THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF RABELAIS'S PANTAGRUEL:

RECONCILING THOUGHT AND ACTION

Timothy Haglund, B.A.

Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2015

APPROVED:

Richard S. Ruderman, Major Professor
Steven P. Forde, Committee Member
Michael J. Greig, Committee Member
Martin D. Yaffe, Committee Member
Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha, Chair of the Department of Political Science
Costas Tsatsoulis, Interim Dean of the Toulouse Graduate School

Haglund, Timothy. *The Political Philosophy of Rabelais's Pantagruel: Reconciling Thought and Action.* Doctor of Philosophy (Political Science), August 2015, 242 pp., bibliography, 193 titles.

Political thinkers of the Renaissance, foremost among them Niccolò Machiavelli and Desiderius Erasmus, authored works commonly referred to as "mirrors of princes." These writings described how princes should rule, and also often recommended a certain arrangement or relationship between the intellectual class and the political powers. François Rabelais's five books of *Pantagruel* also depict and recommend a new relationship between these elements of society. For Rabelais, the tenets of a philosophy that he calls Pantagruelism set the terms between philosophers and rulers. Pantagruelism, defined in Rabelais's *Quart Livre* as "gaiety of spirit confected in contempt for fortuitous things," suggest a measured attitude toward politics. Rabelais's prince, Pantagruel, accordingly rejects the tendencies of ancient thinkers such as Diogenes the Cynic who viewed politics as futile. Yet Pantagruel also rejects the anti-theoretical disposition of modern thinkers such as Machiavelli who placed too much confidence in politics. I demonstrate how Rabelais warns against the philosophers' entrance into public service, and how he simultaneously promotes a less selfish philosophy than that of Diogenes. I argue that Pantagruel's correction of his friend Panurge through the consultations of experts regarding the latter's marriage problem shows that fortune will always trouble human life and politics. I also argue that Pantagruel's rule over the kingdom of Utopia exemplifies a Socratic form of rule—reluctant rule—which relies on a trust that necessity (embodied in the *Tiers Livre* in the Pantagruelion plant) and not fortune (embodied in the *Tiers Livre* in Panurge's future wife) governs the world, including the political world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank my committee members—*Beuveurs tresillustres et Verolez trespreciеux*—for their generous and thoughtful conversations. I'd especially like to thank Richard Ruderman for pushing me to write on Rabelais.

My wife, Jennifer, deserves more than an acknowledgment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii

1. INTRODUCTION 1

Our Religion, the Political State, Private Life 1

The Rabelais–Machiavelli Connection 11

Chapter Structures 14

2. INTERPRETING RABELAIS PANTAGRUELICALLY 19

Revisiting Rabelais's "Plus Hault Sens" 19

Rabelais's Thirsty Audience 26

Was Rabelais Egalitarian? 34

Monks' Robes and Spanish Capes (*Gargantua*, prologue) 41

Renaissance Thought: Childish Exuberance or Commendable Zeal? 51

The Risk of Misreading 58

3. PHILOSOPHY'S POLITICAL PROBLEM: DIOGENISM, MACHIAVELLIANISM, PANTAGRUELISM . 59

Rabelais's Philosophic–Political Aim 59

Diogenism: The Apolitical Precursor to Pantagruelism (*Tiers Livre* prologue) 64

Machiavellianisms (*Pantagruel* 15 and 16) 70

Pantagruelism (*Tiers Livre* prologue and 2) 83

Is Pantagruelism a Viable Political Alternative? 89

4. INTERPRETING MACHIAVELLI PANTAGRUELICALLY 95

Life in Utopia (*Tiers Livre* 1) 95

The Poverty of the Site: Machiavelli and Rabelais on Political Origins 97

"The Way to Hold and Retain Newly Acquired Countries" 104

The Religion of Numa in Machiavelli and Rabelais 110

Holding Machiavelli Accountable 118

5. DUTIFUL PHILOSOPHY: THE ROLE OF *DEBVOIR* IN PANURGE'S OUTLOOK 121

Duty as Concealer 121

Offizio in Machiavelli's *Prince* 123

Panurge's Eulogy of *Debtes* (*Tiers Livre* 2–4) 128

Pantagruel's Classical Individualism (*Tiers Livre* 5) 134

Some Implications of Duty for Philosophy 137

6. PANURGE VERSUS THE AUTHORITIES 140

The Banquet of Experts 140

Hippothadée and the Challenge of Revelation (*Tiers Livre* 30) 142

Rondibilis (*Tiers Livre* 31–33) 154

Trouillogan and Reading the Human Heart (*Tiers Livre* 35–36) 167

Bridlegoose's Psychological Legalism (*Tiers Livre* 39–44) 174

The Effect of the Consultations 187

7. BLOWING BUBBLES, UNDERSTANDING NATURE 190

Nature and the Pantagruelion Herb 190

Pantagruelion and *Moly*: “Rough and Hard to Get at” (*Tiers Livre* 49 and *Odyssey* X) .. 196

The Name Pantagruelion; Or Rather, its Use (*Tiers Livre* 51) 202

How do the Questers Use Pantagruelion in the *Quart Livre*? 208

A Positive Teaching 219

8. CONCLUSION 221

Further Implications of the Diogenic Problem 221

Saving Philosophy 227

BIBLIOGRAPHY 230

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Our Religion, the Political State, Private Life

"For in here," reads François Rabelais's prologue to *Gargantua*, "you will find quite a different taste and more abstruse doctrine, which will reveal to you some very lofty sacraments and horrific mysteries concerning your religion as well as the political state [l'estat politicq] and private life."[1] So begins a tale of epic size about a monarchical dynasty of giants ruling Renaissance France. Rabelais's claim to seriousness may be a comic boast, but testing it provides the only way to find out, for the writer left few clues about who he was. Born in either 1483 or 1494 in the Loire Valley town of Chinon, France, Rabelais entered the local monastery at Fontenay-le-Comte in the early 1520s. A letter to the well-known humanist Guillaume Budé from that location provides the earliest look into Rabelais's life. The young friar describes himself as "a nobody lost in the mass" (*CW*, 735) yet in love with "belles lettres" and happy to see that "all humanity, or nearly all, is regaining its ancient splendor" (*CW*, 736). He writes confidently, but with an awkward obsequiousness. Aside from Rabelais's subsequent work as a medical doctor in Lyon (beginning in 1532) and his time in Italy with the prominent du Bellay family, we know little else. The books provide our access to the man: *Gargantua* (1535),

[11] François Rabelais, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Mireille Huchon (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), *Gargantua* prologue, 7. Hereafter referenced by book as '*G'* (*Gargantua*), *'P'* (*Pantagruel*), *'TL'* (*Tiers Livre*), *'QL,'* (*Quart Livre*), and *'CL,'* (*Cinquiesme Livre*). François Rabelais, *The Complete Works of François Rabelais*, ed. and trans. Donald Frame (Berkeley and L.A.: University of California Press, 1991), 4. Hereafter referenced as '*CW*' followed by page number. Deviations from Frame's translation reflect my interpretation of Rabelais's French in Huchon's Pléiade Gallimard edition. I note when I disagree with Frame about Rabelais's French. Subsequent citations are placed in-text parenthetically and formatted by abbreviated reference, chapter number, and page number. References to Huchon and Frame are always separated by a forward slash. For example, (*G* prol*,* 7 / *CW*, 4).

Pantagruel (1532), and the *Tiers* (1546), *Quart* (1548–1552), and *Cinquiesme* (1564) *Livres*. Readers almost have to believe Rabelais when he says in *Gargantua* that he intends to write about religion, politics, and private matters. Nothing in his recorded life contradicts that intent because there is so little to contradict it.

Rabelais did write often about the themes he mentioned in the *Gargantua* prologue, especially politics. Chapters on royal education in the first two books (of both Gargantua and Pantagruel) reflect the mirrors-of-princes genre exemplified by Desiderius Erasmus's 1516 *Education of a Christian Prince*. Consequently, Rabelais's works have been read as "fictions, many of whose episodes can be read as representations of the way a good prince, any good prince, should act."[2] On the other hand, the *Tiers Livre*, which depicts a character named Panurge (a companion of Pantagruel) considering his marriage prospects, has been taken as a contribution to the *querrelle des femmes* (the "woman question"). This sixteenth century debate was fraught with sensitive religious and moral components. In the later parts of Rabelais's work, grave passages on the death of heroes in the modern world (*QL* 28, 604–605 / *CW*, 497–198) and the difficulties of human judgment (*TL* 44, 488–490 / *CW*, 390–392) show a certain sobriety lacking in any merely comic writer.

In what way should readers respond, then, to a chapter in *Pantagruel* that sets out to explain "How Pantagruel of his farts engendered little men" (*P* 27, 308 / *CW*, 219)? Who could make heads or tails of characters like the Lords of Kissebreech and Suckfist (*P* 11, 254 / *CW*,

[2] Ullrich Langer, "*Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*: The political education of the king," in John O'Brien, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Rabelais* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 111.

170)?[3] What about Panurge's memorable non-verbal argument with Thaumaste, the "great scholar from England"? "Panurge," writes Rabelais, "undismayed [by Thaumaste's sign], hoisted into the air his supercolossal codpiece with his left hand, and with his right took out of it a white rib of beef and two pieces of wood of the same shape [. . .] and made a sound such as the lepers do in Brittany [. . .]" (*P* 19, 287 / *CW*, 198–199). This is to say nothing of the notorious story of Hans Carvel's ring (*TL* 28, 442–443 / *CW*, 346–347), the moral of which makes any cultivated person blush.[4] Looking back from here, the "lofty sacraments" of the *Gargantua* prologue acquire a tincture of grandiosity.

In fact, the dissonance that readers feel leafing through Rabelais's books unearths something important. A certain expectation comes with opening a book purporting to treat the topics that Rabelais chooses to write on. One seeks weightiness, sophistication, ceremony. Rabelais sometimes indulges this expectation, but he also disarms it. The double-sidedness of Rabelais's writing waylays and perplexes, although it actually reveals a full vision. Rabelais forays into all the corners of life—its nobility and rationality, its baseness and absurdity. He does not always say solemn things simply because he writes about things that people take solemnly. He never commits this error of conflation. On the contrary, one could even surmise—and I would argue—that the topics Rabelais assumes inspire or even necessitate his attention on the unseemly. Rabelais sees that politics makes this underside of human nature its business.

[3] The tamer translation used by Thomas Urquhart. See François Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, trans. Sir Thomas Urquhart and Pierre Motteux (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005), 171ff. See *P* 11, 254 / *CW*, 170.

[4] It is, however, noteworthy that Frère Jean calls Hans Carvel "philosophical." See *TL* 28, 442 / *CW*, 346.

By exceeding the accepted limits of speech and action (what the Greeks called *nomoi*), Rabelais provides a new vantage of those limits that allows for evaluation of their virtues and vices.

The Marriage Problem, or Thematically Organizing Rabelais's Books

Although *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* contain the most obviously political passages in Rabelais, I focus on the *Tiers Livre* (and discuss the other books as they relate to it) because I am not interested in what Rabelais has to say about politics but rather in his treatment of this curious subject that he refers to as "the political state" [l'estat politicq] and in his explanation of how this subject relates to the religious and private spheres of life [nostre religion; le vie oeconomicque]. The vagueness of these topics' relationship may tempt readers to divide Rabelais's books into sections, each dedicated to one of the three spheres that the author identifies as central to his work: religion here, politics there, and private life everywhere else. Episodes in the *Quart Livre* clearly ridicule the Catholic Church (see *QL* 29–32; 45–50). The Picrocholine War of *Gargantua* (see *G* 25–51) gives us Rabelais at his most political. Panurge's marriage question in the *Tiers Livre* provides an obvious focus on private life. But cracks begin to form along these walls like spider webs. Gargantua's Picrocholine War ends in the establishment of an idealized abbey, Thélème (*G* 52). Panurge's marriage question involves theology (*TL* 30) and law (*TL* 39–44). Discussions of faith raise the question of whether reason should guide one's life (*QL* 30). Rabelais keeps his promise to treat all of his proposed topics, but he treats them simultaneously. It will not do to say that Rabelais loses interest in politics after he turns from the rule of two magnanimous kings in *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* and writes about the private situation of the lowly vassal Panurge in the three remaining books. The end of

the kings' wars and the achievement of political empire make Panurge's situation possible. These external, political conditions underwrite Panurge's personal situation.

Panurge's marriage problem most tightly links these political, religious, and private spheres. The Christian tradition uses marriage to represent Christ's relationship to his church.[5] Marriage also serves as a public declaration, and it involves vows of loyalty between individuals. In the *Tiers Livre*, marriage first appears as a matter of self-interest. Panurge wants to know if a wife would make him happy.[6] But notice how Panurge later poses the marriage question to Pantagruel. As time passes, Panurge begins to ask if he "should" or "must" marry (*TL* 30, 445 / *CW*, 349). With marriage, a possible tension between different goods arises.

The confusion of the religious, political, and private can also be seen by thinking slightly differently about Panurge's marriage problem. That is, marriage raises specific issues, but these are traceable to general concerns. Repeat Panurge's worries: Is it right to marry? Will marriage bring happiness? Turning these questions over in the mind, one sees that Panurge's situation encourages reflection on moral concepts—rightness, happiness—that can be examined without ever mentioning marriage or Panurge. Panurge's marriage serves as a case study in greater philosophic issues.

This was how Rabelais's first English translator viewed Panurge's marriage question. In his renderings of Rabelais, Sir Thomas Urquhart (1611–1660) framed Panurge's problem as the

[5] Mark 2:19; John 3:29. I use the ESV translation for all biblical references. Crossway Bibles, *ESV: Study Bible: English standard version* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2007).

[6] See *TL* 9, 377 / *CW*, 282: "You know that it is written *veh soli* [woe unto him who is alone]."

problem not of marriage but of fortune.[7] A philosophic mind himself, Urquhart might have sensed that Rabelais was not the first to use the problem of marriage as a stepping stone to deeper philosophic issues. At the least, Urquhart suggests that by having Panurge entertain the possibilities of life together with a wife, Rabelais reminds the reader of Niccolò Machiavelli's famous dictum, "Fortune is a woman."[8] Even Machiavelli merely drew from an existing tradition dating from antiquity when he described fortune this way,[9] and he was not the only Renaissance writer to do so. His real innovation was attributing frailty to Fortuna. One cannot forget how Machiavelli's personification of fortune ends: "and it is necessary, if one wants to hold her down, to beat her and strike her down." As Hannah Pitkin notes with masterfully executed understatement, "the means of coping with [Fortuna] that [Machiavelli] suggests are not those usually applied to divinities."[10] Machiavelli's words make most people cringe.

Rabelais might have cringed too, but for different reasons. In his books, Rabelais attempts to restore respect for the goddess through a cheerful restatement of the case for the sober classical attitude toward future things. As Panurge seeks counsel regarding his marriage prospects, various authorities repeatedly warn him that cuckoldry and spousal abuse await (see

---

[7] See, e.g., Urquhart's renderings of the titles of chapters 11, 12, and 13 of the *Tiers Livre*: "How Pantagruel showeth the trial of one's fortune by the throwing of dice to be unlawful" (*TL* 11), "How Pantagruel doth explore by the Virgilian lottery what fortune Panurge shall have in his marriage" (*TL* 12), "How Pantagruel adviseth Panurge to try the future good or bad luck of his marriage by dreams" (*TL* 13).

[8] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 2nd edition, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 25.101. Hereafter referenced as '*Prince*' and cited by chapter and page number, separated by a period.

[9] See Hannah Fenichel Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, C.A.: University of California Press, 1984), 138–139. See also Rafael Major, "A New Argument for Morality: Machiavelli and the Ancients," *Political Research Quarterly* 60 (2007): 171–179.

[10] Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman*, 144.

especially *TL* 27–35). Panurge looks foolhardy during these admonitions as Rabelais contrasts Machiavelli's instruction to beat fortune like a woman with a dramatization of Panurge learning that his future *femme*[11] may beat him. Through this dramatization, Panurge begins to hear the merits of viewing fortune as an intractable part of life that must be shouldered with the proper inner disposition rather than as an object susceptible of human conquest.

Cuckoldry as a Political and Philosophic Problem

Although Machiavelli's handling of the problem of fortune in chapter 25 of *The Prince* has earned extensive scholarly attention, critics seldom recognize that Machiavelli also approaches the theme of fortune exactly as Rabelais does, through the motif of cuckoldry. Cuckoldry provides the subject of Machiavelli's only original comedy, *Mandragola* (1518).[12] The play begins with a young man from France, Callimaco, set on the all-important question of whether Italian women are more beautiful than French women. Callimaco's encounter with the Florentine Lucrezia Calfucci settles this question. The rest of the play concerns how Callimaco can fulfill his desire for Lucrezia, given her marriage to the old and doltish Messer Nicia. It is also about how Messer Nicia can achieve his desire for children, despite his impotence.

A mandrake-based potion that Lucrezia takes resolves both characters' aims. The mandrake plant allegedly restores female fertility, but the drug has the unfortunate side-effect (so they say) of killing the first person a woman lays with after ingesting it. Of course the mandrake does no such thing, and of course Lucrezia is not barren. Yet believing these things

[11] The French term *femme* can mean both "woman" and "wife."

[12] See Mera J. Flaumenhaft, "Introduction," in Machiavelli, *Mandragola*, 2: "The Prologue to Machiavelli's [other comedy] *Clizia* acknowledges its source in Roman comedy (Plautus' *Casina*) [. . .]."

allows both Callimaco and Nicia to achieve their respective goals, all while keeping a moral veneer. Through an elaborate scheme, Callimaco feigns medical expertise and prescribes the mandrake remedy to Nicia. Nicia and the others then set out to kidnap some unwitting, anonymous man (who turns out to be Callimaco, disguised) to "take the brunt" of the mandrake potion by sleeping with Lucrezia.

Harvey Mansfield argues that Nicia, whose "stupidity" receives several remarks,[13] proves to be the shrewdest character in the play. Nicia appears stupid because he will tarnish his name for the sake of a familial legacy. He even acknowledges that going along with the plan for Lucrezia to take the mandrake will "make a wife a whore and myself a cuckold."[14] "But why is that necessarily stupid?" Mansfield asks.[15] The answer? Most people take the morality implied in monogamy seriously, and think less of those unable to keep their partner monogamous. In other words, most people mistake the moral for the intelligent. It is also easier to identify with Callimaco's short-range interest than with Nicia's long-range outlook. Nevertheless, monogamy obstructs Nicia's wish for children no less than it obstructs Callimaco's wish for sex, and in fact the achievement of Nicia's plan takes as much daring as does the achievement of Callimaco's plan. One could say that Nicia must go further for children than Callimaco must for sex. Nicia faces ridicule. By becoming a cuckold to become a father, Nicia boldly steps outside convention. (Callimaco, whose true identity remains unknown to

[13] See, for example, Niccolò Machiavelli, *Mandragola*, trans. Mera J. Flaumenhaft (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1981), 1.3 (17); 2.4 (23).

[14] Ibid, 1.6 (25).

[15] See Harvey C. Mansfield, "The Cuckold in Machiavelli's *Mandragola*," in Vickie B. Sullivan, ed., *The Comedy & Tragedy of Machiavelli: Essays on the Literary Works* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 28.

Nicia, refuses to do this.) As Nicia attests early in the play, his desire for children gives him the will "to do anything."[16]

If Nicia would "do anything" to achieve his end, then the meaning of Panurge's name, which derives from the Greek πάνουργος [ready to do anything wicked or knavish[17]], perfectly captures this spirit. Although this readiness to "do anything" manifests differently in Panurge than it does in Nicias (in the *Tiers Livre*, Panurge will do anything *not* to be cuckolded), that willingness reflects the same opinion regarding one's ability to control life. Nicia and Panurge want different things out of their marriages, but they are willing to take the same means—any means—to those things.

Rabelais's Panurge sheds light on the principle that unites Machiavelli's *Mandragola* to his political works. Machiavelli was discussing the impediments to perpetuating a regime's political rule when he personified fortune as a woman in chapter 25 of *The Prince*. Likewise, Mansfield writes that the *Mandragola* "seems at first to tell of a private sexual conquest but turns out to have a political end."[18] This end includes not only the changing of morals but the perpetuation of Nicia's political power in Florence. Similarly, Panurge's hope for harmony in the home reflects an analogous hope for harmony in the world. He realizes that harmony in the home depends on his rule over it. Panurge does not just assume his wife's loving loyalty. Analogously, harmony in the world, political harmony, depends on humanity's active rule. As I will argue in Chapter 3, Panurge's belief in a remedy for marital happiness corresponds to his

[16] *Mandragola* 1.2 (16).

[17] See Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek–English Lexicon, Compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940). S.v. *πάνουργος*.

[18] Mansfield, "Cuckold," 1.

belief in a remedy for political success. Where classical philosophy shied from politics,[19] Panurge proposes a political "teaching" that he announces as a "new manner of building walls" (*P* 15, 267 / *CW*, 182). Panurge's confidence in these walls' ability to protect the city in *Pantagruel* parallels his expectation in the *Tiers Livre* that he can somehow secure happiness in the home. Insofar as the plot of the *Tiers Livre* serves as a correction of Panurge,[20] Rabelais's book implicitly corrects Machiavelli as well. With respect to Panurge, Pantagruel recommends an acceptance of fate (see *TL* 9). In like fashion, Pantagruel would solve Nicia's desire for children by dissolving it, not by seeking a workaround as Machiavelli has Nicia do. Rabelais does not take up the art of controlling others but upholds the virtue of self-control and the philosophical recognition of limits.

More can be said about how cuckoldry points to a political problem. Just as partners in marriage must strive for fidelity, civic-minded people must work to maintain a good relationship with their country, their community, their regime, which—as Machiavelli's *Prince* stresses[21]—is always susceptible of seduction by some rival. But not all people are so concerned about how fortune affects politics. They can live with being "cuckolded." These are the philosophers. Like Nicia, the philosophers seem to lack vigilance or care. Non-philosophers worry that philosophers, indifferent as they are to the world of practice (because wrapped in the world of theory), would too easily allow politics to fall into the control of outsiders. This

[19] See "Apology of Socrates," in Plato, *Four Texts on Socrates*, trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 31d. See also Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, 2nd ed., trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 496d.

[20] See Edwin M. Duval, *The Design of Rabelais's* Tiers Livre de Pantagruel, Études Rabelaisiennes 34 (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1997), 194.

[21] See, for example, *Prince*, 3.13–16.

minority group must therefore watch what others think about them, as they remain suspiciously or dangerously detached from the goals and concerns of everyone else. For although I just compared the philosophers to Nicia, Nicia's inner motives suggest that this similarity only goes surface deep. Actually, as can only be expected of the majority of people, no character in the *Mandragola* has that rare, philosophic disposition of detachment toward the things of this world.[22]

The Rabelais–Machiavelli Connection

I want to be perfectly candid about the fact that Rabelais never refers to Machiavelli by name in his extant writings—not in his published works or in his few surviving private letters. Nevertheless, Rabelais's historical context provides reason to expect his knowledge of Machiavelli. France's political relationship with Italy soured in the 1490s. At that time, France aided the duke of Milan in his conflict with the Spanish and the Holy Roman Empire. The Milanese returned France's kindness by later siding against French King Charles VIII with the kingdom of Naples. Like others, Machiavelli discussed the subsequent claims France made to various Italian provinces at the turn of the century.[23] As Donald Frame writes of those ambitious military expeditions, they ironically "resulted in the cultural conquest of France by Italy."[24] Rabelais's eventual residence, Lyon, thereafter developed a printing industry interested

[22] If anyone accepts what happens to them in *Mandragola*, it is Lucrezia. See *Mandragola* 5.4 (52): [to Callimaco] "Since your astuteness, my husband's stupidity, my mother's simplicity, and my confessor's wickedness have led me to do what I never would have done by myself, I'm determined to judge that it comes from a heavenly disposition which has so willed [. . .]."

[23] *Prince*, 3.9; 7.30.

[24] See Donald Frame, *François Rabelais: A Study*. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 3–18. For more on Rabelais's connections to Italy, see R.A. Cooper, "Rabelais et l'Italie: Les lettres

in work on ancient texts. Rabelais's arrival in the city coincided with the publication of Machiavelli's *Prince*; the *Discourses on Livy* had been printed a year earlier, in 1531. As Willis Bowen writes, "Before Machiavelli's most important works were put into French [in the early 1540s] they were already being read by Frenchmen. Although Bourciez is exaggerating when he says that during the reign of Francis I [1515–1547] three fourths of courtiers could read Italian, it is true that scholarly men did not need to wait for translations."[25] At any rate, Rabelais had found a local printer for *Pantagruel*, his first book, in 1532.

Rabelais visited Rome several times. He lived for as many as six years in Italy over the course of four trips with his employer, the public-spirited Bishop of Paris, Jean du Bellay. Rabelais served du Bellay as a physician and acted as his unofficial confidant. He later travelled to the Piedmont with Jean's older brother Guillaume, seigneur de Langey, to help meet the medical needs of the French military outpost there. Ianziti establishes that Machiavelli's *Art of War* likely inspired Langey's *Instructions on the Deeds of War*, which appropriates certain passages verbatim from Machiavelli's work. Langey even reformed the French military according to recommendations made throughout Machiavelli's writings. Langey's literal reading of Machiavelli's works garnered no shortage of attention, including that of Rabelais, showing both figures' vast influence and pointing to Machiavelli's warm, albeit indirect, reception in France. Widespread revulsion to Machiavellianism, Ianziti notes, did not develop in the

écrites de Rome, 1535–1536," *Cahiers de l'Association international des études francaises* 30 (1978): 23–39; Arthur Heulhard, *Rabelais, Ses Voyages en Italie, Son Exil à Metz* (Paris, 1891).

[25] Willis Bowen, "Sixteenth Century French Translations of Machiavelli," *Italica* 27 (1950): 313.

francophone world until decades later, with the circulation and reception of Innocent Gentillet's *Anti-Machiavel*.[26]

Rabelais's time in Italy was formative, as one missive that he wrote in 1534 to Jean du Bellay from Rome suggests. The letter was later used as a dedicatory epistle for Bartolomeo Marliani's *Topographia Antiquae Romae*:

> Well before your stay in Rome, I had formed in the depths of my mind a notion, an idea of the things for which desire drew me there. First of all, I had decided to call on the famous learned men living in the places where we were to pass, and have informal discussions with them about certain difficulties that had long been bothering me. Next (and this was related to my specialty), I had to see some plants, animals, and remedies, that I was told were still unknown in France and were found in abundance in Italy. Finally, using my pen, as I would a brush, I had to depict the appearance of Rome in such wise that on my return there would be nothing I could not get out of my books *for the purposes of my fellow citizens*. On this subject, I had brought with me a pile of notes gathered in various Greek and Latin authors. On the first point, even if my wishes were not granted in full, I did not make out badly. As for the plants and animals, there are none in Italy that I did not see and know beforehand. I saw just one plane tree in Diana's grotto in Aricia. As for the last point [of depicting Rome's appearance with a pen], I went through so much trouble on it that no one, I think, knows his own house any better than I know Rome and its districts.[27]

Rabelais states what his trip to Italy meant to him cautiously, and in so doing he creates an air of excitement. The "famous learned men" he convened with, their "informal discussions," his "certain difficulties"—all of these whet the reader's interest. The nature of these "certain difficulties" can be narrowed. Rabelais discloses that his task required him to bring "a pile of notes gathered in various Greek and Latin authors," and that he wished to help his "fellow citizens." His mission was, then, an intellectual–political one. Still, no smoking gun proves that these "certain difficulties" had anything to do with Machiavelli.

---

[26] Gary Ianziti, "Rabelais and Machiavelli," *Romance Notes* 16 (1975): 463.

[27] Rabelais, "Letter to Jean du Bellay, August 31, 1534," in *CW*, 758. Italics mine.

Because there is no recourse to Rabelais's openly stated opinion of his Italian peer, I make a textually based argument that draws on their shared concerns and themes. In addition, throughout my work I point to Rabelais's allusions that suggest the two thinkers' relationship. I will discuss my plan for overcoming the indirect nature of my evidence at greater length in Chapter 3, after describing Rabelais's oblique writing style in Chapter 2.

Even if Rabelais opposes Machiavelli unintentionally or inadvertently and merely by virtue of his natural disposition, Rabelais's re-articulation of classical philosophy still represents a serious alternative to Machiavelli's "new modes and orders." Comparing Rabelais and Machiavelli brings us back to a fork in the road of human history. The main thread of my argument pits Machiavelli's aim to subjugate fortune (both personal and political) against Rabelais's circumspect philosophy of Pantagruelism, described in the *Quart Livre* as "gaiety of spirit confected in contempt of fortuitous things" (*QL* prol, 523 / *CW*, 425).

Before beginning my argument, I provide a brief sketch of it for readers to follow.

Chapter Structures

As I just mentioned, Chapter 2 focuses on Rabelais's writing, specifically on what Voltaire referred to as Rabelais's "mask of folly."[28] This mask obscures Rabelais's intention and purifies his readership so that only the "precious topers" and "most illustrious drinkers"—philosophic readers—receive his message. Rabelais recommends two modes of reading to this

[28] Voltaire, "Lettres à S. A. Mgr. le Prince de^{xxx} sur Rabelais," in *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. Moland, 52 vols (Paris: Garnier, 1877–1885), XXVI, 470: "[Rabelais] meant to protect himself beneath the mask of folly; he makes this clearly enough understood himself in his prologue." Quoted in Frame, *Study*, 175.

audience, interpretation “in good part” and “in the most perfect sense.” The first requires *moral benevolence*, a hermeneutic assumption of goodwill. The second, interpretation “in the most perfect sense,” refers to *philosophical benevolence*. This rule of reading requires readers to construct the highest or strongest possible meaning of the text. Practicing philosophical benevolence means assuming coherence. These rules derive from the philosophy of Pantagruelism itself. The hermeneutic rules established in Chapter 2 also support Rabelais’s contention (advanced in the *Gargantua* prologue) that he writes about “our religion, the political state, and private life.”

Chapter 3 spans several books of Rabelais’s and lays out these grand themes. I begin by discussing what I call the Diogenic problem. In the prologue to the *Tiers Livre*, Rabelais turns the reader’s attention to the ancient setting of Diogenes’s Corinth, where a friend finds Diogenes rolling around his barrel as the city prepares for war. Diogenes, an apolitical because philosophic person, tells this friend that he rolls his barrel hither and thither because he fears being accused of “slacking and idling” by the Corinthians. The philosopher has concerns, in other words, about his apparent uselessness.

Two solutions to the Diogenic problem are offered in Rabelais’s books. These are Panurge’s wall-building and Pantagruel’s Pantagruelism. Panurge’s wall-building attempts to solve the Diogenic problem by insisting that philosophy can be civic-minded. By building walls, the philosopher can protect the city from the vicissitudes of fortune, relieve non-philosophic citizens of their arduous duties, and win popular esteem. Yet wall-building has a downside. To build walls for the city, the new philosophers relinquish the independence so cherished by older thinkers such as Diogenes. Pantagruelism recognizes the virtues of both the Diogenic and

Machiavellian dispositions, but it rejects their vices. As "gaiety of spirit" and "contempt for fortuitous things," Pantagruelism maintains that some things (things that are not fortuitous) can be met with human industry while others (things that are fortuitous) should be accepted philosophically. The Pantagruelist takes the middle of the road and concedes neither all nor nothing to fortune. For this reason, Pantagruelists recognize politics as a necessary sphere of life, but one that hardly solves humanity's problems.

In Chapter 4, I begin an interpretation of the *Tiers Livre* and turn to the first chapter of the book. The Utopians' conquest of Dipsody in that chapter provides the material for Rabelais's critique of the Machiavellian regime by showing how that regime manifests in Pantagruel's kingdom. Rabelais gives Utopia the features of such a regime because Panurge will live under it, and therefore he will live with it. Panurge reaps what he sows. Utopia's Machiavellianism has the ingenious purpose of educating Panurge by showing him that a community that has "built walls" still can have substantial problems.

In portraying modern Utopia, Rabelais also suggests that contemplative philosophy has no place there; the city subjects everything necessity. "Duty and obedience" characterize the citizens of this political community (*TL* 1, 353 / *CW*, 261). There is no "slacking and idling" in Utopia, no Diogenes. Machiavellian–Utopian freedom is a civilized freedom that obeys the governing officials. These limits may be necessary for political stability, but do they produce an unadulterated good? This curtailing includes intellectual life.

In light of the necessity- and duty-bound character of the Utopian regime, Chapter 5 explores the characteristic of *duty*, especially its place in Machiavelli's writings as well as in Panurge's eulogy of *debtes* (*TL* 2–5). Machiavellian duty conceals self-interest. This is how

Panurge uses duty in the *Tiers Livre*. Interpreting Machiavelli and Panurge "in good part" and "in the most perfect sense," I argue that this move comprises an attempt to correct the plain self-interestedness of Diogenes. But Pantagruel, in turn, corrects this selfish use of duty by showing that the moral and natural conditions of the cosmos allow for a kind of refined individualism that leads to greater neighborliness and honesty than does a system built on insincere obligations.

Nonetheless, Panurge continues to lay the "duty of marriage" on himself through the early chapters of the *Tiers Livre*. In Chapter 6, I cover chapters 29 through 44 of the book.[29] These are the so-called consultations, the meetings that Panurge holds with a set of experts in the professional disciplines of theology, medicine, philosophy, and law. Here Rabelais provides a series of fragmented perspectives that combine and act as a bugbear that nearly squelches Panurge's hope for stability and happiness with his wife. Taken together, these perspectives aim to teach Panurge that accepting fortune's blows will provide him the best means of protecting himself from them.

Chapter 7 completes my interpretation of the *Tiers Livre*. There I focus on the quest for the answer to Panurge's situation that the characters embark on after the consultations are completed. Before they set out to sea for the Divine Bottle and its "word" for Panurge, Pantagruel has the ships stocked with a mysterious Pantagruelion herb. I argue that Rabelais's

[29] The chapters that I exclude from analysis comprise attempts to interpret the marriage question through the following means: through dice, lots, dreams, and through consultation with the Sybil of Panzoust, the mute Goatsnose, the poet Raminagrobis, Épistemon, Herr Trippa, and Frère Jean. These chapters offer the same teaching as the official consultations do, or at least they do not inhibit Pantagruel's education of Panurge. I focus on the banquet consultations because they are central to the book and are orchestrated by Pantagruel.

description of this herb provides a keyhole through which one can see the author's view of nature. When one combines Rabelais's description of Pantagruelion with the herb's actual function in the *Quart Livre*, the author's teaching on nature points to the need for and possibility of Platonic-Socratic πίστις,[30] a human attribute or quality that rejects both the complete intelligibility and the complete mysteriousness of the cosmos.

Rabelais's project does not focus so much on the political regime most conducive of human flourishing. He does not propose a certain type of legislature, executive, or court system. Aside from the Picrocholine War in *Gargantua*, he shows little interest in how states interact. Rabelais instead seeks an answer to the more pressing question of how philosophy can flourish given the politicality of human beings. The questions that political philosophy often asks—about the appropriate or best regime, about the nature of authority and power, about distributive justice and class systems—all suppose a certain luxury. More basic is the fact that philosophy faces public pressures. Rabelais concerns himself with philosophy's place in the political world, and with whether philosophy should serve, guide, hide from, confront, oppose, or otherwise make peace or war with the political powers.

[30] Plato, *Republic*, 511d.

CHAPTER 2

INTERPRETING RABELAIS PANTAGRUELICALLY

> *Veracity, you know, has a certain authentic power of giving pleasure, if nothing offensive goes with it: but this the gods have granted only to fools.*
>
> Desiderius Erasmus

> *[Rabelais] is regarded as the chief among fools; we are sorry that a man who had so much wit should have made so miserable a use of it; he is a drunken philosopher who wrote only when drunk.*
>
> Voltaire

Revisiting Rabelais's "Plus Hault Sens"

In the second volume of his *Visions of Politics*, Quentin Skinner writes of the Enlighteners' deeply felt need to correct a bad tendency of the sixteenth century humanists with whom Rabelais associated. These Renaissance writers allegedly indulged in the practice of what Skinner calls the *Ars rhetorica*, the constant weighing of both sides of any question, the absurd defense of the seemingly indefensible. This early humanist infatuation, Skinner hypothesizes, explains why painstaking Enlighteners like Thomas Hobbes took measures to "control interpretation" in their books. Through serious methodology, scientists and moral philosophers hoped to retire the "one hand" and "other hand" typical of the Renaissance.[1]

Nobody denies that Rabelais embodies this pesky Renaissance tendency that Skinner identifies. If readers of Rabelais agree on anything, they agree on the difficulty of interpreting Rabelais's books. Consensus quickly breaks down, however, regarding what makes these books such hard reading. Indeed, to borrow a fitting turn of phrase from Rabelais's narrator, the

[1] Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Volume II: Renaissance Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 266. See also Melzer, *Between the Lines*, 209. In his discussion of pedagogical esotericism, Melzer discusses the early moderns' (that is, Bacon's, Spinoza's, and Hobbes') "flight from ambiguity."

"nitpicking sticklers for details" and "hood-brained pettifoggers" of academia have argued more about how to approach the books of *Pantagruel* than about what they actually contain. Competing articulations of how to read Rabelais properly have produced some of the most impassioned writings in the vast body of secondary literature.

A view that has the advantage of temporal distance brings into focus why these disputants remained so intractable for so long. One side of the debate argued, mainly on the basis of written directives given by the narrator in the prologue to *Gargantua*, that Rabelais's reader must search for the "higher meaning" [le plus hault sens] of the books and approach Rabelais in a spirit of interpretive generosity and *caritas*. Moreover, the reader should aim for a degree of interpretive accuracy that was particularly lacking in Rabelais's day (though by no means abundant during other historical epochs).[2] This is commonly referred to as the "Pantagruelist" position. Others have held that Rabelais's "texts"—the term *book* insinuates a coherence not to be found in Rabelais—are overwhelmingly polyvalent and playful. On this reading (I will refer to it as the "polyvalent-playfulness thesis"), Rabelais maintains a clear and consistent goal, but one that will purge readers of their latent, complex, and deep-seated desire for certainty by means of befuddlement, comedy, and confusion. Scholars have taken to calling

[2] Donald Stone, "A Word About the Prologue to Gargantua," *Romance Notes* 13 (1972):511–514; André Gendre, "Le Prologue de *Pantagruel*, le prologue de *Gargantua*: Examen comparative," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* 74 (1974):3–19; Michel Charles, *Rhétorique de la lecture* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977), 33–58; George Mallary Masters, "On *Learned Ignorance*, or How to Read Rabelais: Part I, Theory," *Romance Notes* 19 (1978):127–132; Gérard Defaux, "D'un problème l'autre: Herméneutique de 'l'altior sensus' et 'captatio lectoris' dans le Prologue de *Gargantua*," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* 85 (1985):195–216; Edwin M. Duval, "Interpretation and the 'doctrine absconce' of Rabelais's Prologue to *Gargantua*," *Études Rabelaisiennes* 18 (1985):1–17; Guy Demerson, "Le 'Prologe' exemplaire du *Gargantua*: Le Littéraire et ses retranchements," *Versants* (1989): 35–57; David M. Posner, "The temple of reading: architectonic metaphor in Rabelais," *Renaissance Studies* 17 (2003):257–274.

this the "Rabelaisian" position. John A. Walker expressed the Rabelaisian outlook well in his review of Florence Weinberg's (Pantagruelist) book *The Wine and the Will*: "[Weinberg and the literary historians] all give the impression that Rabelais mainly meant to say *one* thing." Then, a barb: "Doesn't Rabelais tell us so, in the Prologue to *Gargantua*?"[3] Through irony like Walker's, the Rabelaisians maintain that searching for any "hidden meaning" in Rabelais's texts means foolishly rushing in where angels fear to tread. The angelic Michel Beaujour put it best when he wrote that Rabelais "doesn't mean anything" [ne veut rien dire][4] but instead plays games with the reader. This literary *jeu* that Rabelais *joue* would seem to be Skinner's *Ars rhetorica* taken to the extreme.

Despite the discord, all parties in the debate believe that Rabelais's writing keeps to a strict design. Whereas the Pantagruelist researchers tend to view Rabelais's design as a test to separate those who eat meat from those who suckle milk,[5] the Rabelaisians maintain that this

[3] John A. Walker, Review of *The Wine and the Will: Rabelais's [sic] Bacchic Christianity* by Florence Weinburg, *Renaissance and Reformation* 10 (1974) 130.

[4] Michel Beaujour, *Le Jeu de Rabelais* (Paris: l'Herne, 1969), 26. See also Floyd Gray, "Ambiguity and Point of View in the Prologue to *Gargantua*," Romanic Review 56 (1965):12–21; François Rigolot, *Les Langages de Rabelais* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1972/2009); Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979); Michael Baraz, "Un texte polyvalent: le prologue de *Gargantua*," in Société Française des Seiziémistes, *Mélanges sur la littérature de la Renaissance à la mémoire de V.-L. Saulnier* (Travaux Humanisme Renaissance; Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1984), 527–535; Raymond C. La Charité, "Rabelais and the Silenic Text: The Prologue to *Gargantua*," in Raymond C. La Charité, ed., *Rabelais's Incomparable Book: Essays on His Art* (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1986), 72–86; Richard L. Regosin, "The Ins(ides) and Outs(ides) of Reading: Plural Discourse and the Question of Interpretation in Rabelais," in *Incomparable Book*, 59–71; Raymond C. La Charité, "Lecteurs et lectures dans le Prologue du *Gargantua*," in Jean Céard et Jean-Claude Margolin, eds., "Rabelais en son demi-millénaire: Actes du Colloque International de Tours (24–29 Septembre 1984)," *Études Rabelaisiennes* 21 (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1988), 285–292; François Rigolot, "Rabelais's Laurel for Glory: A Further Study of the 'Pantagruelion,'" *Renaissance Quarterly* 42 (1989): 60–77; Duane A. Rudolph, "Rereading Rabelais' Sacred Noise," *Renaissance and Reformation* 29 (2005): 23–40.

[5] See I Corinthians 3:2.

design functions more as a bear trap, placed artfully and discreetly to capture the overzealous. These two camps remained at loggerheads from the late 1960s through the early 2000s, although this small patch of common ground—Rabelais's design—has always made amicable relations possible. The various chapters that compose the recent *Cambridge Companion to Rabelais* (2011) suggest that an uneasy peace has finally been established. The *Companion* chapters advocate a balanced approach, yet they still emphasize the difficulty of Rabelais's texts so as to avoid the pitfall of dogmatism. "Reading Rabelais is no easy matter," one contributor begins. "His language constitutes an initial obstacle." This is because his works are "carefully, artfully structured to avoid transparency," his writing "privileges discontinuity," is "purposely undecidable," and piles on "irrelevant learning and advice." His narrator speaks unreliably, and his general "frame of reference" remains unknown to us. Rabelais was also subject to "publishing reality."[6] Another *Companion* contributor agrees that it is the scholar's job or duty to "convey a sense of the pervasiveness and ambiguity of interpretation, as an activity, a theme, or a problem in Rabelais's books."[7] These authors do not voice their opinions as bluntly as Beaujour did, but his sentiment can be heard in these excerpts.

In light of the fact that even those occupying the moderate position tend to dismiss the search for Rabelais's higher meaning and refuse to be fooled by the surface of the text, one must ask: If the desire for certainty is a characteristic of the modern age of Enlightenment, have

[6] Floyd Gray, "Reading the works of Rabelais," in *The Cambridge Companion to Rabelais*, ed. John O'Brien (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 15; 16; 21; 18; 24; 17; 16. For more on the book trade that Rabelais dealt in, see David J. Shaw, "The Book Trade Comes of Age: The Sixteenth Century," in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, eds. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 220–231

[7] François Cornilliat, "Interpretation in Rabelais, interpretation of Rabelais," in *Cambridge Companion*, 44.

we (thanks to the help of these Rabelaisians, both orthodox and reformed) finally overcome that desire and moved into a postmodern period where we are better equipped to cope with uncertainty and ambiguity? Does the polyvalent-playfulness thesis capture the spirit of Rabelais, or does it offer an explanation that tidies up things just as much as earlier interpretive theories did (that is, a bit too much)? This last possibility should be considered, given that all hermeneutic approaches come with their hazards—hazards that can prove all the more dangerous because they incline to certify our frustrations, feelings, and prejudices.

Our Hermeneutic Pessimism

In his work on the history of hermeneutics, politics, and philosophy, Arthur Melzer observes a widespread phenomenon that one could say postmodern Rabelaisianism simply participates in. This is an age where scholars "despair," Melzer writes, "of the possibility of reaching the 'true interpretation' of even the simplest of texts."[8] In the case of Rabelais, this hermeneutic pessimism is all the more insidious because it need not be admitted as an abandonment of seeking authorial meaning but can claim alignment with Rabelais's highest goal. Rabelais still means something precisely by not meaning anything. Rabelais can have a meaning because he is a hermeneutic pessimist ahead of his time. He is just like us.

Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin did not think he had imposed anything foreign on the books of *Pantagruel*. Rather, he claimed to rescue Rabelais from decades of scholarship wrongly equating the subversive author's views with the thinking of "official culture." (Bakhtin had been the fount of all the work accomplished by Beaujour and those who subscribed to the

[8] *Between the Lines*, 106–107.

polyvalent-playfulness thesis. Beaujour insisted that his writing merely expanded and carried Bakhtin's argument to its logical conclusion.)[9] Nonetheless, scholars have since questioned Bakhtin's motives. John Parkin, discussing Bakhtin's account of laughter in Rabelais, detects an ideological assumption: "Clearly the argument is too simplistic, even vapidly Marxist to an extent some would see as exceptional in [Bakhtin's] thinking."[10] Parkin enlists the support of Richard Berrong, who agreed that he could not "accord the work [by Bakhtin] any real value [. . .] as an interpretation of Rabelais."[11] Even in a deeply sympathetic account of how Bakhtin's *Rabelais and His World* was received by the Soviet regime, Michael Holquist does not shy from the fact that

> Western scholars might quickly grasp the obvious parallel between Bakhtin's scathing characterization of the Catholic church in the sixteenth century and features of Stalinism in the twentieth, but they would be unaware of *just how deep and sustained were particular references in the book* [Rabelais and His World] *to its own time* [the 1960s] *and place* [Russia].[12]

Insofar as Rabelaisian scholarship and the current compromise that emerged from the Rabelaisian challenge has stood on Bakhtin's shoulders, these approaches risk reading contemporary, anachronistic assumptions into Rabelais's books, such that Rabelais would seem right at home in today's university faculty lounge.

[9] Beaujour, *Le Jeu*, 9.

[10] Parkin, *Interpretations of Rabelais* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 154.

[11] Richard M. Berrong, *Rabelais and Bakhtin* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 109. Quoted in Parkin, *Interpretations*, 151n28.

[12] Michael Holquist, "Bakhtin and Rabelais: Theory as Praxis," *boundary* 2 (1982–83): 9.

Chapter Plan

Clearly the question of how to read Rabelais remains unsettled. But in the following discussion of how to read Rabelais, I do not claim to clear bramble and forge a new path. I think scholars should minimize imposition on the text and take cues from Rabelais where possible. I also think some of these cues have been neglected. I aim to marshal enough evidence to justify a serious reading of Rabelais's works that takes account of his "higher meaning."

Below I begin by raising the question of who constituted Rabelais's intended audience. Egalitarians assume that any educated person can open a book and find a warm welcome, but Rabelais writes to a much narrower audience than authors today engage. Yet—and this point is crucial—the narrowness of Rabelais's readership is not due to social class membership requirements. Instead it has to do with the rarity of these readers' philosophical character. Because of the rarity of this character, it follows that Rabelais intended for a trans-historical readership.

Still, Rabelais addresses himself to a natural elite, and this fact has consequences for modern readings of Rabelais that assume a different audience. To demonstrate some of these consequences, I show how the egalitarianism that Bakhtin assumes of the audience of *Pantagruel* distorts his reading. I do not leave matters here, because other Rabelais scholars (also egalitarians) have described how jarringly exclusive and inegalitarian Rabelais can seem. Carla Freccero's feminist reading of Rabelais serves as an important and insightful example of such exclusivity. By applying the standard of gender equality to Rabelais, Freccero's reading undermines Bakhtin's egalitarian Rabelais. Nonetheless, the exclusivist Rabelais that Freccero

portrays differs significantly from the Rabelais who excludes on the basis of philosophical abilities—a basis that need not exclude women any more than it excludes men.

After establishing the philosophical readership of Rabelais's books and comparing the implications of this readership–relationship with those assumed by Bakhtin and Freccero, I revisit the mode of reading recommended to the philosophic reader by Rabelais's narrators.[13] This reading mode contains two components. The first is morally benevolent reading. The second is philosophically benevolent reading, or accurate interpretation. Finally, the kind of readership to whom Rabelais's books are dedicated speaks to the kind of issues that the texts will treat. Establishing Rabelais's relationship with his philosophic readers contributes to my argument that Rabelais's books, and especially his *Tiers Livre*, comprise a critique of a new political philosophy that aims for greater influence in the realm of political practice.

Rabelais's Thirsty Audience

Gargantua (1535) begins with its narrator Nasier Alcofribas (an anagram of François Rabelais) insisting that his true readership consists of "all good companies of Pantagruelists." These are the "most illustrious drinkers" who are "drinking as [Alcofribas] was" (*G* prol*,* 8; 5; 7 / *CW*, 5; 3; 5). In the *Tiers Livre,* Rabelais (now writing in his own name) likewise isolates the drinker as his sole addressee. He dedicates the book to "the very illustrious drinkers and precious gouties" (*TL* prol*,* 345 / *CW*, 253). Who do Alcofribas and Rabelais have in mind? Are readers to take these references to drink as "images" that are "closely interwoven with those of

[13] Nasier Alcofribas narrates *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*; Rabelais narrates the last three books.

the grotesque body"?[14] André Winandy offers a mainstream interpretation of who makes up this drunken audience. He too notes that some groups are "excluded from this fellowship [of readers]." The "legal bribemongers," "high-hatted pettifoggers always on the look-out for mistakes," and "pious hypocrites" are among those left out. These monikers apply to three groups: politicians, scholastic theologians, and clerics. Because all those with hands on the levers of power are disqualified as readers, Winandy believes that Rabelais's censure of these groups lends credence to Bakhtin's reading of Rabelais as a vindicator of the lowly. But Winandy takes an unnecessary next step. Given the groups excluded, he interprets the act of drinking in Rabelais not as intellectual activity but as physical experience and even as non-thinking: "Wine and carnival revelry closely relate to debasement, bowels, and excrement [. . .]. The narrator's obsession with the ambivalent debasing-generative character of urine is repeatedly illustrated."[15] If Winandy correctly interprets the meaning of drinking in Rabelais's books, then Rabelais could not be anything further from a philosopher.

It is true that Alcofribas only gradually elaborates the meaning behind these odd designations, so this drunken audience's constitution becomes a preliminary interpretive question. But textual evidence slowly accrues and suggests that Rabelais's dedication is aimed at those who thirst not for booze but for wisdom.

---

[14] See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968/1984), 279.

[15] Winandy concedes that to drink is "to have a certain pondered yet exalted openness to the fullness of human experience, that of bodily functions and that of mental, spiritual aspirations [. . .]." He also recognizes that Rabelais's "'honest boozer' [. . .] becomes a seeker of the obvious, but also of that which is hidden from him." Ultimately, though, these "hidden things" pertain to the "discovery of the body." See Winandy, "Rabelais' Barrel," *Yale French Studies* 50 (1974): 10; 16; 11; 10; 17.

Drinking as Thinking in the Prologue to the Tiers Livre

In the prologue to the *Tiers Livre*, Rabelais presents a new version of a traditional tale about Diogenes the Cynic. Rabelais says he turns to Diogenes so that readers may "start on the wine" (*TL* prol*,* 345 / *CW*, 253). The "wine" is unambiguously Rabelais's story, his story is consequently meant for "the very illustrious drinkers," and it discloses what made Diogenes "one rare and happy philosopher in a thousand" (*TL* prol*,* 346 / *CW*, 254). Immediately the illustrious drinkers of the dedication are set apart. Far from vulgar epicureans, they learn about the happiness of a philosopher renowned for an acerbic asceticism. Of course there is some emphasis on pleasure in Diogenes's story, but this is a refined kind of pleasure evident only to those who can see past or endure the drudgery of Diogenes's lifestyle with its many privations. Diogenes's rare happiness satisfies only the rare reader. The contents of Rabelais's story affirm this rareness. The Cynic philosopher has been shunned because of his theoretic preoccupation and apparent idleness (*TL* prol, 348 / *CW*, 256). His effective ostracism hardly amounts to happiness for most people, who value community and esteem.

Diogenes's story as "wine" is not the only piece of evidence for drinking as thinking. Rabelais's self-identification as a drinker also helps resolve the question of who constitutes the drunken audience. Further, Rabelais writes that his drinking reflects the activities of the Greek and Roman poets Homer and Ennius, who also drank (*TL* prol*,* 349 / *CW*, 257). If this league of drinkers, populated by poets, constitutes an out-group (as Bakhtin and Winandy posit), it differs from an economic or social out-group. For poets and philosophers have turbulent relationships with the political powers, and although Rabelais does not associate drinking with philosophers, he portrays Homer and Ennius as philosophic poets. To Homer he gives the epithet "the father

of philosophy" (*TL* 13, 391 / *CW*, 295). While perhaps not a philosopher himself, the drinking Homer bears some familial relation to philosophy or sires love of wisdom through his poetic utterances. Homer's patriarchy implies that understanding poetry, mysterious in structure and inspired in character, requires intellectual work that enlivens thought. Compare poetry with prose. Prose lays out an argument for readers to evaluate, and evaluating or interpreting prose means verifying the soundness of another's argument. Poetry, by contrast, makes no argument but simply reports or declares. Poetry leaves the argument unarticulated and forces readers to make it. For Rabelais, Homer, and Ennius, drinking is not the creative act of making poetry but the receptive (and perhaps more passive) act of digestion through contemplation.

So far, Rabelais has left the reader to connect the drinking dots. But he does finally leave direct textual evidence that drinking means thinking, at least for him and for those like him. Just after explaining his relationship to Homer and Ennius, Rabelais begs our pardon as he pauses to "sniff down a snifter from this bottle," and declares that "drinking *I deliberate, I discourse, I resolve and conclude*" (*TL* prol*,* 349 / *CW*, 257; italics mine). If ever there is a clear and unambiguous definition of terms in Rabelais, this is it.[16]

In case he has not brought the image of the drinker as the philosophic reader into sharp enough relief, Rabelais makes a more pointed statement in the closing remarks of the prologue: "Note well what I have said, and what type of people I invite [. . .]. I have pierced [the Diogenic barrel] *only for you*, good people, drinkers of the first edition and gouties in your own right" (*TL* prol*,* 352 / *CW*, 259; italics mine). The exclusiveness of Rabelais's invitation does not admit the

[16] For the best study of the theme of drinking in all of Rabelais's five books, see Florence Weinberg, *The Wine and the Will: Rabelais's Bacchic Christianity* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1972).

conventional, inclusive use of the term *drinker*. Here again the author calls out not to drinkers, but to drinkers "of the first edition," a species of the genus.

Drinking as Thinking in the Cinquiesme Livre

Rabelais's prologues are not the only places where drinking means thinking. The conclusion of the Pantagruelic company's quest for the Divine Bottle and its solution to Panurge's marriage question elaborates the theme of thirst as well. In chapter 45 of the *Cinquiesme Livre*, the oracle given by the Divine Bottle commands Panurge to "drink" [TRINCH]. The high priestess charged with guarding the Bottle, Bacbuc, gives a speech that uncovers the oracle's meaning. Bacbuc calls drinking an indication of neediness and deems it humanity's distinctive trait. Drinking cures neediness by giving "power," for "power it has to fill the soul with all truth, all knowledge and philosophy" (*CL* 45, 834 / *CW*, 710). Bacbuc identifies the powerful as those who "have noted what is written in Ionic letters over the door into the temple," γνῶθι σεαυτόν (*CL* 45, 834 / *CW*, 710).[17] This group, aware of their need for self-knowledge, thirsts most, and Bacbuc's discussion of how to satisfy their need for self-knowledge involves no discussion of revelry. Instead she gives a serious, twofold curriculum of study. In fact, Bacbuc's educational plan mirrors that of Socrates as laid out in Book IV of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. Bacbuc and Socrates are not in simple agreement, however. Their differences speak to unique historical situations. Consider these differences in greater detail:

[17] Panurge recognized but neglected self-knowledge as the key to philosophy. See *TL* 27, 428 / *CW*, 329.

Bacbuc introduces self-knowledge

If you have noted what is written in Ionic letters over the door into the temple, you have been able to understand that in wine truth is hidden. The divine Bottle sends you to it. (*CL* 45, 834 / *CW*, 710)

Socrates introduces self-knowledge

Tell me, Euthydemus, have you ever been to Delphi?
Yes, certainly; twice.
Then did you notice somewhere on the temple the inscription 'Know thyself?[18]

Bacbuc's curriculum

All ancient philosophers [. . .] have considered two things necessary: *guidance of God* and *company of man*. (*CL* 47, 840 / *CW*, 716)

Socrates's curriculum

In the first place, he tried to make his companions *moderate toward the gods*.[19] Again, concerning *justice* he did not hide his opinion, but proclaimed it by his actions.[20]

Bacbuc on divine guidance

[The wise] b*esought* [*God*] *to manifest and reveal himself to them*, opening up to them knowledge of him and his creatures, thus by the guidance of *a good lantern.* (*CL* 47, 840 / *CW*, 716)

Socrates on divine guidance

[. . .] has it ever occurred to you to *reflect on the care the gods have taken* to furnish man with what he needs? [. . .] Well, no doubt you know that our first and foremost need is *light*, *which is supplied to us by the gods?*[21]

After reminding the companions of their divine calling to know themselves, Bacbuc urges the questers to investigate the "guidance of God" and "company of man" just as Socrates urges Euthydemus to investigate piety and justice. To make these investigations is to "TRINCH," yet Bacbuc and Socrates do not make identical recommendations.

[18] Xenophon, "Memorabilia," in *Xenophon in Seven Volumes*, vol. 4, ed. and trans. E.C. Marchant (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923), 4.2.24. Rabelais cites Xenophon three times (*G* 10, 32; *TL* 13, 388; *CL* 14, 757). His references include at least the *Anabasis* and *Cyropaedia*. Rabelais probably knew Xenophon through J.C. Scalinger and Erasmus. See *CW*, 845n2.

[19] *Memorabilia* 4.3.2

[20] Ibid, 4.4.1.

[21] Ibid, 4.3.3.

Piety and Justice

Bacbuc's order to learn about the "guidance of God" and "company of man" correlate to sections 4.3 and 4.4 of the *Memorabilia*, which discuss piety and justice respectively, and which likewise follow an exhortation to self-knowledge in section 4.2. Yet Socrates teaches these subjects in a fashion inconsistent with the Christian theology and humanist ethics so often ascribed to Rabelais. After Socrates poses the issue of self-knowledge to Euthydemus in the *Memorabilia*, and after Euthydemus displays a persistent desire to know,[22] Socrates emphasizes the need for "moderation" toward the gods.[23] It is not at all clear that Bacbuc understands "divine guidance" as such "moderation." For Socrates, moderation occurs when one examines how the gods care for people.[24] The inquirers will be "moderated" by expecting less divine help after making this examination. In keeping with these findings, and only after stridently stressing the bountiful goods that the gods provide us with, Socrates draws attention to the evils and discord that the gods perpetrate. Even the most basic *good* that Socrates names (light) cannot be enjoyed directly.[25] By contrast, Bacbuc's image of God's guidance as a "lantern" points to a different problem. Whereas the overabundance of light blinds (as in the case of Socrates), lanterns fend against darkness. Bacbuc gives a warmer salutation to divine guidance than Socrates does because light is scarcer for her than it is for Socrates.

[22] Ibid, 4.2.40.

[23] Ibid, 4.3.2.

[24] Ibid, 4.3.2–11.

[25] Ibid, 4.3.14.

Comparing the teachings of Socrates and Bacbuc also suggests that the qualities of piety and justice stand in a strange opposition to each other as vying objects of attention. After Socrates discusses the need for moderation toward the gods in chapter 3 of the *Memorabilia*, he turns to the topic of justice in chapter 4. Divinities cannot be counted on, so friends must help each other. Even in this account of human justice, however, Socrates recommends the diffident policy of refraining from injustice.[26] Again, Bacbuc's teaching diverges slightly. Because she takes time to explain the role of revelation in human life, she leaves what she means by justice ("the company of man") an open question. Whereas Socrates downplays piety and emphasizes (limited) justice, Bacbuc dwells on piety to the neglect of justice.

Bacbuc and Socrates do not offer identical educational curriculum (drinking plans, as they might be called), but Bacbuc still reveres the ancients in her speech. In fact it is simply by appealing to "the ancients" that Bacbuc points to a new intellectual movement or way of thinking that has disregarded the old philosophic themes. Early modern thinkers such as Machiavelli certainly did not ruminate on self-knowledge. Between the *Prince* and *Discourses*, Machiavelli mentions the Delphic oracle five times. In the first instance, Machiavelli writes of religion "used well." The Roman generals maintained troop morale by telling soldiers that Apollo had promised victory.[27] Later, he writes that the Roman Senate had "satisfied Apollo to the satisfaction of the plebs."[28] On no occasion does the famous inscription "know thyself"

[26] Ibid, 4.4.11.

[27] Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1.13.1. Hereafter referenced as *'DL'* and cited by book, chapter, and paragraph.

[28] Ibid, 1.55.1.

enter in Machiavelli's discussion of the oracle. In each of those mentions of Apollo detailed, Machiavelli encourages the subordination of religious institutions to the dictates of political necessity. In his hands religion becomes a tool to be used by tactful politicians. The case of Socrates shows, however, that the Delphic oracle provides an opportunity for a philosopher to take religion seriously so as to discuss philosophic themes through it. By politicizing the oracle, Machiavelli not only subordinates religion to politics but inhibits philosophic expression.

Critics argue that Bacbuc's teaching is more or less cryptic.[29] After all, when the questers receive the oracle they receive only a single, vague command [TRINCH] and begin to rhyme in poetic frenzy (*CL* 46). Yet this Bacchic furor precedes the clarifying interpretation of the *mot* of the Divine Bottle given by Bacbuc in the following chapter and discussed above. To "TRINCH," one need not attend the popular festival of the Dionysia. This discussion of Bacbuc and Socrates suggests instead that the theme of drinking allows Rabelais to discuss philosophic problems.

Was Rabelais Egalitarian?

The high-mindedness and selectivity evident in Rabelais's dedication to the philosophic reader simultaneously syncs with and contradicts the different strands of Rabelais criticism. It will be easier to understand the implications of Rabelais's targeting a philosophic audience by examining readings that assume a different audience. By comparing Mikhail Bakhtin's carnivalesque Rabelais against Carla Freccero's misogynistic Rabelais, readers can see that

[29] See Elizabeth Chesney Zegura, "Bottle, Divine or Holy (Dive Bouteille)," in Elizabeth Chesney Zegura, ed., *The Rabelais Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT, London: Greenwood Press, 2004), 21.

different opinions regarding the intended audience help determine how the works themselves are understood.

Bakhtin and Carnival

As mentioned before, studies following Bakhtin typically argue that Rabelais places sixteenth century ideologies in "ironic" opposition so that no outlook triumphs.[30] The many voices of the Rabelaisian text quickly begin to sound like cacophony, and Rabelais's radical skepticism prevails over apparent support for any system of thought. By these means, the Rabelaisian wing of Rabelais scholarship has crafted an image of the author as a destroyer of hierarchy and guardian of equality where all outlooks or perspectives equally lack authority.

Bakhtin first concluded that Rabelais's books had this egalitarian temper. Not only Rabelais scholars but the entire field of literary criticism appreciated Bakhtin's work as path-breaking. His sharpest insights resulted from an extremely honest application of historicist philosophy that expanded the possible scope of influences on an individual's thinking patterns and opinion formation. The earlier, Pantagruelist scholars (also historicists) had read Rabelais as a Christian humanist, but in attempting to resurrect Rabelais, they looked to what Bakhtin described as the merely "official" cultural and intellectual sources of cultural and social influence such as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Thomas, Erasmus, and the Bible.[31] By widening the

[30] See Holquist, "Bakhtin and Rabelais," 12; Jerome Schwartz, *Irony and Ideology in Rabelais: Structures of Subversion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[31] See, e.g., N.H. Clement, "The Eclecticism of Rabelais," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 42 (1927): 339–384; Abel Lefranc, *Rabelais: Etudes sur Gargantua, Pantagruel, le Tiers Livre* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1953); George Mallary Masters, *Rabelaisian Dialectic and the Platonic–Hermetic Tradition* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1969); Verdun L. Saulnier, *Rabelais: Rabelais dans son Enquete, La Sagesse de Gargantua, le Dessein de Rabelais* (Paris: SEDES, 1983); Linton C. Stevens, "Rabelais and

range of influences working in Rabelais's mind, Bakhtin deepened the Pantagruelist interpretation and thereby turned it on its head. Bakhtin's evaluation of Lucien Febvre, who had attempted to restore Rabelais's cultural milieu and to place the author in his precise context, explains the defects he saw in all prior Rabelais criticism:

> The fact is that Febvre, like [Abel] Lefranc, ignores the culture of folk humor of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Only the serious level of thought and culture exists in his mind. In his brilliant analysis of the various spheres of sixteenth-century culture, Febvre actually remains within its official framework. Therefore, he sees and appreciates in Rabelais' novel only that which can be understood and interpreted on that serious level. That which is essential, the true Rabelais, remains outside his scope of vision. As we have said, Febvre considers anachronism, modernization, as the historian's most grievous sin [. . .]. But, alas! he himself commits this sin in relation to laughter.[32]

Bakhtin contends that the author of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* subversively opposed his time's canonized sources and championed the "tradition of folk culture" and its spirit of "Carnival."[33] For Bakhtin, the category of Carnival or "the carnivalesque" refers to a social but prepolitical institution with deep roots in Medieval Europe. During the extended holiday time of Carnival, peasants and nobility dressed as characters incompatible with their everyday stations. The institution thus implied, if temporarily, a reconfiguration of the political powers and comprised perhaps the only area of life that escaped the control of the Catholic Church. Carnival was secular and anarchic: "[. . .] during carnival there is a temporary suspension of all hierarchic distinctions and barriers among men and of certain norms and prohibitions of usual life."[34] By

---

Aristophanes," *Studies in Philology* 55 (1958): 24–30. Michael A. Screech, *The Rabelaisian Marriage: Aspects of Rabelais' Religion, Ethics and Comic Philosophy* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1958); Screech, *Rabelais* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979). Before the publication of Bakhtin's book, Lefranc, Saulnier, and Screech had exposited by far the most influential interpretations of Rabelais.

[32] Bakhtin, *World*, 132–133.

[33] Ibid, 3.

[34] Ibid, 15. See Holquist, "Theory as Praxis," 13.

endorsing and normalizing Carnival, Rabelais's work gave some durability to the institution. Thus, according to Bakhtin's reading, Rabelais was able to simultaneously bring forth the virtues of the everyday person and to puncture the pretensions of French nobility.

Bakhtin equates the official with the serious. On his telling, any discussion of philosophy, literature, or art must be vetted by the political powers, or amounts to propaganda. Because Bakhtin reads philosophic texts as "official" texts, he either rejects them as purveyors of the opinions of the day or—in very unusual cases— accepts them on the basis of their ironic use, as in the case of Rabelais. This view of philosophy is especially damaging, however, because it does not recognize that philosophic texts can be counter-cultural without being ironic in the way he supposes. Philosophic texts can contain a positive message that opposes the prevailing political ideology. Plato, for example, discusses other regimes than that of Socrates's Athens—and holds those regimes in higher esteem than Athenian democracy. (This is to say nothing of Socrates's personal god versus the traditional gods of the Greek world.) To the extent that Rabelais has an interest in philosophic themes, to the extent that Rabelais does not think of philosophy as part of "official culture," Bakhtin need not regard philosophy as a weapon of the enemy.

The Feminist Reading of Rabelais

Rabelais's legacy does not end with Bakhtin, and therefore it does not end with Rabelais as a leveler of society. Since scholars translated Bakhtin's Rabelais book into English, studies in America have usually taken one of three courses. Many aim to expand knowledge of quotidian life during the Renaissance to better define the carnival concept and to reveal ever more

connections between Rabelais and this underground movement. Some take a traditional tack and challenge Bakhtin's assertion that Rabelais protested the prevailing ideologies of the day. Such traditionalist studies proceed by placing the author in an increasingly clear context of biblical humanists like Erasmus and Budé, who Rabelais clearly admired and corresponded with.[35] Others apply "contemporary theoretical insights" to Rabelais and read him through a hermeneutic lens that views the text from the perspective of society's margins.[36] The last of these developments is of greatest interest here because it has resulted in a reappraisal of Rabelais's legacy. For those contemporary theoretical insights included the insights of feminist readers who have questioned the legacy of Rabelais's supposed push for equality.[37] Tracing this development illuminates the complications of Bakhtin's egalitarian reading of Rabelais.

Part of Bakhtin's approach was to deny meaningful differences between high and low content in the Rabelaisian corpus. According to Bakhtin, Rabelais did not prefer the high (that is, the philosophical ideas) to the low (that is, folk humor). But Bakhtin did not merely equate high with low. He went further and idealized the low. Soon, feminist scholars would seize on this idealization and argue that Rabelais embraced the low in its entirety—yes, its virtues, but also its prejudices. These scholars suitably follow Bakhtin's abolition of a high–low distinction, and for this very reason they discredit Bakhtin's portrayal of a prejudice-free Rabelais.

---

[35] See n. 4 above. See "To Guillaume Budé, March 4, 1521" and "To Bernard Salignac, November 30, 1532 (Missive letter to Erasmus)" in *CW*, 735–737; 746.

[36] Carla Freccero, *Father Figures: Genealogy and Narrative Structure in Rabelais* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), ix.

[37] See Wayne C. Booth, "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism," *Critical Inquiry* 9 (1982): 45–76 for a discussion of the tension between Bakhtin and the feminists.

At any rate, Carla Freccero claims that even the high aspects of Rabelais had been tainted by prejudice. She isolates Rabelais's Christian humanism as a source of his alleged misogyny, blaming that thought system's "imperialist bases."[38] Freccero in fact shows more than she sets out to prove. Not only Christian humanism but even Rabelais's clownish, carnivalesque elements perpetuate patriarchy despite the latter's celebrated leveling effect on society. Bakhtin's reading may not easily withstand, for example, Freccero's scrutiny of an exchange between Panurge and a "high lady of Paris." After the high lady rejects Panurge's persistent sexual advances, Panurge causes a pack of dogs to urinate on her (*P* 22, 296–297 / *CW*, 209). Where Bakhtin and others focus on the apparent sacrilege or blasphemy of Panurge's vengeful actions (which take place on the holiday of Corpus Christi), or on the class differences between the noblewoman and poor Panurge, [39] Freccero's interpretation emphasizes the blatant injustice that Panurge commits against the female character. For Freccero, Rabelais's writings—at their best—exude "masculinity and male friendship."[40] By highlighting Rabelais's apparent hostility toward or neglect of femininity, Freccero wonders whether such a restricted worldview can subvert the social order in the least.

---

[38] Freccero, *Father Figures*, ix.

[39] Bakhtin, *World*, 229–230. Strangely, the Pantagruelists agree with Bakhtin that Panurge can be redeemed as "humiliating the exalted." See Edwin M. Duval, *The Design of Rabelais's* Pantagruel (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1991), 139.

[40] See Carla Freccero, "Feminism, Rabelais, and the Hill/Thomas Hearings: Return to a Scene of Reading," in *François Rabelais: Critical Assessments,* ed. Jean-Claude Carron (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 73–82; Carla Freccero, "Queer Rabelais?," in *Approaches to Teaching the Works of François Rabelais*, eds. Floyd Gray and Todd W. Reeser (NY: MLA, 2011), 182–191. Other scholars recognize in Freccero's Rabelais a concentration on the "homosocial bond." See Rosa A. Perez, "The Workings of Desire: Panurge and the Dogs," in *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behavior, Its Meaning, and Consequences*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2010), 593.

A Philosophic Egalitarianism

Both Bakhtin and Freccero work from the premise that Rabelais wrote for a popular audience as a writer who reflected the hegemonic dispositions of the day. Bakhtin and Freccero could hardly differ more in their conclusions about Rabelais, but only because they disagree about the character of Rabelais's age and his situation in it. Bakhtin locates Rabelais in a marginalized pocket of society that could be revered for its mirthful battle against oppressive forces. Freccero, on the other hand, gives us a Rabelais who, compelled by the homosocial bond, deserves the title of oppressor for his implications in the degradation of women. There are, no doubt, glimpses of the real Rabelais in both of these views. Yet Rabelais maintains that he does not write to the entirety or even to a segment of "his society," those who would feel affirmed by seeing their prejudices played out on the page. Remember, those "precious gouties" who Rabelais reaches out to may not live in sixteenth century France. The Greek Homer (ca. 800 BC) and Roman Ennius (239–169 BC) were both drinkers like Rabelais, yet these poets stood more—in Homer's case far more—than sixteen hundred years in distance from Rabelais. Moreover, vast expanses of time and place separated these ancient writers.

Imagining Rabelais's audience as he did (rather than as history suggests it was) provides the surest path to understanding the author. Rabelais says he models his audience after that of Lucilius, the early Roman satirist who "protested that he wrote only for his Tarentines and Cosenzans" (*TL* prol*,* 352 / *CW*, 259). By this Rabelais means that his audience is limited to some form of kin. Yet in the precise sense, Rabelais deviates from Lucilius's model. Lucilius wrote as a citizen to fellow citizens. Like Lucilius, Rabelais tailors his audience, but his illustrious drinkers transcend the ordinary political community. These are citizens of a different kind of community.

Authoring a trans-political book, Rabelais leaves his relationship to France questionable: "comrade I may not be," he warns (*TL* prol*,* 350 / *CW*, 259). Rabelais writes to no specific segment of society, high or low. In his commitment to the good companions, Rabelais must expand the range of possible readers from which he draws even as he contracts his circle. Even though he abolishes conventional distinctions—one could say he calls out to "neither Jew nor Greek," "neither slave nor free," "neither male nor female"[41]—the natural distinction that he makes between drinkers and non-drinkers ensures a small following.

Monks' Robes and Spanish Capes (*Gargantua*, prologue)

It is well that Rabelais addresses his book to philosophic readers, but what is this special group to do? Why have they been signaled? The answer has two parts. First, Rabelais addresses these readers to alert them to his obfuscating style of writing. Second, Rabelais wants them to know that his book has philosophic significance—that it discusses a philosophic theme or problem. There is "substantific marrow" in his bone of a book (*G* prol, 7 / *CW*, 4). Rabelais handles both these reasons, discussed in order below, in the prologue to *Gargantua*.

Taking Things "In Good Part" and "In the Most Perfect Sense"

Postmodern studies of Rabelais's language and aesthetic have defended their position by charging that Rabelais's writings abound in contradictions even in their clearest moments. For example, Terence Cave, Michel Jeanneret, and François Rigolot seek to dissuade readers from embarking on the search for "substantific marrow" that Rabelais encourages them to

[41] See Galatians 3:28.

make by pointing out that just lines later Rabelais blames contemporary interpreters of Homer for conjuring new, unintended meanings. As Rabelais puts it, eager readers tend to "calk" allegories and impose their prejudices on the text (*G* prol, 7 / *CW*, 4–5). The Rabelaisians could point to an excessively freewheeling "esoteric" interpretation of Rabelais such as that by Claude Gaignebet as a recent example of this danger and as evidence of the need to stop reading too deeply into Rabelais's texts. (In 1986, Gaignebet sought to establish Rabelais's covert association with Freemasonry.)[42] In addition, the Rabelaisians point out that Rabelais proceeds—after ardently insisting on his seriousness—to call his work mere drinking (see *G* prol, 7 / *CW*, 5).[43] This the Rabelaisians have taken as an authorial retraction of the self-pronounced rules of writing that Rabelais provides moments before. But as Rabelais has indicated, drinking in his books is never "mere" drinking. The Rabelaisians' discoveries of these stumbling-blocks would condemn the search for Rabelais's meaning if they were not artifacts of his writing style, but they are. Indeed, Rabelais warns readers that during their search they will encounter everything that the Rabelaisians take as evidence of polyvalent-playfulness.

There is yet another reason to reject the polyvalent-playfulness thesis. Beyond insisting that he writes as he does purposely, Rabelais adds that only those who "take all things for the good" (*TL* 2, 357 / *CW*, 264) and "interpret all [his] deeds and words in the most perfect sense"

[42] Gaignebet, *A plus hault sens: L'ésoterisme spirituel et charnel de Rabelais,* 2 vols. (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1986).

[43] See Terence Cave, Michel Jeanneret, and François Rigolot, "Sur la prétendue transparence de Rabelais," *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France* 86 (1986): 709–16. See also Walker, review of *The Wine and the Will*, 130, and n. 6 above for more examples of this reading of the prologue.

(*G* prol, 8 / *CW*, 5) will receive his teachings. That is, Rabelais asks readers to put a question to themselves: Is he being treated benevolently? Is he being "done justice"?

Each of these variants of the expression seem to correspond to a different sense. Taking things "in good part" suggests moral benevolence; taking them "in the most perfect sense," philosophical benevolence. Given the persecutory mood of Rabelais's day, scholars have often recognized the need for moral benevolence in the act of interpretation.[44] Moral benevolence demands giving the author a presumption of innocence. If the text seems to say something troublingly unorthodox or heretical, one must try to see whether the words can be reconciled with the orthodox view. This is an important practice when the temper of an age inclines to presume guilt, as when Rabelais wrote.

What is philosophical benevolence, then? Here it helps to compare Rabelais's instructions to his readers with those of another philosopher. When Rabelais asks us to interpret him "in the most perfect sense," he asks something like what Heraclitus instructed in a famous fragment of his: "Listen not to me but to the Logos."[45] As Eva Brann argues, this Heraclitean fragment enjoins us to refrain from profiling the person giving the argument (which only causes us to look for reasons to disregard *or* to too heavily regard what is said) and to

> Listen for the intention, for what the speech is about, listen to all the speeches extendedly and intently, until they are about something; help [. . .] frame what they

[44] See especially Gendre 1974, Duval 1985, and Demerson 1989 in n. 4 above.

[45] Heraclitus, *Fragments*, ed. and trans. T.M. Robinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 37 (frag. 50).

> mean or find out what they intended to say by evincing a staunch faith (even against all evidence) that they did mean or intend something.[46]

Philosophical benevolence differs from moral benevolence in that it does not have to do with whether the author's expressed view aligns with or contradicts those of the age and locality. Whereas moral benevolence means granting a presumption of innocence, philosophic benevolence means granting the presumption of coherence. As the scholarly debate over how to read Rabelais has demonstrated, it is this presumption of coherence that presents the real challenge for readers today in ironic, post-rational postmodernity.

With these very different but complementary notions of interpretive benevolence in mind, the guidelines that Rabelais recommends for the reading of his books become clearer.

Philosophical Benevolence: The Book as Silenus

An examination of the main textual evidence for approaching Rabelais as an oblique writer will show that Alcofribas's wish in the prologue to *Gargantua* resembles that of Heraclitus's wish in Fragment 50. However, Rabelais expresses this wish for different reasons than Heraclitus did. Rabelais asks readers to take all things "in the most perfect sense" because he wears the mask of a fool and will be dismissed as a fool. He fears disregard, not anger and conflagration. The excerpt from Voltaire's *Lettres* that provides this chapter's epigraph verifies Rabelais's fear, which manifests in Alcofribas's speech in the prologue to *Gargantua*. Before

[46] Eva Brann, "Talking, Reading, Writing, Listening: A Lecture for Parents and Students," (St John's College, 2011), MP3 audio file, http://cdm15894.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15894coll2/id/8. See Eva Brann, *The Logos of Heraclitus* (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2011), 15–19.

giving these lines, Alcofribas had recounted Alcibiades's speech about Socrates as a Silenus—a being with an ugly, foolish outside but beautiful, wise inside—in Plato's *Symposium*:

> To what purpose, you may well ask, does this prelude and essay point? It's inasmuch as you, my good disciples, and a few other unoccupied madmen, reading the merry titles of certain books of our creating, such as *Gargantua*, *Pantagruel*, *Tosspint*, *On the dignity of codpieces*, *On peas with bacon cum commento,* etc., too easily judge that inside there is nothing treated but mockeries, tomfooleries, and merry falsehoods, seeing that the outward sign (that is the title) is commonly received without further inquiry as derision and jest. But it is not fitting to assess people's work so lightly, for you say yourselves that the robe does not make the monk, and a man may wear a Spanish cape who in courage bears no relation to Spain. That is why you must open the book and carefully consider what is expounded in it.[47] (G prol, 6 / *CW*, 3–4)

Even the "good disciples" most open to Rabelais tend to misunderstand him as a primarily comic writer. The root of this misunderstanding grows from their habit of reading only the surface of the text—or even more superficially, of reading only the chapter headings. But as Alcofribas later insists, "the matters here treated are not so foolish as the title above claimed" (*G* prol, 6 / *CW*, 4). Readers are advised to look at the contents more closely to see what they really say, to think more deeply about both the titles and about what is treated inside. (In contrast, the Rabelaisians advise learning to take Rabelais less seriously. Rabelais has fooled many into thinking that he is not a fool.)

Unfortunately, Rabelais does not give much direction about what to do with this awareness of his inner seriousness, or how to carry out his intentions. He leaves readers to think about his titles themselves. Luckily, one work listed, Alcofribas's *On the dignity of*

[47] This passage is included on Arthur Melzer's list of "explicit testimony concerning philosophical esotericism." See Arthur M. Melzer, "A Chronological Compilation of Testimonial Evidence for Esotericism: A web appendix for *Philosophy Between the Lines: The Lost History of Esoteric Writing*" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 47. PDF, http://www.press.uchicago.edu/sites/melzer/melzer_appendix.pdf.

codpieces, speaks particularly well to the relation between title and content. Codpieces provide a hard shell to protect male genitalia. A better title for Rabelais's work would be *On the utility of codpieces*. How does a codpiece "dignify" genitalia? The answer is that it serves to adorn and magnify. The work's title looks ridiculous, but it uncovers the deeper matter of how human convention masks the imperfections or deficiencies of nature, which leave many people insecure and undignified. This is not an inconsequential teaching. It means that neither nature nor God provides people with all they need, want, or think they deserve, so they have to make those provisions themselves. The title speaks not just of the dignity of codpieces, but of the dignity that humans supply through artifacts. A profound statement lies beneath the surface of this title, but it requires philosophical benevolence to see—as Rabelais has assured. Readers should approach the rest of Rabelais's titles in a similar spirit.

Moral Benevolence: Anger and Scandal

The second half of the passage turns to a slightly different but related problem. Here Alcofribas grounds his discussion of the exoteric and esoteric aspects of writing in common opinion ("you say yourselves"). The images he chooses to illustrate that opinion concern religious life (a monk's robes) and citizenship (a Spanish cape). Only, in the cases of robes and capes, something unconventional (an unbeliever/a traitor) can take on a conventional cover (a monk/a Spaniard). So far from exculpating Rabelais, the examples indict him. He may look like a monk or a Spaniard, but look again—and closer.

Both examples suggest that appearances correlate crudely to opinion, but whereas Rabelais had previously identified complacency as the readers' main problem (the title is

"commonly received without further inquiry") to be corrected by a philosophical benevolence that makes a strong case for the text, in these cases the community often proactively investigates whether orthodox exteriors cover heresy or treachery. The impulse to make such investigations must be corrected by moral benevolence. In fact Rabelais had been subjected to such investigations after he entered the monastery near his home in 1521 and began to study literature and philosophy by candlelight. The overseer of the monastery where Rabelais lived punished him for these activities, and Rabelais left for a safer setting. Later, in the 1530s, the faculty of theology at the Sorbonne censured his books. Despite wearing the robes, Rabelais was no monk.[48]

Rabelais's experience was common in the mid-sixteenth century. Montaigne summed up the social and political situation when he later remarked that "dissimulation is among the most notable qualities of this century [the fifteen-hundreds]."[49] In keeping with Montaigne's assessment, others in Rabelais's circle of *évangeliques* were kept under close watch, and even the secretary of Jean du Bellay, Jean Bribart, was burned at the stake.[50] Although the *Index of Prohibited Books* was not compiled until 1559, French King Francis I had tried to ban printing in 1535 (around the time of the publication of *Gargantua*), a measure that he likely felt to be necessary following the social and political discontent that was initiated by the Reformers and

[48] Harry R. Secor, "Rabelais," in *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation, Volume 3 (N–Z)*, Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas B. Deutscher, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 129.

[49] Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958), 505 (2.18). Quoted in Melzer, *Between the Lines*, 137.

[50] See Frame, "Introduction," in *CW*, xxxi.

that resulted in the Affair of Placards.[51] A decade later, the Paris Parlement passed legislation that would have stopped Rabelais from publishing his last three books, were it not for his acquisition of a royal privilege likely given at the behest of Queen Margaret of Navarre.[52]

Rabelais' concern for benevolent interpretation traces back to the Christian theme of scandal original to Paul and discussed by Reformed theologians. In 1550, John Calvin wrote a book on the topic in which he grouped Rabelais with skeptics who "held that they themselves were no different from dogs and pigs."[53] Calvin's speech shows that nonbelievers like Rabelais can offend believers like him, but Christian theology defines *scandal* as the offensive nonsense, angering to secularists, implied in Christian tenets of faith. As the ultimate triumph of grace over sin, the Crucifixion scandalizes nonbelievers who see only defeat in Calvary.[54]

Scandal operates in Rabelais on two levels. Both his readership and his characters may be or are scandalized. These levels converge in Rabelais's expectation that illustrating how his characters work through scandalizing puzzles will help readers cope with comparable puzzles in life. Thus scholarship maintains that Rabelais realized his books upset people and sought a solution for "transforming potential offence into edifying good cheer."[55] Yet the mood of the

---

[51] See Shaw, "The Book Trade Comes of Age," 225.

[52] Frame, "Introduction," xxxi.

[53] John Calvin, *Concerning Scandals*, trans. John W. Fraser (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), 62–63. For a similar sentiment, see Calvin's sermon on Deut 13:6–11, excerpted and discussed in Bernard Cottret, *Calvin: A Biography (*Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000), 235: "This [Rabelais] is a boor who issues villainous lampoons against the holy Scriptures, like this devil named Pantagruel, and all that filth and villainy [. . .] it can be seen that they [Rabelais and others] not only make fun of all religion, but that they want to abolish it entirely."

[54] Emily Butterworth, "Scandal in Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*: Divination, Interpretation, and Edification," *Renaissance and Reformation* 34 (2011): 29.

[55] Ibid, 35; 37.

times suggests that Rabelais would not have believed that most readers would be capable of living up to his interpretive instructions. Indeed, most people proved that they were utterly incapable. Clearly, whether individuals can overcome scandal depends on Rabelais's estimate of how many of his readers would react as harshly toward him as Calvin did. It also depends on readers learning vicariously through the experiences of Rabelais's characters. Given these potential (or in the case of Calvin, real) limits on his writing strategy, Rabelais likely did not expect all readers to overcome the scandal of literature like his. Rather than convert malice to goodwill, Rabelais focused on readers already capable of good faith. Rabelais's expectation of his readers' malice lends support for the drinker-as-thinker thesis.

Rabelais uses comedy, then, less as a conversion tool and more as a screen. The quotation by Erasmus used as one of the two epigraphs of this chapter suggests that comedy or foolishness can lessen the impact of a writing that stands at odds with and challenges one's beliefs. Other readers would simply read page after page of foolishness and believe that Rabelais had nothing important—serious—to say. Impatient dismissal, as the second chapter epigraph shows, describes the reaction of Voltaire. And although the anticlerical Voltaire would not have found anything morally objectionable in Rabelais, others who may have had moral objections to passages in *Gargantua and Pantagruel* were at least as likely as Voltaire—no shabby reader himself—to simply throw their hands up when faced with the deluge of apparent nonsense inside Rabelais's books.

The Text as Bone: Rabelais's "Substantific Marrow"

On the other hand, all of these whisperings of importance beneath the comic mask may make readers believe that Rabelais has a hard philosophic teaching—atheism, nihilism, or some similarly dangerous or edgy truth to tell. Remember that Calvin had detested Rabelais's *outer* teaching for its deleterious social effects. But the character of Rabelais's teaching also needs to be reconsidered. After all, Rabelais describes his message as something that deserves to be sought after in the same way that a dog watches, guards, holds, starts in on, breaks, and sucks his bone to get to its "marrow" (*G* prol, 6 / *CW*, 4). The implications of Rabelais's teaching as marrow—something that tastes good and bestows benefits—are important to recognize. The importance has only increased in our times, where people sometimes associate "careful reading" and esoteric interpretation with subversive findings that can damage souls and societies by replacing religious beliefs and political myths with skepticism. (This is to say nothing of esotericism's resemblance of an outdated, antidemocratic elitism.) Yet Rabelais's marrow is emphatically not Lucretius's chalice of poison with honey around the rim.[56] Rabelais's teaching may not exactly affirm belief or myth, but Rabelais insists that reading his books will not feel like walking into an open elevator shaft. By promising marrow, Rabelais promises that readers will not be left with an empty feeling. If Rabelais's marrow causes anger, it angers those who do not know what is good for them. By describing his teaching in this way, Rabelais encourages us to treat moral benevolence—taking all things "in good part"—seriously.

[56] See Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, trans. Walter Englert (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2003), 93 (4.10–22).

Renaissance Thought: Childish Exuberance or Commendable Zeal?

As I have already mentioned, Rabelais faced other obstacles in addition to ill will. Reading according to Rabelais's directives also requires interpretive precision or philosophical benevolence, an ability that Rabelais realized even gracious interpreters might lack. So what more can be said about taking things "in the most perfect sense"? Why did Rabelais see such need for philosophical benevolence? An impediment to Rabelais's "higher meaning," related to the rudimentary emergence of a brand of historicism contemporary to him, remains overlooked. To clarify the emergence (and the stakes) of this issue, I am going to place Rabelais's diagnosis of it alongside those of two other writers, Nietzsche and Machiavelli. In all three cases, different but related causes are held responsible for the careless reading that Rabelais sought to correct.

Nietzsche and the "Historical Sense" of the Renaissance

For the purposes of this study, historicism refers to what Nietzsche deemed the "historical sense":

> And insofar as the most considerable part of human culture so far was semi-barbarism, "historical sense" almost means the sense and instinct for everything, the taste and tongue for everything—which immediately proves it to be an *ignoble* sense. We enjoy Homer again, for example [. . .].[57]

For Nietzsche, the historical sense manifests as a tellingly indiscriminate appreciation for the arts and sciences. Europeans of the Renaissance had a naive enthusiasm for art and education fitting for a culture that, true to its name, had yet to grow up. Youthful participants in the

[57] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1989), 151. The italics are Nietzsche's.

Renaissance movement lacked a definite "Yes" and "No" in matters of taste, the presence of which indicates "perfection and ultimate maturity." In some sense, the Renaissance thinkers could not be blamed for this. Maturity requires a certain amount of time for exposure and development. Because the philosophy of antiquity had been only recently rediscovered, thinkers of the sixteenth century needed time to reflect on what little they knew about it. Sober reflection proved difficult, Nietzsche saw, because the zeal and enthusiasm that attended the Renaissance thinkers' rediscovery of the ancients stunted their judgment. Over time the absence of an intellectual hierarchy (which had collapsed under the weight of appreciation) undermined the Renaissance movement and compelled the turn to Enlightenment thought. As a synthesis of classical thought and Christian belief, the Renaissance participants never fully realized the complications of combining two disparate traditions. Analyzing these thinkers' attempt to synthesize Christianity and freethinking may show why the movement failed, and why the Enlighteners subsequently rejected revealed religion with vehemence. The following statement, made in chapter 1 of Desiderius Erasmus's *Education of a Christian Prince*, articulates the noble Renaissance spirit of conciliation:

> Further, you must realize that "philosopher" does not mean someone who is clever at dialectics or science but someone who rejects illusory appearance and undauntedly seeks out and follows what is true and good. Being a philosopher is in practice the same as being a Christian; only the terminology is different.[58]

Philosophers and Christians agree that Erasmus's definition embraces their occupation. Both groups follow, in their self-understanding, "what is true and good." Yet even within their ranks, philosophers disagree about the details of these categories, to say nothing of how differently

[58] Desiderius Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, ed. Lisa Jardine, trans. Neil M. Cheshire and Michael J. Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 15.

Christians conceive of the true and the good. In the beginning of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argues that a definitions such as Erasmus employs skirt the question of who seeks the good and what the good truly is. After all, "every action and choice *seems* to aim at some good." [59] Erasmus widens the definition of philosophy to include all sentient beings, none of whom believe they follow the false and bad.

The Enlighteners—conceivably more mindful of the incompatibilities of faith(s) and science(s)—were less swept away by the art and philosophy that antiquity and Judeo-Christian culture produced. Still, Nietzsche saw that the Enlightenment did not correct the mistakes committed by Renaissance because it too failed to purge itself of "semi-barbarism," a kind of homelessness that attends the historical sense. Enlighteners like John Locke supported the virtue of tolerance to disable the claims typically made by religious sectarians to exclusively possess the true and good. Locke emphasized that claims to such possessions frequently justified physical and psychological violence.[60] Nietzsche, on the other hand, feared that communities who embraced Lockean toleration would become not only non-violent but servile through their flaccid acceptance of a heterogeneous (if not incongruous) assortment of lifestyles and values. He wondered whether the contradictions that tolerance abided could weaken or destroy society. Nietzsche's doubts about the Enlighteners' commitment to a

[59] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2002), 1094a1–2. Italics are mine.

[60] See John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration: Humbly Submitted*, ed. James H. Tully (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983). Indeed, in hindsight Erasmus may appear more diplomatic than naïve in the way he approached questions of religion. See R. Edward Brennan, "What of Erasmus?" *Blackfriars* 5 (1924): 299–304 for a discussion of Erasmus's legacy as a public religious figure who advocated for non-schismatic reforms within the Catholic Church rather than for Reformation.

distinct way of life affirm how much less he must have thought about their comparatively pacific predecessors of the Renaissance, such as Erasmus.

Clarifying why Renaissance writers had developed a "taste and tongue for everything" involves taking Nietzsche's concept as a point of departure and travelling backward to contemporaries like Rabelais and Machiavelli, who weighed in on the topic. Nietzsche, Machiavelli, and Rabelais did not agree about the causes of historicism. Where Nietzsche emphasized *niaiserie*, Machiavelli blamed widespread belief in the world's changeability. Rabelais, in keeping with his comic disposition, found a kind of mental illness responsible for the birth of the historical sense.

Machiavelli and History as Consultant

Long before Nietzsche, thinkers during the Renaissance already sensed the threats that the historical sense posed to philosophy, but they explained the problem in slightly different terms than Nietzsche would. These thinkers, unlike Nietzsche, did not make an issue of a culture's need for distinctiveness or conviction of its superiority. For his part, Machiavelli worried that the historical sense (though he did not use the term) severed society's link to useful political knowledge. Before Rabelais's most productive years, Machiavelli wrote that Renaissance authors and artists had captured the artistic bent of ancient Greece and Rome, but

> [. . .] in ordering republics, maintaining states, governing kingdoms, ordering the military and administering war, judging subjects, and increasing empire, neither prince nor republic may be found that has recourse to the examples of the ancients. This arises, I believe, not so much from the weakness into which the present religion has led the world, or from the evil that an ambitious idleness has done to many Christian provinces

> and cities, as from not having a true knowledge of histories, through not getting from reading them that sense *nor tasting that flavor that they have in themselves*.[61]

The value of the ancient political philosophers' writings equaled that of the ancient artists' and poets' works, yet every discipline of antiquity except for political philosophy benefited the Renaissance because statesmen had "no recourse to the examples of the ancients." The comment appears to be inaccurate. As of Machiavelli's writing, many works of ancient political philosophy and history had been translated into a Latin known widely by the literate, circulated among them, and earnestly read.[62] The soundness of Machiavelli's account rests on definition of the term *recourse*. He did not hold that rulers and states lacked recourse to ancient political works because of difficulties procuring relevant texts. Rather, Machiavelli blamed the interpretive method favored by his contemporaries, who did not get "the flavor" that the old books have "in themselves." Unskilled readers added their favorite seasonings and spices to old texts out of a belief that historical change creates an unbridgeable gulf. They assumed the ancients, shaped by their surroundings, were basically different people. As Machiavelli says, they acted "as if heaven, sun, elements, *men* had varied in motion."[63] Machiavelli's generation accordingly believed (perhaps unconsciously) that ancient thinkers lacked authority on questions pertinent to their lives. They granted themselves a license to read ancient histories as

---

[61] Machiavelli, *DL*, I.preface.6. Harvey Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov note that belief in the intervention of Jesus Christ in the world certainly led "the infinite number" to see themselves as what Paul the Apostle called "new creations" (see Galatians 6:15) with natures unlike those of the pre-Christ pagans. Harvey Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov, "Introduction," in *DL*, xxxvii.

[62] Indeed, works by authors such as Erasmus cited ancient political philosophy as often as or more frequently than Scripture. See, e.g., Erasmus, *Education*, 25: "To put it in a nutshell, Aristotle differentiates in his *Politics* between a prince and a tyrant by the criterion that the latter is concerned for his own interests and the former for the state." Machiavelli may mean that readers have only recourse to the thoughts—that is, not the deeds—of the ancients.

[63] Machiavelli, *DL*, I.preface.6. Italics mine.

inconsequential stories—pleasant to hear, but not instructive in the present situation. These premises discouraged serious consultation of the ancients' examples despite their regard as works suited for recreation and distraction. Machiavelli deplored such premises and readings for preventing the public-spirited of his age from taking the recourse they needed in public life. The contrast between Nietzsche and Machiavelli is strong. Machiavelli did not think the main problem for the Renaissance was a lack of distinctiveness or sense of superiority. On the contrary, he argued that those of his times felt they were too distinct, too different from other cultures, to seek the wisdom of ancient political thinkers and statesmen.

Rabelais's Friar Booby: "Crazy" Anachronistic Readings

Rabelais recommended and practiced relatively disciplined interpretive methods, especially when compared with those fashionable writers who earned Machiavelli's ire. As his prologue to *Gargantua* suggests, Rabelais agreed with his Italian peer's evaluation of the Renaissance: interpretation had become much too unbridled.

In my discussion of philosophic benevolence above, I did not discuss the underlying cause of its opposite (let me call it anti-philosophic malevolence). When Nasier Alcofribas condemns incompetent interpreters of ancient texts for "calking" allegories that were very probably unintended by their authors (*G* prol, 7 / *CW*, 4–5), he goes yet further and suggests that many readers circumvented the problems of scandal and outrage altogether by reading themselves into texts and ignoring or rather hijacking authorial intent. Alcofribas cites a Christianized reading of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, written "by a certain Friar Booby, a real bacon snatcher" who appealed to the sensibilities of "folk as crazy as he," as the worst example of

such negligence (*G* prol, 7 / *CW*, 4). Alcofribas humorously confirms Machiavelli's judgment that a new but common error of imposing a current prejudice onto an old text hobbled the Renaissance. (He also accuses Friar Booby of profiting from his followers' gullibility.) Friar Booby's "error" indicates that some things are bounded by time and place, as historicists contend. Ovid did not know of Jesus Christ, and he therefore could not have wished for his writings to remind readers of Jesus's life or of his teachings. But Alcofribas, again following Machiavelli, rejects the conclusion that readers cannot, because of historical differences (like those a new religion might introduce), approach a book with the proper interpretive skills. Readers living after Jesus's death can still understand Ovid in his terms. At the least, they can refrain from force-fitting him into theirs. Christianizing Ovid's writings is "crazy" because doing so means flouting reality for an alternate world. One renders Ovid someone other than he was.

Unlike Nietzsche, neither Machiavelli nor Rabelais attributes the Renaissance's (mis)treatment of ancient letters to childish exuberance. Machiavelli and Rabelais see deeper principles at work, but these differ strikingly in their respective accounts. Machiavelli focused on his peers' assumption that human nature changes. He felt that by stressing the differences between the past and present, Renaissance intellectuals disregarded and left dormant the uses of history. Rabelais did not feel that his peers neglected the past but that they misappropriated it for their special purposes. Rabelais diagnosed an egotism as the cause of this misappropriation. This egotism imagined the complete harmonization of the world, including its past, with the self of the present. Friar Booby and his ilk sought to rationalize their view. When looking into the past, they saw (wittingly or not) only how history paved its way to the latest destination. Rabelais's takeaway is clear: read authors as they wished to be read.

The Risk of Misreading

Interpreting Rabelais has been so hotly contested because it cuts to the core questions of the status of reason and of the roots of our desire for knowledge. Can a reasonable argument be conveyed through the ages? If so, can it be conveyed through the medium that Rabelais chooses—rambling novels penned under the influence of drink? There is a much greater risk for misreading if Rabelais is not taken at his word when he says that he has a serious message despite his comical noise. Rabelais may be fooling when he insists on the gravity of his work, but granting him this much will at worst make for lots of wasted time and a hard lesson learned. At any rate, if Rabelais "ne veut rien dire," readers will eventually figure this out. If one assumes (without textual warrant) that Rabelais is playing games when there actually is marrow in that bone of his, then one risks never cracking the text and sucking it out.

Rabelais gives reasons to believe him by leaving clues about the nature of his books. He targets philosophic readers and handles philosophic issues. At the end of the prologue to *Gargantua*, Rabelais says he will confront problems "not only concerning our religion, but also the political state and domestic life" (*G* prol, 7/ *CW*, 4; italics mine). When Rabelais refers to "l'estat politicq," he has in mind not only the political affairs of his day (although these are by no means excluded from his purview) but also and especially the enduring issues of political philosophy. Rabelais's concern for the problem of fortune, so central to the *Tiers Livre*, is his means of engaging the new movement in political philosophy initiated by Machiavelli, a movement that takes a more aggressive posture towards fortune and is accordingly optimistic about humanity's ability to control its future.

CHAPTER 3

PHILOSOPHY'S POLITICAL PROBLEM: DIOGENISM, MACHIAVELLIANISM, PANTAGRUELISM

> *I judge this indeed, that it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman; and it is necessary, if one holds her down, to beat her and strike her down.*
>
> Niccolò Machiavelli

> *But if God willed [. . .] and I married some woman who beat me—I'd be worse off than Job's tercel!*
>
> Panurge

Rabelais's Philosophic–Political Aim

Understanding the spheres of life (religious, political, private) that constitute Rabelais's subject matter requires taking a broad view of his body of work. Upon stepping back and spanning the books, one discerns a thread that unites the many tales, vignettes, digressions, and reports that they contain. But the interaction of Rabelais's spheres becomes most evident in the transition from *Pantagruel* to the *Tiers Livre*, as the Utopians conclude war and ease into peace. During this transition, Panurge begins to settle down. He thinks about life ahead, and wonders about domestic happiness. He considers marriage, but questions whether a relationship will bring about all that he desires. What if, Panurge asks, having and holding becomes beating and scolding? Marital misery and marital bliss seem equally likely.

Thinking about Utopia's political transition reveals more about Panurge's private situation. Panurge's slow realization and attendant worries come on the heels of Utopia's impressive conquest of the land of Dipsody. The Utopians accomplished this feat through knowledge of "the way to acquire and maintain newly conquered countries" [la maniere

d'entretenir et retenir pays nouvellement conquestez].[1] Rabelais attributes Utopia's political success to its favor for beneficent colonization over harsh rule (*TL* 1, 354 / *CW*, 262), the advantages of which are discussed in Machiavelli's *Prince* and *Discourses on Livy*.[2] That is, the Utopians conquered Dipsody through Machiavellian means, and the expansionary regime that Machiavelli insisted on has come to fruition in Rabelais's book. This means the personal problem of fortune that besets Panurge in the *Tiers Livre* occurs inside of Machiavelli's regime and appears as a problem that Machiavelli had not anticipated for it.[3]

Scholars have so far considered the conquest of Dipsody that transpires in chapter 1 in isolation from the rest of the *Tiers Livre*. Treating the episode independently has occasioned disagreement about how Rabelais viewed Machiavelli. Gary Ianziti argues that Rabelais was receptive of the Florentine's political thought because Utopia so closely follows Machiavelli's recommendations in its colonization efforts.[4] After examining the same chapter that Ianziti focuses on, others have argued that Rabelais targets precisely Machiavelli when he scorns "certain tyrannical minds" who advocate rule "with iron rods" (*TL* 1, 354 / *CW*, 262).[5] Albert Cherel, in his older study on Machiavelli's influence in France, even gives Rabelais the honor of

[1] Compare with *Prince*, 7.48.

[2] See *Prince*, 5.21; *DL*, 2.21.1–2; 2.32.1–2.

[3] Chapter 3 examines this regime in detail.

[4] Ianziti, "Rabelais and Machiavelli," 460–473. Ianziti never mentions that Rabelais makes a positive assessment of the Roman king Numa, a key figure in Machiavelli's *Discourses.* This too suggests Rabelais's concern with Machiavelli. See *TL* 1, 356 / *CW*, 263. Compare with *DL*, 1.11.

[5] There is a provocative interpretive alternative to that of Machiavelli: Rabelais may have had in mind the Biblical God's "Anointed" ruler, who is ordered in Psalm 2:9 to "break [the nations] with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

having made "[t]he first French protestation" against the Florentine.[6] Against Ianziti, a scholar like Cherel might point out that whereas Machiavelli asserts that princes who successfully acquire will always be "praised,"[7] Rabelais protests that "ill got things perish ill" (*TL* 1, 356 / *CW*, 263). This latter perception of Rabelais as stout anti-Machiavellian prevails.[8] Ianziti criticized Jean Plattard's contribution to Abel Lefranc's 1913–1955 edition of Rabelais's works; but Huchon, in her 1994 Gallimard collection, still glosses the passage condemning tyrannical minds as a "probable allusion to the *Prince* of Machiavelli."[9]

The foregoing debate, focused on a single episode from Rabelais's book, seems like a storm in a teacup. Here I argue that Rabelais persistently engages Machiavelli in passages from *Pantagruel* and the *Tiers Livre*. I agree with Ianziti that Rabelais portrays Utopia as a Machiavellian regime in chapter 1 of the *Tiers Livre*, but I do not conclude that this portrayal amounts to an endorsement. I instead read this chapter as setting up Rabelais's critique of Machiavelli, which begins in earnest in chapter 2 and continues through the end of the book. On the other hand, I go beyond those who have thought of Rabelais as an *anti-Machiavel* by showing that Rabelais objects less to Machiavelli's support for amoral *political rule* and focuses

[6] "La première protestation française contre Machiavel est une raillerie chrétienne : Rabelais met en scène Toucquedillon [. . .]." The translation is mine. Albert Cherel, *La Pensée de Machiavel en France* (Paris: L'artisan du livre, 1935), 53. Cherel's statement is based on evidence from *Pantagruel*, which was of course written before the *Tiers Livre.* Cherel also cites the passage on "tyrannical minds" as evidence of Rabelais's anti-Machiavellianism. Ibid, 319.

[7] See *Prince*, 3.14.

[8] See Duval, "Design of Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*," 31: "[. . .] whereas Machiavelli had postulated that the chief lesson to be learned by an occupying prince is 'how *not* to be good,' Pantagruel is renowned even among the conquered Dipsodiens as 'le *bon* Pantagruel.'"

[9] Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, 1372.

more on the alterations that Machiavelli felt had to be made to the expression and employment of *political philosophy*.

In keeping with his interpretive rules, Rabelais advances his critique of Machiavelli in the spirit of his title character's philosophy of Pantagruelism (*TL* 2, 357 / *CW*, 264). As I argued in Chapter 2, Pantagruelists make the best case for another's argument. They read charitably and extend the benefit of the doubt. Rabelais applies these principles in the present context. He sees that Machiavelli had attempted to solve a problem that endangered philosophy: its perceived irrelevance and uselessness. Thus the civic-minded Machiavellianism of the *Tiers Livre* that is at work during Utopia's invasion of Dipsody contrasts with Rabelais's recitation of an old story in the prologue to the book about the ancient philosopher Diogenes the Cynic. As Corinth prepared to ward off imperial invaders, Diogenes mockingly imitated fellow citizens by knocking about the barrel that he called his home. When a friend asked Diogenes what he was doing, The Dog explained that the magistrates left him without a task as the city fought for its life (*TL* prol, 348 / *CW*, 256). Rabelais admired Diogenes's independence of mind, but he—like Machiavelli—saw the need for a new kind of philosophizing that could justify itself before the public. When Rabelais tried to meet this need, he made sure—unlike Machiavelli—to retain what was good about Diogenes.

My goal is to trace the chronological developments of philosophy as presented in Rabelais's books. My procedure breaks from the dramatic arrangement of the passages I analyze so that I can discuss Machiavelli as a critic of antiquity (refracted through Diogenes) and Rabelais as a sympathetic (because Pantagruelic) critic of both Machiavelli and Diogenes. First, I discuss Diogenes and the charge of "slacking and idling" leveled against him by the virtuous and

dutiful Corinthians in the prologue to the *Tiers Livre*. Diogenes was willing to endure this charge because doing so was, he felt, the only way to continue philosophizing. But in this situation, philosophy would remain morally suspect; its practitioners, pariahs. Next I turn to Rabelais's treatment of Machiavellianism. This section of my argument is composed of a few parts. First I establish that Panurge generally represents the Machiavellian view in Rabelais's books. Then I examine chapters 15 and 16 of *Pantagruel*. These chapters reveal a tension in Machiavelli's thought by pitting the classical Pantagruel against the modern Panurge. Both Pantagruel and Panurge take positions that Machiavelli agrees with at different times. The cause of Machiavelli's schizophrenia lies in his attempt to respond to the charge of "slacking and idling" that was leveled against Diogenes (and against all philosophy). Machiavelli embraces civic responsibilities only to disparage the traditional virtues that had been theretofore the means of fulfilling those responsibilities. Machiavelli creates a new virtue (dam-building) based on selfishness, but this brings Machiavelli round circle to one of the reasons why Diogenes rejected civic responsibility to begin with. Such responsibility was needed to satisfy the community's concerns about its safety in the face of the uncertain future, and it therefore requires a patently un-philosophic belief that the future can and should be controlled.

From there I move to the bases of Pantagruelism as found in Rabelais's story about the Macedonian commander Ptolemy (in the prologue to the *Tiers Livre*) and in Pantagruel's conversation with Panurge regarding his vast debts in the newly enlarged empire of Utopia, where Panurge now serves in a public capacity (in chapter 2 of the *Tiers Livre*). These instances display a few things. First, they show that Panurge's Machiavellianism stands at an advantage because natural inclination leads most people to assume bad and not good of others. But

Pantagruelism's disadvantage—a naïve belief in the good of humanity—can be overcome if "badness" (which deserves punishment) is simply ignorance (curable by education, but unjustly punished). Second, Rabelais contrasts the approach of passivity in the face of fortuitous events offered by Diogenic philosophy against Machiavelli's approach of decisive, aggressive action. Yet both the Diogenic outlook and the Machiavellian one err in how much power over human life they grant to fortune. These errors lead Diogenes and Machiavelli to different but equally distorted views of what can be achieved through politics, and they bring about a detrimental (because obviously selfish) concern for the good of the philosophic enterprise.

Diogenism: The Apolitical Precursor to Pantagruelism (*Tiers Livre* prologue)

Rabelais does not advertise Pantagruelism as a new philosophy. He acknowledges Pantagruelism's debt to older sources and invites readers to think of Diogenes the Cynic's philosophizing as a model for his enterprise (*TL* prol, 348 / *CW*, 256). In Chapter 1 when I discussed the audience of Rabelais's book, I pointed out that Diogenes receives rare honors from Rabelais (*TL* prol, 346 / *CW*, 254). This praise seems curious. The recurrent images of drinking in *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* bring to mind Plato's *Symposium* and *Laws*, after all. And even as Bacbuc's interpretation of the Divine Bottle showed, the act of drinking includes investigating the grand Socratic themes of piety and justice. Drinking implies a desire or longing for knowledge, for completion, akin to Socratic *eros*.[10] Yet according to tradition, Diogenes lived so austerely that he threw away his water cup after he witnessed a small boy drinking from his

[10] Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Seth Benardete (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 202d–204c; Plato, *The Laws of Plato*, trans. Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 637d–641e.

hands.[11] One wonders if Diogenes had any longings at all. Although these considerations must figure in a discussion of Rabelais's philosophy, first his praise for this fierce, eccentric critic of Plato and Aristotle needs explication.

Analyzing three connected facts that are recounted in the prologue to the *Tiers Livre* illuminates some reasons behind Rabelais's bow to Diogenes:

1. Rabelais sets up Diogenes as a rival of Alexander the Great's renowned tutor, Aristotle.
2. Alexander, despite his formal association with Aristotle, deems Diogenes superior.
3. Nevertheless, Alexander would only be Diogenes if he could not be himself. (*TL* prol, 346 / *CW*, 254)

By placing the ruler at the top of his ordinal ranking of occupations, Alexander reveals that his passion for politics determines his judgment of philosophy. In Alexander's estimation, the Diogenic philosopher follows the political ruler; the Aristotelian philosopher receives no mention. Two possible interpretations follow from this ranking, but their validity depends on the nature of Diogenic philosophy. Minding the primacy he places on politics, Alexander may perceive a political component in Diogenic philosophy that he finds absent from Aristotelian philosophy. If so, Diogenic philosophy would offer a second-best option that shadows or loosely approximates the art of rule. Aristotle's authorship of works such as the *Politics* renders this option doubtful. Conversely, and more likely, Alexander admires the radically apolitical nature of Diogenic philosophy. This explanation privileges Diogenic philosophy over Aristotelian philosophy precisely because the latter encompasses politics. Perhaps Alexander assigns a lower ranking to a political brand of philosophy because it middles. Though political philosophy

[11] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, ed. and trans. A. Robert Caponigri (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1969), 137.

discusses rule, it does not supply the satisfaction of politics in its raw form. An apolitical philosophy might, by contrast, interest Alexander in its perplexing refusal to value what he values. Legend supports this interpretation. It holds that when Alexander asked a restful Diogenes whether there was anything that he wanted, the philosopher replied that he "should be grateful if [Alexander] and [his] friends would move to one side, and not keep the sun off [him]."[12] In making this smart response, Diogenes differs starkly from Machiavelli, who says he "submits entirely" to the Macedonian order created by Philip and Alexander.[13] Whereas Diogenes displays utter disregard for politics and worldly desires, Machiavelli all but forsakes philosophy and serves the powerful hand and foot.[14]

Diogenes's Barrel-Rolling

In Rabelais's portrayal of the Cynic philosopher, he focuses on a widely cited story about the activities of Diogenes's city, Corinth, as it frenetically prepared to fight the Macedonians. Then he illustrates Diogenes's reaction to those preparations, his tossing around the barrel that "served him as a house against the assaults from the sky" (*TL* prol, 347 / *CW*, 255). Numerous studies note the importance of Diogenes's tub-rolling performance to an understanding of the *Tiers Livre*. Most interpreters characterize the episode, which has been called "a guide of sorts"

[12] Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, trans. Aubrey De Sélincourt, ed. J.R. Hamilton (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1971), 349–50.

[13] Machiavelli, *Prince* 8.57.

[14] See Vickie B. Sullivan, *Machiavelli's Three Romes: Religion, Liberty, and Politics Reformed* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 11: Machiavelli "shuns philosophy in the name of politics."

and "un clé" to Rabelais himself, as a form of philosophic ridicule directed at the city.[15] On this view, Diogenes alone realizes the Sisyphean futility of political action (see *TL* prol, 348 / *CW*, 256). Yet Rabelais notes that the Corinthians "were all, *not without cause*, frightened, and were not negligent in each making it his office and duty to resist [Philip's] hostile invasion" (*TL* prol, 346 / *CW*, 254; italics mine).[16] By assigning a serious cause to the city's trepidation, and by categorizing the citizens' actions as "office and duty," Rabelais shines a moral light on Diogenes's truancy. Rabelais's full account warrants examination:

> Diogenes, seeing [the Corinthians] turning everything upside down with such fervor, and not being employed by the magistrates to do anything, for a few days contemplated their behavior without saying anything. Then, as if excited by a martial spirit, he flung his cloak around him like a scarf, trussed up his robe like an apple picker, handed an old comrade of his wallet, his books, and his writing tablets, took a fine esplanade out of the city toward Cranion, a hill and promontory near Corinth, rolled over to it the earthenware barrel that served him as a house against the assaults from the sky, and, exerting his arms in great vehemence of spirit, veered it, twisted it, scrambled it, garbled it [. . .]. (*TL* prol, 347 / *CW*, 255)

Hugh Roberts' interpretation of this event focuses on Diogenes's excited "performance" and sporadic actions, on Diogenes' "comic, bizarre, and outrageous" behavior, puzzling to the onlooker and beckoning explanation.[17] But Diogenes's serene mood and his activity of silent contemplation should not be overlooked. In fact, serenity and contemplation constitute the vast majority of Diogenes's activity: he watched and thought "for a few days." The eleven years

[15] See Duval, "Design of Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*," 17–21; Freccero, *Father Figures*, 135–136; Ian R. Morrison, "Diogenes," in Chesney Zegura, *Encyclopedia*, 54. See Hugh Roberts, *Dog's Tales: Representations of Ancient Cynicism in French Renaissance Texts* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), 171 for a review of the literature on this episode. For reference to Diogenes as a "guide," see Roberts, *Dog's Tales*, 173. Schwartz's view is standard: Diogenes is "ironic." See Schwartz, *Structures of Subversion*, 90.

[16] Frame translates "office et debvoir" as "business."

[17] Roberts, *Dog's Tales*, 173.

of dormancy in Rabelais's life between the publication of *Gargantua* (1534) and the *Tiers Livre* (1546) mark a similar pattern. Rabelais's life was defined not by the bombastic overflowing of speech so frequently ascribed to him, but by long periods of withdrawn reflection. Asserting that a philosopher's work consists in "performance" ignores the hard thinking that must have a central place in a wisdom-seeking vocation. Without this, performance is merely theatrical. And Rabelais makes clear that Diogenes' thinking stops when his action begins. As he rises to roll his tub, Diogenes hands his friend his books and writing tablet. He gives up his thinking tools, as it were. This detail of the vignette would be superfluous if it did not function to condemn the attempt to join thinking to acting.

The Corinthians as Critics: Their Problem with Philosophy

To modern readers, Diogenes appears as the uncontested hero of Rabelais's story. Such readers may favor the philosopher for a variety of reasons. Perhaps Rabelais's story is too Diogenes-centric. Perhaps the proud heirs of the Enlightenment do not want to be identified with the perceived anti-intellectualism of the Corinthians. For better or worse, these tendencies obscure the fact that Diogenes is not the only critic in Rabelais's account. Indeed, Diogenes's performance-critique of the Corinthians' war preparations is more accurately a counter-critique made against the citizens' prior critique of the Cynic:

> [. . .] one of [Diogenes's] friends asked him what cause impelled him thus to torment his body, spirit, and barrel. To which the philosopher replied that being given no other duty [office] by the republic, he harried his barrel this way amid this people so fervent and occupied, not alone to seem a slacker and idler. (*TL* prol, 348 / *CW*, 256)

Diogenes's reply to his friend makes clear that Diogenic philosophy consists foremost in restful thinking. The philosopher's outrageous displays did not bother his fellow citizens. On the

contrary, Diogenes makes these displays out of (ironic?) worry that, to them, he looks like a "slacker and idler." Like so many philosophers before him, Diogenes finds himself at odds with the city. But Diogenes does not follow Plato and Aristotle and blame this conflict on the city's spirited resistance to philosophy's discrediting of public myths. Instead, Diogenes' problem concerns the political world's dismissal of philosophy as something unworthy of civic "duty or business." Philosophy, according to Diogenes, does not intimidate in the way that the Socrates of Plato's *Apology* impresses readers to think. The philosopher is neither the disgusting corruptor of the youth[18] nor the formidable bringer of new gods.[19] Quite the opposite, philosophy—including Socratic philosophy—conveys impotence. Rabelais remarks in his prologue to *Gargantua* that Socrates was, much like Diogenes, thought "inept for all offices of the republic" (*G* prol, 5 / *CW*, 3).

Ancient philosophy's problem results from what today's behavioral scientists call observational equivalence. To outsiders, philosophy in action resembles sheer inaction. Non-philosophers cannot distinguish between thinking and vegetation. Violating the Pantagruelic rule and assuming the worst, the Corinthians believe Diogenes idles. It matters whether the city thinks philosophy evil or innocuous, but Diogenes has only pointed out the problem. Diogenes remains content with enduring whatever fortune brings his way—including whatever the Corinthians might decide to do with him. Indeed, contentedness is Diogenes's very solution to the problem of the demands that the public places on individuals, including philosophers, to serve its ends.

[18] See Plato, "Apology of Socrates," 23d1–2.

[19] Ibid, 26b2–3.

Not all of the characters in Rabelais's book respond the same way to the problem of fortune. Now Rabelais gives the Machiavellian response.

Machiavellianisms (*Pantagruel* 15 and 16)

Rabelais wrote books of poetic fiction filled with suggestions, hints, and allusions. As I have said, scholars of all stripes agree that these features do not make for easy interpreting. But my interpretation of Rabelais faces another obstacle. In addition to dealing with Rabelais's writing style, a sound interpretation must also account for the sensitive subject matter that he addressed—Machiavellianism. As Cambridge historian Jonathan Haslam notes, "Any explicit association with [Machiavelli's] ideas risked condemnation and worse."[20] Indeed, there is no explicit mention of the relatively orthodox Erasmus in Rabelais's published works, let alone of Machiavelli. Keep these considerations in mind while evaluating the evidence of Rabelais's critique of Machiavellianism.

Panurge, Machiavellian or Trickster?

Because of Rabelais's writing style and subject matter, much of the evidence that I bring forth falls short of explicit naming and straightforward engagement. This is especially the case with Panurge, who often represents Machiavellianism. Without accounting for Rabelais's social-political situation, the objection that I reason by association in order to establish Panurge's Machiavellianism can always be raised: a table has four legs, a dog has four legs, but it does not

[20] Haslam, *No Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations since Machiavelli* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 41.

follow that a table is a dog. I will try to overcome the unsatisfactory nature of the evidence for my interpretation by gathering enough of it to show that Rabelais's texts become so suggestive, so allusive, that their clues cannot be dismissed as merely coincidental. Something with four legs may not be a dog, but membership in the canine family becomes less deniable if the animal also has hair, wags its tail, urinates on fire hydrants, chases cars, and barks.

With Panurge, there is need to differentiate not between a table and dog but between a generic "trickster" and Machiavellian. Literary critics recognize the trickster as "a character in a story who persistently uses his wiliness, and gift of gab, to achieve his ends by outmaneuvering or outwitting other characters." David LaGaurdia has argued that Panurge belongs to this literary type. I argue that Machiavellians are tricksters, and that Panurge is a trickster, but that both are more. Still, "Machiavellian" is not easy to circumscribe.[21] The meaning of the term can be grasped through a character analysis of Panurge.

Panurge's "Ways and Dispositions"

The element that distinguishes Panurge as a Machiavellian apart from other tricksters is his obsession with fortune. That is what the *Tiers Livre*, wherein Panurge seeks an answer to his marriage prospects, is essentially about. And in the *Tiers Livre*, Rabelais personifies fortune as a

[21] M.H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 9th edition (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009), 9. David LaGuardia, "Un Bone Esmoucheteur par Mousches Jamais Émouché ne Sera: Panurge as Trickster," *Romanic Review* 88 (1997): 523. See Oxford English Dictionary Online, "Machiavellian, n. and adj." (Oxford University Press, 2014), http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/111832: "A follower of Machiavelli; a person who adopts the principles recommended, or supposed to have been recommended, by Machiavelli in his treatise on statecraft; a person who practises expediency in preference to morality; an intriguer or schemer. Usu.*derogatory*."

woman—just as Machiavelli did.[22] There is more evidence to consider beside Panurge's overriding concern for fortune.[23] Panurge enters Rabelais's narrative in chapter 9 of *Pantagruel*, where he is introduced as a speaker many languages (including Italian) without a home. He appears as a sheer individual who in Machiavelli's terms depends on his virtue [virtù].[24] In his first encounter with the Pantagruelic company, Panurge discloses that he has just changed his dire fortune by bravely escaping from the Turks who had captured him. After Pantagruel and his royal entourage take in Panurge so that he can convalesce, Panurge begins to serve the Utopian prince in the capacity of a counselor or minister.

Chapter 16 of *Pantagruel* provides a detailed description of Panurge's "ways and dispositions." There, the narrator Alcofribas Nasier's portrayal of Panurge invites comparison with Machiavelli on the most superficial level. Readers are told that Panurge was of "medium height" and had an "aquiline nose." Alcofribas's physical stereotype may not sit well with us, but it suggests Roman or Italian roots. Then there are Panurge's moral qualities. He was "somewhat of a lecher, and by nature subject to a malady that in those days was called *faulte d'argent, c'est douleur non pareille* [lack of money—that's pain without match]" (*P* 16, 272 / *CW*, 186). One could argue that the squalor in which Panurge lives speaks to his noble, even Socratic disregard for gain, but Panurge acts immorally to acquire what little wealth he can. He fancies "theft furtively perpetrated"[25] (*P* 16, 272 / *CW*, 186), and Alcofribas lists the items

[22] Learned advice that Panurge receives regarding his future marriage will be the topic of Chapter 5.

[23] In the Introduction I noted that Panurge's name derives from the Greek *πάνουργος*: "ready to do anything wicked or knavish."

[24] *Prince*, 6.21.

[25] Although see Aristophanes, "The Clouds," in West and West, *Four Texts*, 122 (lines 175–180).

Panurge carries on his person in his attempts to discreetly disable fortune. Clearly Panurge uses the "little lead die" that he keeps with him to fix games of chance (*P* 16, 273 / *CW*, 187). Later, in chapter 11 of the *Tiers Livre*, Panurge proposes to conclude the question of his marriage fortunes by precisely this means (*TL* 11, 383 / *CW*, 288).

Those who would read Panurge's intentions "in good part" (as Rabelais would have it) must ask why he cheats and lies. Chapter 43 of the *Tiers Livre* provides a good answer. There, Pantagruel and his friends sit in on the judicial proceeding of Bridlegoose the judge, who was supposed to act as one of Panurge's consultants regarding the question of his marriage, but who is busy standing trial for using dice to reach judicial decisions. This trial takes place despite Bridlegoose's excellent legal record and high reputation. Here is what the narrator says about Panurge in that scene: "Panurge was raising some difficulty over believing the good fortune of the judgments by chance, especially for such a long time" (*TL* 43, 487 / *CW*, 389).[26] Panurge does not believe that good things simply happen to good people. Machiavelli's position on morality explains Panurge's recourse to fraudulence, for he also takes the position that the good and the bad are not rewarded commensurately, and he does so sincerely: "For a man who wants to make a profession of good in all regards must come to ruin among so many who are not good."[27] The ruses of Panurge stem, in part, from a moral impulse. Traditional morality has not protected simple, good people from the world's indifference to goodness (that is, from chance). To euphemize, extra-moral measures must be taken to ensure the proper outcomes.

[26] Bridlegoose's jurisprudence plays a major role in Chapter 5.

[27] *Prince*, 15.61.

Machiavellianism: A House Divided

Diogenes has laid out the political problem that faces philosophy. On the one hand, the city despises its indolence. On the other hand, philosophers know that usefulness means giving up unguided, pure theoretics. Diogenes could suffer a bad name, but other philosophers have attempted to reconcile or combine the life of thought with the active life in order to have some cake and eat it, too. Here I examine two things. First I explain how Machiavelli tried, according to Rabelais, to solve the Diogenic problem. Second, I identify what Rabelais sees as the failure of Machiavelli's solution.

As one could guess from the foregoing discussion of Panurge's character, Rabelais typically opposes Pantagruel and Panurge such that Pantagruel takes the classical position on some matter and Panurge serves as a wily foil. Readers become accustomed to Pantagruel stoically championing one of the virtues, upholding religion, exhorting others to seek knowledge, and so forth. (This is especially true of Pantagruel from the *Tiers Livre* on.) Likewise, readers will not be surprised when Panurge indulges vice, blasphemes, and spreads lies. Chapters 15 and 16 of *Pantagruel* give us a more difficult case. Here the line between Pantagruel and Panurge at first seems bolded—as usual—but then it suddenly blurs. It is no coincidence that these chapters also supply the material of Rabelais's exposition (albeit an implicit one) and critique of Machiavelli. In fact, it is because Rabelais engages Machiavelli in these chapters that the line between Pantagruel and Panurge blurs: Rabelais pits Machiavelli against himself.

First Pantagruel legitimizes the city's concerns about philosophy. Pantagruel wholeheartedly endorses self-sacrificing virtue—what he calls a wall of bone. Machiavelli takes

this very view in section 2.24 of the *Discourses*. But then Panurge gives a harsh critique of virtue and recommends a wall not of bone but of vice. This position is no less Machiavellian. Support for it can be found in chapter 15 of *The Prince*. Applying Rabelais's hermeneutic rules to these speeches, our goal is to see whether these two Machiavellianisms can be reconciled, and whether they constitute a coherent whole.

Manly Virtue (The Machiavelli of the Discourses on Livy*)*

Not long after Pantagruel takes Panurge under his wing, the two walk together through Utopia's capital city, Paris. Their conversation turns to the same subject that Rabelais takes up in the prologue when he discusses Diogenes and the Corinthians: military preparedness. After some time, Panurge ridicules the city's shoddy fortifications, weak enough for a cow to knock over with a fart. Pantagruel supplies an ancient Spartan's decent response to Panurge's lighthearted analysis:

> "O my friend," said Pantagruel, "are you well aware of what Agesilaus said when he was asked why the great city of Lacedaemon was never girded with walls? For, pointing to the inhabitants and citizens of the town, so very expert in military knowhow and so strong and well-armed, 'here,' he said, 'are the city walls,' meaning that there is no wall but of bone, and that cities and towns could have no safer and stronger wall than the virtue[28] of the citizens and inhabitants." (*P* 15, 267–268 / *CW*, 183)

Like that of Agesilaus, Pantagruel's kingdom is upheld by civic virtue.[29] This son of Gargantua thus reveals his kinship with classical political practice. In fact, Pantagruel's Paris resembles not only Agesilaus's Sparta but also Diogenes's Corinth. All are inhabited by robust citizens willing to give their lives. Pantagruel cites practical reasons such as monetary cost that prohibit the

[28] Frame translates "la vertus des citoyens et habitans" as "the valor of the citizens and inhabitants."

[29] The anecdote about Agesilaus appears in Plutarch, *Moralia*, 210e29–30.

construction of strong walls around Paris,[30] but he grounds his argument in the superior "safety" and "strength" of virtue. Pantagruel also sees that his city's security rests on a kind of knowledge, "military knowhow." Such knowledge does not belong only to the generals and leaders, and it is not anything like philosophic or scientific knowledge, but it is dispersed among the community.

Although Machiavelli took fault with some aspects of the political life of antiquity, in the *Discourses* he agrees wholeheartedly with the ancients on this very issue of "walls." In fact, Machiavelli titled section 2.24 of the *Discourses* as follows: "Fortresses Are Generally Much More Harmful than Useful." There he argues that fortresses tend to encourage the rulers' belief that using force will suffice to hold power, that this use of force will on the contrary incur hatred, and that a better means of maintenance would be a fairer government that endears the people to it.[31]

The ancient cities that Machiavelli cites to support this argument vary in the degree to which they relied on both walls and virtue. The Romans had no fortresses but still built walls, whereas the Spartans refused to build walls, let alone fortresses (as Pantagruel attests). Here Machiavelli makes the Spartans stand out, for they alone "wished for *the virtue of the individual man* to defend them, and no other defense."[32] Like Pantagruel, Machiavelli supports the pro-virtue, anti-fortress position with an Agesilausean adage: "Wherefore when a Spartan was

[30] Rabelais's Corinth and Paris both had walls, but these were in great disrepair. With regard to Paris, this is implied in Panurge's complaint. With regard to Corinth, Rabelais writes that some citizens were "repairing walls" (among twenty other things they were doing) to prepare for the Macedonians.

[31] *DL*, 2.24.1–2.

[32] Ibid, 2.24.4. Italics mine.

asked by an Athenian if the walls of Athens seemed to him beautiful, he responded, 'Yes, if they were inhabited by women.'"[33] Again, the example shows that, according to Machiavelli, not all ancient cities relied exclusively on virtue. Athens had walls, and these walls did not merely serve utilitarian purposes but evoked "beauty." The severe Spartan virtue that Machiavelli praises means jettisoning some of the higher human activities, which are to be rejected because of their incompatibility with virtue (that is, because of their so-called "feminizing" capacities, or even simply because of opportunity cost). These activities include anything contemplative and therefore enervating to the body, whether philosophical or religious.

Machiavelli makes a further point in section 2.24 of the *Discourses*, as he arrays modern examples of power quickly won and lost because of mistaken trust in fortresses. Sforza in Milan, Julius II in Bologna, Louis XII in Genoa, and the Florentines in Pisa are all cited in this connection.[34] These failures are so temporally lopsided that readers may be tempted to view the divide between successes and failures as byproducts of a historical process. But the different avenues taken in antiquity, and especially the contrast between Sparta and Athens that Machiavelli provides, suggests a different divide, one based more simply on the effects of civilization. Spartan virtue must always be protected from the sophisticated corruption of beauty, as embodied in Athens' walls and in those citadels of the early modern Christian world. Machiavelli's attempt to protect virtue is a difficult endeavor, but does it bode well for philosophy? Did philosophy exist in Sparta as it did in Athens and under Christendom?

[33] Ibid, 2.24.4. See Plutarch, *Sayings of Spartans*, 215DE, 190A, and 212E. Mansfield and Tarcov note that none of these insults recorded by Plutarch are necessarily aimed at Athens.

[34] Ibid, 2.24.2–3.

Machiavelli's defense of virtue seems odd for more reasons still. Those familiar with Machiavelli know that he radically changes the meaning of virtue, and that he occasionally writes with umbrage about the naiveté of moralistic rulers and the damage they can unwittingly cause. Rabelais has something to say about this aspect of Machiavelli's writings as well.

Women's "Whatchamacallits" (The Machiavelli of The Prince*)*

When Panurge defends his complaint about the walls of Paris against Pantagruel's Spartan-Machiavellian response, it becomes clear that Rabelais highlights a tension in Machiavelli's writings. For against Pantagruel's Spartan-Machiavelli, Panurge represents the Machiavelli who "departs from the modes of others"[35] and favors the new over the old. As Panurge says, answering Pantagruel, his "teaching" [enseigne] unveils a "very new manner of building walls" [une maniere bien nouvelle de bastir les murailles] (*P* 15, 267 / *CW*, 182):

> I see that women's whatchamacallits in this part of the country are cheaper than stones. Of these they should build the walls, arranging them in good architectural symmetry and putting the biggest in the front ranks, and then, building them up donkey-back style, arrange the mediums and little ones [. . .]. There is no metal so resistant to blows. (*P* 15, 268–9 / *CW*, 183)

Here is Panurge's lack of faith in moral virtue at its greatest. Although it is no less Machiavellian than Pantagruel's Spartan position, it could not be more incompatible with it. Indeed, Diogenes had rejected civic virtue in equally unequivocal terms. Above, Rabelais said that Diogenes watched the Corinthians "turning everything upside down" (*TL* prol, 347; *CW*, 255). The citizens created their city for order, but their preparation for war introduced disorder. Virtue upended

[35] See *Prince*, 15.61.

the city of Corinth. Although Panurge and Diogenes both think that they know how to improve on the inadequacies of virtue, these improvements could not be more different. The Roman historian Diogenes Laertius reports that Diogenes the Cynic claimed philosophy taught him "to be prepared for every kind of fortune."[36] By this Laertius means that Diogenes possessed a psychological ability to accept his lot. Panurge, by contrast, would prepare a city wary of fortune by having it build more reliable defense systems—he would violate Machiavelli's classical teaching in the *Discourses* and embrace Machiavelli's modern teaching in the *Prince*.

The Cost of Virtue

To build those systems, Panurge inverts Pantagruel's formula. He plans to bring vice into the service of Paris' political goals.[37] Vice will provide "cheaper" building material than virtue because vice abounds whereas virtue is scarce. Panurge's subsequent conversation with Pantagruel justifies this abandonment of virtue by showing the difficulty of maintaining the city through it. "How do you know the women's pudenda are so cheap?" Pantagruel asks. "For in this town there are many good women, chaste and virgins" (*P* 15, 271 / *CW*, 185). Panurge assures Pantagruel that he knows the real moral character of the Parisian women—417 of them, to be exact—quite intimately. They are not as upright as Pantagruel believes. Pantagruel hears only the reputation of Paris' women, but Panurge has witnessed (and experienced) their true being. Panurge's special knowledge taught him that civic virtue fails the public because, while the community promises citizens a good name if they act well, many realize they can

[36] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 146.

[37] See Duval, *Design of Rabelais's* Pantagruel, 94–5 for an excellent discussion of the turn from virtue to vice in Panurge's "new teaching."

maintain the general appearance of virtue without its practice. Reputation and reality have an unfortunately attenuated relationship. People must be forced to be good. Panurge calls vice a "metal so resistant to blows" because the city can count on them being bad.

A story that Panurge tells about a father of two young girls further confirms virtue's flaw. Panurge had asked the father whether his daughters, both of whom he carried around by the arms, were virgins. The father told Panurge that he was of the "opinion" that the girl in front had never taken a man, for he had watched her "continuously." He dared not testify on behalf of the girl he carried behind him (*P* 15, 271 / *CW*, 185). Ensuring virtue demands extreme vigilance. Analogizing Panurge's story about the father and his girls means that, to guarantee the virtue that Pantagruel believes his Parisians possess (and by extension, the virtue that Agesilaus believed his Spartans possessed), his government must keep a constant, fatherly eye on its people. If Pantagruel's estimation of the Parisian men is as wrong as his estimation of the Parisian women, then Pantagruel's city cannot confidently rely on military excellence. Pantagruel knows only that the men, like the women, are reputed for virtue—not that they are virtuous.

Panurge's teaching in chapter 15 of *Pantagruel* complements Machiavelli's teaching in chapter 15 of *The Prince*, which also speaks to the issue of reputation, and in the same terms. In that chapter, Machiavelli turns his discussion to "what the modes and government of a prince should be." He explains that the distance he perceives between "how one lives to how one should live" impels him to take his step.[38] In the often neglected second half of the chapter,

[38] *Prince*, 15.61.

Machiavelli's account of the problem that normative considerations introduce to politics focuses on the same difficulties that precipitate Panurge's architectural proposal in *Pantagruel.*

Defending his opening statement, Machiavelli argues that because all people and especially princes have been held to high, moral standards of living, they "are noted for some of the qualities that bring them either blame or praise." The effectiveness of virtue relies on the citizens' individual reactions to public evaluations. Because these evaluations bear on personal happiness, and because the moral standards that determine those evaluations prove impossible to honestly respect, people must "be so prudent as to know how to avoid the infamy of those vices" whose reputed indulgence would incur personal damages.[39] Machiavelli contends that success in human affairs relies, as Panurge argues, on reconciling or combining the necessity of vice with the image of virtue. The two daughters that Panurge met had not accomplished this feat only because of their father's wise vigilance. Panurge himself perfectly manifests the combination of virtue and vice: Alcofribas describes him as "an evildoer, cheat, boozer, idler, robber, if ever there was any in Paris, and for the rest the nicest guy in the world" (*P* 16, 272 / *CW*, 186).

The New Virtue: Dams—not Fortresses, not Walls

Both Panurge and Machiavelli subscribe to a specific understanding of human nature that leads them to rebel against virtue-centered politics. Machiavelli makes his clearest statement about that nature, applicable "generally" to all people, during his assessment of love and fear as princely goals: "[People] are ungrateful, fickle, pretenders and dissemblers, evaders

[39] Ibid, 15.62.

of danger, eager for gain."[40] Rabelais's pitting of Pantagruel (as the classical representative, or as the classical Machiavellian) against Panurge (as the modern Machiavellian) shows that Machiavelli's pessimistic view of human nature makes it difficult for him to argue that a return to ancient Spartan virtue is possible.

What, then, is the purpose of Machiavelli's Spartan teaching? Perhaps Machiavelli's support of virtue can be interpreted as an effort to show that philosophers care about the well-being of the city. Only, this support for virtue must be modified so that it aligns with the modern Machiavelli's view of nature as it "is,"[41] a view that sunders the civic virtue exemplified by the good citizen. Thus in the *Prince* Machiavelli offers a new virtue that aligns with his view of human nature. He recommends the building of something like a wall: a dam.[42] The virtue of dam-building requires a pro-activeness that resembles virtue, but it is clean of the defects of virtue. At the end of the day, Machiavelli can say that the dam-building virtue is—unlike the Corinthians' and Spartans' virtue—amenable to philosophy. Dam-building requires foresight and hard thinking. And dam-building escapes the critique of Spartan virtue laid out by Panurge. Dam-building does not require human goodness or sacrifice of an extraordinary measure—it means to save skins without asking for lives. Moreover, dam-building satisfies the city by showing that philosophers need not slack and idle, and it legitimizes the community's concern for safety from future contingencies. Finally, dam-building does not run counter to self-interest.

[40] Ibid, 17.66.

[41] See Ibid, 15.61.

[42] See Ibid, 25.98.

But Diogenes might have his doubts about the ability of dam-building to cope with fortune. Merely by diverting or forcing philosophers and others to the task of building dams, fortune still rules human life. Machiavelli has not tidied up all the loose ends.

Pantagruelism (*Tiers Livre* prologue and 2)

Diogenes and Machiavelli represent a tension between independence and responsibility that philosophy cannot easily rid itself of. Like Machiavelli, Rabelais sees that Diogenic tub-rolling is civically irresponsible. But Machiavelli's attempt at responsibility leads to a medley of problems. Not only will philosophy now have its hands full with the city's grunt work, but it will take the same problematic attitude toward fortune that the city takes. That is, the new dam-building virtue is not only unpleasant but fortune-obsessed in the manner of the majority of people. It falls prey to the widespread wish for human domination over the world.

Pantagruelism is an attempt to correct the flaws of all the proposed solutions to the problems listed above. It takes a higher view of human nature than both Machiavelli and Diogenes do. It aims—with Machiavelli and against Diogenes—for civic responsibility. But it maintains—with Diogenes and against Machiavelli—that inner peace combats the effects of fortune more effectively than building dams. These considerations will lead Pantagruel to a measured view of what can be done regarding the problem of fortune. Still, Pantagruelism will have its own problems to overcome.

*Pantagruelism and the Egyptian Case (*Tiers Livre *prologue)*

If Machiavelli was right that philosophy needed to care more for the city, Pantagruelism will show that this care is not compatible with the Machiavellian presupposition that "all men are bad."[43] The following discussion will identify the shortcoming of this presupposition, namely that pessimism about human nature results from an incorrect estimation of human ignorance. Here I more fully elaborate the reasons for "taking all things in good part" that Rabelais gave in the prologue to *Gargantua*.

Against Machiavelli's counsel, the chief rule of the Pantagruelists is "never taking in bad part things they know issue from a good, free, and honest heart" (*TL* prol*,* 351 / *CW*, 258). What began in the prologue to *Gargantua* as a rule for reading texts is expanded into a rule for reading the intentions of others in the political world. But Rabelais has to prove that Pantagruelism is more than what Plato's Thrasymachus calls "high-minded innocence,"[44] and that those who follow Pantagruelism will not "come to ruin," as Machiavelli suggests they will.[45] Rabelais begins, however, by demonstrating the seriousness of these realists' reservations, as he tells a story to illustrate the contest between Pantagruelism (a certain openness to change) and the established order (resistant, of course, to change).[46] This story, recounted in the second half of Rabelais's prologue, concerns a Macedonian commander named Ptolemy who brought a Bactrian camel and a "motley-colored" man as gifts to the Egyptian people. Just as the

[43] *DL*, 1.3.1.

[44] Plato, *Republic*, 348c11.

[45] *Prince*, 15.61.

[46] The fact that Machiavelli's *Prince* is dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici gains significance here.

Egyptians abhorred the gifts Ptolemy brought before them, Rabelais "oscillates between hope and fear" because the French people may confuse service with offense just as the Egyptians had (*TL* prol, 350 / *CW*, 258).

The Egyptian case indicates that Machiavelli's position reaffirms untutored inclination or prejudice. People do not need to be taught to assume the worst of others. They already do that very well. Machiavelli's advice seems to be aimed at people who could be charmed by a contrived way of looking at things that contradicts the natural way of equating strangers with enemies. Ptolemy, for example, needs Machiavelli's advice. As he has traveled the world and seen many new things, Ptolemy has forgotten parochialism. Through empire, Ptolemy and the Macedonians have been opened to different possibilities in a way that the Egyptians have not. Ptolemy's openness to change blinkers his understanding of people as they are prior to gaining experiences like his.

Although Rabelais does not consider whether any conventions influenced the Egyptians' reaction to Ptolemy, he turns to an analogous discussion of France and singles out two powerful groups, the "hood-brained pettifoggers" and "nitpicking sticklers for details," for ignoring his philanthropy and wishing ill of him (*TL* prol*,* 352 / *CW*, 259). Pettifoggers and nitpicking sticklers cloak themselves in law and use its conservative disposition to protect themselves. They realize that new information upsets the status quo, and they know (or rather remember) human nature better than Ptolemy. These entrenched interests see that defending the established order via "nitpicking" takes less effort than proposing a new one. Ptolemy's and Rabelais's problem belongs to all innovators. It consists in convincing others of the good behind change. Pantagruelism, like Macedon's expansionary politics, necessitates a rethinking of what

the community is. Because people tend to like the community that they know, and because the rule of "never taking in bad part" applies to unknown and therefore ambiguous goods, Pantagruelism demands optimism about hidden motives, and for this reason it appears suspect (at worst) or naïve (at best). This optimism makes Pantagruelism especially vulnerable.

*The Benefits and Superiority of Pantagruelism (*Tiers Livre *2)*

In response to the story about Ptolemy in the prologue to the *Tiers Livre*, chapter 2 contains Rabelais's apology on behalf of the Pantagruelic virtue of good companionship. There Pantagruel learns of Panurge's misconduct in his new post as head of the castle at Salmagundi, which the Utopian prince had assigned to him. Panurge had quickly squandered three years of public revenue on festivities and debauchery. When questioned about his shady activities, Panurge equates incurring financial debt with executing moral duty, making the virtue ridiculous. This pretentious eulogy of *debtes* sets the stage for the Pantagruelic response. When Pantagruel addresses Panurge, Rabelais notes, he does not express anger,

> [. . .] else [Pantagruel] would have quite departed from out the deific manor of reason, if otherwise he had let himself be affected; for all the goods that Heaven covers and earth contains in all its dimensions—height, depth, length, and width—do not deserve to stir our affections or trouble our senses and spirits. (*TL* 2, 357 / *CW*, 264)

Pantagruelists take actions in good part for two reasons. The first pertains to the person under scrutiny. Interpreters should not attribute nefarious purposes to the interpreted. Such attribution rests on conjecture at best and faulty premises at worst. Pantagruelists assume that people act or think badly solely because they lack awareness of what benefits them and others. Pantagruelists reject Machiavelli's assumption that all people are naturally bad because there is a difference between being bad and being ignorant. The ignorant, like all people and including

the wise, aim for the good with varying degrees of accuracy. They never actually aim for the bad, as Machiavelli insists. Pantagruelists are "good companions" (*G* prol*,* 8 / *CW*, 5) because they see others' desire for the good despite their inability to obtain it. At least, they see that the bad others perpetrate has no coherent purpose. In this sense, Pantagruel follows the argument that Socrates makes in Plato's *Apology*, according to which people make poor choices because they do not know better and need only learn what would be. Pantagruel does not punish Panurge for chasing pleasures that, to him, seem worthy of pursuit, because Panurge acts the best he could in his benighted condition. Pantagruelism, like Socratism, teaches that responding to ignorance with instruction fits the nature of the condition more closely than punishment does.[47]

The second salutary effect of Pantagruelism, and the one that Rabelais emphasizes, relates to the interpreter. Pantagruel also profits from taking Panurge's actions in good part. Not only do the ignorant not deserve to be met with anger, but the angry person becomes ignorant. Rabelais says that anger shows one is "quite departed from out the deific manor of reason." Reason might, *post hoc*, justify anger, but the two cannot jointly inhabit the soul. Moreover, holding Panurge culpable for his deeds is not only morally wrong but intellectually misguided. Punishing the ignorant betrays an incomplete understanding of the conditions necessary for responsibility, and knowers are never "stirred" or "troubled" by the world because they do not expect it to exhibit responsibility. The universe may or may not be intelligible, but it is certainly not intelligent. Punishing Panurge would not differ from cursing a

[47] Plato, *Apology*, 26a. Rather than punish Panurge, Pantagruel attempts education: "he drew Panurge aside and gently pointed out to him that if he would live that way and not husband his resources differently, impossible it would be, or at least very difficult, to make him rich" (*TL* 2, 358 / *CW*, 265).

piece of furniture after stubbing a toe on it. Both resigning to the necessity of ignorance and adjusting one's expectations of the ignorant precede overcoming personal ignorance. Pantagruel wisely aims for inner serenity rather than external control.

Julius II's Obstinacy

Machiavelli thinks differently about humanity's response to externalities than Pantagruel does. I have already argued that where the latter advises detachment from the world through reasoned resignation, the former contemplates human domination over it. Anthony Parel's portrayal of Machiavelli shows just how different the two approaches are. Parel posits that Machiavelli "associated with practices related to predictive political astrology,"[48] and that, consequently, his worldview rests on a Ptolemaic theory of harmonization that entails a human responsiveness or agency. If so, new light may be shed on the intention behind Rabelais's parodies of agricultural almanacs, the most famous of which is his *Pantagrueline Prognostication* (1532), which contests the possibility and normative desirability of prediction.[49] Parel says that chapter 25 of *The Prince* conveys the centrality of this theory for Machiavelli in its discussion of "the quality of the times," which either complements or frustrates the rule of individual princes.[50] Other researchers can evaluate the validity of Parel's thesis about the

[48] Anthony Parel, "Farewell to Fortune," *The Review of Politics* 75 (2013): 593.

[49] See Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes,* 923–935; Frame, *Complete Works*, 747–56. Due to space constraints I do not discuss Rabelais's *Prognostication* here, although doing so would emphasize the contrast between Rabelais and Machiavelli.

[50] Parel, "Farewell," 593. See *Prince* 25.99.

specifics of Machiavelli's cosmology. More relevant here is how Machiavelli's judgment of princes who are dashed by fortune differs from Pantagruel's judgment.

Machiavelli notices that the natures of princes are unlikely to change at the rate, or in the way, that the world around them changes, but he does not link this problem to human ignorance as Pantagruel does. Although Machiavelli admits that Julius II (who serves as his example of a complacent prince) "would never have deviated from those modes to which nature inclined him," he avers that successful princes not only can override natural inclination but must. People who resist changing as conditions demand simply "remain obstinate."[51] Their error amounts, in short, to a matter of will. "Obstinacy" carries an important connotation. The obstinate one is not ignorant but knows better and refuses to act on their knowledge. Those who refuse to change with the times will be punished—not educated—by their fall from privilege.

Is Pantagruelism a Viable Political Alternative?

Before Pantagruelism is explained in Rabelais's texts, Rabelais seems to leave a tension between an ancient philosophy that retreats from politics (that of Diogenes) and a modern philosophy that favors politics to the neglect of philosophy proper (that of Machiavelli). The question is whether these solutions are exhaustive.

Pantagruelism shows that they are not. Reconsider the problem that both Diogenes and Machiavelli faced: How should one respond to civic needs and to the responsibility that those needs imply? Answering this question well depends on knowing fortune's true scope and

[51] *Prince*, 25.101.

power. Machiavelli admits in his cagey analysis of fortune in chapter 25 of *The Prince* that it "might be true" that fortune rules "half our actions" and "leaves the other half, or close to it, for us to govern." But he only tentatively considers fortune and humanity as co-rulers in the second step of a three-step progression. This progression begins from the initial popular opinion that fortune rules all things, and it ends with Machiavelli's trademark conclusion that fortune "demonstrates her power where virtue has not been put."[52] If the dam-building virtue is put everywhere, so to speak, then everything enters the bounds of human control, or at least it enters the bounds where humanity has a fighting chance at control. Diogenes, on the other hand, stays behind on the first step, with the "many" who provide Machiavelli's point of departure. Like those many, Diogenes allows himself to "be governed by chance" rather than try to govern chance.[53] He would simply master his appetites and discipline his response to fortune's governance, insulating himself from its effects by learning to cope with them. But Diogenes differs from the many in that he copes better than they do with fortune. Think of Corinth frenetically preparing for war.

Pantagruel occupies the only space left, Machiavelli's second step. Merely by virtue of its placement on this spectrum, Pantagruelism is the most moderate solution. Pantagruelism gives up neither too much nor too little to fortune. This becomes clear when reexamining the definition of Pantagruelism as given in the prologue to the *Quart Livre*: Pantagruelism is "gaiety of spirit confected in contempt for fortuitous things" (*QL* prol, 523 / *CW*, 425). The fact that

[52] Ibid, 25.98.

[53] Given that the majority in Diogenes's time were not as passive as the many who Machiavelli describes, one may have to distinguish between majorities belonging to different time periods and communities.

things can be so categorized suggests that not all things are fortuitous, only some. Pantagruelism refuses the two temptations of saying that fortune encompasses all or nothing. Pantagruel suggests this too, as he uses prudence to discern between things that are in and out of human control. In chapter 2 of the *Tiers Livre*, Pantagruel recognized Panurge's actions were out of his control and so he refused to be "affected" by them. But he also insisted that Panurge's situation, his indebtedness, laid within Panurge's control. The disquieting of the Pantagruelist's soul occurs only when s/he misjudges what belongs to the realm of fortuitous things. Rabelais follows Diogenes regarding those things that truly belong to that realm. These are not to be trifled with but must be shouldered with the proper psychological attitude. However, Pantagruel also takes on a task that Diogenes would simply refuse—ruling over the kingdom of Utopia. Yet as a ruler, Pantagruel does not actively aim for expansion as the Machiavellian prince would. Even the conquest of Dipsody at the beginning of the *Tiers Livre* (our topic in Chapter 4) originates from a defensive war. Pantagruel seeks only to maintain order where order is threatened.[54] For Pantagruel, politics comprises a necessary sphere of life, but one that has limits.

Yet the problem of fortune exceeds the question of fortune's strength and the limits of its domain. According to Diogenes, acting against fortune precludes the contemplative life. His tub-rolling—his beating about the house that was meant to protect him—demonstrated the thoughtlessness of the Corinthians. Political communities such as Corinth often drop everything, including thinking, to act together against some threat to security and well-being.

[54] See, e.g., *P* 23, 298–299 / *CW*, 209–210.

The community's tendency to privilege action over thought makes participation in that community impossible for Diogenes as a philosopher who values independence of mind. By resisting participation in civic action, Diogenes nevertheless endangered philosophy by turning public opinion against it. Machiavelli, on the other hand, opposed old-fashioned civic duty as ardently as he did not because he agreed with Diogenes that it distracted from the philosophic life, but because he saw that philosophy could relieve civic duty through the formulation of smarter policy. This relief would refute philosophy's selfishness and give it a better name. To Diogenes's objection that this task costs philosophic freedom, Machiavelli would agree with Achilles that it is better to be a slave on earth than king of Hades.[55] Avoiding one evil, Diogenes falls into a worse one.

Pantagruel alone retains philosophic independence while fulfilling civic responsibilities. He makes this combination through recourse to a modified version of the distinctively Socratic response to the foregoing problems. When Socrates says in Book 7 of the *Republic* that a philosopher would not desire to return to that cave of a community he once lived in and would need to be dragged back into it, he lends some respectability to Diogenes's decision to sit on top of the Cranion and watch his city prepare to fight. Nevertheless, Socrates conceded, unlike Diogenes, that justice required the philosopher to eventually descend.[56] The best rulers—the philosophers—would rule reluctantly. They would love private life but give up that love because

[55] Homer, *The Odyssey of Homer*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), XI, 489–491: "I would rather follow the plow as thrall to another man, one with no land allotted him and not much to live on, than be a king over all the perished dead."

[56] Plato, *Republic*, 519c–d.

of their justice.[57] But who characterizes such a ruler? Machiavelli's prince (if not Machiavelli himself) is too eager to rule; Diogenes, too loath. Unlike Machiavelli, Pantagruel does not esteem political rule as the key to happiness; but unlike Diogenes, Pantagruel does not dismiss political rule as unhappiness.

The Pantagruelic king takes a measured view of political rule not only because of his view of fortune's powers but because he embodies the noblest argument on behalf of hereditary monarchy. This argument did not hold a king fit to rule by virtue of blood. It said that educating a good ruler[58] requires knowing long beforehand who will be prince. This education would begin in childhood and culminate in the belief that "science without conscience is but the ruin of the soul" (*P* 8, 245 / *CW*, 162). And as a gift from father to son (for Rabelais conveys this argument through a letter from Gargantua to the young prince Pantagruel), this education would give the future ruler a sense of gratitude that would provide comfort when the time came to "come forth out of this tranquility and repose of study" as befits one "becoming a man" (*P* 8, 245 / *CW*, 161). Here a "man" is not simply a man of action. The man's actions, his virtues, are rooted in thought, and he reconciles the life of thought with the life of action through movement from thought to action. By enjoying the life of thought before taking up the life of action, the ruler is tempered. The life of action cannot be mistaken for something more

[57] Ibid, 520e; see also 345e and 347c.

[58] For Rabelais, this education includes language (Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldean, and Arabic), mathematics, law, physics, and metaphysics, in that order. See *P* 8, 243–245 / *CW*, 161–162.

than it is because the memory of the pleasures of thought linger. The ruler would even be seen philosophizing from time to time (*P* 9, 246 / *CW*, 163).[59]

Whereas Pantagruel's life of thought, his childhood education related in the early chapters of *Pantagruel* (*P* 4–8), included both science and conscience (two words whose etymologies suggest a connectedness), Diogenes and Machiavelli both reject virtuous action because of a dearth of conscience. Fortune causes both Diogenes and Machiavelli to think first of what would benefit them. Pantagruel reminds us that philosophers embrace the moral sense and, most philosophically, forget themselves. With this it becomes evident that Pantagruelism is primarily a political philosophy—one that looks for and to the good of the whole. As a ruler, Pantagruel does this in part because one simply should, but also because that concern for the whole makes rule philosophic.

[59] See King Grandgousier's letter to Gargantua, a letter much like Gargantua's letter to his son: "The fervor of your studies obliged me for a long time not to recall you from that philosophical repose, if my trust in our friends and former confederates had not now spoiled the security of my old age. But since such is this fated destiny that I should be troubled by those in whom I trusted most, I am forced to recall you to the aid of the people and property which are entrusted to you by natural law." (*G* 29, 84 / *CW*, 71)

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETING MACHIAVELLI PANTAGRUELICALLY

Life in Utopia (*Tiers Livre* 1)

So far attempts have been made by Machiavellianism and Pantagruelism at solving the Diogenic problem. To articulate the main assumptions of these alternatives, I have used broad brush strokes. This sweeping view of Rabelais's writings has weaved through passages from *Gargantua*, *Pantagruel*, and the *Tiers Livre*. Now I begin to move at a more leisurely pace and embark on an interpretation of the *Tiers Livre*, one that takes interest in the Diogenic problem and its underlying theme, the interference of fortune in human life.

In this chapter I examine the opening episode of the *Tiers Livre*, Utopia's conquest of Dipsody. I mentioned before that scholars have noted an "allusion" to Machiavelli in this episode—Rabelais's condemnation of those "tyrannical minds" who "rule with iron rods." But I see a few reasons to reconsider Rabelais's purpose here. First there is Ianziti's argument. Rabelais's narrator proceeds to recommend a mode of rule that Machiavelli heartily endorses. I hope to show just how persistently Rabelais engages Machiavelli in this first episode. For besides the theme of conquest (which is Machiavellian enough), Rabelais also discusses the motivations for beginning or expanding political community, explains "the way to hold and retain newly acquired countries," and evaluates the Roman king Numa Pompilius. All of these show up at various places in Machiavelli's body of work.[1]

[1] Cf. *DL*, 1.1; *Prince*, 7.48; *DL*, 1.11; 1.19.

I propose a second reason for Rabelais's engagement of Machiavelli. That is, Rabelais's goal is not to morally condemn Machiavelli, but rather to use Utopia to portray the Machiavellian regime and scrutinize it. This portrayal and scrutinizing of Machiavelli's regime better aligns with Rabelais's promised purpose of writing about his "lofty sacraments and horrific mysteries," it gives Rabelais a vehicle for continuing the account of the Diogenic problem, and it constitutes a more benevolent interpretation of Machiavelli.

Thus there is much overlap between Utopia and the Machiavellian regime. The narrative commentary and the action of the story together actually seem to support Machiavelli's new approach of controlling the outer world. Utopia succeeds politically because it takes that approach. Things go better for it than they had for the Corinthians of the prologue, and Utopia's political success does not even depend on the hard-won cultivation and consistent practice of virtue, a term that is not once mentioned in the chapter. But as Edwin Duval has argued, chapter 1 does not tell the whole story of the *Tiers Livre*. In fact, Duval contends, chapter 1 presents little more than the ending of the story that began in *Pantagruel.*[2] It is actually chapter 2 of the *Tiers Livre* marks the beginning of a new story—the account of "private life" that Rabelais promised to give us alongside his account of "the political state." By detailing through subsequent chapters what the topsy-turvy life inside of Utopia looks like in peacetime, the *Tiers Livre* will demonstrate that doubt and uncertainty permanently trouble human life, and that dealing honestly with those doubts and uncertainties (rather than attempting to eradicate them) constitutes the main goal for a thoughtful person or community. First, though,

[2] See Edwin M. Duval, "History, Epic, and the Design of Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*," *François Rabelais: Critical Assessments*, ed. Jean-Claude Carron (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 121–132.

Rabelais shows what attractions the conquest of fortune offers, explains why thinkers like Machiavelli deemed the venture worthwhile, and makes the strongest possible case for Machiavelli. True to his word, Rabelais interprets all things—including Machiavelli's understanding of the world—"in the most perfect sense." This is an act of philosophical benevolence.

The Poverty of the Site: Machiavelli and Rabelais on Political Origins

Machiavelli's Discourses 1.1 *as Map for* Tiers Livre 1

Recent editors and translators of Rabelais's works assume that Rabelais used *The Prince* as his source text for chapter 1 of the *Tiers Livre*.[3] Presumably those scholars have in mind chapter 3 of Machiavelli's short handbook, which explains how colonization benefits the acquisitive prince.[4] At first blush, Pantagruel appears to colonize Dipsody in like fashion. Yet Rabelais's depiction of how Pantagruel conquers Dipsody more closely reflects an analogous discussion of the formation of political communities in Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*. Machiavelli's *Discourses* aids analysis of Rabelais's *Tiers Livre* better than *The Prince* does because both the *Discourses* and the *Tiers Livre* focus on necessity's role in shaping the city. By

[3] Frame, *Complete Works*, 840; Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, 1372. See also Duval, *Design of the* Tiers Livre, 31. This is not to say that Rabelais did not use *The Prince* in his writing of the chapter, only that scholarship never explains why it believes he did.

[4] See Machiavelli, *Prince*, 3.10: "The other, better remedy is to send colonies that are, as it were, fetters of that state, to one or two places, because it is necessary either to do this or to hold them with many men-at-arms and infantry. One does not spend much on colonies, and without expense of one's own, or with little, one may send them and hold them; and one offends only those from whom one takes fields and houses in order to give them to new inhabitants—who are a very small part of the state [. . .]. I conclude that such colonies are not costly, are more faithful, and less offensive." Machiavelli rescinds the option of military force at *Prince*, 3.11.

using Machiavelli's analysis of communal origins in *Discourses* 1.1 as a template for Utopia's actions in the opening of the *Tiers Livre*, readers can see where Rabelais's interaction with Machiavelli begins.

The opening of Machiavelli's *Discourses* purports to describe "universally" the beginnings of all political communities. Despite this claim's confidence, scholarly and popular readers alike know less about it than about the parallel but distinct typology of regimes that Machiavelli constructs in *The Prince*. There his construction substitutes Aristotle's moral arrangement of regimes[5] for an amoral one that sorts principalities according to their means of procurement.[6] In *Discourses* 1.1, however, Machiavelli differentiates between cities founded by either "natives" or "foreigners." All native-founded cities enjoy freedom, says Machiavelli, so he makes no further classification of them. (The claim is dubious, especially given Machiavelli's account of Rome at various points in its history.) Freedom is also the principle at work in foreign-founded cities, which Machiavelli divides into subcategories according to their status as slavish or free.[7]

Freedom, whether in the case of colonies or of home-cities, depends on the circumstances of a community's formation. Paradoxically, cities are forced into freedom. Native communities thrive and live freely because necessity compels their establishment. Colonies attain freedom when people "constrained by disease, war, and hunger" occupy new lands. Romulus's Rome and Moses's Israel (occupying Canaan) serve as prototypes of free cities

[5] Aristotle, *Politics*, 2nd edition, ed. and trans. Carnes Lord (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1279a22–b10.

[6] *Prince*, 1.5.

[7] *DL*, 1.1.1.

founded by natives and foreigners, respectively.[8] In slavish cities such as the Roman colonies and contemporary Florence, on the other hand, imperial ambitions and glory-seeking lay the groundwork.[9]

Type of city	Origin	Historical example [Founder]
Native founder / free	People unite against outside enemies spontaneously or at motioning of leaders (*DL*, 1.1.1)	- Ancient Athens [Theseus] - Modern Venice [the people] (*DL*, 1.1.2)
Foreign founder / free	Conditions of disease, war, or hunger compel abandonment of homeland for a new city (*DL*, 1.1.4)	- Israel in Canaan [Moses] (*DL*, 1.1.4)
Foreign founder / slavish	Built either to relieve an overpopulated homeland or for the prince's glory (*DL*, 1.1.3)	- Alexandria [Alexander] - Florence [Sulla / mountain men of Fiesole] - Roman colonies [the people] (*DL*, 1.1.3)

From these categories, Machiavelli discovers a problem that prospective political founders must account for:

> Because men work either by necessity or by choice, and because there is greater virtue to be seen where choice has less authority, it should be considered whether it is better to choose sterile places for the building of cities so that men, constrained to be industrious and less seized by idleness, live more united, having less cause for discord, because of the poverty of the site.[10]

The problem compounds as Machiavelli continues. For although tough living cultivates virtue, the demands of international politics require a city to sit on advantageous ground that allows easy living. This countervailing need of protection from the outside not negating the original one for sterility to encourage virtue from within, Machiavelli draws a final conclusion that

[8] Ibid, 1.1.5.

[9] Ibid, 1.1.3.

[10] Ibid, 1.1.4.

meets both needs. Laws and norms must, through harshness, replace natural necessities as the impetus of virtue. Thus Romulus and Numa imposed law on the Romans to artificially maintain civic commitment.[11]

Machiavelli joins a tradition of realists who prioritize necessity's dominance over political life. Athenian historian Thucydides taught a similar (not identical) lesson about necessity in his history of the Peloponnesian War, and he used almost identical verbiage to do so. Of Attica, he wrote that "the poverty of its soil" protected it from the political strife so disruptive of maturing civilizations.[12] Hardship, according to Thucydides, cultivated virtue in Athens and precipitated its imperial success.[13] But success gave way to decadence in an inexorable decline.[14] The ultimate victory of Sparta over Thucydides' home in his account warns that the excellence necessity forges culminates in the defeat of necessity, and finally in an antithetical softness.

In the famed funeral oration that Thucydides attributes to Pericles, the Athenian leader admitted that Athens' softness posed a problem.[15] Or, presented differently, Pericles saw that necessity denies the city participation in higher pursuits thought to provide happiness. Indulging those good and pleasant pursuits weakens and imperils the city. Pericles's assurance that the Athenians could "philosophize without softness" comprised his half-hearted attempt to

[11] Ibid, 1.1.5.

[12] Thucydides, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, ed. Robert B. Strassler, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998), 1.2.5.

[13] Ibid, 1.2.6.

[14] Ibid, 1.8.3; 1.13.1.

[15] Ibid, 2.40.1.

reconcile necessity with the higher pleasures. For some in the audience, his assurance must have rung hollow. At other times in Athens, philosophy had been questioned and would be questioned precisely on the grounds that it softens people. A brief thirty-two years after Pericles' speech, Plato recorded how the Athenians put Socrates to death for corrupting—one could say softening—the city's youth. And later, in the first century AD, the author of *The Acts of the Apostles* condemned the Athenian philosophers' idleness as he observed that the Epicureans and Stoics "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to know some new thing."[16] Paul's polemic lived on in Rabelais's peer Erasmus who, though sometimes described as an adversary of Machiavelli,[17] agreed with the Italian thinker that "many of the pitfalls which exist in every state are the result of idleness."[18]

If philosophy corrupts or softens people by releasing them of convictions for which they might fight and die (and which serve communal necessities like preservation), then admitting necessity's dominion over political life as Machiavelli and the realists do points back to the Diogenic problem laid out in Rabelais's prologue, and moreover explains why ancient thinkers may have resisted the Machiavellian formulation. Only the modern person mistakes the necessity-as-crucible thesis as meaning that necessity fathers invention and thereby sanctions philosophy, because only modern people equate the crafty inventor with the philosopher. The

[16] Acts 17:21. Given that the caution in his letter to the church in Colossae (2:8) against the allure of "vain deceit" offered by philosophers constitutes the only other reference to philosophy in the New Testament, I would ascribe a pejorative spirit to Paul's characterization of the Athenian schools.

[17] Harry R. Burke, "Audience and Intention in Machiavelli's 'The Prince' and Erasmus' 'Education of a Christian Prince," *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* (1984):84–93; Allan H. Gilbert, *Machiavelli's* Prince *and Its Forerunners*: The Prince *as a Typical Book de Regimine Principum*, 2nd edition (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1 938/1968).

[18] See Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, 6.83.

classical tradition conceived of philosophy as a leisurely pursuit, possible mainly through respite from necessity. Ancient philosophers achieved leisure through one of two means. Socrates and Diogenes found leisure by strictly limiting their needs; those like Plato found it through vast, inherited wealth. To use Machiavelli's phrase in *Discourses* 1.1, both kinds of ancient thinkers, the moderate and the rich, were emphatically not "constrained to be industrious and less seized by idleness." Neither Socrates, nor Diogenes, nor Plato could find a home in a world so hostile to their idle pursuits—whether the intransigently moral world of the Bible (in which idleness invites sin), or the hurried and practical one of the moderns (in which idleness invites tyranny).

A troubling difference between the Corinthians in Rabelais's prologue and the Utopians in chapter 1 is the presence (or, as it were, absence) of a resident philosopher. While the modern Utopia endorses and widely practices "the liberal disciplines" (*TL* 1, 353 / *CW*, 261), it has no philosopher on the level of Diogenes. Or, if philosophers live in Utopia,[19] the goals of their occupation sync with the goals of the city. They blend with the crowd. But true philosophers would only accept this synchronization if it could be sincerely made, that is, if the regime would not modify or bend their activities. Rabelais's text gives readers no evidence either way, but interpreters should not assume the unqualified superiority of the Utopians to the Dipsodians. Utopia enjoys superior political force, but its dearth of philosophy, or at least its demotion of philosophy to the retail level, should trouble Rabelais's thirsty readers.

[19] Trouillogan is, besides perhaps Pantagruel, the only philosopher in Utopia. His Pyrrhonism may be unconventional, but it does not threaten. See *TL* 35. I discuss Panurge's consultation with Trouillogan in Chapter 5.

The Wilderness of Dipsody

Rabelais's description of the Utopian settlement of Dipsody in chapter 1 recalls the discussion of political origins that occurs in *Discourses* 1.1. If readers take Machiavelli at his word, then this is merely to be expected. Machiavelli claims that his framework exhausts the theoretical alternatives. This claim may extend, as Rabelais makes it, into the province of literature or fiction. But as he says more about Utopia, Rabelais denies the salience of attributes that, according to Machiavelli, determine political culture. If readers charge the Utopians with colonizing Dipsody for its resources (as Machiavelli's free cities do), Rabelais replies that Utopia entered Dipsody "not so much" for material goods. And if readers suggest that Utopia must be relieving its homeland of a growing population,[20] Rabelais again asks us to seek a more fundamental reason for Utopia's rule over Dipsody (*TL* 1, 353 / *CW*, 261). Ultimately, Rabelais trains his readers not to think about Utopia's actions in terms of its own situation, as Machiavelli would have it. Utopia's policy depends mostly on the character of the vanquished.

Rabelais discounts the salience of qualities that Machiavelli measures to predict a community's foreign policy, yet he agrees with Machiavelli on a basic point. His Utopians conquered their enemies because they had never been completely free. The Utopians are rather Pantagruel's "faithful, ancient subjects, who in all memory of man had known, recognized, avowed, or served, no lord other than him" (*TL* 1, 353 / *CW*, 261). Likewise,

[20] This is Machiavelli's slavish colony. The analogous case in Machiavelli is the old Roman colonies, but Rabelais discusses Utopia here in relation to Israel. Whereas Machiavelli had described the Israelites' settlement in Canaan as an escape from constraints—and thus deemed Israel's Canaan a free colony—Rabelais says the Utopians are like Moses's Jews, who "multiplied like locusts" (*TL* 1, 353 / *CW*, 261). Rabelais questions Machiavelli's sorting of specific cases into his categories. His characterization of the Jews suggests they overpowered the Egyptians and enslaved the Canaanites. Compare with Exodus 10.

regardless of Utopia's necessities, Pantagruel makes the conquest of Dipsody "in order *to contain it in its duty and obedience*" (*TL* 1, 353 / *CW*, 261; italics mine). The conquest of the undutiful by the dutiful suggests that cities remain free on the world stage by submitting to a ruler at home. Rabelais's portrayal of the Utopians' colonization—enslavement by slaves—lays bare the tension in Machiavelli's *Discourses* between freedom and necessity. Necessity introduced in the form of rule by the Utopians extinguishes the Dipsodians' freedom, which is in turn denigrated as little more than "wild" or anarchical living. The Dipsodians will experience a new freedom under Utopian rule, but it will be a qualified, civilized freedom. Likewise Machiavelli knows the freedom in his account is not freedom in the deepest sense, but it is a political freedom that keeps a community from a fate worse than that of the Dipsodians, who were simply lucky to be conquered by the benevolent Pantagruel and not by a tyrant. But as Rabelais suggests (and as the ancients insisted), civilized servitude costs philosophy.

"The Way to Hold and Retain Newly Acquired Countries"

If chapter 1 of the *Tiers Livre* calls into question the effects of necessity on political life, Rabelais's narrator nonetheless expresses agreement with Machiavelli regarding the need for respect of property. The mutual esteem of property in Rabelais and Machiavelli is most evident when Rabelais takes up the theme of material benefit. This section of chapter 1 brings us back to the supposed allusion to Machiavelli as a "tyrannical mind" who "rules with iron rods." The context of that allusion is a discussion of "the way to hold and retain newly acquired countries" (*TL* 1, 354 / *CW*, 262) in which the narrator argues that rulers should beware using force or fear to secure themselves.

Machiavelli gives the same warning in chapter 17 of *The Prince*. Yes, Machiavelli insists that rulers must rely on fear rather than love to secure their rule. Such a statement appears completely tyrannical and at odds with Rabelais's position, although a closer examination reveals the humanity of Machiavelli's political psychology. The Machiavellian prince who realizes the fickleness, vileness, and ingratitude so common among people must use fear more than love,[21] but different "modes" of fear produce different effects, and Machiavelli does not approve all modes. Princes who misuse fear incur hatred especially if they abuse property. Successful rulers avoid such abuse at all costs. They exhibit a certain measure of justice as they use force.[22] The fear—let us call it political fear—that Machiavelli endorses prefigures the fear that Hobbes assigns to the leviathan.[23] It creates orderliness by stirring a passion in people stronger than the "wickedness" that makes them meddle with others. Machiavelli's fearful prince actually embodies, perhaps in secularized form (perhaps not), Paul's description of the governing authorities in Romans 13:4: "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, *be afraid*" (italics mine). Machiavelli and Paul see that fear corrodes society when taken too far. Good people must know they will be treated well. As Machiavelli writes, "A prince should show himself a lover of the virtues, giving recognition to virtuous men."[24] Unless Rabelais's narrator would place Paul among those certain tyrannical spirits he chastises, he cannot have in mind Machiavelli as one who advocates a mode of rule that allows

[21] *Prince*, 17.66.

[22] Ibid, 17.67.

[23] Law for the leviathan encompasses nothing more than restraint through the threat of punishment, and Hobbes concludes that executive force matters more than disembodied laws. See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co., 1994), 26.8; 46.36.

[24] *Prince*, 21.91.

"plundering, forcing, harassing, ruining peoples and ruling them with iron rods" (*TL* 1, 354 / *CW*, 262). These are obvious examples of the sort of fear that Machiavelli warns against.

On the other hand, in a passage near the end of chapter 1, Rabelais also shows how Machiavelli's support for respect of property stands at odds with other comments he makes in *The Prince.* Near the end of chapter 1, for example, Rabelais challenges Machiavelli's conviction that rulers will be praised for successfully taking what they wish.[25] Against Machiavelli's assurances, Rabelais affirms simple-minded, conventional opinion ("for you say as a common proverb") and cautions that, on the contrary, "ill-got things perish ill" (*TL* 1, 356 / *CW*, 263). Ruling through bare power as fails, or will fail, because rulers and their successors will not always hold power. When a ruler passes away, "the like scandal will lay upon the deceased; and his memory will be accursed as a wicked conqueror" (*TL* 1, 356 / *CW*, 263).[26] Rabelais simply holds Machiavelli to his word here. If the strong can take with impunity, what becomes of property?

Beyond identifying a negative model of rule that shows princes what not to do, Rabelais also provides positive examples worthy of imitation. Still discussing acquisition and maintenance, Rabelais proceeds to portray political subjects in a series of images as newborn children, trees, and sick patients for whom rulers must care as parents, gardeners, and doctors. The three images correspond to three distinct sets of responsibilities: 1) nursing, cradling, and

[25] See *Prince*, 3.14.

[26] Even so, readers should note the selfish (perhaps Machiavellian?) motive of just rule for Rabelais when he stresses that an aggressor will surely "lose his acquisition and suffer scandal and opprobrium" (*TL* 1, 356). Plus, Rabelais could appeal to natural justice or to the divine as corrections of the theft that Machiavelli endorses, but does not.

fondling, 2) supporting, securing, and defending, and 3) coddling, sparing, and restoring. Like children, citizens need education; like plant-life they need defense against "storms and calamities"; and like the sickly, some will need rehabilitation (*TL* 1, 354 / *CW*, 262).

Rabelais's narrator takes an essentially paternalistic view of government's role. With regard to Rabelais's first image of children one could point out (for illustrative purposes) that later liberal theorists like Locke dedicated ample attention to defining the limits of the imposing claim a parent may make over its child's life. Locke argued that children lie at their parents disposal only because they live in a state of immaturity, hence of vulnerability. He emphasized that parents retain power over children until the relationship reaches equality, and noted that even this stage requires minimal help. A father who attempts to control his son's or daughter's life into adulthood must be suspected of extortion—of pretending to act as a protector when protection is not needed.[27] Machiavelli too recognizes that benefits are "held to be a burden" and comprise a strong claim on the beneficiaries,[28] and Rabelais himself notes that princes may benefit subjects to create dependency. Benefits act as the "philters, snares, and lures of love, by which peacefully one retains what one had conquered with difficulty" (*TL* 1, 355 / *CW*, 263).

The examples of Osiris, Alexander, and Hercules attest to this morally dubious function of benefits. By benefitting others, Osiris "conquered the whole earth." Through these means Alexander likewise became "emperor of the universe" and Hercules "possessed the whole continent" (*TL* 1, 355 / *CW*, 262). These are not acts of altruism.[29] Citizens would prefer life

[27] Locke, "Second Treatise," in *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 303–311 (6.53–65).

[28] *DL*, 1.29.1.

[29] For a contrary argument, see Duval, *Design of the* Tiers Livre, 34.

under such benevolent emperors to the arbitrary will of tyrants, but this argument in favor of public benefits clearly considers the private good of the ruler prior to the common good.

The Implicit Critique of Religion

Benefits redound to the prince's favor in another way, just as important for princes who would acquire new territory. They help the prince displace the authority normally given to the divinities that precede his arrival. As the Utopians settle in Dipsody, the vanquished develop the Utopians' fondness for Pantagruel after spending a few days with the Utopians and seeing how beneficently their new king treats them. The Dipsodians even "complained," the narrator explains, "*calling on all the heavens and the moving intelligences*, that they had not known sooner of the renown of the good Pantagruel" (*TL* 1, 354 / *CW*, 262; italics mine). In other words, the Dipsodians cursed their gods for withholding the benefits that Pantagruel and his Utopians now provide.

The narrator's description of how the Dipsodians reacted to material well-being captures a component of the critique of religion advanced by the early modern philosophers, in whose view religion reflects little more than deeply felt insecurity and anxiety about the future. According to them, the phenomenon of religion remains a political force because of the apparently "occult qualities" of the world.[30] Hobbes basically agrees with, or extends, or deepens, Machiavelli's flatly stated opinion that religion abounds among "mountain men."[31] That is, religion belongs to the uneducated. Thus Hobbes predicted that religion would subside

[30] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 46.29.

[31] *DL*, 1.11.3.

with the twin efforts of science explaining the unknown[32] and politics securing the future. He would have expected the abandonment of ancient religion that transpires in Dipsody on the heels of its newfound flourishing under Pantagruel. Hobbes warrants this expectation by finding a common cause of religion and civil society in humanity's primal fear of violent death.[33] One of these remedies suffices to extinguish the cause. Hobbes suggests, if he does not wager, that the dissolution of anxious fear through commodious living in civil society can replace the promises of heaven.[34] The Dipsodians' reception of the Utopian lifestyle and attendant condemnation of their old divinities confirms this hypothesis.

Doing good by mediating could alternatively be explained as the duty of a Christian ruler,[35] but the details of Rabelais's description rule out this possibility. On the contrary, Pantagruel's actions appear unconscionable to the Christian after Rabelais explains that the Utopians depend on Pantagruel as the sole guarantor of their welfare and safety. The Utopians "had known, recognized, avowed, or served, *no other lord* than him" (*TL* 1, 353 / *CW*, 261; italics mine). The statement is benign if the term *lord* [seigneur][36] encompasses only other political leaders. If Rabelais intends the term in its broader sense, however, it means that Pantagruel did not allow for the kind of fracturing of allegiances that Christianity tends to promote. The suspicion is confirmed when Rabelais makes a similar but even brasher comment about Hercules. In part, Hercules accomplished all he did by "pardoning the entire past with

[32] As Machiavelli says of the 'unknown,' "Nor is this any miracle." *Prince*, 3.16.

[33] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 13.9.

[34] Ibid, 11.

[35] See Langer, "The Political Education of the King," 107ff.

[36] Traditionally, *seigneur* has been used in France as an epithet for Jesus Christ.

eternal oblivion of all preceding offense" (*TL* 1, 355 / *CW*, 262). Such an act could not be more reminiscent of Jesus Christ. And as the Christian would say, such an act belongs to Christ alone. The endurance of Christianity as a spiritual community demonstrates how well forgiveness fortifies rule, but the suggestion that princes secure empire through those same means seems designed to undermine Christian faith in the deity who visited earth to take on the task—exclusively—of pardoning humankind's sins.[37] The Pharisees and secular rulers alike understood Jesus's pardoning as a disruption of the status quo.[38]

The Religion of Numa in Machiavelli and Rabelais

Here readers finally arrive at the need to recognize the importance of the figure of Numa for both Rabelais and Machiavelli. But it is important to read both authors in light of the larger conversation about Numa that dates back to antiquity. Indeed, Numa has often served as the touchstone of academic discussion of civil religion in the West, but that discussion has not settled how or what Numa contributed to religion and politics. A prevailing view in the scholarship casts Numa as the creator of a more civil way of life, as one who purged the detrimental (from the Roman state's perspective) practices of backwoods believers and instituted the "strict supervision of all ritual." From this perspective, Numa's policies tended to secularize Roman society, or they at least cropped those extra-political religious institutions

[37] See Matthew 1:21.

[38] See Luke 7:48–49.

that had stuck like thorns in the government's side.[39] Christians up until the writing of Augustine, however, regarded Numa as a downright despicable ruler willing to propagate religious lies and false doctrine for the sake of political security and peace without regard for matters of the soul. The early Christians did not view Numa as a secularist, but rather as the source of all superstition and pernicious paganism.[40]

Both Rabelais and Machiavelli portray Numa as a great "mediator" between gods and people. "[Numa's mediations] all arose," Machiavelli explains, "because he wished to put new and unaccustomed orders in the city and doubted that his authority would suffice."[41] According to Machiavelli, the basic issue for Numa was that he could not share his unique insights and considerable foresight with others because the knowledge he discovered lay buried and could only be dug up with much thought. The "reasons" for his positions on important issues were not "self-evident."[42] Numa solved the asymmetry between ruler and ruled by pointing to a higher authority whose "goodness and prudence," though actually his, would be "marveled" at and, consequently, accepted.[43] At the end of *Tiers Livre* chapter 1, Rabelais supports Numa's policy with the authority of the ancient poet Hesiod, who calls kings "mediators between gods and men; inferior to gods, superior to men." Hesiod, according to Rabelais, says kings imitate the genii, striving "always to do good; never harm," which is "a uniquely kingly way to act" (*TL*

[39] Edna M. Hooker, "The Significance of Numa's Religious Reforms," *Numen* 10 (1963): 129; 111; Mark Silk, "Numa Pompilius and the Idea of Civil Religion in the West," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72 (2004): 864–66.

[40] Silk, "Idea of Civil Religion," 871.

[41] *DL*, 1.11.2.

[42] Ibid, 1.11.3.

[43] Ibid.

1, 355 / *CW*, 262).This do-good policy helps to shift credit for furnishing good things from the gods to the prince.

In the context of the *Tiers Livre*, and with the foregoing picture of Numa in mind, it is important to see that just as Pantagruel aimed to "contain Dipsody [like Utopia itself] in its *duty and obedience*," Machiavelli writes that Numa "found a very ferocious people and *wished to reduce it to civil obedience* with the arts of peace."[44] The similarities do not stop there. Both Pantagruel and Numa stand second in the line of kings to rule their respective states, Rome and Utopia. Numa succeeded Romulus; Pantagruel follows Gargantua. Neither Rome's nor Utopia's first kings, Romulus and Gargantua, shied from conflict (see *G* 48), and both of these second kings make peace. Yet for Machiavelli, the rule of Numa casts doubt on the freedom of Rome, or rather, and more broadly, on whether the citizens of any empire can be free. Rabelais interpreters must determine, then, how closely Pantagruel's methods for gaining obedience mirror Numa's methods.

Numa in Machiavelli: "Numa Would Obtain the First Rank"

Although Machiavelli cites Numa's policies as examples of religion used well, he also judges Numa to be a "weaker" prince than the warlike Romulus.[45] This judgment comes as a surprise after reading *Discourses* 1.11, where Machiavelli apparently places Numa higher than Romulus and decides that "if one had to dispute which prince Rome was more obligated to, Romulus or Numa, I *believe* rather that Numa would obtain the first rank." What could it mean

[44]Ibid, 1.11.1.

[45] Ibid, 1.19.

that Numa was "weaker" than Romulus and yet had obligated Rome to himself more than Romulus had? The meaning depends on interpretation of the term *obligated* (and also on the weight given to Machiavelli's "beliefs"). On the one hand, Numa may "obligate" Rome in the sense that the city owes him gratitude for the vast empire and overwhelming power that he built and prudently maintained. This reading falters. Numa did not expand Rome's borders even an inch. One option remains. Rome was "obligated" to Numa in a more literal sense, as subjects are obligated to their masters.

Machiavelli's argument in *Discourses* 1.19 requires accepting this second interpretive possibility. In section 1.19, Machiavelli presents what Harvey Mansfield calls the "problem of the third king."[46] The order of political succession matters because it shapes the character of the people. Successful founders like Romulus make their people warlike and self-sufficient.[47] Yet it was because Romulus molded the Romans into soldiers that Numa "found a very ferocious people" who needed to be tamed and domesticated. The successive kings must constantly swing a pendulum between ferocity and softness, but Machiavelli's view (given in *Discourses* 1.1) that necessity precedes political freedom leads him to conclude that softness damages the city more than ferocity does. Numa may have had no choice but to render the Romans docile after years under Romulus, but Machiavelli would prefer two Romuluses to two Numas. By encouraging piety and submission to authority, Numa's mode of rule depends on fortune, or the goodwill of the ruling class. If Rome's third king Ancus had continued or

[46] Harvey Mansfield, *Machiavelli's New Modes and Orders: A Study of the Discourses on Livy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 90.

[47] *DL*, 1.19.1.

radicalized Numa's reforms, Machiavelli doubts Rome, by then "effeminate and the prey of its neighbors," would have survived.[48]

Numa in Rabelais: "the Just, Politic, and Philosophic Second King of the Romans"

Rabelais denies that Numa's mode of rule has all the corrosive effects on political life that Machiavelli detects. In contrast to Machiavelli's demotion of Numa in *Discourses* 1.19 (and also in contrast to his ironic acclaim in 1.11), an unreserved praise of the second Roman king as "just, politic, and philosophic" frames Rabelais's treatment (*TL* 1, 356 / *CW*, 263). Rabelais voices his disagreement with Machiavelli and Livy by turning to an episode that both omit. Rabelais examines a religious institution that the Roman king created, a religious festival called Terminalia.[49] Since neither Machiavelli nor Livy mentions this festival, Rabelais must have found record of it in the writings of Dionysius of Halicarnassus (60 BC–7 BC), a contemporary of Livy, or Plutarch (46–120), who wrote roughly one century later.[50]

Further, Rabelais's treatment of Numa differs from Machiavelli's because the two regard religion itself differently. Machiavelli's exposition of Numa centers on the king's establishment of religion through (feigned) encounters with a nymph named Egeria, the story of which spread and built his authority.[51] But the content of Numa's religion—the rituals and doctrines he instituted—receive no special place in Machiavelli's analysis. This procedure is

[48] Ibid, 1.19.4.

[49] Hooker, "Numa's Religious Reforms," 94–95. To be sure, Machiavelli knew Plutarch as well as he did Livy; but he follows the latter in his negative assessment of Numa. See Silk, "Idea of Civil Religion," 865.

[50] See Hooker, "Numa's Religious Reforms," 89–90. According to Hooker, the later Roman historians typically give fuller accounts than those offered by more taciturn writers like Livy.

[51] *DL*, 1.11.2–3.

typical of Machiavelli, who tends to make general comments about religion as such. He says, for example, "Thus, princes of a republic or kingdom should maintain the foundations of the religion they hold."[52] Statements like this suggest indifference to the character of religious foundations. Whatever beliefs a religion entails, rulers should only be concerned that it contributes to social and political stability.[53] Rabelais's treatment of religion, by contrast, does not neglect the implications of specific beliefs for a people's character. In chapter 1 of the *Tiers Livre*, he considers the effects of two religions through his discussion of Terminalia, during which "nothing was to be sacrificed that had died." This prohibition teaches that "in peacetime it is fitting to guard and control the bounds, frontiers, in peace, friendliness, and geniality, without soiling our hands with blood and pillage" (*TL* 1, 356 / *CW*, 263). Plutarch provides the context for an otherwise random relationship of sacrifices to border control:

> [The god] Terminus signifies *boundary*, and to this god they make public and private sacrifices where their fields are set off by boundaries; of living victims nowadays, but anciently the sacrifice was a bloodless one, since Numa reasoned that the god of boundaries was a guardian of peace and a witness of just dealing, and should therefore be clear from slaughter.[54]

[52] Ibid, 1.12.1.

[53] Machiavelli argues that Christianity emasculates citizens more than other religions do: "Our religion has glorified humble and contemplative more than active men" (*DL*, 2.2.2). Yet his assessment of Numa shows pagan religion quite capable of this defect. As Viroli argues, Machiavelli may have, in light of his view that religious belief is intractable, aimed to shape a more patriotic and assertive Christianity. See Maurizio Viroli, *Machiavelli's God*, trans. Antony Shugaar (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010). On the necessity of interpreting religion, see John M. Najemy, "Papirius and the Chickens, or Machiavelli on the Necessity of Interpreting Religion," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60 (1999):659–681.

[54] Plutarch, "Numa," *Plutarch's Lives*, vol. 1, trans. Bernadette Perrin, ed. William Heinemann (London; Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1959), 16.1.

Plutarch further explains that Romulus had created no boundaries because he predicted that doing so would either limit his ambition to expand or convict him of injustice.[55] Numa, on the other hand, not only set up boundaries but instituted an agriculture encouraged by private property. Plutarch says that Numa saw that the practice of farming "subdued and softened" the Roman people, but the historian does not therefore conclude that Numa's farming programs deprived the Romans of spiritedness or industry. In fact, to counteract these qualities, Numa held contests "judging of the characters of the citizens from the condition of their farms," honoring those who worked hard and chiding the lazy and careless. Numa ensured that his citizen-farmers would take a middle way and become neither insolent rogues nor indolent idlers, neither criminally ambitious nor weak.[56] Plutarch and Rabelais see Numa's goal as one of moral edification. They do not accuse Numa, as Livy and Machiavelli do, of softening, corrupting, or "obligating" the Roman people through religion. Numa, for Rabelais and Plutarch, made moderate changes that recognized the virtues of spiritedness without indulging its excesses. In Plutarch's and Rabelais's telling, Numa is an almost proto-Lockean ruler who pulled the world out of a borderless state of nature that Romulus was happy to perpetuate. Further, Numa recognized softness as a desirable and good part of human life—softness only needs the protections that property provides. By teaching that some things belong to others and others to you, property laws instill both peacefulness and assertiveness.

I want to discuss another point about Rabelais's discussion of Terminalia, with the disclaimer that much of it rests on conjecture. I think Rabelais might have used Plutarch's

[55] Ibid, 16.2.

[56] Ibid, 16.3–4.

discussion of Terminalia in order to make a statement about Christianity. (In fact, this is not the only instance where Rabelais or one of his characters Christianizes Plutarch's writings.)[57] I mentioned that in his discussion of the festival, Plutarch states that Numa prohibited the sacrifice of dead things (*TL* 1, 356 / *CW*, 263). Few readers in Rabelais's time could read about Numa's prohibition without thinking of the transubstantiated Eucharist, the blood and flesh of the crucified Savior. Plutarch never overtly discusses Christianity in his writings, but in his discussion of Terminalia he notes that Numa's Romans refrained from blood sacrifices, but Romans living in the present (that is, Christian) age do not.[58] Plutarch may simply be contrasting Numa's peaceful religion with a modern and more violent variant of paganism, for his statement admittedly leaves the matter ambiguous. However this may be, Rabelais recognized the assertiveness of Christian belief in Frère Jean, whom the author describes as "a real monk if ever there was one since the monking world first monked in monkery" (*G* 27, 78 / *CW*, 66). Jean is nothing if not *thumotic*.[59] His bloodlust far surpasses that of any other character in Rabelais's books. This point is important because, while today people recoil from all forms of religious

[57] In section 17 of *Defectu Oraculum* [*The Cessation of Oracles*], Plutarch discusses the "death of Pan," communicated to a sailor named Thamous by an unidentified voice. Thamous thereafter proclaimed the news "when he was in Palodes." In chapter 28 of the *Quart Livre*, Pantagruel relates this story in its entirety, only to add that he "would interpret it to be about the Savior of the faithful, Who was ignominiously slain in Judea by the iniquity of the pontiffs, doctors, priests, and monks of the Mosaic Law. And the interpretation does not seem preposterous to me, for He may rightly in the Grecian tongue be called Pan, seeing that He is our All" (Q*L* 28, 604–605 / *CW*, 497–498). For more on the death of Pan, see Eric Von Der Luft, "Sources of Nietzsche's 'God is Dead!' and its Meaning for Heidegger," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45 (1984): 263–276.

[58] Plutarch, "Numa," 16.1

[59] See, e.g., *G* 27, 79 / *CW*, 67: "[Friar Jean] took off his great monk's habit and seized a staff of the cross, which was of the heart of the sorb apple tree, as long as a lance, round to fit the fist, and a little decorated with a fleur-de-lis, all almost obliterated. Thus he went forth in a fine cassock, put his frock scarfwise, and with his staff of the cross fell so lustily on his enemies [. . .] that he bowled them over like pigs, striking out right and left, in the old fencing style [. . .]."

violence, Rabelais's discussion of Terminalia defends religion against a criticism that authors such as Machiavelli advanced: religion enfeebles its adherents.

Again, Rabelais's and Machiavelli's evaluations of Numa differ, in part, because their accounts of religion differ. Whereas Machiavelli insists that the third king who follows pious and peaceful Numa must restore the harsh temper of Romulus's Rome, Rabelais does not see self-pacification as an effect of religion. Rabelais's reevaluation of Numa indicates that the Roman king actually comes closer to exemplifying the virtues of Machiavelli's preferred ruler.

Holding Machiavelli Accountable

In chapter 1 of the *Tiers Livre* Rabelais holds Machiavelli accountable to the implications of the regime ordered around necessity by portraying Utopia as that sort of regime. That ordering was intended to eliminate chance, but the Machiavellian regime accomplishes this intention by limiting human freedom. Free people—whether Diogenes the Cynic or the Dipsodians—do not always act with an eye to practical necessities. Diogenes lived happily in his barrel with the Corinthians, and the Dipsodians lived happily in their wilderness. But just as Corinth faced slavery under the Macedonians, Dipsody faces slavery under the Utopians.

Leaders like Numa and save their people from slavery to exterior forces by making them submit to a gentler form of slavery at home: civilization. But people will not yield easily to rule, so Numa and Pantagruel act as divine mediators and provide material benefits in a clever act of seduction. The question for Machiavelli is whether Numa's strategy of gaining obedience through religion softens citizens too much. Rabelais shows that Numa's mode of rule, especially his support of property, is compatible with the robust citizenship that Machiavelli praises.

Instead, Rabelais points to another problem with the necessity-ruled regime throughout chapter 1 of the *Tiers Livre*. The duty and obedience of the ruled—both of the Utopians and the Dipsodians—means philosophers become dutiful and obedient as well. It is notable that in Thomas More's *Utopia*—a work that, given the name of Pantagruel's kingdom, is relevant here—the philosophic Raphael Hythloday and courtly Peter Giles exchange these words:

> "As for my relatives and friends," [Raphael] replied, "I am not greatly troubled about them, for I think I have fairly well performed my duty to them already. The possessions, which other men do not resign unless they are old and sick and even then resign unwillingly when incapable of retention, I divided among my relatives and friends when I was not merely hale and hearty but actually young. I think they ought to be satisfied with this generosity from me and not to require or expect additionally that I should, for their sakes, enter into servitude to kings."
>
> "Fine words!" declared Peter. "I mean not that you should be in servitude but in service to kings."
>
> "The one is only one syllable less than the other," [Raphael] observed."[60]

As this question of the philosopher's duty applies to Rabelais's Utopia, I have observed that the regime maintains a vibrant sector it refers to as the "liberal disciplines." But where is the philosopher that inhabited the ancient polis? Diogenes is a relic of the past. "Duty and obedience"—the hallmarks of the Utopians—do not characterize The Dog. In fact, Corinth had refused precisely to give him any "duty or business."

In the next chapter I examine this theme of *debvoir* [duty] and examine more fully how it relates to the original Diogenic problem. Machiavelli has given philosophy the great duty of managing politics in order to solve that problem. By contrast, when Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard interpreted the same story about Diogenes that Rabelais discusses in the *Tiers Livre*

[60] Thomas More, "Utopia," in *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More, vol. 4*, eds. Edward Surtz, S.J. and J.H. Hexter (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965), 55. The following pages give arguments by Peter and Raphael for and against the philosopher's servitude to political powers.

prologue, he wrote that the Cynic's behavior "at least cannot occasion any misunderstanding, for surely it would be inconceivable for anyone to dream of regarding Diogenes as the savior and benefactor of the city."[61]

The action of the remainder of the *Tiers Livre* has readers consider whether even Machiavelli can improve philosophy's reputation and win the name of benefactor. For the politically successful Utopians still face risky duties in the sphere of what Rabelais has called "private life." This kind of duty calls, in fact, to the most Machiavellian of the Utopians, the character who introduced "the new manner of building walls" to begin with: Panurge. Even in the peacetime ahead, Panurge remains anxious. Should he assume the "duty of marriage" (*TL* 4, 367; 9, 377 *CW*, 273; 283) or not?

[61] Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments: Or, a Fragment of Philosophy*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), 6.

CHAPTER 5

DUTIFUL PHILOSOPHY: THE ROLE OF *DEBVOIR* IN PANURGE'S OUTLOOK

Duty as Concealer

Debt and duty have already come up in Rabelais's works as a political obstruction for philosophers who would prefer to mind their business and who bestow no obvious good or benefit on their city. Thus Rabelais, in the prologue of his *Tiers Livre*, contrasts the duty of the Corinthians engaged in their "office and business" as they prepared to fight the Macedonians with Diogenes' slacking and idling (*TL* prol, 346; 347 / *CW*, 254; 255). Then, in Diogenic fashion, Rabelais ironically presented his writing of ribald comedies as his duty to France (*TL* prol, 348 / *CW*, 256–257). And the problem for Pantagruel in chapter 1 of the *Tiers Livre* was making the newly conquered Dipsodians—theretofore free spirits who obeyed no one—obedient (*TL* 1, 353 / *CW*, 261). This chapter focuses on the peculiar French verb *devoir* (for Rabelais, *debvoir*) that is involved in each of these scenarios. By considering this verb as a literary theme in Rabelais's work, I will show what light is shed on the problem of the philosopher's relationship to society.

Rabelais's works as a whole amplify the theme of *debvoir* through Panurge's ambivalence toward duty. Panurge's anti-duty teaching in chapter 15 of *Pantagruel* makes it difficult to see, at least initially, why he suddenly appears as the champion of *debte* in the early chapters (2–5) of the *Tiers Livre,* immediately after the conquest of Dipsody and its reduction to a dutiful and obedient ward. The goal of this chapter is to explain Panurge's understanding of *debte* and *debvoir* with an eye to their roles in Machiavelli's writings, and with an eye to what this means for philosophy writ large.

The verb *debvoir* derives from the Latin *debere*. It relates to the French noun *dette* (in Middle French, *debte*) and to the English nouns *debt* and *duty*. *Debvoir* admits many meanings. It indicates "that the speaker's motive of action depends on a source that may coincide with a rule or fact." These correlations sometimes converge, as in the ambiguous statement that *"Les enfants doivent se coucher tôt"* ["The children must go to bed early." / "Children must go to bed early."].[1] That is, *debvoir* correlates to both moral duties and natural necessities.[2] Moreover, a debt is something owed to someone, but the reasons for that debt can differ vastly, such that debts can be owed in several distinct senses. One might, for example, have a debt like Panurge's, in which money is owed to lenders. Here debt is self-incurred. On the other hand, one might owe a debt (that is, have an obligation) to family, to country, or to other human beings simply because others are family, citizens, or human. Panurge, in his eulogy of *debt*, legitimizes his self-incurred bankruptcy by equating these two senses of the word and by acting as if his acceptance of financial debts were tantamount to a fulfillment of selfless duty. In so doing, he brings into focus and exacerbates the difference.

---

[1] Corinne Rosari, Corina Cojocariu, Claudia Ricci, and Adriana Spiridon, "*Devoir* et l'evidentialité en français et en roumain," *Discours* 1 (2007): 2. The translation is mine. The ambiguity is stronger in the French than in the English because the plural article "les" must be used to communicate both senses. See also Carl Vetters, "Les verbes modaux pouvoir et devoir en français," *Revue belge de philology et d'histoire* (2004): 657–671.

[2] See Jacob Vance, "Duty, Conciliation, and Ontology in the *Essais*," in Zahi Zalloua, ed., *Montaigne after Theory, Theory after Montaigne* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 82: "Duty, or *devoir*, refers to what is owed and obligated to oneself (*se devoir*), to one's own nature, by analogy to one's own nature, in a way that is consistent with the good of the *cause publique*." For the Attic Greek equivalent, see Mary P. Nichols discussion of Aristophanes' *Clouds*. Nichols, *Socrates and the Political Community: An Ancient Debate* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 8: "The Greek word for debt (*chreos*) would remind a Greek audience of the word for necessity (*chreon*). Not only do the words sound alike, they are etymologically related. A debt is what one is bound to pay, just as necessity is inescapable. Necessity refers to what binds a man and, consequently, limits his freedom. In portraying a man trying to escape his debts, Aristophanes parodies man's tragic attempt to escape from necessity."

This chapter begins by investigating the usage of the corresponding Italian noun *offizio* in Machiavelli's *Prince*, which occurs in the cases of Cesare Borgia and Liverotto da Fermo. I use the results of that investigation to inform my reading of Panurge's eulogy of *debte/debvoir*, and argue that Panurge's disposition toward or position on debt/duty mirrors that of Machiavelli's examples. This means that Pantagruel's rebuttal of Panurge's position serves as a rebuttal of Machiavelli's position as well. I end the chapter by discussing the implications of both positions for the occupation of political philosophy. In so many words, I find that Machiavelli's concealment of self-interest beneath duty appears in Rabelais as a correction of the Diogenic defect of plain self-interestedness, but that Pantagruel's response to Panurge's speech (*TL* 5) corrects both Diogenes and Machiavelli by showing that individualism can indeed justify itself. Pantagruelic individualism is an attempt to overcome the problem brought to light by Diogenes and inadequately solved by Machiavelli.

Offizio in Machiavelli's *Prince*

Machiavelli uses the term *offizio* in the sense of *duty* twice in *The Prince*. The first usage occurs in chapter 7, which treats acquisition through others and through fortune. Cesare Borgia serves as Machiavelli's prime example of the fortunate prince even though he failed to maintain his state and finally suffered from "an extraordinary and extreme malignity of fortune."[3] Machiavelli's estimation seems paradoxical until readers realize that Borgia's misfortune consisted in his father, Alexander VI, providing his good fortune by initiating his political career.

[3] *Prince*, 7.27. There seems to be an intimate connection between Borgia and Machiavelli here. Compare with *Prince*, DL.4: "I [Machiavelli] endure a great and continuous malignity of fortune."

That is, Borgia's family connections in Italian politics meant that he never learned how to compete or how to rule through experience.[4] Machiavelli calls Borgia's case "extraordinary" because the Duke Valentino eventually did gain experience that taught him political virtue. He should have afterward fared well, but did not. It remains for the reader to think about why.

Two lessons comprised Borgia's belated schooling, which can still be useful for those who have time on their side. First, Borgia witnessed the fickleness of his auxiliary troops, men party to the Orsini family in Rome, who fought "coolly" for him during a key battle. Second, Borgia saw his father allow the king of France to enter Italy to his son's peril. Borgia saw, in other words, the unreliability of both country and kin. In a Machiavellian-style second sailing, the Duke decided to transform himself and "to depend no longer on the arms and fortune of others."[5] But Borgia's decision to become self-sufficient did not mean cutting off ties to others. On the contrary, it meant abusing others without trusting them—just as political contenders and family members had abused him in his youthful credulity.

The rest of chapter 7 details Borgia's education in action. Once Borgia made his transformation from prince of fortune to prince of virtue, he ingratiated himself with and won over the "adherents" of the Orsini family. When the family heads grew suspicious, Borgia

> [. . .] knew so well how to dissimulate his intent that the Orsini themselves, through Signor Paolo, became reconciled with him. *The duke did not fail to fulfill every kind of*

[4] See also *Prince*, 11.46: "With Duke Valentino [Cesare] as his [Alexander VI's] instrument and with the invasion of the French as the opportunity, he did all the things I discussed above in the actions of the duke."

[5] Ibid, 7.28.

> *duty* to secure Signor Paolo, giving him money, garments, and horses,[6] so that their simplicity brought them into the duke's hands at Sinigaglia.[7]

Borgia's decision to depend on himself worked because the Orsini mistook him for a prince of good faith—even despite his recent undermining of their party members. Borgia's success in appearing this way may perhaps be attributed to the Orsini counting on Borgia remaining true to his old, unsuspecting way, or to the fact that they were dazzled by his displays of generosity and fell victim to the convictions of duty themselves. Either way, Machiavelli attributes the downfall of the Orsini to their "simplicity," a quality that he chastises in chapters 7 and 18. Cruel as the Orsini could be, and ambitious as they were to control Rome, they ignored Machiavelli's teaching on the mode of keeping faith.

So, in the first appearance of *offizio* in *The Prince*, Borgia duplicitously won over and eliminated the Orsini by fulfilling duties to them. Machiavelli discusses *offizio* again in the following chapter. The topic there concerns princes who have achieved their rule criminally, and centers on the coming to power of two figures: Agathocles the Sicilian and Liverotto da Fermo. Agathocles assassinated the rich in his city *en masse* by calling a meeting of the Senate and then having his soldiers attack the legislative body. The ancient tyrant appealed to his victims' desire to exert power, to rule, to participate in the decision-making process. Agathocles

[6] Compare with ibid, DL.3: "It is customary most of the time for those who desire to acquire favor with a Prince to come to meet him with things that they care most for among their own or with things that they see please him most. Thus, one sees them many times being presented with horses, arms, cloth of gold [. . .]." Of course, Machiavelli's gift to the prince is his book, *The Prince*.

[7] Ibid, 7.29; italics mine.

lured them by this desire as pigs to a slaughter. Thus duty is not mentioned in Agathocles' case. It is rather the "modern" Liverotto da Fermo who rises to preeminence by invoking duty.[8]

Unlike Borgia, whose father groomed him, Liverotto was orphaned and raised by his maternal uncle, Giovanni Fogliani. Liverotto may have also benefitted from family connections, but these were not as immediate, and therefore not as imposing, as Borgia's connections. One could even surmise that Liverotto was resented and had to win his uncle's affections. He did so by proving his military excellence. Liverotto's achievements on the battlefield allowed him to ask Giovanni whether he might return to Fermo with fanfare that would honor both nephew and uncle. Machiavelli relates that Giovanni indulged this wish, partly out of gratitude and partly out of interest, and "did not fail in *any proper duty* to his nephew."[9] Whereas Agathocles called a private meeting to discuss public affairs in order to deceive the Sicilians, Liverotto called a public banquet that would honor the leading citizens of Fermo. Unlike the Sicilian Senate that was lured by its power-lust, the citizens of Fermo were lured by their honor-seeking. The latter felt that they deserved recognition on account of what they had done for their city in war. Machiavelli communicates a difference in approach when he says that Liverotto spoke (by the way—just as Machiavelli does) of "the greatness of Pope Alexander and of Cesare Borgia, his son, and of their undertakings,"[10] and thereby indicates a proximity of the fan to his object of admiration. Readers should thus be reminded of Borgia's deception at this

[8] Mansfield notes that Liverotto was later killed by the craftily dutiful Borgia as a result of the discussion above. See *Prince*, 7.29n7.

[9] *Prince*, 8.36; italics mine.

[10] Ibid, 8.37.

juncture, especially as Liverotto then called the banqueters, including his uncle, into a secret room to murder them. Thus the second instance of *offizio* in the book.

If Machiavelli portrays princes who use convictions of duty to their advantage in chapters 7 and 8, he later shows that this conviction must be adroitly heeded regardless of whether one feels morally bound by it, and that this is so precisely because it binds others. This part of Machiavelli's treatment of duty occurs in chapter 21, where he identifies the components of esteem, among them decisiveness and partisanship. He concludes that princes must be partisans of all conflicts. Neutrals will appear too self-interested and unprincipled for others to trust, even if they abstain out of moral concerns.[11] More importantly, Machiavelli formalizes the rule at work in the cases of Borgia and Liverotto. He writes that helping others means they have "an *obligation* to you" and "a contract of love for you."[12] This rule holds not only in international politics, which provides the setting of chapter 21, but in human relationships generally. The specific examples of Borgia and Liverotto simply confirm the general need to make use of duty. Machiavelli's princes support duty without being dutiful, just as they support religion without being religious. Such asymmetry is possible in part because Machiavelli sees that there are two sides to human nature. On the one hand, people are "dissemblers, cheaters, eager for gain"; on the other, there is a certain level of decency beneath which people will rarely sink.[13]

[11] Ibid, 21.89.

[12] Ibid, 21.90; italics mine.

[13] Compare ibid 17.66 with 21.90.

In chapters 2–5 of the *Tiers Livre*, Panurge reiterates the teaching on *offizio* given in *The Prince* through his eulogy of *debte.* This means that Pantagruel's response to that eulogy constitutes a Pantagruelic response to Machiavelli's teaching. In response to Machiavelli's deceitful embrace of duty, Pantagruel stands for the individualism of the philosopher. Now I examine Panurge's extraordinary speech before finally turning to Pantagruel's harsh condemnation.

Panurge's Eulogy of *Debtes* (*Tiers Livre* 2–4)

Earlier I discussed chapter 2 of the *Tiers Livre* as it relates to Pantagruel's Pantagruelism, which allowed Rabelais's prince to reside in his "deific manor of reason" even as Panurge squandered public money in a way that would have maddened most superiors. Throughout the remainder of chapter 2, Panurge defends his wasteful liberality on the grounds of duty. Consequently, Panurge's praise of debtors and creditors has been characterized as a "mock serious" speech, much as Rabelais's work as a whole is characterized as "mock epic" or "mock heroic."[14] I follow Abrams and Harpham in defining such works as "type[s] of parod[ies] which imitate, in a sustained way, both the elaborate form and the ceremonious style of the *epic* genre," but such that this form is "purposely mismatched to a lowly subject, for example, to Thomas Gray's comic 'Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat' (1748)."[15] Yet I depart from other Rabelais critics in noting that Panurge's speech only meets half of this criteria. While Panurge maintains an elaborate form and ceremonious style, his subjects, debt and credit, do not match

[14] See Gerard Lavatori, "Debts or Debtors, Praise of (3BK 2–5)," in Chesney Zegura, *Rabelais Encyclopedia*, 48–49.

[15] Abrams and Harpham, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 36–37.

the genre's lowly subject matter on the level of a deceased household pet. Panurge certainly makes light of these topics of *debt* and *duty*, but they are still not lowly or mismatched. I therefore treat Panurge's speech as a serious one that is meant to be a real alternative to Pantagruel's position on debt and credit given in chapter 5.

Now, one could say that in chapter 2 Panurge acts like a typical member of the sixteenth century French nobility. He, like the nobility, lives large. Perhaps Panurge is not Machiavellian enough and still clings to what Machiavelli would call liberality "used virtuously."[16] By foolishly practicing the open-handedness of liberality, Panurge appears to be just the person who needs the Machiavellian amoral education that occurs in chapter 16 of *The Prince* through the end of the book. But then again, the feebleness of Panurge's defense suggests that he defends his old-fashioned liberality ironically, and that he thereby makes the virtue indefensible. Because Panurge is well aware that his virtue is little more than disguised vice,[17] I will argue that he makes advantageous use of duty just as Machiavelli's model princes do. Here is Panurge recommending this very thing:

> Do you always owe something to someone? By him will God be continually implored to give you a good, long, and happy life, fearing to lose his debt; always will he speak well of you in all companies, always will he acquire for you new creditors, so that by means of them you may make payment, and with other men's earth fill his ditch. (*TL* 3, 361 / *CW*, 267)

[16] *Prince*, 16.63. Modern readers who believe that Panurge's vice is obvious may simply be revealing that they have been "Machiavellianized," and unreservedly (and perhaps unwittingly) side with Machiavelli on the issue of liberality as presented in chapter 16 of *The Prince*.

[17] As Machiavelli points out, these debts do not hurt the prince but instead "burden the people extraordinarily," as it will be necessary to be "rigorous with taxes" and "do all those things that can be done to get money." See ibid, 16.63.

Panurge continues to argue that being indebted to others puts those others at his service. And the larger the debt, the better for him. In economic terms, Panurge's position prefigures that of Keynes: "The old saying holds. Owe your banker £1000 and you are at his mercy; owe him £1 million and the position is reversed."[18] Machiavelli's opinion on the matter is even more to the point: "And the nature of men is to be obligated as much by benefits they give as by benefits they receive."[19] The creditors are, so to speak, "invested" in Panurge. They see that their good is wrapped up with his. (In the same way, tithers who believe invest in God and heaven.)

Panurge argues in favor of debt and duty out of interest and not because of any moral scruple he has, but he is not the only self-interested party. His creditors appear to be nice people—they are Panurge's "candidates, [his] parasites, [his] glad-handers, [his] good-day-sayers, [his] perpetual speechmakers" (*TL* 3, 362 / *CW*, 268)—but they favor debtors like Panurge only because they "fear to lose [their] debt." A scale in their heads governs life. Only, they mistakenly trust this scale. They are already burned. Panurge will never repay. The strictly self-interested Panurge gains an advantage over his creditors because they half-heartedly pursue self-interest by participating in a moral system and erroneously expecting this system to benefit them. Here Panurge's Machiavellianism shines through most in his eulogy. One could say that his creditors "make a profession of good" by honoring debt contracts, and "come to ruin among so many who," like Panurge, "are not good."[20] Panurge has imbibed the

[18] John Maynard Keynes, "Overseas Financial Policy in Stage III (1945)" in *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes, Vol. 24: Activities 1944–1946: The Transition to Peace*, eds Elizabeth Johnson and Donald E. Moggridge (London: Macmillan, 1979), 258.

[19] *Prince*, 10.44.

[20] Ibid, 15.61.

Machiavellian lesson after all. He applauds the same moral system that the creditors uphold so as to reap its benefits, but (like Borgia and Liverotto) does not honor that system. Panurge professes faith without keeping it.[21] This is the function of his over-the-top praise of debt.

Throughout his speech, Panurge appears just as Machiavelli recommends one should appear: as "all mercy, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion."[22] Thus Panurge laments a "nothing-lending world" from which "Faith, Hope, [and] Charity" would be banished, "for," he says, "men are born to aid and succor men" (*TL* 3, 363 / *CW*, 269). This is clearly tongue-in-cheek. If there can be any criticism of Panurge, it is that his rhetoric does not sufficiently alter his appearance or obscure his interestedness. Pantagruel suspects something (see *TL* 5, 368 / *CW*, 273). He looks—just as Machiavelli suggests one look—past speeches and to the (lack of) actions of Panurge for the truth.[23]

Panurge Imagines "a World without Debts"

Panurge's eulogy also furnishes an important window into the principles underlying his way of doing things. Throughout his eulogy, Panurge constantly turns to the natural world as an analogy for his situation. The importance of the orderly cosmos for Panurge emerges in the present scenario, for it is by comparing the moral world to the natural world that Panurge weights the moral duties. In beginning his discussion of this duty-laden natural world, Panurge asks his audience to imagine a cosmos "without debts." Here none of the celestial bodies acts

[21] Ibid, 18.

[22] Ibid, 18.70

[23] Ibid, DL.3: "I have found nothing in my belongings that I care so much for and esteem so greatly as the knowledge of the actions of great men."

predictably, nor do they take a regular course of action that indicates recognition of the other bodies (*TL* 3, 362–363 / *CW*, 269). To emphasize the absurdity of such a cosmos, Panurge appeals to the authority of the philosophic tradition (specifically, that of Heraclitus, the Stoics, and Cicero[24]) which—despite its diversity of opinion in other cases—has always maintained that "debts" are made and fulfilled in the natural world. But Panurge is using the term *debtes* to speak of necessities, not duties, and this is where the double-meaning of *debvoir* and *debte* becomes evident.[25] *Debte* manifests not only in moral norms but in scientific laws. Without "debts" to be paid, says Panurge, Saturn and Mars will "put this whole world into *confusion*" (*TL* 3, 363 / *CW*, 269; italics mine). The "confusion" caused by the cosmos' lack of debt means that the problem is not only moral but intellectual. Philosophy depends, that is, on the existence and surety of "debt" understood as necessity.[26]

Panurge expounds *debvoir* as natural necessity through the end of chapter 3 and into chapter 4, where he speaks of the organs and appendages of the human body as mutually indebted. The body would perish without these debts. Yet the bodies' debts are not moral obligations that could be consciously neglected or even carelessly forgotten; many are involuntary. Panurge nonetheless envisions a body in which these necessities are not necessities—in which "the bladder won't be indebted to the kidney" (*TL* 3; 364 / *CW*, 270). He completes his portrayal of this "world without debts" by describing the soul. When the body

[24] Panurge appeals also to Homer alongside these authorities.

[25] For a historical account of the development of different notions of *debt*, see Friedrich Nietzsche, "Second essay: 'Guilt,' 'bad conscience,' and related matters" in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Deithe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 40

[26] This issue will recur in Panurge's consultation with the theologian, Hippothadée (*TL* 30ff). See Chapter 5 below for a treatment of that episode.

does not do its duties, the soul becomes "indignant" and "takes its flight to all the devils" (*TL* 3; 364 / *CW*, 270). Whatever this means, clearly the relationship between body and soul does not rest on equality. Whereas the soul expects the body to maintain it, the soul is not expected to fulfill, and does not think it should be expected to fulfill, any duty to the body.

The soul that Panurge imagines, like the aforementioned characters of *The Prince* and like Panurge himself, depends on debts without obliging itself. But this soul does not even feign dutifulness. The difference is driven home in Panurge's next (and opposite) image of a "different" world "in which everyone lends, everyone owes, all are debtors, all are lenders" (*TL* 4, 364 / *CW*, 271). This is a world where "Charity reigns" and happiness abounds. It is characterized by "harmony" (*TL* 4, 365 / *CW*, 272). Those who help others in this world experience no pain. Yet the soul in this case "imagines, discourses, resolves, deliberates, reasons, and remembers." That is, even in this lending world the soul does not lend. When the body cares for itself, the soul does its independent work. As in the "world without debts," none of the soul's acts in the borrowing-and-lending-world necessarily contributes to or helps the body. And the acts of lending and borrowing even in the body culminate in a sexual satisfaction that constitutes "the duty of marriage," apparently in its entirety. The hardships of child-rearing that ought to attend this duty of marriage are left from Panurge's account. It is rather the "refuser," the one who decides to have no children, who pays. He will feel "a sharp vexation among the members, and frenzy among the senses" (*TL* 4, 367 / *CW*, 273).

Pantagruel's Classical Individualism (*Tiers Livre* 5)

If one accepts Machiavelli's frequent praises of acquisitiveness and self-sufficiency without considering how these qualities must be presented to (or rather, concealed in) a moral world, then Pantagruel, who vehemently discounts debts and praises self-sufficiency, would appear to take the Machiavellian position on the issue of debt and duty in chapter 5 of the *Tiers Livre*. But Pantagruel's stalwart individualism differs from Machiavelli's in important ways. Machiavelli's individualism entails learning to lie one's way out of interpersonal and communal obligations and to use those obligations as leverage, whereas Pantagruel's independence denies all obligations precisely because "debts and lies are ordinarily allied together." And the debts are worse than the lies because they precipitate the lies (*TL* 5, 368 / *CW*, 274). This alliance turns out to be the major problem for Pantagruel, and it needs explication.

If it were not already clear, Machiavelli could not agree more that debts and lies are allied.[27] A passage from chapter 19 of *The Prince* states the problem that Pantagruel sees. There Machiavelli writes that citizens remain loyal to the prince "when death is at a distance," but that "few [citizens] are to be found" when the state needs them. In other words, citizens say that they will die for their community in order to get their needs taken care of, but they break promises and neglect their duty when push comes to shove. The problem consists in the fact that promises are made to secure some good (here, the citizens' safety), although fulfilling the promise (here, fighting for their country) entails risking the good for which the promise was made. The citizens have already shown that they are too self-regarding to be loyal to anyone

[27] *Prince*, 18.69.

but themselves. In saying that debts and lies are ordinarily allied together, Pantagruel only adds that this problem holds true for all promises, all debts, and not only those between a government and the people.

Machiavelli and Pantagruel see opposite solutions to this problem. For his part, Machiavelli recommends escalating obligation. The people's fickleness simply means that the prince "must think of a way by which his citizens, always and in every quality of time, have need of the state and of himself [. . .]."[28] Pantagruel, on the other hand, argues for minimizing or clearing debt because honesty requires equality. Dependencies lead to lies especially when one could be self-sufficient because in such cases one has to appear other than one is. Panurge serves as a case in point. He exaggerates his condition. And so as Panurge's lord, Pantagruel wipes away all of Panurge's debts: "Therefore let's drop this subject," he says, "and from now on don't get involved with creditors; of the past I set you free" (*TL* 5, 368 / *CW*, 274). Here Pantagruel resembles Jesus,[29] who frees sinners of their past servitude to sin—of their debts.[30]

---

[28] Ibid, 9.42.

[29] He also resembles Hercules as described in chapter 1 of Rabelais's book, who "possessed the whole continent" because he had "pardon[ed] the entire past with eternal oblivion of all preceding offense" (*TL* 1, 355 / *CW*, 262).

[30] See Gerard Defaux, "De Pantagruel au Tiers Livre: Panurge et le Pouvoir" in *Études Rabelaisiennes* 22 (Geneva: Droz, 1976), 176. According to Defaux, readers ought to compare the attitudes of Rabelais's characters toward debt with that of the Gospel writer Matthew, who records Jesus's model prayer as including the plea that God "forgive us our debts" ("*remets nous nos dettes*"). Compare with John 8:31–36: "So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.' They answered him, 'We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, 'You will become free?' Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.'" In Rabelais's text the consequence of this freedom is unexpected (or is it in fact expected?). Panurge responds by acknowledging his great debt to Pantagruel for giving him his newfound freedom (*TL* 5, 368 / *CW*, 274). This may be a veiled comment that is critical of Christian freedom, or it may simply be another trick up Panurge's sleeve. Or, Panurge may believe self-interest is inescapable.

Finally, Pantagruel's individualism is supported by a classical strand. During his censure of *debte*, Pantagruel cites statutes praised by the Athenian Stranger in Book 8 of Plato's *Laws* that support the sanctity of private property.[31] According to the Athenian Stranger, these statutes dictated that a farmer dig on his land for water before asking neighbors if he may draw from their wells. An assumption that the earth furnishes what people need justifies this law: "For this earth by its substance, which is greasy, strong, slippery, and dense, retains humidity, and does not easily allow runoff or evaporation" (*TL* 5, 368 / *CW*, 274). If a resource is abundant, there is no reason to dissimulate or lie to obtain it. But Machiavelli's books are filled with endorsements of instances of dissimulation and lying for the sake of material acquisition. This is because Machiavelli, against the classical (and biblical[32]) view, assumes resource scarcity. Human contrivance must add to natural and divine provision. Machiavelli could not believe Jesus when he says, "Ask and it will be given to you."[33] Because Pantagruel does not see reason to cope with scarcity, his individualism does not, like Machiavelli's, need to be protected by a false piety or a false morality. Pantagruelic individuals need not impinge on each other, and therefore they do not need to justify impinging on each other (or to referee impingements).[34]

[31] Plato, *The Laws of Plato*, trans. Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 843a2. The laws that Pantagruel points to are consistent with those other ancient property laws derived from the Terminalia festival instituted by Numa Pompilius. See Chapter 3 above.

[32] See Psalm 65:9: "You visit the earth and water it; you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water; you provide their grain, for so you have prepared it."

[33] Matthew 7:7.

[34] One could, however, argue that resource abundance makes private property superfluous.

Some Implications of Duty for Philosophy

If the defect of ancient philosophy was, as Rabelais asserts through the tale of Diogenes, its plain self-interestedness, then it could be that Machiavelli's teaching on *offizio* aims to protect the interests of philosophy by extending promises and fulfilling duties. It is well-known that in the *Discourses*, for example, Machiavelli says his book provides "common benefit to everyone."[35] The "common benefit" extends also to the benefactor, the philosopher, and so delicately removes or obviates the pain of duty.[36] (Socrates too claimed that he had bestowed benefits on the city of Athens, but he died for his benefaction.)[37] But what if Machiavelli's philosophic dutifulness is more than merely painless and is actually calculated and abusive? Was this not the case with the dutifulness of Cesare Borgia and Liverotto da Fermo?

An answer to that question requires access to Machiavelli's opinion of what benefits could transpire through politics. The ancient philosophers' interestedness and disdain for duty was predicated on a view that politics does little good. This, as Harvey Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov point out, is reflected in the ancient doctrine of cyclical regimes.[38] Diogenes implicitly endorses this teaching through his indifference to the question of who rules the city. To him it did not matter whether he lived under the Corinthian people or Alexander the Great because a certain person's or group's rule does not ensure his happiness. (Yet Diogenes's indifference deviates from or holds untenable the Socratic view that a certain person's rule—the

[35] *DL*, 1.Preface. Elsewhere he calls his writings "useful" (*Prince*, 15.61).

[36] Machiavelli's benefaction would, by contrast, correspond to Panurge's so-called "duty of marriage," which culminates in sexual pleasure.

[37] See Plato, *Apology*, 30a7–8: "And I suppose that until now no greater good has arisen for you in the city than my service to the god."

[38] Harvey Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov, "Introduction," in *DL*, xxxviii.

philosopher-king's—could ensure human happiness.) [39] If a community's flourishing must someday perish, then it is a wasteful mistake to spend much energy on improving that community. Ancient self-interest is warranted, if unseemly, as long as this thesis of political entropy holds true. But if it proves false, then philosophy confirms its sheer vanity. Machiavelli's progressivism (that is, his rejection of the cycle of regimes)[40] suggests that his promises are sincerely made. Still, the examples of Borgia and Liverotto linger in the mind as Machiavelli strikes his deal with society.

Even granting Machiavelli's sincerity, however, Rabelais shows that problems with the Machiavellian view persist. By contrast with Panurge's eulogy of *debte*, which asks us to look at fictional worlds, Pantagruel's individualism recognizes that reality resembles neither Panurge's world of "bitchery" that never lends, nor his all-lending world where "Charity reigns." The human situation sits between these worlds. Ours, Pantagruel sees, is a sometimes-lending world. Morality has influence here, but people can choose to be immoral. And it is a world where natural necessities exist but are not completely known or regular. Randomness, chance, and contradictory wills contaminate necessities. It is this world, the one that we inhabit, that informs Pantagruel's view in chapter 5 of the *Tiers Livre*, a view that acknowledges debt and necessity without bowing to them. It does not insist on the perfect fulfillment of debts for the sake of predictability, nor does it see the world as comprised of chaotic, individual units in competition with each other. There are individual units in Pantagruel's world; but these units

[39] Plato, *Republic*, 473d.

[40] Because exposition of this progressivism would unnecessarily extend and complicate this chapter, I instead refer readers to Harvey Mansfield, "Machiavelli and the Idea of Progress" in *Machiavelli's Virtue* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 109–122.

are neighborly (or should be) like the well-digger of the *Laws.* They are not so burdened by necessity. The needy in this world are the burden because they have unreasonably enlarged their needs. When they cannot pay back their debt (which will require them to frugally set aside funds for repayment), they will have to go back on their word and give the lie to their character.

There is a final and most important reason why Pantagruel cannot endure obligation. If lying and debts are ordinarily allied, then debts and obligations stand counter to philosophy, which is love of wisdom and truth. Stated conversely, philosophers hate lying. Machiavelli, insofar as his work deigns to fulfill social obligations and debts, dissembles. But is he dissembling before society or himself? Panurge's picture of the soul in his eulogy suggests the latter. Machiavelli commits what Plato's Socrates refers to as "the true lie."[41]

If the soul is ordinarily independent and debt free, Machiavelli has now arranged things such that the soul, the philosopher, has "taken its flight *to* all the devils"[42] (italics mine) who convinces him- or herself that this arrangement will be tolerable.

For more than half of the *Tiers Livre*, the reader witnesses Panurge in the nearly impossible act of trying to convince himself of the goodness of the duty he lays on himself, until Pantagruel finally tries to settle the matter by calling the meeting of four experts. This is where my analysis picks up, because it is in these consultation chapters that Rabelais pits the tradition, alongside Pantagruelism, against Panurge.

---

[41] See Plato, *Republic*, 382b: "But I mean that to lie and to have lied to the soul about the things that are, and to be unlearned, and to have and to hold a lie there is what everyone would least accept; and that everyone hates a lie in that place most of all."

[42] There is significance in Panurge's deployment of the preposition *to* rather than the expected *from*. See *TL* 3, 364 / *CW*, 270: "*l'ame toute indignée prendra course à tous les Diables, après mon argent*."

CHAPTER 6

PANURGE VERSUS THE AUTHORITIES

> *All that we are and all that we have consists in three things: the soul, the body, and property.*
>
> Pantagruel

The Banquet of Experts

Panurge's praise and Pantagruel's condemnation of debts culminates in a discussion between vassal and lord about the marriage question. Although Pantagruel can be short with Panurge, he entertains this question at such length that it becomes the focus of the rest of the *Tiers Livre*. The comrades tirelessly weigh the question of whether Panurge should marry from angle after angle. They consider rolling dice and reading lots (*TL* 10–12) and interpreting dreams (*TL* 13–15). They consult the sibyl of Panzoust (*TL* 16–18), the mute Goatsnose (*TL* 19–20), and the poet Raminagrobis (*TL* 21–23). Panurge speaks with Epistémon about it (*TL* 24), and the two decide (independent of Pantagruel) to visit Herr Trippa (*TL* 25). Afterwards, they speak with Frère Jean and get his opinion (*TL* 26–28) as well.

In chapter 29, with Panurge's business still unresolved, Pantagruel calls for a meeting to be attended by a theologian (named Hippothadée), a doctor (Rondibilis), a jurist (Bridlegoose[1]), and a philosopher (Trouillogan). Pantagruel had originally proposed three visits, each correlating to one type of good. The theologian tends to the soul, the doctor tends to the body,

[1] Frame simply transliterates the French judge's name, Bridoye, which roughly translates to the English Bridlegoose. I prefer this rendering because it gives the English reader a mental picture closer to the one that the French reader sees. Duval raises an important question about the name: "Is Bridoye an <<oison bridé>> [. . .] or a <<brideur d'oisons>> who confounds the wise of the world?" See Duval, "*Design of the* Tiers Livre," 134.

and the jurist tends to property.[2] Only later does Pantagruel recommend visiting the Pyrrhonian philosopher, Trouillogan, whose occupation gets no explanation. The meeting commences on a Sunday, and Bridlegoose, the jurist, fails to attend because he is in trouble with the law. Panurge initiates the three present consultations during dessert, after the main course has been taken. He waits for the opportune time, when the mood is cheeriest. Panurge then vows that if the three present experts cannot answer his question, he will consider his situation "insoluble." He poses his question to the arranged experts in normative terms. Panurge wants to know whether he "should," or has the "duty," to marry (*TL* 30, 445 / *CW*, 349).[3]

The four consultants fall into two groups. One group, comprised of the first two speakers (Hippothadée and Rondibilis), answer Panurge's question in positive terms. Hippothadée and Rondibilis represent the traditions that had prevailed until the Renaissance: Christianity and Platonism. The two consultations differ, however, in that Panurge holds his own against Hippothadée. Panurge is not able to object to Rondibilis's advice that he resign himself to the "natural consequences" of marriage, among which is cuckoldry (*TL* 32, 453 / *CW*, 356). But when Hippothadée advises that Panurge will or will not be a cuckold "if God please," the quester gives substantive rebuttals that require evaluation (*TL* 30, 446 / *CW*, 350).

The third and fourth speakers, Trouillogan and Bridlegoose, are not speakers with traditions to defend but rather problems for Rabelais's characters and readers to solve. Trouillogan's elusive answers to Panurge's question—"Both" and "Neither" (*TL* 35, 461ff / *CW*,

[2] See Screech, *Rabelaisian Marriage*, 66.

[3] "Me doibs je marier, ou non?" The term *doibs* is, of course, related to the all-important term *debvoir* explored in Chapter 4.

362–363)—test the interpretive mettle of the other banqueters. The result of these answers is a discussion of inequality in love relationships, an issue that Machiavelli takes up in chapter 17 of *The Prince*. The answers that Pantagruel and Gargantua give to Trouillogan's riddle comprise a critique of Machiavelli's discussion of that theme. Bridlegoose's confrontation with the law as an interpreter of that law leads readers to reconsider the source and use of human convention. Bridlegoose's judicial malpractice (he had used dice to decide important legal hearings) brings law into focus as an attempt at orderliness and as a rebellion against chance, or the divine will. That is, law counteracts chaos, but "chaos" may be a euphemism for God. What is more, Bridlegoose explains his appeals to chance, together with his slow and time-consuming manner of proceeding, as necessary remedies to the human longings for justice (or rather revenge, in many cases) and reputation. Bridlegoose's temporizing violates Machiavelli's preference for swift or even pre-emptive action, and Bridlegoose's rationale for temporizing, based on a certain understanding of human psychology, discredits that preference.

The goal of this chapter is to see how the traditions and ideas that the consultants stand for fare against Panurge's Machiavellianism. Panurge, it is important to note, is not always wrong. At times he makes his own arguments for readers to assess. The interpreter's task in these chapters is to discern when Panurge's thinking succeeds, and when it fails.

Hippothadée and the Challenge of Revelation (*Tiers Livre* 30)

Hippothadée is the first to speak, at the behest of Pantagruel. He orients his discussion with a key Pauline text: I Corinthians 7. In fact, Panurge had asked the assemblage of consultants what the ancient Corinthian church had asked Paul—should one marry?—and

Hippothadée answers Panurge by citing one of the most well-known verses in Paul's letter: "It is better to marry than to burn in the fire of concupiscence" (*TL* 30, 446 / *CW*, 350).[4]

Christian theologians from all ages have commented on the verses that Hippothadée draws from. Rabelais scholars have accordingly tried to identify which of these writers Panurge's first interlocutor represents. Screech, in his old but good treatment of this chapter, reads Hippothadée as a "synergist" who adapts the style of the German born Lutheran Philip Melanchthon. The evidence does not, however, uniformly support Screech's thesis. Panurge calls Hippothadée and his ilk "Frenchmen" (*TL* 30, 446 / *CW*, 350). This moniker more likely indicates a Calvinist influence, which Screech eventually acknowledges. Even so, and as Screech says, other voices could feasibly be heard in the speech of Rabelais's theologian. For while Calvin insists in his commentary that the church of Corinth had written to Paul about "doubtful points" that reasonable people might dispute, his reading of the text leaves the centuries-old annotations of St. Thomas largely intact.[5]

Hippothadée confuses modern interpreters in part because his consultation with Panurge progresses through two stages, each concerned with a distinct question.[6] The first addresses the issue already mentioned, of whether Christians may marry. Theologians agreed

[4] Hippothadée embellishes Paul's Greek, which reads "*κρεῖσσον γάρ ἐστι γαμῆσαι ἢ πυροῦσθαι*" ("it is better to marry than to burn"). See Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren, eds., *The Greek New Testament*, 2nd edition (Stuttgart, West Germany: Württemberg Bible Society, 1966/1968), 592.

[5] Screech, *Rabelaisian Marriage*, 68; 71. John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries, volume XX: Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians by John Calvin*, trans. Rev. John Pringle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1948), 222; Saint Thomas Aquinas, Super I Epistolam B. Pauli ad Corinthios lectura: Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, ed. Joseph Kenny, O.P., trans., Fabian Larcher, O.P., http://dhspriory.org/thomas/SS1Cor.htm.

[6] See Ian R. Morrison, "Hippothadée," in Chesney Zegura, *Rabelais Encyclopedia*, 116–117.

on that matter by the sixteenth century. Thomas, Melanchthon, and Calvin all wrote that Paul allowed Christians to couple as a means of combating sin.[7] Rabelais thereby begins Panurge's meeting with Hippothadée by making him grapple with the weight of revelation as such and not merely with this or that religious figure and attendant doctrine, any of which might be easily discarded as aberrations or fads. Hippothadée stands for the united front of theology when he recommends that Panurge, who confirms that he feels the pricklings of the flesh "very strongly," take recourse in marriage (*TL* 30, 446 / *CW*, 350).

But Panurge transforms the Bible's approval of marriage as a refuge from sinfulness into a concession to sinfulness, if not a license to hedonism. Hippothadée's advice pleases him. "That's the way to talk, that is!" Panurge exclaims. He immediately invites Hippothadée to his wedding, where the theologian will wear his colors, eat a fine goose dinner, and dance with beautiful bridesmaids (*TL* 30, 446 / *CW*, 350). Panurge's cageyness indicates that, despite the effort that theologians made during the Middle Ages and after to encourage marriage, the church fathers of the early centuries A.D. were wise to preach celibacy in Paul's wake.[8] They accurately expected sinful people like Panurge to abuse the institution.

Yet as soon as Panurge thinks he has found a loophole in the theologian's counsel, he realizes that the question of whether he "should" marry never bothered him. This realization takes the consultation to its second stage, in which Panurge questions the happiness that

---

[7] Thomas, "Commentary on Corinthians," ¶314; Philip Melanchthon, *Annotations on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, eds. Kenneth Hager, Franz Posset, John Patrick Donnelly, trans. John Patrick Donnelly (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1995), 93–94; Calvin, *Commentary of the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, 222; 223; 229.

[8] For an account of lay (as opposed to clerical) celibacy in the early church, see David G. Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

marriage promises. His concern is not whether marrying is right, but whether it will benefit him. Panurge understands that religion limits its promises. He is not mistaken in this understanding. Matrimony may be a gift or even an order from God, but Thomas and Calvin admit that it nevertheless brings many couples misery.[9] Christianity makes no guarantees about marriage even as it supports it, and it generally teaches that even devout believers should not seek happiness on earth but during the afterlife.[10] Here is the real theological issue. For Panurge, the specific question of cuckoldry stands for the larger question of predestination. From the human perspective, this is the same question as whether happiness can be expected.

Despite their harmonious understanding of Paul's meaning in I Corinthians 7, Thomas, Calvin, and Melanchthon hold unique views of God's future plans for individuals, including individual husbands and wives, and how divine predestination affects them. Hippothadée takes a most radical stance on the matter, one that upsets Panurge: "'No [you won't be a cuckold] indeed, my friend,' said Hippothadée, '*if God please*'" (*TL* 30, 446 / *CW*, 350; italics mine).

God's Pleasure: Predestination in Calvin's Institutes of the Christian Religion

In Chapter 2, I briefly argued that Hippothadée's theology challenges Panurge's goal of risk minimization through foresight by introducing the possibility—or, for Panurge, the difficulty—of miracles. Hippothadée subscribes to and teaches a doctrine of predestination that maintains God's ability to intervene in any situation and even to disrupt nature. Panurge sees

[9] Calvin: "marriage is the source and occasion of many miseries." *Commentary of the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, 224. Thomas: Marriage is "the most bitter of all servitudes." "Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians," ¶314.

[10] See, e.g., Titus 1:2.

that such a doctrine rends causal relationships. Hippothadée's expression of predestination, "if God please," suggests an arbitrariness destructive of the stability that science needs. The phrase comes directly from Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*,[11] and it lives on as one of his most controversial and misunderstood.

In the 1541 French edition of his magnum opus,[12] Calvin defines predestination as "God's eternal plan by which He has determined what he wanted to do with each person."[13] The definition makes two claims. God's providence is particular rather than general, and it flows from His free decision rather than from his appeal to an external standard. Predestination so defined constitutes Calvin's solution to a classic problem that Socrates articulated in Plato's *Euthyphro*: "Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved?"[14] Socrates' polytheistic formulation exacerbates the problem by making it possible for "the gods" to contradict each other's loves. Still, the basic issue within the context of monotheism remains that of whether a god makes decisions by looking to some other source. Calvin rejects the first of Socrates's options. Calvin argues that admitting a standard that God looks to would only detract from God's power, and would call into question His divine status: "That is asking for something greater and higher than God's will."[15] Calvin rather maintains that "He wants to keep all your attention on His goodness alone,"[16] not on the Platonic form of "the

[11] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion: 1541 French Edition*, trans. Elsie McKee (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009), 418; 420; 423.

[12] This is the edition that Rabelais would have known when he composed the *Tiers Livre*.

[13] Calvin, *Institutes*, 417.

[14] Plato, "Euthyphro," in *Four Texts*, 10a2–3.

[15] Calvin, *Institutes*, 423.

[16] Ibid, 421.

good" in itself. Hippothadée concurs: "Isn't [the doctrine of predestination] recognizing him as the Giver of all good?" he asks (*TL* 30, 447 / *CW*, 350).[17]

Calvin holds that God instead keeps to a set of Self-created rules that squelch doubts about His power and divinity. But the lack of an outside standard implies God's infinite power. This limitlessness, in tandem with the mystery shrouding the process by which He makes His rules, inspires human anxiety. To assuage the concerns that arise from this fact, Calvin maintains, or rather asserts, that God's plans are "secret and incomprehensible but righteous and fair."[18] The move is critical. The claim that this mysterious and omnipotent God is just allows for political philosophy. And yet the qualifier in this description ("but") suggests that secrecy and incomprehensibility are not problems. Yet righteousness and fairness typically imply or even require transparency. The "secret" parameters of God's pleasures concern sinful creatures, who, like the modern realists, do not trust hidden motives. (The modern realists would simply euphemize "sinful creatures" as "self-interested beings" or even "rational actors.") Calvin might reply that fairness requires transparency, and that salvation appears severed from merit, only for those sinful/self-interested people who do not trust God because they would not trust themselves as gods.

Those sinners are onto something, despite what Calvin says. For human beings, fairness means people get what they deserve, and what people deserve is connected to merit. But Calvin teaches that nobody enters heaven through good works.[19] God discounts one's own

[17] A non-teleological science would deviate from both of Socrates's options in its denial of any standard, divine or not.

[18] Calvin, *Institutes*, 417.

[19] Calvin, *Institutes*, 418; 420; 423.

efforts, which, according to Machiavelli, are the key to worldly success.[20] Calvin's God puts everyone at His mercy and does not allow them to depend on themselves. As Jesus said, "You have not elected me, but I have elected you."[21] This teaching is not, for Calvin, a whim unique to the New Testament, but the paradoxical fulfillment of God's steady word through the ages. Calvin points out that Jesus simply affirms what God said through Moses in Exodus 33:19: "And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

If God dispenses grace to whom He will, the second half of Calvin's definition of *predestination*—His righteousness and fairness, which imply non-arbitrariness—still lacks explanation. Thus Calvin identifies constraints on God's will that do not imply the blasphemy of the Socratic or Platonic forms, which are independent of and higher than God. Calvin prefers to say that God shows his fairness by limiting His own strength through the written revelation of Himself in the Holy Bible.[22] Again, Hippothadée follows suit: "To find out what is His pleasure in this, there is no need to fall into despair [. . .]. He has revealed, announced, and openly described them, in the Holy Bible" (*TL* 30, 447 / *CW*, 350). The Bible supplies transparency and so makes good on the second, qualifying half of Calvin's definition.

Panurge's Critique: "Where are you sending me back to, good folk?"

Panurge describes Hippothadée's Calvinism as a kind of sentencing. Hippothadée's advice casts him into the realm of the "conditionals, which in dialectic admit of all

[20] See *Prince*, 6. But n.b. that Machiavelli acknowledges the need for "opportunity." See *Prince*, 6.23.

[21] Calvin, *Institutes*, 418–419. See John 15:16.

[22] Ibid, 415: "The secrets of His will which He thought good to communicate to us He has witnessed to us in His word," says Calvin.

contradictions and impossibilities" (*TL* 30, 446 / *CW*, 350). Although the main opponent here is revealed religion as Calvin defends it, Panurge makes sure, as a good Machiavellian, to also disparage the method of Platonic philosophy as one that ruins science by entertaining absurdities that could only exist 'in speech,' such as the republic founded by Socrates, Glaucon, and Adeimantus.[23] This protest comprises a central part of Panurge's Machiavellianism. Despite Hippothadée's assurances, Panurge fears God's good pleasure might prove so unpredictable, so unbound to any guiding principle, that the prospect of science or of knowing the future would dissipate. Science delineates what is and is not possible, but as Jesus taught, "With God, all things are possible."[24] Panurge correctly senses in Hippothadée's Calvinism something like the diatribe against science made by the eleventh century Islamic pietist Abu Hamid al-Ghazali in his *Incoherence of the Philosophers*. For any cause that seems independent is always, in principle, traceable back to God, and if nothing happens without God, then nothing can happen except through God's unpredictable mind.[25]

Machiavelli diverges from religious instruction in part because of the challenge that divine revelation creates for those who, like himself and Panurge, wish to know the future so as to shape it. In chapter 30 of the *Tiers Livre*, Panurge visits with a theologian named Hippothadée to discuss the marriage question. The theologian informs Panurge that his marital happiness will depend on God's favor; the most he can do is follow the Bible and live well.

[23] In this connection, see *Prince* 15.61.

[24] Matthew 19:26.

[25] See Matthew Levering, "Providence and Predestination in Al-Ghazali," *New Blackfriars* 92 (2011): 55–70. Rabelais had some knowledge of Islamic philosophy, including the figures of Averroes (see *QL* OC, 519 / *CW*, 422) and Avicenna (*G* 10, 33 / *CW*, 29). Rabelais never references Al-Ghazali, however.

Panurge's subsequent objection to Hippothadée's understanding of providence matches Machiavelli's objection to revelation in chapter 25 of *The Prince*. Here is how Panurge responds to Hippothadée's counsel:

> If God please, I won't be a cuckold; I'll be a cuckold if God please. Good Lord, if it were a condition I could obviate, I wouldn't despair at all. But you send me back to God's Privy Council, to the chamber of His petty pleasures. (*TL* 30, 446 / *CW*, 350)

And here is what Machiavelli says about those under the sway of theology:

> [. . .] many have held and hold the opinion that worldly things are so governed by fortune and by God, that men cannot correct them with their prudence, indeed that they have no remedy at all [. . .].[26]

Panurge and Machiavelli agree that the doctrine of providence so understood produces undesirable effects in human behavior. Panurge notes that Hippothadée "likes repose, silence, and solitude" (*TL* 30, 446–447 / *CW*, 350). Machiavelli would agree: "Our religion has glorified humble and contemplative more than active men."[27] Because he does not believe that the future is in his hands, the theologian lacks the Machiavellian virtues of spiritedness and industry. Hippothadée resigns himself to the mysteries of God/chance. Machiavelli does acknowledge, like Hippothadée, the futility of "opposing" fortune, but he insists that people "should indeed never give up" (and Panurge certainly never gives up!) precisely because he agrees with Hippothadée that fortune proceeds mysteriously.[28]

Panurge's protest against divine predestination as Hippothadée posits it demonstrates that the goal of knowing the future in order to overcome necessity nevertheless depends on

[26] *Prince*, 25.98.

[27] *DL*, 2.2.2.

[28] *DL*, 2.29.3.

the surety of necessity. The limits that necessity imposes are regular and, hence, predictable. There is, on the other hand, no reason to study the laws of nature or limits of necessity if God might change them tomorrow.[29] Divine intervention implies God's absolute freedom from necessity. This is just what Panurge ultimately desires for himself, and yet it is what he ultimately cowers from in another Being. Panurge believes nature rules less harshly than God, yet despite nature's relative kindness, Panurge still would not learn to live within its bounds as Diogenes and Socrates did and as Pantagruel would have him.

Panurge's objection to Hippothadée's theology has another prong. Besides referring Panurge to a study of the Holy Bible that contains God's will, a kind of faint blueprint of what is to come, Hippothadée also exhorts Panurge to the life of virtue. He does this not so much because God rewards virtue as for the effects that the virtuous life would have on Panurge's wife, who would eventually "conform to her husband's ways" (*TL* 30, 447 / *CW*, 351). This second piece of advice suggests, unlike the first, that it is possible to bend nature. Hippothadée does remind Panurge to "implore God's grace" even as he educates his wife in virtue, but the goal of eventual conformity through instruction betrays an unexpected confidence in human agency from Hippothadée.

Perhaps Hippothadée's two pieces of advice converge. Perhaps one could say that according to the Bible, God wants us to live virtuously. In this scenario, Panurge's rejection of the virtuous life implies a rejection of specifically biblical virtue. This seems to be the case, given the kind of wife that Hippothadée imagines for Panurge:

[29] This is the comical line of argument drawn in Rabelais's *Pantagrueline Prognostication* of 1532. See *CW*, 747–756. In the work, Rabelais parodies contemporary attempts to read the weather and predict the conditions of the farming seasons.

> "So you want me," said Panurge, pointing to the ends of his mustaches, "to marry the capable wife described by Solomon. *She's dead, in point of fact*. I've never seen her that I know of, God forgive me! Thanks anyway, Father. Here, eat a bit of marzipan: it will help you with your digestion; then you'll drink a cup of red and white hippocras: it's good for your health and stomach. Let's move on." (*TL* 30, 448 / *CW*, 351; emphasis mine) [30]

Panurge's objection to the virtuous life that Hippothadée recommends differs in important ways from the critique of virtue that Panurge had advanced in chapter 15 of *Pantagruel*. In his earlier argument with Pantagruel about the defense system in Paris, Panurge had exposed the dependence of virtue on reputation or hearsay, and had demonstrated that people act badly when unmonitored and must be forced to act well through a continual threat of shame. But in his exchange with Hippothadée, Panurge does not expose the contingency of the virtuous life. He instead attacks the status of virtue in the sacred writings of Solomon, and points more specifically to the status of the capable (or, virtuous) wife—she is "dead." The image of a dead woman that Panurge conjures does not allow the conclusion that Proverbs 31 mistakenly commends the non-existent or impossible; life precedes death. Something has killed the capable wife who lived during Solomon's time (but who was rare even in that time, as the biblical text says), which is really to say that something has killed, not a historical person, but rather a type of person or a value. This is Rabelais's version of Nietzsche's "God is dead."[31]

Panurge suggests that Christian Europe has no equivalent of the capable wife, true to God and to her husband. Indeed, the New Testament, which stands between ancient Israel and Renaissance France, does not emphasize the capable wife but her opposite, the "woman at the

[30] Frame translates "*elle est morte sans poinct de faulte*" as "She's dead, and no mistake."

[31] Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), 181–182 (aph. 125).

well" (perhaps also a type rather than a historical figure) who illicitly keeps five men at a time.[32] The woman at the well's lowliness is not, for Jesus, a mark against her. What distinguishes the woman at the well is not her virtue but her coming to know, through Jesus' thorough knowledge of her private sins and complete lack of virtue, who the Messiah is. The woman at the well arrives at this knowledge by recognizing "His goodness alone," as Hippothadée might put it. One wonders whether the capable wife who senses and values her dignity and virtue would be able to attain knowledge of the Messiah through such a route as the woman at the well's.

Panurge ends his conversation with Hippothadée by giving his own advice. He recommends to Hippothadée a diet of marzipan, a sweet confection, and hippocras, a wine flavored with cinnamon.[33] Without forgetting the philosophic overtones of wine, it seems that Hippothadée has not persuaded the materialist Panurge. Yet readers cannot simply assume that Panurge chooses to be willfully ignorant of the truth of his situation. Whether Panurge persists in ignorance depends on the strength of what I believe Rabelais has designed to be taken as Panurge's substantive critique of revelation. It also depends on whether Hippothadée's critique of science carries weight, which is only a different but equally fair way of saying the same thing. Whatever the case, Rabelais gives Panurge the last word: "Let's move

[32] See John 4:1–26. One possible equivalent of the capable wife in the New Testament is Mary, Jesus's mother. None of the Gospel authors mention Mary's virtue, however. Luke writes that Mary could not comprehend why God would have chosen her to carry out the task He gave her. See Luke 1:29. The Reformers of course refused to worship the figure of Mary as the Catholics had.

[33] See *CW*, 856n7.

on." The answer may be supplied by the turn in the consultations from the divine to the natural, as Panurge now confronts ancient science, conveyed by the doctor Rondibilis.

Rondibilis (*Tiers Livre* 31–33)

Much has been made of the fact that Rondibilis and Rabelais both practice medicine. This fact corresponds to an interpretive tendency to take Rondibilis's advice as Rabelais's. Roland Antonioli was the first to make this connection between character and author in what has been considered a classic analysis, *Rabelais et la Médecine*. For Antonioli, Rondibilis reflects Rabelais's training and practice as a professional informed by the progressive history of his art.[34] Screech enters this debate only to say that Rabelais supported Plato's older conception of medicine, but only because it had been vindicated by the latest medical developments.[35] He otherwise agrees with Antonioli about Rondibilis's scientific-medical progressivism. But Elizabeth Chesney Zegura does not think that Rondibilis's Platonism can be reconciled with Rabelais's favor for the authority of the "experientialist" thinker, Galen.[36]

On the whole, attempts to describe the relation of Rondibilis to Rabelais have not been particularly fruitful, and they have been made for too slight a reason to begin with. Just as Rabelais practiced medicine, he also had personal connections to the monastery, but he was not therefore endeared to monks.[37] Rather than conflate Rondibilis and Rabelais on the basis

[34] Roland Antonioli, "Rabelais et la Médecine," *Études Rabelaisiennes* 12 (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1976).

[35] Screech, *Rabelaisian Marriage*, 92.

[36] Elizabeth Chesney Zegura, "Rondibilis," in Chesney Zegura, *Rabelais Encyclopedia*, 215.

[37] See *G* 40, 110; *CW*, 93. Here Gargantua explains why monks are disliked: "There is nothing so true as that the robe and the cowl bring on themselves opprobria, insults, and maledictions of the people, just

of their shared attributes, interpreters should try their best to distinguish between, and keep separate, the author and his character. Doing this would allow for a more sober consideration of what medicine brings to bear on the situation and why Rabelais thought it worthy of representation in his book.

These two tasks, separating author from character and considering the worth of medicine, reinforce each other. Apart from Rabelais's biography, plenty of reasons for medicine's presence in the *Tiers Livre* can be cited. The historian of ideas can look back and speak of "the parallelism of political science and medicine" in ancient Greece.[38] Joel Warren Lidz writes about how the ancient thinkers drew a connection between medical health and political justice. Moderation, which the doctor recommends, is also a political virtue that benefits the city. In addition, Lidz shows how medicine must "take into account fine differences between patients." Socrates was in the habit of making this kind of accounting by "tailoring his speech for specific individuals."[39] The doctor who individualizes his treatments mimics the statesman and philosopher.[40]

If Plato depicts doctors as philosophic-political types, he also criticizes doctors for their presumptions and narrowness of vision. Eryximachus, a doctor who appears in Plato's *Symposium*, discusses love through "the nature of bodies"[41] understood as the physical

---

as the wind called Caecias attracts the clouds. The determining reason is that they eat the shit of the world, that is to say the sins, and as shit-eaters, they are cast back into their privies of a house."

[38] Leo Strauss, "On Classical Political Philosophy," in *What is Political Philosophy?, And Other Studies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 87.

[39] Joel Warren Lidz, "Medicine as Metaphor in Plato," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 20 (1995): 534.

[40] For such a comparison see Plato, *Laws*, 719e13–720e10.

[41] Plato, *Symposium*, 186b4.

attraction of bodies. His speech excludes metaphysics. Under the authority of medicine, Eryximachus conceives of health as a carefree hedonism that aims for "pleasure without illness." Medicine, for him (as for Jenny Craig), manages "the art of making delicacies."[42] Eryximachus realizes that health and pleasure normally stand at odds, but he believes that the problematic principle of pleasure-seeking can be liberated from its negative consequences through the all-encompassing rule of medicine.[43] In other Platonic dialogues, Socrates gives us a more serious version of medicine than Eryximachus's. He insists that doctors order their patients to eat beneficial food; mere cooks indulge their clientele.[44] In the *Minos*, and in direct contrast to Eryximachus, Socrates refrains from calling cooking or baking an art because of this difference.[45] For a body of knowledge to constitute art, that body should discriminate between what benefits and harms people simply.

Readers should evaluate Rondibilis by asking what type of doctor he is. Does he consider the idiosyncrasies of Panurge? Does he tell Panurge what he wants to hear, or does he prescribe a bitter pill?

[42] Ibid, 187e5.

[43] Ibid, 188b–c.

[44] Plato, "Protagoras" in *Plato in Twelve Volumes, vol. 3*, trans. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 313d7.

[45] Plato, "Minos" in *The Roots of Political Philosophy: Ten Forgotten Socratic Dialogues*, ed. Thomas L. Pangle, trans. Thomas L. Pangle (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987), 59 (317a4): "And the cooks, *as they claim*, have knowledge?" Italics mine.

Rondibilis, Ancient Platonist?

Hippothadée had advised Panurge to first be honest with himself about concupiscence, but Rondibilis equivocates. Rather than provide one rule as Hippothadée did ("it is better to marry than to burn"), the medical expert furnishes five possible treatments for the problem at hand. By recommending numerous plans, Rondibilis recognizes that different people have different needs, as the philosophic-political doctor does. But Rondibilis allows Panurge to listen to the list and select his own treatment. Rondibilis recognizes individuality, but apparently believes that people have enough responsibility and maturity to properly judge themselves within circumscribed limits.

The Faculty of Medicine has vetted Rondibilis's plans, which accord with those of "the ancient Platonists" (*TL* 31, 448 / *CW*, 351). The doctor's lineage does not make the interpreter's task easy. Rondibilis refers to both Socrates and Plato in his speech, but also to Hippocrates, Diogenes, and Democritus (*TL* 31, 451; 32, 453 / *CW*, 353; 356). The variety of opinion from which Rondibilis draws calls to attention the fact that the views of his exalted "Platonists" may not match those of Plato and Socrates.[46] Plato might approve the unadulterated aspects of Rondibilis's advice, yet reject others.

Because the ancient Platonists who Rondibilis admires cannot be equated with Plato, and because Rabelais himself knew Plato through Platonists, interpretive questions arise related to how intermediaries such as Ficino affected Rabelais's own understanding of Platonic philosophy, and whether Plato may shine through an intermediary without refraction. One

[46] See Romain Menini, "Rabelais et l'intertexte platonicien," *Études Rabelaisiennes* 47 (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2009). Menini emphasizes the need to consider the intermediaries (Cicero, Plutarch, Erasmus, Ficino, Calcagnini, etc.) through which Rabelais read Plato.

consideration in the Rondibilis chapters would help readers address the concern of what Rabelais knew about Plato. That is, the selection of Platonic dialogues that Rondibilis uses as authorities or markers during his speech says something in itself.

These works, the *Phaedo* and *Timaeus*, had special significance in Medieval and Renaissance Christendom as philosophic supports for the religious notions of an afterlife (the *Phaedo*) and of a Craftsman who intelligently orders the cosmos (the *Timaeus*). Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil* begins by accusing Plato of making the "most dangerous of all errors" because his works had unintentionally promoted these Christian inclinations. Nietzsche clarifies that his quarrel is not with Plato per se, but with "the Christian–ecclesiastical pressure of millennia—for Christianity is Platonism for 'the people.'"[47] The "dangerous error" that most worries Nietzsche is Plato's easily misconstrued way of discussing the possibility of the soul's immortality. According to Nietzsche, Christianity effaced tones of uncertainty from dialogues like the *Phaedo*.[48] Christianity's allegedly doctrinaire answer to the metaphysical question of the soul's immortality did not provide the palliative against fear of death that Socrates actually gives in that dialogue (avoiding "hatred of arguments"[49]). The Christian teaching instead ignited

[47] Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 4.

[48] See ibid, aph. 12: [. . .] one must also, first of all, give the finishing stroke to that other and more calamitous atomism which Christianity has taught best and longest, the *soul atomism*. Let it be permitted to designate by this expression the belief which regards the soul as something indestructible, eternal, indivisible, as a monad, as an *atomon*: this belief ought to be expelled from science! Between ourselves, it is not at all necessary to get rid of "the soul" at the same time, and thus to renounce one of the most ancient and venerable hypotheses [. . .]. For tones of uncertainty in Plato, see, e.g., *Phaedo*, 88b1–4: "But if all this holds [that the soul is like a tuning or a weaver], the confidence that characterizes anybody who's confident in the face of death is a mindless confidence—so long as he can't demonstrate that the soul is altogether deathless and imperishable."

[49] Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage, and Eric Salem (Newburyport, MA: Focus, 1998), 65–69 (88c–91b).

a moral revolution that was justified by a belief in the soul's permanence. Because Christians elevated the soul for its immortality, they denigrated the corrupt body and what were perceived as the bodily virtues.[50] It is characteristic of Christian theologian Augustine's thought that he locates the origin of "lust" [libido] in the genital organs and describes the term as general "for all desire."[51] Augustine implicitly rejects Plato's division of the passions into different parts of the soul that can be ranked as higher or lower, even as he speaks well of Socrates' moral philosophy.[52] Ficino, the chief representative of Platonism in Rabelais's time (the Renaissance knew Plato through Ficino's discovery and translations of the Greek thinker), argues in his commentary on Plato's *Phaedrus* for the soul's immortality in terms at least as strong as Augustine's: "All soul is immortal because what is always moved is immortal."[53]

[50] See Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, aph. 168: "Christianity gave Eros poison to drink: he did not die of it but denigrated—into a vice."

[51] Augustine, "The City of God," in *Political Writings*, eds. Ernest L. Fortin and Douglas Kries, trans. Michael W. Tkacz and Douglas Kries (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1994), 104 (14.15).

[52] Ibid, 8.3: "Therefore, he recommended that one eagerly pursue the required cleansing of life through good morals. In this way the mind, unencumbered by the weight of lusts, might raise itself to eternal things by its natural vigor, and so contemplate with a purified intelligence the nature of immaterial and unchangeable light, where the causes of all created natures have their stable dwelling."

[53] Marsilio Ficino, *Commentaries on Plato, Volume I: Phaedrus and Ion*, ed. and trans. Michael J. B. Allen (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2008), 1.3. See also Ficino, *Commentaries on Plato*, 2.5.1: "Since in the *Theology* it was proved that the soul is the first to be moved in the universal hierarchy and is therefore self-moving and moves others, it is agreed that the soul is the principle of motion and that its motion, being the first and most natural, is the most perfect motion in motion as a class; and, further, that this motion is universal, complete, circular, and sempiternal. But the soul's motion consists in life, and, in turn, the soul's life is engaged in perpetual motion. The soul is therefore immortal." For a treatment of Ficino on the human soul, see Valery Rees, "The Care of the Soul: States of Consciousness in the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit," *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 8 (2008): 1–19.

In light of this tendency among Christian and Renaissance-Platonic interpreters of Plato to misconstrue the ancient philosopher, the question in the context of the Rondibilis consultation is whether Rondibilis similarly distorts Plato's philosophy.

First of all, Rondibilis does not condemn the body as the Christian Platonists do. The list of cures that Rondibilis provides for Panurge composes an arc that starts with bodily pleasure and ascends to natural remedies, to work, to thought, and that finally descends back to sex and body: 1) wine, 2) plants/drugs, 3) assiduous toil, 4) intense study, and 5) the venereal act (*TL* 31). Augustine could never endorse Rondibilis's list. But Rondibilis's morally neutral view of the body is not the only matter that separates him from the Christian Platonists. Consider option 1), wine, which has nothing to do with body, though one might first suppose it does.[54] Rondibilis's understanding of wine complies with Rabelais's use of it in the prologues as an emblem of philosophizing. According to Rondibilis, intemperate wine drinking does not constitute bodily indulgence; it rather disables the bodily functions. Wine cures concupiscence by producing "a chilling of the blood, slackening of the sinews, dispersal of the generative seed, and numbing of the senses" (*TL* 31, 449 / *CW*, 352). Rondibilis's description of 1), wine, resembles 4), intense study, during which the student has "all the external senses halted" and participates in "nothing else but meditation on death" (*TL* 31, 450–451 / *CW*, 353). Rondibilis explicitly likens cures 1) and 4) to Socrates's description of philosophy in the *Phaedo* as freedom from the body.[55]

[54] See Plato, *Laws*, 66a for a discussion of wine as a gift from Dionysus "bestowed on mankind as a medicine potent against the crabbedness of old age."

[55] See Plato, *Phaedo*, 64a.

So the doctor's understanding of the *Phaedo* is not influenced by Christian Platonism, which advocates a notion of the soul that will certainly outlast the body rather than a notion of philosophy as the soul's freedom from the body through study. Rondibilis's brand of Platonism does not lead him to disparage the body like Augustine or to venerate it like Eryximachus. Rondibilis has a measured view of the body's place in human life.

An analysis of Rondibilis's understanding of the *Timaeus* yields a consistent result, that Rondibilis's Platonism is ancient Platonism and not neo- or Christian Platonism.

Recent scholarship on the *Timaeus* has focused on its peculiar literary considerations, apparent from the outset as Socrates asks about the "missing fourth" character in the work.[56] Scholars have also noted that if Socrates's speeches and actions in the *Phaedo* make Simmias and Cebes face their fear of death, his silence in the *Timaeus* casts doubts on the superficially comprehensive Pythagorean cosmology given by the dialogue's namesake. While older scholarship on the *Timaeus* discusses such topics as "Plato's cosmology" and concludes that "Plato thinks of this [i.e., Timaeus's] cosmos as the product of intelligent design," Peter Kalkavage describes Timaeus's discourse on the cosmos as a patently anti-Platonic "will to order" in which "Craftsmanship, rather than contemplation, is the hero of the story." Kalkavage argues that the monologic character of the *Timaeus* "signals the absence and withdrawal of philosophy itself." Richard Chessick supports Kalkavage's interpretation of the dialogue with his conviction that Timaeus's discourse finds sympathy from "those who expect science to explain everything sooner or later" in the fashion of the materialist sciences that reduce "mind" to

[56] See Laurence Lampert and Christopher Planeaux, "Who's Who in Plato's *Timaeus–Critias* and Why," *The Review of Metaphysics* 52 (1998): 87–125.

"brain."[57] The anti-Platonism that Kalkavage and Chessick detect in Timaeus's speech corroborates Aristotle's low opinion of the *Timaeus* as a lapse of form, or even as a full departure from the true Platonic teaching: "Plato says in the *Timaeus* that material and extension are the same [. . .]. Though he spoke in different ways there," Aristotle notes.[58] In short, readers must let Timaeus be Timaeus, an Italian Pythagorean and not a Greek Platonist. Nevertheless, Rondibilis imparts his Platonic teaching through a clever re-appropriation of Timaeus's anti-Platonic speech.

(Dis)Orderliness and the Querelle Des Femmes

Understanding how the *Tiers Livre* interacts with the *Timaeus* is important. Rabelais's reputation has suffered due to Rondibilis's use of Plato. Rabelais scholars have charged both Rondibilis and Rabelais with misogyny because of the unsettling way in which Rondibilis discusses women. These scholars have recognized that an appeal to the *Timaeus* orients Rondibilis's discussion of women, but they have not considered how Rondibilis's situation and goals link up with the situation of Timaeus and Timaeus's goals. Rather, it has been taken for granted that Rondibilis affirms (via Timaeus) Plato's dusty, patriarchal ranking of the sexes. [59] To

[57] Glenn R. Morrow, "Necessity and Persuasion in Plato's *Timaeus*," *The Philosophical Review* 59 (1950): 148; 161; Peter Kalkavage, "Plato's Timaeus and the Will to Order," *St John's Review* 47 (2003): 137–167. For a similar discussion, see Catherine Zuckert, *Plato's Philosophers: The Coherence of the Dialogues* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 423ff; Richard D. Chessick, "The Silence of Socrates," *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 58 (2004): 406.

[58] Aristotle, *Aristotle's* Physics, *A Guided Study*, 5th edition, ed. Harvey Flaumenhaft, trans. Joe Sachs (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 209b12–14.

[59] See, for instance, Françoise Charpentier, "Notes pour le *Tiers Livre de Rabelais* Chap. 32: Le Discours de Rondibilis," *Revue belge de philology et d'histoire* 54 (1976): 791: Rondibilis gives us a "pseudo-scientific discourse, where it will not be difficult to find something terrifying" (my translation). See also Chesney Zegura, "Rondibilis," in *Rabelais Encyclopedia*, 215: "Rondibilis's contention that all married

make sense of Rondibilis/Rabelais, scholars have placed the text in the historical context of the *querrelle des femmes*, a well-known debate between certain writers of Rabelais's age who took opposing (roughly, feminist or anti-feminist) views of women. Reading Rondibilis's use of the term *woman* within another context—that of the *Timaeus*—shows a different intent than has been supposed. Rabelais affirms not only woman's independence, but even man's subjection to women.

Initially it seems reasonable to suppose that Rabelais's doctor has been influenced by the Pythagoreanism to which Timaeus subscribes, or even that he is moved by the dogmatic will to order that, according to Kalkavage, permeates Timaeus's speech. If so, women must be willed to order just like the rest of the cosmos. But Rondibilis is neither so influenced nor so moved. Although he, like Timaeus, gives a lengthy speech, Rondibilis does not follow Timaeus in accounting for the complete, mathematical structuring of the world. On the contrary, Rondibilis seizes on Timaeus's brief mention of *woman* because it comprises a weak point in his speech. Disorder and uncertainty enter the world when Timaeus discusses the sexes:

> "When I say woman [femme], I mean a sex so fragile, so variable, so mutable, so inconstant and imperfect, that Nature (speaking in all honor and reverence) seems to me to have strayed from that good sense by which she [elle] had created and formed all things when she [elle] built woman. [. . .] Certainly Plato does not know in what category

men either have been, are, or will be, or may be cuckolded [. . .] hinges upon a negative view of women." Similar points have been raised about Plato and Aristotle. See Susan M. Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 82. For a defense of Greek philosophy against charges of misogyny, see Larry Arnhart, "A Sociobiological Defense of Aristotle's Sexual Politics," *International Political Science Review / Revue international de science politique* 15 (1994): 389–415. See also Mary P. Nichols, "Women, Politics, and Nature: Women in Western Political Thought by Susan Mollen Okin," *The Review of Politics* 43 (1981): 130–131.

> he should place them, that of reasonable animals or that of brute beasts." (*TL* 32, 453–454 / *CW*, 356)

Before commenting on the above passage, I heed the advice of Wayne C. Booth: "Propositions *about* women can tell us nothing, then, until we ask, Who utters them? In what circumstances? In what tone? With what qualification by other utterances? And, most important of all, What is the quality of our emotional response, point by point and overall?"[60] With Booth's advice in mind, readers should recall that Machiavelli had used *woman* as an image of vulnerable fortune,[61] and that Panurge's entire quest has up this point been a slow realization that fortune, *une femme*, cannot be made to serve him so easily. Remembering these instances along with Rondibilis's intention in speaking to Panurge (to bring him yet closer to that realization) changes how the above passage reads.

In that passage, Rondibilis mentions Plato's view that women rank as equals with the brute beasts. By syllogism this would place woman below man, given that Plato, like others of the classical tradition, places the "beasts" lower than humanity. Yet the adjective "brute" suggests indomitability, and it does not admit, even despite the negative connotations involved with the image, of a vertical hierarchy.[62] Woman's indomitability is supported by a fascinating component of Rondibilis's speech. If Rondibilis believes woman is low because brute, she nevertheless rules man in a way that transcends the instances of particular women ruling particular men, for Rondibilis does not limit his usage of the term *woman* to the female sex of

[60] Wayne C. Booth, "Freedom of Interpretation," 59.

[61] *Prince*, 25.101.

[62] Nevertheless, one may ask, as feminist scholars long have, whether this image of fickle woman as brute beast—whatever its intentions—negatively affects female dignity.

the various animal species. He makes exclusive use of the female pronoun *elle* to refer to Nature. And Nature belongs, as a woman, to the class of fragile, variable, mutable, inconstant and imperfect beings that she has created. (That nature would create anything disorderly reflects, after all, her own disorderliness and, as in the case of individual females, means that Nature cannot be controlled.) This feature of Rondibilis's speech exculpates him from Kalkavage's assessment of Plato's Timaeus as one who seeks to will order where none exists. Rondibilis's teaching on the disorderly cosmos is remarkable because it uses the orderly Timaeus to make its point.[63]

Rondibilis's view of women is not unlike Socrates's view, expressed in Xenophon's *Symposium*, that "woman's nature is really not a whit inferior to man's." When Antisthenes questioned Socrates' sincerity on the grounds of his marriage to Xanthippe ("the hardest to get along with of all the women there are"), Socrates replied that "men who wish to become expert horsemen do not get the most docile horses but rather those that are high-mettled, believing that if they can manage this kind, they can easily handle any other." If he could "endure" or "*be placed under*" [ὑποίσω] Xanthippe, Socrates continued, he could get on with the rest of humankind all right.[64] Although the goal of becoming an expert horseman suggests a kind of desire for domination, that goal is paradoxically achieved by learning to cope with or *live under* the subject to be mastered.

[63] See David Krell, "Female Parts in *Timaeus*," *Arion* 2 (1975): 400–421 for more on Timaeus's account of the female sex.

[64] Xenophon, "Symposium," in *Xenophon in Seven Volumes*, 2.10.

In the same chapter (*TL* 32), and as a consequence of *woman's* indomitability, Rondibilis also takes the authentically Platonic stance of resignation to nature, and in his way admits the superiority and dominion of woman over man. Man must bow to woman's (and, by inference, to Nature's) unpredictability:

> "The shadow follows the body no more naturally than cuckoldry follows marriage. And when you hear said of anyone these three words: 'He is married,' if you say: 'Then he is, or has been, or will be, or may be a cuckold,' you will not be called an inexpert architect of natural consequences.'" (*TL* 32, 453 / *CW*, 355).

Rondibilis's assertion that cuckoldry "follows" marriage brings the reader full circle back to the *Phaedo*, where Socrates asserts that pain always follows pleasure.[65] In fact, Rondibilis and Panurge's discussion of cuckoldry is nothing more than a discussion of a specific kind of pain. Rondibilis's refusal to offer Panurge a solution to the problem of cuckoldry (i.e., the problem of pain), or some foolproof device he may use to ward off cuckoldry, deserves greater praise than it gets.[66] Contrast Rondibilis's sobriety with the deluge of marriage counseling books on the market today—many of them written by doctors!—and his position appears more impressive. Rondibilis's Socratic teaching that pleasure is temporary and pain imminent deflates Panurge's aspiration of ensuring stable, long-lasting happiness. Rondibilis joins the chorus of condemnation of the utopian streak found in the early modern thought of Machiavelli.

Panurge's interrogation of Rondibilis ends with the doctor telling a story that takes up the same theme that Panurge had focused on as he and Pantagruel inspected Paris together in

---

[65] Plato, *Phaedo*, 60b–c. See Peter J. Ahrensdorf, *The Death of Socrates and the Life of Philosophy: An Interpretation of Plato's* Phaedo (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 23ff for a discussion of pleasure, pain, and necessity in Socratic philosophy.

[66] Chesney Zegura calls Rondibilis's contention that all men may be cuckolded a "truism." See "Rondibilis," *Rabelais Encyclopedia*, 215.

Pantagruel chapter 15. In Rondibilis's story Jupiter gives Messer Cuckoldry a festival, whereupon Messer Cuckoldry made an "infallible promise that to those who (as they say) should stop work for this festival, cease all business, neglect their own affairs to spy on their wives, lock them up and mistreat them out of Jealousy [. . .], he would be continually favorable" (*TL* 33, 457 / *CW*, 359). In other words, the husbands must realize that vigilance is key to their spouses' loyalty. Panurge's story of the father with his two daughters suggests that he knows this lesson. Rondibilis would simply have Panurge heed his own advice. But Panurge must see that his goal of securing the future allows no more laxity than Paris' old-fashioned preaching and enforcing of virtue. Ensuring the future, like cultivating virtue, implies constant management. Further, Rondibilis's story about Messer Cuckoldry shows that the accomplishment of Panurge's goal stands at odds with his earlier suggestion that vice should flourish and even that the city should be structured around it. This solution discomforts Panurge as it applies to him. Vice as the city's ordering principle loses its appeal when its consequences are felt personally. Here is another, final Platonic lesson: Unleashing vice violates self-interest. Teaching others to be bad means those others may be bad to oneself.[67]

Trouillogan and Reading the Human Heart (*Tiers Livre* 35–36)

With the conclusion of Rondibilis's speech Pantagruel reestablishes himself as the overseer of the banquet. He turns to Trouillogan, the Pyrrhonian philosopher, and orders him to respond to Panurge's question. Trouillogan has just started to give Panurge his famous "non-answers" when Gargantua serendipitously enters the hall. This constitutes Gargantua's first

[67] Plato, *Apology*, 25e1–4.

appearance in Rabelais's works since *Pantagruel* chapter 4, when Pantagruel was still an infant. Though his attendance is the most notable, Gargantua is not the only character to reappear in the Trouillogan chapters. Hippothadée and Rondibilis also speak and contribute to Panurge's discussion with the philosopher. The multiplicity of voices at this point can be attributed to the fact that Trouillogan does not give a positive response for readers to evaluate. He furnishes a riddle that the other characters ponder and try to answer. Their various attempts, which are of main interest in this analysis, reveal more about them than is revealed about Trouillogan.

Gargantua's appearance is actually preceded by that of a little dog named Kyne (a name derived from the Greek *kunos*). This generic "Dog" reminds the reader of another: The Dog, Diogenes the Cynic. Gargantua's first words also have philosophic import: "Give me something to let me drink to the company." If these words mark the chapter as philosophically important, Gargantua seems to stand at the same time for the authority of the elder or father, or of the political authority that might frown on private discourse such as these characters have engaged in. Gargantua's dog may not stand for Cynic philosophy, but for loyalty.[68] When the canine walks in, Pantagruel gives warning and the discussion halts: "Our king is not far from here. Let's rise" (*TL* 35, 462 / *CW* 363). In this sense, Gargantua seems like a more distinguished version of Plato's Cephalus, or like Alexander, who, as Rabelais reminds us in the prologue, blocked Diogenes's sun. In the chapter, Gargantua accordingly embodies "the dog" in two senses. He displays a philosophic mind, even as he stands for the established order and expresses distrust of "today's" philosophy (*TL* 36, 466 / *CW*¸ 367).

[68] See Plato, *Republic*, 375e1–4: "[. . .] by nature the disposition of noble dogs is to be as gentle as can be with their familiars and people they know and the opposite with those they don't know."

Fear and Love: What Trouillogan Tells Us about Machiavelli's Prince

When Gargantua asks about what has passed in his absence, the narrator relates Pantagruel's response at an added level of removal. Pantagruel told his father that Panurge had twice asked the philosopher whether he should marry, and that Trouillogan had supplied "incompatible and contradictory answers," namely, "Both" and "Neither." Gargantua immediately weighs in. He hedges, but is fairly sure that he understands the Pyrrhonian: "The answer is like what an ancient philosopher said when asked whether he had some woman whose name they gave him. 'I have her as my love,' said he, 'but she doesn't have my love. I possess her, I'm not possessed by her'" (*TL* 35, 462 / *CW*, 363). Pantagruel supports Gargantua with "a similar answer," made by "a servant girl from Sparta": "She was asked whether she'd ever had business with a man. She answered: 'No, never, although men have sometimes had business with me'" (*TL* 35, 462 / *CW*, 363).

Gargantua's and Pantagruel's solutions to the riddle affirm the basic inequality of lover and beloved. The problem is an important one for egalitarian societies to face.[69] Machiavelli recognizes, unfortunately for those societies, that those who want to experience and enjoy love must make do with their dependence on another's will, and may be subjected to ungratefulness. Machiavelli sees greater inequality in love relationships than even Pantagruel

[69] Numerous scientific studies negatively frame inequality in romantic relationships. Out of the vast literature on the topic, one might consult the following: Diane H. Felmlee, "Who's on Top? Power in Romantic Relationships," *Sex Roles* 31 (1994): 275–295; R.M. Cate, S.A. Loyd, J.M. Henton, and J.H. Larson, "Fairness and Reward Level as Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 45 (1982): 177–181; Geneviève Schoeb, Martin Belzile, Audrey Brassard, Lisa-Marie Desruisseaux, Corinne Potvin, et al, "The Perceived Equity and Equality of Sexual Practices Scale: Validation of a Measure of Equity and Equality Within Couples," *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* 22 (2013): 25–39.

and Gargantua do. Even if somebody returns love now, Machiavelli writes, they may change their mind later.[70] As Machiavelli frames the problem in chapter 17 of *The Prince* (albeit in a political context), the only way to level the inequality of love relationships is to place those relationships on another basis. He concludes that it is "safer" to be feared than loved for precisely the reasons that Gargantua and Pantagruel insinuate through their anecdotes. To circumvent the problem of winning another's freely given love by persuasion, Machiavelli recommends the use of force, which manifests psychologically in the beloved as fear.

But Machiavelli does not recognize something important about the implications of replacing love with fear. These implications can be found in the image of love that Pantagruel provides. Pantagruel's image of lover and beloved differs from Gargantua's and Machiavelli's images in an important way. Gargantua had displayed the inequality of love from the standpoint of the lover who wishes to possess his beloved ("I possess her; I am not possessed by her"). Likewise, in *The Prince*, Machiavelli approaches the problem from the angle of the ruler trying to win the love of the people. Though Pantagruel reiterates the same problem, and though he agrees about the unequal relations of lover and beloved, Rabelais says that Pantagruel's answer to Trouillogan's riddle is only "similar" because he takes up the love relationship from the opposite perspective of the beloved—the servant girl from Sparta with whom others have had "business." This Spartan girl did not concede her love to the men who took advantage of her, even as they conducted their "business" with her by subjecting her to force. True, she conceded physically, but she withheld her heart. The lovers may well have

[70] *Prince*, 17.66.

gotten something of what they wanted from the servant girl, but the coercion—or fear—that they employed could not entirely give her over to them. This is what the girl means when she says that she "never" had business with those who follow (unwittingly) Machiavelli's advice.[71]

At this point the other consultants assess Trouillogan's riddle. Rondibilis gives a nonsensical and obviously humorous answer, that the Aristotelian mean between extremes should be sought in matters of love. Here Rondibilis's incompetence in matters outside of medicine becomes evident. Hippothadée's response is more plausible, and keeps to its expected basis in Paul's writings: "Let those who are married be as if unmarried; let those who have a wife be as if they had no wife." Pantagruel adds to, and seems to endorse, Hippothadée's solution, by answering that "having a wife is having her for such use as Nature created her for [. . .] not giving up the duties he naturally owes to his country, the commonwealth, his friends [. . .]" (*TL* 35, 463 / *CW*, 364). Pantagruel's endorsement of Hippothadée's view does not, however, amount to an endorsement of Paul. Pantagruel adds worldly duties to Hippothadée's Pauline or Calvinist focus on God.

Then there is Panurge. While scholars have usually described Trouillogan's answers as cryptic,[72] a qualification needs to be made. They are only cryptic to Panurge. As the foregoing analysis shows, the other characters interpret Trouillogan's advice. Duval notes that Pantagruel's contribution in particular constitutes a prime example of Pantagruelism defined as

[71] In the *Discourses* (1.58.1), however, Machiavelli seems to endorse the view that persuasion should be used instead of force. See Nathan Tarcov, "Machiavelli's Critique of Religion," *Social Research* 81 (2014): 199. The question of whether force/fear or persuasion/love should be used in politics has been important in liberal theory, especially in Locke's writings. See Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*.

[72] For the most notable exception to this trend in the literature, see George Hoffman, "Neither One Nor the Other and Both Together: How Scholastic Logic Can Help Explain Panurge's Marriage Question (*Tiers Livre*, 35)," *Études Rabelaisiennes* 25 (1991): 79–90.

interpreting all things for the good.[73] This means the reader must account for Panurge's inability to see what Trouillogan means in light of the other characters' proposed solutions to the Pyrrhonian's puzzle.

Panurge abides by a literalism that renders Trouillogan's answers absurd. This literalism is a counterpart of Panurge's insistence on certainty. The mere effort at interpretation is what separates Pantagruel, Gargantua, Rondibilis, and Hippothadée from Panurge. Panurge does interpret other efforts at prediction metaphorically (his dream, the Sybil of Panzoust, the Virgilian lots, and so on), but he is unwilling or incapable of doing so here. With Trouillogan, Panurge's literalism instigates a dialogue in which the philosopher's evasiveness only mounts as Panurge's questioning progresses. The exchange eventually culminates in Gargantua's apparent disgust for Trouillogan, even though the king had earlier thought the philosopher was straightforward and clear in his meaning. The final remark that the king makes indicates the point of Panurge's interrogation of Trouillogan taken as a whole:

> Truly from now on it will be possible to catch lions by the thick hair, horses by the main, oxen by the horns, wild oxen by the muzzle, wolves by the tail, goats by the beard, birds by the feet; but never will such philosophers be caught by their words. (*TL* 36, 466 / *CW*, 368)

Whether or not Gargantua's speech expresses lamentation, it raises an issue that is vital to Machiavelli's brand of political philosophy. Gargantua points to the rationale for philosophy's turn in modernity from speeches to actions. Machiavelli, like his successors and including social scientists to the present day, would begin to privilege the latter over the former. This privilege was thought necessary because of the futility involved in trying to evaluate pronouncements

[73] Duval, *Design of the* Tiers Livre, 192.

(or "rhetoric," a term that has become synonymous with "hot air") such as those Trouillogan makes. Thomas Hobbes later drew the same conclusion:

> These forms of speech, I say, are expressions, or voluntary significations, of our passions, but certain signs they are not, because they may be used arbitrarily, whether they that use them have such passions or not. The best signs of passions present are in the countenance, motions of the body, actions, and ends or aims which we otherwise know the man to have.[74]

Machiavelli's works reflect Hobbes's point by giving a historical account of the actions that people take rather than of the speeches that they make. Machiavelli differs in this emphasis even from his "realist" predecessor Thucydides, whose history of the Peloponnesian War contains many speeches with important rhetorical components. But the turn has been decisive. Current psychology, still under the influence of Machiavelli, also places action over speech. To give but one example, psychologists find that liars blink less than truth tellers while in the act of lying, and then blink more than truth tellers immediately after the lie has been told.[75] Going simply by the words of the liar, one might be deceived. Knowing that the lie has physical manifestations levels the field. Pantagruel's Spartan girl, however, brings the explanatory power of actions into question. Judging her by her actions (that is, by her yielding to the Spartan men) would not reveal her heart but would instead lead to a misinterpretation of it.

Trouillogan's advice shows that the urgency of interpretation, our need to know other's hearts, rests on the emotion of love. We want sound interpretation because we want to know what others are thinking and how best to respond to them. Courtship brings about the highest

---

[74] Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 6.56. For more on Hobbes's account of the misuse of words, see Skinner, *Renaissance Virtues*, 264–285.

[75] Sharon Leal and Aldert Vrij, "Blinking During and After Lying," *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 32 (2008): 187–194.

uncertainty in this regard, and Machiavelli's treatment of the issue shows that courtship had always pervaded politics as well, in the sense that most rulers wish to be loved. Machiavelli recommends a turn from love to fear in order to gain certitude and secure that delicate relationship, but this turn implies a complete abandonment of getting to know the inner thoughts of the "other" or beloved. Forcing others to fulfill one's wishes means settling for outward compliance. The Trouillogan chapters suggest that philosophy must heed speech—even highly puzzling speech—as the only path to knowledge, and as the only path to true possession. This conclusion makes good Pantagruel's characterization of Trouillogan well in advance of the Trouillogan consultation. In chapter 29 of the book Pantagruel calls him a "perfect philosopher," who "gives a positive answer on all doubts that are proposed" (*TL* 29, 445 / *CW*, 348). Once readers recover from laughing at the initial ridiculousness of this characterization, they can see that the doubts that Trouillogan raises aim to clarify, and that they actually do.

At the end of Trouillogan's consultation, the *Timaeus*, so central to the Rondibilis episode, is invoked a final time. Pantagruel proposes a talk with Bridlegoose, the judge—"the fourth" of Rabelais's book (*TL* 36, 466 / *CW*, 368).

Bridlegoose's Psychological Legalism (*Tiers Livre* 39–44)

The questers' encounter with Bridlegoose is peculiar. Bridlegoose is the only one of the four authorities enlisted by Pantagruel who does not offer any advice, however brief, to Panurge. Rather, Rabelais uses Bridlegoose (as he used Trouillogan) to present a problem, one that is once again considerable for Machiavelli, to the reader.

The circumstances under which Bridlegoose speaks are also peculiar. Up to this point, the consultations have transpired in the setting of a banquet. But the banquet is interrupted when Pantagruel announces that he wishes to leave to attend Bridlegoose's trial (*TL* 38, 473 / *CW*, 375). Bridlegoose, a judge who was to represent the field of law to Panurge, is the defendant in a case scrutinizing his jurisprudence. The legal investigation relates to Bridlegoose's misjudgment of a certain Assessor Toucheronde. Bridlegoose reveals in the course of his proceedings that he had arrived at his faulty judgment of Toucheronde in the same way that he had without incident reached sound judgments for the last forty years—by casting die. This is indeed a revelation to the high court, whose members are astounded at the news: "'What dice do you mean, my dear friend?' asked Trinquamelle, grand president of this Court" (*TL* 39,474 / *CW*, 376). Bridlegoose's defense of his dice-throwing comprises the rest of the proceedings.

After Bridlegoose makes his closing remarks, Pantagruel and Epistémon provide separate excuses for Bridlegoose's dubious dice-throwing method. These excuses are based respectively on what the apologists interpret as Bridlegoose's respect for the divine will (*TL* 43) and on the ambiguities of justice itself (*TL* 44). Secondary literature on the episode has centered on these two characters' vindications. For one segment of this scholarship, Bridlegoose embodies divine wisdom and exemplifies what Pantagruel calls "the befuddlement of the wise" (*TL* 43, 487 / *CW*, 389).[76] Duval's treatment of the chapter breaks from this orthodox view:

[76] See Kurt Reichenberger, "Studien zu Rabelais' Rechtsdenken," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 22:185–191; Walter J. Kaiser, *Praisers of Folly: Erasmus, Rabelais, Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963); Jean Céard, *La Nature et les Prodigies: L'insolite au XVIe siècle, en France* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1977).

"Rabelais," he writes, "simply does not allow us to approve Bridlegoose's behavior on any grounds, whether legal or metaphysical." Duval also focuses on Pantagruel's perspective on the hearing, but he reads Bridlegoose as an "object of judgment" in need of *caritas* or forgiveness rather than as a befuddler of the wise, given that Bridlegoose displays "the self-satisfaction of a falsely learned fool."[77] Other scholars place the Bridlegoose chapters in the context of the contemporary legal system. Robert Marichal treats the episode as a satire and critique of that system, and J. Duncan M. Derret examines the rationale for the dozens of legal references peppered throughout the Bridlegoose chapters, which, to him, raise the question of Rabelais's stance on Roman law as a model for Renaissance Europe.[78]

Before focusing on the excuses of Pantagruel and Epistémon as the Rabelais literature has, I analyze Bridlegoose's own apology, which is singular in its focus on human psychology. A directly related feature of Bridlegoose's apology is its relatively brief consideration of how dice-throwing contributes to his (mostly) sterling legal record. Bridlegoose instead speaks at length, and in light of his psychology, on the need for law to be adorned by procedure and pomp. Below is an analysis of Bridlegoose's apology, of the psychology it contains, and of the legal dictates that follow from his psychological apology.

[77] Edwin M. Duval, "The Juge Bridoye, Pantagruelism, and the Unity of Rabelais' *Tiers Livre*," *Études Rabelaisiennes* 17: 39; 49.

[78] Robert Marichal, "Rabelais et la réforme de la justice," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 14 (1952):176–192; J. Duncan M. Derret, "Rabelais's Legal Learning and the Trial of Bridoye," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 25 (1963):111–171.

Initially Bridlegoose calms the high court by justifying his dice-throwing as the product of a strict (if absurd and naïve) adherence to the letter of the law.[79] He argues that rigid legal formality is important and must be taken to an extreme not because he believes that justice depends on such procedure, but rather because of how much is at stake for the disputants. The parties involved are, universally, indignant and charged with emotion. Regardless of justice, each side wishes to avoid "shame" (*TL* 41, 481 / *CW*, 383). These passions make the disputants recalcitrant and unwilling to give up even when they should. Bridlegoose's argument is prudential. Formalities consume time. Not only does anger, like the other emotions, decrease over time, but time obfuscates the original incident, which recedes into memory. And by allowing ample time to pass, each side can say that they fought well. When the time is ripe, Bridlegoose intervenes as a humble mediator and allows the parties to save face. As Bridlegoose puts it, "the suit, well ventilated, scrutinized, and batted around, may be borne more easily by the losing parties" (*TL* 40, 478 / *CW*, 379). Settling an issue too early—even and perhaps especially if the evidence is in[80]—does not allow Bridlegoose to account for the non-rational concerns of the parties to the case. Bridlegoose the judge turns to the art of medicine to authorize his temporizing:

> In judging [a case] when it is raw, green, and at the beginning, there would be the danger of the harm that doctors say occurs when they lance an abscess before it is ripe, when they purge some harmful tumor from the human body before it is digested. (*TL* 40, 478; *CW*, 379)

[79] In response to Trinquamelle's question, "what dice?," Bridlegoose answers that he means "the dice of judgments [. . .]," and proceeds to cite the relevant statutes, taken literally. See *TL* 39, 474ff; *CW*, 376.

[80] Bridlegoose knows some cases are "liquid" and easily decided; *TL* 39, 476; *CW*, 377.

The teaching that Bridlegoose has learned from medicine directly contradicts what Machiavelli says medicine has taught him:

> And it happens with this as the physicians say of consumption, that in the beginning of the illness it is easy to cure and difficult to recognize, but in the progress of time, when it has not been recognized and treated in the beginning, it becomes easy to recognize and difficult to cure.[81]

Here, Machiavelli's teaching both aligns with and deviates from Bridlegoose's position on issue-settlement. On the one hand, Machiavelli prefers pre-emption of disputes such as the Romans practiced by depending on their virtue and prudence. They did not take the advice of those who Machiavelli pejoratively named "the wise men of our times," who praise "the benefit of time." Bridlegoose would seem to be an example of one of these mistaken "wise men." But Machiavelli also discusses issue-settlement in other contexts, where a social or political problem has grown and cannot be pre-empted. In those cases he endorses the wise men's advice of temporizing rather than dealing with the issue.[82] Still, even in cases where Machiavelli sees some advantage in waiting out a problem, he admits that "the strength of the malady" may not be weakened by time.[83] Whereas Bridoye has enjoyed success after success by temporizing, Machiavelli only prescribes temporizing as a last resort. Panurge follows Machiavelli's advice in the way he deals with situations, by taking them into his own hands and not allowing them to fall into the slow hands of the law. One could say that Panurge practices

[81] *Prince*, 3.12.

[82] *DL*, 1.33.5: "I say thus, that since it is difficult to recognize these evils when they arise—the difficulty being caused by the fact that things are apt to deceive you in the beginning—it is a wiser policy to temporize with them after they are recognized than to oppose them [. . .]."

[83] Ibid.

the Machiavellian virtue of *discrezione*.[84] He keeps all options open and concludes matters quickly.[85]

A Great Roister and a Gallant Man: The "Active and Vigilant" Judge, Tenot Dendin

Bridlegoose gives his argument against *discrezione* quickly dispatched through the story of a young, inexperienced judge named Tenot Dendin, "a great roister and a gallant man," who decided all his cases in a manner that was "active and vigilant" (*TL* 41, 480 / *CW*, 381). In other words, Tenot Dendin embodies Machiavellian *virtù*. But the young judge, despite his decisiveness and considerable virtue, and even despite his accuracy and fairness, found that the parties he judged were always "irritated and embittered" (*TL* 41, 480 / *CW*, 382). Tenot Dendin's no-nonsense jurisprudence did not calm the disputants' anger, nor did it attend to the disputants' care for their names or reputation. Tenot Dendin violates the teachings of both Machiavelli and Bridlegoose in one important sense, however. Tenot believed that "the perversity of the men of his time" caused his failure, but he would not accommodate perversity. He sees the corruption of his age as a sad decline, whereas he believes that his father (who was also a judge) had enjoyed better conditions. But the father corrects his son: "When *oportet*[86] comes into play, / Things just must be done that way," Perrin Dendin teaches

[84] Maurizio Viroli, "Machiavelli's Realism," *Constellations* 14 (2007): 466.

[85] Both Panurge's bold escape from the Turks (*P* 14) and his swift revenge on the high lady of Paris (*P* 14), in addition to the long chapter on his "ways and dispositions" (*P* 16) reflect his inclination to quickly settle matters himself through discretion rather than to rely on others or appeal to formal channels.

[86] Lewis and Short define the Latin *oportet* as "it is necessary, is proper, is becoming, behooves." See Charlton Thomas Lewis, William Freund, Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary: Founded on Andrews' Edition of Freund's Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

(*TL* 41, 481 / *CW*, 382). Human conventions must concede to human nature. On this point Bridlegoose and Machiavelli agree, though they disagree about what comprise the necessary concessions.

The lesson that Perrin Dendin transmits to his son explains why, although Bridlegoose always decided cases in the end by the (private) throw of a die, he went about "emptying sacks, leafing through papers, marking up booklets, filling baskets, and examining lawsuits" only to completely disregard them (*TL* 40, 478 / *CW*, 379). The members of the high court of Myrelingues who judge Bridlegoose's case see this activity just as Tenot Dendin had: as needless busywork. But Bridlegoose knows that, given the centrality of *oportet*, only the appearance of such painstaking efforts could satisfy the perversity of the age. Indeed, the arbitrariness of the dice combined with their seemingly inexplicable success proves that the appearance of justice via formality and procedure is the decisive component of Bridlegoose's jurisprudence. Quick, accurate, and transparent decisions are better than Bridlegoose's at actually reaching just outcomes, but they lack the ceremony and majesty which signal to or convince others that those outcomes have been met. Although Tenot Dendin's gallantry is noble, it leaves something to be desired. Bridlegoose makes his disputants think that justice is at work while simultaneously deadening their desire to defeat their enemies.

Pantagruel's Excuse for Bridlegoose: The Profanity of Law and Psychology of Lawgivers

But Bridlegoose's prudential temporizing still does not explain why he ultimately determined his cases by dice. For this explanation readers must turn to the opposed reactions

of the two main characters of the *Tiers Livre*, Pantagruel and Panurge, each of whom explain the relevance of dice-throwing to Bridlegoose's psychology.[87]

I argued in Chapter 2 that dice-throwing as a means of settling disputes relates to Panurge's Machiavellianism. In light of this relation, Pantagruel's intervention in the legal hearing of Bridlegoose requires some reflection. Although Pantagruel comes to Bridlegoose's defense, Pantagruel had earlier condemned Panurge's dice-throwing as an invention of the "infernal calumniator" (*TL* 11, 383 / *CW*, 288). And in chapter 16 of *Pantagruel*, the narrator had listed weighted dice among the items that Panurge always kept with him. But, as I also argued, Panurge's weighted dice were clearly intended to help him cheat and overcome chance. Bridlegoose's use of fair dice, by contrast, directly appeals to chance. In fact, Bridlegoose justifies his use of dice by arguing that "chance is very good, honorable, useful, and necessary for the settlement of lawsuits and dissensions" (*TL* 39, 475 / *CW*, 376).

Panurge's and Pantagruel's opposed reactions to the case of Bridlegoose cast light on this statement about chance. Panurge doubts Bridlegoose's method[88] because Bridlegoose abandons any notion of law as an attempt to impose and maintain order by rational rules, or as an attempt to eliminate the chaos that preceded law and that would ensue without it. Panurge

[87] Epistémon's speech does not speak to this psychological account. Epistémon endorses Bridlegoose's method, but on the grounds of the ambiguity of matters of justice and the necessity for arbitrariness in deciding them. He recounts a case in which a mother avenged her biological son's death at the hands of his step-family. The judges of that case did not know how to decide, and so perpetually delayed the case (*TL* 43). But Epistémon's speech does not account for those "liquid" cases over which Bridlegoose presided, with clearly innocent and guilty parties.

[88] *TL* 43, 487 / *CW*, 389: "Panurge was raising some difficulty over believing the good fortune of the judgments by chance, especially for such a long time."

could not but be displeased to learn about Bridlegoose's manner of proceeding, which restores chance's primacy and even bestows the weight and authority of law on chance.

In the course of his defense of Bridlegoose, Pantagruel[89] actually sides in a small but important way with Panurge by conceding that law opposes chance. But Pantagruel immediately thereafter gives chance the status of "divine will" and thereby legitimizes its tension with law. Pantagruel supports this equation, and this tension, with the opinion of the Talmudists, who had said that "there is no harm whatever contained in chance, and only by chance, in human anxiety and doubt, is the divine will manifested" (*TL* 44, 489 / *CW*, 391). The tension between law and the divine will arises from the fact that humans create law. And humans created law, Pantagruel suggests, because of the anxiety and doubt that chance introduces. But by syllogism, humans created law because of the anxiety and doubt that the divine will introduces. The final link in this chain of reasoning says law amounts to rebellion against the divine will, which people secularize and refer to as "chance" in order to, contra Pantagruel, legitimize law. Pantagruel takes his condemnation of law to a surprising level:

> I would not want to think or say, nor indeed do I believe, that all the too evident iniquity and corruption of those responsible for justice [. . .] is so extraordinary that a lawsuit could not be decided by worse than casting dice, come what might, than it is now, passing through their hands full of blood and perverse inclination. Considering especially that the entire rule-book in common law was given by one Tribonianus, an unbeliever, infidel, barbarian, so malicious, so perverse, so avaricious and wicked, that he used to sell laws, edicts, bills, constitutions, and ordinances for cash on the line to the highest bidder. (*TL* 44, 489–490 / *CW*, 391)

[89] Huchon 1994 follows the ms. that attributes this speech to Epistémon, but cf. Frame 1991, 864n1 for a case for attributing the speech on the divine will to Pantagruel, based both on the faultiness of the 1552 (as opposed to the 1546) ms. and on matters of textual interpretation.

Pantagruel makes an argument that persists to the present day, in some form, in the social sciences: human intentions, private goals, and selfishness inevitably sully law.[90] Chance, on the one hand, may not award deserving people as law may. On the other hand, chance is not capable of conscious partiality or corruption, as law is. Chance may not always champion the good, but it does not advocate for the bad, as human institutions often do. Law in the best cases means to correct for the indifference of chance on the grounds that some people deserve favor. But, over time, interestedness ensures that law is "perverted" and actively serves the opposite, those who deserve disfavor. Further, as Pantagruel notes above, law may not even need to be perverted. It may be corrupt in its origins. Law may emanate from a wicked "unbeliever"—the epithet emphasizes the lawgiver's dismissal of or rebellion against God—such as Tribonianus.

Pantagruel adds to Bridlegoose's apology by giving a different vantage on how Bridlegoose's jurisprudence corrects for the human passions. Whereas Bridlegoose had focused on the judge's need to account for the passions of the disputants, neither of whom would resign without the passage of time wearing on them, Pantagruel shows that law itself can be tainted by the passions of its creators. Because sound interpretation of bad law does not provide recourse, chance must replace interpretation and nullify law. As the judge with forty years of sound judgments, Bridlegoose makes no proper judgments himself, for proper

[90] See Jeffrey A. Segal and Harold Spaeth, *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For a discussion of the problems that this thesis creates for modern societies, see Harvey C. Mansfield, "On the Majesty of Law," *Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy* 36 (2013): 117–129.

judgments that remain true to the law's letter would only carry into motion the faults embedded in law.

Machiavelli on Law

Like Pantagruel, Machiavelli also teaches that law is not divine. But whereas Pantagruel would have us after absorbing this teaching seek out the truly divine sources for guidance (or at least realize that our attempt to build order is really an attempt to flee the mystery of God), Machiavelli would rescue us from that search altogether.

Though his republicanism relies in many ways on respect for law, Machiavelli is at times incredibly cavalier in his disposition toward law. This is because his teaching on law has two aspects. One relates to the rulers and the other relates to the ruled. Machiavelli argues that the ruler's discretion is always necessary in addition to the rule of law, and even that laws need be cast aside at crucial moments. The ruler's discretion must have a place in the regime "unless [the regime] has provided for everything with its laws."[91] The unlikelihood or impossibility of such provision proves the inadequacy of law and the permanent need for extra-legal measures and actions.

But Machiavelli's disparagement of law goes further than this. In the preface to Book 1 of the *Discourses*, Machiavelli remarks that "the civil laws are nothing other than verdicts given by ancient jurists, which, reduced to order, teach our present jurists to judge." The remark occurs in the midst of an effort to encourage a rebirth of ancient political practice mirroring the kind of rebirth that law and medicine had seen in the late Middle Ages. Considered in isolation,

[91] *DL*, 1.34.3.

this statement suggests that Machiavelli would have his peers respect politics as they respect the other long-standing professions. Yet the characterization is striking in its similarity to Pantagruel's conception of law as merely human. One must ask: Is this how civil law was always understood by those who lived under it?

Machiavelli's low characterization of law as human in origin might be literally true, as Paolo Carta argues, in the sense that Machiavelli "probably has in mind the *Digest*, the body of Roman law collected by the Emperor Justinian, in VIth Century, and even the long tradition of legal studies conducted upon it."[92] But this interpretation does not account for the generality of Machiavelli's declaration, which does not limit itself to a certain legal code, and which precludes neither divine law nor natural law, but which instead reduces each of these too to ancient juridical opinion. This reduction is consistent with, for example, Machiavelli's treatment of Moses as a lawgiver like any other. Such treatment could only undermine respect for the laws that Moses gave, and could serve to remove divine law as an insurmountable obstacle to human rule.[93]

Yet in certain contexts Machiavelli suggests that the lawgiver must assert divine underpinnings. Numa, like Moses, appealed to the divine in order to institute good law.[94] Elsewhere Machiavelli does not speak of law per se, but shows that, generally speaking, civil and military authorities must make the majesty of religion serve secular needs.[95] But this

[92] Paolo Carta, "Politics, Law, and Literature: The Dialogue between Machiavelli and Guicciardini" (working paper, The Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America, Columbia University, 2011), 2.

[93] See Tarcov, "Machiavelli's Critique of Religion," *Social Research* 81 (2014): 201ff.

[94] *DL*, 1.11.

[95] Ibid, 1.14.

arrangement is made in order to reinforce the divide between leaders and the many, for leaders like Numa should not, like the community, remain under the spell of religion, but must break faith as they appear to keep it. From Pantagruel's perspective, this dissembling makes the Machiavellian leader even worse than Tribonianus because it divinizes the human rebellion against the divine. Pantagruel's excuse for Bridlegoose implies that a teaching like Machiavelli's shields perversity with piety and thereby makes profane, corrupt law that much more impregnable or secure.

The Bridlegoose episode completes the Hippothadée episode by arguing that the divine will is not arbitrary, as Panurge suggests when he asks where Hippothadée is "sending [him] back to" (*TL* 30, 446 / *CW*, 350). Against Panurge, Bridlegoose shows that the divine will is rather indifferent or disinterested in the way that no human can be. What humans interpret as arbitrary results from self-concern. Disinterestedness feels too cold. And while disinterestedness is still not what people conceive as justice, it may be the only way to prevent justice from deteriorating into injustice. As a reflection of human interestedness and self-concern itself, law cannot always be looked to as the foundation of a healthy society. Even so, Bridlegoose shows that law can have salutary effects that are also related to the problem of human interestedness. The judge who represents the law can serve as an intermediary and can wear out human interestedness. Corruption cannot be easily undone, and laws are already in place. In this situation, imperfect laws must appear to be taken as seriously as Bridlegoose appears to take them so that the social interest that underwrites those laws never succumbs to the private interests of disputing parties.

The Effect of the Consultations

The four consultants each approach Panurge from different perspectives, but generally they reinforce each other. Hippothadée challenges scientific prediction in a way that is reinforced by Rabelais's almanacs, works published separately from the books of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* but which impart the same teachings. As Rabelais writes in his *Pantagrueline Prognostication* of 1532,

> Considering the fact that infinite abuses have been perpetrated because of a bunch of prognostications from Louvain, made in the shade of a glass of wine, I have now worked one out for you, the surest and truest that was ever seen, as experience will demonstrate to you. For no doubt, as the Royal Prophet says to God in Psalm 5: 'Thou shalt destroy all who speak lies,' it is no slight sin to lie consciously, and mislead the poor public, anxious to learn new things. (*PP*, 923–924 / *CW*, 747).

The sacred writings of David cast doubt on the scientific enterprise as practiced by Rabelais's contemporaries in the forward-looking city of Louvain, known at the time for its learning and the home of a large university.[96] The sentiment might as well be Hippothadée's, but with the added charge that those who would perpetuate the notion of a predictive science mislead and actually deserve punishment. Hippothadée is much more gracious with Panurge.

But despite Hippothadée's graciousness, Panurge mounts a counterattack against the theologian based on the mysteriousness of God's proceeding. When Hippothadée de-shrouds that mystery by directing Panurge to the clarity of the Scriptures, Panurge holds untenable the way of life recommended by those writings. But to Panurge's credit, he does so on the grounds of the biblical tradition, by pointing to the historical development implied in the transition from the Old to the New Testament, and therefore to the outmoded advice given in what are for

[96] See Frame 1991, 938n46.

Hippothadée key verses, such as Proverbs 31. In other words, Panurge points to the ambiguity of Scripture, which (when read as a whole) praises virtue but calls the human race sinners.

The lack of a clear winner in the Hippothadée episode brings us to Rondibilis, who recommends, on the grounds of his Platonism, resignation not to God but to Nature. Nature, like *woman*, is indomitable. The Spartan woman who Pantagruel uses as his example of an elusive beloved in the Trouillogan chapters exemplifies Nature's indomitability, based on its unpredictability and fickleness. There is no way to dominate this Spartan woman through fear or force, as the Spartan men (with Machiavelli) believe. The insight gleaned from Pantagruel through Trouillogan affirms Rondibilis's medical wisdom.

Finally, Bridlegoose shows that slowness, not swiftness, brings social peace. The solution of slowness relates to the problem of anger, expounded in chapter 2 of the *Tiers Livre* through Pantagruel's dwelling in the "deific manor of reason." Just as Pantagruel warded off anger in dealing with Panurge, Bridlegoose shows law can be made useful by serving as a buffer against quickly dispatched actions made out of anger or revenge. Anger goes hand in hand with swiftness. Insofar as the Machiavellian solution relies on swiftness, it cannot account for the thoughtlessness (and, therefore, the errors) of anger. Machiavelli's antidote for anger does not rely on slowness wearing out the passions but rather on the cultivation of a more relaxed attitude toward morality. But insofar as morality and justice have some connection to one's situation (for one may fall prey to injustice oneself), this relaxed attitude is not always likely.

Pantagruel ends the consultations by appending his teaching to the jurist's and revealing law itself as trumped up private ambition. This teaching comes dangerously close to Machiavelli's own teaching, but is made for widespread consumption rather than for the few.

Pantagruel reinterprets the arbitrariness of the divine will as disinterestedness, which is ultimately an attribute of the biblical God who Hippothadée defends.[97]

Through the consultations, Rabelais makes readers ask whether Panurge's "new manner of building walls" is better than the old ways of building walls. Much of this question has centered on the nature of nature. Chapter 6 treats the final section of the *Tiers Livre*, which discusses nature through the mysterious Pantagruelion plant. By considering the use of this plant in the *Quart Livre*'s quest for the Divine Bottle and its final answer for Panurge, readers can gain greater insight into Rabelais's reasons for defending the old ways of building walls.

[97] God's impartiality is made clear in Elihu's impressive speech in the book of Job. See Job 34:19. For an exposition of Elihu's speech that predates Rabelais, see Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed, Volume II*, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), 3.23.

CHAPTER 7

BLOWING BUBBLES, UNDERSTANDING NATURE

φύσις: origin, growth, nature, constitution
φυσητήρ: a blowpipe or tube, the blowhole or spiracle of a whale

Nature and the Pantagruelion Herb

A brief review will help us make sense of the *Tiers Livre* as it comes to its strange close—an encomium or eulogy of the Pantagruelion herb that occupies chapters 49 through 52. After establishing that Rabelais intended to write for the philosophic reader who "interprets all things for the good" and "in the most perfect sense" (Chapter 1), I laid out Rabelais's treatment of the Diogenic problem and showed how his answer to that problem—a measured view of fortune—differed from the answers of dam-building (offered by Machiavelli) and barrel-rolling (offered by Diogenes) (Chapter 2). Rabelais understood, however, that Machiavelli aimed to control fortune for two well-intended reasons: 1) to secure human freedom, and 2) to legitimize philosophy in the eyes of society. In other words, Rabelais kept to his Pantagruelic rule and interpreted Machiavelli with both moral and philosophic benevolence. But Rabelais was nonetheless concerned that Machiavelli's accomplishments would not redound to philosophy's benefit: Utopia—a thoroughly Machiavellian society—has no resident philosophers such as most ancient urban centers had (Chapter 3). To the extent that Utopia accommodates philosophic activity through the "liberal disciplines" (see *TL* 1, 353 / *CW*, 261), philosophy now shoulders the "duty" or "debt" [le debvoir] of fixing all Utopia's social-political problems that occur because of the inscrutability of the future. Thus Panurge anxiously but nobly (and humorously) made his "Praise of Debt" (Chapter 4). Panurge's consultations about this new

debt (*TL* 30–45) show the variety of struggles that will arise during this heretofore avoided venture (Chapter 5).

The Consultations Ended and the Voyage Ahead

Panurge, insistent on his duty, is not swayed by the experts he meets with, so he asks Pantagruel to go with him on a quest for the oracle of the Divine Bottle concerning his self-proclaimed "enterprise"[1] (*TL* 47, 494 / *CW*, 396). The two characters thus turn from human conversation and human wisdom to seek out divine utterances and divine wisdom.[2] In making this turn, Panurge beckons Pantagruel as a friend. He promises to be "a loyal Achates" and "companion." He no longer seems to be the way he once was—obsessed with his future, vindictive, petty. Panurge affectionately describes Pantagruel as "a lover of foreign travel and wishing always to see and always to learn." Pantagruel agrees to set out on this voyage, but he views what lies ahead as a "long peregrination, full of risk, full of evident dangers." Still, something of the old Panurge remains, as he too eagerly brushes these concerns aside in his almost foolish courage (*TL* 47, 494–495 / *CW*, 396).[3] Nevertheless, Pantagruel convinces Panurge they must obtain Gargantua's fatherly permission before embarking on their journey.

[1] Frame translates "mon entreprinse" as "my project."

[2] See Verdun Saulnier, *Rabelais II, Rabelais Dans son Enquête: Étude sur le Quart et le Cinquième Livre* (Paris: SEDES, 1982). Frame argues that Saulnier's conception of the *Quart Livre* as a philosophic "quest," although pithy, makes Panurge seem more open-minded than he really is. See Frame, *Study*, 74.

[3] The Tempest episode of the *Quart Livre* (18–24) shows that Panurge only becomes more cowardly throughout Rabelais's books.

The trip to Gargantua's castle does not yield advice as much as the expression of a view of marriage. Marriage should be, contrary to the practice of the Catholic Church,[4] a decision reserved for parents. Gargantua feels happy that Pantagruel has waited for his father's will before marrying, but on the flip side, the exchange between father and son casts doubt on Panurge's solo endeavor as one set against custom and tradition. As Gargantua says, parents wish for their daughters to grow into virtue and marry "the sons of their old friends and neighbors" (*TL* 48, 498 / *CW*, 399). Marriage, to people like Gargantua, represents the heart of the community and its customs. The foundling Panurge finds this arrangement simply impossible. He has not known a community or lived a life where his future could unfold in this way. The quest for the Divine Bottle confirms Panurge's distance from conventional human life.

Praise for Pantagruelion

As the company prepares to quest for the *divine* oracle, they stock up on a peculiar provision, the Pantagruelion herb—a living thing, a piece of *nature*. Interpreters have taken their best guess at what the Pantagruelion herb represents, but ever fewer try their hand as time passes. Donald Frame casts no blame. He calls the discussion of Pantagruelion "one of the most baffling passages in Rabelais."[5] Yves Delegue notes that the Pantagruelion episode is the only one in the *Tiers Livre* where no characters advance competing interpretations,[6] and yet the plant ironically has produced as many speculations as any of Rabelais's other writings. In 1956,

[4] See *CW*, 868n3.48.1.

[5] Frame, *Study*, 61.

[6] Delegue, "Le Pantagruélion, ou le discours de la vérité," *Réforme Humanisme Renaissance* 16 (1983): 18–40.

Verdun Saulnier identified eight scholarly theories about Pantagruelion as worthy of consideration.[7] Frame's 1977 *Study* added four more.[8] Saulnier himself developed what has since been called the *hésuchist* theory, which posits Rabelais's prudential recourse to enigma as a way of communicating with fellow *évangeliques* in the face of religious persecution. In Saulnier's opinion, this communication, most evident in the Pantagruelion chapters, proves the reality of Rabelais's *plus hault sens*.

A more recent argument prevails, however. Writing in 1989 in support of the polyvalent-playfulness thesis, François Rigolot argued that "in the Pantagruelion chapters, lyricism becomes an end in itself."[9] Later, reflecting on his past work, Rigolot characterized the narrator's praise of Pantagruelion as a "symbol of textual productivity" and "paradox."[10] Thus Saulnier's claim that "[the Pantagruelion chapters] have something to say"[11] has been coldly received by newer scholarship.

As in the general disagreement over how to read or interpret Rabelais, nobody claims that capturing the meaning of the Pantagruelion chapters is easy or straightforward. There is only the question of whether the text contains an ultimate message or, alternatively, whether it tests the human desire for certainty, and thus the desire to receive such a higher message. In keeping with my argument on how to read Rabelais (by interpreting him as he interprets

---

[7] See Saulnier, "L'Énigme du Pantagruélion, ou: du *Tiers* au *Quart Livre*," *Études Rabelaisiennes* 1 (1956): 51–56.

[8] See Frame, *Study*, 62.

[9] Rigolot, "Rabelais's Laurel," 61.

[10] Rigolot, "Pantagruelion," in Chesney Zegura, *Rabelais Encyclopedia*, 177.

[11] Saulnier, "L'Énigme," 49: [i]ls [i.e., the Pantagruelion chapters] avaient quelque chose à dire."

others: benevolently), I do believe that the Pantagruelion plant serves a purpose in Rabelais's book beyond playfulness or aesthetics (although the different levels or functions of Pantagruelion may co-exist). But that purpose is only intelligible after thinking about how exactly Pantagruelion is praised, and how this praise relates to the events of the quest in the *Quart Livre* ahead. Indeed, this seems to be a major weakness of most interpretations of Pantagruelion. Whatever it is, it has been considered apart from the rest of the book, and especially from the quest. But without the quest, there would be no reason for the characters to stock up on the plant.

The Quest and the Whale

Perhaps Pantagruel agrees to go on the quest because it offers the surest way to convert Panurge to Pantagruelism. During the adventure, Panurge will encounter nature itself—something he will not be able to discount as mere tradition, moralizing, or bloviating. The adventure does away with the problems of speech. Sure enough, an encounter with nature occurs in chapters 33–34 of the *Quart Livre* when the company, then at sea, spots a whale or *physeter* (think of the false cognate φύσιν here[12]) approaching. Pantagruelion, I will argue, is the key to understanding this encounter with the whale, and so the key to understanding nature itself. Arriving at this conclusion will entail enduring the twists and turns of Rabelais's Pantagruelion chapters. At times my argument may seem far afield from the comparisons of Diogenism, Machiavellianism, and Pantagruelism—with their focus on the political world—that

[12] See Samuel Kinser, *Rabelais's Carnival: Text, Context, Metatext* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 93n1.

have brought us here. This, I believe, is because Rabelais no longer engages in an argument or dialogue with any other thinker but gives us his insight alone.

Chapter Plan

My argument falls into three rough sections. I first consider a question that occurred to me after reading the description of Pantagruelion in chapter 49 of the *Tiers Livre*: Is Pantagruelion analogous to Homer's *moly* plant? Homer is, after all, one of the most cited of Rabelais's many antique sources.[13] A "yes and no" answer to this question leads to deeper digging. For, aside from providing a physical description of the plant, Rabelais writes that Pantagruelion has a "use" that *moly* lacks. Below, I explain the significance of this use, which the narrator describes through a riddle. Via reflection on this riddle, two possible "uses" present themselves: 1) philosophy and 2) faith. Or is it 3) both, combined (Platonic πίστις[14])? Perhaps Saulnier's *hésuchist* theory was right that Pantagruelion symbolizes faith, but faith in the nature of things—faith that there is such a thing as nature—and not religious faith despite persecution by the authorities, as Saulnier had argued. I reach this conclusion not only through the textual evidence of the Pantagruelion chapters, but by reflecting on the function of Pantagruelion in the *Quart Livre* as a *physeter*, or blowhole, to match that greater *physeter*, the whale.

[13] For a list of Rabelais's Homeric references and allusions, see Isidore Silver, "La prima fortuna di Omero nel Rinascimento francese," *Convivium* 29 (1956):30–49; 560–578.

[14] See *Republic*, 510a4–6.

Pantagruelion and *Moly*: "Rough and Hard to Get at" (*Tiers Livre* 49 and *Odyssey* X)

The *encomium* of Pantagruelion begins when the narrator reports that Pantagruel is preparing the number of ships that "Ajax of Salamis long ago brought the Greeks as a convoy to Troy" (*TL* 49, 500 / *CW*, 402). This is only the first hint that Homer's poetry serves as a signpost for these Pantagruelion chapters. The narrator drops more breadcrumbs when he lists the attributes of the plant. One of the first things he notes is that its roots are "rough and tough." And later, at the beginning of chapter 52, he attests that the truth about Pantagruelion is "rather rough and hard to get at" (*TL* 52, 509 / *CW*, 409). This is the verbiage Hermes uses to describe the nature of the *moly* plant to Odysseus in *The Odyssey*. It may be that the Pantagruelion plant functions in Rabelais's book just as the *moly* plant functions in Homer's book. This possibility would lend importance to Pantagruelion. Benardete claims that the "peak of the *Odyssey*" occurs when Hermes descends to Odysseus.[15] To see if there is a link, I analyze the relevant passages in Homer and Rabelais below.

Odysseus Learns From Hermes

Hermes intervenes in Odysseus's situation in *The Odyssey* after his group's arrival on Aiaia (an island inhabited by the powerful goddess Circe). Odysseus had seen a fire in the distance and decided to send a team headed by Eurylochos to investigate.[16] Eurylochos alone returned and reported the fate of those investigators who had happened upon the household of Circe, accepted "malignant drugs" from her, and "took on the look of pigs." The last that

[15] Seth Benardete, *The Bow and the Lyre: A Platonic Reading of the* Odyssey (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997), 84.

[16] *Odyssey*, 10.155–220.

Eurylochos knew, the men had been driven by the dread goddess into a hog-sty.[17] Just before Hermes appeared to reveal the nature of the *moly* plant, Odysseus and Eurylochos had disagreed about how to proceed. Odysseus wished to retrieve the men and Eurylochos advised abandonment. But Odysseus felt a strong "compulsion" and determined to save the company.[18]

Odysseus then set off to find his companions. Hermes, in the likeness of a man in the bloom of youth, appeared to Odysseus and provided him with a "good medicine" to work against the "malignant medicine" that Circe had used on the others. He told Odysseus to enter the house of Circe and wait for her to try to strike him with her wand. At her movement he was to draw a sword and rush at her. When she, in fear, would invite Odysseus to bed, Odysseus was not to refuse but rather to obtain her oath to desist. With these instructions delivered, Hermes "administered" the medicine. Benardete points out that the medicine works not through its administration to the body, but through Hermes' "explaining" its "nature" [φύσιν] to Odysseus:

> So spoke Argeiphontes, and he gave me the medicine, which he picked out of the ground, and he explained the nature of it to me. It was black at the root, but with a milky flower. The gods call it moly. It is *hard for mortal men to dig up*, but with the gods all things are possible.[19]

[17] *Odyssey*, 10.235–260.

[18] *Odyssey*, 10.260–270. As Benardete notes, this is the first decision that Odysseus makes against his self-interest. See Benardete, *Bow*, 84.

[19] *Odyssey*, 10.302–306 (italics mine); Benardete, *Bow*, 86. Lattimore translates θεοὶ δέ τε πάντα δύνανται as "the gods have power to do all things." My translation follows that of A.T. Murray, trans., *The Odyssey with an English Translation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919).

Odysseus called Hermes by one of his many epithets, Argeiphontes, which refers to another instance where Hermes counteracted the magic of a goddess.[20] Yet Hermes himself never uses magic. Hermes works or thinks through the way things are, their being, telling Odysseys about these things presumably at greater length than Odysseus discusses them with us. As this study of nature applies to the *moly*, it is more than possible that without Hermes' help Odysseus would only have seen the plant's white blossom. The root, "hard for mortal men to dig up," would have remained hidden. Thus Odysseus would not have realized that the white blossom and black root belong together, just as the human body and mind, though also disparate, go together.[21]

The root and the flower differ in more than color, however. The root works to keep the plant grounded in one place. The flower, on the other hand, is not only visible but effortlessly gives off pollens that travel and reproduce the plant in scores elsewhere. The reproductive capacities of the flower point to the universality of its nature; the roots, to its particularity. And whereas the flower has a soft beauty about it, the black roots look ugly.

Moly is "hard for mortals to dig up," but why? Does digging up the *moly* require a superhuman amount of physical strength? A more plausible answer is that the beauty of the *moly* petals leaves onlookers content with what stands above ground, or that it compels them to snap the plant at the stem and take what they see. Either way, the root is simply not recognized or desired. The root is not considered as essential to the plant or as on the same

[20] Hera, who had Zeus's lover Io transformed into a cow. Hera enlisted the giant Argos to guard the enchanted animal. Later, Hermes slew Argos and saved Io—hence the name Argeiphontes (Argos-slayer).

[21] This is a summary of Benardete's argument. See *Bow*, 86.

level of importance as the flower. Knowing about this ugly thing requires considerable will to see beyond the visible. Hermes' lesson is not only that nature combines diverse parts into wholes, but also that people keep to the surfaces of things out of an intellectual weakness or blindness, and that this blindness prevents them from seeing the whole. In this case, being blind means seeing and keeping to a prettier picture of life.

Is Pantagruelion Rabelaisian Moly?

If Rabelais's Pantagruelion plant is anything like *moly*, then the narrator's description should produce a teaching about nature like the one found in Book X of *The Odyssey*. Below I list, for the sake of comparison, the narrator's full description of the nature of Pantagruelion:

1. Pantagruelion may be "prepared" and put to use.
2. Pantagruelion has small, shallow roots (though "rather tough and rough") with a blunt white point.
3. Its stem is concave, with a green outside and white inside.[22]
4. Pantagruelion derives its worth from its fiber.
5. Its height ranges from 5' to that of a lance (roughly ten feet)
6. The Pantagruelion herb dies yearly.
7. It does, however, have evergreen leaves with spikes.
8. These leaves number 5 or 7 in each row, "so much has Nature cherished it that she has endowed in its leaves these two odd numbers, so divine and mysterious."
9. The odor of the plant is too strong for delicate noses.
10. The seeds "extinguishes the generative seed in anyone who should eat many of them often." Greeks used these seeds for desserts.
11. The female has a milky flower.

(*TL* 49, 501–502 / *CW*, 402–403)

Although this list shares a few things with Odysseus's description of *moly*, there are also significant differences. Odysseus's details were scant. He mentioned only *moly*'s colors, its two

[22] I hold off on discussion of this third item for now. It will gain importance when I discuss the encounter with the *physeter* in the *Quart Livre.*

parts, and the roughness or softness of those parts. Here readers get many details to sift through and organize. First, the Pantagruelion's roots are white, shallow, and small—not black (though still "rough and tough"). Pantagruelion's roots are similar to those of *moly* in that their shortness suggests that harvesting Pantagruelion does not require great physical strength but strength of another kind. Point 9 reinforces Pantagruelion's *moly*-like difficulty of access. The strong odor of the plant keeps weak people away. Only those able to ignore its stench can handle the plant. In addition, spikey leaves [point 7] suggest a need for thick skin. This plant too is hard for mortals to dig up.

But even if *moly* serves as a kind of literary model for Pantagruelion, the meaning of Rabelais's plant exceeds that of *moly*. Consider point 1. Odysseus did not "use" *moly* when he entered Circe's household except in the sense that it gave him a knowledge of his nature that enabled him to remain firm against Circe's seductions. Simply by being what it was, *moly* helped Odysseus to realize who he was—a human and not a pig. But chapter 51 of the *Tiers Livre* will suggest that humans use Pantagruelion in ways that improve and change conditions for themselves. This is a point that will be revisited and examined more closely below.

Points 6 and 8 deal most directly with nature. The yearly death [point 6] of Pantagruelion speaks not only to its mortality but also to its continual recurrence, or to the fact that a blueprint for this plant exists somewhere. Its individual specimens inhabit a realm of becoming and perishing, but Pantagruelion keeps becoming and perishing because of its residence in the realm of being. The numbers of its leaves [point 8], five and seven, mean different things in the biblical and classical-philosophical traditions, and here Rabelais mixes the two. "Nature" endows the leaves with the numbers, but the numbers themselves are "divine

and mysterious." The regularity with which these numbers appears points to a cause, but knowledge about this cause remains sparse.

The final point [point 10] is, however, the most enigmatic. The seed of Pantagruelion "extinguishes the generative seed in man." On a literal reading one might compare Pantagruelion with those plants and drugs responsible for cases of sexual impotence, erectile dysfunction, and the like. Medical researchers know that certain forms of plant life are capable of these effects.[23] But this literal reading does not explain why Rabelais pairs this point with the apparently unnecessary detail that the Greeks ate this anti-aphrodisiac for dessert. Keeping this odd pairing in mind, a few interpretive options come up. Such a dessert may represent *philosophy*, for which the Greeks were so well-known. Philosophy represents the culmination of learning. It is, so to speak, the "last course" of one's intellectual development. In its deepest manifestation, philosophy's intense focus on discovering the truth about the cosmos decreases other non-philosophic loves. Philosophy "extinguishes the generative seed in man" by taking erotic focus away from immediate, particular things and connecting the lover of truth to eternity.

But this dessert might also be *faith*. For faith reached the Greeks after philosophy did, and so may be the true final course. Christianity opened up God's covenant with the Jews to the Gentiles in Athens, Corinth, Thessaly, and elsewhere in the Hellenic world. And just as philosophy makes the lover of wisdom un-erotic with regard to this world by turning attention to the eternal world of intellect, faith makes the faithful un-erotic by turning their attention

[23] The early interpreters of Rabelais emphasized the sterilizing effects of the hemp seed in their readings of the Pantagruelion chapters. See Saulnier, "L'Énigme," 51.

from this world (often an autonomous and proud attention aimed at figuring out the physics of "this world," or an infatuation with its material pleasures) to the next world or afterlife as presented in the written revelations. An indication of just this "extinguishing of the generative seed in man" can be found in Genesis 1:28: "God blessed them; and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply [. . .].'" What kind of human community actually needs to be commanded to this sort of activity?

As the narrator discloses more about Pantagruelion, these competing interpretations of *philosophy* and *faith* must be weighed against each other or reconciled. A sound interpretation will not only fit the description given of the plant in the final chapters of the *Tiers Livre*, but will also explain how Pantagruelion helps the company during their journey in the *Quart Livre*.

The Name Pantagruelion; Or Rather, its Use (*Tiers Livre* 51)

Pantagruelion resembles *moly* in several respects (most of all in the hard work of harvesting it), but the other things disclosed about Pantagruelion suggest that its significance extends beyond that of *moly*. Chapter 51, which purports to take up the reason behind the plant's name (but which deviates from this plan to explain a "certain use" of the plant), speaks at greater length about this issue.

Pantagruelion as Philosophy

The chapter begins with a moral observation: Thieves hate the plant because it can "stop up the passages by which good remarks come out and good morsels come in, more banefully than would a bad choking spell or mortal quinsy." In short, Pantagruelion acts as a

"halter" and "cravat" (*TL* 51, 506 / *CW*, 406). It delivers death, especially to those who deserve it. The narrator equates this effect of Pantagruelion with the work of the Greek goddess Atropos (*TL* 51, 506 / *CW*, 406).[24] Traditionally, Atropos was the oldest of the three Fates and had the job of ending life and ensuring cosmic justice.[25] In the *Republic*, Socrates similarly (but not identically) mentions Atropos in his telling of the myth of Er as the governess of "what is going to be."[26] Thus Pantagruelion, like Atropos, signifies death and inevitability (but also the future and eternity)—something that, as La Rochefoucauld later wrote, cannot "be looked on fixedly."[27] Some can, however, look at death more fixedly than others. Pantagruelion disturbs mainly the unjust. And on the other hand, Pantagruelism promises to cultivate callousness toward one's future[28]—callousness towards Atropos.

From the narrator's focus on thieves as the most fearful of Pantagruelion, one might conclude that the moral, or the law-abiding, can look on death fixedly. But if the bad fear punishment then the good anticipate rewards. The predispositions of the unjust and the just, combined with the definition of Pantagruelism as contempt for fortuitous things, leads to the conclusion that beholding death fixedly requires transcending morality altogether, or looking

---

[24] *See the LSJ definition of* ἄτροπος*: "not to be turned, unchangeable, eternal."*

[25] See Hesiod, "Theogony," in *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica, With an English Translation*, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914), 218–223: "Also [Night] bore the Destinies and ruthless avenging Fates, Clotho and Lachesis and Atropos, who give men at their birth both evil and good to have, and they pursue the transgressions of men and of gods: and these goddesses never cease from their dread anger until they punish the sinner with a sore penalty." That Atropos and her sisters punish *the gods* suggests necessity or nature limits or stands above the gods.

[26] Plato, *Republic*, 617c4.

[27] "Le soleil ni la mort ne se peuvent regarder fixement." See François de La Rochefoucauld, "Réflexions ou Sentences et Maximes Morales (ed. 1678)" in *Œuvres complètes, ed. Jean Marchand* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), 406 (maxim 26). The translation is mine.

[28] Or, "gaiety of spirit confected in contempt for fortuitous things." See *QL*, prol 523 / *CW*, 425.

on death philosophically (from outside of convention). At this juncture one cannot ignore something that Rondibilis first brought to our attention in his consultation with Panurge: Socrates' famous formulation of philosophy as "dying and being dead."[29]

More evidence of Pantagruelion as *philosophy* accrues throughout the chapter. Here is the most prominent piece: The narrator observes that planters harvest Pantagruelion during the draught season, when the people are forced into "caves or cellars or other underground places." These dwellings may remind readers of the cave or shadow world described in Book 7 of Plato's *Republic.* But in the Pantagruelion chapters, the people are not born and reared in the cave with its questionable customs (as in the account of Plato's Socrates[30]) but head down into them because of the harsh conditions above ground. And these draught conditions cause thirst, Rabelais's emblem for the desire for wisdom. In a literal sense, the sun's heat might push people to live underground. In another, figurative sense, the "heat" of the governing authorities' rule can push freethinking underground. Although advocates of liberalism and individual rights may be tempted to blame this kind of "heat" for causing science to wither on the vine, Pantagruelion actually flourishes in "draught conditions." Perhaps philosophy withers when generously watered. Great philosophers have sprouted in persecutory ages.

Pantagruelion as Faith

Pantagruelion as *faith* may be read as a competing alternative to Pantagruelion as *philosophy*, or the harsh conditions that surround Pantagruelion as *philosophy* may point to the

[29] See Plato, *Phaedo*, 64a7.

[30] Plato, *Republic*, 514a–517d.

need for *faith* as a supplement. These possibilities need to be considered, and can be, by thinking about a list of disparate uses of Pantagruelion that Rabelais provides. Based on the uses on this list, I propose a second-order interpretation of Pantagruelion as *faith*. Although not literal, this interpretation is still warranted by the textual evidence. Rabelais describes the uses for the plant by painting a dreary picture of human life without it. Without Pantagruelion,

1. "[. . .] kitchens would be a disgrace, tables loathsome."
2. Beds would be "without delight."
3. Millers could not carry wheat to the mill.
4. Plaster could not be carried to the workshop
5. Water could not be drawn from the well.
6. The art of printing would perish.
7. Human beings would not be clothed.

Additionally,

8. It protects armies against cold and rain.
9. It provides netting for fishermen.
10. It shapes shoes, strings bows, bends crossbows, and makes slingshots.[31]
11. Dead bodies are always buried with it.
12. It arrests invisible substances.

(*TL* 51, 507–508 / *CW*, 407–408)

Plant materials can explain each of these riddles well enough. Linens adorn and give charm to kitchens and tables; blankets give beds delight; bags contain wheat and plaster; rope pulls up water; printing requires paper. And of course plant materials of various kinds are used to produce clothing, weaponry, death shrouds, and sails. But the quality or virtue of *faith* explains the genesis or origin of each use, and it is the genesis that seems to be at stake.

The superiority of this second-order interpretation is clear from point 1 through point 12. Kitchens [point 1], to begin with, do not need decoration. From a strictly utilitarian view, the

[31] I do not discuss this use of Pantagruelion here but will do so later, in my discussion of the *physeter*.

act of eating requires nothing more than transporting food from the hand to the mouth. Yet this utilitarian view cannot account for why someone would cover a dinner table with ornate doilies. The embellishments of Pantagruelion-based artifacts seem to signal faith or trust that there will be a future catch or harvest—joyful meals, or even feasting. In short, Pantagruelion symbolizes faith in life above necessity. Likewise, a bare floor suffices for sleep, but the delight of the bed [point 2] shows that human beings are amorous and romantic creatures who not only want to be together but to dwell in each other's beauty and togetherness.

Much the same follows for the subsequent points. Those humans who discovered wheat invested great energy and faith in their efforts to produce bread. It was not simply intuitive to the humans who discovered wheat that this crude plant could make a processed, labor-intensive food. A bag made of hemp or some such material could carry wheat to the mill well enough, but the faith that great toil will eventually pay off more truly carries the wheat to the mill [point 3]. The same goes for taking plaster to the workshop [point 4]. And it is the faith that it takes to dig for potable water that pulls up that water from the bottom of the well [point 5]. Likewise, the art of printing is preserved by paper, but it is better preserved by a faith that others (now or in the future) will read one's writing [point 6]. Clothing suggests faith in the seasons [points 7 and 8]. The fisherman drops nets made of hemp—out of faith in a big catch [point 9]. Artisans craft weapons using plant materials, but faith in the victory over the enemy compels them to produce arms in the first place [point 10].

Points 11 and 12 suggest that this list of acts of faith constitutes an ascension. They also support what I am calling the second-order interpretation of Pantagruelion. For if human clothing represents a certain kind of faith, then bringing fabrics and clothing with oneself to the

grave [point 11] implies faith of the highest order—faith in the afterworld.[32] The final point, moreover, turns from the realm of the grave and back to another, equally deep sort of faith. Although one might literally interpret the arrest of invisible substances as the arrest of winds by sails [point 12], this usage demonstrates faith in the regularity and beneficence of nature.[33] This faith takes explorers to new worlds far more than do the sails themselves.

A sound interpretation of Pantagruelion should maintain consistency with the end of chapter 51, but the mundane (literal) interpretation fails to do so. This section reports that the Olympian gods feared Pantagruel's children would discover "an herb of similar energy" and invade the heavens after seeing humans putting Pantagruelion to its various uses. It ends by stating that the gods convened a meeting about how to respond to the human threat (*TL* 51, 509 / *CW*, 409). Rabelais's story may be derived from those warnings against collective human efforts found in Aristophanes' speech in Plato's *Symposium* or the Fall and Babel stories of the book of Genesis. Regardless of Rabelais's source, it is likely that the worry among the divinities that he writes about originates in something stronger than plant material. Still, what makes Pantagruelion so strong and threatening to the gods is not yet clear. To see how Pantagruelion supplies such faith, readers must examine its function in the quest of the *Quart Livre*.

---

[32] One tends to think of religious conceptions of the afterlife, but ancient philosophers such as Aristotle treated seriously this sort of faith. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Newburyport, MA: Focus, 2002), 1100a23–1101b10. For more on Aristotle regarding the afterlife, see Kurt Pritzl, "Aristotle and Happiness after Death: Nicomachean Ethics 1. 10–11," *Classical Philology* 78 (1983): 101–111. Apocryphally, Rabelais's dying words are said to have been "I seek a great Maybe."

[33] Even the use of Pantagruelion to capture wind echoes *The Odyssey.* Odysseus receives the gift of bagged winds from Aiolos just before arriving at Aiaia and meeting Circe. If the events there are any indication, Rabelais does not think humanity's ability to use Pantagruelion to capture wind is simply good. The bag of winds episode emphasizes the human *misuse* of wind-power. See *Odyssey*, 10.19–27.

How do the Questers Use Pantagruelion in the *Quart Livre*?

Thinking about the function of Pantagruelion means returning to basic questions. The turn from established authorities to an independent quest does not of itself explain the pertinence of the Pantagruelion chapters at the end of the *Tiers Livre*. The additional fact that Pantagruelion is mentioned only twice in the *Quart Livre*—once in a restatement of the ending of the *Tiers Livre*, and once in a droll way—seems to further diminish the plant's purpose. Here is what the narrator describes Panurge doing with the Pantagruelion plant in chapter 63: "Panurge, through a tube of Pantagruelion, was blowing bubbles with his tongue" (*QL* 63, 687 / *CW*, 579). Nothing more is written about Pantagruelion, but we may not need more. Reflecting on the design of the *Quart Livre* gives weight to Panurge's apparently frivolous bubble-blowing:

Plan of the Quart Livre[34]

Event. (Chs)	Location	Characters
1. (2–8)	Nowhere [Medamothi]	Merchants from Lanternland
2. (9)	Ennasin, Island of Alliances	The Ennasians
3. (10)	Cheli, Island of Peace	King Sant Panigon
4. (12–16)	Procuration	The Chiquanous
5. (17)	Thohu and Bohu	The giant Bringeunarilles
6. (18–24)	*At sea* in the Tempest	Pantagruel and co.
7. (25–28)	Island of the Macraeons	The Old Men
8. (29–32)	Coverup [Tapinois]	Fastilent [Quaresmeprenant]
9. (33–34)	*At sea*	The whale [physeter]
10. (35–42)	Farouche	The Chitterlings
11. (43–44)	Island of Wind/Spirit [Ruach]	The people of Ruach
12. (45–47)	Popefigland	The Popefiggers
13. (48–54)	Island of the Papimanes	The Papimaniacs

[34] This plan is based on that of Duval. See "The Design of Rabelais's *Quart Livre de Pantagruel*," *Études Rabelaisiennes* 36 (1998): 21–22.

14. (55–56)	*At sea*	The frozen words
15. (57–62)	Island of Messier Gaster	Messier Gaster
16. (63)	Island of Hypocrisy [Chaneph]	Hypocrites and the like
17. (64–67)	*At sea*, nearing Island of Robbers [Ganabin]	Pantagruel and co.

The above plan reveals that an episode with a whale, which the narrator calls a *physeter*, stands in the middle[35] of the work. This Greek term means a few things. It may refer to 1) an instrument for blowing, a blowpipe, or tube, 2) the blowhole or spiracle of a whale, or 3) to a kind of whale. But of course, we just read that Panurge later (in chapter 63) uses the Pantagruelion plant as a kind of *physeter*—a blowhole. This use, it turns out, is deliberately planned as early as chapter 49 of the *Tiers Livre* in the Pantagruelion chapters, where the narrator discloses that the stem of the plant is "concave."[36] Rabelais's plan stews for some time, and for such an odd reason. The difficult question is what all of this means.

*Pantagruel's Naturalist Interpretation of the Biblical "Leviathan" (*Quart Livre *33–34)*

Pantagruelion as a bubble-blowing device is best understood against the backdrop of the other ways of understanding the other bubble-blower—the whale—that are on offer. Pantagruelion and the whale both stand for natural things, or for living beings that grow. These *physeters* are specimens of *physis* or nature. Yet the very blower of the blowhole, Panurge, seems not to understand this. When the whale approaches the boat, Panurge shouts out in fear

[35] I agree with Duval that the center of the *Quart Livre* is key to understanding the book, but I interpret the contents of the center differently than he does. Duval focuses on Pantagruel's role as a soteriological (Christ-like) hero. See Duval, "The Sign at the Center and the Quest without End," in Design of Rabelais's *Quart Livre*, 125–142.

[36] See point 3 on the above list of Pantagruelion's nature, as well as the related discussion of *TL* 49, 501–502 / *CW*, 402–403.

and bemoans the coming of "the Leviathan as described by the noble prophet Moses in the life of that holy man Job!" (*QL* 33, 616 / *CW*, 508). In other words, Panurge understands the *physeter* not according to its nature, but as presented through the holy revelations.

The rest of the chapter consists of Pantagruel's explanation to Panurge of what the *physeter* is and the narrator's description of how Pantagruel confronted and defeated the creature. Duval demonstrates beyond doubt that Rabelais uses Job 41 as his source text for the questers' encounter with the beast. He points out that each of Pantagruel's actions in his battle against the Leviathan (or "Satan," as Panurge also calls the animal) correspond to the rhetorical questions that God poses to Job.[37] God asks, for example, whether anyone can put a cord through the animal's nose or pierce its jaw with a hook; Pantagruel does just these things (*QL* 34, 619 / *CW*, 511). But Pantagruel's behavior has heretical ramifications. For according to the Church tradition, each of God's questions were to be answered firmly in the negative. Here is what Thomas has to say about the matter in his *Expositio super Iob ad litteram* (*Literal Exposition on Job*):

> [. . .] lest it be believed that man can overcome the devil by his own power he begins to exclude this belief under the figure of Leviathan, concerning whom He shows first that he cannot be overcome through the method by which fish are caught. Hence, He says *Or will you be able to draw out*, namely, from the waters, *Leviathan with a hook?* [. . .] And by this verse is signified that no man can either draw the devil away from his malice or even tie him so that he may not proceed in his malice.[38]

[37] Duval, "Design of the *Quart Livre*," 130–131.

[38] Thomas Aquinas, *The Literal Exposition on Job: A Scriptural Commentary Concerning Providence*, trans. Anthony Damico (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 454–455.

To save Rabelais from heresy, Duval reads Pantagruel as a Christ-like "fishhook" who may legitimately bind the Leviathan.[39] Although the Savior could rightfully take that kind of action, Pantagruel does not act as the Savior would. Rather than claim that he alone possesses divine power to overcome Satan, Pantagruel reinterprets the Leviathan as an exclusively physical creature and denies one of its main attributes *as* a devilish Leviathan. Compare Job 41:19–21 with what Pantagruel says about the whale. Here is the relevant portion of the account in Job:

> Out of [the Leviathan's] mouth go flaming torches; sparks of fire leap forth. Out of his nostrils comes forth smoke, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. His breath kindles coals, and a flame comes forth from his mouth.

And here is how Pantagruel assuages Panurge's fear of the "Leviathan":

> If such [. . .] is your ill-fated destiny [i.e., that you will be destroyed by the "Leviathan"], as Frère Jean was stating a while ago, you should be afraid of Pyroeis, Eous, Aethon, and Phlegon, the famous *flammivomous* [flame-vomiting] horses of the Sun, who breathe out fire through their nostrils; but *of physeters*, *which spout nothing but water from their blowholes* and from their throats, you should have no fear at all. Never from their water will you be in danger of death. By that element you will rather be made safe and preserved than troubled and harmed. (*QL* 33, 617 / *CW*, 508–509; italics mine)

Several parts of this speech strike the eye. First, Pantagruel refuses to join Panurge in calling the animal a Leviathan—the designation given it by the biblical tradition. He in fact introduces the taxonomic term *physeter*. Second, he goes out of his way to deny that this whale shoots flames as both the biblical Leviathan and the mythical horses of the Sun do. Pantagruel appears not as a soteriological hero, but rather as a student of nature whose knowledge of nature gives him a proper measure of confidence or faith—faith that this *physeter*, a natural thing, is no Leviathan.

[39] Duval, "Design of the *Quart Livre*," 133.

He does not extinguish this Leviathan's fire (on Thomas's view, symbolic of the Devil's capacity to stir passions[40]) but instead demystifies the Leviathan and denies that it has this fire at all.

Now, anybody familiar with whales knows all these things that Pantagruel points out. But judging by the reactions of Panurge and the others, those in the company do not seem as though they had this same familiarity. So how would Pantagruel possess this pre-knowledge? The answer must be that he knew about the properties of the whale by thinking about that other *physeter*: Pantagruelion.

In many ways the whale and Pantagruelion are nothing alike. One is a plant and the other an animal. One lives on land and the other in the sea. One stands as tall as a human and the other stretches "the size of four acres."[41] But Pantagruel's teaching seems to be that these differences must not deceive. To the unschooled it seems the height of folly to approach the "Leviathan" with any less fear than Panurge and the others approach it with, but Pantagruel knows the nature of *physeters*, and so he knows the limits of what they can do.[42] Although Rabelais's description of Panurge's bubble-blowing occurs twenty-nine chapters after the *physeter* encounter, presumably Pantagruel has seen Panurge idling away time by blowing bubbles with a tube of Pantagruelion before. If it would have been silly to fear Panurge's

[40] Thomas, *Job*, 462*:* Now the first and most important part of the head is the brain, by the disturbance of which an animal's sneezing is caused. Therefore, describing Leviathan's sneeze he says *His sneeze is a flash of fire*, namely, since as a result of Leviathan's sneeze so great a disturbance of the waters is caused in the manner of a flash of fire. Or it can also refer to the fact that when the head or the eyes are strongly disturbed a kind of flash or fire seems to us to leap forth. Hence, since the disturbance of Leviathan's head as a result of his sneeze is much greater, much more does such a flash go forth. Now by this verse is signified that through the disturbance of the devil's head, that is, through his temptations, a flash of fire, namely, of anger or of eager desire or even of vainglory, leaps forth.

[41] The size that Thomas attributes to the whale on the authority of Pliny. See Thomas, *Job*, 454.

[42] I intentionally write this noun *physeter* in plural form to emphasize the presence of a class of beings.

bubbles, then it is silly to fear the whale's bubbles. The differences run surface deep. In fact, the whale spiracle and Pantagruelion tube operate according to the same principles. Pantagruel is right. As the *physeter* nears the ships, it begins "spouting water on them by the barrelfuls, as if it were the cataracts of the Nile in Ethiopia" (*QL* 34, 618 / *CW*, 509). There is no fire, hence no "Leviathan."

The Futility of Technology

Pantagruel's demystification of the Leviathan betrays his scientific view of the world, one that rejects the help of revelation. This view has a few important implications. The demystification process—the rejection or removal of the world of spirits—makes the physical world appear as the *merely* physical world, something within our understanding and so not as grand and, well, mysterious as the mystical world that had eluded us. Lest humans take our newfound confidence in their (relatively) elevated place in this world too far, Rabelais compares two possible ways of mastering the *physeter*, one failure and one success. First the failure:

> The artillery hurled thunder and lightning like the Devil, and tried its best to prick it and not in jest. But this was doing little good; for the iron and bronze cannonballs, as they sank into its skin, seemed to melt, to see them from a distance, as tiles do into the sun. (*QL* 34, 618 / *CW*, 509)

Whereas the biblical view (which Thomas expounded above) asserts that humans cannot master themselves or the external world unless God grants them power to do so, the artillery embodies the human conceit of thinking that the world can be overpowered or mastered. This attempt at mastery seems to be the likely alternative to leaning on divine help, especially if the world is hostile to human life. Clearly, though, Rabelais does not support this solution. As Duval writes, "Even the most advanced modern weaponry is powerless to frighten off the beast

or to penetrate its skin."[43] Human contrivance cannot best the power of the *physeter*. Readers have to look to Pantagruel for another way forward.

The Pantagruelic Archer

Were it not for Pantagruel's intervention in the *physeter* encounter, the failure of the modern artillery might speak to the superiority of Thomas's religious view over that of the modern view which, like Pantagruel's, is also demystified. Before I analyze the Pantagruelic response to the whale, I want to emphasize that the Pantagruelic solution is one of these three possible alternatives.[44]

Rabelais's description of Pantagruel begins with the prince Diogenically watching the artillery unload for some time. As he looks on he "considers the occasion and necessity" [l'occasion et necessité] of the situation. Then he steps forward with his bow and arrow and pierces the *physeter* through the forehead to close its blowhole (*QL* 34, 618–619 / *CW*, 509–511). He continues to shoot arrows through each of the whale's eyes, its tail, as well as three through its spine. Pantagruel finishes the job by putting fifty arrows in each flank. "Thereupon the *physeter*, dying, rolled over its back, belly up, *as do all dead fish* [. . .]" (*TL* 34, 620 / *CW*, 511; italics mine). The *physeter* remains subject to the same necessities as all other specimens of its kind.

It is no coincidence, then, that reappearance of Atropos also links the Pantagruelion and *physeter* episodes. In chapter 51 of the *Tiers Livre*, Rabelais's narrator equated Pantagruelion

[43] Duval, "Design of the *Quart Livre*," 130.

[44] Whereas Chapter 2 considered the differences between Diogenism, Machiavellianism, and Pantagruelism, here the alternatives are the religious view, the modern view, and Pantagruelism.

with this goddess of death and necessity (*TL* 51, 506 / *CW*, 406). Atropos is not mentioned again until the *physeter* episode, when Panurge notes that he sees the death-sister appear "above the topmast," "with her scissors newly ground, ready to cut the thread of our lives" (*QL* 33, 617 / *CW*, 509). The goddess of death looks on as Pantagruel brings the *physeter* belly up in the manner of all dead fish. Whereas Panurge responds fearfully to Atropos, according to his "thievish" disposition, Pantagruel responds philosophically to Atropos, or to necessity, knowing that the *physeter* too is limited.

Let us examine the reasons for Pantagruel's success. The method of archery combined with the presence of Atropos proves that power has little to do with the defeat of the *physeter*. It rather suggests that knowledge of the *physeter* and of its limitations is the decisive factor. Lacking this knowledge, the artillery utterly misplaced and wasted its power. Among the most important things that Pantagruel does is consider the "necessity" of the situation. It seems to be no mistake that the first move he makes is to shut the whale's spiracle. This was a thoughtful move, one based on the nature of the specific animal he faced.

Yet one might still object that Pantagruel's archery differs from artillery only in its relative simplicity. Both are forms of technology, after all. This objection may be correct. What, then, is the virtue of simplicity? Rabelais dwells on the point. He attributes adroitness, expertise, deftness, cleverness, and dexterity to various individuals and groups (respectively: Commodus, an Indian archer, the Franks, the Parthians, and the Scythians) known for their abilities with the bow and arrow (*QL* 34, 618–619 / *CW*, 510). Archery depends on certain virtues including tranquility and harmony, but the artillery does not. The bow and arrow require a steady hand. All of the archers mentioned are noted for their incredible accuracy and intense

focus. Moreover, archers do not shoot arrows haphazardly but aim specifically for the most vulnerable part of the enemy. Knowing to aim for the vulnerable part (and what that vulnerable part is) is related to the presence of Atropos that Panurge detects above the topmast. Whereas Atropos strikes fear in the Panurge's heart and reminds him of his contingency, the goddess prompts Pantagruel to remember that everything has a nature and is governed by necessities. This nature cannot be changed or overcome, but it can be realized and used. This usage works through mind, not power; or brains, not brawn.[45] Thus in Pantagruel's thoughtful employment of his bow, he also employs Pantagruelion in its "use" as that which "shapes shoes, *strings bows, bends crossbows*, and makes slingshots" (*TL* 51, 507–508 / *CW*, 407–408).[46]

*Fastilent and the children of Physis and Antiphysie (*Quart Livre *29–32)*

The story of the *physeter* is not the only important text about nature in the *Quart Livre*. In fact, Rabelais introduces the theme of nature in the episode that immediately precedes the encounter with the whale. This episode does not contain any allusions or references to Pantagruelion, but it nevertheless concerns plants and maintains the same basic teaching suggested by the study of Pantagruel's famous herb.

Nearing the middle of the *Quart Livre*, Pantagruel and his friends pass by the island of Coverup [Tapinois], ruled by Fastilent [Quaresmeprenant]. Their guide, Xenomanes, is familiar with this strange king. Upon hearing Xenomanes' low opinion of Fastilent, Pantagruel says he

[45] This dichotomy between mind and muscle reminds us that Rabelais's description of Pantagruel's defeat of the *physeter* excludes the most reputed of the archers: Odysseus, who shot an arrow through twelve axe heads in a contest against the other suitors for his wife. See *Odyssey,* 21.409. This too connects the passages on Pantagruelion with Homer's passage on *moly*.

[46] See point 10 on the list describing Pantagruelion's "uses" in my discussion of Pantagruelion as faith.

would like to know more: "You'll give me pleasure if even as you have described to me his vestments, his clothes, his way of acting, and his pastimes, you would also explain to me his form [sa forme] and body in all its parts."[47] In other words, Pantagruel wants to think about Fastilent's nature. Subsequently, Xenomanes details the king's outer and inner parts at great length, and with great wit and humor. The list of parts described has a certain movement, and ends with an account of the various aspects of Fastilent's intellect:

> He [Fastilent] had a memory like a scarf. Common sense, like a drone. His imagination, like a carillon of bells. His thoughts, like a flight of starlings. His conscience, like an unnesting of young herons. His deliberations, like a pouchful of barley. His repentance, like the carriage of a double cannon. His enterprises, like the ballast of a galleon. His understanding, like a torn breviary. His notions, like snails crawling out of strawberries. His will, like three walnuts in a dish. His desire, like six trusses of sainfoin. His judgment, like a shoehorn. His discretion, like a mitten. *His reason, like a footstool.* (*QL* 30, 610 / *CW*, 502; italics mine)

Each of these similes ridicules Fastilent's mind in some way, mostly by speaking to its frailty or subservience. The last image of reason as a footstool is especially noteworthy. Fastilent is the anti-philosopher. His reason is instrumental. Its very location is inverted. It is not located inside the head, but sits under the feet.[48] Two chapters later, Xenomanes concludes his description of Fastilent through a series of similar inversions:

> He worked doing nothing, did nothing working. He had eyes open sleeping, slept with his eyes open [. . .]. He bathed on top of high steeples, dried himself in ponds and streams. He fished in the air and there caught decuman crayfish. He went hunting in the depths of the sea and there found ibexes, wild goats, and chamois. (*QL* 32, 614 / *CW*, 506)

[47] Frame translates "sa forme" as "his physique."

[48] Given that much of the episode reads as a satire of the Catholic Church and its practices, this description of reason as a footstool may be derived from Thomas's well-known formulation of reason as the "handmaiden" of theology. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Q. I, Art. 5, in Anton C. Pegis, ed., *Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Modern Library, 1948), 9.

Fastilent inhabits a world without nature. His life consists of contradictions and impossibilities—or at least that is what we would call his activities in our world.

Xenomanes' description of Fastilent brings to Pantagruel's mind "old stories" featuring the children of two characters he refers to as Physis and Antiphysie. These stories have been long forgotten. Frère Jean says he knows nothing of them (*QL* 32, 614 / *CW*, 507). They consist of an ancient wisdom that has been covered up. In the tales, the children of Antiphysie have perfectly round skulls, with distorted ears, eyes, and appendages. They do cartwheels and always go around with their legs above their heads (*QL* 32, 614 / *CW*, 507). Antiphysie praises these children of hers and succeeds in convincing "the fools and madmen" (perhaps a large group) that her offspring imitate the "Creator of the Universe," given that their hair is like the roots of a tree, their legs like its branches, and so on. The story is clearly framed as a critique of religion. Among those persuaded by Antiphysie are the "Papelars" and "the demoniacal Calvins, impostors of Geneva" (*QL* 32, 614 / *CW*, 507). True to his form, Rabelais does not discriminate here. He attacks both Catholics and Reformers. But aside from these satirical punches pulled, the story also condemns any effort, religiously motivated or not, to override nature. Nothing about Antiphysie himself is inherently religious. Antiphysie, according to Pantagruel, has simply always been "adverse to" and "envious of" Physis. As Rabelais writes, this animosity dates back "*from all time*" (*QL* 32, 614 / *CW*, 507; italics mine). Antiphysie was not born of Christianity or any other particular religious sect. There is something about humans—at least there is something about a part or faction of them—that does not want to be subjected to nature. In the following chapters, the Pantagruelic company's varied reactions to the *physeter* (especially those of Panurge and the artillery) depicts the teaching of the story of Physis and Antiphysie.

A Positive Teaching

The preceding discussion of the *Quart Livre* is too short to do justice to this final authentic work that we have by Rabelais. This cursory examination of the quest does, however, cast light on the events of the *Tiers Livre*. As I wrote in Chapter 1, these events have been considered by modern scholarship as examples of the problem of interpretation. I do not entirely disagree with this view, but the quest of the *Quart Livre* shows that the problem of interpretive difficulty is secondary. The problem is not interpretation per se but rather the desire to know the future. In other words, the problem is self-concern and self-interest, or *philautie*, as Pantagruel calls it (*TL* 29, 444 / *CW*, 347).

Pantagruelion embodies this theme or question of nature, which goes hand in hand with knowing the future, and which was already being established during the consultations of the banquet in the *Tiers Livre*. The consultations had denied the reality of nature (the Hippothadée consultation) and suggested the inscrutability of nature (the Rondibilis consultation). Further, they showed how highly interested people are in their futures, and how quick they are to disregard justice (the Bridlegoose consultation). Together, the events of the *Tiers Livre* could serve to weigh down imperiousness and put people back in place. When taken seriously, these events may cultivate the kind of servility that Machiavelli so strongly opposed.

But if the beginning and middle of the *Tiers Livre* give a negative teaching about nature, then the ending of the *Tiers Livre* and the middle of the *Quart Livre* offer a positive teaching about nature. The passages about Pantagruelion and the *physeter* discourage us from attempting to overpower other beings or nature itself, as the questers' artillery had attempted to do. Yet they also discourage us from laying prostrate before others' displays of power. The

presence of nature means that one's place in the world is not determined by "power relations." Discerning our true place in the order of nature means thinking about limitations. This has the double-advantage of instilling humility (when grasping one's limits) and granting faith or trust (when grasping others' limits). The faith in nature (or πίστις) for which Pantagruelion stands, and which Pantagruelion inspires, is exemplified in the unlikely scenario of the *physeter*, an animal that is much more powerful than the Pantagruelic comrades but that is nonetheless governed by Atropos—as Panurge unwittingly revealed by blowing into his stick of Pantagruelion, the other *physeter*.

Of the three views presented in the *physeter* episode (the religious, the modern, and the Pantagruelic), only the Pantagruelic view respects and takes its bearings from nature. There is a certain kinship between the religious and modern views in that both deny nature its rule. The effects of these views differ. The religious view grants that the "Leviathan" may do anything—though a water animal, it may shoot fire. The modern view opposes the power of nature with the power of art. Both are nonetheless children of Antiphysie. As a child of Physis, Pantagruel observes Pantagruelion and, through it, sees harmonious principles at work in the world. These principles may not be simply intuitive. It takes much thought to see that the Pantagruelion and *physeter* are more alike than not. Reflecting on the "occasion and necessity" of a given situation (*QL* 34, 618 / *CW*, 509) does not mean negating the limitations of nature, but one may begin to see that the limits of nature are different—perhaps more accommodating of human life, less hostile—than had been expected. Still, one gains wisdom from Pantagruelion with difficulty. The meaning of the plant proves "rather rough and hard to get at."

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

> *Ballock away to the devil, Panurge my friend, since it is so predestined for you; would you make the planets reverse their course? all the heavenly spheres go off track? propose error to the Moving Intelligences? blunt the spindles? slander the bobbins? reproach the reels? condemn the spools for spun thread? unwind the skeins of Fates? A tough quartan fever to you, ballocker! You'd do worse than the Giants.*
>
> Frère Jean

Further Implications of the Diogenic Problem

Rabelais includes many themes, images, and puzzles in his books. The sporadic placement of these textual features and the apparent lightness of much of Rabelais's subject matter makes it difficult to blame some interpreters for concluding that the author lacks positive positions on the most important issues. I have focused my efforts on what I have been calling the Diogenic problem as a corrective of our interpretive tendencies and as an example of Rabelais's positive message. To restate the Diogenic problem, non-philosophers (who constitute the vast majority of society) look askance at philosophers, or at least misunderstand them and fail to see the significance of their enterprise. Philosophers are interpreted with malevolence. (This Diogenic problem affects even Rabelais, who anticipates the morally and philosophically deficient misinterpretation of his books.)

There are, of course, many pieces to this Diogenic problem. The first, Diogenes and his barrel-rolling, symbolizes philosophical vanity, boastfulness, and self-interest. After reading about Diogenes's barrel-rolling jeers in the *Tiers Livre* prologue, the ancient, popular prejudice against philosophers becomes more understandable. It becomes clear that Diogenes does not care about his city. Yet Diogenes simply brought to a head the important point that

philosophers esteem different goods than society esteems. Diogenes's activities could go on regardless of the well-being of Corinth, but the Corinthians' activities could not. Whereas ancient philosophers such as Diogenes sought to understand the world (something possible regardless of political regime), the citizens of ancient communities sought to protect their distinct way of life from the world (something that depends chiefly on control over the political regime and other, external conditions).

By recommending his "very new manner of building walls" in *Pantagruel* chapter 15, Panurge would place the philosopher in the proverbial trenches with citizens like the Corinthians. In fact, Rabelais includes "repairing walls" among the preparations he describes the Corinthians making as they anticipated battle with Macedon (*TL* prol, 346 / *CW*, 254). As Rabelais says generally of the Corinthians' work, "each and every man [was] earnestly exerting himself and working, partly on the fortification of his fatherland and defending it, partly on repelling the enemy and harming them, all this in such fair polity, such wonderful ordering, *and to such evident advantage for the future* [. . .]" (*TL* prol, 348 / *CW*, 256; italics mine). With wall-building, Panurge arranges things so that the contemplative life can finally become civic-minded and "exertive." With wall-building, the philosophic vanity, boastfulness, and self-interestedness of Diogenic barrel-rolling become humility and self-sacrifice.

What explains this change of heart? A public relations campaign based on outward shows of philosophic philanthropy does not of itself explain the transformation from philosopher as slacker and idler to city-savior. Rather, distinct views of the world underlie these opposite dispositions. Diogenes slacks and idles because he regards human action as futile, Machiavelli jumps to action because he regards it as conceivably efficacious, and each thinker

so regards action based in part on what they think humans can learn. Panurge embodies the Machiavellian tendency to think humans can unveil and render the world certain (see *TL* 36, 463–466 / *CW*, 364–367), with rulers "more knowing of natural things."[1] Diogenes, by contrast, asked to be buried "on his face," believing that "after a little time, down will be converted to up."[2] Machiavelli sees the possibility of progressive knowledge, but Diogenes's burial wishes forecast instability and flux.

In evaluating the soundness of these two philosophic temperaments, Pantagruelism takes a measured view of politics. Unlike both Diogenism and Machiavellianism, Pantagruelism *trusts* or has faith in principles at work in the world. This trust-in-principles links the Pantagruelion and *physeter* episodes (discussed in Chapter 6) to the political teaching of the book.

These two episodes suggest that Atropos governs the world. The "thieves" who, like Panurge, bend or break rules tend to fear Atropos, which Rabelais embodies in Pantagruelion. When contrasted against Machiavelli's focus on the goddess Fortuna at the end of *The Prince*, Rabelais's focus on the goddess Atropos in the *Tiers Livre* suggests the need for humans to respect limits. Fortuna is fickle but malleable. By contrast, the natural limits that Atropos stands for make politics worthwhile, but they also suggest the futility of progressivism and thereby direct or reduce politics to maintaining the status quo. Atropos tables Panurge's Machiavellian task of social and political improvement. Vanquishing Fortuna and respecting Atropos entail very different ways of life.

[1] *DL*, 1.12.1.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 135.

Different Conceptions of Necessity

Indeed, the serene political moderation of Pantagruelism, the heady ambition of Machiavellianism, and irresponsible indolence of Diogenism are all premised on different views of Atropos, or necessity. How closely these views approximate our world determines their soundness.

Oddly, Diogenism has much in common with the religious (especially Judeo-Christian) view that necessities or causes escape human knowledge. If, as Diogenes says, "down" can become "up," so also the Sun could sit still in the sky.[3] When compared to the consultants visited in the middle of the *Tiers Livre*, Diogenes's position that causes elude us resembles Hippothadée's doctrine of secret predestination (see *TL* 30, 446 / *CW*, 350). On the other hand, Diogenes contrasts with the ancient Platonist, Rondibilis, who believes one can become an "architect of natural consequences" (see *TL* 32, 453 / *CW*, 355). The architect does not control or possess complete knowledge of natural consequences, however. Regardless of the view of causality that the representatives of antiquity take in Rabelais's book, all of them recommend deference to the order of things—whether known or unknown, divine or natural.

Panurge vehemently rejects the ancient attitude of deference and insists on the knowability of causes. This insistence shows most in his praise of *debtes*, examined in Chapter 4. Indeed, Panurge's world "in which everyone lends, everyone owes, all are debtors, all are lenders" (*TL* 4, 364 / *CW*, 271) rests on a strong conception of *debvoir*. Yet this world, as Panurge concedes, requires us to "imagine" it (*TL* 4, 364 / *CW*, 271). The early modern project

[3] Joshua 10:12–13.

leans on the promise of eventually building a world where all things lend and owe in the sense of acting predictably. Paradoxically, in this world no self-sacrifice will really be needed. On the contrary, self-interest will drive and fulfill the execution of duties. These political duties will resemble Panurge's "duty of marriage." For Panurge, marital duty can culminate in sexual pleasure that relieves the bodily members. Of course, Panurge most fears that the duty of marriage, representative of all duties and necessities, will turn out opaque, not be reciprocated, and result in misfortune and misery. Panurge still inhabits the unimagined, somewhat-lending world—the world that *is*.

The epigraph of this conclusion, some strong words from Frère Jean to Panurge, suggests Rabelais's doubt that one can domesticate fortune like a spouse made to serve one's ends.[4] As Frère Jean points out, if the future is necessitous, it resists change—including the change that humans would impose on it. One cannot "make the planets reverse their course," or "the heavenly spheres go off track" (*TL* 28, 441–442 / *CW*, 345). Whereas Diogenes would not even posit a "course" or "track" for the heavenly bodies, Panurge, like Frère Jean, would. Yet despite what Panurge thinks, human efforts could not so easily manipulate a true "track." Although knowing the principles of the cosmos might seem to lend itself to reshaping the cosmos (as Panurge hopes), Jean reminds Panurge that principles would not be principles if they could be so shaped. Principles and necessities are permanent by definition.

Rabelais expands on Frère Jean's position and finally opposes Panurge's conception of *debvoir* through the Pantagruelion and *physeter* chapters. Although Pantagruelion (compared

[4] For an ancient account of spousal (in)educability, see Xenophon, "Oeconomicus," in *The Shorter Socratic Writings*, ed. Robert C. Bartlett (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 59–79 (7–11).

to Atropos) reveals principles at work in the world, the plant does not grant human beings ultimate knowledge of those principles either. Pantagruelion retains a mysteriousness even as it teaches something about nature. As a specimen of nature, Pantagruelion corresponds to the level of "trust" (πίστις) on Socrates's divided line—"the animals around us, and everything that grows [. . .]."[5] Yet standing on the level of trust or faith, one remains far from knowing everything about the world. One remains especially far from knowing the higher, invisible realm that transcends the specimens of plants and animals. In keeping with our location between ignorance and knowledge, the term *trust* exudes uncertainty, but a confident uncertainty that stays open to the possibility of an intelligible whole without completely knowing it. Likewise, one can know Atropos as the goddess of death, but seeing Atropos "above the topmast" (see *QL* 33, 617 / *CW*, 509) does not mean knowing everything about death. Establishing the fact of mortality does not reveal where, when, and how death will come (to oneself or to others), and it especially does not reveal what will happen after death.

Politically, Pantagruelion-based faith in principles leads to the individualism on display in Pantagruel's response to Panurge's praise of *debtes*. This individualism bases itself on the fact that the earth "is greasy, strong, slippery, and dense, retains humidity, and does not easily allow runoff or evaporation." This earth provides enough sustenance for workers to fulfill their needs, and even to give should others need help. This earth belongs to neither Diogenes (who believes down may be converted to up) nor to Panurge (who foresees a universal but self-interested system of borrowing and lending). Diogenes's acerbic way of life suggests that

[5] Plato, *Republic*, 510a4–6.

human needs must decrease to match the accommodations of the world. Conversely, Panurge's contrived lending and borrowing system suggests that the world must artificially increase its natural yield to meet human neediness. In Pantagruel's individualistic world, human needs naturally match what the earth offers. Debts destroy, rather than create, this equilibrium.

Saving Philosophy

The focus on and acceptance of necessities so central to Pantagruelism reminds readers that philosophy could be called, as the ancient Platonist Rondibilis calls it, "nothing else but meditation on death," the ultimate necessity (*TL* 31, 450–451 / *CW*, 353). In other words, Pantagruelion, a "halter" and "cravat," is a philosophic subject.

Meditating on death provides a genuine means of self-forgetting or selflessness. Despite, for example, what Diogenes Laertius says about Diogenes the Cynic being "prepared for every kind of fortune,"[6] the philosopher would have seriously taken issue with placement in a station of importance in the political machinery of Corinth. That, for him, would entail a future of drudgery. And although I earlier characterized Machiavelli's dam-building as a newfound philosophic humility, of course Machiavelli, in his deployment of *offizio* or *debvoir*, expects a considerable return for philosophy's hard work. Machiavelli's dutiful correction of selfish Diogenic barrel-rolling still has the particular fate of the philosopher in mind. Meditation on death means forgetting everything about this world. This includes material and bodily goods and pleasures, but it also includes concerns such as one's situation in society. Socrates simply would not whine about a "malignity of fortune" as Machiavelli did. Whereas meditation on

[6] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 146.

death requires forgetfulness, Diogenic barrel-rolling and Machiavellian wall-building involve lying in order to create constructed futures with the good of the philosopher in mind. These lies stem from the fact that philosophic knowledge spans the worlds of theory and practice. Insofar as philosophic knowledge is practical, Diogenes lies in order to continue indulging theoretics. Insofar as philosophic knowledge is theoretical, Machiavelli lies in order to fully embrace public service and relieve the duties of non-philosophers.

When Pantagruel posits the alliance of debts and lies in chapter 5 of the *Tiers Livre* (see *TL* 5, 368 / *CW*, 274), he suggests that caring about debts either too little (as Diogenes does) or too much (as Machiavelli does) harms philosophy. And the one thing that philosophy cannot do as love of truth is countenance lies.[7] Rabelais's book teaches that philosophers can only avoid this lying by making neither the Diogenic mistake of flouting, nor the Machiavellian mistake of succumbing to, political duties. Pantagruel's reluctant rule over Utopia—taking as its model the reluctant political participation of Socrates—suggests that the old-fashioned execution of duty, indistinguishable from that of the citizen, provides the best way to solve the Diogenic problem.[8] Only through this means does philosophy avoid the equally bad problems of being a hindrance or a benefit to the city.

Above all, reading Rabelais's books remind readers that the character of philosophy has been consciously crafted by its practitioners. The development of philosophy to the present day does not constitute a natural course, nor does it even reflect the forces of history. As the tradition of philosophizing has accumulated, various thinkers have made deliberate choices for

[7] See Plato, *Republic*, 382b

[8] See Plato, *Apology*, 28d10–29a2.

better and for worse about how philosophy proceeds and presents itself to the human community. Rabelais writes about a choice that was rejected but perhaps remains open and which, at any rate, illuminates the current situation. In this way Rabelais's book really is, as he insists, a Silenus with an exterior of folly and interior of wisdom (see *G* prol, 5 / *CW*, 3).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abrams, M. H. and Geoffrey Galt Harpham. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 9th ed. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009.

Ahrensdorf, Peter J. *the Death of Socrates and the Life of Philosophy: An Interpretation of Plato's Phaedo*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995.

Aland, Kurt, Matthew Black, Carlo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren, eds. *The Greek New Testament*. 2nd ed. Stuttgart: Württemberg Bible Society, 1966/1968.

Antonioli, Roland. *Rabelais et La Médecine*. *Études Rabelaisiennes*. Vol. 12. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1976.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas*. Edited by Anton C. Pegis. New York: Modern Library, 1948.

Aquinas, Thomas. *The Literal Exposition on Job: A Scriptural Commentary Concerning Providence*. Translated by Anthony Damico. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989.

Aquinas, Thomas. "Super I Epistolam B. Pauli Ad Corinthios Lectura: Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians." Edited by Joseph Kenny, O.P. Translated by Fabian Larcher. 2015, http://dhspriory.org/thomas/SS1Cor.htm.

Aristophanes. "Aristophanes' Clouds." In West and West 1998, 115–176.

Aristotle. *Aristotle's Physics, A Guided Study*. Edited by Harvey Flaumenhaft. Translated by Joe Sachs. Vol. 5. New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by Joe Sachs. Newburyport, MA: Focus, 2002.

Aristotle. *Politics*. Edited and translated by Carnes Lord. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Arnhart, Larry. "A Sociobiological Defense of Aristotle's Sexual Politics." *International Political Science Review / Revue International De Science Politique* 15, (1994): 389–415.

Arrian. *The Campaigns of Alexander*. Edited by J.R. Hamilton. Translated by Aubrey de Sélincourt. London: Penguin Books, 1971.

Augustine. "The City of God." In *Political Writings*. Translated by Michael W. Tkacz and Douglas Kries. Edited by Ernest L. Fortin and Douglas Kries, 3–201. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1994.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1968/1984.

Baraz, Michael. "Un Texte Polyvalent: Le Prologue De *Gargantua*." In *Mélanges Sur La Littérature De La Renaissance à La Mémoire De V.–L. Saulnier*. Edited by Société Française des Seiziémistes, 527–535. Geneva: Librairie Droz.

Beaujour, Michel. *Le Jeu De Rabelais*. Paris: l'Herne, 1969.

Benardete, Seth. *The Bow and the Lyre: A Platonic Reading of the Odyssey*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1997.

Berrong, Richard M. *Rabelais and Bakhtin*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1986.

Booth, Wayne C. "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism." *Critical Inquiry* 9, (1982): 45–76.

Bowen, Willis. "Sixteenth Century French Translations of Machiavelli." *Italica* 27 (1950): 313–320.

Brann, Eva. *The Logos of Heraclitus*. Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2011.

Brann, Eva. "Talking, Reading, Writing, Listening: A Lecture for Parents and Students." St. John's College 2015, http://cdm15894.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p15894coll2/id/8.

Burke, Harry R. "Audience and Intention in Machiavelli's 'The Prince' and Erasmus' 'Education of a Christian Prince.'" *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* 4 (1984): 84–93.

Butterworth, Emily. "Scandal in Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*: Divination, Interpretation, and Edification." *Renaissance and Reformation* 34 (2011): 23–43.

Calvin, John. *Calvin's Commentaries: Commentary on the Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians by John Calvin*. Translated by Rev. John Pringle. Vol. XX. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1948.

Calvin, John. *Concerning Scandals*. Translated by John W. Fraser. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1550/1978.

Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion: 1541 French Edition*. Translated by Elsie McKee. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2009.

Carron, Jean-Claude, ed. *François Rabelais: Critical Assessments*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995.

Carta, Paolo. “Politics, Law, and Literature: The Dialogue between Machiavelli and Guicciardini.” Working paper, The Italian Academy for Advanced Studies in America, Columbia University, 2011.

Cate, R. M., S. A. Loyd, J. M. Henton, and J. H. Larson. “Fairness and Reward Level as Predictors of Relationship Satisfaction.” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 45 (1982): 177–181.

Cave, Terence. *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.

Cave, Terence, Michel Jeanneret, and François Rigolot. “Sur La Prétendue Transparence De Rabelais.” *Revue d’Histoire Littéraire De La France* 86 (1986): 709–716.

Céard, Jean. *La Nature et Les Prodigies: L’insolite Au XVIe Siècle, En France*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1977.

Charles, Michel. *Rhétorique de la Lecture.* Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977.

Charpentier, Françoise. “Notes Pour le *Tiers Livre de Rabelais* Chap. 32: Le Discours De Rondibilis.” *Revue Belge De Philology Et d’histoire* 54 (1976): 780–796.

Cherel, Albert. *La Pensée de Machiavel en France*. Paris: L’artisan du livre, 1935.

Chesney Zegura, Elizabeth, ed. *The Rabelais Encyclopedia*. Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, 2004.

Chesney Zegura, Elizabeth. “Bottle, Divine Or Holy (Dive Bouteille).” In Chesney Zegura 2004, 21.

Chesney Zegura, Elizabeth. “Rondibilis.” In Chesney Zegura 2004, 214–215.

Chessick, Richard D. “The Silence of Socrates.” *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 58 (2004): 406–419.

Clement, N. H. “The Eclecticism of Rabelais.” *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 42 (1927): 339–384.

Cooper, R. A. “Rabelais et l’Italie: Les Letters Écrites de Rome, 1535–1536.” *Cahiers De l’Association Internationale Des Etudes Francaises* 30 (1978): 23–39.

Cornilliat, François. “Interpretation in Rabelais, Interpretation of Rabelais.” In O'Brien 2011, 43–56.

Cottret, Bernard. *Calvin: A Biography*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000.

Crossway Bibles. *ESV: Study Bible: English Standard Version*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2007.

Defaux, Gerard. "D'un Problème l'autre: Herméneutique De 'l'altior Sensus' Et 'captatio Lectoris' Dans Le Prologue De *Gargantua*." *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire De La France* 85 (1985): 195–216.

Defaux, Gerard. "De Pantagruel au Tiers Livre: Panurge et le Pouvoir." In *Études Rabelaisiennes*. Vol. 22, 163–180. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1976.

Delegue, Yves. "Le Pantagruélion, Ou Le Discours De La Vérité." *Réforme Humanisme Renaissance* 16 (1983): 18–40.

Demerson, Guy. "Le 'Prologe' Exemplaire du *Gargantua*: Le Littéraire et ses Retranchements." *Versants* (1989): 35–57.

Derret, J. Duncan. "Rabelais's Legal Learning and the Trial of Bridoye." In *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme Et Renaissance*. Vol. 25, 111–171, 1963.

Duval, Edwin. *The Design of Rabelais's Quart Livre De Pantagruel*. *Études Rabelaisiennes*. Vol. 36. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1998.

Duval, Edwin. *The Design of Rabelais's Tiers Livre*. *Études Rabelaisiennes*. Vol. 34. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1997.

Duval, Edwin. *The Design of Rabelais's Pantagruel*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991.

Duval, Edwin. "History, Epic, and the Design of Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*." In Carron 1995, 121–132.

Duval, Edwin. "Interpretation and the 'doctrine Absconce' of Rabelais's Prologue to *Gargantua*." *Études Rabelaisiennes* 18 (1985): 1–17.

Duval, Edwin. "The Juge Bridoye, Pantagruelism, and the Unity of Rabelais' *Tiers Livre.*" In *Études Rabelaisiennes*. Vol. 17, 37–60, 1983.

Erasmus, Desiderius. *Education of a Christian Prince*. Translated by Neil M. Chesire and Michael J. Heath. Edited by Lisa Jardine. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Felmlee, Diane H. "Who's on Top? Power in Romantic Relationships." *Sex Roles* 31 (1994): 275–295.

Ficino, Marsilio. *Commentaries on Plato: Phaedrus and Ion*. Translated by Michael J.B. Allen. Edited by Michael J.B Allen. B. Vol. 1. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Frame, Donald. *François Rabelais: A Study*. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977.

Freccero, Carla. *Father Figures: Genealogy and Narrative Structure in Rabelais*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991.

Freccero, Carla. "Feminism, Rabelais, and the Hill/Thomas Hearings: Return to a Scene of Reading." In Carron 1995, 73–82.

Freccero, Carla. "Queer Rabelais?" In *Approaches to Teaching the Works of François Rabelais*. Edited by Floyd Gray and Todd W. Reeser, 182–191. New York: Modern Language Association, 2011.

Gaignebet, Claude. *A Plus Hault Sens: L'ésoterisme Spirituel et Charnel De Rabelais*. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1986.

Gendre, André. "Le Prologue De *Pantagruel*, Le Prologue De *Gargantua*: Examen Comparative." *Revue d'Histoire Littéraire De La France* 74 (1974): 3–19.

Gilbert, Allan H. *Machiavelli's Prince and its Forerunners:* The Prince *as a Typical Book De Regimine Principum*. Vol. 2. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1938/1968.

Gray, Floyd. "Ambiguity and Point of View in the Prologue to *Gargantua*." *Romanic Review* 56 (1965): 12–21.

Gray, Floyd. "Reading the Works of Rabelais." In O'Brien 2011, 15–30.

Haslam, Jonathan. *No Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations since Machiavelli.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002.

Heraclitus. *Fragments*. Translated by T.M. Robinson. Edited by T.M. Robinson. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.

Hesiod. "Theogony." In *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica, with an English Translation*. Translated by Hugh G. Evelyn-White. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914.

Heulhard, Arthur. *Rabelais, ses Voyages en Italie, son Exil à Metz*. Paris: 1891.

Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. Edited by Edwin Curley. Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co., 1994.

Hoffman, George. “Neither One nor the Other and both Together: How Scholastic Logic can Help Explain Panurge’s Marriage Question (*Tiers Livre*, 35).” In *Études Rabelaisiennes*. Vol. 25, 79–90, 1991.

Holquist, Michael. “Bakhtin and Rabelais: Theory as Praxis.” *Boundary* 2 (1982): 5–19.

Homer. *The Odyssey of Homer*. Translated by Lattimore, Richmond. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

Hooker, Edna M. “The Significance of Numa's Religious Reforms.” *Numen* 10 (1963): 87–132.

Hunter, David G. *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinianist Controversy.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Ianziti, Gary. “Rabelais and Machiavelli.” *Romance Notes* 16 (1975): 460–473.

Kaiser, Walter J. *Praisers of Folly: Erasmus, Rabelais, Shakespeare*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.

Kalkavage, Peter. “Plato's *Timaeus* and the Will to Order.” *St. John's Review* 47 (2003): 137–167.

Keynes, John Maynard. “Overseas Financial Policy in Stage III (1945).” In *The Collected Writings of John Maynard Keynes, Activities 1944–1946: The Transition to Peace*. Edited by Elizabeth Johnson and Donald E. Moggridge. Vol. 24. London: MacMillan, 1979.

Kierkegaard, Søren. *Philosophical Fragments: Or, a Fragment of Philosophy*. Translated and edited by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985.

Kinser, Samuel. *Rabelais’s Carnival: Text, Context, Metatext*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990.

Krell, David. “Female Parts in *Timaeus*.” *Arion* 2 (1975): 400–421.

La Charité, Raymond C. “Lecteurs Et Lectures Dans Le Prologue Du *Gargantua*.” In *Rabelais En Son Demi-Millénaire: Actes Du Colloque International De Tours (24–29 Septembre 1984)*. Edited by Jean Céard and Jean-Claude Margolin. *Études Rabelaisiennes* 21. Geneva: Librairie Droz.

La Charité, Raymond C. “Rabelais and the Silenic Text: The Prologue to *Gargantua*.” In La Charité 1986, 72–86.

La Charité, Raymond C. *Rabelais’s Incomparable Book: Essays on His Art.* Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1986.

La Rochefoucauld, François. “Réflexions ou Sentences et Maximes Morales (Ed. 1678).” In *Œuvres Complètes*. Edited by Jean Marchand. Paris: Gallimard, 1964.

Laertius, Diogenes. *Lives of the Philosophers*. Translated and edited by Robert A. Caponigri. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1969.

LaGaurdia, David. “Un Bone Esmoucheteur Par Mousches Jamais Émouché Ne Sera: Panurge as Trickster.” *Romanic Review* 88 (1997): 519–528.

Lampert, Laurence and Christopher Planeaux. “Who’s Who in Plato’s *Timaeus–Critias* and Why.” *The Review of Metaphysics* 52 (1998): 87–125.

Langer, Ullrich. “*Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*: The Political Education of the King.” In O'Brien 2011, 107–124.

Lavatori, Gerard. “Debts Or Debtors, Praise of (3BK 2–5).” In Chesney Zegura 2004, 48–49.

Leal, Sharon and Aldert Vrij. “Blinking during and After Lying.” *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 32 (2008): 187–194.

Lefranc, Abel. *Rabelais: Etudes Sur Gargantua, Pantagruel, Le Tiers Livre*. Paris: Albin Michel, 1953.

Levering, Matthew. “Providence and Predestination in Al–Ghazali.” *New Blackfriars* 92 (2011): 55–70.

Lewis, Thomas Charlton, William Freund, and Charles Short. *A Latin Dictionary: Founded on Andrews’ Edition of Freund’s Latin Dictionary.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.

Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. *A Greek–English Lexicon, Compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940.

Lidz, Joel Warren. “Medicine as Metaphor in Plato.” *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 20 (1995): 527–541.

Locke, John. *A Letter Concerning Toleration: Humbly Submitted*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1983.

Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government*. Edited by Peter Laslett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Lucretius. *On the Nature of Things*. Translated by Walter Englert. Newburyport, MA: Focus, 2003.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Discourses on Livy*. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *Mandragola*. Translated by Mera J. Flaumenhaft. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1981.

Machiavelli, Niccolò. *The Prince*. Translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Maimonides, Moses. *The Guide of the Perplexed*. Translated by Shlomo Pines. Vol. 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.

Mansfield, Harvey C. "The Cuckold in Machiavelli's *Mandragola*." In *the Comedy & Tragedy of Machiavelli: Essays on the Literary Works*. Edited by Vickie B. Sullivan, 1–29. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002.

Mansfield, Harvey C. "Machiavelli and the Idea of Progress." In *Machiavelli's Virtue*, 109–122. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Mansfield, Harvey C. *Machiavelli's New Modes and Orders: A Study of the Discourses on Livy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Mansfield, Harvey C. "On the Majesty of Law." *Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy* 36 (2013): 117–129.

Mansfield, Harvey C. and Nathan Tarcov. "Introduction." In Mansfield and Tarcov 1996, xvii–xliv.

Marichal, Robert. "Rabelais et La Réforme de la Justice." In *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*. Vol. 14, 176–192, 1952.

Masters, George Mallary. "On *Learned Ignorance*, Or how to Read Rabelais: Part I, Theory." *Romance Notes* 19 (1978): 127–132.

Masters, George Mallary. *Rabelaisian Dialectic and the Platonic–Hermetic Tradition*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1969.

Melanchthon, Phillip. *Annotations on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Translated by John Patrick Donnelly. Edited by Kenneth Hager, Franz Posset and John Patrick Donnelly. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1995.

Melzer, Arthur. *Philosophy between the Lines: The Lost History of Esoteric Writing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014a.

Melzer, Arthur. “A Chronological Compilation of Testimonial Evidence for Esotericism: A Web Appendix for *Philosophy between the Lines: The Lost History of Esoteric Writing*.” University of Chicago Press 2014b, http://www.press.uchicago.edu/sites/melzer/melzer_appendix.pdf.

Menini, Romain. *Rabelais Et l’intertexte Platonicien*. *Études Rabelaisiennes*. Vol. 47. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2009.

Montaigne, Michel de. *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*. Translated by Donald Frame. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1958.

More, Thomas. *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, edited by Edward J.H. Hexter Surtz. Vol. 4. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1965.

Morrison, Ian R. “Diogenes.” In Chesney Zegura 2004, 53–54.

Morrison, Ian R. “Hippothadée.” In Chesney Zegura 2004, 116–117.

Morrow, Glenn R. “Necessity and Persuasion in Plato’s *Timaeus*.” *The Philosophical Review* 59 (1950): 147–163.

Najemy, John M. “Papirius and the Chickens, Or Machiavelli on the Necessity of Interpreting Religion.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 60 (1999): 659–681.

Nichols, Mary P. *Socrates and the Political Community: An Ancient Debate*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987.

Nichols, Mary P. “Women, Politics, and Nature: Women in Western Political Thought by Susan Mollen Okin.” *The Review of Politics* 43 (1981): 130–131.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future.* Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House, 1989.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Translated and edited by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage, 1974.

O'Brien, John, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Rabelais*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Okin, Susan M. *Women in Western Political Thought*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Oxford English Dictionary. “Machiavellian, n. and Adj.” Oxford University Press, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/111832.

Parel, Anthony. “Farewell to Fortune.” *The Review of Politics* 75 (2013): 587–604.

Parkin, John. *Interpretations of Rabelais*. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2002.

Perez, Rosa A. “The Workings of Desire: Panurge and the Dogs.” In *Laughter in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*. Vol. 5, 587–602. Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2010.

Pitkin, Hannah Fenichel. *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984.

Plato. “Euthyphro.” In West and West 1998, 41–61.

Plato. *The Laws of Plato*. Translated by Thomas L. Pangle. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Plato. “Minos.” In *the Roots of Political Philosophy: Ten Forgotten Socratic Dialogues*. Translated and edited by Thomas L. Pangle, 53–66. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Plato. *Phaedo*. Translated by Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage and Eric Salem. Newburyport, MA: Focus, 1998.

Plato. “Plato's Apology of Socrates.” In West and West 1998, 63–97.

Plato. “Protagoras.” In *Plato in Twelve Volumes*. Translated by Lamb, W. R. M. Vol. 3. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

Plato. *The Republic of Plato*. Translated by Allan Bloom. 2nd ed. New York: Basic Books, 1991.

Plato. *Symposium*. Translated by Seth Benardete. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.

Plato and Aristophanes. *Four Texts on Socrates*. Translated by Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998.

Plutarch. “Numa.” In *Plutarch's Lives*. Translated by Bernadette Perrin. Edited by William Heinemann. Vol. 1. London, Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1959.

Posner, David M. “The Temple of Reading: Architectonic Metaphor in Rabelais.” *Renaissance Studies* 17 (2003): 257–274.

Pritzl, Kurt. “Aristotle and Happiness After Death: Nicomachean Ethics 1. 10–11.” *Classical Philology* 78 (1983): 101–111.

Rabelais, François. *The Complete Works of Rabelais*. Translated by Donald Frame. Berkeley and L.A.: University of California Press, 1991.

Rabelais, François. *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Translated by Sir Thomas Urquhart and Pierre Motteux. New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 2005.

Rabelais, François. *Œuvres Complètes*. Edited by Mireille Huchon. Paris: Gallimard, 1994.

Rees, Valery. "The Care of the Soul: States of Consciousness in the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit." *Aries: Journal for the Study of Western Esotericism* 8 (2008): 1–19.

Regosin, Richard L. "The Ins(Ides) and Outs(Ides) of Reading: Plural Discourse and the Question of Interpretation in Rabelais." In La Charité 1986, 59–71.

Reichenberger, Kurt. "Studien Zu Rabelais' Rechtsdenken." In *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme Et Renaissance* . Vol. 22, 185–191, 1960.

Rigolot, François. *Les Langages De Rabelais*. Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1972/2009.

Rigolot, François. "Pantagruelion." In Chesney Zegura 2004, 176–177.

Rigolot, François. "Rabelais's Laurel for Glory: A further Study of the 'Pantagruelion." *Renaissance Quarterly* 42 (1989): 60–77.

Roberts, Hugh. *Dog's Tales: Representations of Ancient Cynicism in French Renaissance Texts*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006.

Rosari, Corinne, Corina Cojocariu, Claudia Ricci, and Adriana Spiridon. "*Devoir* et l'evidentialité En Français Et En Roumain." *Discours* 1 (2007): 2–14.

Rudolph, Duane A. "Rereading Rabelais' Sacred Noise." *Renaissance and Reformation* 29 (2005): 23–40.

Saulnier, Verdun–Louis. "L'Énigme Du Pantagruélion, Ou: Du *Tiers* au *Quart Livre*." In *Études Rabelaisiennes.* Vol. 1, 48–72, 1956.

Saulnier, Verdun–Louis. *Rabelais: Rabelais Dans Son Enquete, La Sagesse De Gargantua, Le Dessein De Rabelais* . Paris: SEDES, 1982.

Saulnier, Verdun–Louis. *Rabelais II, Rabelais Dans Son Enquête: Étude Sur Le Quart Et Le Cinquième Livre*. Vol. 2. Paris: SEDES, 1982.

Schoeb, Geneviève, Martin Belzile, Audrey Brassard, Lisa–Marie Desruisseaux, Corinne Potvin, and et al. "The Perceived Equity and Equality of Sexual Practices Scale: Validation of a Measure of Equity and Equality within Couples." *The Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality* 22 (2013): 25–39.

Schwartz, Jerome. *Irony and Ideology in Rabelais: Structures of Subversion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Screech, Michael Andrew. *Rabelais*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979.

Screech, Michael Andrew. *The Rabelaisian Marriage: Aspects of Rabelais' Religion, Ethics and Comic Philosophy*. London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1958.

Secor, Harry R. "Rabelais." In *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation, Volume 3 (N–Z)*. Edited by Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas B. Deutscher. Vol. 3, 129. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.

Segal, Jeffrey A. and Harold Spaeth. *The Supreme Court and the Attitudinal Model Revisited*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Shaw, David J. "The Book Trade Comes of Age: The Sixteenth Century." In *A Companion to the History of the Book*. Edited by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose, 220–231. Malden, MA: Wiley–Blackwell, 2009.

Silk, Mark. "Numa Pompilius and the Idea of Civil Religion in the West." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72 (2004): 863–896.

Silver, Isidore. "La Prima Fortuna Di Omero Nel Rinascimento Francese." *Convivium* 29 (1956): 30; 560–49; 578.

Skinner, Quentin. *Visions of Politics, Volume II: Renaissance Virtues.* Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Stevens, Linton C. "Rabelais and Aristophanes." *Studies in Philology* 55 (1958): 24–30.

Stone, Donald. "A Word about the Prologue to Gargantua." *Romance Notes* 13 (1972): 511–514.

Strauss, Leo. *What is Political Philosophy?, and Other Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959.

Sullivan, Vickie B. *Machiavelli's Three Romes: Religion, Liberty, and Politics Reformed.* DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996.

Tarcov, Nathan. “Machiavelli's Critique of Religion.” *Social Research* 81 (2014): 193–216.

Thucydides. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Richard Crawley. Edited by Robert B Strassler. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998.

Vance, Jacob. “Duty, Conciliation, and Ontology in the *Essais*.” In *Montaigne After Theory, Theory After Montaigne*, 75–99. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009.

Vetters, Carl. “Les Verbes Modaux Pouvoir et Devoir en Français.” *Revue Belge De Philology Et d’histoire* 82 (2004): 657–671.

Viroli, Maurizio. *Machiavelli's God*. Translated by Antony Shugaar. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Viroli, Maurizio. “Machiavelli's Realism.” *Constellations* 14, (2007): 466–482.

Voltaire. *Œuvres Complètes*, edited by Moland. Vol. XXVI. Paris: Garnier, 1877–1885.

Von Der Luft, Eric. “Sources of Nietzsche’s ‘God is Dead!’ and its Meaning for Heidegger.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45 (1984): 263–276.

Walker, John A. “Review of *the Wine and the Will: Rabelais’s [Sic] Bacchic Christianity* by Florence Weinburg.” *Renaissance and Reformation* 10 (1974): 130–131.

Weinberg, Florence. *The Wine and the Will: Rabelais's Bacchic Christianity*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1972.

Winandy, André. “Rabelais’ Barrel.” *Yale French Studies* 50 (1974): 8–25.

Xenophon. “Memorabilia.” In *Xenophon in Seven Volumes*. Translated by Marchant, E. C., edited by Marchant, E. C. Vol. 4. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.

Xenophon. “Oeconomicus.” In *The Shorter Socratic Writings*. Edited and Translated by Robert C. Bartlett. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996.

Xenophon. “Symposium.” In Marchant 1979.

Zuckert, Catherine. *Plato's Philosophers: The Coherence of the Dialogues*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009.