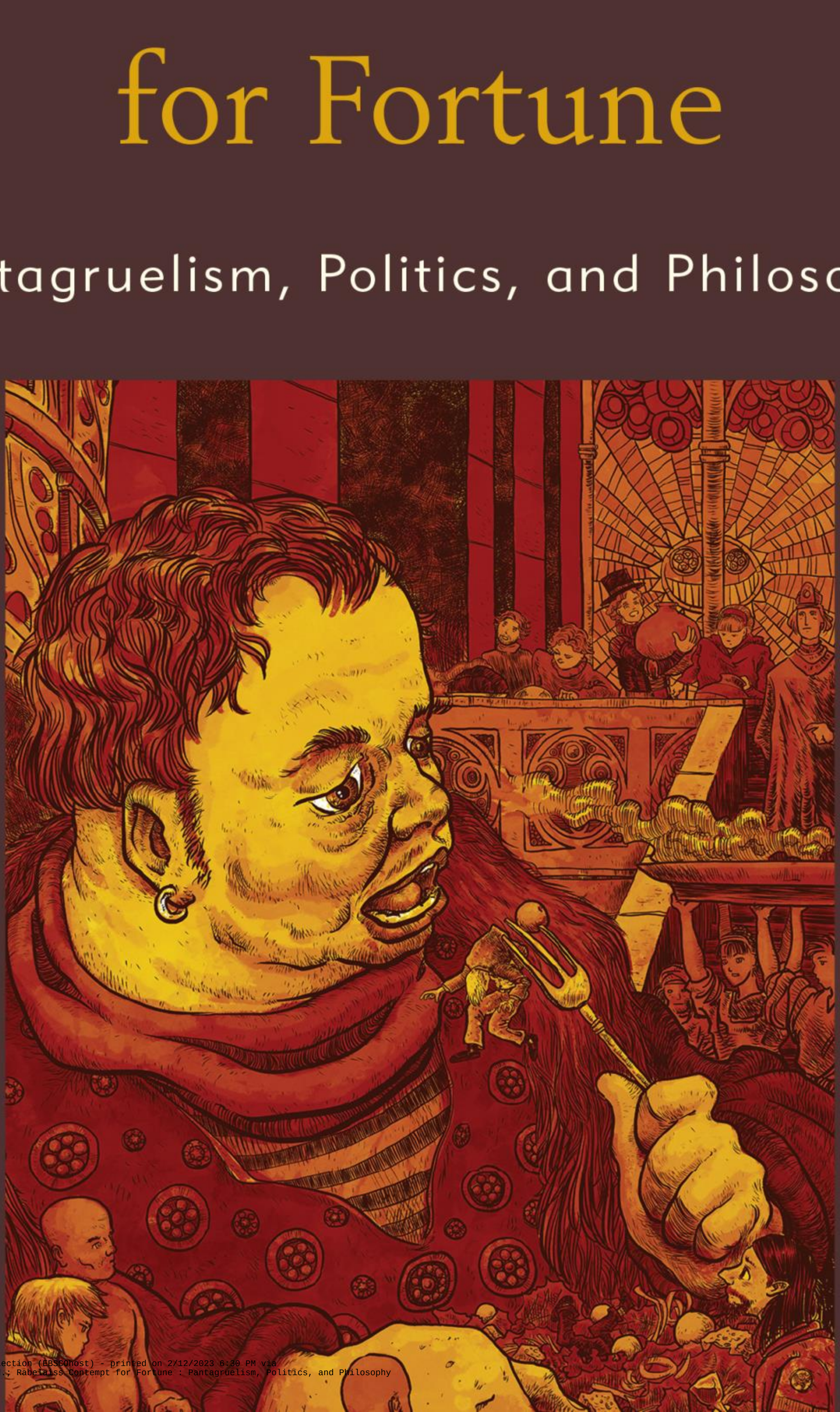
Timothy Haglund

Rabelais's Contempt for Fortune

Pantagruelism, Politics, and Philosophy



Rabelais’s Contempt for Fortune

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Pantagruelism, Politics, and Philosophy

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For Richard Ruderman

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Chapter One

Our Religion, the Political State, and 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; the first in the dramatic sequence but the second published), *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, *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*, reflect the mirrors-of-princes genre ex-

emplified 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 *querelle 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) reveal a 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*, 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), on how a husband might maintain a wife's fidelity, the moral of which makes any cultivated person blush.[4] Looking back from here, the "lofty sacraments" of the *Gargantua* prologue seem a bit grandiose.

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

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 as such, 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; la 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 a religious institution, an idealized abbey, Thélème (*G* 52). Panurge's "personal" marriage question in the *Tiers Livre* 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 condition.

Panurge's marriage problem most tightly links these political, religious, and private spheres. The Christian tradition uses marriage to represent Jesus's relationship to his church.[5] Marriage also serves as a public declaration and 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, between interest and obligation, 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 problem not of marriage but of fortune,[7] much in the manner of peers of Rabelais such as Machiavelli. Even Machiavelli merely drew from an existing tradition dating from antiquity when he described fortune as a feminized concept, and he was not the only Renaissance writer to do so.[8] Machiavelli's real innovation was attributing frailty to Fortuna. As Hannah Pitkin notes with masterfully executed understatement, "the means of coping with [Fortuna] that [Machiavelli] suggests are not those usually applied to divinities."[9]

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 especially *TL* 27–35). Panurge looks foolhardy during these admonitions. Far from affirming Machiavelli's instruction to beat fortune like a woman, Rabelais dramatizes Panurge learning that his future *femme*—*femme* meaning both woman and wife—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

Allow me to further compare Machiavelli and Rabelais to illustrate the difference. 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).[10] 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 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 (Callimaco, disguised) to "take the brunt" of the mandrake potion by sleeping with Lucrezia.

Harvey Mansfield argues that Nicia, whose "stupidity" receives several remarks,[11] 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."[12]

"But why is that necessarily stupid?" Mansfield asks.[13] The answer? Most people take monogamy for granted as something desirable and therefore think less of those unable to keep their partner monogamous. In other words, most people mistake the moral for the successful. 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 Nicia, refuses to take such a step.) As Nicia attests early in the play, his desire for children gives him the will "to do anything."[14]

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], 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.

This principle 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."[15] This end includes not only the changing of morals but the perpetuation of Nicia's family's political power in Florence at any cost. Similarly, in Rabelais's writing, 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 active rule over it. Panurge does not just assume his wife's loving loyalty.

So too, 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 belief in a remedy for political success. Where classical philosophy shied from politics,[16] Panurge proposes a political "teaching" [enseigne] that he announces as a "new manner of building walls" [une maniere bien nouvelle de bastir les murailles] (*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,[17] Rabelais's book differs from Machiavelli's writings in equal proportion. 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 morally suspicious 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 that Machiavelli denied.

More can be said about how cuckoldry points to a political problem. Just as partners in marriage strive for fidelity, civic-minded people work to maintain a good relationship with their country, their community, their regime, which—as Machiavelli's *Prince* stresses[18]—is always open to 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 minority group must therefore watch what others think about them, as they remain seemingly 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.

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.[19] As Donald Frame writes of those military expeditions, they ironically "resulted in the cultural conquest of France by Italy."[20] Rabelais's eventual residence, Lyon, thereafter developed a printing industry interested 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."[21] At any rate, Rabelais had found a local printer for *Pantagruel*, his first book, in 1532.

Rabelais also 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 francophone world until decades later, with the circulation and reception of Innocent Gentillet's *Anti-Machiavel*.[22]

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. (*CW*, 758; italics mine.)

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.

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 effect, I carry out a comparative study. However, throughout my work I point to Rabelais's many allusions that, I believe, 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," which are so akin to Panurge's "new manner of building walls." 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."[23] This mask obscures Rabelais's intention and purifies his readership so that only the "precious topers" and "most illustrious drinkers"—philosophic readers, I argue—receive his message. Rabelais recommends two modes of reading to this audi-

ence: 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 what I call *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 of Rabelais's books 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 of how the life of thought is perceived 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 intellectual independence so cherished by older thinkers such as Diogenes.

Pantagruelism recognizes the virtues of both the Diogenic and Machiavellian-Panurgian 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 rather clearly 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? They curtail, it seems, intellectual life.

In light of the necessity- and duty-bound character of the Utopian regime, chapter 5 explores the concept of duty, especially its place in Machiavelli's writings as well as in Panurge's eulogy of *debtes* in chapters 2–5 of the *Tiers Livre*. Machiavellian duty conceals self-interest. This is precisely 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 and frankly problematic self-interestedness of Diogenes. But Pantagruel, in turn, corrects Machiavelli's and Panurge's 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 a system of 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.[24] 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 actually 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 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,[25] a human attribute or quality that rejects both the complete intelligibility and the complete mysteriousness of the cosmos. This view of nature comports well with the tenets of Pantagruelism.

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 *Gar-*

gantua, he shows little interest in how states interact. Rabelais instead seeks an answer to the more pressing question of how intellectual life 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 those who pursue the life of the mind face public pressures. Rabelais concerns himself with the intellectual'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.

NOTES

1. 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. Donald Frame (Berkeley: 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).

2. Ullrich Langer, "*Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*: The political education of the king," in *The Cambridge Companion to Rabelais* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 111.

3. The tamer translation used by Urquhart. 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.

5. Mark 2:19; John 3:29. I use the ESV translation for all biblical references. *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]."

7. See, for example, 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. Hannah Fenichel Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Berkeley: 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.

9. Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman*, 144.

10. See "Introduction" in Niccolò Machiavelli, *Mandragola*, 2nd, trans. Mera J. Flaumenhaft (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1981), 2: "The Prologue to Machiavelli's *Clizia* acknowledges its source in Roman comedy (Plautus' *Casina*) . . . ."

11. See, for example, Machiavelli, *Mandragola*, 1.3 (17); 2.4 (23).

12. Machiavelli, *Mandragola*, 1.6 (25).

13. Harvey C. Mansfield, "The Cuckold in Machiavelli's *Mandragola*," in *The Comedy & Tragedy of Machiavelli: Essays on the Literary Works* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 28.

14. Machiavelli, *Mandragola*, 1.2 (16).
15. Mansfield, "Cuckold," 1.
16. See Plato, "The Apology of Socrates," in *Four Texts on Socrates*, trans. Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 31d. See also Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 496d.
17. See Edwin M. Duval, *The Design of Rabelais's* Tiers Livre de Pantagruel, vol. 34, Études Rabelaisiennes (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1997), 194.
18. See, for example, Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, 2nd, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 3.13–16.
19. Machiavelli, *Prince*, 3.9; 7.30.
20. See Rabelais, *The Complete Works of François Rabelais*, 3–18. For more on Rabelais's connections to Italy, see R. A. Cooper, "Rabelais et l'Italie: Les lettres 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).
21. Willis Bowen, "Sixteenth Century French Translations of Machiavelli," *Italica* 27 (1978): 313.
22. Gary Ianziti, "Rabelais and Machiavelli," *Romance Notes* 16 (1975): 463.
23. Voltaire, "Lettres à S. A. Mgr. le Prince dexxx sur Rabelais," in *Œuvres Complètes* (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 Donald Frame, *François Rabelais: A Study* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 175.
24. 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. I focus on the banquet consultations because they are central to the book and are orchestrated by Pantagruel.
25. Plato, *Republic*, 511d.

Chapter Two

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 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 mode of thinking and writing.[1]

Nobody denies that Rabelais embodies this pesky Renaissance tendency that Skinner identifies. If readers of Rabelais agree on anything, it is on the difficulty of interpreting Rabelais's books. Consensus quickly breaks down, however, regarding what makes these books such hard reading. To borrow a fitting turn of phrase from Rabelais's narrator, the "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 and humor. Scholars have taken to calling 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 biting sarcasm 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 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 undecid-

able," 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 the matter 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 we 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 and resolves them just as easily as earlier interpretive theories did (that is, a tad too easily)? 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

Arthur Melzer might say so. In his work on the history of hermeneutics, politics, and philosophy, Melzer observes a widespread phenomenon that postmodern Rabelaisianism exemplifies well. 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 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.

I submit that the question of how to read Rabelais remains unsettled. But in the following discussion, 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 Rabelais's audience 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 signifi-

cantly 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. 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 ascendant contemporarily with the author, one that had aimed 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 the grotesque body"?[13] 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."[14] If Winandy correctly interprets the meaning of drinking in Rabelais's books, then Rabelais could not be anything further from a philosopher.[15]

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.

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). Far from vulgar epicureans, this readership learns 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. Poets and philosophers have turbulent relationships with the political powers because they articulate dissident opinions. 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.

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. And 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 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.[16]

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 Bakhtin's "carnivalesque" Rabelais against Freccero's misogynistic Rabelais, readers can see that different opinions regarding the intended audience help determine how the works themselves are understood.

Studies following Bakhtin typically argue that Rabelais places sixteenth century ideologies in "ironic" opposition such that no outlook triumphs.[17] 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 uniformly lack authority.

But 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 influence such as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Thomas, Erasmus, and the Bible.[18] By widening the 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. [19]

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."[20] For Bakhtin, the category of Carnival or "the carnivalesque" refers to a social but pre-political 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."[21] By 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.

Note that 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 characters, as in the case of Rabelais himself. This view of philosophy is especially damaging, however, because it does not recognize that philosophic texts can be counter-cultural far more often than he supposes, expressing a 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 that Bakhtin highlighted. 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.[22] 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.[23]

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.[24] 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 in its utter backwardness. 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.

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."[25] 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 democratizing 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,[26] Freccero's interpretation emphasizes the blatant injustice that the hyper-masculine Pa-

nurge commits against the female character. For Freccero, Rabelais's writings at their best exude "masculinity and male friendship."[27] 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.

RABELAIS'S INTERPRETIVE BENEVOLENCE

Both Bakhtin and Freccero work from the premise that Rabelais wrote for a popular audience as a writer who merely interacted with 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). (Lucilius' protest implies, by the way, that the author had to convince others who thought they knew who constituted his audience better than he did.) In citing Lucilius, 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 transpolitical 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"—the natural distinction that he makes between drinkers and non-drinkers ensures a small following.

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*.

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, Cave, Jeanneret, and Rigolot seek to dissuade readers from embarking on the search for "substantific marrow" that Rabelais encourages them to make by pointing out that just lines later Rabelais blames contemporary interpreters of Homer for conjuring new, unintended meanings.[28] 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 liberal "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, via subtle textual evidence, Rabelais's covert association with Freemasonry.)[29] 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). 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—and that they must not throw up their hands and give up if they are to learn from the books.

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" (*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.[30] 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."[31] As Eva Brann argues, this Heraclitean fragment enjoins us to refrain from profiling the person giving the argument, that 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 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.[32]

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 and conformity with custom, 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, postrational 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.

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 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. (*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, as Alcofribas points out, 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 too many into thinking that he is not a fool.)

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 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.

Let us return to Alcofribas' speech to think about the moral aspect of Rabelais's writing and how readers should respond to it. 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.[33]

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]."[34] In keeping with Montaigne's assessment, others in Rabelais's circle of *évangéliques* were kept under close watch, and even the secretary of Jean du Bellay, Jean Bribart, was burned at the stake.[35] 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 that resulted in the Affair of Placards.[36] 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.[37]

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 atheistic skeptics who "held that they themselves were no different from dogs and pigs."[38]

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.[39] 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." Yet the mood of the 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.

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 or serious to say. Voltaire's impatient dismissal of Rabelais as a "drunken philosopher who wrote only when he was drunk" is instructive here. 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 walk away when faced with the deluge of apparent nonsense inside Rabelais's books.

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 disbelief and callousness. (This is to say nothing of esotericism's alleged kinship with an outdated, antidemocratic elitism.)

Yet Rabelais's marrow is emphatically not Lucretius's chalice of poison with honey around the rim.[40] Rabelais's writing may not exactly affirm belief or myth, but Rabelais insists that reading his books will not feel like walking into an open elevator shaft. 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.

RENAISSANCE THOUGHT: CHILDISH EXUBERANCE OR COMMENDABLE ZEAL?

As I have already mentioned, reading according to Rabelais's directives requires interpretive precision or philosophical benevolence, an ability that Rabelais realized even morally 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 among contemporaries that Rabelais sought to correct.

Nietzsche and the "Historical Sense" of the Renaissance

For our purposes, *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. . . .[41]

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 Renaissance move-

ment 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.

The Enlighteners 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 "semibarbarism," 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.[42] 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.

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.[43]

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.[44]

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."[45] 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 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 book learning. Machiavelli deplored such premises and readings for preventing the public-spirited of his age from the resources they needed to improve 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 antiphilosophic malevolence). When Alcofribas Nasier 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 read themselves into texts and ignore or rather hijack authorial intent for their own purposes. 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, 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 mistreatment 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. 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," as the Rabelaisians contend, readers will eventually figure this out. But if one assumes, with scant 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, never thinking about what Rabelais has to say "not only concerning our religion, but also the political state and domestic life" (*G* prol, 7 / *CW*, 4).

NOTES

1. Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Volume II: Renaissance Virtues* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 266. See also Arthur Melzer, *Philosophy Between the Lines: The Lost History of Esoteric Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 209. In his discussion of pedagogical esotericism, Melzer mentions the early moderns' (that is, Bacon's, Hobbes', and Spinoza's) "flight from ambiguity."

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); 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' 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.

3. John A. Walker, "Review of *The Wine and the Will: Rabelais's Bacchic Christianity*, by Florence Weinberg," *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); Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1979); Michael Baraz, "Un texte polyvalent: le prologue de *Gargantua*," in *Société Français des Seizémistes, 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 *Rabelais's Incomparable Book: Essays on His Art*, ed. Raymond C. La Charité (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 *Rabelais's Incompar-*

able Book: Essays on His Art, ed. Raymond C. La Charité (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1986), 59–71; Raymond C. La Charité, "'Lecteurs et lectures dans le Prologue du *Gargantua*," in *Rabelais en son demi-millénaire: Actes du Colloque International de Tours (24–29 Septembre 1984)*, ed. Jean Céard and Jean-Claude Margolin, Études Rabelaisiennes (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.

6. Floyd Gray, "Reading the works of Rabelais," in *The Cambridge Companion to Rabelais*, ed. John O'Brien (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 15; 16; 21; 18; 24. 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*, ed. Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose (Malden, MA: Wiley–Blackwell, 2009), 220–231.

7. François Cornilliat, "Interpretation in Rabelais, interpretation of Rabelais," in *The Cambridge Companion to Rabelais*, ed. John O'Brien (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 44.

8. Melzer, *Between the Lines*, 106–107.

9. Beaujour, *Le Jeu*, 9.

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

11. Richard Berrong, *Rabelais and Bakhtin* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 109.

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

13. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 279.

14. 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 André Winandy, "Rabelais' Barrel," *Yale French Studies* 50 (1974): 10; 16; 11; 10; 17.

15. 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, IL: Wayne State University Press, 1972).

16. 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," *gnothi seauton*. 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: "the guidance of God" and the "company of man." These subjects, piety and justice, have precursors in Socratic philosophy. See, e.g., *Memorabilia* 4.3 and 4.4.

17. See Holquist, "Bakhtin and Rabelais: Theory as Praxis," 12; Jerome Schwartz, *Irony and Ideology in Rabelais: Structures of Subversion* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

18. Chief among these readings would be that of Michael Screech. See, e.g., Screech, *Rabelais* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979). See also N. H. Clement, "The Eclecticism of Rabelais," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 42 (1927): 339–384; Abel Lefranc, *Rabelais: Études sur Gargantua, Pantagruel, le Tiers Livre* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1953); George Mallary Masters, *Rabelaisian Dialectic and the Platonic-Hermet-*

ic 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 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), Before the publication of Bakhtin's book, Lefranc, Saulnier, and Screech had exposited by far the most influential interpretations of Rabelais.

19. Bakhtin, *World*, 132–133.

20. Ibid., 3.

21. Ibid., 15; See Holquist, "Bakhtin and Rabelais: Theory as Praxis," 13.

22. 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.

23. Carla Freccero, *Father Figures: Genealogy and Narrative Structure in Rabelais* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), ix.

24. See Wayne C. Booth, "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism," *Critical Inquiry* 9 (1982): 45–76.

25. Freccero, *Father Figures,* ix.

26. 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, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 139.

27. See Carla Freccero, "Feminism, Rabelais, and the Hill/Thomas Hearings: Return to a Scene of Reading," in *Francois 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),˘ 182âAS¸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.

28. 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 for more examples of this reading of the prologue.

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

30. See especially Gendre 1974, Duval 1985, and Demerson 1989 in n. 4 above.

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

32. 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.

33. 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.

34. 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.

35. See Frame, "Introduction," in *CW*, xxxi.

36. See Shaw, "The Book Trade Comes of Age," 225.

37. Frame, "Introduction," xxxi.

38. 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 13:11, 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."

39. Emily Butterworth, "Scandal in Rabelais's Tiers Livre: Divination, Interpretation, and Edification," *Renaissance and Reformation* 34 (2011): 29. 55 Ibid, 35; 37.

40. See Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, trans. Walter Englert (Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2003), 93.

41. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1989), 151.

42. See John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration: Humbly Submitted*, ed. James H. Tully (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Co, 1983).

43. 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.

44. Indeed, works by authors such as Erasmus cited ancient political philosophy as often as or more frequently than Scripture. See, for example, 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." When he speaks of ancient "examples," Machiavelli may mean that readers have only recourse to the thoughts—that is, not the deeds—of the ancients.

45. Machiavelli, *DL*, I. preface. 6. Italics mine.

Chapter Three

Philosophers as Citizens: 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 viewing his body of work broadly. 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*. Whereas the first two installations of Rabelais's series involve two different wars, the third ushers in an era of peace. Rabelais's cast of characters turns to a fitting question for such an era, that of whether one of the main characters, Panurge, should marry. During this transition, Panurge begins to think about life ahead and wonders about domestic happiness. 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 Uto-

pians 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 a regime like the one Machiavelli recommends and appears as a problem that Machiavelli had not anticipated for it.

Scholars have 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.[3] 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).[4] Albert Cherel, in his older study on Machiavelli's influence in France, even gives Rabelais the honor of having made "[t]he first French protestation" against him.[5] Contra Ianziti, a scholar like Cherel might point out that whereas Machiavelli asserts that princes who successfully acquire will always be "praised,"[6] Rabelais protests that "ill got things perish ill" (*TL* 1, 356 / *CW*, 263). This latter perception of Rabelais as stout anti-Machiavellian prevails.[7] 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."[8]

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

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). Pantagruelists, again, make the best case for another's argument. They read charitably and extend the benefit of the doubt, with both moral and philosophic benevolence. 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 starkly 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 had 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, lest the public suspect all philosophers as fellow Diogenesians. 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 explore 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 same basic charge of "slacking and idling" that was leveled against Diogenes. 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 (what I call "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 *unphilosophic* 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, which is 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 in both cases they bring about a detrimental, because obviously selfish, concern for the good of the philosophic enterprise.

DIOGENISM: THE APOLITICAL PRECURSOR TO PANTAGRUELISM

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 of his (*TL* prol, 348 / *CW*, 256). 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 is curious. The recurrent images of drinking in *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* bring to mind Plato's *Symposium* and *Laws*, after all. And in Bacbuc's interpretation of the Divine Bottle in the *Cinquiesme Livre*, 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.[9] Yet according to tradition, Diogenes lived so austerely that he threw away his water cup after he witnessed a small boy drinking from his hands.[10] One wonders if Diogenes had any longings at all.

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 and stands higher than the Aristotelian philosopher. 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, as his philosophic works certainly dealt with politics. 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 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 and not keep the sun off [him]."[11] In making this smart response, Diogenes differs starkly from Rabelais's contemporary Machiavelli, who says he "submits entirely" to the Macedonian order created by Philip and Alexander.[12] Whereas Diogenes displays utter disregard for politics and worldly desires, Machiavelli all but forsakes philosophy and claims to serve the powerful hand and foot.[13]

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" and "*une clé*" to Rabelais himself, as a form of philosophic ridicule directed at the city.[14] 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).[15] By assigning a serious and real "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. The case is not so black and white. 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.[16]

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, even in this passage: he watched and thought "for a few days." The eleven years 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 the tools of theory and thought, 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, as systems of thought that emphasize "practicality" so often do.

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 his 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[17] nor the formidable bringer of new gods.[18] 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. Nonphilosophers cannot always easily 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.

Not all of the characters in Rabelais's book respond the same way to the problem of fortune. Now let us examine how Rabelais portrays the Machiavellian response.

MACHIAVELLIANISMS

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 of Machiavellianism. As Cambridge historian Jonathan Haslam notes, "Any explicit association with [Machiavelli's] ideas risked condemnation and worse."[19] Indeed, there is no explicit mention of the relatively orthodox Erasmus in Rabelais's published works, let alone of Machiavelli.

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, on my reading, 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 follow that a table is a dog. I will try to overcome the 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.[20] The meaning of the term, at least for Rabelais, 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 woman—just as Machiavelli did.[21] There is more evidence to consider beside Panurge's overriding concern for fortune.[22] 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, in other words, as a 'sheer individual' who in Machiavelli's terms depends solely on his virtue [*virtù*]. 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, much as Machiavelli considered himself as one taking up such a role.

Chapter 16 of *Pantagruel* provides a detailed description of Panurge's "ways and dispositions." There, the narrator Alcofribas' 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 modern readers, 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.[23] He fancies "theft furtively perpetrated" (*P* 16, 272 / *CW*, 186), and Alcofribas lists the items 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, in violation of the accepted procedures, 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).[24] 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."[25] 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, extramoral measures must be taken to ensure the proper outcomes.

Machiavellianism: A House Divided

Through Diogenes, Rabelais has laid out the political problem that faces philosophy. On the one hand, the city despises its practitioners' indolence when it needs *all* citizens to aid in its protection from the vagaries of the future. 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 might 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 effectively 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 on Livy*. But then Panurge gives a harsh critique of such sacrificial 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[26] of the citizens and inhabitants." (*P* 15, 267–268 / *CW*, 183)

Like that of Agesilaus, Pantagruel's kingdom is upheld by civic virtue.[27] 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 construction of strong walls around Paris,[28] 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 citizens to it.[29]

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."[30] Like Pantagruel, Machiavelli supports the pro-virtue, anti-fortress position with an Agesilausean adage: "Wherefore

when a Spartan was asked by an Athenian if the walls of Athens seemed to him beautiful, he responded, 'Yes, if they were inhabited by women.'"[31] 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). 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.[32] 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? 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"[33] 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 terms just as unequivocal as Panurge's. 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 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."[34] By this Laertius means that Diogenes possessed a psychological ability to accept his lot and not try to take action against it. 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.[35] 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 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 its people 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 speaks to the issue of reputation 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.[36] In the often neglected second half of the chapter, 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.[37] Machiavelli contends that success in human affairs relies, as Panurge argues, on reconciling or combining the necessity of vice with the mere image of virtue. The two daughters that Panurge met had not accomplished this feat only because of their father's wise vigilance. But 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. Machia-

velli 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 of danger, eager for gain."[38] Rabelais's pitting of Pantagruel (as the classical representative, or as the classical Machiavellian when Machiavelli inclines that way) against Panurge (as the more typical, 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? Taking all of this in Rabelais's spirit of moral benevolence, perhaps Machiavelli's support of virtue can be interpreted as an effort to show that philosophers care about the wellbeing 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,"[39] a view that sunders the civic virtue exemplified by the good citizen. Thus in the penultimate chapter of *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.[40] The virtue of dam-building requires a proactiveness 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 actually asking for lives. No "wall of bone" is necessary. 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.

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

Diogenes and Machiavelli (and Machiavelli himself, throughout his body of work) represent a tension between independence and responsibility that philosophy cannot easily resolve. Like Machiavelli, Rabelais sees that Diogenic tubrolling 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 intellectually 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

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."[41] 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,"[42] and that those who follow Pantagruelism will not "come to ruin," as Machiavelli suggests they will.[43] 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).[44]

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 Egyptians abhorred the gifts Ptolemy brought before them, Rabelais "oscillates between hope and fear" because the French people may confuse the service of his authorship and writing with offense just as the Egyptians had (*TL* prol, 350 / *CW*, 258). The Egyptian case indicates that Machiavelli's position on human nature 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. Rabelais then 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). But he is aware of these special interests in a way that Ptolemy was not aware of his fellow Egyptians.

Pettifoggers and nitpicking sticklers cloak themselves in law and use its conservative disposition to protect themselves. 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

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* (examined later, in chapter 5) 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 as-

sume 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.[45]

The second salutary effect of Pantagruelism, and the one that Rabelais emphasizes, relates to the interpreter. Pantagruel himself 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 piece of furniture after stubbing a toe on it. Both resign 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.

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,"[46] 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.[47]

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.[48] Other researchers can evaluate the validity of Parel's thesis about the 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."[49] 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. Much of the difference in attitude toward political progress between Rabelais and Machiavelli stems from their understandings of the role ignorance plays in political decision-making.

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 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."[50] If the dam-building virtue is "put" everywhere, so to speak, then everything enters the bounds of human 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.[51] 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 "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, through his own example, 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 she or 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. 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.[52] 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. 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 simply agree with Achilles that it is better to be a slave on earth than king of Hades.[53] 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.[54] The best rulers—the philosophers—would rule reluctantly. They would love private life but give up that love because of their justice.[55] 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[56] 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 than it is because the memory of the pleasures of thought linger. The ruler would even be seen philosophizing from time to time, when conditions allowed (*P* 9, 246 / *CW*, 163).[57]

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. Pantagruel reminds us that philosophers embrace the moral sense and—most philosophically—for-

get 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.

NOTES

1. Compare with *Prince*, 7.48.
2. See *Prince*, 5.21; *DL*, 2.21.1–2; 2.32.1–2.
3. 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.
4. 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."
5. "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.
6. See *Prince*, 3.14.
7. 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.'"
8. Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, 1372.
9. 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.
10. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, ed. and trans. A. Robert Caponigri (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1969), 137.
11. Arrian, *The Campaigns of Alexander*, trans. Aubrey De Sélincourt, ed. J. R. Hamilton (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1971), 349–50.
12. Machiavelli, *Prince*, 8.57.
13. 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."
14. 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.
15. Frame translates "office et debvoir" as "business."
16. Roberts, *Dog's Tales*, 173.
17. See Plato, "Apology of Socrates," 23d1–2.
18. Ibid, 26b2–3.
19. Haslam, *No Virtue Like Necessity: Realist Thought in International Relations since Machiavelli* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 41.
20. 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.

21. Learned advice that Panurge receives regarding his future marriage will be the topic of chapter 6.
22. In the introduction I noted that Panurge's name derives from the Greek πάνουργος: "ready to do anything wicked or knavish."
23. Although see Aristophanes, "The Clouds," in West and West, *Four Texts*, 122 (lines 175–180).
24. Bridlegoose's jurisprudence plays a major role in chapter 6.
25. *Prince*, 15.61.
26. Frame translates "la vertus des citoyens et habitans" as "the valor of the citizens and inhabitants."
27. The anecdote about Agesilaus appears in Plutarch, *Moralia*, 210e29–30.
28. 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.
29. *DL*, 2.24.1–2.
30. Ibid, 2.24.4. Italics mine.
31. 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.
32. Ibid, 2.24.2–3.
33. See *Prince*, 15.61.
34. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 146.
35. 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."
36. *Prince*, 15.61.
37. Ibid, 15.62.
38. Ibid, 17.66.
39. See Ibid, 15.61
40. See Ibid, 25.98.
41. *DL*, 1.3.1.
42. Plato, *Republic*, 348c11.
43. Prince, 15.61.
44. The fact that Machiavelli's *Prince* is dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici gains significance here.
45. 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).
46. Anthony Parel, "Farewell to Fortune," *The Review of Politics* 75 (2013): 593.
47. See Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, 923–935; Frame, *Complete Works*, 747–56. I do not discuss Rabelais's *Prognostication* here, although doing so would emphasize the contrast between Rabelais and Machiavelli.
48. Parel, "Farewell," 593. See *Prince* 25.99.
49. Ibid, 25.101.
50. Ibid, 25.98.
51. 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.
52. See, for example, *P* 23, 298–299 / *CW*, 209–210.
53. 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."
54. Plato, *Republic*, 519c–d.
55. Ibid, 520e; see also 345e and 347c.

56. 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.

57. See also 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 Four

Interpreting Machiavelli Pantagruelically

LIFE IN UTOPIA

So far we have considered attempts made by Panurge's Machiavellianism and Pantagruel's Pantagruelism at solving the Diogenic problem laid out in the *Tiers Livre* prologue. 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.

Now let us 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 describe 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 questions or themes show up at various places in Machiavelli's body of work.[1]

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 mode of thinking about politics and to

scrutinize it. This portrayal and scrutinizing of Machiavelli's approach to political thought 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.

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 Utopia 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 civic 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 and for a well-founded community. First, though, 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 such a point of view. 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

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 using Machiavelli's analysis of communal origins in *Discourses* 1.1 as a template for Uto-

pia'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] into tyrannical and non-tyrannical ones 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 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]

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

Table 4.1.

Type	Origin	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)

> 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 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 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] Luke'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 likeminded realists do points back to the Diogenic problem laid out in Rabelais's prologue. Moreover, it 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 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, 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 (just think today of how liberal-democratic governments incentivize certain kinds of scientific research and neglect others). 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.

THE WILDERNESS OF DIPSODY

As in the case of Machiavelli's "successful" examples, Rabelais's 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, 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 has its costs.

If chapter 1 of the *Tiers Livre* calls into question the effects of necessity on political life, Rabelais's narrator 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,[20] 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.[21] The fear—let us call it political fear—that Machiavelli endorses prefigures the fear that Hobbes assigns to the leviathan.[22] It creates orderliness by stirring a passion in people stronger than the "wickedness" that makes them meddle with others. Machiavelli's fear-inducing prince also 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."[23]

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 "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's treatment suggests 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 can.[24] 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). When a ruler who has illegitimately gained power passes away (and thereby loses power), "the like scandal will lay upon the deceased; and his memory will be accursed as a wicked conqueror" (*TL* 1, 356 / *CW*, 263).[25] 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 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.[26] Machiavelli too recognizes that benefits are "held to be a burden" and comprise a strong claim on the beneficiaries,[27] 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.[28] Citizens would prefer life 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.[29] Hobbes basically agrees with, or extends, or deepens, Machiavelli's flatly stated opinion that religion abounds among "mountain men."[30]

That is, religion belongs to the uneducated. Thus, Hobbes predicted that religion would subside with the twin efforts of science explaining the unknown[31] 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.[32] 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.[33] 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,[34] but the details of Rabelais's description rule out this pos-

sibility. 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][35] 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 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 Jesus *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.[36]

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 that had stuck like thorns in the government's side.[37] 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 superstitious and pernicious paganism.[38]

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."[39] According to Machiavelli,

the basic issue for Numa was that he could not share his unique political 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."[40] Numa solved the asymmetry between wise ruler and unwise ruled by pointing to a higher authority whose "goodness and prudence"—though actually his—would be "marveled" at and, consequently, accepted.[41] 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* 1, 355 / *CW*, 262).

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."[42] 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.[43] 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 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 own "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."[44] 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.[45] 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, through the goodwill of the ruling class. If Rome's third king Ancus had continued or radicalized Numa's reforms, Machiavelli doubts Rome, by then "effeminate and the prey of its neighbors," would have survived.[46]

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 this 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.[47] 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.[48]

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.[49] But the content of Numa's religion—the rituals and doctrines he instituted—receive no special place in Machiavelli's analysis. This procedure is 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."[50] 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.[51] 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.[52]

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.[53] 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.[54] Plutarch and Rabelais see Numa's goal as one of moral-civic 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 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.)[55] 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.[56] 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. Plutarch's view notwithstanding, 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*.[57] His bloodlust far surpasses that of any other character in Rabelais's books. This point is important because, while today mainstream members of liberal societies recoil from all forms of religious violence, Rabelais's discussion of Terminalia defends religion against a criticism that authors such as Machiavelli advanced: religion enfeebles its adherents. 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 a necessary 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. This is what makes life for them more orderly, more predictable.

Leaders like Numa and Pantagruel save their people from slavery to exterior forces by making them submit to a gentler form of slavery at home called "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. Ultimately their different appraisal amounts to the difference in their goals and in what they believe politics can do. For Rabelais, placing too much confidence in political leadership is folly to begin with. His Numa is not culpable for the downfall of manly citizenliness in Rome, as for Machiavelli; the problem is believing that *any* mode of rule is sufficient for a community's thriving.

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, one could say, *explicitly* 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."[58]

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* 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."[59]

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 social 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.

NOTES

1. Cf. *DL*, 1.1; *Prince*, 7.48; *DL*, 1.11; 1.19.
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.
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.
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.
8. Ibid, 1.1.5.
9. Ibid, 1.1.3.
10. Ibid, 1.1.4.
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.
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., 1938/1968).
18. See Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, 6.83.
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.
20. *Prince*, 17.66.
21. Ibid, 17.67.

22. 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, IN: Hackett Publishing Co., 1994), 26.8; 46.36.
23. *Prince*, 21.91.
24. See *Prince*, 3.14.
25. 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.
26. Locke, "Second Treatise," in *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 303–311 (6.53–65).
27. *DL*, 1.29.1.
28. For a contrary argument, see Duval, *Design of the* Tiers Livre, 34.
29. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 46.29.
30. *DL*, 1.11.3.
31. As Machiavelli says of the 'unknown,' "Nor is this any miracle." *Prince*, 3.16.
32. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 13.9.
33. Ibid, 11.
34. See Langer, "The Political Education of the King," 107ff.
35. Traditionally, *seigneur* has been used in France as an epithet for Jesus.
36. See Matthew 1:21.
37. 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.
38. Silk, "Idea of Civil Religion," 871.
39. *DL*, 1.11.2.
40. Ibid, 1.11.3.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid, 1.11.1.
43. Ibid, 1.19.
44. Harvey Mansfield, *Machiavelli's New Modes and Orders: A Study of the Discourses on Livy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 90.
45. *DL*, 1.19.1.
46. Ibid, 1.19.4.
47. 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.
48. 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.
49. *DL*, 1.11.2–3.
50. Ibid, 1.12.1.
51. 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.
52. Plutarch, "Numa," *Plutarch's Lives*, vol. 1, trans. Bernadette Perrin, ed. William Heinemann (London; Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1959), 16.1.
53. Ibid, 16.2.
54. Ibid, 16.3–4.

55. 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" (*QL* 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.

56. Plutarch, "Numa," 16.1.

57. See, for example, *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 [. . .]."

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

59. 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 Five

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 political obstruction for philosophers who would prefer to mind their business and who bestow no obvious good or benefit on their home city. In Rabelais' *Tiers Livre* prologue, he 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 presents his own 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* is 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 these scenarios. Taking up this verb as a literary theme sheds light on the problem of the philosopher's relationship to society. Rabelais's works as a whole, we shall see, amplify the theme of *debvoir* through Panurge's ambivalence toward duty. Panurge's anti-duty teaching in chapter 15 of *Pantagruel* (examined above, in chapter 3) makes it difficult to understand, at least initially, why he suddenly appears as the champion of *debte* in the early parts of the *Tiers Livre*, immediately after the conquest of Dipsody and its reduction to a dutiful and obedient ward. Panurge's ambivalence toward duty makes more sense in light of the role *duty* plays in Machiavelli's writings as well as in light of what the civic requirement of duty means for the larger occupation of philosophy.

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."]. That is, *debvoir* correlates to both moral duties and natural necessities. Moreover, a debt is something owed to someone, but the reasons for that debt can differ vastly, such that debts can be owed in 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, mandatory duty. In so doing, he brings into focus and exacerbates the difference.[1]

Machiavelli's usage of the Italian noun *offizio*, deployed in the cases of Cesare Borgia and Liverotto da Fermo, compares quite interestingly with Panurge's eulogy of *debte*/*debvoir*. I will 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 can serve as a rebuttal of Machiavelli's position as well. Either stance has implications for the occupation of political philosophy. In so many words, Machiavelli's concealment of self-interest beneath duty appears, in Rabelais's terms, as a correction of the Diogenic defect of plain self-interestedness. But Pantagruel's response to Panurge's speech (*TL* 5) corrects both Diogenes's and Machiavelli's misguided solutions. Pantagruel shows that individualism (including that which philosophy depends on) can indeed justify itself before the community. Pantagruelic individualism is, I believe, 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."[2] Machiavelli's estimation seems paradoxical until readers realize that Borgia's misfortune consisted in his father, Alexander VI, providing for Borgia's good fortune by initiating his political career. Borgia's family connections in Ital-

ian politics meant that he never learned how to compete or how to rule through experience.[3] 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 he 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 (like us) 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."[4] 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," Machiavelli notes, "*did not fail to fulfill every kind of duty* to secure Signor Paolo, giving him money, garments, and horses,[5] so that their simplicity brought them into the duke's hands at Sinigaglia."[6] 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. For all of their cruelty and ambition, the Orsini ignored or forgot Machiavelli's advice on the mode of keeping faith.

So, in the first appearance of *offizio* in *The Prince*, Borgia duplicitously won over and eliminated the Orsini in large part by fulfilling duties to them. Machiavelli discusses *offizio* again in the following chapter. The topic there concerns princes who have achieved their rule criminally. It 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 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.[7]

Machiavelli invites comparison through the biographical details he provides about his cases. Unlike Borgia, whose father groomed him, Liverotto was orphaned and raised by his maternal uncle, Giovanni Fogliani. Liverotto may have also benefited 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 a fanfare, a public banquet, that would honor them both. 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."[8] Unlike Agathocles' Sicilian Senate that was lured by its power-lust, the citizens of Liverotto's Fermo were lured by their honor-seeking; and Liverotto's uncle, by his indebtedness. Machiavelli communicates that this is another instance warranting comparison when he writes 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,"[9] and thereby indicates a proximity of the fan to his object of admiration. Readers should be reminded of Borgia's deception at this 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 for others, 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.[10] 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."[11] 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.[12]

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.

PANURGE'S "EULOGY OF DEBTES"

In chapter 2 of the *Tiers Livre*, Pantagruel's Pantagruelism 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." 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)."[13]

Panurge's speech only meets half of this criteria for mock-seriousness. While Panurge maintains an elaborate form and ceremonious style, his subjects, debt and credit, do not match 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."[14] 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,[15] 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)

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."[16] 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."[17] The creditors are, so to speak, "invested" in Panurge. They see that their good is wrapped up with his.

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-daysayers, [his] perpetual speech-makers" (*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 their interactions with others. 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 expecting the honoring of debt contracts, and "come to ruin among so many who"—like Panurge—"are not good."[18] Panurge has imbibed the 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, he does not honor that system. Panurge professes faith without keeping it.

This is the function of his over-the-top praise of debt. Throughout Panurge's speech, he appears just as Machiavelli recommends one should appear: as "all mercy, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion."[19] 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 past speeches and to the (lack of) actions of Panurge for the truth.

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 speech, Panurge con-

stantly 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 finds an anchor for 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 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) that—despite its diversity of opinion in other cases—has always maintained that "debts" are made and fulfilled in the natural world.

But here 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.[20] *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 also, and perhaps primarily, intellectual. Philosophy and science depend, that is, on the existence and surety of "debt" understood as necessity.

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 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

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, as he declares, "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.[21] 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 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. [. . .]"[22] 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,[23] who frees sinners of their past servitude to sin—of their debts.[24] 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).

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.[25] 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," Pantagruel explains in support of his ancient citation, "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[26]) view, assumes resource scarcity. Human contrivance must add to natural and divine provision. Machiavelli could not believe Jesus when he says, in Matthew 7:7, "Ask and it will be given to you." 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.

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF DUTY FOR PHILOSOPHY

If the defect of ancient philosophy was, as Rabelais earlier insinuated through the tale of Diogenes, its plain self-interestedness, then it could be that Machiavelli's usage of *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."[27] The "common benefit" extends also to the benefactor, the

philosopher, and so delicately removes or obviates the pain of duty.[28] Socrates too claimed that he had bestowed benefits on the city of Athens, but he died for his benefaction.[29] But what if Machiavelli's philosophic dutifulness is more than merely painless and is actually calculated and abusive? Was this not so with the examples 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.[30] Diogenes implicitly endorses such a teaching through his indifference to the question of who rules the city. For 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 philosopher-king's—could ensure human happiness, however unlikely.)[31] 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)[32] 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, 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 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 of debt suggests the latter. Machiavelli commits what Plato's Socrates refers to as "the true lie."[33] 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"[34] (italics mine) and 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 of marriage that he wishes to lay 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 philosophic tradition, alongside Pantagruelism, against Panurge.

NOTES

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. 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 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."

2. *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."

3. 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."

4. Ibid, 7.28.

5. 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*.

6. Ibid, 7.29; italics mine.

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

8. Ibid, 8.36; italics mine.

9. Ibid, 8.37.

10. Ibid, 21.89.

11. Ibid, 21.90; italics mine.

12. Compare ibid 17.66 with 21.90.

13. Abrams and Harpham, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 36–37.

14. 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*.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. *Prince*, 10.44.

18. Ibid, 15.61.

19. Ibid, 18.70.

20. 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, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 40.

21. *Prince*, 18.69.

22. Ibid, 9.42.

23. 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).

24. 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– 6: “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.’”

25. Plato, *The Laws*, 843a2. The laws that Pantagruel points to are consistent with those other ancient property laws derived from the Terminalia festival instituted by Numa Pompilius.

26. 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.”

27. DL, 1. Preface. Elsewhere he calls his writings “useful” (Prince, 15.61).

28. Machiavelli’s benefaction would, by contrast, correspond to Panurge’s so-called “duty of marriage,” which culminates in sexual pleasure.

29. 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.”

30. Harvey Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov, “Introduction,” in DL, xxxviii.

31. Plato, *Republic*, 473d.

32. 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.

33. 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."

34. 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 Six

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 orchestrates a lunch 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, 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*, 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

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 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 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

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 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 or standard. 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 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 such mysterious power, 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 distant 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. Calvin might reply that fairness requires transparency, and that salvation appears severed from merit, only for those sinful or 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 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, he laments, into the realm of the "conditionals, which in dialectic admit of all 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] 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. 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 and 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 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:

> "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 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.

In the passage quoted above, 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 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.

THE RONDIBILIS CONSULTATION

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. Michael Screech enters this debate to say that Rabelais supported Plato's older conception of medicine, but only because it had been vindicated by the latest medical developments. He otherwise agrees with Antonioli about Rondibilis's scientific-medical progressivism. Others wonder whether Rondibilis's Platonism can be reconciled with Rabelais's favor for the the "experientialist" thinker, Galen.[34]

On the whole, attempts to describe the relation of Rondibilis to Rabelais have not been fruitful, and they have been made for a slight reason. Just as Rabelais practiced medicine, he also had personal connections to the monastery. He was not therefore endeared to monks.[35] Rather than conflate Rondibilis and Rabelais on the basis of shared attributes, interpreters should try to distinguish between, and keep separate, the author and his character. Maintaining this separation allows for a more sober consideration of what medicine brings to bear on the dramatic situation and why Rabelais thought the occupation 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. 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, a kind of medically-minded philosopher, was in the habit of making such accounting by "tailoring his speech for specific individuals."[36] In these ways, at least, the doctor who individualizes patients' treatments mimics the statesman and philosopher.[37]

If Plato depicts doctors as philosophic-political types, he also criticizes them for their presumptions and narrowness of vision. Eryximachus, a doctor who appears in Plato's Symposium, discusses love through "the nature of bodies"[38] understood as the physical attraction of bodies. His speech ex-

cludes metaphysics. With the authority of medicine, Eryximachus conceives of health as a carefree hedonism that aims for "pleasure without illness." Medicine, for him, manages "the art of making delicacies."[39] Eryximachus speaks more like a faddish dietitian than a medical professional. Or, if one prefers, Eryximachus is rather more like Flaubert's Homais, who enters the heady business of improving the general quality of life, than Larivière, who cares foremost about the good of each of his charges.[40] Eryximachus realizes that health and pleasure normally stand at odds, but believes that the problematic principle of pleasure-seeking can be liberated from its negative consequences by artisans like him.[41] In other Platonic dialogues, Socrates offers a version of medicine that has little concern for pleasure. He insists in the *Protagoras*, for instance, that doctors order their patients to eat beneficial food, whereas mere cooks indulge their clientele.[42] In the *Minos*, Socrates refrains from calling cooking or baking an art because of this difference.[43] 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?

Rondibilis, Ancient Platonist

Prior to Rondibilis's banquet speech, Hippothadée the theologian had advised Panurge to first be honest with himself about concupiscence. Rondibilis lacks this frankness; he 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 to select his treatment. Rondibilis recognizes individuality, and in addition he apparently believes that people have enough responsibility and maturity to properly judge what befits them—at least within circumscribed limits.

The Faculty of Medicine has, in turn, vetted Rondibilis's five 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 attention to the fact that the views of his exalted "Platonists" may not match those of Plato and Socrates. Plato, for all readers know, might approve the unadulterated aspects of Rondibilis's advice yet reject others. Because the Platonists who Rondibilis admires cannot be conflated with Plato, and because Rabelais himself knew

Plato through Platonists, interpretive questions arise related to how intermediaries such as Marsilio Ficino affected Rabelais's understanding of Platonic philosophy, and whether Plato may shine through such an intermediary without refraction.[44]

One consideration in the Rondibilis chapters would help readers address this question 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 the *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.'"[45] 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*.[46] 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').[47] The Christian teaching instead ignited a moral revolution that was justified by a belief—less justified by Plato's text—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.[48] It is characteristically Christian of Augustine's thought that he locates the origin of "lust" [libido] in the genital organs and describes the term as general "for all desire."[49] 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.[50] Ficino, the chief representative of Plato in Rabelais's time (the Renaissance knew Plato through Ficino's rediscovery 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," Ficino writes.[51]

In light of the Christian interpreters' habit of misconstruing Plato, the question in the context of the Rondibilis consultation is whether Rabelais's doctor similarly distorts Plato's writing.

Plato's *Phaedo* and *Timaeus* in Rondibilis's Speech

First of all, Rondibilis does not condemn the human 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. 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. Rondibilis's understanding of wine complies with Rabelais's use of it in the prologues of his five books 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."[52] Rondibilis explicitly likens cures 1) and 4) to Socrates's description of philosophy in the Phaedo as freedom from the body.[53] This description does not match the Christian Platonists' notion of a soul that will certainly outlast the body. Rondibilis's brand of Platonism does not lead him to disparage the body like Augustine or Ficino, nor to venerate it like Eryximachus. Rondibilis takes 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 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.[54] Several interpreters 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 that the dialogue's namesake gives. Older scholarship on the *Timaeus* discusses such topics as "Plato's cosmology" and concludes that "Plato thinks of this [that is, Timaeus's] cosmos as the product of intelligent design," but 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* even "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 every-

thing sooner or later" in the fashion of materialist doctrines that reduce mind to brain.[55] 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 as he saw it. "Plato says in the *Timaeus* that material and extension are the same. . . . Though he spoke in different ways there," Aristotle notes.[56] In short, readers must let Timaeus be Timaeus, an Italian Pythagorean and not a Greek Platonist. Nevertheless, in Rabelais's text Rondibilis imparts his Platonic teaching through a clever appropriation of Timaeus's anti-Platonic speech.

Disorderliness and the Querelle Des Femmes

Understanding how the *Tiers Livre* draws upon Plato's *Timaeus* is important. Rabelais's reputation has long suffered due to Rondibilis's use of Plato, as Rabelais scholars have charged both Rondibilis and Rabelais with misogyny because of the unsettling way in which Rondibilis discusses women.[57] The historical context used to make sense of the Rondibilis chapters is the *querelle des femmes*, a well-known debate between certain writers of Rabelais's age who took opposing (very roughly, feminist or anti-feminist) views of women. I propose reading these chapters in the light of a different context—that of the *Timaeus* itself—which suggests another intent. Through this Platonic (rather than contemporary) context, Rabelais has Rondibilis affirm not only the independence of women, but even the subjection of men to women.

Initially it seems reasonable to presume that Rabelais's doctor has been influenced by the Pythagoreanism to which Timaeus subscribes, or 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, at least from Panurge's perspective, 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, or in attempting to account for, the complete structuring of the world. On the contrary, Rondibilis seizes on Timaeus's brief mention of women because it comprises a weak point in his account. As Rondibilis suggests below, disorder and uncertainty enter Timaeus's world when he 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 he should place them, that of reasonable animals or that of brute beasts. (*TL* 32, 453–454 / *CW*, 356)

Timaeus 90–91 provides a likely source of Rondibilis's speech. Here Timaeus gives the 'probable account' of the generation of the female sex:

> According to the probable account, all those creatures generated as men who proved themselves cowardly and spent their lives in wrong-doing were transformed, at their second incarnation, into women. . . . And in women again, owing to the same causes [that is, the gods' contrivance of love of sexual intercourse among humans], whenever the matrix or womb, as it is called,—which is an indwelling creature desirous of childbearing,—remains without fruit long beyond the due season, it is vexed and takes ill. . . . [58]

Before commenting on the above passages, 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?"[59] With Booth's cautions in mind, readers should recall that Panurge's entire quest has up this point been a slow realization, orchestrated by Pantagruel, 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 Rondibilis's interpretation of Timaeus's description of women reads. In Rondibilis's interpretation of Timaeus's speech, he mentions Plato's uncertainty regarding woman's place in the natural order, meaning that Plato at least entertains the possibility of the equality of men and women. It may well be that even Timaeus believes women display reason equally as well as men do; his rationale for placing women below men rests on the purely *moral* grounds of the former's alleged cowardice and "wrong-doing." By contrast, birds in Timaeus's speech represent the second incarnation of men with low intellect, who are "harmless but light-minded"[60]; land animals, in turn, descend from those men "who have paid no attention at all to philosophy."[61] Likewise, Rondibilis never specifically condemns female intellect, although he does speak of "imperfection." These imperfections are what initially lead Rondibilis to note that Plato waffled on the question of whether women ought to be classified as humans or as "brute beasts." Yet even the implications of this waffling are not straightforward. The qualifier "brute," however unseemly, finds its opposite in domestication. So, even if such a classification would place women below men in one sense, in another sense women would remain indomitable. The possibility of such a low ranking does not admit, therefore, and even despite the negative connotations it involves for women, of a simply vertical hierarchy.

A fascinating component of Rondibilis's speech further supports the indomitability of women. Women rule men in a way that transcends the instances of particular women ruling particular men because Rondibilis does

not limit his usage of the term *woman* to the female sex of the many animal species. He makes repeated use of the feminine pronoun *elle* to refer to Nature as well, as if to emphasize the femininity of 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 or domesticated.)

This feature of Rondibilis's speech exculpates him from Kalkavage's assessment of Plato's Timaeus as a speaker who seeks to will order where none exists. Rondibilis's teaching on the disorderly cosmos remarkably uses the orderly Timaeus to make its point.[62] In fact, Rondibilis's view of women approximates Socrates's view, expressed in Xenophon's *Symposium*, that "the feminine nature is not at all inferior to man's." When Antisthenes questioned Socrates' sincerity by noting his marriage to Xanthippe ("the most difficult of present-day women and . . . of the past and future too"), Socrates replied that "those who wish to become skilled horsemen do not acquire horses that readily obey, but high-spirited ones." Although the goal of becoming an expert horseman betrays a kind of desire for domination on Socrates's part, that goal is paradoxically achieved by learning to cope with or live under [ὑποίσω] the subject to be mastered.[63]

In the same chapter that Rondibilis alludes to Plato's *Timaeus* (*TL* 32), and as a consequence of woman's indomitability, he recommends this authentically Socratic stance of resignation to nature, and in his way admits the dominion of women over men. Men must bow to the unpredictability of women (and by inference, to the unpredictability of Nature):

> 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.[64] In fact, Rondibilis and Panurge's discussion of cuckoldry is nothing more than a discussion of a specific pain. Rondibilis's refusal to offer Panurge a solution to the problem of cuckoldry (that is, to the problem of pain), or some foolproof device he may use to ward off cuckoldry, deserves greater praise than it gets. Contrast Rondibilis's sobriety with the deluge of marriage counseling books on the market today—many written by doctors!—and his position appears more impressive. Rondibilis's Platonic–Socratic position that pleasure is temporary and pain imminent deflates Panurge's almost utopian aspiration of ensuring stable, long-lasting happiness.

Panurge's interrogation of Rondibilis ends with the doctor telling a story wherein Jupiter gives Messer Cuckoldry a festival. Upon hearing this news, Messer Cuckoldry makes 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—that their spouses are difficult to control. Rondibilis's story takes up the same theme that Panurge himself had focused on as he and Pantagruel inspected the fortifications of Paris together in chapter 15 of the preceding work, *Pantagruel*. In the course of that inspection, we will recall, Panurge told the story of a father with two daughters who he carried around in order to ensure their sexual purity. Still, the father was hesitant to vouch for the purity of the girl he carried behind him, Panurge explains (*P* 15, 271 / *CW*, 185). The moral of Panurge's story—vigilance over trust—suggests that he knows Rondibilis's lesson. Rondibilis would simply have Panurge heed his own advice. For that to happen, Panurge must see that his goal of securing the future of a happy marriage to a faithful wife allows him no more laxity than an old-fashioned preaching and enforcing of virtue. Ensuring the future, like cultivating virtue, implies constant management. From this vantage, resignation to natural consequences is the more realistic course for Panurge to take.

THE TROUILLOGAN CONSULTATION

With the conclusion of Rondibilis's speech Pantagruel turns to Trouillogan, a Pyrrhonian philosopher, and orders him to respond to Panurge's question: should he marry? Trouillogan has just started to give Panurge his famous "non-answers" when Gargantua serendipitously enters the hall. This constitutes Gargantua's first appearance in Rabelais's works since *Pantagruel* chapter 4, when Pantagruel was still young. 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 but instead furnishes a riddle that the other characters ponder and try to answer.

Gargantua's appearance is actually preceded by that of a little dog named Kyne, a name derived from the Greek common noun. This generic "Dog" reminds the reader of another: The Dog, Diogenes the Cynic, discussed by Rabelais earlier in the prologue to the *Tiers Livre* as a model for the kind of work he set out to accomplish (*TL* prol, 348 / *CW*, 256). Gargantua's first

words likewise have philosophic import: "Give me something to let me drink to the company." If this request for drink marks 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. 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 an authority figure—a more distinguished version of Plato's Cephalus, or like Alexander, who, as Rabelais also reminds us in the *Tiers Livre* 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 old order and expresses distrust of "today's" philosophy.

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).

How Pantagruel's Spartan Girl Substantiates Rondibilis's Natural Woman

Just as Rondibilis recommends resignation to female nature on the grounds of his Platonism, the story of the Spartan girl that Pantagruel uses to explain Trouillogan's cryptic answers also testifies to the indomitability of nature, in this case also a female nature. Both Gargantua's and Pantagruel's solutions to Trouillogan's riddle affirm the basic inequality of lover and beloved. Rabelais's contemporary Machiavelli recognized 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. Indeed, Machiavelli sees greater inequality in love relationships than even Pantagruel and Gargantua do. Even if somebody returns love now, Machiavelli writes, they may change their mind later. 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 and to circumvent the problem of winning another's freely

given love by persuasion is to place those relationships on another basis. He thus advocates a form of force that manifests psychologically in the beloved as fear. He concludes that this option is "safer" for precisely the reasons that Gargantua and Pantagruel insinuate through their anecdotes.[65]

Yet Machiavelli misses something important about the implications of replacing love with fear. These implications manifest in the image of love that Pantagruel provides in response to Trouillogan's riddle. 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. 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 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 (unknowingly) Machiavelli's advice.[66]

While scholars have usually described Trouillogan's answers as cryptic,[67] a qualification needs to be made. These answers are only cryptic to Panurge. As the foregoing analysis shows, the other characters interpret Trouillogan's advice plausibly.[68] 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 metaphorical interpretation is what separates Pantagruel, Gargantua, Rondibilis, and Hippothadée from Panurge. Panurge does interpret other efforts at prediction in the *Tiers Livre* 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 Gargantua 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*, 367–368)

Gargantua points to the rationale for many modern scientists' turn from the study of speeches to the study of actions. This turn was thought necessary because of the futility involved in trying to evaluate pronouncements such as those Trouillogan makes. Thomas Hobbes's conclusion is typical of this later group of thinkers:

> 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.[69]

"The best signs of passions present," Hobbes continues, "are in the countenance, motions of the body, actions, and ends or aims which we otherwise know the man to have." Those who agree with Hobbes differ even from his realist predecessor Thucydides, whose history of the Peloponnesian War contains many speeches with important rhetorical components (translated by Hobbes, of course). But the turn toward Hobbes's way of proceeding has been decisive. Current psychology still 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.[70] Going simply by the words of the liar, one might be deceived. Knowing that the lie has physical manifestations levels the field. However, Pantagruel's Spartan girl brings the explanatory power of certain 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 profound misinterpretation of it.

Trouillogan's advice shows that the urgency of interpretation, our need to know other's hearts, flows out of love, if of a sometimes vulgar sort. We want sound interpretation because we want to know what others are thinking and how best to respond to them, given our love or desire to possess them. Courtship brings about the highest 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 the fulfillment of 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 character-

ization of Trouillogan well in advance of the Trouillogan consultation. In chapter 29 of the *Tiers Livre*, 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 answers that Trouillogan offers aim to clarify, and that they actually do.

Rabelais goes out of his way to clarify that Trouillogan does not stand within the tradition of Platonic philosophy, but that he is instead a skeptic thinker of Pyrrhonian lineage. Even though this skepticism exceeds Socratic skepticism in its conviction that knowledge lies absolutely out of reach,[71] Trouillogan still has more in common with Rondibilis than he would with a philosopher of another bent, and he especially has more in common with Rondibilis than he would with a thinker influenced by the doctrines of a revealed religion, which demands something of a person—faith—that is essentially anti-skeptical. An effect follows from Trouillogan's skepticism, his embracing of the world's inscrutability: politics appears less efficacious than it would to someone more confident in humanity's ability to understand the world. The Trouillogan consultation suggests, in addition to this, that understanding the world means understanding the interiors of those who inhabit it, and this kind of understanding relies on cooperation or persuasion rather than on observation or even manipulation, as good survey data collectors know.

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

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).[72] Duval's treatment of the chapter breaks from this orthodox view: "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."[73] 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.[74]

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 dicethrowing 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.

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.[75] 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[76]—does not allow Bridlegoose to account for the nonrational 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)

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.[77]

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.[78] 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.[79] Whereas Bridlegoose 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 the Machiavellian virtue of *discrezione*.[80] He keeps all options open and concludes matters quickly. 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 quick-

ly settle matters himself through discretion rather than to rely on others or appeal to formal channels.

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*[81] comes into play, / Things just must be done that way," Perrin Dendin teaches (*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.[82]

I argued earlier 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 serious reflection on what it means for Panurge. 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—he 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)—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 could only 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[83] 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, that 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)

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.[84] 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 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."[85] 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, 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."[86] 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.[87]

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.[88] 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.[89] But this 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, 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.[90] 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 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.[91]

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 7 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, based as they so often are on deference to God and to the natural order of things.

NOTES

1. Frame simply transliterates the French judge's name, Bridoye, that 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.
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 previously in Panurge's eulogy of *debtes.*
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; 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.
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).
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, for example, Titus 1:2.
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.

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.
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.
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.
26. *Prince*, 25.98.
27. *DL*, 2.2.2.
28. *DL*, 2.29.3.
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.
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).
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.
34. Roland Antonioli, *Rabelais et la Médecine*, vol. 12, Études Rabelaisiennes (Genève: Librarie Droz, 1976); Michael Andrew Screech, *The Rabelaisian Marriage: Aspects of Rabelais's Religion, Ethics, and Comic Philosophy* (London: Edward Arnold Ltd, 1958), 92; Elizabeth Chesney Zegura, "Rondibilis," in *The Rabelais Encyclopedia*, ed. Elizabeth Chesney Zegura (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 215.
35. See *G* 40,100 / *CW*,93.
36. Joel Warren Lidz, "Medicine as Metaphor in Plato," *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 20 (1995): 534.
37. See Plato, *Laws*, 719e13–720e10.
38. Plato, *Symposium*, 186b4.
39. Plato, *Symposium*, 187e5.
40. See Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary: Provincial Ways*, trans. Lydia Davis (New York:Viking, 2010),156; cf.285.
41. Plato, *Symposium*, 188b–c.
42. Plato, "Protagoras," in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (Harvard University Press, 1967), 313d7.
43. Plato, 'Minos,' in *The Roots of Political Philosophy: Ten Forgotten Socratic Dialogues*, ed. and trans. Thomas L. Pangle (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 317a4.
44. See Romain Menini, *Rabelais et l'intertexte platonicien*, vol. 47, *Études Rabelaisiennes* (Genève: Librarie Droz, 2009).
45. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1989), 2 (Preface).
46. See Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, aph. 12. For tones of uncertainty in Plato see, for example, Plato, *Phaedo*, trans. Eva Brann, Peter Kalkavage, and Eric Salem (Newburyport, MA: Focus, 1998), 88b1–4.
47. Plato, *Phaedo*, 88c–91b.

48. See Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, aph. 168.

49. Augustine, 'The City of God', in *Political Writings*, trans. Michael W. Tkacz and Douglas Kries (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994),104 (14.15). Italics mine.

50. See Augustine, 'The City of God,' 8.3.

51. 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), I.3; see also II.5.1. See also 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.

52. *TL* 31, 450–451 / *CW*, 353.

53. See Plato, *Phaedo*, 64a.

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

55. 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; Richard D. Chessick, "The Silence of Socrates," *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 58 (2004): 406; see also Catherine Zuckert, *Plato's Philosophers: The Coherence of the Dialogues* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 423ff.

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

57. See, for example, 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.

58. Plato, 'Timaeus,' in *Timaeus, Critias, Cleitophon, Menexenus, Epistles*, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 90–91. Ficino notably does not write about this passage in his commentary on the work, although Galen cites Plato's *locus classicus* in texts with which Rabelais was familiar. See Marsilio Ficino, *All Things Natural: Ficino on Plato's Timaeus*, ed. Arthur Farndell (London: Shepheard-Walwyn, 2010),166f; Galen, *On Semen (De semine)*, ed., trans., and comm. Phillip De Lacy (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1992), 67–68 (I.2, 12–13). Most of Galen's efforts in *De semine*, which was translated into Latin in the fourteenth century by Niccolò da Reggio, take the form of a critique (more or less friendly) of Aristotle's views on procreation laid out in *De generatione animalium*. See also Galen's *Utrum conceptus in utero sit animal*, translated into Latin in 1540 by Matthias Theodorus Melanelius. For an account of the "feminism" of Galen's account of procreation (relative, that is, to Aristotle's), see Sophia M. Connell, "Aristotle and Galen on Sex Difference and Reproduction: A New Approach to an Ancient Rivalry," *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 31 (2000): 405–427.

59. Wayne C. Booth, "Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism," *Critical Inquiry* 9 (1982): 59.

60. Plato, *Timaeus*, 91d5.

61. Plato, *Timaeus*, 91e1–2.

62. For more on Timaeus's account of the female sex, see David Krell, "Female Parts in *Timaeus*," *Arion* 2 (1975): 400–421.

63. Xenophon, 'Symposium,' in *The Shorter Socratic Writings*, ed. Robert C. Bartlett (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 2.10.

64. 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.

65. Machiavelli, *Prince*, 66.

66. See, however, Machiavelli, *DL*, 1.58.1. See Nathan Tarcov, "Machiavelli's Critique of Religion," *Social Research* 81 (2014): 199.

67. For the most notable exception to this trend, see George Hoffman, "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 (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1991), 79–90.

68. Duval notes that Pantagruel's contribution in particular constitutes a prime example of Pantagruelism defined as interpreting all things for the good. Duval, *Design of the* Tiers Livre, 192. See *TL* 2, 357 / *CW*, 264.

69. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 6.56. See also Skinner, *Visions*, 264–285.

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

71. See Plato, *Apology*, 21d3–7.

72. 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, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963); Jean Céard, *La Nature et les Prodigies: L'insolite au XVIe siècle, en France* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1977).

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

74. 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.

75. 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.

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

77. *Prince*, 3.12.

78. *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. . . ."

79. Ibid.

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

81. Lewis and Short define the Latin *oportet* as "it is necessary, is proper, is becoming, behooves."

82. 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.

83. 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.

84. 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.

85. *DL*, 1.34.3.

86. 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.

87. See Tarcov, "Machiavelli's Critique," 201ff.

88. *DL*, 1.11.

89. Ibid, 1.14.

90. See Frame 1991, 938n46.

91. 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 Seven

Blowing Bubbles, Understanding Nature

Nature and the Pantagruelion Herb

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

Like many of Rabelais's passages, the praise of Pantagruelion that closes the *Tiers Livre* has a generative capacity, encouraging interpretation. There Rabelais cryptically describes the plant to be brought on board in preparation for the search for the *Dive Bouteille*, which supposedly holds the final answer to Panurge's marriage question, initially raised with the end of the war against the Dipsodians and the onset of political peace in the *Tiers Livre*. The plant's qualities seem to have little to do with this quest. I will suggest that, on the contrary, the Pantagruelion plant is well-suited to answering the question of whether Panurge should marry and to further educating Panurge by giving him the right disposition toward his future and his happiness.

The interpretive history of the Pantagruelion plant is expansive. In 1956, Verdun Saulnier identified eight scholarly theories about Pantagruelion worthy of consideration.[1] Donald Frame's 1977 *Study* catalogued four more.[2] Saulnier developed what has since been called the *hésuchiste* theory, which presents Rabelais's prudential recourse to shrouded speech and imagery (such as that of the lauded herb) as a way of communicating with fellow *évangéliques* in the face of religious persecution.[3] This interpretation prevailed until the 1960s, when scholars began to examine the rhetoric of the Pantagruelion *encomium*, its comical, paradoxical, digressive character, and its lyrical quality. These latter studies consider the Pantagruelion chapters as

one whole to be examined independently of the rest of Rabelais's writings.[4] Louis-Georges Tin reminds us that, after all, the ending of the *Tiers Livre* may perhaps be "un texte sur rien, faisant surgir *ex nihilo aliquid*." But Tin himself—like so many readers, including me—cannot resist probing the rhetorical, hermeneutical, and poetical aspects of the Pantagruelion chapters.[5]

The reading offered here connects Pantagruelion to the narrative of the *Quart Livre* by showing that the plant, a living thing, serves a purpose in the quest for the *Dive Bouteille*, during which Panurge will encounter nature. Under the circumstances of this quest, Panurge cannot discount nature as mere tradition, moralizing, or bloviating as he had discounted the expert consultations of the *Tiers Livre* banquet scene investigated in the previous chapter. Nature's tutelage or correction of Panurge occurs most obviously in chapters 33–34 of the *Quart Livre* when the company, then at sea, spots a whale or *physeter*—think of the false cognate φύσις[6]—approaching. Pantagruelion, also a *physeter*, provides the key to understanding the questers' encounter with the sea creature. And Pantagruel's thoughtful response to the monster makes use of his knowledge of *physeters* as a class of things, all similar though different.

The following argument contains three sections. The first considers a question that occurs after reading the description of Pantagruelion in chapter 49 of the *Tiers Livre*: Is Pantagruelion analogous to Homer's *moly* plant? (Homer is one of the most cited of Rabelais's antique sources.)[7] An equivocal 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. The second section explains the significance of this use, which the narrator describes through a riddle. Via reflection on this riddle, two possible "uses" present themselves: 1) philosophy, or dialectical reasoning and 2) belief. Or is it 3) both, combined in a kind of Platonic πίστις?[8] That is, perhaps Saulnier's *hésuchiste* theory was right: Pantagruelion symbolizes belief, but belief in the necessity of things—belief that there is such thing as a mostly *invisible* and yet *intelligible* necessity, an ordering of the cosmos and a setting of limits on each part of the cosmos—and not religious belief despite persecution by the authorities. Such belief would mean ignoring or looking past the appearance of things in the world. It would mean focusing instead on the principles that often underlie those things, which are not so readily available to the eye. This type of belief in necessity is evident not only in the text of the Pantagruelion chapters, nor only in the likeness of Pantagruelion to Homer's *moly* plant, but also in the function of Pantagruelion in the *Quart Livre* as a *physeter*, or blowhole, to match that greater *physeter*, the whale. This function, discussed in the third section of the argument, accounts for the appearance of the goddess of necessity, Atropos, in both episodes.[9]

Understanding the function of Pantagruelion in the *Quart Livre* not only verifies the coherent design of Rabelais's books, but lends even further credence to the view that Panurge undergoes a series of events intended to lead him to accept his circumstances rather than to try to control his future. Not least of all, the presence of the *physeters* in the *Tiers* and *Quart Livres* suggest a Rabelais advocating a view of nature deserving of or commanding human deference. Rabelais's books serve as a timely reminder in an age of both heady, scientific ambitions and resurgent religiosity. It also behooves the reader, with that in mind, to connect the events of the *physeter* episode with the immediately prior tale that Rabelais's narrator recounts (*QL* 29–32) about the children of Physis and Antiphysie. The characters of these episodes are etymologically kindred, and they in fact relate to the same theme of nature and of our dispositions toward nature.

PANTAGRUELION AS *MOLY*: "ROUGH AND HARD TO GET AT"

The praise of Pantagruelion in the *Tiers Livre* begins when the narrator reports 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 chapters. The narrator drops more breadcrumbs when he lists the attributes of the plant. He notes that Pantagruelion "has small and tough roots" [a racine petite, durette . . .] (*TL* 49, 501 / *CW*, 402). And later, at the beginning of chapter 52, he attests that the truth about Pantagruelion is "d'accès assez scabreux et difficile" [rather rough and hard to get at] (*TL* 52, 509 / *CW*, 409). As we shall see, this is the verbiage Hermes uses to describe the nature of the *moly* plant to Odysseus in *The Odyssey*. Rabelais's mimicry may suggest the Pantagruelion plant functions in Rabelais's book just as the *moly* plant functions in Homer's book. The possibility would lend importance to Pantagruelion. Seth Benardete claims the very "peak of the *Odyssey*" occurs when Hermes descends to Odysseus.[10] 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.[11] Eurylochos alone returned and reported the fate of the others who had happened upon the household of Circe, accepted "malignant drugs" from her, and "took on the look of pigs." The last Eurylochos knew, his men had been driven by the dread goddess into a hog-sty.[12] 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.[13]

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" Circe had used on the investigators. 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 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. [14]

In relating this story, Odysseus called Hermes by one of his many epithets, Argeiphontes. The name refers to another instance where Hermes counteracted Hera's magical transformation of Zeus's lover, Io, into a cow. Hera afterward enlisted the giant Argos to guard the enchanted animal. Later, Hermes slew Argos, hence the name Argeiphontes [Argos-slayer]. Yet Hermes himself never uses magic. Hermes works or thinks through the way things are, their being, telling Odysseus about these things presumably at greater length than Odysseus discusses them with us. As this study of nature applies to the *moly*, without Hermes' help Odysseus may possibly have seen only have seen the plant's white blossom. The root, "hard for mortal men to dig up,"[15] 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. [16]

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 not because digging it requires superhuman amount of physical strength. A more plausible answer is that the beauty of the *moly* petals leaves onlookers content with the visible part of the plant, 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 goes overlooked as inessential to the plant or as subordinate to 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. This blindness prevents them from seeing the whole. In this case, being blind means seeing and holding to a prettier picture of life.

The difference between what is invisible and visible, apparent and real, was very important to Rabelais. As George Mallary Masters writes,

> All Rabelaisian images play on appearance and reality. They embody a dynamic relationship between external form and intrinsic meaning. They at once express the dialectic of opposites and they are that dialectic. . . . But, at the same time, the images also signify something else—they point beyond the apparent to an idea.[17]

My contention about the Pantagruelion plant mirrors Masters' view of Rabelais' work on the whole. The Pantagruelion plant acts to point beyond itself and to a more general idea. This is how it functions as Rabelais's "*moly*." And as in Homer's *Odyssey*, Rabelais's characters discover this dialectical aspect of Pantagruelion through a literal (but also intellectually important) quest. As Masters concludes, "It [Pantagruelion] represents the wisdom of the sage Pantagruel and symbolizes the quest for self-knowledge."[18] And just as Odysseus was aided in his quest with knowledge of the moly plant, which transformed into self-knowledge, Pantagruel and Panurge will be aided in theirs by knowledge of the Pantagruelion plant, which will facilitate the same transformation—by showing them their standing within and in relation to the rest of the cosmos.

In the cases of both *moly* and Pantagruelion, in other words, the plants reveal and teach the operations of nature. Odysseus learned the relationship between disparate parts and the whole—that things that seem not to go together in fact belong together, when the larger entity they belong to is considered. As for Pantagruel and Panurge, they will learn about another equally important aspect of nature: beings that differ in size and appearance can belong to the same class, once their basic functions come into focus and once one finally looks past what is most obvious to the eye. This is the deeper quest that Pantagruel and Panurge will endure—not the physical one of visiting far flung places in the world, but the philosophical one of more deeply understanding the world through dialectics.

If Rabelais's Pantagruelion plant is anything like *moly*, then the narrator's description should produce a view or understanding of nature like the one found in Book X of *The Odyssey*. For the sake of comparison, here is 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 "petite" and "durette") with a blunt white point.

3. Its stem is concave, with a green outside and white inside.
4. Pantagruelion derives its worth from its fiber.
5. Its height ranges from 5' to that of a lance (roughly 10').
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. But "estainct en l'home la semence generative, qui en mangeroit beaucoup et souvent" [it 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*, differences are evident. Odysseus's details were scant. He mentioned only *moly's* colors, its two parts, and the roughness or softness of those parts. Here readers get many details to organize. First, the Pantagruelion's roots are white, shallow, and small—not black (though still "petite" and "durette"). 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—strength of intellect or of constitution. 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.

The third item, the fact that Pantagruelion is concave, will gain importance during the questers' encounter with the *physeter* in the *Quart Livre*—more about which below.

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 point will be revisited and examined more closely below.

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 becom-

ing and perishing, but Pantagruelion keeps becoming and perishing because of its residence in the realm of being.

Point 10 is, however, enigmatic. The seed of Pantagruelion "extinguishes the generative seed in man." (This extinguishing of desire is what Panurge most needs in the *Tiers Livre*, and various attempts to extinguish that "generative seed" are made through the consultations, formal and informal.) 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. The early interpreters of Rabelais accordingly emphasized the sterilizing effects of the hemp seed in their readings of the Pantagruelion chapters.[19]

Yet this literal reading does not explain why Rabelais pairs this effect with the apparently unnecessary detail that the Greeks, of all peoples, ate this anti-aphrodisiac for dessert. Keeping this odd pairing in mind, a few interpretive options arise. Such a dessert may represent *philosophy*, the life dedicated to the cultivation of and adherence to *reason* (any subsequent reference herein to *philosophy* indicates such a way of life), for which the Greeks were so well-known. Living a philosophic life means grasping or trying to grasp things as they really are, not as they are expounded by human authorities, nor as they appear to be at first glance. Implying such independent activity, 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 "estainct en l'home la semence generative" by taking erotic focus away from immediate, particular things and connecting the lover of truth to eternity. And the narrator does note that Pantagruelion is of philosophic importance. He expresses surprise that the benefits of Pantagruelion were "hidden for so many centuries from the ancient philosophers" (*TL* 51, 508 / *CW*, 408).

On the note of the narrator's surprise about Pantagruelion's belated discovery, this dessert might also be *belief*.[20] For belief 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. Further, just as philosophy makes the lover of wisdom un-erotic with regard to this world by turning attention to the eternal world of intellect, belief makes the faithful un-erotic by turning their attention 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 future, the next world, or afterlife. An indication of just this "extinguishing of the generative seed in man" can be found in Genesis 1:28 (ESV): "And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be

fruitful and multiply. . . .'" It is indeed an otherworldly kind of human community that needs to be commanded to this sort of activity.

As the narrator discloses more about Pantagruelion, these competing interpretations, *philosophy* or *reason* on the one hand and *belief* on the other, 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*. I take steps toward refereeing these interpretations by briefly considering the various uses of Pantagruelion offered in *Tiers Livre* 51, and ultimately settle on the answer that Pantagruelion suggests to the reader belief in natural regularities dispersed throughout the cosmos, as well as in human reason's ability to decipher these regularities. In this sense, Pantagruelion would resemble Homer's *moly* plant; it would be used as an introduction of sorts to the mysterious but coherent workings of nature, so "rough and hard to get at."

PHILOSOPHY AND BELIEF: THE USES OF PANTAGRUELION

Chapter 51, which purports to explain the reason for the plant's name, and which deviates to explain the uses of the plant, supplies the reasons for suspecting that Pantagruelion encourages the synthesis of *reason* or *philosophy* with *belief*.[21] The chapter begins with a moral observation, which presents the reader with the first of a series of themes related to these "uses" of Pantagruelion to consider. Thieves, we are told, 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 "hart" [halter] and "cornette" [cravat] (*TL* 51, 506 / *CW*, 406). It delivers death, especially to the deserving. The narrator equates this aspect of Pantagruelion with the work of the Greek goddess Atropos (*TL* 51, 506 / *CW*, 406).

Traditionally, Atropos was the oldest of the three Fates and had the job of ending life and ensuring cosmic justice.[22] In Plato's *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."[23] Thus Pantagruelion, like Atropos, signifies death, inevitability, and necessity, but also the future and eternity—something that, as La Rochefoucauld later wrote, "cannot be looked on fixedly."[24] In Rabelais's text, however, some can 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[25]—callousness towards Atropos, or an ability to disregard one's fate.

Because of 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 more 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 on death philosophically (from outside of convention, or from outside of good and bad). At this juncture one cannot ignore what that Rondibilis first brought up in his consultation with Panurge earlier in the *Tiers Livre*: Socrates' famous formulation of philosophy as "meditation on death" (*TL* 31, 451 / *CW*, 353).[26]

More evidence of Pantagruelion as a subject appropriate to *philosophy* accrues throughout the chapter. Here is the most prominent piece: The narrator observes that planters harvest Pantagruelion during the drought season, when the Sun "forces everyone to live in caves or cellars or other underground places" (*TL* 51, 506 / *CW*, 407). These drought conditions cause thirst, Rabelais's emblem for the desire for wisdom.[27] The underground dwellings that Rabelais's narrator describes 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,[28] but head down into them because of the harsh conditions above ground. 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 and dedication to reason underground. Although advocates of liberalism and individual rights may blame this kind of "heat" for causing science to wither on the vine, Pantagruelion flourishes in drought conditions. Perhaps philosophy withers when generously watered. Great philosophers have sprouted, after all, in persecutory ages.

Pantagruelion as *belief* may be read as a competing alternative to Pantagruelion as a philosophic occasion. That is, the harsh conditions that surround Pantagruelion as *philosophy* may affirm the need for *belief* as a supplement. Indeed, interpretations of Pantagruelion as *belief* are not new.[29] Here I merely suggest that this belief may not be particularly religious faith, but—in a fitting twist for Rabelais—faith in reason or philosophy. Hence my suggestion that readers should investigate a reason/belief duality in the meaning of the plant.

These possibilities need to be considered, then, and can be, by thinking about a list of disparate uses of Pantagruelion that Rabelais provides. The uses on this list support a second-order interpretation of Pantagruelion as *belief*. Although not literal, this interpretation is still warranted by the textual evidence.[30] 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 *belief* explains the genesis or origin of each use, and it is the genesis that seems to be at stake. As Tristan Vigliano writes,

> En réalité, dans le Pantagruélion sont réunies toutes les caractéristiques du pantagruélisme *entendu comme illusion*. Il existait avant que son utilité ne fût découverte, et certains continuent à en faire mauvais usage. . . . Il ne peut être réduit à néant : comme l'illusion, dont nul ne viendra jamais à bout. Il entretient et développe l'activité humaine: comme l'illusion, qui est vivifiante.[32]

Although I refer to Pantagruelion as a source of belief rather than as an illusion (as Vigliano does), I agree that Pantagruelion might be conceived of as such a belief-inspiring illusion if readers consider it as the driving motivation behind each of the inventions mentioned.

More than any of the other uses for Pantagruelion, however, points 11 and 12 on the list above suggest that Pantagruelion either stands for or supplies belief. These points, read allegorically, also support (of course with the risk of speculation, and therefore without an authoritative claim), a second-order interpretation of Pantagruelion.[33] For *if* Pantagruelion symbolizes belief, then bringing fabrics and clothing with oneself to the grave [point 11] implies belief of the highest order—belief in the afterworld.[34] The final point, moreover, turns from the realm of the grave and back to another, equally deep sort of belief. Although one can literally interpret the arrest of invisible substances as the arrest of winds by sails [point 12], this usage also demonstrates belief in the regularity and beneficence of nature.[35] Such belief takes explorers to new worlds far more than do the sails themselves. Alternatively, a plausible reading of "invisible substances" includes an arrest of human

souls. Because Rabelais writes of intellectual activity as the human vocation most capable of making such an arrest (think again of Socrates' "meditation de mort," mentioned, to reiterate, in *Tiers Livre* 31), this usage of Pantagruelion also suggests a link between belief and reason.

A sound interpretation of Pantagruelion should maintain consistency with the end of chapter 51. This section reports that the Olympian gods feared Pantagruel's children would invent or 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 in the Babel story of the book of Genesis.[36] Regardless of Rabelais's source, however, it is likely that the worry among the divinities that he writes about originates in something stronger than plant material, such as the belief underlying each of the uses. To see how Pantagruelion supplies belief, readers must examine its function in the quest of the *Quart Livre*.

THE QUESTERS' USES OF PANTAGRUELION IN THE *QUART LIVRE*

Thinking about the function of Pantagruelion in Rabelais's narrative means returning to basic questions. The turn from established authorities in the *Tiers Livre* to an independent quest in the *Quart Livre* does not of itself explain the pertinence of the Pantagruelion chapters. 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.

There may be no need for more. As Edwin Duval has written, the design of the *Quart Livre* gives weight to the appearance of another bubble-blower: the whale or *physeter* who appears to the questers in the middle of the book.[37] The Greek term φυσητήρ 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, as we have just seen, Panurge later (in *QL* 63) uses the Pantagruelion plant as a *physeter*—a blowhole. Rabelais prepares for this apparently frivolous use of Pantagruelion as early as chapter 49 of the *Tiers Livre*, where, as noted in my earlier discussion of Pantagruelion's qualities, the narrator discloses that the stem of the plant is

concave.[38] Rabelais's plan stews for some time, and for such an odd reason. The difficult question is what all of this means.

Pantagruelion's use 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 and bemoans the coming of the "Leviathan descript par le noble prophete Moses en la vie du sainct home Job" [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. By making this comparison, Panurge is showing that he understands the whale in religious terms, not philosophic ones. According to his analogy, Panurge believes the whale to be capable of anything, not limited by its nature or necessity.

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. In other words, Pantagruel appears to Panurge as a kind of Homeric Hermes, who arrives to instruct his Odysseus, Panurge—who had described himself as such during his first appearance in Rabelais's books (*P* 9, 249 / *CW*, 166). 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 correspond to the rhetorical questions that God poses to Job.[39] 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 says 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.[40]

To save Rabelais from heresy, Duval reads Pantagruel as a Christ-like "fishhook" who may legitimately bind the Leviathan.[41] 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," said Pantagruel, "is your ill-fated destiny [that is, being destroyed by the Leviathan's fire], as Frère Jean was stating a while ago, you should be afraid of Pyroeis, Eous, Æthon, and Phlegon, the famous flammivomous 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 as a student of nature whose knowledge of nature gives him a proper measure of confidence or belief—belief that this *physeter*, a natural thing, is no Leviathan. He does not extinguish this Leviathan's fire (on Thomas's view, symbolic of the Devil's capacity to stir passions) but instead demystifies the Leviathan[42] and denies that it has fire at all.[43]

Guy Demerson writes, in his article on the nature of water in Rabelais, that the element is

> au moins aussi pernicieux que l'autre élément dit 'agressif,' le feu. . . . Pantagruel rappelle les deux malheurs subis par Enée : l'incendie de Troie et une 'horrible tourmente sus mer' (T 14, 608) et, déjà au début de *Tiers Livre*, lorsque Panurge évoquait les pires dangers qui peuvent assaillir quelqu'un, il désignait l'inondation avec l'incendie et l'assassinat: 'au feu, à l'eau ! au meurtre ?'[44]

Demerson's observations are important because, at least at this point in Rabelais's writing, Pantagruel's and Panurge's reactions to or understandings of water seem to be similar. Pantagruel's understanding of Pantagruelion may then account for his new and different attitude in the *Quart Livre*.[45]

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. Pantagruel's possession of this knowledge is not explicitly mentioned in this text, although his father's wish for him to become an "abyss of knowledge" [abysme de science], as Rabelais's narrator elsewhere describes him (*P* 8, 245 / *CW*, 161), means that he likely possesses knowledge that the others lack—or at least that he is likely to possess a certain way of applying newly learned facts. Through this learning, Pantagruel knows not only about what the whale is, but can also abstract and think through its properties as a *physeter*—a being that belongs in the class of beings that Pantagruelion also belongs to.

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."[46] But Pantagruel teaches that these differences must not deceive. To the unschooled it is the height of folly to approach the "Leviathan" with any less fear than Panurge and the others approach it with, but through dialectical reasoning, Pantagruel knows the nature of *physeters* and so he knows their natural limits. Rabelais's description of Panurge's bubble-blowing occurs twenty-nine chapters after the *physeter* encounter, but presumably Pantagruel has seen Panurge idling away time by blowing bubbles with a tube of Pantagruelion before. If it had been silly to fear Panurge's bubbles, then it would be 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 whale blows bubbles with its spiracle just as Panurge blows bubbles with the Pantagruelion stem.

Pantagruel's demystification of the Leviathan suggests 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 human understanding and so not as grand and mysterious as the magical world that preceded it. Lest humans take 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*, 50)

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 (and a characteristically modern one) of thinking that the world can be overpowered or mastered. This attempt at mastery is 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."[47] Human contrivance cannot best the power of the *physeter*. Readers have to look to Pantagruel for another way forward.

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. The Pantagruelic solution is one of these three possible alternatives. Rabelais's description of Pantagruel begins with the prince Diogenically watching the artillery unload for some time. As he looks on he considers "l'occasion et necessité" [the occasion and necessity] of the situation. That is, he thinks about the *nature* of the whale. 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*. . . . " (*QL* 34, 620 / *CW*, 511; italics mine). The *physeter* remains subject to the same necessities as all specimens of its kind.

Given Pantagruel's consideration of the occasion and necessity of the whale confrontation, it is fitting that the reappearance of Atropos also links the Pantagruelion and *physeter* episodes. Back in chapter 51 of the *Tiers Livre*, Rabelais's narrator equated Pantagruelion 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). Fittingly, 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 rather to necessity, knowing that the *physeter* is limited. If Pantagruel serves as a Hermes to Panurge in his explanation of the *physeter,* here he acts as Odysseus himself, firm (as Odysseus was when faced with Circe) because he is sure of what he is dealing with.[48]

The method of archery combined with the presence of Atropos proves that power has little to do with Pantagruel's defeat of the *physeter*. This combination instead suggests that knowledge of the *physeter* and above all 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 action, 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 comparative simplicity. Both are forms of technology. 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, a dichotomy that reminds readers that Rabelais's description of Pantagruel's defeat of the *physeter* excludes the most reputed of the archers: the thoughtful Odysseus, who shot an arrow through twelve axe heads in a contest against the other suitors for his wife.[49] Thus, in Pantagruel's thoughtful employment of his bow against the physeter, he also shadows Odysseus as he employs Pantagruelion in this use of the plant: "By it are bows strung, crossbows bent, and slingshots made" (*TL* 51, 507–508 / *CW*, 407–408).[50] This too connects Pantagruelion with *moly*.

FASTILENT AND THE CHILDREN OF PHYSIS AND ANTIPHYSIE

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 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."[51] In other words, Pantagruel wants to think, in almost Odyssean fashion, 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. Given that much of the episode reads as a satire of Catholic practices, this description of reason as a footstool may be derived from Thomas's well-known formulation of reason as the "handmaiden" of theology in the *Summa*. 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)

Fastilent inhabits a world without nature. His life consists of contradictions and impossibilities—or at least that is what most people would call his activities.

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. Antiphysie praises these children of hers and succeeds in convincing "the fools and madmen" (perhaps a large contingent) 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." 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 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*" [*de tout temps*] (*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), more and less mindful of the creature's nature as a member of this class, depict the contents of the story of Physis and Antiphysie.

A POSITIVE TEACHING

Pantagruelion embodies the theme or question of nature, which was already being established during the consultations of the banquet in the *Tiers Livre*. There Hippothadée had denied the reality of "nature," which is rather God's "pleasure" (*TL* 30, 446 / *CW*, 350). Rondibilis, on the other hand, suggested the inscrutability of nature. Although he did exhort Panurge to become "an architect of natural consequences," such an architect learns to deal with nature's mysteriousness (*TL* 32, 453 / *CW*, 355). 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. The passages about Pantagruelion and the *physeter* found in those segments of Rabelais's books discourage readers from attempting to overpower other beings or nature itself, as the questers' artillery had attempted to do. Yet they also discourage lying 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 one's 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 belief or trust (when grasping others' limits). The belief 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 consequences of these views of course 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, 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."

NOTES

1. Verdun-Louis Saulnier, "L'Énigme du Pantagruélion, ou: du *Tiers* au *Quart Livre*," in *Études Rabelaisiennes*, vol. 1 (1956),51–56; see also Verdun-Louis Saulnier, *Rabelais I: Rabelais dans son Enquête* (Paris: SEDES, 1983).

2. Donald Frame, *François Rabelais: A Study* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 62.

3. Louis-George Tin writes, for example, that the hemp plant (which Pantagruelion is compared to) was used during the reign of Francis I to suppress Lutherans in France. Louis-Georges Tin, "Qu'est-ce que le Pantagruelion?" in *Études rabelaissienes*, vol. 39 (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2000),130.

4. Marcel Tetel, *Étude sur le comique de Rabelais* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1964); Deborah N. Losse, "Frivolous Charm and Serious Bagatelle: Lyrical and Burlesque Paradox in The Works of Francois Rabbelais," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 10 (1979):62–3; François Rigolot, "Rabelais's Laurel for Glory: A Further Study of the 'Pantagruelion,'" *Renaissance Quarterly* 42 (1989): 61.

5. Tin, "Qu'est-ce que le Pantagruelion?," 126. More recently, Tin has revised his position, now making the provocative and exciting insight that, as Pantagruelion is made from hemp, it culminates in the book of Pantagruelism itself, and therefore does represent a certain human industry and progress of the kind Rabelais participated in. See Tin, "Le Pantagruelion: Réflex-

ions sur la notion d'exégèse littéraire," in *Rabelais et la question du sens*, eds. Jean Céard and Marie-Luc Demonet, vol. 49, Études rabelaisiennes (Librairie Droz: Genève, 2011),124.

6. See Samuel Kinser, *Rabelais's Carnival: Text, Context, Metatext* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 93 n.1.

7. 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.

8. That is, both reason and belief combined in a kind of trust or belief in the orderliness of the cosmos. See Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968 / 1991), 190 (510a4–6).

9. The goddess Atropos is also mentioned in *Quart Livre* chapter 27 (*QL* 27, 603 *CW*, 496). There Pantagruel insists that the threat she poses is overstated, and in fact that "all human souls are exempt from the scissors of Atropos." In *Tiers Livre* 51 and *Quart Livre* 33, which contain the episodes examined in this article, Atropos appears as an active character in the text, and one more capable of harm—at least from the narrator's and Panurge's perspectives. In *TL* 51, the narrator corrects those who have blamed Pantagruel for having them "by the throat," for it was, he says, truly Pantagruelion (with which Atropos is associated). In *QL* 33, Panurge claims that he sees Atropos above the topmast of the ship, ready to take the lives of the crew. These differing views correspond well, we shall see, to the different dispositions of each character in the *physeter* chapters.

10. Seth Benardete, *The Bow and the Lyre: A Platonic Reading of the* Odyssey (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997),84.

11. Homer, *Odyssey*, 156–158 (10.155–220).

12. *Odyssey*, 158–159 (10.235–260).

13. *Odyssey*, 159 (10.260–270).

14. *Odyssey*, 160 (10.302–306). Italics mine. See also Benardete, *Bow*, 86. Lattimore translates θεοι δέ τε πάντα δύνανται as "the gods have power to do all things."

15. Cf. the description of Pantagruelion at *TL* 52, 509 / *CW*, 409.

16. This is a summary of Benardete's argument. See Benardete, *Bow*, 86.

17. See Masters, *Rabelaisian Dialectic*, 18

18. Masters, *Rabelaisian Dialectic*, 23.

19. Saulnier,"L'Énigme," 51; see also Tin, "Qu'est-ce que le Pantagruelion?," 129.

20. Surprisingly, the use of dessert as an emblem of philosophy or belief was not typical during the Renaissance. It cannot be found in the writings of Erasmus, for instance. As far as I can tell, this emblem may be a unique contribution of Rabelais's.

21. Tin observes that a literal understanding of the plant does not account for its being named after Pantagruel. I do not agree with him on all points about Pantagruelion, but this is an important insight. See Tin, "Qu'est-ce que le Pantagruelion?," 130.

22. See Hesiod, "Theogony," in *The Homeric Hymns and Homerica, With an English Translation*, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), lines 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.

23. Plato, *Republic*, 300 (617c4).

24. See François de La Rochefoucauld, "Réflexions ou Sentences et Maximes Morales (ed. 1678)," in *Oevres complètes*, ed. Jean Marchand (Paris: Gallimard, 1964),406 (maxim 26). The translation is mine.

25. Or, "gayeté d'esprit conficte en mespris des choses fortuites" [gaiety of spirit confected in contempt for fortuitous things]. See *QL*, prol 523 / *CW*, 425.

26. Compare with Plato, *Phaedo*, 34 (64a7).

27. See, again, *TL* prol, 349 / *CW*, 257: ". . . *drinking I deliberate, I discourse, I resolve and conclude*." Italics mine.

28. Plato, *Republic*, 193–196 (514a–517d).

29. "The repeated claim," writes Duval, "that fire actually purifies and whitens asbestine Pantagruelion . . . suggests an analogy between Pantagruelion and faith, whose symbolic color

is white and which is traditionally said to be tested by tribulation as gold is tested by fire." See Duval*, Design of Rabelais's* Tiers Livre, 210.

30. Marie-Luc Demonet has recently written a compelling chapter on the force and importance of literally interpreting Rabelais's body of work. She not only calls attention to the flightiness of critical efforts to seek the "plus haut" meaning of Rabelais's writing, but also finds value in the literal as such. At the least, readers should never close off their openness to these various levels of reading, if they feel inclined to one or the other. See Demonet, "Le sens littéral dans l'oeuvre de Rabelais," in *Rabelais et la question du sens*, 211–236.

31. This use of Pantagruelion is addressed in my discussion of the *physeter*.

32. See Vigliano, *Humanisme et juste milieu au siècle de Rabelais: essai de critique illusoire*, Le Miroir des Humanistes (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2009), 634. ["In reality Pantagruélion puts together all the characteristics of pantagruelism understood as an illusion. It existed before its usefulness was discovered and certain people continue to put it to bad use. . . . It can't be reduced to nothing: like an illusion, of which nothing will ever come to fruition. *It undergirds and develops human activity: like an illusion, which is life-giving*."] Italics mine.

33. I heed Duval's understanding of the Pantagruelion plant as a "test of Pantagruelism in the reader." See Duval*, Design of the* Tiers Livre, 212: "The reader who treats it as either an enigma to be deciphered or as errant foolishness is to be condemned as a Panurgian reader. . . ."

34. Ancient philosophers such as Aristotle treated the afterlife seriously. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Joe Sachs (Newburyport, MA: Focus, 2002), 16–18 (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." This disposition would not only suggest belief, but the synthesis between belief and reason.

35. 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, humanity's ability to use Pantagruelion to capture wind is not simply good. The bag of winds episode emphasizes the human misuse of wind-power. See *Odyssey*, 152–153 (10.19–27).

36. See David Quint, *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature: Versions of the Source* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), 167–171.

37. See Edwin M. Duval, *The Design of Rabelais's* Quart Livre de Pantagruel, vol. 36, Études Rabelaisiennes (Genève: Droz, 1998), 21–22.

38. See point 3 on the above list of Pantagruelion's nature.

39. Duval, *Design of the* Quart Livre, 130–131.

40. Thomas Aquinas, *The Literal Exposition on Job: A Scriptural Commentary Concerning Providence*, trans. Anthony Damico (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 454–455.

41. Duval, *Design of the* Quart Livre, 133. Frank Lestringant, on the other hand, connects the *physeter* to Rabelais's anti-Catholic disposition. "Il [the *physeter*] se trouve donc naturallement du côté de Quaresmeprenant" [It is found, naturally, on the coast of Quaresmeprenant], he notes. See Lestringant, "L'espace maritime du *Quart Livre*," in *En relisant le* Quart Livre *de Rabelais,* vol. 35, Cahiers Textual, eds. Nathalie Dauvois and Jean Vignes (Paris: Université Paris Diderot, 2012).

42. For similar readings, see Paul J. Smith, *Voyage et Écriture: Etude sur le* Quart Livre de Rabelais (Genève: Droz, 1987), 113; Wes Williams, *Monsters and their Meanings in Early Modern Culture: Mighty Magic* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011), 61; For the contrast between Panurge's and Pantagruel's reactions in the episode, see Marcel Tetel, "Le Physetère bicéphale," in *Writing the Renaissance: Essays on Sixteenth-Century French Literature in Honor of Floyd Gray*, ed. Raymond C. La Charité (Nicholasville, KY: French Forum, 1992), 58–59.

43. Myriam Marrache-Gouraud has noted that the theme of fear plays a most prominent role in the *Quart Livre*. Although much of the book, on this reading, is about correcting Panurge's misplaced fear, it is important to note that it is not always Panurge who is fearful and Pantagruel who is brave. On the contrary, Pantagruel shows fear—but only when reasonable. Panurge, on the other hand, sometimes expresses confidence when fear would be more proper. See Marrache-Gouraud, "Leçon d'agrégation: La peur dans le *Quart Livre*," in *Rabelais, aux*

confins des mondes possibles: Quart Livre, ed. Myrian Marrache-Gouraud (Paris: PUF, 2011), 136ff.

44. Guy Demerson, "Rabelais et la nature de l'eau," in *Actes des conférences du Cycle: Rabelais et la Nature, organisé durant l'année 1994*, ed. Francis Métivier, vol. 31, Études rabelaisiennes (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1996), 20. Water is "at least as pernicious as the other element deemed 'aggressive,' fire . . . Pantagruel recalls the two misfortunes suffered by Aeneas: the Trojan fire and a 'horrible storm above sea,' and already at the beginning of the *Tiers Livre*, when Panurge evoked the worst dangers that can attack someone, he equated the flood with fire and murder: fire, water! murder?"

45. Pantagruel's transformation reflects, in an inverse way, an adage of Erasmus (quoted by Demerson in this connection) that begins with the declaration that the fire, the sea, and woman are three evils. But as Erasmus's adage proceeds, water is said to be more fearful than fire, and woman more fearful than water. Pantagruel, by contrast, views water as a thing to be feared less than fire, and has been in the process, of course, of purging Panurge's fear of women. See Desiderius Erasmus, *Les Adages D'Érasme*, ed. La societé d'édition des Belles Lettres et le Groupe Renaissance Âge Classique (UMR 5037) (2010), II, 2, 48, http://sites.univ-lyon2.fr/lesmondeshumanistes/wp-content/uploads/Adages.pdf.

46. The size that Thomas attributes to the whale on Pliny's authority. See Aquinas, *Job*, 454.

47. Duval, *Design of the* Quart Livre, 130.

48. This is all the more fitting in light of Panurge's need to be educated, given that Panurge foolishly likened himself to Odysseus in his debut in Rabelais's work. See *P* 9, 249 / *CW*, 166.

49. See *Odyssey*, 319 (21.409).

50. See point 10 on the list describing Pantagruelion's "uses" in the discussion of Pantagruelion as belief.

51. Frame translates *sa forme* as "his physique."

Chapter Eight

Back To Diogenes' Barrel—and Tomb

> *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

I find it helpful to again recall Langer's formulation of Rabelais' works as "fictions, many of whose episodes can be read as representations of the way a good prince, any good prince, should act."[1] Langer's locution suggests a longstanding intention on Rabelais's part.[2] Yet even in these depictions of how a prince should act, Rabelais diverges from the model of most contemporary writings that aimed to last through the generations by portraying a stable human nature. His first two books, *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, which best reflect the popular mirrors-of-princes genre by depicting the actions of two hereditary rulers, focus on fictional characters.[3] Mirrors-of-princes writings, on the other hand, tend to glean examples from "the histories" and "the actions of great men."[4] Second, mirrors-of-princes books take the posture of moral advice given by a counselor or advisor, official or unofficial, to a ruler or potential set of rulers. Yet Rabelais only portrays an example to be interpreted and morally judged.

Rabelais's last three books seem to diverge further from the hallmarks of the mirrors-of-princes genre, yet for this very reason they are politically important. The age of peace that prepares the plot of the *Tiers Livre* and its focus on private life—Panurge's scheme to marry—is underwritten by the

political victories of the first two books. The permanence of this peace that begins at the outset of the *Tiers Livre* appears tenuous, however. The book's prologue centers on the war preparations of ancient Corinth and the questionable inaction of the city's resident philosopher, Diogenes the Cynic. Nonetheless, reprieve from war allows Rabelais to focus on the intellectual inheritances of the Renaissance and how they had shaped domestic life. Thus, Rabelais's movement from war to the marriage quest makes good his intention, stated at the beginning of *Gargantua*, of investigating "the political state [l'estat politicq] and private life"[5]—two aspects of the human condition whose interconnectedness he takes for granted.[6]

And Desrosiers-Bonin reminds readers of the fact that ethics, for Rabelais no less than for his predecessors, encompasses "l'individu, la famille, la société" all at once, yet nonetheless it retains these distinctions.[7] These twin investigations of the political state and private life become all the more inseparable as Rabelais politicizes Panurge's search for personal guidance by invoking the voices of many authorities who all claim to know best, whose opinions receive a qualitative independence from (and sometimes contradict) the others. By contrast, even pious Erasmus occasionally conflated the wisdom of the pagans with that of his Christian forefathers, however more highly he held the latter's standard of conduct, and he quite often refers to the classics and to ancient Judaism as the baseline of proper political action, never wholly regarding them as incompatible with Christian ethics and politics. As Erasmus insisted, "being a philosopher is in practice the same as being a Christian."[8]

Rabelais might have called Erasmus his intellectual "father,"[9] but his approach is still quite different. By focusing on the varied *reasons* behind the authorities' unified answer to the marriage question, Rabelais presents ways of life that must be chosen to the exclusion of others, even if those ways of life tend toward one answer for Panurge. Put differently, although each of the authorities suggests one piece of advice, the foundations of that advice differ to such a degree that the practical course of action that is repeatedly recommended tends to conceal differences in the thoughts behind that recommendation. One happy byproduct of the incompatibility of these authorities' opinions is a clearer understanding of each of the strands of Western civilization that Rabelais represents, including the "ancient Platonism" of Rondibilis. Because Rabelais has these authorities speak for themselves, he avoids combining Christian belief and Greek philosophy in a way that most contemporaries and prior authors had not. The ancient Platonism that comes to view through this route entails no grand political plans; it entails little more than coping with, resigning to, or living under the vicissitudes of life.[10]

The relatively authentic Platonism of the *Tiers Livre* might also cause readers to question the fruitfulness of the debate about whether Pantagruel serves as a Christian ruler. Pantagruel, after all, ruled reluctantly, in the

manner of someone who would not desire to return to a cave of a community, but who would need to be dragged back in—and who eventually would only out of a sense of justice.[11] In addition, Rondibilis's particular advice that Panurge resign to "natural consequences" comes closest to the narrator's characterization of Pantagruelism in the *Quart Livre* prologue as "gaiety of spirit confected in contempt for fortuitous things."[12] Indeed, one could reconcile the two outlooks, Rondibilis's Platonism and Pantagruel's Pantagruelism, by saying that Rondibilis simply makes Nature one of those "fortuitous things" that earn Pantagruelists' contempt. Both Pantagruel's Pantagruelism and Rondibilis's Platonism (along with Trouillogan's Pyrrhonism) cast doubt on any enterprise that seeks to control nature, including politics, and they point to the superiority of instead girding and preparing oneself for a more truly individualistic life.

But most of all, Pantagruelism can be understood as an antidote to what I have been calling the Diogenic problem. 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 vocation. Philosophers are interpreted with malevolence. (This Diogenic problem affects even Rabelais, who anticipates the morally and philosophically deficient misinterpretation of his books, as is all too apparent from his prologues, with him fending off anticipated charges from intellectual foes.)

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 as recounted by Rabelais 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 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. Securing this good 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," in Machiavelli's famous formulation.[13] Diogenes, by contrast, asked to be buried "on his face," believing that "after a little time, down will be converted to up."[14] Machiavelli sees the possibility of progressive knowledge, but Diogenes's burial wishes forecast instability and flux.

In evaluating the soundness of these two 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 faith-in-principles links the Pantagruelion and *physeter* episodes discussed in chapter 7 to the political teaching of Rabelais's book.

These two episodes suggest, after all, 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 people to humbly respect limits rather than try to boldly overcome them. The natural limits that Atropos stands for make politics worthwhile, but they also suggest the futility of political progressivism and thereby direct or reduce politics to maintaining the status quo. Atropos tables Panurge's essentially Machiavellian task of social and political improvement. Vanquishing Fortuna and respecting Atropos entail very different ways of life, different dispositions toward politics.

DIFFERENT CONCEPTIONS OF NECESSITY

The serene political moderation of Pantagruelism, the heady ambition of Machiavellianism, and irresponsible indolence of Diogenism are all prem-

ised 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, as in chapter 10 of the book of Joshua. When compared to the consultants visited in the middle of the *Tiers Livre*, Diogenes's position that causes elude us resembles a secular version of 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), although even Rondibilis does not have his architects aim to reshape the world in their favor. They simply work the advantages of nature when they recognize them.

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 alone vehemently rejects the ancient attitude of deference and insists on the knowability of causes. This insistence shows most in his praise of *debtes*, Panurge's world "in which everyone lends, everyone owes, all are debtors, all are lenders" (*TL* 4, 364 / *CW*, 271) which rests on a strong conception of *debvoir*. Yet this world, as Panurge concedes, requires us to "imagine" it (*TL* 4, 364 / *CW*, 271). The project leans on the mere 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. And these 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.[15] 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 prin-

ciples 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 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 natural specimen, Pantagruelion corresponds to the level of "trust" (πίστις) on Socrates's divided line—"the animals around us, and everything that grows. . . ."[16]

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, and it especially does not reveal what will happen after death.

Pantagruelion-based faith in principles leads to the individualism on display in Pantagruel's response to Panurge's praise of *debtes*. This individualism justifies itself through 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 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.

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,"[17] 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 spirit of service, 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 would not whine like a child about a "malignity of fortune," as Machiavelli did.

Whereas meditation on death requires forgetfulness, Diogenic barrel-rolling and Machiavellian wall-building involve deceit and dissimulation 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.[18]

Rabelais's book teaches, among so many other things, 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—following in the tradition of the reluctant political participation of Socrates—suggests that the old-fashioned execution of duty, indistinguishable from that of the rank-and-file citizen, provides the best way to solve the Diogenic problem.[19] 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 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. In this way, Rabelais's book really is, as he insists, a

Silenus with an exterior of folly and interior of wisdom, the two being far from mutually exclusive (see *G* prol, 5 / *CW*, 3).

NOTES

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

2. Other critics read Langer's "representations" of princely conduct as parodies. See Françoise Charpentier, "Une Education de prince: Gargantua, chapitre XI," in Études rabelaisiennes, vol. 21 (Genève: Librairie Droz, 1988), 103–108; Patricia Eichel-Lojkine, *Excentricité et Humanisme: Parodie, dérision et détournement des codes à la Renaissance*, vol. 63, Etudes de Philologie et d'Histoire (Genève: Droz, 2002), 149. Michael Randall concludes that "Rabelais's monarch is of the same stuff as his subjects." Michael Randall, "Rabelais and the Ideal Imperfect Polity," in *The Gargantuan Polity: On the Individual and the Community in the French Renaissance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 170. Desrosiers-Bonin uses the negative example of princely conduct, taken mostly from the *Tiers Livre*, of "la tyranny" (142–158) and "l'esclavage de Panurge" (158–167). Diane Desrosiers-Bonin, *Rabelais et l'humanisme civil*, vol. 27, Études rabelaisiennes (Droz, 1992), chapter 2, 'Le Prince,' 109–167.

3. The same holds of Rabelais's focus on fictional places that represent political ideals, such as Thélème, where residents exercise their will (θέλεμα) properly understood. See Randall, "Rabelais and the Ideal Imperfect Polity," 181. One could however argue that these fictional characters are informed by writings meant to have a practical effect. This argument applies well, for example, to Gargantua's father Grandgousier, who "à lu évidemment la *Querela Pacis* d'Erasme. . . ." Pierre Villey, *Marot et Rabelais*, vol. 1 (Paris: Champion, 1923), 220. Quoted in Randall, "Rabelais and the Ideal Imperfect Polity," 313.

4. Machiavelli, *Prince*, 20, 84 *DL*, 3.

5. *G* prol, 7 / *CW*, 4.

6. According to François-Marcel Plaisant, for example, when Rabelais includes a book titled 'Le mortier de vie politicque' in the Library at Saint-Victor (*P* 7), he alludes to the death of a social life wherein individuals form and mold one another through education. Plaisant, 'Le Sens du mot politicq chez Rabelais à la lumière d'un titre de la librairie Saint-Victor: Le mortier de vie politicque', in *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, vol. XXX, 3 (1971), 399.

7. Desrosiers-Bonin, *Rabelais et l'humanisme civil*, 21–22.

8. See Erasmus, *Christian Prince*, 1, 15.

9. See *CW*, 746.

10. Cf. Plato, "Seventh Letter," in *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. R. G. Bury (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), 326a–b.

11. See Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, 2nd edition, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 519c–d; 520e; see also 345e and 347c; see also Plato, *Apology*, 28d10–29a2. Compare with *P* 8, 245 / *CW*, 161.

12. *QL* prol, 523 / *CW*, 425. See Desrosiers-Bonin, *Rabelais et l'humanisme civil*, 47.

13. *DL*, 1.12.1.

14. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 135.

15. For an ancient account of spousal (in)educability, see Xenophon, "Oeconomicus," in *Shorter Socratic Writings*, 59–79 (7–11).

16. Plato, *Republic*, 510a4–6.

17. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, 146.

18. See Plato, *Republic*, 382b.

19. See Plato, *Apology*, 28d10–29a2.

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