures such as

[61] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.603-22.

the Vesalian skeleton and the drawings of prosthetic limbs that are added to the other books appear in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the text of the book, which is lengthy, detailed and clearly intended to be the main focus of the reader's attention. The relationship between text and image in *Des monstres et prodiges* appears therefore to be different to the one that exists throughout the rest of the *Œuvres.*

Visually, then, *Des monstres et prodiges* differs markedly from other parts of Paré's work, but there are several further ways in which this book stands out as a departure from the rest of the *Œuvres.* Its subject matter, for example, is not specific but miscellaneous, and the cases Paré chooses to report include examples of such diverse and intriguing human abnormalities as conjoined twins, hermaphrodites, multiple births and extraordinary hairiness among others. But Paré does not limit the subject matter of this book to strictly human deformity as he also reports numerous cases of hybrid creatures: a child born with the body of a dog, for example, a monster born with the head of a man and the body of a goat, and a dog with the head of a bird. Moreover, Paré extends his discussion of bizarre physical events still further to include meteorological phenomena, such as comets and other unusual celestial occurrences. In spite of the fact that these phenomena possess a clear thematic link to the bodily monstrosity of earlier chapters, in that, as I will discuss later in the present chapter, Paré considers several of the monsters to which he refers to be vehicles of divine communication, the inclusion of this type of exceptional physical event sees Paré writing beyond the designated territory of a surgeon, and indeed of any medical practitioner, whose specific area of expertise is, strictly, the human body. Therefore, while disease is Paré's professional or vocational focus, monstrosity represents what is in effect an extra-

curricular interest. Paré's fascination with deformed and abnormal bodily conditions led him to seek out and establish his own material collection of unusual physical specimens, a kind of cabinet of curiosities, and he makes references to several of these in *Des monstres et prodiges*. He preserved and performed an autopsy on the body of a female monster described in chapter eight, for example, and in chapter four reports being presented with the remains of two sets of conjoined twins by a colleague, the master barber-surgeon René Ciret.[62] This, Paré's physical collection of monstrous specimens, is accompanied by a written and illustrated account of them in the form of *Des monstres et prodiges*, and in this way he preserves important and interesting specimens in a bodily, textual and pictorial manner.

However, although the close first-hand observation of noteworthy cases – which, as I suggested in the previous section on plague, corresponds to the first stage of Bakhtinian Authorship in which the Author projects himself into an imagined position as close to the Hero's experience as possible – forms the basis of Paré's other surgical and medical books, this is not the case to the same extent in *Des monstres et prodiges*. The sources of the accounts cited in this book are diverse and numerous, and Paré cites occurrences, and interpretations of them, previously documented by Pliny, Aristotle and Hippocrates among others. In addition, several examples are borrowed from the Bible as well as from more recent works by figures such as Lycosthenes and Boaistuau. This method of writing by synthesising personal experience with observations gleaned from multiple other sources differs from the method Paré typically uses in the *Œuvres*, which is, as we have seen, to make a record of what he has witnessed of the disordered human body at first hand. Paré does, of course, cite many sources of information throughout the

[62] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.9.

Œuvres and recognises in the opening pages of his book the influence on his work of a long list of medical authorities, but these acknowledgements are largely passing references and the main substance of Paré's narrative reports what he personally has seen and done. Paré's departure from his usual method of writing in *Des monstres et prodiges* reflects an interest, shared by other sixteenth-century writers, in compiling inventories of noteworthy physical events, and this contemporary trend in books about natural phenomena which is evident in *Des monstres et prodiges* suggests that this book is also different from the rest of Paré's work in terms of its purpose. The explicit function of the *Œuvres*, as we read in the preface, is essentially a pedagogical one which is clear when Paré dedicates his book in part to 'pauvres escholiers' and explains that one of his intentions is to ensure 'l'esclaircissement, et perfection de la Chirurgie'.[63] His conscious objective is to teach his reader about the causes and symptoms of anatomical disorders and to provide instructions for the effective treatment of patients. Paré clearly intends the *Œuvres* to be an accessible substitute for the learning experience necessary to practise surgery effectively that is beyond the financial means of some aspiring surgical apprentices, and of the twenty-nine books of the *Œuvres*, twenty-seven deal expressly with practical questions of anatomy, disease, injury, surgical principles and medical procedures including how to embalm a cadaver. Yet again, therefore, we see that *Des monstres et prodiges* represents a departure from the other books in the collection because the type of information contained within it is radically different to the pedagogical descriptions and instructions found throughout the rest of the *Œuvres*. Therefore, while the rest of the books combine to represent a reference guide or instruction manual for the official or unofficial medical practitioner, *Des monstres et prodiges* stands out by contrast as a

[63] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, dedication to Henri III, p.2.

miscellaneous compendium of fascinating specimens which, in style, tone and content, resembles more closely other contemporary texts such as the *Histoires prodigieuses*, which were produced in order to inform and amuse the more general reader, rather than to teach and instruct him, than the other books of the *Œuvres* to which *Des monstres et prodiges* belongs.

In terms of its appearance, structure and content, as well as the collection of sources on which Paré draws in the writing of this book, *Des monstres et prodiges* is, therefore, an anomaly. It does not share many of the fundamental characteristics of the *Œuvres* in general, and as a result does not appear to contribute to Paré's pedagogical objective in the way the other books characteristically do. If, however, we consider elements of *Des monstres et prodiges* in a more abstract sense, I would argue that it is at the same time possible to identify a number of features in the text which tally with the rest of Paré's work, and with *De la peste* in particular. In what follows, I will consider specific sections of *Des monstres et prodiges* in which similarities to the rest of the *Œuvres* can be discerned and, through the close reading of a selection of Paré's monstrous case studies, will explore the ways in which this apparently anomalous book, like *De la peste*, exhibits the features of a Bakhtinian Novel.

Des monstres et prodiges opens with a detailed explanation of the multiple terms that are commonly used, in Paré's experience, to refer to a variety of unusual physical conditions. Its preface shows Paré establishing the ground he intends to cover in this book and anticipating the various components of monstrosity that he will later consider. He writes that,

> Monstres sont choses qui apparoissent outre le cours de Nature (et sont le plus souvent signes de quelque malheur à advenir) [...] Prodiges, ce sont choses qui viennent du tout contre nature [...] Les mutilés, ce sont aveugles, borgnes, bossus, boiteux ou ayans six doigts à la main ou aux pieds, ou moins de cinq, ou joints ensemble: ou les bras trop courts [...] [64]

As he embarks on his exploration of monsters and marvels, the lines of distinction between different categories of bodily abnormality are clear for Paré. The first type, monsters, exist beyond or outside the normal course of nature and perform a specific, portentous function. Indeed, the etymology of the term *monster/monstre* indicates its roots in the Latin verb *monere*, meaning to presage or notify, which underlines the qualities of communication and demonstration of the figure of the monster in this context.[65] Physical conditions belonging to the second category, 'prodiges', share the preternatural status of the monster, but seem in addition emphatically to resist or oppose the rules of nature here, and therefore to embody the transgression or violation of the natural order. Abnormalities that fall into the final category, 'mutilés', are, by contrast, defined by the fact that some accident or change has befallen them. The name Paré gives to the category to which these bodies belong attributes an element of weakness or deformity to this type of physical abnormality, and the fact that Paré makes no reference to the relationship between this type of physical condition and nature, in contrast to the description of how the previous two categories resist or deviate from natural laws, suggests that the 'mutilés' are indeed natural, but natural gone wrong. I would suggest, therefore, that all of the examples which Paré assigns to this group would be

[64] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, *Des monstres et prodiges*, preface, p.1-2.
[65] D. Wilson, *Signs and Portents*, p.6.

considered normal or natural but for the crucial fact that they lack or contain an excess of body matter, or are in some way misshapen or deformed.

More important for the purposes of the present thesis, however, is the fact that, by opening *Des monstres et prodiges* in this way, Paré in effect gives precedence to existing terminology and definitions relating to his subject matter by placing this information before the actual substance of the book, which comes in the form of the reported case studies. As a result, theories about monsters are established in the text before the evidence for this conceptual framework has been considered, and therefore each of the examples of monstrosity Paré eventually describes must be read in the light of the definitions he has presented in advance. Moreover, the preface is followed by a list of the thirteen most common causes of monstrosity, and the remainder of *Des monstres et prodiges* is divided into chapters largely corresponding to this list. The book's structure, therefore, creates the impression that Paré has categorised his collection of monstrous specimens according to an existing grouping system, rather than allowing the evidence of his observations to dictate the method of classification. Although this feature is not in itself unusual in that the causes of physical conditions are typically expounded in the first chapters of most of the other books in the collection, these other openings are much more discursive and explanatory than the clear-cut and assured list with which *Des monstres et prodiges* commences. If we compare, for example, the three-page-long account of the divine causes of the plague in chapter two of *De la peste* to the thirteen succinct bullet points which state the causes of monstrosity in *Des monstres et prodiges*, we see a marked contrast. The first five causes of monstrosity are explained in the quotation below, which, in the concision and baldness of its language, is representative of the whole of the first chapter.

Les causes des monstres sont plusieurs.

La premiere est la gloire de Dieu.

La seconde, son ire.

La troisiéme, la trop grande quantité de semence.

La quatriéme, la trop petite quantité.

La cinquiéme, l'imagination.[66]

As this quotation from the first chapter of *Des monstres et prodiges* illustrates, the form and style of the opening chapter of the book are, I would argue, unique. This uncharacteristic introduction to the book strongly suggests that Paré's approach to the question of monstrosity is fundamentally different from the method he uses with regard to other forms of bodily disorder.

What, then, are the qualities of the introductory chapters of *Des monstres et prodiges* that are consistent with the process of Bakhtinian Authorship? In the previous section on *De la peste*, I argued that Paré establishes what is in effect the lifespan of his plague-Hero by focusing first on the causes of the disease, then on the chronological development of the illness in the body of the victim, and finally on its almost inevitably fatal conclusion, and he performs a similar act of initial chronological demarcation through his list of the causes of monstrosity. Paré explains that his list contains the causes of the majority of forms in which monstrosity appears, and he enumerates these in descending order of importance.

[66] Chapter I, 'Des causes des monstres', p.3. For comparison, see chapter two of the *Livre traitant de la grosse Verolle dite maladie venerienne, et des accidens qui adviennent à icelle*, entitled 'Des causes de la verolle': 'Il y a deux causes de la verolle. La premiere vient par une qualité specifique et occulte, laquelle n'est sujette à aucune demonstration: on la peut toutesfois attribuer à l'ire de Dieu, lequel a permis que ceste maladie tombast sus le genre humain, pour refrener leur lasciveté et debordée concupiscence', p.528.

Divine factors are listed first and are, therefore, depicted as the most common or important causes. The second cause Paré identifies in chapter one connects cases of monstrosity resulting from the wrath of God with the phenomenon of illness, and in particular with the plague, which, as we have seen, is presented by Paré as a form of divine punishment. The resolved and emphatically non-discursive style of the list of causes ensures that all monstrous cases are seen to have a clearly discernable causal origin, and I would suggest that the first element of a lifespan, or temporal context, for the figure of the monster is thus identified. In what follows I will use a selection of Paré's case studies to argue that he also tracks the progression and conclusion of the monster's lifespan in the various short narratives of *Des monstres et prodiges*, and thereby creates a complete temporal context.

The first monstrous specimen mentioned in *Des monstres et prodiges* appears in chapter two of the book, and contains explicit references to the temporal context of the case study. Chapter two, entitled 'Exemple de la gloire de Dieu', contains, as its title suggests, only one example of monstrosity as evidence of the glory of God, and this is an incident recorded in the New Testament. In the episode from the gospel of John, the disciples, on seeing a man who had been blind from birth, ask Christ whether this affliction is due to the man's own sin, or to that of his parents. Christ, cited by Paré, replies that 'ne son pere, ne sa mere n'avoient peché, mais [...] c'estoit afin que les œuvres de Dieu fussent magnifiées en luy'.[67] As Christ subsequently cures the man of his blindness, it would seem more logical to classify this physical feature as an example of illness rather than monstrosity as it is used here, particularly in the light of Paré's earlier classification

[67] John 9:1-3. A. Paré, *Œuvres*, *Des monstres et prodiges*, p.3.

of blindness as *mutilé* as opposed to *monstrueux*, but the characteristic of this case of blindness that renders it monstrous is arguably its role as a channel through which God's work can be shown to be done. However, more important for the purposes of the present thesis are the two references Paré makes to the starting point of the man' s blindness, and his reporting of Christ's act of restoring the man's sight. Firstly, in the opening line of his account, Paré introduces the blind man as 'un homme qui estoit nay aveugle' and later reiterates the nature of this case of blindness when he writes that the man 'eust esté ainsi produit aveugle dés le jour de sa nativité'.[68] The state of blindness is described twice as coinciding with the man's birth and I would suggest that a temporal beginning is thus firmly and explicitly established. Secondly, the fact that Christ is reported to have restored the man's sight in effect brings an end to his physical monstrosity because the deformity, which for Paré defines the case as monstrous, is corrected. Although only the man's birth, and not his death, is mentioned in the account, both the beginning and the end of the *monstrosity* are thus established in the short narrative, and as a result, the temporal context for this monster, or Hero, is complete.

Paré invokes biblical material once again in chapter three, entitled 'Exemple de l'ire de Dieu', but in this case, the chapter contains accounts of several cases attributed to divine wrath. Citing the apocryphal book of Esdras, in which it is stated that a woman who conceives a child during menstruation will give birth to a monster, Paré explains that the transgression of the codes and norms of sexual behaviour specified in scripture can result in a punishment from God delivered through the child.

[68] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.3.

> Il est certain que le plus souvent ces creatures monstrueuses et prodigieuses procedent du jugement de Dieu, lequel permet que les peres et meres produisent telles abominations au desordre qu'ils font en la copulation comme bestes brutes, où leur appetit les guide, sans respecter le temps, ou autres lois ordonnées de Dieu et de Nature.[69]

He corroborates this firstly by referring to the passage from the book of Leviticus in which both menstruation and sexual contact during menstruation are described as unclean, and secondly by alluding to numerous, unspecified 'anciens [qui] ont observé par longues experiences, que la femme qui aura conceu durant ses fleurs, engendrera enfans lepreux, tigneux, goutteux, escrouëlleurs, et autres'.[70] As we can see from the quotation above, it is the fact that parents conceive a child at the wrong *time* – 'sans respecter le temps' – that brings about the creation of monstrous offspring. Again we see Paré identifying the elements of his Hero's temporal context, which is of particular significance in this case because the time at which the monster is conceived is the decisive factor in determining its monstrous nature.

Two further examples of monstrosity resulting from the wrath of God are included in chapter three, and both are accompanied by illustrations of the creatures in the original editions. The first example is of a foal with a human face born to a mare in Verona in 1254, and the second, a creature born (presumably to a human mother, although this is not specified) in Ravenna in 1512, with a horn on its head, wings, the foot of a bird of prey and both male and female sexual organs.

[69] Esdras 5:4. A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.4.
[70] Leviticus 15:19 and 15:31-32. Also A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.4.

L'Italie en fit preuve assez suffisante, pour les travaux qu'elle endura en la guerre qui fut entre les Florentins et les Pisans, apres avoir veu à Veronne, l'an 1254, une jument qui poulina un poulain qui avoit une teste d'homme bien formée, et le reste d'un cheval.

Autre preuve. Du temps que le Pape Jules second suscita tant de malheurs en Italie, et qu'il eut la guerre contre le Roy Louys douziéme (1512), laquelle fut suivie d'une sanglante bataille donnée prés de Ravenne: peu de temps aprés on veit naistre en la mesme ville un monstre ayant une corne à la teste, deux ailes, et un seul pied semblable à celuy d'un oiseau de proye: à la jointure du genoüil un œil: et participant de la nature de masle et de femelle.[71]

The monster born in Verona in 1254 is described here as appearing shortly before a war was declared between the Florentines and the Pisans. Similarly, the monster of Ravenna is reported to have been born a short time after a bloody battle had been fought between supporters of Pope Julius II and exponents of Louis XII. These case studies are reported to share a common role as agents of divine communication which appear during periods of political struggle, and again we see that repeated mention is made in these short passages of the times at which these remarkable physical phenomena occur.[72] In all of these cases, Paré states the year in which the monsters were born as well as providing information about the contemporary political circumstances in which they appear. In this way, he situates

[71] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, *Des monstres et prodiges*, p.4.
[72] Equally, we read in chapter four about a monster born in Germany 'La mesme année que le grand roy François fit la paix avec les Soüisses' which locates the case study at a specific historical moment. Chapter 4, p.12.

the monsters numerically as well as locating each one at a precise historical moment.

This type of temporal detail continues to appear throughout *Des monstres et prodiges*, and although it is important to note that not all of the case studies mentioned are placed in a specific temporal context, Paré does record the years, months and even exact times of birth of many of the specimens, as we see for example in the case of 'une honneste dame [qui] accoucha d'un monstre le dix-septiéme jour de janvier à huit heures du soir, ceste presente année 1578'.[73] Details about the age and lifespan of Paré's monstrous specimens frequently accompanies information about the time of their births, as we see in the following example from chapter four, 'Exemple de la trop grande quantité de semence'. Paré recounts the story of a Parisian man who, it is reported, had attached to his stomach the headless body of another fully-grown man. An illustration of this specimen accompanies the description in which Paré adds that 'cest homme estoit aagé de quarante ans ou environ'.[74] Later in the same chapter, Paré includes the case, which he attributes to Sebastian Munster, of a pair of conjoined twin girls born near Worms in September 1495. Paré explains that the girls 'vesquirent jusques à dix ans, et lors en mourut une, laquelle fut ostée et separée de l'autre: et celle qui demoura vive mourut tost aprés, quand on separa sa sœur morte d'avec elle'.[75] A complete temporal context for this specimen is created here through the sequential description of the twin girls' births, lives and deaths, and this feature also appears in a second instance of conjoined female twins reportedly born on Monday 10th July 1572: 'Le lundy dixiéme jour de juillet mil cinq cens soixante et douze, en la

[73] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, *Des monstres et prodiges*, p.7.
[74] *Ibid.*, p.6-7.
[75] *Ibid.*, p.9.

ville du Pont de Sée prés d'Angers, nasquirent deux enfans femelles, lesquels vesquirent demie heure et receurent baptesme'.[76] All three of the case studies cited here, like many found throughout *Des monstres et prodiges*, contain a chronological account of the monsters' lives and this, I suggest, constitutes the building of a complete temporal framework around the figure of the monster-Hero.

If we briefly revisit two of the case studies mentioned earlier, the monsters of Verona and Ravenna which Paré cites as manifestations of God's wrath, we realise that, in spite of the very specific temporal context that I have argued Paré establishes for their birth, no other information relating to their lifespan is provided. Although the absence of any further detail of time could be seen as a factor that inevitably detracts from the completeness of any temporal context Paré establishes, I would suggest that the inclusion of information relating only to the birth of the monsters in fact supports Paré's interpretation of their significance. Aristotle, as was explained in chapter one of the present thesis, writes in the *Physics* that 'action for an end is present in things which come to be and are by Nature', and this theory of the *telos*, or inherent function of all living things, is especially pertinent here.[77] If, as Paré suggests, the reason for the existence of the monsters in question is unambiguously connected to the troubled historical circumstances in which they are generated, then their purpose is, by definition, ephemeral. The *telos* of these monsters requires them merely to *appear*, not to grow or develop, and therefore the temporal context in which they reside begins and ends at the moment of their appearance. I would therefore argue that, in spite of the apparent lack of information about time, the portentous nature of these two monster-

[76] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, *Des monstres et prodiges*, p.10.
[77] Aristotle, *Physics*, Book II p.339.

Heroes ensures that Paré is able effectively to complete the time frame around them simply by describing the circumstances of their respective births.

Information relating to time appears frequently and in numerous different forms throughout *Des monstres et prodiges*, and this emphasis on time suggests that Paré considers temporal detail to be an important element in his recounting of his chosen case studies. Moreover, the fact that this temporal detail almost exclusively concerns the beginning, end or length – however short – of the monster's life means that the temporal context that Paré creates for his individual specimens is comprehensive. In this sense, I would argue that, through the act of narrating, Paré performs one of the functions of the Bakhtinian Author, in that he establishes the outmost parameters of the Hero's temporal existence. However, in order for the Author fully to recreate the Hero's world in text, a spatial context for his story must also be identified, and I will now go on to explore the ways in which Paré establishes the physical detail and boundaries of the Hero's environment.

The most obvious way in which spatial detail appears in *Des monstres et prodiges* is in the place names that are routinely included in the text. The majority of Paré's case studies are described as inhabiting a particular, named environment, as we have already seen in some of the specimens to which I have referred above, such as the hybrid monsters which reportedly appeared in Verona and Ravenna, and the two sets of conjoined female twins born near Worms and Angers respectively. Equally, the forty-year-old man who was reported to have the fully-formed body of another man attached to his abdomen is described by Paré as

being seen 'en ceste ville de Paris'.[78] But in addition to making frequent references like these to place names, Paré provides still more specific spatial information on a number of occasions. The 'honneste dame' who gave birth to a monster on the 17th January 1578 did so, for example, 'en Piedmont en la ville de Quiers, distante de Thurin environ de cinq lieuës'. Similarly, on the 20th July 1570, a set of conjoined twins was born 'à Paris, rue des Gravelliers'. Paré also claims to have himself observed a deformed monstrous child in 1573: 'L'an 1573, je veis à Paris, à la porte de sainct André des Arts, un enfant aagé de neuf ans, natif de Parpeville, village trois lieuës pres de Guise'.[79] Finally, Paré reports that a tax collector in St. Quentin 'm'a affirmé avoir veu un homme au logis du Cygne à Rheims, l'an soixante, lequel semblablement on avoit estimé estre fille jusques en l'aage de quatorze ans'. The sex of the man in question was finally confirmed, Paré reports, when his male genitalia appeared following an encounter with a chambermaid.[80] More interesting than this bodily transformation, from the perspective of the present thesis, is, however, the fact that Paré places this example of monstrosity in an identifiable, named building. Equally, the name is given of the exact Parisian street in which the conjoined twins were born in 1570. In the case of the monster born in 1578, the name of the town in which it appeared is accompanied by the name of its region and the approximate distance the town lies from the city of Turin, and Paré gives a similar geographical description of the village in which was born the deformed child he personally observed. I would therefore suggest that, through this assortment of geographical information, a picture of the territory in which Paré's various Heroes reside becomes apparent, is named and delineated.

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[78] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.6-7.
[79] *Ibid.*, 'Exemple du defaut de la quantité de semence', p.21.
[80] *Ibid.*, 'Histoires memorables de certaines femmes qui sont degenerées en hommes', p.19.

Further details of the monster's physical environment are included in several of Paré's case studies, including the story of a creature discovered by a chambermaid inside an egg, which is accompanied by an illustration of the monster. Paré writes,

> Ce present monstre que voyez cy depeint a esté trouvé dedans un œuf, ayant la face et le visage d'un homme [...] et fut trouvé le quinzième jour du mois de mars dernier passé, 1569, chez un advocat nommé Baucheron, à Authun en Bourgongne, par une chambriere qui cassoit des œufs pour les mettre au beurre, entre lesquels cestuy-ci estoit: lequel estant cassé par elle, veit sortir ledit monstre, ayant face humaine, les cheveux et barbe de serpens, dont elle fut merveilleusement espouvantée.[81]

Paré locates this monster in a very specific spatial, as well as temporal, environment. The discovery of the creature takes place in what is presumably the kitchen of a Burgundian lawyer's house during the preparation of a meal. Again, we see the inclusion of names – the lawyer's surname, the name of the town and the region in which this story takes place – through which Paré labels and thereby identifies the spatial boundaries of this particular Hero's world. In addition to these details, however, Paré continues to fill in the space behind the Hero's head by populating this domestic environment firstly with the chambermaid, then with the employer for whom the eggs are being prepared, and finally with the unlucky cat to whom the chambermaid later feeds the monstrous egg and which consequently 'en mourut subitement'. A further example of this method of situating a Hero spatially can be found in chapter nine, entitled 'Exemple des

[81] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.7-8.

monstres qui se font par imagination'. In this chapter, Paré describes a monster born to human parents but bearing the features of a frog:

> L'an mil cinq cent dix-sept, en la paroisse de Bois le Roy, dans la forest de Biere, sur le chemin de Fontaine-Bleau, nasquit un enfant ayant la face d'une grenoüille, qui a esté veu et visité par maistre Jean Bellanger, chirurgien en la suite de l'Artillerie du roy, és presences de messieurs de la justice de Harmois: à sçavoir honourable homme Jacques Bribon, procureur du roy dudit lieu, et Estienne Lardot, bourgeois de Melun, et Jean de Vircy, notaire royal à Melun, et autres.[82]

This narrative opens with the kind of spatial referencing that we have seen in previous examples, which includes the designation of the monster's locality and nearby geographical features. Moreover, the setting for this narrative, like that of the previous case study, is populated by numerous characters who surround and witness the existence of the central figure of the monster. As the narrative progresses, Paré mentions three further characters who contribute to the monster's story, and provides additional information which augments the picture of the physical conditions in which the monster is generated. Firstly, Paré names the parents of the monster: 'le pere s'appelle Esme Petit, et la mere Magdaleine Sarboucat'. He then explains that

> Ledit Bellanger [...] desirant sçavoir la cause de ce monstre, s'enquit au pere d'où cela pouvoit proceder: luy dist qu'il estimoit que sa femme ayant la fiévre, une de ses voisines luy conseilla pour guarir sa fiévre, qu'elle print

[82] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.24.

> une grenoüille vive en sa main, et qu'elle la tint jusques à ce que ladite grenoüille fust morte: la nuit elle s'en alla coucher avec son mary, ayant tousjours ladite grenoüille en sa main: son mary et elle s'embrasserent, et conceut, et par la vertu imaginative ce monstre avoit esté ainsi produit.[83]

The narrative, then, occurs in two separate locations and is divided into two different episodes: the place and time of the monster's conception, and the more recent time and place at which the 'messieurs de la justice de Harmois' visit to observe the monster. In both of the contexts in which the story is described taking place, however, the same features appear. Both contexts are defined spatially: the later context is identified by the geographical details of the monster's local environment, and the earlier context by the account of the domestic, marital situation in which the monster was conceived. The setting for the two episodes in the monster's story is thus outlined, and Paré adds to this rudimentary spatial delineation by filling the monster's surroundings with people and other physical elements connected to its story: the curious observers, for example, the monster's parents, the friend on whose advice the monster's mother held the frog in her hand, and even the frog itself. In this way, I would argue that both the spatial outline and the physical contents of the Hero's world are established in Paré's narrative, and this, combined with details of time, such as the year in which the monster was born and the chronology of events leading up to its conception, creates a extensive temporal and spatial context for the monster's story.

Contained within the individual narratives that combine to make up *Des monstres et prodiges* are repeated references to the temporal circumstances and spatial

[83] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.25.

environment inhabited by each monstrous specimen. In Bakhtinian terms, Paré engages in the process of Authoring these Heroes through writing their stories, and more specifically by situating the Heroes in a particular time and place. It would be wrong to suggest that this process of establishing boundaries around the Hero is a conscious or deliberate writing strategy adopted by Paré, because the spatial and temporal information that is included in many of the narratives does not appear in the account of the every case, and the ways in which details of time and space are conveyed are, as we have seen, varied and inconsistent. Instead, I would suggest that Paré displays in his writing of *Des monstres et prodiges* several of the key tendencies that are central to Bakhtin's theory of the Authoring or the 'consummation' of a Hero. In particular, he repeatedly exhibits a natural willingness to use temporal and spatial descriptions in order to recreate the full and accurate stories, or histories, of his chosen case studies. However, Bakhtin explains that, for the Hero to be presented as a complete, 'consummated' figure, the Author must also experience the Hero's world from the perspective of the Hero, and in the final part of the present chapter I will explore the ways in which Paré may be seen to perform this second function too.

In order to fulfil this role, and to experience the world from the Hero's perspective, the Author is required to have, or to be able to imagine some form of contact, connection or intimate understanding of the Hero. Indeed, the notion of proximity to the Hero and familiarity with the minutiae of the Hero's life and world is a strong theme that runs through *Des monstres et prodiges*. On four occasions, Paré claims to have had direct physical contact with monstrous specimens. He recalls in chapter four the birth in 1546 of 'un enfant ayant deux testes, deux bras, et quatre jambes, lequel j'ouvris, et n'y trouvay qu'un cœur', and

reports a few lines later that the bodies of two conjoined twins born in 1569 'me furent donnés secs et anatomisés par maistre René Ciret, maistre barbier et chirurgien, duquel le renom est assez celebre par tout le pays de Touraine, sans que je luy donne autre loüange'.[84] The fact that Paré reports performing a form of autopsy on the first monster and observing the dissected body of the second confirms the Author's extensive physical experience of these two Heroes. Moreover, the margin note reinforces the proximity of Author and Hero because, at the time of writing the book, Paré and the two monstrous specimens inhabit the same place. In other words, the temporal and spatial context of the Heroes which is established in the narrative also contains the Author, and indeed the statement that the monsters are in Paré's possession means, somewhat ironically perhaps, that the Hero is in fact transported into the Author's space: Paré's dissection table and his cabinet of curiosities. But if we step away from the question of whose space is inhabited by whom, we realise that Paré and these specimens of monstrosity occupy the same space and the time, and this is a feature we also find in two further narratives, one of which has already been mentioned. This is the case of the monstrous child born in 1573 which Paré introduces by saying 'je veis à Paris [...] un enfant aagé de neuf ans', and this confirms that the monster is a phenomenon that Paré has witnessed in person. Similarly, in chapter seven, Paré reports seeing a character who is also mentioned in Montaigne's *Essais* and *Journal d'un voyage*; a male shepherd who had, until the age of fifteen, been female.[85]

> Or ayant atteint l'aage susdit, comme il estoit aux champs, et poursuivoit assez vivement ses pourceaux qui alloient dedans un blé, trouvant un fossé

[84] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.9.
[85] Montaigne's references to this case will be discussed in chapter five of the present thesis.

le voulut affranchir: et l'ayant sauté, à l'instant se viennent à luy developper les genitoires et la verge virile.[86]

Paré introduces this curious case by writing that 'aussi estant à la suite du roy, à Vitry le François en Champagne, j'y vis un certain personnage nommé Germain Garnier', and in doing so performs two functions of the Bakhtinian Author. Firstly, he establishes the spatial and temporal context of the moment at which he encounters the Hero of this narrative by naming the place in which it occurs and outlining the historical circumstances during which he visited this place. Wallace Hamby's account of Paré's tour of France as part of Charles IX's retinue ('à la suite du roy') allows us to date this sighting of Germain Garnier to March 1564, and Hamby also points out that, at the time of Paré's writing about the case in 1579, Germain was still alive.[87] Hamby draws this information from the point in *Des monstres et prodiges* at which Paré concludes this narrative with the statement that 'luy et sa mere sont encore vivans', and this additional detail relating to the lifespan of the case study augments the temporal context of the Hero that Paré had already begun to establish earlier in the narrative.

The fact that he refers explicitly to the first-hand, material nature of his knowledge of the group of monsters I mention above highlights the importance that this experience holds for Paré. I would argue that in telling the reader that these are the case studies he has observed in person, Paré is firstly exhibiting his enjoyment of the fact that he possesses interesting specimens and has witnessed them in the flesh, and is secondly adding an element of credibility to these

[86] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.19-20.
[87] W. Hamby, *Ambroise Paré: Surgeon of the Renaissance* (1967), p.113-15.

narratives in particular. I have argued above that Paré does not intend for *Des monstres et prodiges* to perform the same pedagogical function as the majority of his other books, and that his interest in monstrosity is less academic than extra-curricular. The application of rigorous standards of close observation, comprehensive description and full explanation that we see in his writing about illness and surgery is not, therefore, in evidence in *Des monstres et prodiges*, and determining the veracity of the stories he reports does not appear to concern him to any great extent, although there is some evidence to suggest that, while the sceptical examination of reports of monstrous births is not a conscious writing strategy employed by Paré, he nevertheless goes some way to establishing the sources and reliability of his information. In chapter nine, for example, he recalls the case, found in Heliodorus' *History of Ethiopia*, of Queen Persina of Ethiopia who gave birth to a white-skinned child in spite of the fact that both she and the baby's father were dark-skinned.[88] Paré's account of this case begins with the phrase 'qu'il soit vray', which is a rare moment in *Des monstres et prodiges* at which we see him expressing an awareness of the possible unreliability of a report of monstrosity. It must be acknowledged here that a considerably greater degree of scepticism regarding what appears to be monstrous can be found, however, in several later chapters of the book in which Paré reports a number of cases of people who have simulated the features of monstrosity for reasons of financial gain, and have subsequently had their physical deformity exposed as counterfeit.[89] However, the stories of these bogus monsters are contained within chapters

[88] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.23-24.

[89] The chapters to which I refer are Chapter XXI, 'Exemple de l'artifice des meschans gueux de l'ostiere'; Chapter XXII, 'L'imposture d'une belistrisse feignant avoir un chancre à la mamelle'; Chapter XXIII, 'L'imposture d'un certain maraut qui contrefaisoit le ladre'; Chapter XXIV, 'D'une cagnadiere feignant estre malade, du mal sainct Fiacre, et luy sortoit du cul un long et gros boyau, fait par artifice'; and Chapter XXV, 'D'une grosse garce de Normandie, qui feignoit avoir un serpent dans le ventre'.

twenty-one to twenty-five, and Paré's decision to confine these cases to chapters which explicitly concern accounts of false monstrosity implies that he considers the cases of monstrosity that appear in his other chapters to be true, or, at the very least, does not consciously suspect them of being false. In many cases, Paré presents evidence of the reliability of his sources and the accuracy of the information they contain, and the following are some examples of this.

In chapter nine, Paré cites the case of a remarkably hirsute girl, 'une fille veluë comme un ours', about whom he has read in a book by Damascene. This writer is described by Paré as an 'auteur grave', an adjective which suggests the serious-minded and reliable nature of this source.[90] Paré attributes similarly trustworthy credentials to a number of other figures on whose experiences he draws in the writing of *Des monstres et prodiges*. In chapter eight, for example, Paré describes the body of a headless monster 'lequel m'a esté donné par monsieur Hautin, docteur regent en la faculté de medecine à Paris'.[91] Not only does Paré verify this case study by connecting it to the impressive academic status of Hautin, but he writes also that Hautin 'm'a affirmé l'avoir veu', which acts, in effect, as an additional guarantee of the authenticity of the specimen. Similarly, in a passage concerning the birth defects that can result from the constriction of the mother's womb, Paré writes that 'ceci se peut confirmer par Matthias Cornax, medecin de Maximilian, roy des Romains, lequel recite que luy-mesme assista à la dissection du ventre d'une femme, laquelle avoit porté en sa matrice son enfant, l'espace de quatre ans'.[92] Once again, Paré suggests the genuineness of the case firstly by naming his distinguished source, and secondly by confirming the presence of that

[90] A. Paré, *Œuvres*, p.24.
[91] *Ibid.*, p.21.
[92] *Ibid.*, p.26.

distinguished source at the discovery of the monstrous body. The sources of many other cases, such as Lycosthenes, Pliny and Hippocrates, are such familiar names that they do not appear to require any further validation from Paré, and the cases that are imported from scripture also remain unquestioned.[93]

The broad selection of sources from which case studies are imported effects the convergence of a group of very disparate texts in *Des monstres et prodiges*, and Paré's first-hand, contemporary observations are, as we have seen, juxtaposed with accounts from antiquity, recent history and folklore. Within both the book as a whole and its individual chapters, Paré unites ideas from surgery and anatomy, ancient philosophy and scripture, and I would suggest that the significance of this coexistence does not lie in the fact that Paré uses diverse and numerous sources, but rather in the fact that he makes no explicit distinction between them in terms of their veracity, accuracy or reliability. The lines of distinction between the various textual categories become blurred as the data contained in each specific genre is presented in the same format as the information imported from a different type of source, as well as from Paré's own experience. The growing emphasis on the value of first-hand observation in the sixteenth century is evident in *Des monstres et prodiges* as Paré's includes several of his own experiences, but the simultaneous appearance of first-hand accounts from other writers, which are presented in the same terms of reference as those Paré has witnessed in the flesh, and are often accompanied by Paré's endorsements of the source's credentials or distinction, strongly suggests that he considers the personal observations contained in other sources to be equally valid and reliable, regardless of their distance from his own experience in

[93] Examples of monstrosity from the works of Lycosthenes can be found in chapter 4 (p.6); Hippocrates in chapter 9 (p.24); Pliny in chapter 7 (p.20).

terms of time, genre or objective in writing. I would therefore suggest that Paré's acknowledgement of the first-hand nature of other writers' knowledge, and more generally, the fact that he refers so frequently to his own and others' proximity to and familiarity with monstrous specimens, proves that the experience of monstrosity is of considerable importance to Paré in the writing of his book.

Earlier in the present chapter, I argued that the two stages of Bakhtinian Authoring can be identified in *De la peste* and that, in experiencing and writing about the plague, Paré exhibits the characteristics of an Author engaged in the process of consummating the Hero he observes. Based on the case studies that I have considered from *Des monstres et prodiges*, I would contend that Paré's approach to monstrosity and the methods he uses to construct his accounts of the information he has gathered conform to the patterns I identified earlier in *De la peste.* For Paré, the figure of the monster is intriguing and fundamentally problematic, and in this sense its bodily strangeness presents him with questions relating to the monster's origins and purpose. His written response to this consists, as I have argued above, of numerous attempts to explain, define and classify specimens he has seen or about which he has read, and the method he implements to respond to these problematic phenomena repeatedly involves, crucially, identifying the spatial and temporal context of the individual specimen and filling in the detail of the world it inhabits. Furthermore, in emphasising the element of first-hand experience and observation that is a constituent of many of his case studies, Paré in addition attributes meaning and importance to the physical contact that takes place between the observer and the observed. I therefore contend that these features of Paré's monster-narratives, like elements of his book on the plague, correspond closely to the stages of Authoring that Bakhtin identifies.

Firstly, information relating to the spatial and temporal context of the Hero is repeatedly provided and Paré thereby establishes the boundaries and contents of the Hero's world. Secondly, when Paré describes dissecting the body of a monster or possessing a monstrous specimen, he is, in effect, describing his material experience of the Hero as its Author. At the moment of physical contact with a monstrous specimen, Paré inhabits the same spatial and temporal context as his Hero, and in effect experiences the Hero's world as a constituent of its surroundings. Even in the cases with which Paré has no direct contact with the specimen, the emphasis he regularly lays on the experience of other, frequently learned and distinguished observers means that this stage of Authoring is still present in parts of the narrative. While it would be incorrect to claim that Paré fully or consciously performs the functions of the Bakhtinian Author in *Des monstres et prodiges*, I nevertheless contend that the features of his book that have been considered above indicate that there are strong tendencies in Paré's approach to writing about monsters, which we have also seen in *De la peste*, that correspond closely to the processes of Authoring and the consummation of the Hero.

Having analysed Paré's methods of writing about the subjects of plague and monstrosity in light of Bakhtin's description of the relationship between Author and Hero, what have we discovered about Paré's approach to these forms of bodily disorder? Firstly, the process of analysing Paré's *Œuvres* has revealed that, while it has previously been considered significant largely because it is the written evidence of its writer's substantial impact on the field of surgery, there is considerably more to this text than the historical and factual information it contains. But secondly, by casting Paré in the role of an Author of a Novel of experience, and the disordered bodies with which he comes into contact as

Heroes, it becomes possible to gain new insight into the relationship between Paré, his book and its Hero. What the *Œuvres* represent is the process through which Paré makes sense of the diseased and abnormal human bodies he experiences as part of his daily life. Through his book, Paré intends to teach his reader about bodily disorder and in order to do so, is driven to clarify, explain and define various physical phenomena and therefore to present bodily disorder in a complete and comprehensive manner. In doing so, therefore, Paré exhibits both the awareness of the problem that is embodied by his disordered Hero, and the impulse to use a range of narrative strategies to overcome its bodily disruption. In this way, I contend that Paré performs the functions of a Bakhtinian Author and that the book he creates contains elements of the Novel of experience that Bakhtin describes.

CHAPTER THREE

Jean de Léry: The *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil* (1578) and the *Histoire mémorable du siège et de la famine de Sancerre* (1573)

Jean de Léry was born in 1534 in the town of La Margelle in Burgundy. A shoemaker by trade, Léry converted to Calvinism at the age of eighteen and moved to Geneva to study theology and become a missionary of the Reformed Gospel. In September 1556, the mission to which he belonged embarked on a voyage to the New World, and Léry was one of a very small number of volunteers willing to travel to Brazil as part of the first Protestant mission to the New World, led by Villegagnon. He returned to Europe in 1558 to continue with his religious studies in Geneva, and married the following year. Léry was sent to Belleville-sur-Saône as a minister in 1562, the same year in which the bloody massacre at Vassy marked the beginning of the first of the Wars of Religion. When the news of the desecration of churches and religious statues reached him at Belleville-sur-Saône, Léry was forceful in his criticism of such acts of destruction. One year later, in 1563, he began to write his *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*, but his account of his time in the New World remained unfinished for many years. It was in 1572, while he was serving a pastor in La Charité-sur-Loire, that Léry first came into contact with the fierce violence that spread through France in the aftermath of the

St. Bartholomew's day massacre. He and a colleague named Pierre Melet sought refuge in the town of Sancerre, and during the siege of the town which lasted from 9th January until 14th August, Léry is reported to have played an important role as negotiator between the Huguenots and the army of Charles IX. The following year, Léry published his account of the siege in his *Histoire mémorable du siège et de la famine de Sancerre.* He returned to the manuscript of the *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil* and this book was finally completed and published in 1578, two years after Léry had reportedly rediscovered the notes he had made on what he had experienced in Brazil. Léry supervised the publication of later editions of this work in 1580, 1585, 1594, 1599-1600 and 1611, and died in Berne in 1613, having contracted the plague.

Other than the fact that they are written by the same author, what is it that connects these two books, and what is their significance to the present thesis? The answer is that in both books Léry addresses the troubling issue of cannibalism, the act through which one human body is consumed and then digested by another, and both bodies undergo substantial change as a result. The body of the consumed is broken up and dispersed, the body of the consumer is penetrated by the flesh it consumes, and I would suggest therefore that the result of this act is the permanent and drastic physical alteration of both bodies. Léry reports three episodes of cannibalism in total, and his written accounts of these will be examined in the present chapter. The first episode is one of endocannibalism, whereby the body of an enemy captive is eaten by members of the Toupinamba tribe with whom Léry lived during his time in Brazil. The second, much shorter episode is one in which a group of translators originating from Normandy and living in Brazil participate in acts of tribal cannibalism alongside the native inhabitants. Both of

these acts of cannibalism are reported in the first of Léry's books that will be examined in this chapter, the *Histoire d'un voyage*. The third episode of cannibalism is one committed in the besieged town of Sancerre in 1573, in which Léry witnesses the consumption of the body of a young girl by her parents, and is reported in the *Histoire mémorable*. What each of the episodes of cannibalism represents is a moment of bodily disorder witnessed at close quarters by Léry.

For the purposes of this study, the main analysis will be done using the 1573 edition of the *Histoire mémorable* and the 1578 and 1580 editions of the *Histoire d'un voyage* in particular. It is worth mentioning that differences between these first editions of the *Histoire d'un voyage* and later ones are minimal, especially in the reporting of cannibalism with which the present thesis is primarily concerned. The editions in question have been selected for two main reasons. Firstly, the 1578 publication roughly coincides with the appearance of the first volume of Ambroise Paré's *Œuvres*, a coincidence that permits the present thesis to consider two truly contemporary texts. More important, however, is the fact that the first edition of the *Histoire d'un voyage* is also the version which Montaigne read and used as his principal source of information for the famous essay of 1580, 'Des cannibales'.[1] It is of course essential when dealing with Montaigne to bear in mind the fact that 'Des cannibales' underwent considerable revisions in later editions of the essays, but the factual information on which Montaigne bases his original argument, and indeed his later additions, is found in the 1580 edition of the essays, and must therefore have come from Léry's first edition of the *Histoire d'un voyage*.

[1] Montaigne's use of the *Histoire d'un voyage* in his account of cannibalism will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five of the present thesis.

Secondly, the 1578 and 1580 editions of the *Histoire d'un voyage* were written, edited and published at a particularly significant time for a number of reasons. Having experienced the siege and famine at Sancerre in 1573, Léry published his account of the siege in 1574. In 1575, the Catholic André Thévet's *La Cosmographie universelle* appeared, containing numerous factual errors that were obvious to Léry, who in turn corrected them in his 1578 *Histoire d'un voyage*. Léry returned to Lyons in 1576 and found the original manuscript account of his time in Brazil. 1577 saw the sixth War of Religion, and the siege of La Charité, Léry's former parish. In 1579, Urbain Chauveton translated Benzoni's *Histoire nouvelle du Nouveau Monde*, adding to it his own account of the massacre of a group of Frenchmen in Florida. This text was revised and published in a second edition in 1580 alongside a Latin translation of Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage*. The atmosphere and writing of the period during which Léry both witnessed and wrote about the three acts of cannibalism is characterised, therefore, by moments and accounts of violence, and bodily violence in particular, and I would suggest that the events surrounding him at the time of writing and publishing the first two editions of the *Histoire d'un voyage* and the *Histoire mémorable* unquestionably motivated and influenced him in the production of these books. The 1578 and 1580 editions of the *Histoire d'un voyage* in particular contain the first formal presentation of Léry's recently rediscovered notes from Brazil, but more importantly, they contain Léry's experiences of Brazil seen in the light of his later experience of religious conflict, famine and bodily fragmentation in his own domestic environment. Indeed, the sequence of events regarding Léry's encounters with cannibalism supports the argument that his experience of each episode is influenced by the experience of other events. He visits Brazil and witnesses two forms of cannibalism there, then returns to Europe, witnessing cannibalism in Sancerre. He subsequently writes

about the cannibalism in Sancerre, and at this point finally writes about the first acts of cannibalism he experienced in Brazil. In this way, the whole experience of Sancerre – by which I mean both the moment at which Léry witnesses the cannibalism and his act of writing about it – happens after he has experienced the tribal cannibalism of the Toupinamba and that performed in Brazil by the Normandy interpreters, which inevitably colours Léry's reaction to what he sees later in the besieged town. Equally, while Léry witnesses the anthropophagous behaviour in Brazil prior to his experience of cannibalism in France, he only completes his written account of it some years later and crucially after he has both witnessed and recorded the events that occurred in Sancerre. I would argue, therefore, that all three acts of cannibalism are inextricably bound up with one another in Léry's mind, especially if we consider this situation in the terms provided by Bakhtin's theory. I would suggest that the two stages of Authoring that Léry performs in each episode of cannibalism – namely the experience and secondly the process of making sense of the experience through writing about it – are punctuated and interrupted by the stages of the other episodes. In this way, Léry inevitably draws comparisons between his different experiences of cannibalism, and the present thesis will also compare and contrast the ways in which Léry writes about them in his two books.

In the present chapter, the main analysis of Léry's account, or Authoring, of cannibalism will focus on the parts of each book in which the act of cannibalism itself is reported because these are the decisive moments at which the human body becomes drastically and permanently disordered. However, the point at which each episode of cannibalism appears in the text is also, I will argue, of considerable importance, and for this reason, I will begin the analysis of each anthropophagous

incident by explaining the episode's context within the book as a whole. The first of Léry's books to be considered will be the *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil* in which two episodes of cannibalism are included, and an analysis of the *Histoire mémorable du siège et de la famine de Sancerre* will follow.

The *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*

> 'Comment se fait-il que personne, à ce jour, n'ait songé à tourner
> le grand film que mérite l'aventure de Villegagnon
> telle que Léry l'a racontée?'[2]

The impact of Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage* on modern anthropology and ethnology has been considerable and a number of prominent voices in this field, most notably Claude Lévi-Strauss in his *Tristes Tropiques*, have drawn heavily in their work upon Léry's account of tribal life in the sixteenth-century New World.[3] The particular appeal of the *Histoire d'un voyage*, for Lévi-Strauss at least, appears to be Léry's ability mentally to transport his reader to the world of the cannibal, and, through the eyes of one of the first non-native people to set foot in this foreign space, to permit the reader to see that tribal environment as he did, in other words, as a genuinely new world. Indeed, Lévi-Strauss explains that the experience of reading the *Histoire d'un voyage* 'm'aide à échapper de mon siècle, à reprendre contact avec ce que j'appellerai une «sur-réalité» [...] une réalité plus réelle encore que celle dont j'ai été le témoin'.[4] Reading Léry's story allows Lévi-Strauss to inhabit and experience, albeit temporarily and only in his imagination, a completely different space and time, and I will argue that the reader's intimacy with the events of the book to which Lévi-Strauss alludes is generated through the comprehensive

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[2] C. Lévi-Strauss, in an interview which appears in Frank Lestringant's edition of the *Histoire d'un voyage* I am using here. p.14.
[3] C. Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (London: Jonathon Cape, 1973).
[4] Interview, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.13.

detail and frank realism of Léry's narrative. Indeed, the fullness of Léry's narrative which grants the reader such intimate access to the New World, as well as the book's structure, are the features of the text on which Frank Lestringant concentrates closely in his book *Jean de Léry ou l'invention du sauvage* to which I will return later in the present chapter after first considering the content of Léry's book, and in particular the order and manner in which information is presented.[5]

The *Histoire d'un voyage* opens with a chapter containing Léry's chronological account of the formation of the mission to Brazil and the specific motivation behind the journey on which he and his colleagues embark. The mission, Léry reports, was spearheaded in 1555 by 'un nommé Villegagnon Chevalier de Malte' whose decision to form this first Protestant mission to the New World was prompted by two factors. Firstly, Léry writes, Villegagnon had 'dès long temps [...] une extreme envie de se retirer en quelque pays lointain, où il peust librement et purement server à Dieu selon la reformation de l'Evangile'. Secondly, Villegagnon 'desiroit d'y preparer lieu à tous ceux qui s'y voudroyent retirer pour eviter les persecutions'.[6] Léry's story, therefore, begins with Villegagnon's desire to leave Europe, to move elsewhere and to create a sanctuary for followers of the reformed gospel in a distant location, and two features here are of particular relevance to the present thesis. Firstly, a temporal beginning to the narrative is established and enumerated: Villegagnon's long-held desire comes finally to fruition in 1555 and Léry reports that 'au mois de Mai audit an 1555. il s'embarqua sur mer'.[7] Later in the chapter, Léry provides similarly specific

[5] F. Lestringant, *Jean de Léry ou l'invention du sauvage: essai sur l'«Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil»* (Paris: Champion, 1999).
[6] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*, ed. F. Lestringant (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1994), p.106.
[7] *Ibid.*, p.106-07.

temporal information when he writes that, in order to join Villegagnon's expedition, he and his colleagues 'partismes de la cité de Geneve le dixiesme de Septembre, en l'année 1556'.[8] Equally, the location of the narrative is established in this early description in two ways. Firstly, we are told that it is Villegagnon's intention to move elsewhere, far away from Europe, the site of religious conflict and persecution, and secondly, that the location to which the story will move is 'appelée terre du Brésil'.[9] A binary opposition pertaining to space is thus established, I suggest, between the European territory, the site of religious oppression, and Brazil, which offers Villegagnon the possibility of spiritual freedom. In this way, Léry introduces information relating to both the spatial and the temporal context of the story at the outset, and enables the reader to track the geographical and chronological progress of the narrative from its origins.

We turn next to chapter two which contains Léry's report on the journey between Geneva and the New World, and in which he provides details of the length of each stage of the voyage and the numerous and often troubling experiences the mission's members had during each leg. He writes, for instance, that after passing the coast of England, '[nous] fusmes prins d'un flot de mer qui continua douze jours: durant lesquels [...] nous fusmes tous fort malades de la maladie accoustumée à ceux qui vont sur mer'.[10] A few pages later, he writes that

> la mer s'estant derechef enflée, fut l'espace de six ou sept jours si rude, que non seulement je vis pas plusieurs fois, les vagues sauter et s'eslever par-dessus le Tillac de nostre navire, mais aussi [...] le vaisseau estoit tellement

[8] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.112.
[9] *Ibid.* p.107.
[10] *Ibid.* p.114-15.

esbranlé qu'il n'y avoit matelot, tant habile fust-il, qui se peust tenir debout.[11]

The extreme weather conditions in the course of the journey are described from the perspective of the people experiencing their dramatic effects, and, crucially, the descriptions are accompanied by details of the duration of each episode. This feature continues through chapters three to seven, in which are described the geography, flora and fauna of the Brazilian landscape through which Léry's party travels on its way to its final destination.[12] The purpose of this descriptiveness is obviously to produce a faithful and accurate account of Léry's journey, but more important, I suggest, is the effect on the reader that is produced by the fact that this configuration of exotic images appears. The central focus of Léry's book is the New World, and in particular the savages who inhabit it, but in order for the reader to gain access to this unknown world, he is obliged, as a result of the narrative structure, to accompany Léry on his journey to Brazil and to enter this foreign territory through the same route. Led by Léry's descriptions, the reader, I would argue, experiences the voyage, and although this happens only in the reader's imagination, Léry ensures throughout the story of the journey that his reader is nevertheless aware of the details of the real space and time in which events occurred. In this way, a connection is created between Léry and his reader: we do not meet Léry at his final destination in the narrative, but instead make the

[11] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.117-18.

[12] The summaries of each chapter, which form part of the prefatory material to the book, reveal that Léry records sights, sounds and feelings at each stage of the journey, as the following extracts demonstrate: Chapter III 'Des Bonites, Albacores, Dorades [...] et autres de plusieurs sortes que nous vismes et prismes sous la zone Torride'; Chapter IV 'De l'Equateur [...] ensemble des tempests, inconstances de vents, pluye infecte, chaleurs, soifs et autres incommoditez que nous eusmes et endurasmes'; Chapter V 'Descouvrement et premiere veue que nous eusmes, tant de l'Inde Occidentale ou terre du Bresil, que des sauvages habitans en icelle'; Chapter VI 'De nostre descente au fort de Colligny, en la terre du Bresil: du receuil que nous y fit Villegagnon'; Chapter VII 'Description de la riviere de *Ganabara*, autrement dite Genevre en l'Amerique' (*Ibid.* p.101-02).

mental journey to Brazil by way of Léry's description of his own journey. Our experience of the Brazil narrative is analogous with Léry's experience in that the route by which we gain access to the world of the cannibal is the route he also took.

The progress and chronology of the mission's journey to its destination at Villegagnon can be tracked in detail through chapters five and six in particular. However, the text's other chapters differ from these early ones in that they are much more emphatically thematic in content, and the order in which Léry's series of themes is presented to the reader is highlighted by Frank Lestringant in *Jean de Léry ou l'invention du sauvage.*[13] Lestringant draws attention to the fact that Léry's first chapter containing the theme of man in the New World is chapter eight:

> La bonne méthode descriptive, que suit Léry, «deduisant les choses par ordre», et faisant implicitement la leçon à son devancier, est donc de commencer par un portrait de l'homme, et tel est l'objet du chapitre VIII, «Du naturel, force, stature, nudité, disposition et ornemens du corps, tant des hommes que des femmes sauvages Bresilliens». Passé ce préambule [...] tout l'inventaire du monde est orienté suivant cette perspective téléologique. Les créatures, bêtes et plantes, sont décrites en fonction de leur utilité pour l'homme, ou au contraire de leur nocivité: les animaux comestibles sont faits pour être mangés, de même que les productions du sol, les légumes et les fruits. Cette finalité explique pourquoi l'inventaire

[13] F. Lestringant, *Jean de Léry ou l'invention du sauvage* (Paris: Champion, 1999) p.75.

> s'ouvre par le manioc et le caouin, qui sont le pain et le vin des sauvages, c'est-à-dire la base de leur alimentation solide et liquide.[14]

In this rather lengthy extract from Lestringant's essay, he argues that Léry's writing follows two central lines: firstly, the Aristotelian, teleological understanding of the natural world in which all elements of nature are created with an innate purpose, and secondly, the Christian belief in the hierarchy of nature found in the Genesis story of creation. In drawing attention to these two ways of thinking about the natural world, Lestringant raises the question of the significance of the ordering of material within Léry's text. The fact that vegetation and animal life are presented almost exclusively as comestibles, in other words as being defined by their innate *telos*, reinforces the anthropocentric dimension of the text which is identified by Lestringant when he writes that 'les créatures, bêtes et plantes, sont décrites en fonction de leur utilité pour l'homme'. This presentation of material relating to plants and animals and their usefulness to man underscores the idea of a hierarchy within the natural world, which appears in Léry's text as a food chain with man at the top. This method of presenting the natural world is not unusual in sixteenth-century books, and elements of, for example, Conrad Gesner's method can be seen in this approach, as Gesner's descriptions of animal species in his *Historia animalium* of 1551 are divided into categories, two of which refer to the domestic and nutritional uses of each creature. Although the example of Gesner's *Historia animalium* shows that it is far from unusual for Léry to have referred frequently to the plants and animals of Brazil as sources of food, it is nevertheless significant that in his reporting of the New World Léry presents the exotic environment

[14] *Ibid.*, p.74-75. The attention to the Brazilian equivalents of bread and wine will be explored in greater detail later in the present chapter.

principally as a resource for human consumption and nourishment. The question of what people eat in this foreign environment is thereby raised at this early stage, and in this way Léry anticipates the cannibalism that becomes the focus of the narrative later in the book. But in addition to the general theme of food and feeding, Lestringant's reference to the 'utilité' to man of the natural world raises a second and fundamental question about the function of food and indeed the *necessity* of eating which will be explored later in the present chapter in my analysis of the cannibalism witnessed by Léry in both Brazil and Sancerre.

In spite of this depiction of the relationship between man and nature as that of a consumer and what he consumes, the emphasis in Léry's text on the usefulness to man of plants and animals does not proceed from a merely functional perspective on the natural world. The theme of an order or hierarchy within nature echoes the biblical account of creation in which vegetation is defined by its use as food for man and animals, and man is created to rule over the natural world.[15] Indeed in the early modern era the idea of the hierarchy of nature, symbolised frequently by the image of the *scala naturae*, was a familiar one. Léry, as a former student of theology, was undoubtedly aware of this and other figures representing the theme of the structure within nature which appears repeatedly in texts like St. Augustine's *City of God* and Montaigne's 1569 French translation of Raymond Sebond's *Theologia naturalis*, which is thought to have been written in

[15] 'Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground' [...] God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all he beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground – everything that has the breath of life in it – I give every green plant for food' (Genesis I: 26-30).

Toulouse in the late 1420s or early 1430s.[16] In the *City of God*, Augustine employs the metaphor of God's weaving of nature to illustrate this idea of the necessary ordering of all matter. Each individual strand must be in its proper place for the fabric to hold firm, he explains, and it is only in contemplating the larger structure that the importance and utility of each component in its proper place becomes obvious.[17] Similarly, Léry's *Histoire d'un voyage* contains ideas that reflect elements of Sebond's *Theologia naturalis*, as he too perpetuates the understanding of the natural world as a vertical structure with man at the top. Like Augustine's metaphor of weaving, Sebond's descriptions stress the importance of considering each organism, not as an individual case, but as a component with a proper place within the mechanism of nature, as only in this light can the value and purpose of each creature be properly recognised. In chapter 128, for example, Sebond employs the commonplace metaphor of the staircase to explain how nature is designed to function. Organisms are described as individual steps, leading the observer of nature mentally to ascend the staircase at the top of which can be found an understanding of God: 'Elles [les créatures] nous ont monté et conduit comme par une eschelle tres bien ordonnee jusques à un souverain pere [...] Ainsi nous sommes montez des creatures au createur.'[18] Sebond also describes his understanding of the natural world in terms of letters, words and books. He compares God's first creation, the natural world, with his second creation, the Bible, thereby endowing nature with the same qualities of order, truth and spiritual

[16] M. de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, trans. M.A. Screech (London: Penguin, 1991) p.xxi (Introduction).
[17] St. Augustine, *City of God*, translated by Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin, 1984)'For God is the creator of all, and he himself knows where and when any creature should be created or should have been created. He has the wisdom to weave the beauty of the whole design out of the constituent parts, in their likeness and diversity. The observer who cannot view the whole is offended by what seems the deformity of a part, since he does not know how it fits in, or how it is related to the rest', p.662.
[18] R. Sebond, *La Théologie Naturelle de Raymond Sebon*, trans. Michel de Montaigne (Paris: Louis Conard, 1932) p.219.

and pedagogical utility associated with scripture. Living creatures are described as letters in the alphabet of God's Book of Nature, which are arranged in various combinations to fulfil a range of purposes.[19] Literary metaphors such as these – the ladder, the book and the fabric – perpetuate the idea that nature is prearranged, ordered and structured, and Léry's allusion to this notion is evident in his depiction of the natural environment of Brazil as a resource designed to serve the alimentary needs of its human inhabitants who reside in the narrative at the top of the food chain.

The content of Léry's description, therefore, reflects that of the account of creation found in the book of Genesis, but there is a further allusion to the biblical story of creation to be found in Léry's book. The account of creation in Genesis 1: 20-25 states that the living creatures of the earth were created in the following order: aquatic animals and birds on the fifth day, and livestock and land animals on the sixth day, with man also being created on the sixth day after the other land animals. As has already been discussed, Léry's account of the living creatures encountered on his voyage to Brazil does not follow this scripturally-dictated ordering of events. In chapter three, for example, he describes the 'Bonites, Albacores, Dorades, Marsouins, poissons volans, & autres de plusieurs sortes que nous vismes & prismes sous la zone Torride'; vegetation is described in chapters

[19] In effect, Sebond highlights the issue of the authority of the Church by pointing out that the lessons God has placed in nature are more accessible than those contained in scripture, and that man has no need of any other authority or point of reference to benefit from the knowledge contained within the natural world: 'Puis que l'homme, tout raisonnable et capable de discipline qu'il estoit, ne se trouvoit toutefois à sa naissance garni actuellement de nulle science, et que nulle science ne se peult acquerir sans livre, où elle soit escrite, il estoit plus que raisonnable (afin que ceste capacité d'estre sçavant ne nous fust pour neant donnee) que la divine intelligence nous fournist dequoy pouvoir, sans Maistre d'escole, naturellement, et de nous mesmes nous instruire de la doctrine qui nous est seule necessaire.' Sebond's 'Préface de l'autheur' contains the author's explicit commitment to the prominent position of scripture and the Catholic faith, yet his suggestion that nature constitutes an alternative and effective method of understanding God led to the preface being placed on the papal Index in 1595, because of its emphasis on the availability of divine truth to all men willing to observe nature attentively.

nine and thirteen; the native people of Brazil in chapter eight; mammals, reptiles and 'autres bestes monstrueuses' appear in chapter ten; birds and insects in chapter eleven; fish native to Brazil in chapter twelve. The reason for some aquatic animals appearing in chapter three and others in chapter twelve is arguably Léry's decision to establish a chronological emphasis at the beginning of his text, and a thematic one in later chapters. In this way, the descriptions of species encountered during the journey to Brazil are incorporated into the narrative of the early chapters, in contrast to the dedication of later chapters to thematic descriptions of the animal species found in Brazil itself. With reference to these later chapters (eight to thirteen), it is not, I suggest, the order in which the information appears that is most significant, but rather the way in which Léry imposes categories and chapter divisions on the various animal species. As Lestringant notes, Léry groups all land animals, aquatic animals and flying animals together, so that mammals and reptiles are found in the same chapter, as are birds and flying insects.[20] In addition, Léry divides the trees, shrubs and fruits described in chapter thirteen from the plants used to produce the equivalents of bread and wine described in chapter nine; the separate consideration conferred on bread and wine here is clearly influenced by the importance of these substances in the Christian religion, and not necessarily by their significance to the Brazilian natives. Therefore, although the creatures Léry encounters on his travels in Brazil do not appear described in the text in the order in which they are created according to the book of Genesis, Léry's division of the animals of the New World into inhabitants of land, water and air nevertheless reflects the three stages of creation described in the biblical version, and in imitating the system of species classification found in scripture, I would argue that

[20] F. Lestringant, *Jean de Léry ou l'invention du sauvage*, p.75.

Léry is alluding yet again to an existing paradigm in order to help him make sense of the new world in which he finds himself.

In terms of both its substance and its structure, Léry's description of the environment of Brazil draws heavily upon pre-existing ideas of nature and the relationship between man and his surroundings. As we have seen, Léry's perspective is an avowedly anthropocentric one as he seats man firmly at the top of the food chain and sees plants and animals as elements of the environment which exist principally in order to sustain its human inhabitants. In addition, Léry's method of presenting and categorising the vegetation and animal life of the New World reflects the biblical system of understanding nature which belongs to the Old World, Europe, and imposes a clear order on the unmapped, savage territory that Léry's reader experiences for the first time through reading the *Histoire d'un voyage*. I contend, therefore, that the landscape in which the act of cannibalism will ultimately be performed is constructed by Léry using scaffolding that owes much to the conceptual model of nature familiar to the European readership of the late sixteenth century. In other words, the spatial context in which the story of the cannibal-Hero will take place is established in detail, and crucially is created according to a familiar framework of principles. In this way, I would argue that Léry succeeds in performing two important functions. Firstly, he creates for his reader a stage, festooned by the plants and animals of Brazil's natural environment, on which the cannibal-Hero will later appear, and secondly, he anticipates the act of anthropophagy by making reference to the alimentary relationship between New World man and his surroundings. The boundaries of the cannibal's world are being addressed by Léry, intentionally or subliminally, in these first chapters of his book but the process by which the Hero's context is ultimately established is not

straightforward. The present chapter will now go on to explore the issue of the problematic boundaries of the cannibal's world and their impact on Léry's experience of Authoring his cannibal-Hero.

Indigestion

In chapter seven of the *Histoire d'un voyage* Léry explains how, during his journey to Brazil, he observes oysters clinging to rocks along the Guanabara river, and describes the moment at which he discovers the name given to these creatures in the native language of the New World inhabitants: 'les sauvages se plongeans és rivages de la mer, rapportent de grosses pierres, à l'entour desquelles il y a une infinité d'autres petites huitres, qu'ils nomment *Leripés*, si bien attachées, voire comme collées, qu'il les en faut arracher par force.'[21] Lestringant, in *Jean de Léry ou l'invention du sauvage*, explains how Léry comes to interpret this coincidental similarity with his surname as an analogy with the new situation in which he finds himself:

> La rencontre est fortuite, mais heureuse. Léry va exploiter cette coïncidence onomastique entre tupi et français pour remotiver son nom, pour en faire en quelque sorte un nom brésilien, aussi solidement attaché à cette terre naguère inconnue de lui que l'huître à son rocher [...] Mais déjà par son nom qui est un nom d'huître, un nom qui s'attache à son lieu et y adhère si fortement qu'il est difficile de l'en arracher, Léry *est* Brésilien.[22]

[21] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.206.
[22] F. Lestringant, *Jean de Léry ou l'invention du sauvage*, p.27-28.

In Lestringant's argument, Léry uses the resemblance between his name and the Toupinamba name for oysters in order to forge an association between the nature of the oysters and his own experience of being washed up on a foreign shore, and as a result he is able to immerse himself in the unfamiliar culture into which he has been transported. Lestringant suggests that Léry is pleased by the connection that he is able to establish through sound between his own name and the tribal name for the oysters, and that the drawing of this analogy brings about a major transformation in Léry's identity. He claims that, as a consequence of the oyster episode, 'Léry *est* Brésilien', a statement which suggests that Léry's identity undergoes a fundamental change as a result of the common ground he identifies between himself and an element of the Brazilian landscape. However, if Léry's allusion to the language of the Toupinamba tribe in this episode is read in the context of the many other references to the native language found in the *Histoire d'un voyage*, it is possible to draw an entirely different conclusion to the one drawn by Lestringant, and one which will prove to be more illuminating for the purposes of the present thesis.

The aforementioned reference to the oysters contains the word '*leripê*' presented in italic characters. This is a typographical feature that recurs frequently throughout the book, in which Brazilian words and phrases are typically italicised, and are at times accompanied by a French translation or explanation of the term. When describing a particular group of native Brazilians, Léry writes, for instance, that 'on les appelle *Conomioüassou* (c'est à dire gros ou grand garçon)'.[23] Furthermore, the proper names of places, geographical features and tribes are always italicised in the text, and we read, in Léry's description of a striking feature

[23] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.216.

of the Brazilian landscape, about 'ceste riviere de *Ganabara*'.[24] Similarly, Léry later refers to his host tribe as 'nos *Toüoupinambaoults*'.[25] While we, Léry's European readers, are able to understand the meaning of these italicised terms and so to identify the Brazilian ideas and objects they represent, the tribal language remains nevertheless noticeably different from the French text that surrounds it, and it is as a result never fully integrated into the rest of the book. The visual result of this method of writing, which involves extracting words and phrases from the Brazilian language and incorporating them into a larger body of writing in the French language, can, I suggest, be seen as a metaphor for the act of cannibalism for which the Toupinamba tribe becomes known. The dominant language of the book, French, ingests or cannibalises parts of the Brazilian language, but I would argue that the fact that the Brazilian words are evidently foreign, and through the use of italics remain, to pursue the metaphor, *undigested* by Léry's host text, suggests that the process of absorbing parts of one language into a body of another is fundamentally problematic. We will return to this analogy between linguistic and bodily cannibalism in the analysis of the second form of anthropophagy Léry reports in the *Histoire d'un voyage*, but firstly, we will consider Léry's account of the main cannibalistic act performed by the Toupinamba tribe, in other words the process by which Brazilian prisoners of war are incarcerated, how they are treated during their captivity, and, most importantly, the way in which they are killed and eaten. What we learn from Léry's account is the following.

Act One: The Foreign Cannibal

[24] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.161.
[25] *Ibid.*, p.302.

When he is captured, the prisoner of war is brought back by members of the victorious Toupinamba tribe to their village, where he is fed generously on the best food his captors can gather. In addition, the prisoner is provided with women from his captors' tribe, who attend to his every need. This princely treatment continues for an unspecified time, but long enough for the inhabitants of surrounding villages to be notified in advance of the day of the prisoner's execution. According to Léry's estimate, up to three or four thousand men, women and children of the Toupinamba tribe gather on the morning of the execution to drink and dance, and, somewhat surprisingly, the most joyful and enthusiastic participant in these festivities is the prisoner himself. After several hours, two of the strongest members of the tribe seize the prisoner, tie a strong rope around his waist, and parade him through the village as a trophy. The prisoner, showing no sign of weakness at the prospect of his imminent death, defiantly taunts his captors, boasting of the countless Toupinamba he himself has captured and eaten in the past, and warning those about to kill him that his tribe will avenge his death by killing and eating more members of their tribe in the future. Rocks and sharp pieces of broken pots are then placed within the prisoner's reach, and he is goaded by his captors to hurl these at the assembled crowd as an act of vengeance. This act of defiance prompts another Toupinamba, wearing an extravagant headdress of feathers, to come forward, carrying a large decorated wooden bar, with which the prisoner's head is struck so forcefully that he falls down dead immediately. At this point, the female companion who had been given to the prisoner approaches his dead body and cries what Léry describes as crocodile tears, and this performance of mourning ensures that she will be the first to eat the flesh of the dead prisoner. The body is then cooked and divided into pieces by the women of the tribe, so

that as many of the assembled crowd as possible are able to taste the unfortunate prisoner's flesh.

The long and detailed account of the captivity and execution of the prisoner that Léry writes, and which is accompanied by an illustration of the execution scene which will be discussed later, is not that of a single event or series of events witnessed in the past and reported in the past tense. Instead, Léry's description takes the form of a kind of storyboard, which contains directions for the staging of the events he reports, dialogue and an illustration depicting the actions and characters involved in the events he describes. The treatment of the prisoner and the events associated with him become a spectacle, a choreographed and regulated theatrical production, in which the present and future tenses are employed throughout to explain the progression of events, which further underscores the fact that this tribal practice is a regular occurrence. We read, for example, that, during the festivities which precede the execution of the prisoner, 'il [le prisonnier] doit estre dans peu d'heure assommé, emplumassé qu'il *sera*, tant s'en faut qu'il en soit contristé, qu'au contraire, sautant et buvant il *sera* des plus joyeux'.[26] In this way the choice of tense allows the description of events to be read as generic, as an account of patterns of repeated behaviour, regular and organised. Later in the description it is, as we have seen, revealed that the killing and eating of the prisoner from another tribe is an act of revenge for the past capture of a member of the Toupinamba tribe, and that the actions against the prisoner described in the text will be avenged by his own tribe in the future.

[26] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.35.

> En s'approchant du prisonnier luy tient ordinairement tels propos, N'es-tu pas de la nation nommée *Margaias*, qui nous est ennemie? et n'as-tu pas toy-mesme tué et mangé de nos parens & amis? Luy plus asseuré que jamais respond en son langage [...] Ouy, je suis tres fort et en ay voirement assommé & mangé plusieurs [...] Et bien respond-il encore [...] mes parens me vengeront aussi.[27]

By setting the treatment of the captive in this context of similar past and future events, Léry ensures that the account is perceived to be a traditional event, which is enacted in response to an historical precedent and performs the function of perpetuating the cultural customs and the existing relationship between two enemy tribes, and it is through the use of the present and future tenses that Léry creates this atmosphere of tradition.

The representation of the event as a traditional, staged spectacle is amplified by the use of conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions relating to the points in time at which particular actions are performed and the conditions under which they can happen. The account of the central 'ceremonie' opens with the word 'premierement', and the section containing the description of the death of the prisoner begins with 'finalement'.[28] Both adverbs are printed in capital letters in the text, and although this feature occurs solely because each appears as the first word in a new paragraph, the words themselves are nevertheless emphasised visually. Léry also makes frequent use here of conjunctions like 'apres que', 'puis' and 'si tost que', and in doing so, highlights the division of the process into stages

[27] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.357-58.

that are clearly defined both by time constraints ('*apres qu'*avec les autres il aura ainsi riblé et chanté six ou sept heures durant'[29]) and by prerequisite conditions ('*si tost que* le prisonnier aura esté ainsi assommé'[30]). The events therefore are not only introduced explicitly as 'les ceremonies', but have characteristics of ritual, such as order, timing and regulation, attributed to them by the phrases relating to the conditions and constraints included in the description.[31]

The meticulous timing and prescribed order of events in this cannibalistic spectacle strongly suggests that the tribal practice takes place according to a formal and pre-existing procedure, and that this procedure has been carried out, and will continue to be carried out, in precisely the same manner by generations of native Brazilians. With respect to timing and the order of events, the act of cannibalism is clearly-defined, regular and above all predictable. The prisoner, for instance, is at all times fully conscious of what will be his eventual fate at the hands of the enemy tribe, and moreover of the manner in which his story will be played out, and he conducts himself according to what we must assume he knows to be historical precedent during his period of captivity and on the day of his execution. But our perception of the act of cannibalism as a methodical and scheduled event is due entirely to the attention Léry gives to its aspects of timing and order: it is, after all, he who defines the act as a 'ceremonie'. So what does this tell us about Léry's experience of observing the cannibalism, and how does this affect the way in which he Authors this Hero?

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[29] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*,. p.355. Emphasis mine.
[30] *Ibid.*, p.361. Emphasis mine.
[31] *Ibid.*, p.354.

If we briefly consider once again what cannibalism is and what it represents, we recall that it causes a permanent and significant physical transformation in (at least) two human bodies. Firstly, the body of the consumed, which is broken up and ingested by at least one other body, and in the case of the Toupinamba, by many other bodies. Secondly, the body of the consumer is transformed because it undergoes drastic change when it absorbs the flesh of another body, in other words, that of the consumed. This process involving the fragmentation and permeation of one body by another is, if we recall the arguments proposed by Elizabeth Grosz and Mary Douglas, troubling and threatening, and I would therefore suggest that, in bodily terms, the act of cannibalism presents to the observer a problem similar to the extraordinary case studies reported in Paré's *Des monstres et prodiges* or the 'polychromatic cascade of morbid bodily fluids and weeping buboes' into which the body of the plague victim eventually dissolves.[32] In observing the cannibalism of the Toupinamba, Léry witnesses the human body being beaten to death, roasted, torn apart and eaten by a tribe which has gathered solely in order to participate in this morbid spectacle. The event causes profound physical change, in that the integrity of the body is shattered completely, but it is in addition morally disturbing because it involves the commission of a premeditated and violent murder, and Léry in his narrative does nothing to conceal any of these alarming facts. However, the style of his reporting of the event, and crucially his meticulous account of the strict timing and order in which each stage of the process takes place, brings a fundamentally different dimension to the spectacle which determines the way in which it is received by the reader. When it is presented within the fixed and definite temporal framework that Léry creates through his use of conjunctions,

[32] L. Brockliss & C. Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France*, p.39.

adverbs and prepositions pertaining to time, this form of cannibalism is not associated with ideas of chaos, brutal violence or disorder, but is instead presented overwhelmingly as a controlled, organised and orderly procedure. The use of a clearly-defined framework of timing in Léry's reporting of the cannibalism fulfils one of the functions of a Bakhtinian Author, who must, he argues, establish a temporal context in order to consummate or make sense of the Hero and his story. While I am not suggesting that Léry denies or entirely overcomes the violent and immoral aspects of the Toupinamba's anthropophagy through the creation of this temporal context, I would argue nevertheless that in depicting the act as a ceremony involving numerous stages which are performed in a strict and pre-arranged order, Léry's focus shifts from the disorderly elements of the cannibalism to its more orderly aspects.

Equally, I would suggest that Léry creates a similar effect by focusing on other, orderly aspects of the tribal anthropophagy, and furthermore that he turns it into what is in effect a staged spectacle. The staging of this episode, I would argue, lies partly in Léry's use of prepositions, which draw attention to the visual nature of the events by continually making reference to details of location and distance. Having encouraged the reader to visualise the scene by writing 'apres qu'il aura ainsi esté exposé à la veuë d'un chacun',[33] Léry continues,

> les deux sauvages qui le tiennent lié, s'esloignans de luy, l'un à dextre et l'autre à senestre d'environ trois brasses, tenans bien neantmoins chacun le bout de sa corde, laquelle est de mesme longueur, tirent lors si fermement

[33] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.356.

que le prisonnier, saisi comme j'ay dit par le milieu du corps, estant arresté tout court, ne peut aller ne venir de costé ni d'autre.[34]

The information about distance, position, direction and movement here makes the episode an inevitably physical and visual one in which the reader of the text is invited to become a spectator of the scene, and the picture that accompanies the text reinforces this.

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The illustration above depicts the prisoner making a defiant gesture with his right hand while two members of the tribe hold him stationary with a rope. A third tribesman can be seen standing ready to deliver the fatal blow to the prisoner, and on the left hand side, a woman, presumably the prisoner's female companion, can be seen waiting for her cue to perform her 'petit dueil'.[36] However, I would

[34] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.356.
[35] This image accompanies is found in the text of the 1580 edition of the *Histoire d'un voyage*, and versions of it are reproduced in most other editions of the book.
[36] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.361.

suggest that the most significant feature of the illustration is the crowd of spectators on the right hand side of the picture. The group extends in an unbroken line from the background into the foreground, and the position of the tribesman in the immediate foreground draws the reader of the text into the illustration. Viewed thus, I would argue that the reader, observing the picture, becomes an extension of the assembled crowd within the picture, and in this way is absorbed into the group as an additional spectator of the action of the scene. Instead of reading about it, we are now looking at it, and our experience of the event becomes all the more intense and direct as a result.

There are several other elements of this part of Léry's text which support the interpretation of the event as a staged spectacle. Dialogue and characterisation feature heavily in Léry's account of the episode, and the ritual nature of the act is underlined by the presence of a script and clearly defined character roles. There is the chorus, the 'hommes, femmes & enfans y estans arrivez de toutes parts, ce sera à danser, boire & *caoüiner* toute la matinee'.[37] There are 'deux ou trois des plus estimez de la troupe' whose role is to restrain the prisoner, to lead him 'en trophee parmi le village', and eventually to perform the execution.[38] The female companion of the captive, as we have seen, has her role in the episode: 'se mettant auprès du corps [elle] fera quelque petit dueil', and this expression of grief is the condition for her to be 'la premiere qui en mangera'.[39] The prisoner himself, unsurprisingly, is the focus of the most sophisticated characterisation of the episode. He participates

[37] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.355.
[38] *Ibid.* p.355.
[39] *Ibid.* p.361.

in the festivities conducted prior to his execution, and displays '[une] jactance incroyable', by remaining defiant during the events:[40]

> Mais pensez-vous que encores pour cela (ainsi que feroyent les criminels par-deça) il en baisse la teste? rien moins: car au contraire, avec une audace et asseurance incroyable, se vantant de ses prouesses passees, il dira à ceux qui le tiennent lié: J'ay moy-mesme, vaillant que je suis, premierement ainsi lié et garrotté vos parens.[41]

Qualities of fearlessness and determination are attributed here to the character of the prisoner, and Léry compares his attitude to that of Marcus Atilius Regulus, a standard and familiar model of heroic and stoical endurance. The prisoner is 'aussi resolu d'estre assommé pour sa nation, que Regulus fut constant à endurer la mort pour sa republique Romaine'.[42] Léry even includes a script of the dialogue between the prisoner and his captors, which is in effect a set of cues and responses, well known by the tribal participants and designed to be delivered by the central characters of this drama. The combination of stage directions, dialogue, choreography, characterisation and visual representation creates a storyboard version of the events witnessed by Léry, and the imprisonment and execution of the prisoner are afforded ritual status in this way, in other words, by the presentation of the episode as an ordered and organised tribal spectacle.

The combination of the description of the event and the illustration that accompanies it can leave us in no doubt of Léry's intention to depict this act of

[40] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.356 (margin note).
[41] *Ibid.*, p.355-56.
[42] *Ibid.*, p.357.

cannibalism as a public performance or spectacle, but in addition to being furnished with elements of staging including props, costume and stage directions, the reader is also given details of the backdrop to the performance, or, in Bakhtinian terms, details of the space behind the Hero's head. In the illustration above, this happens literally, as we see in the distance, behind the central action of the scene, the elements of Brazil's landscape – vegetation and mountains – to which Léry has previously alluded in the opening chapters of his book. Indeed, the detail of the illustration reflects the content of Léry's earlier chapters in that both forms of description, visual and written, perform the same function in the narrative. They are the methods Léry employs to create a comprehensive backdrop, or full spatial context, for the Hero of his story, and in filling in the space behind the Hero's head in these two ways, Léry in effect performs another function of the Bakhtinian Author. While he establishes a temporal context for the cannibal-Hero's story by describing the event as a sequence of pre-arranged stages, Léry defines its spatial context firstly by way of his account of the Brazilian territory and secondly by describing and illustrating the event itself as a spectacle. Again, the creation of a stage or spatial context does not remove the innate violence of the act – because, after all, the illustration still depicts a man about to be murdered – but in the same way as the temporal framework I discussed earlier encourages the reader to see the orderly rather than the disorderly aspects of the scene, the staging I describe above ensures that the act of cannibalism is contained within a specific and delineated spatial context.

Act Two: Cannibalism by those who have forgotten themselves

Léry's description of the central act of cannibalism among native tribesmen is a strongly documentary one and the position he occupies in the parts of the narrative I have explored above is that of a meticulous but neutral observer who records facts and details without passing explicit judgement on the activities he witnesses. However, a shift in the language and perspective of the author occurs in the second half of the chapter in which cannibalism is reported. He writes,

> s'il advient que les femmes qu'on avoit baillees aux prisonniers demeurent grosses d'eux, les sauvages, qui ont tué les peres, allegans que tels enfans sont provenus de la semence de leurs ennemis (chose horrible à ouir, & encor plus à voir) mangeront les uns incontinent apres qu'ils seront naiz: ou selon que bon leur semblera, avant que d'en venir là, ils les laisseront devenir un peu grandets.[43]

At this point in the narrative, at which Léry moves away from the killing and eating of the prisoner of war and turns to the consumption of the flesh of children, the neutral and descriptive style changes, and Léry moves from his position as the objective observer of events to responding morally and emotionally to the situation. He introduces this late stage in the process as 'ceste tant estrange tragedie', and in some editions the margin note alongside the account of the killing and eating of children reads 'horrible & nompareille cruauté'.[44] The language, therefore, is no longer simply factually descriptive, but is instead emotionally evocative, and a moral dimension is projected onto this moment of the account as a consequence. Furthermore, the appearance in parentheses of Léry's comment

[43] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage,* p.369.
[44] *Ibid.*, p.369.

that this act is a 'chose horrible à ouir, & encor plus à voir' sets the killing and eating of the prisoner's children firmly apart from the previous cannibalism of the body of the prisoner of war. What this reveals is the fact that Léry's experience of the eating of children is more intense than that of the ritual execution of the prisoner, and that he responds to it in an emotional way which is completely absent from his account of the earlier tribal 'ceremonie'. I would suggest that Léry's reaction in the *Histoire d'un voyage* of 1578 to the killing and eating of the prisoner's children can be explained in part by the experience of cannibalism he had observed and reported several years previously in 1573 during the siege of Sancerre, and this is an important point to which I will return later in the present chapter.

The shift in Léry's register of language continues, and it is surely no coincidence that in the lines immediately following the moment at which he reports the eating of children's bodies, Léry writes that he and his companions were invited at times to eat human flesh by members of the Toupinamba tribe. He explains firstly that 'ils nous presentoyent de ceste chair humaine de leurs prisonniers pour manger', but swiftly states that 'nous en faisions refus (comme moy et beaucoup d'autres des nostres ne nous estans point Dieu merci oubliez jusques-là avons tousjours fait)'.[45] The narrative moves, here, from being a generalised description of the ritual practice of cannibalism to a report of actual and disturbing past events, in which Léry becomes directly and bodily involved in the action of the narrative of this chapter for the first time. I would suggest, therefore, that the increasingly emotional language he uses reflects this shift in his own status, from interested observer to potential, although ultimately unwilling

[45] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.370.

participant. These two snapshots of Lérys' experience – the discovery that children too are killed and eaten by the tribe, and the offer of consuming human flesh made by the Toupinamba to Léry and his companions – mark a shift in the narrative in terms of the way in which they are reported, and moreover, they constitute a moment of transition between the account of the ceremonial cannibalism and the second form of anthropophagy observed by Léry. In the lines immediately following what I term here as the transitional moment, Léry writes:

> À mon grand regret, je suis contraint de reciter icy, que quelques Truchemens de Normandie, qui avoyent demeuré huict ou neuf ans en ce pays-là, pour s'accommoder à eux, menans une vie d'Atheistes, ne se polluoyent pas seulement en toutes sortes de paillardises et vilenies parmi les femmes & les filles, dont un entre autres de mon temps avoit un garçon aagé d'environ trois ans, mais aussi, surpassans les sauvages en inhumanité, j'en ay ouy se vantoyent d'avoir tué & mangé des prisonniers.[46]

In a reflection of Léry's tone in the lines immediately preceding this passage, the language used here to describe the behaviour of the Normandy interpreters is rich in moral and emotional content. The involvement of these men in the native Brazilian practice of cannibalism, which was described earlier in the text as formalised and ritual, is depicted as a form of debauchery and is included in the narrative alongside the account of their 'paillardises & vilenies', in other words, the sexual relationships and fathering of illegitimate children with women and girls of the tribe. There is, I would argue, an important contrast to be drawn here between the accounts of cannibalism practised by native Brazilians, which are

[46] J. de Léry, *Histoire d'un voyage*, p.370.

associated with ideas of ceremony, ritual and order, and the account of the same type of behaviour, in other words the consumption of human flesh, in the same historical and geographical context, but this time practised by European settlers rather than by natives. Léry links explicitly this latter form of cannibalism with atheism and moral transgression, and therefore implicitly with ethical disorder. Unlike Léry and his companions, who refuse the offer to participate the acts of cannibalism, the Normandy interpreters willingly take part in the tribal practice, and in so doing cross an important boundary between the culture of Europe and that of Brazil. When reporting the fact that he had refused the offer of human flesh, Léry thanks God that he and his companions did not forget themselves. In the following section, by contrast, he describes his sorrow at the failure of the Normandy interpreters to do the same, and suggests that the fact that they should have known better as a result of their European origins makes their transgression all the worse: we recall that they 'surpass[ent] les sauvages en inhumanité'. In light of this contrast, I would argue that, from Léry's perspective, cannibalism can be seen as an organised and traditional ritual only insofar as it remains contained within the boundaries of the spatial and temporal context to which it naturally or originally belongs, and involves indigenous participants only. The status of these European cannibals as translators is also certainly worthy of comment. In their role as interpreters of language, these *truchemens* perform the role of linguistic intermediaries, and they therefore straddle and overcome the division between Europe and Brazil that remains always evident in Léry's text through the use of italic characters to identify Brazilian terms, as I discussed earlier in the present chapter. The translator absorbs both languages and in this way becomes the site of the convergence of Europe and Brazil, and this is a (con)fusion of two cultures which is reflected in physical terms. It is embodied firstly by the act of cannibalism

during which the Brazilian body is consumed by the European body, and secondly by the conception of children of mixed race, both of which forms of behaviour provoke Léry's moral disapproval. The problem with the Normandy translators, in Lery's eyes, is that they do not naturally belong to the cannibal tribe and therefore do not have a role to play in the anthropophagous ritual he reports. This, I suggest, is because they come from *somewhere else*, beyond the spatial limits of the stage on which the cannibal's story is played out, and their full bodily participation in the culture of the New World leads to a disruption of the contained and ordered world that Léry establishes around the figure of the cannibal-Hero.

Act Three: Cannibalism at home

By the time of writing the final version of his *Histoire d'un voyage* in 1578, some twenty years after his original journey to Brazil, Léry's experiences in Europe and in the New World had brought him to witness the act of human cannibalism in three different forms. Firstly, as we have seen, between 1557 and 1558, whilst in Brazil, Léry observed the cannibalism practised by the natives of the Toupinamba tribe, in which the body of the enemy or outsider was consumed as a way of exacting revenge and of asserting the strength and victory of the consumers' tribe. Secondly, Léry reports his discovery at this time of the cannibalism of Brazilian natives performed on this occasion by the group of interpreters from Normandy who had allowed themselves to become assimilated into the anthropophagous culture of the New World in spite of their European roots. Thirdly, in 1573, Léry stumbled upon a starving family in the besieged town of Sancerre as they were committing an act of cannibalism, and this is the episode to which we will now

turn in our exploration of Léry's methods of Authoring this problematic form of human behaviour.

This third and final form of cannibalism is reported in the second of Léry's books, the *Histoire mémorable du siège et de la famine de Sancerre*, published in 1573, several years prior to the publication of the *Histoire d'un voyage*. The *Histoire mémorable* is the shorter, lesser-known book of the two, and is frequently cited by scholars in relation to the *Histoire d'un voyage* as a result of the report of cannibalism it contains. We recall that Léry and a colleague, Pierre Melet, sought refuge in the town of Sancerre in order to escape the wave of violence sweeping through France in the long aftermath of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. Sancerre came under siege by the army of Charles IX soon after Léry's arrival, and the siege lasted from 9th January until 14th August. The fact that the *Histoire mémorable* is a chronological eye-witness account of the siege and its consequences ensures that the historical moment and location in which the act of cannibalism is performed are clearly identifiable, and indeed we later learn the date and exact place in which the child's body is consumed by three starving adults. In Bakhtinian terms, therefore, Léry's method of recording his experiences in Sancerre ensures that the Hero's story unfolds in a specific spatial and temporal context.

Although the majority of the text of the *Histoire mémorable* is concerned with the political circumstances and negotiations relating to the siege in the context of the religious conflict happening across Europe, the book appears nonetheless to be defined by the starvation of the town's inhabitants and the single episode of cannibalism that takes place as a result of many months without food. This episode is one of endocannibalism carried out by three inhabitants of Sancerre: Simon

Potard and his wife Eugene, the parents of the child whose body is eaten, and Philippes de la Feüille, an elderly lady who is reported to have lived with the Potard family. The reporting of the act of cannibalism itself takes up only a couple of pages, but Léry presents in the preface to the book a sonnet which introduces the idea of cannibalism and thus anticipates the anthropophagous event which is to take place much later in the narrative. The 'Sonet' presented in the preface to the *Histoire mémorable* draws attention to a commonplace of descriptions of sieges, which is the eating of children by their parents, and most often by their mothers:

> Qui voudra voir une histoire tragique,
> Ne lise point tant de livres divers
> Grecs et Latins, semez par l'univers,
> Monstrans l'horreur d'Amerique et d'Afrique.
> Qu'il jette l'oeil sur Sancerre l'antique,
> Il y verra des ennemis pervers,
> Canons, assaux, coups à tors, à travers,
> Et tous efforts de la guerriere pique.
> Combat terrible, et plus cruelle faim,
> Où de l'enfant la chair servit de pain.[47]

The reference contained within the sonnet to 'l'horreur d'Amerique' is particularly significant given Léry's experiences in Brazil. His instruction here for the reader seeking 'une histoire tragique' to avoid stories about the New World and to turn instead to Sancerre reinforces the argument I proposed in the previous

[47] J. de Léry, *Histoire mémorable*, 'Sonet', p.177. The opening line of the sonnet is clearly calqued on Ronsard's 'Qui voudra voir ...' and also on Petrarch's 'Qui vuol veder ...'.

section that for Léry there is a fundamental moral difference between the ritual cannibalism enacted by the Toupinamba tribe and the acts of cannibalism carried out in Brazil and Sancerre by Europeans. According to the sonnet, the anthropophagous 'horreur d'Amerique' does not constitute a tragic tale, whereas the same basic bodily act performed in a different location or by different participants – in other words, in a different spatial context – is presented as evidence of extreme wretchedness and profound moral disorder.

The inclusion in the prefatory material to the text of the familiar idea of a child's flesh being consumed during sieges anticipates the appearance of cannibalism later in the narrative, although the event is not actually described in the text until chapter ten. The chapter is devoted almost entirely to a description of the hardship and famine experienced during the siege of 1573 and the methods developed by the inhabitants of Sancerre to cope with the extreme lack of food. The chapter synopsis, which appears at the beginning of chapter ten, and the introductory paragraphs of the chapter, perform a similar function to the sonnet found in the preface in that they ensure that the act of cannibalism described later in the chapter is both anticipated, and viewed as inevitable by the reader.[48] The introduction to the chapter reveals Léry's awareness of the practice of what can be termed endocannibalism as a recorded and familiar occurrence in historical siege situations. He alludes to passages from the biblical book of Kings as well as Flavius Josephus as sources of this commonplace of siege accounts before turning to a description of his own, first-hand experience of siege, famine and cannibalism.[49] I

[48] 'De l'extreme famine, cherté de vivres, chairs et autres choses non accoustumees pour la nourriture de l'homme, dont les assiegez dans la ville de Sancerre ont esté affligez, et ont usé environ trois mois' *Ibid.*p.279.

[49] 2 Kings 6: 25-29 (war and famine in Samaria; killing and eating of a child); "Among the residents of the region beyond Jordan was a woman named Mary [...] who had fled with the rest

would argue that, by way of these allusions too, Léry is exhibiting his awareness of the inevitability of the practice in the siege of Sancerre, and his reader, equally aware of the commonplace, has his expectation reinforced that an account of cannibalism will appear in the narrative.

When Léry later describes cannibalism in the context of a siege as 'les miserables et deplorables necessitez, dont plusieurs ont esté affligez', he depicts the actions of those who consume human flesh in a completely different way to his account in the *Histoire d'un voyage* of ceremonial, ritual cannibalism.[50] Viewed in the way the quotation above depicts, cannibalism comes to be seen as an illness or disorder that afflicts individuals in desperate and extreme circumstances, thereby forcing the besieged inhabitants to take part in activities that they would otherwise reject. Participation in this form of cannibalism is involuntary, and therefore the actions of the cannibals in the *Histoire mémorable* stands in stark contrast, firstly to the ritualised and intentional practices of the Brazilian natives reported in the *Histoire d'un voyage*, and moreover, to the choice exercised by the translators from Normandy to participate in the cannibalistic activities of their host tribe.

Although the issue of cannibalism is raised, as we have seen, by the content of the sonnet in the preface to the text, and later by the introduction to chapter ten

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of the people to Jerusalem and there became involved in the siege [...] But when no one either out of exasperation or pity put her to death, weary of finding for others food, which indeed it was now impossible from any quarter to procure, while famine coursed through her intestines and marrow and the fire of rage was more consuming even than the famine, impelled by the promptings alike of fury and necessity, she proceeded to an act of outrage upon nature. Seizing her child, an infant at the breast, 'Poor babe,' she cried, 'amidst war, famine, and sedition, to what end should I preserve thee? [...] Come, be thou food for me, to the rebels an avenging fury, and to the world a tale such as alone is wanting to the calamities of the Jews.' With these words she slew her son, and then, having roasted the body and devoured half of it [...] stored the remainder." F. Josephus, *Josephus: Jewish War and its Slavonic Version*, ed. H. Leeming and K. Leeming (Boston & Leiden: Brill, 2003) vi, 201-208.

[50] J. de Léry, *Histoire mémorable*, p.280.

in which Léry cites Flavius Josephus and his reference to the consumption by a mother of her child's body, the account of the act of cannibalism during the siege of Sancerre does not actually appear in the text until a late stage in the chapter, and indeed it does so only after Léry has provided a thorough and chronological explanation of how Sancerre sustained itself while under siege. Léry describes the way in which the townspeople feed themselves as a remarkably methodical strategy, and one which I would suggest is reminiscent of a structure that he also uses in the *Histoire d'un voyage*. I argued earlier in the present chapter that one of the ways in which the New World Hero's spatial environment is established is through Léry's description of the natural landscape, flora and fauna of Brazil, and that the structure of this description owes much to the biblical account of creation. Furthermore, I highlighted the fact that the natural environment is described largely in terms of its nutritional usefulness to its human inhabitants, and that this too is a feature shared by Léry's narrative and the creation story in Genesis. In the story of the search for food in the *Histoire mémorable*, which I will summarise below, elements of this same structure can be identified, and the impact of this recalls the effect that I argued is created when the same figure is used in the *Histoire d'un voyage*.

Léry explains that supplies of beef were consumed first and when these were beginning to run short the flesh of a horse that had been killed during a battle was used for food.[51] The inhabitants of Sancerre turned next to donkeys and mules for meat, before resorting to the deliberate slaughter of horses, although a number of these were kept alive for a time for the purposes of transport and connection with the outside world. Having exhausted the supply of meat from donkeys, mules

[51] J. de Léry, *Histoire mémorable*, p.280.

and horses, Léry writes that cats, rats, moles and mice were eaten, and finally dogs, 'chose que je ne croy avoir esté auparavant pratiquee, ou pour le moins bien rarement.'[52] In the continuing famine, animal products constituted the next source of food to which the starving inhabitants turned, and Léry provides detailed descriptions of how animal hides, followed by horns, bones, vellum, and leather bridles, belts and straps were boiled and soaked until they could be eaten.[53] Léry goes on to explain how all types of vegetation, especially roots and leaves, were consumed, and how desperation led some people to resort to eating the deadly hemlock root.[54] He turns next to bread, and reports that it was rationed in Sancerre from an early stage in the siege, but as stocks of wheat diminished, ground walnut shells were used instead of flour to make a sort of dough.[55] Léry then reports that the horses which had previously been kept alive for transport and carrying essential messages were also slaughtered.[56] Finally, he writes that

> les fientes et excremens humains y ont esté amassez et recueillis pour manger. Et y en a-on veu qu'ayans rempli leurs escuelles de fiente de cheval, la mangeoyent de si grande avidité qu'ils disoyent la trouver aussi bonne qu'ils eussent faicts du pain de son: et au reste amassoyent toutes sortes d'ordures et vilenies par les rues, grattans sur les fumiers, y cherchant les vieux os, vieilles cornes, et autres choses, impossibles à croire à ceux qui ne l'ont veu.[57]

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[52] J. de Léry, *Histoire mémorable*, p.282.
[53] *Ibid.*, p.283-86.
[54] *Ibid.*, p.287-88.
[55] *Ibid.*, p.288.
[56] *Ibid.*, p.289.
[57] *Ibid.*, p.290.

In this section of the narrative, Léry is describing the descent of the people of Sancerre down the food chain, and indeed far beyond what are considered actual sources of food, in their desperate search for sustenance, and it is only after having described how every possible source of food had been exhausted that Léry turns to his description of the act of cannibalism:

> Mais, ô Dieu eternel! voicy encores le comble de toute misere et du jugement de Dieu. Car comme il proteste en sa Loy qu'il reduira ceux qui n'obeiront à ses Commandemens en tel estat, que durant le siege il fera que les meres mangeront leurs enfans[58]: les enfermez de Sancerre [...] ont veu commettre ce crime prodigieux, barbare et inhumain, perpetré dans l'enclos de leurs murailles. Car le vingt unieme de Juillet il fut descouvert et averé qu'un vigneron, nommé Simon Potard, Eugene sa femme, et une vielle femme qui se tenoit avec eux nommé Philippes de la Feüille [...] avoyent mangé la teste, la cervelle, le foye et le fressure d'une leur fille aagée d'environ trois ans, morte toutesfois de faim et en langueur.[59]

The cannibalism is depicted using superlatives: it is the last resort open to the starving inhabitants of Sancerre, who are completely surrounded and cut off from the outside world, and their act of consuming human flesh is described as being the sign of the most extreme wretchedness. The horror of the event, conveyed, among other evocative phrases, by the exclamation of 'ô Dieu eternel!' is the result of an interruption of the order described in great detail in the account of the famine, and of the inversion of the hierarchy of the natural world. Léry's

[58] Leviticus 26: 26-29: 'When I cut off your supply of bread [...] you will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters'.
[59] J. de Léry, *Histoire mémorable*, p.290-91.

description in the *Histoire d'un voyage* of the ecosystem he discovers in Brazil owes much to the account of creation found in Genesis, and in which Léry, mirroring the biblical model of the natural world, positions man at the top of the hierarchy of nature, and the rest of the environment beneath him as a source of food. In his account of the famine in Sancerre too, Léry reflects this hierarchical structure within nature by enumerating the stages through which the starving inhabitants proceed in their search for sustenance. They begin with what may be termed normal sources of food such as cattle, but are gradually forced to move further away from the usual to the unusual, until they begin to consume animals such as dogs and objects including leather straps and pieces of vellum that do not form part of the standard food chain. The consumption of human flesh when it eventually occurs, therefore, is a desperate act and takes place after the supplies of all other possible sources of food have been exhausted. Cannibalism has a dramatic and disruptive impact on the framework of the food chain which Léry has used as the structure for his narration of the circumstances relating to food, in that man, or the human body, which originally occupies the topmost position of the food chain, suddenly slips to a position at the bottom of that structure, beneath all the other sources of food. This is a troubling reversal of the established order that Léry has established and as such represents the transgression of natural as well as moral law.

But while, from Léry's perspective, the consumption of the child's body remains an horrific and reprehensible act, in his words a 'crime prodigieux, barbare et inhumain', I would suggest that the profound disorder that this act of cannibalism represents is limited to the actions of the child's parents and their elderly companion as a result of Léry's inclusion of the description of the food

chain down which the other inhabitants descend in their search for food. The consumption of the child's body is an isolated event, and the only case of cannibalism Léry reports happening in Sancerre, and it is therefore the exception rather than the rule. All of the other inhabitants adhere to the process of finding food which is governed by the structure Léry describes, which resembles the hierarchy of nature. Therefore, in the same way as Léry's description of the spatial context in which the cannibalistic 'ceremonie' of Brazil takes place serves to reduce at a narrative level the disorderly elements of the act, the inclusion of a procedure for finding food, to which the majority of the inhabitants of Sancerre apparently adhere, ensures that the horror of the incident that occurs in the Potard household is, to an extent, contained.

Indeed, the containment of the cannibalism, in this case to a group of only three people, is mirrored in Léry's account by the clear spatial and temporal boundaries that he draws around the incident. In the quotation above, Léry establishes the temporal context when he specifies the date on which the event was discovered, 'le vingt unieme de Juillet'. However, more striking is the spatial boundary that he identifies around the cannibalism, which occurs, he writes 'dans l'enclos de[s] murailles'. Here, Léry exposes the literal, physical barriers which enclose the cannibalistic act, and in so doing, firmly delineates the space in which the Hero's story takes place.

The effect on Léry of discovering this first reported case of cannibalism in Sancerre is profound. On witnessing the dismembered and partially-consumed body of the Potard girl, he writes that

> je fus si effroyé et esperdu, que toutes mes entrailles en furent esmeus. Car combien que j'aye demeuré dix mois entre les Sauvages Ameriquains en la terre du Bresil leur ayant veu souvent manger de la chair humaine [...] si n'en ay-je jamais eu telle terreur que j'eus frayeur de voir ce piteux spectacle, lequel n'avoit encores (comme je croy) jamais esté veu en ville assiegée en nostre France.[60]

In one sentence, Léry expresses the intense horror he feels at discovering this crime, makes an explicit comparison between this event and the cannibalism he had witnessed almost twenty years previously in Brazil, and refers to the consumption of the child's body as a 'spectacle'. The explicit comparison here between the event he witnesses in Sancerre and the ceremonial anthropophagy of Brazil is significant, but I would suggest that this is not solely because they are two acts of cannibalism. The language Léry uses to describe the consumption of the little girl's body in Sancerre is evocative in both emotional and physical terms, and his revulsion is so great that he describes experiencing it viscerally: 'je fus si effroyé et esperdu, que toutes mes entrailles en furent esmeus'. The intensity of this response from Léry's recalls his reaction, recorded in the *Histoire d'un voyage*, when describing the epilogue to the central act of ritual cannibalism performed by the Toupinamba tribe. Léry describes as 'ceste tant estrange tragedie' the killing and eating by the tribe of any children born to the prisoner of war's female companion, and writes about the 'horrible & nompareille cruauté' of this act. In contrast to the preceding, markedly documentary description of the cannibalism of the prisoner's body, the reporting of the cannibalism of his children is loaded with previously unseen moral and emotional comment. It is important to note, therefore, that by

[60] J. de Léry, *Histoire mémorable*, p.291.

the time of recounting this episode in the *Histoire d'un voyage* in 1578, Léry had both witnessed and written about the incident of cannibalism involving the Potard child, and I would argue that his initial revulsion and outrage in response to the act committed in Sancerre later influenced his writing about the cannibalism of children in the *Histoire d'un voyage.* It is at the point in the narrative of the *Histoire d'un voyage* at which Léry describes the killing and eating of children that his language and tone change, and he exchanges his status as the neutral observer of the action for the position of moral critic. If we read the account of the Brazilian case of infanticide and the consumption of the child's body in the light of the earlier account of the same activity in the context of Sancerre, I suggest that it becomes possible to explain Léry's transition from detached objectivity to involved subjectivity in the *Histoire d'un voyage.*

The relationship between the two episodes which involve the death and consumption of children is, I would suggest, a mise-en-abyme of Léry's complete experience of cannibalism as reported in his books because the inter-textual influence that I have argued exists between them transcends the divisions between the Author's two accounts and reflects his intersecting experiences. Léry's journey to Brazil and the written recollection of his experiences there in the form of the *Histoire d'un voyage* are interrupted by his experience in Sancerre and by the writing of the *Histoire mémorable.* In this way, the straight lines of chronology are disrupted, firstly because Léry encounters the siege and cannibalism of Sancerre in the light of his experiences in Brazil, and secondly because the revisiting of his experience of Brazil in the form of writing the *Histoire d'un voyage* occurs after the events of the Sancerre siege and the writing of the *Histoire mémorable.* The experience, and the reliving of the experience through writing about both Brazil and Sancerre are

coloured by that of the other, and the osmotic relationship that results between the *Histoire mémorable* and the *Histoire d'un voyage* means that neither text can be read as a self-contained version of events in either the Brazilian or European context.

The overlapping nature of Léry's experiences of cannibalism therefore poses a difficulty in that it obstructs the process of cleanly delineating each experience individually. The cannibal's body and the body he cannibalises are, I have argued, threatening to the observer because their integrity is compromised as a result of the consumption of the latter by the former. In order to consummate the cannibal-Hero, or to present him as an integral and contained figure, we recall that the Bakhtinian Author is obliged firstly to experience the world from the Hero's perspective, and secondly to establish the comprehensive and clearly-delineated spatial and temporal context in which the Hero resides. The intersecting nature of Léry's experiences of cannibalism in Brazil and Sancerre means, however, that it is impossible for him, as the Author of both experiences, to consider each episode separately. The Authoring of cannibalism in its various forms becomes still more complicated in Léry's case because of the problematic, voluntary anthropophagy of the Normandy interpreters during Léry's experience in Brazil, and the profoundly troubling cannibalism that occurs in the Author's domestic setting, because the act of eating human flesh, which he is able to view as traditional and orderly when seen in the Brazilian context, is performed by participants who do not belong to this culture, and in whose own culture the act of anthropophagy is irredeemably unsettling and disruptive.

However, although the outcome of the process of Bakhtinian Authoring may be compromised by these obstacles to the clear delineation of the Author's

experience and the Hero's context, the two distinct stages of which the process is comprised remain evident in Léry's writing. Firstly, he stresses his proximity to the cannibal-Hero of his narratives by way of phrases such as 'j'en ay ouy' and 'j'aye demeuré dix mois entre les Sauvages Ameriquains [...] leur ayant veu', and in so doing verifies his experience. But furthermore, the veracity and intensity in particular of his experiences of the cannibalism of children in Brazil, the participation in cannibalistic acts by the Normandy interpreters, and the consumption of the little girl's body in Sancerre, are conveyed through the physically and emotionally evocative descriptions Léry gives of what he witnesses at these three moments.

Secondly, Léry exhibits an acute awareness of the spatial and temporal context in which his Hero resides, and throughout his accounts he typically identifies elements of order in the inherently disorderly and threatening acts of cannibalism he witnesses. In both the *Histoire d'un voyage* and the *Histoire mémorable*, I have demonstrated how Léry introduces aspects of structure into the fabric of the text, and the fact that cannibalism is presented within frameworks, such as the staging of the cannibal spectacle in Brazil and the food chain through which the inhabitants of Sancerre move as their hunger increases, means that, however threatening and horrific the act of cannibalism may remain, it is presented as being contained within specific temporal and spatial boundaries, or in other words, consummated. As a result, I contend that, while the troubling bodily disruption that is the inevitable consequence of cannibalism is not removed by Léry's narration of the events, and in addition that the task of viewing each episode individually is complicated by the nature of Léry's experiences, the disorderly

impact of the act of cannibalism is nevertheless diminished by a process of writing that corresponds closely to Bakhtinian Authoring.