MEDICINE, TIME, AND FICTION

IN RABELAIS

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Supervised by Professor Wes Williams

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For my family, and other animals

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Short Abstract

In the prologue to *Pantagruel*, Rabelais's narrator Alcofribas promises his readers that sufferers of toothache will find no better remedy than the book they have in their hands, once it has been infused with powder and pressed between hot linens. A reading influenced by the medical humanities might take Alcofribas's hawking as indicative of Rabelais intentionally drawing a parallel between his professional identities of physician and writer, using his fiction as an alternative means of participating in the theoretical debates of his day or a vehicle for therapeutic laughter. This thesis, however, proposes that Rabelais's fictions resist both an instrumentalist and biographical approach: reconsidering how medicine is represented across his works allows for reconsideration of the specific force of (his) fictional writing. It sets Rabelais's fictions in relation to a range of early modern medical texts, written traces of Rabelais's medical life, and critical histories of medicine. By focussing on different elements of the temporality of care and cure, it also proposes a new lens through which to understand the practice of medicine as a contingent and collaborative

process, engaging not only the practitioner and the patient, but also the materials which mediate their encounter (including Alcofribas's repurposed pages). Tracing Rabelais's re-imagining of the stages classically involved in the medical encounter – Anamnesis, Diagnosis, Prognosis, and Cure – close readings will be supported by intertextual 'suturing' with classical and contemporary source texts, all in a bid to recover the specific animation (movement, energy, temporality) of Rabelais's fictional writing, and the experimental, embodied, and interdisciplinary interpretative mode it prompts. This thesis is therefore an experiment in literary analysis, in the cultural history of medicine, and in the contemporary medical humanities: one in which Rabelais emerges as a powerful case study for reimagining the force of fiction from the early modern period to today.

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Long Abstract

One of Rabelais's most renowned medical scenes is not really a scene at all, but a description, told from memory, of a figure seen beyond the pages of the text: that of Quaresmeprenant, a monstrous allegory of lent, 'anatomisé et descript' by Xenomanes during the long voyage of the *Quart Livre*. The body parts of this monster – organs, limbs, qualities, countenance, right down to how he winks and yawns – are itemized in a characteristically exuberant Rabelaisian list and compared, with a deceptive 'comme', to household items that bear little to no resemblance. Rabelais scholars have explored how this textual dissection plays on the use of analogy and description in early modern medical texts; in so doing, they draw a parallel between Rabelais's professional identities as physician and writer to suggest that Rabelais uses his fictional writing as an alternative means of participating in contemporary medical debates. By this means, they solidify Rabelais's place and value in two critical traditions that sit on the disciplinary boundary between medicine and literature. The first is the interpretative model of dissecting the text, which dominates in early

modern scholarship and which imagines the early modern reader as part of a wider culture of dissection and enquiry, and so expected to expertly decrypt the 'design' of the text and its various contexts; the modern reader must, in turn, mimic this approach in order to fully understand the complexity of a text such as Rabelais's. The second tradition is more concerned with the functionality of literature; to foreground the blurring of professional identity is, in line with the contemporary medical humanities, an interdisciplinary movement born out of introducing literary and artistic subjects into the medical school curriculum, to explore how fiction itself can have a therapeutic purpose, instrumentalised as an alternative form of cure or self-care.

This thesis proposes, rather, that Rabelais's fictional texts prompt a rearticulation of how we understand the relation between medicine and literature. It resists thinking about Rabelais's textual corpus as 'dead', as a set of static constituent parts whose significance is rooted in Rabelais's biography or in their therapeutic value for readers. It proposes that Rabelais's texts are 'animated' by his staging of medical scenes, and that an experimental, embodied, and interdisciplinary reader is able to 'reanimate' the energy of his fictional writing in ways that go beyond the archival or the pharmaceutical. To do so, it introduces a new lens through which to read medicine in Rabelais: the temporality of medical work.

If the critical landscape of early modern medicine has traditionally focused on a set of conceptual binaries – theoretical versus practical, learned versus popular, written versus oral, Latin versus vernacular – this original approach seeks to uncover how early modern medical practice was understood in its time as a contingent and collaborative process that plays out between a range of practitioners, patients, and the materials that might mediate their encounter. The thesis advances by way of four

chapters that track key stages in the medical consultation: Anamnesis, the patient's account of their medical history; Diagnosis, the identification of the nature of an illness by examination of the symptoms; Prognosis, the prediction of the likely course of the illness; finally, Cure, focused on pharmaceutical treatment. Each chapter begins with a textual trace from Rabelais's medical career – from poems by Etienne Dolet recording Rabelais's own public anatomical demonstration to diagnostic letters written by Giovanni Manardi and prefaced by a letter from Rabelais to André Tiraqueau – which introduces how each temporal mode structures how we can understand different forms of medical expertise and error in this period.

The chapters then map how each stage of the consultation allows us to reread a medical scene from Rabelais's fictions. By attending to the temporality of each medical stage, this thesis uncovers new ways of understanding Rabelais's texts as 'animated'. It examines the movement and dynamism of Rabelais's fictional writing, exploring ways in which it constantly reorients the position of the reader: the medical scenes represented emerge as demanding an embodied and experimental mode of reading, in which the reader is tasked with reflecting on how their own body and imaginative capacity structures their interpretative response. This reconsideration of Rabelais's literary work serves, ultimately, to reframe how we think more broadly about the force and function of his fiction beyond that which either early modern French studies or the medical humanities currently allow on their own. For these reimagined medical scenes demonstrate that Rabelais's text operates as a thinking ground: one in which the ideas of medical practice are animated, in which alternative medical futures are imagined, in which the dangers of medical error or fakery can be revealed, and in which source texts and classical, medieval, and contemporary intertexts can be transformed.

The introduction sets out the thesis's new approach to medicine and Rabelais by way of three medical scenes. The encounter between the Limousin scholar (called 'the spruce-like scholar' by Rabelais's translator Urquhart) and Pantagruel contains both a violent threat and an act of intensely physical violence. This meeting serves to introduce the early steps of this thesis as interested in the particular value of Rabelais's texts in revealing the heterogeneity of early modern medicine as well as in destabilising the analogy of the medical and literary encounter. The introduction then turns to the well-known dissection scene of the title-page to Vesalius's work on anatomy as a means of considering the most common articulation of the relation between medicine and literature in early modern studies, that of dissecting the text. This is compared, finally, to an observation of surgery undertaken by the author of this thesis; one which reveals the value of temporality as a critical lens to approach this disciplinary boundary, and which imagines Rabelais's text in 'suspended animation', able to be re-animated by the tools of interdisciplinary study.

The first chapter, Anamnesis, opens with Dolet's poetic celebration of Rabelais's public anatomical demonstration in 1537, at Lyon's Hôtel-Dieu. Dolet imagines how Rabelais's corpse might narrate their own experience of this spectacular event, and how this account might inform – or clash with – that of the physician and anatomist performing the dissection. To do so, he draws both on shifting definitions of the term *historia* in early modern medicine and on the trope of speaking with the dead in literary history to represent this sort of anamnesis in reverse. This opening analysis of the powers of different forms and temporalities of testimony goes on to shape the body of the chapter, which reconsiders Epistemon's resurrection on the *Pantagruel* battlefield and his subsequent recounting of his experience of the underworld – from the impossible position of being at once one of

the dead and a living witness to them. It is Panurge's diagnosis and suturing of Epistemon's head and body back together which turns, this thesis argues, this renowned analepsis into an upturned anamnesis; one which questions the capacity of both medical practice and fiction. The chapter ends with a comparison of Epistemon's anamnesis with François Villon's *Epitaphe*, in which Villon imagines his own dead voice and posthumous presence, and with surgeon Ambroise Paré's case history about a patient who also speaks after suturing in order to exonerate his servant in the court of law. Suturing then emerges as a metaphor for both Rabelais's intertextual work and my own interdisciplinary experiment.

Chapter Two, Diagnosis, moves from Panurge conjuring with death to an exploration of how birthing bodies – my term for women in various stages of conception, pregnancy, and birth – offer a particularly difficult diagnostic challenge in early modern medicine. Manardi's remote diagnosis of a patient's curiously swelling womb, in a letter responding to a plea by confused junior colleagues, opens this chapter: Manardi's challenge – his inability to respond immediately and perform a tactile examination of the patient's body – serves to illuminate the challenge of the diagnostic present/presence, and to introduce a textual dynamic of suspension and delay that will go on to characterise the representation of women's medical experiences in Rabelais. This chapter then advances by way of the stages of birthing. It examines first how Panurge's fable of an encounter between a lion, a fox, and an old woman in *Pantagruel* reworks Gargantua's conception in *Les Chroniques Gargantuines*, widely considered to be an important source text for Rabelais's narrative, before moving on to how Rabelais's reworking of the form of the fable, pausing the main text to supposedly offer an exemplary tale, operates to dismantle readerly expectations of the authority of both the masculine medical community and

of his own fictions. The chapter then turns to Gargantua's mother, Gargamelle, and her protracted pregnancy, focussing eventually on her labour, during which a group of meddling, misdiagnosing midwives redirect the reader's imagination to the temporal and embodied nature of their own interpretation, thereby effecting a crucial pause before the moment of birth. To conclude, the chapter examines how the death of Pantagruel's mother, Badebec, consolidates the link between diagnostic error and the textual movement of suspension, pause, and delay that is pursued across all stages of birthing bodies in this chapter.

The third chapter, Prognosis, alters the rhythm of those that have come before: it replaces an examination of Rabelais's medical correspondence with that of the integration of two real medical scenes into Rabelais's fictional text. It begins with how the death of the Seigneur de Langey, Guillaume du Bellay, in the *Quart Livre*, which Epistemon testifies that 'Rabelays' attended as a physician, reveals the necessity of prudential prognosis: the physician who instils trust and collaboration in their patient ultimately allows for a more successful management of the future course of an illness. It is an imprudent physician, however, that characterises the major analysis of this chapter: Rondibilis, most often read as an avatar of the Montpellier physician Guillaume Rondelet, whom Panurge consults as part of the intellectual odyssey of the *Tiers Livre* to decide on whether to marry, and if he will be cuckolded if he does. The chapter argues that Rondibilis's exhortation that Panurge write his prognosis – that yes, of course, Panurge will probably be cuckolded – 'en vostre cervelle avecques un style de fer' opens up a consideration of imagination, medical pedagogy, and the materiality of the brain. This construction of Panurge as a medical student as well as a patient is significant due to Epistemon's following intervention: he undermines Rondibilis's medical authority by recounting a play that he witnessed

about an imprudent physician, performed on the streets of Montpellier by none other than Rabelais when he was a medical student. This chapter argues that by introducing the form of a recounted performance, and an alternative autobiographical dimension (as medical student, rather than physician), Rabelais extends a consideration of the ethical and epistemological stakes of prognosis into one of the very force and function of fiction in this period.

Cure, the final chapter, focuses on pharmaceutical treatment in *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*. It reveals a series of unintentional and accidental cures that offer a means of reflecting on both medical and authorial prescription. It opens, once again, with Rabelais as seen through Dolet's poetry; yet, here, we have Rabelais's corrective response. For Rabelais sends Dolet a vial of *garum* (a fermented fish sauce that abounds in ancient recipe books); when Dolet replies alluding to a classical symposium of poets, Rabelais sends a prescription-style-poem that insists on the medicinal rather than metaphorical quality of digestion. The medicalisation of digestion is traced throughout the chapter: firstly, with Gargantua's accidental swallowing of pilgrims seeking spiritual cure for the plague; secondly, with Pantagruel's swallowing of peasant labourers encased in metal pills, prescribed by physicians, to clear a blockage in his stomach. The pilgrims set up a string of unintentional cures when they repurpose their pilgrim staffs in the toothy terrain of Gargantua's mouth; the explicitly medical discourse of pharmaceutical intervention in *Pantagruel*, however, unravels into a consideration of intertextuality and interpretation. If Anamnesis examined the metaphor of suturing for understanding Rabelais's relation to literary and medical texts, then this chapter concludes with suggesting that the process of prescribing and preparing a pharmaceutical recipe

opens up new ways of thinking about how we understand the work of Rabelais's fiction.

The conclusion returns to the very scene that opened this thesis, that of the encounter between Pantagruel and the spruce-like scholar. It compares it to the ending of the *Quart Livre*, in which Panurge shits himself not out of fear, he claims, but because he is laughing too much; allowing for a final consideration of laughter and cure in and beyond Rabelais that characterises this thesis's positioning of Rabelais as a challenge to the contemporary medical humanities.

This thesis seeks to radically reframe what we think of as the value of Rabelais's texts on the disciplinary frontier between medicine and literature. It proposes that Rabelais's texts do not conform to current critical articulations of this frontier by way of a double reconsideration. If it is by rethinking how we approach the medical in Rabelais's texts that we can uncover something new about the work of his fiction, then, by way of a critically reflexive movement that doubles back on that initial disciplinary frontier, Rabelais's texts demand that we think more expansively about the capacity of early modern fiction to address medical concerns. Rabelais's work encourages us to understand fictional texts as not just reflecting or capturing early modern medicine, but as interrogating the practice and the limits of medicine, and at the same time uses this interrogation as a springboard for an exploration of the function of fictional writing. This constitutes this thesis's proposition beyond early modern French studies: that Rabelais is a productive and provocative case study for a far-reaching reimagining of how the temporality of medical work can help us to think differently about the force of fiction, and the forms of embodied, experimental, and interdisciplinary engagement that it can prompt.

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All images used are in the public domain.

Figure 1: Andreas Vesalius, *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, frontispiece woodcut (1543), © The Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 2: Ambroise Paré, *Les Oeuvres d'Ambroise Paré, conseiller et premier chirurgien du roy, divisées en vingt-sept livres : avec les figures et portraicts tant de l'Anatomie que des instruments de chirurgie et de plusieurs monstres : reveuz et augmentez par l'autheur pour la seconde Edition, Paris*, (Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1579), © Collection BIU Santé Médecine.

Note on Abbreviations and Translations

Abbreviations

I use the following abbreviated forms:

ÉR *Études rabelaisiennes*

OC *Œuvres complètes*

Translations

Unless otherwise stated, translations are my own.

Introduction

I. Skinning a Spruce-like Scholar

I.i. Prosthesis, Poetry, Pre-history

Shortly after visiting the universities of France, Pantagruel encounters, on the road into Paris, a university student – or, in Thomas Urquhart's seventeenth-century translation, a 'spruce-like scholar', by which early modern English dictionaries suggest he means a scholar neat and trim – that intrigues him (*Pantagruel*, ch. 6, pp. 232-235).[1] Pantagruel asks where he is from, but is not satisfied with his response, in a strangely latinised French, that he hails from the city itself. After verbally sparring for a couple of pages, Pantagruel finally grasps that the student is from Limousin, merely pretending to be Parisian ('Et tu veulx icy contrefaire le Parisien') (*Pantagruel*,

[1] François Rabelais, *Œuvres complètes* [*OC*], ed. by Mireille Huchon in collaboration with François Moreau (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1994). I will henceforth cite from this edition and incorporate references in the body of the text, using the format: (*text*, chapter number, page number(s)). François Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel, Complete Five Books of the Lives, Heroic Deeds and Sayings of Gargantua and his Son Pantagruel The Complete Works of François Rabelais,* trans. by Sir Thomas Urquhart and Peter Motteux, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1871) reprinted from the 1653 first edition. Accessed online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1200/1200-h/1200-h.ht (02.05.2022). 'Spruce', for example, in Elisha Cole, *An English Dictionary* (London: 1676) is recorded as a synonym for 'neat' and 'dapper'. Accessed online: https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/search/word# (19.12.2022). In this thesis, I will focus on Rabelais's first four texts, *Pantagruel, Gargantua,* the *Tiers Livre*, and the *Quart Livre*, excluding the *Cinquiesme Livre.* The authenticity of the *Cinquiesme Livre* has been fiercely debated by Rabelais scholars, who conclude variously that the text contains at least fragments written by Rabelais, functions as a first draft of an unfinished work, or is an example of Rabelais's reception and interpretation by a contemporary reader. Due to my interest, made clear in what follows, in how Rabelais's medical career informs his fictional writing, I have decided that including the *Cinquiesme Livre* would alter the terms of my examination beyond what I have scope for in this thesis; medicine in the *Cinquiesme Livre* would certainly be a productive avenue of further study, notably chapter 20, 'Comment la Quinte-Essence guarissoit les maladies par chansons', pp. 768-770. For an overview of the debate, see Richard Cooper, 'L'Authenticité du *Cinquiesme Livre*: état présent de la question', *ÉR*, 40 (2001), 9–22.

ch. 6, p. 234). This deceit prompts a violent dénouement to their encounter. Pantagruel grabs the scholar by the throat: the young man simultaneously defecates and breaks into his native Limousin dialect to which Pantagruel replies, satisfied, that 'A ceste heure parle tu naturellement'; he is left with lasting trauma, a 'remord toute sa vie' and such thirst (in a winking reference to Pantagruel's name) 'qu'il disoit souvent que Pantagruel le tenoit à la gorge' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 6, p. 232; p. 235). And Pantagruel's violence is anticipated by the verbal force of one of Rabelais's most memorable, visceral threats: 'Tu escorche le latin', Pantagruel glowers, 'par sainct Jan je te feray escorcher le renard, car je te escorcheray tout vif' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 6, p. 234).

This may seem like an unexpected scene with which to open a thesis about Rabelais and medicine. There is no curative intervention, here, nor medical knowledge from Rabelais's parallel career as an accomplished physician and editor of medical texts on display. If anything, it anticipates a medical scene absent from Rabelais's text: it is the backstory to an imagined future encounter between the Limousin and his physician as they work together to find some form of treatment adequate to the trauma of the encounter with Pantagruel. Yet this meeting, and the relation it explores between verbal and physical violence emblematised in the 'escorcher' triptych of Pantagruel's threat – skinning a language, skinning a fox, skinning alive – made this scene an integral and formative part of the early development of this project.

Before beginning my thesis, I had pursued an interest in the representation of the body in early twentieth-century French literature; more specifically, in the

prosthetics and poetry of first world war soldier-poets.[2] The poetic languages of modernism celebrated both the technological spectacle of war and the formal fragmentation of the body; I examined how the real fracturing and remaking of bodies changed how soldier-poets expressed their own experience (some, like Apollinaire, had become patients too) and what they witnessed of conflict. Modernist studies of bodies at war had inherited models of how to understand this relation between medicine and literature. Scholars were beginning to engage with the developing field of the medical humanities and its focus on literary practices as curative (to which I will return, later in this introduction), but their articulations of amputations and prosthesis also drew on early modern studies, notably Jonathan Sawday's formative examination of bodily fragmentation in terms of a culture of dissection.[3] My prosthetic subjects and their poetry resisted these models: these bodies were restored, not fragmented; writing about these bodies variously consolidated and challenged my assumptions about modernist literary form and function. I, in turn, developed a curiosity about the pre-history of the relation between medicine and literature and how our inherited understanding of it might, too, be disrupted.

I like to think of the Limousin scholar as a distant ancestor, perhaps, of the first world war amputees facing life-altering injuries that fed my initial interest in returning to early modern culture. Even if we never see his body restored nor hear his own experience of suffering, and even if we are now in the world of fictional

[2] This interest started in the second year of my undergraduate degree at the University of Bristol, and I remain grateful to Professor Susan Harrow for her guidance and support in this early stage of my academic trajectory. Her article on Guillaume Apollinaire's wartime poetics is exemplary of the most exciting work on medicine and poetry in this period: Susan Harrow, 'The Autobiographical and the Real in Apollinaire's War Poetry', *The Modern Language Review*, 97 (2002), pp. 821-834.
[3] Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995). I will address Sawday's approach in further detail later in the introduction.

narrative rather than poetry, Pantagruel's anticipatory skinning threat suggestively raises a set of questions that helped to navigate my early approach to the pre-history of the relation between medicine and literature. The material and metaphorical reconfigurations of skinning imply a tension about how the body was understood in early modern culture; my early readings of this scene were (as I make clear below) most interested in uncovering one facet of this, the heterogeneity of early modern medicine. These reconfigurations offer, then, a productive means for thinking through the force of Rabelais's fictional writing in representing medicine on the page. Finally, this scene places emphasis on the encounter, helping to inform a central proposition of this thesis: that the analogy of the medical and the literary encounter – and, crucially, how it can be experimented with – is a powerful way of understanding the relation between medicine and fiction in early modern France.

The first part of this introduction will explore how this Rabelaisian skinning scene might serve as a lens to set out these three early questions, establishing current scholarly approaches to early modern medical culture, medicine in Rabelais, and the medical and literary encounter. This first part will offer an immediate challenge to the dominant model of literature as curative, common to both Rabelais scholarship and the medical humanities. The second and third part of the introduction will then compare two further medical scenes and their value as analogies. Firstly, I will consider the dissection scene in which the skin of the dead body is peeled back by the anatomical expert, which has become something of a topos in early modern medical studies. Secondly, I will recount a surgical scene that I observed, on a trip to the Churchill Hospital, Oxford in December 2019, in which the patient's life is suspended temporarily as the surgeons work to restore it. Through close attention to these three scenes – literary skinning, early modern dissection, modern surgery – I will move

from how my thesis started to what it has become: an experiment in literary analysis, in the cultural history of medicine, and in the contemporary medical humanities. Across these scenes, a fundamental refocusing of my early interest in the representation of the heterogeneity of early modern French medical culture will come into view: I will set out how my thesis ultimately reconsiders the relation between medicine, time, and fiction in Rabelais.

I.ii Rabelais and Early Modern Medical Culture

Lazare Sainéan claims to uncover, tracing the medical vocabulary that proliferates in Rabelais's fictional narratives, 'l'inépuisable fécondité d[e son] génie scientifique'.[4] From medical student in Montpellier to physician at the Hôtel-Dieu in Lyon, where he performed his own public dissection, private physician to Jean and Guillaume du Bellay, and editor of Hippocratic and Galenic treatises, Rabelais was a respected member of the learned medical communities of his time.[5] Pantagruel's threat – 'Tu escorche le latin; par sainct Jan, je te feray escorcher le renard, car je te escorcheray tout vif' (*Pantagruel,* ch. 6, p. 234) – might not appear to explicitly be drawn from this parallel medical career, yet his choice of the term 'escorcher' is useful for us here: revealing both an interrelation between different forms of knowledge and a concern for how they are communicated to the reader of his fictions, then, as now.

The first figuration of 'escorcher' plays on the skin surface as being a marker of coherence; exposed, incomplete, a skin-less body translates into the Latin language

[4] Lazare Sainéan, *La Langue de Rabelais* (Paris: E. de Boccard, 1922), p. 47.
[5] Roland Antonioli offers the most comprehensive history of Rabelais's medical career: Roland Antonioli, *Rabelais et la médecine* (Geneva: Droz, 1976); see also Huchon's chapter, 'Medécin, philologue, abstracteur de quinte essence' in her biography of the author: Mireille Huchon, *Rabelais* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2011), pp. 109-135. I will be examining textual traces of these moments in the opening to each chapter.

unmastered. As for the second instance, Randle Cotgrave records 'escorcher le renard' in his 1611 French-English dictionary as an expression for making one vomit, originating in the grisly smell of skinning a real fox. It is the animal's material body, and the practical, corporeal knowledge that the human experiences while handling it ('for the flaying of so stinking a beast is like enough to make them spue that feele it', writes Cotgrave), that is now calcified in a figurative expression.[6] The third rearticulation then turns skinning from metaphorical vomit into metaphorical violence, imagined on the real human body of the schoolboy. Timothy Hampton's reading of this episode is attuned to what he calls 'an interplay of language, territory, and body', with the 'space of France and the emerging French vernacular' contested between the scholar's latinised French and 'natural' Limousin dialect.[7] Rabelais's fictions are, for Hampton, a form of literary artefact that registers how national identity developed in early modern France. I contend that a different sort of registration to what Hampton suggests is also at play here: that Rabelais's creative use of 'escorcher' demonstrates how language registers different ways in which we can make meaning about the body; learned, proverbial, experiential, and imaginative. The movement of this linguistically changed encounter is, then, important, for the scholar's words – shifting from counterfeit Latin, would-be Parisian French, and his 'own' Limousin dialect, while Pantagruel and his followers understand each other throughout – alert us to how such forms of knowledge were constructed and performed by different communities of learning in early modern France.

[6] 'Escorcher' in Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London: Adam Islip, 1611). Accessed online: https://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/ (24.02.2022).
[7] Timothy Hampton and Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Confronting the Turkish Dogs: Rabelais and his Critics', *Occasional Papers of the Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities*, 10 (1996), 1-29 (p. 11).

Scholarship examining sixteenth-century French medical culture has tended to prioritise learned modes of medical thought and practice and, in so doing, establish a set of conceptual binaries with which to frame this period: knowledge as either elite or popular, written or oral, theoretical or practical, transmitted in Latin or vernacular texts.[8] In 2003, an international group of researchers on the cultural history of medicine – co-ordinated by Michel Jeanneret and including scholars such as Andrea Carlino, Dominique Brancher, and Valerie Worth-Stylianou – met at the École normale supérieure in Paris to investigate more closely the obscured continuities between such binaries. This group focused on medical texts written in the French vernacular, using literary tools of analysis to examine principally how medical writers defended their language, style, and professional allegiance; the results of their collaborative work were published in 2009 as *Vulgariser la médecine: du style médical en France et en Italie*.[9] Their scholarship paints the first half of the sixteenth century as a time of lively change and collaboration; the growing use of the vernacular in the translation and writing of medical texts contributed to a more diverse 'marché thérapeutique' in which practical skill was increasingly valorised, professional and social hierarchies were questioned, and the reading public was expanded.[10] 'La

[8] These distinctions are evident in the most comprehensive studies of medicine in early modern France, which remain important and useful guides to medicine in this period: Laurence Brockliss and Colin Jones, *The Medical World in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997) and Ian Maclean, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance: The Case of Learned Medicine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). See also Ian Maclean, *Le Monde et les hommes selon les médecins de la Renaissance* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2006). Studies of early modern Europe further tend to focus on learned medicine, with consideration of alternative forms and figures of medical practice mostly limited to surgery: see, for example, Nancy G. Siraisi, *Medieval and Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1990) and Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[9] *Vulgariser la médecine: du style médical en France et en Italie (XVIe et XVIIe siècles)* ed. by Andrea Carlino and Michel Jeanneret (Geneva: Droz, 2009). Vivian Nutton has very recently published an overview of medicine in the sixteenth-century with a part dedicated to the 'kaleidoscopes of healing' and those 'on the margins of medical history': Vivian Nutton, *Renaissance Medicine: A Short History of European Medicine in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 2022).

[10] Carlino, 'Introduction' in *Vulgariser la médecine',* p. 20.

promotion du vernaculaire comme langue de transmission écrite du savoir médical permet aux auteurs d'opérer conjointement sur l'ensemble des savoirs et des pratiques de la médecine et, en conséquence,' writes Carlino in his introduction to the volume, 'contribue à la remise en question, sur le plan culturel, du partage entre médecine théorique et pratiques thérapeutiques et, même, entre médecine savante et « populaire »'.[11] Rabelais's 'escorcher' triptych betrays a curiosity, on the part of Rabelais, in the different ways in which one can know and transmit knowledge about the body. The material practice and metaphorical possibility of skinning expands, under his pen, to accommodate traces from the heterogenous therapeutic marketplace that the *Vulgariser la médecine* scholars uncovered; traces of an early modern medical world animated by a range of practitioners and practices beyond what conventional histories of medicine tell us of this period.

I.iii Rabelais's Restless Texts

Hampton reads Pantagruel and the spruce-like scholar's fictional encounter as staging contemporary debates around political and national community; so far, our reading has suggested that Rabelais's use of language can also, and powerfully, reveal heterogeneity in the early modern medical world. Two key critical standpoints in Rabelais scholarship can help us to deepen this position; firstly, to think beyond Rabelais's calcifying language to how his fictional narrative works in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin's writing on heteroglossia and, secondly, to consider the distribution of narrative energy among characters, including the enigmatic narrator Alcofribas

[11] Carlino, 'Introduction' in *Vulgariser la médecine',* p. 31.

himself.[12] In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin – one of Rabelais's most renowned critical readers, his texts often the lens through which non-specialists encounter Rabelais's fictions – expands on how different kinds of social 'languages' or 'social dialects' are present in any national language at a given moment. His suggestive list of examples helps us to consolidate our argument, above, that the 'escorcher' expressions reveal different communities of knowledge:

> The internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour (each day has its own slogan, its own vocabulary, its own emphases).[13]

These languages do not just co-exist for Bakhtin, but overlap, combine, and clash to constitute the vitality of living language. Bakhtin's text thrills in how he proposes that this heteroglossia operates in the form of the novel:

> Heteroglossia, once incorporated into the novel (whatever the forms of incorporation) is *another's speech in another's language*, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way. Such speech constitutes a special type of *double-voiced discourse*. It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author.[14]

It is a desire to uncover such 'refraction' that drives the interpretative energy of his book dedicated to Rabelais, *Rabelais and his World*.[15] Rabelais's heteroglossia animates, for Bakhtin, the recalcitrant speech of the people participating in carnival and at the marketplace; it amplifies the voices of the lower echelons of early modern

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[12] For a sustained reflection on Bakhtin's scholarship on Rabelais, see Richard M. Berrong, *Rabelais and Bakhtin: Popular Culture in 'Gargantua' and 'Pantagruel'* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Paress, 1986).
[13] Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 262-263.
[14] Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, p. 324.
[15] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984).

French culture that are rarely heard in critical scholarship. Bakhtin, in this way, proves to always be wrestling – alongside decades of Rabelais scholars – with the restlessly shifting nature of Rabelais's fictional writing and its resistance to interpretative clarity or certainty. For if the medical can be taken as a set of languages that can reveal how this culture operates, we can see how, in layering such languages, Rabelais deliberately refracts his own authorial position.

Rabelais voices, clearly, multiple viewpoints in his texts through his characters; narrative energy is distributed among them, rather than being attributed to an all-seeing authorial presence. Another of Bakhtin's terms is useful for understanding this idea: polyglossia, or the exchange or the meeting of different voices and languages. Hampton is interested in how Pantagruel's response to the spruce-like scholar constituted a form of 'collective paranoia' of a culture on the brink of religious violence: 'it is unclear who, exactly, is being tested here', he argues.[16] This position grows in persuasiveness when we read the encounter as reworked when Pantagruel (eventually) offers Panurge, speaking strangely on their first meeting in a few chapters time, compassionate aid. Panurge's narrative fate diverges from the spruce-like scholar as much as his physical one does; he acts, alongside the rest of the assorted characters throughout the texts (Epistemon, Ponocrates, Frere Jan, to name just a few), as a continuous interlocutor to the giant, intervening, probing, challenging, alarming, and disagreeing with him in turn. Such peripheral figures to the princely protagonists invest the text with alternative perspectives that 'test' the

[16] Hampton, 'Confronting the Turkish Dogs: Rabelais and his Critics', p. 9. This scene (Rabelais, *Pantagruel,* ch. 9, pp. 246-250) receives much attention in Rabelais scholarship. For a particularly perceptive reading on alterity and compassion, see Terence Cave, 'Travelers and Others: Cultural Connections in the Works of Rabelais', in Jean-Claude Carron, ed. *François Rabelais: Critical Assessments* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 39-56.

reader on how and where, exactly, Rabelais is himself invested in the debates of his day.

A voice absent from the skinning scene is that of Alcofribas Nasier. A thinly veiled anagram of Rabelais's name, the mocking and irreverent narrator is a medical figure in his own right: an 'abstracteur de quinte essence', or alchemist, announcing the first two texts as possessing an esoteric quality (one that forms part of Mireille Huchon's proposal of steganographic reading, to which we will return in part two of this introduction). Rabelais, as 'docteur en medecine', then appears himself on the title-pages of the *Tiers Livre* and the *Quart Livre*. This shift is most often read as reflective of the febrile, anxious landscape of the 1550s, with religious conflict engulfing France and the boundaries of the known world expanding: it is a defiant move, critics suggest, against the Sorbonne's censorship of his earlier texts in 1543, one that is bolstered by the royal privilege and a form of dedication to Marguerite de Navarre accompanying the *Tiers Livre* and a dedication to Cardinal de Châtillon, the powerful protector of Christian humanists, accompanying the *Quart Livre*.[17] Those attentive to Rabelais's medical history take a different approach. They suggest that Rabelais's reclaiming of authorial ownership alongside his insistence on his medical identity means that Rabelais intentionally associates the two. This perceived relation has shaped both how Rabelais critics read medical scenes in the narratives and how they think, more broadly, about the encounter between the writer and reader as operating analogically to that of the physician and their patient; in so doing aligning, as I make clear in what follows, with the still developing field of the contemporary medical humanities.

[17] See, for example: Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Rabelais among the Censors (1940s, 1540s)', *Representations*, 32 (1990), 1-32 (pp. 16-17).

I.iv The Medical and Literary Encounter

Roland Antonioli has written an authoritative account of medicine and Rabelais, in which he foregrounds medical scenes represented in the texts as able to powerfully inform our understanding of Rabelais's own medical training and practice.[18] Reading in Antonioli's wake, we might see Rabelais's re-inscription of his role as a physician as going hand-in-hand with a startling moment, amid the encounters with strange people and beasts in the *Quart Livre*, where Rabelais pens himself into his fictional narrative as a physician attending the deathbed of Guillaume du Bellay: 'Il m'en souvient (dist Epistemon) et encores me frissonne et tremble le cœur dedans sa capsule, quand je pense es prodiges tant divers et horrificques les quelz veismes apertement cinq et six jours avant son depart', Rabelais writes, before listing those present at the death, including 'Rabelays' himself (*Quart Livre*, ch. 27, p. 602). Rabelais's autobiographical gesture makes the value of Antonioli's biographical approach particularly legible: he appears to directly invite the historical scrutiny that we see scholars such as Emmanuelle Lacore-Martin perform, examining, for example, the physiology of Epistemon's 'frisson[ant] et trembl[ant]' heart in terms of Galenic texts we know Rabelais to have read.[19] This biographical impulse produces a focus on either Rabelais's authorial presence or the presence of his medical contemporaries, such as Dr Rondibilis in the *Tiers Livre*, commonly thought to be an avatar of Montpellier physician Guillaume Rondelet. It encourages readers to search, continuously, for Dr Rabelais in the text.

[18] Antonioli, *Rabelais et la médecine.*
[19] Emmanuelle Lacore-Martin, '"Encores me frissonne et tremble le cœur dedans sa capsule": Rabelais's Anatomy of Emotion and the Soul', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 39 (2016), 33-58.

This approach in useful in the way it which it helps the Rabelais scholar to more fully grasp how Rabelais is embedded in his time and place, more specifically in the medical communities in Montpellier, Lyon, and Paris across the first half of the sixteenth century. I, also, find it important to understand Rabelais within his context; I will begin each chapter by examining a moment of Rabelais's medical career in the form of literary or para-literary correspondence between Rabelais and one of his contemporaries: from poems and letters to and from Etienne Dolet, through to the epistolary prefaces by Rabelais to André Tiraqueau, which precede Manardi's medical letters. Yet I am wary of how this emphasis on authorial presence in literary analysis of Rabelais risks flattening out the complexities of his writing; I will return again and again, for example, to du Bellay's death throughout this thesis, slowly teasing apart the significance of Rabelais framing his blurring of fiction and history by having his character Epistemon remember what he saw, bearing witness in the narrative present. I suggest this episode serves better as Rabelais's critical, fictional self-reflection on his medical failure than as a valued piece of evidence concerning his medical career. For the latter would imply that his fictional, literary text is a transparent tool of representation, functioning purely as a window into the early modern medical culture in which Rabelais worked. Bookmarking her article on Epistemon's emotion, Lacore-Martin writes that anatomical references constitute 'textual markers of the Rabelaisian view of the relationship between the body and the soul'; his writing 'appears to reflect [a] shift [in medical understanding of the soul]', his anatomical descriptions of emotion 'reveal[ing] his fascination with […] the origin and nature of life'.[20] Her vocabulary of reflecting and revealing makes clear the significance that she reads into Rabelais's 'markers' of medicine: isolated moments

[20] Lacore-Martin, 'Rabelais's Anatomy of Emotion and the Soul', p. 33; p 58.

in his narratives that carry the weight of Rabelais inserting his own name as a physician, as if able to serve as historical sources.

Such an insistence on a biographical approach feeds, furthermore, an argument that the force of Rabelais's fictional writing comes from its capacity to be instrumentalised to cure a patient-reader. Barbara B. Bowen writes that 'there can be no doubt that Doctor Rabelais's book is intended as a *pharmakon* for us, the "lecteurs bénévoles"'; a position prompted by Alcofribas, who, speaking as if a marketplace peddler in the prologue to *Pantagruel*, offers the book as a cure for toothache: 'après avoir tous leurs bien despenduz en medicins sans en rien profiter', sufferers 'ne ont trouvé remede plus expedient que de mettre lesdictes chronicques entre deux beaulx linges bien chaulx, et les appliquer au lieu de la douleur, les sinapizand avecques un peu de pouldre d'oribus.' (*Pantagruel*, 'Prologue de l'Auteur', p. 214). Bowen's argument is set in the context of a broader examination of laughter's curative properties: although she finds little evidence of Rabelais's contribution to medical theorizing over laughter's causes and mechanisms (as found in the period's perhaps most well-known treatise on the topic, Laurent Joubert's 1579 *Traité du ris*), she understands Rabelais's comic force as driven by a desire to spark therapeutic laughter in his readers.[21]

Alison Williams's early work built on Bowen's findings by examining both the medical language used in Rabelais's jokes as well as his texts' broader curative function; in recent years, she has developed this second claim as part of an essential effort to historicise the work of the contemporary medical humanities on the

[21] Laurent Joubert, *Traité du ris, contenant son essence, ses causes, et mervelheus effais* (Paris: Nicolas Chesneau, 1579). For the most developed study of Rabelais and Joubert, see: Gregory de Rocher, *Rabelais's Laughers and Joubert's 'Traité du ris'* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1979).

therapeutic power of literature.[22] Originally starting in medical schools, where humanities courses were introduced for training physicians, the medical humanities' earliest scholars were interested in the encounter between the physician and their patient as a sort of 'primal scene'. Kathryn Montgomery observed such interactions at the University of Rochester, New York; her book, *Doctors' Stories: The Narrative Structure of Medical Knowledge*, an early pioneering work of the discipline published in 1991, concluded that the medical encounter constitutes an 'interpretative activity'.[23] The context of Montgomery's work is important; for the story of the early medical humanities is shaped by how this recognition of medicine as an interpretative space was instrumentalised for both sides of the medical encounter. Patients were encouraged to write narratives of their experiences that could form, as proposed by writers such as Arthur Frank and Rita Charon, an alternative source of knowledge about the body.[24] Both physicians and fellow patients were encouraged to read such autobiographical texts, and fictional literature which drew on this patient perspective: physicians, in order to hone their professional capacity to be compassionate; and patients, in order to find consolation or recognition, forms of self-care that could build on the work of the physicians managing their treatment by more conventional methods. When Claude La Charité, echoing Williams, writes that the image of Alcofribas's book above is 'bibliothérapie avant la lettre', he reveals the most

[22] Alison Williams, 'Sick Humour, Healthy Laughter: The Use of Medicine in Rabelais's Jokes', *The Modern Language Review*, 101 (2006), 671-68; 'Embodied Laughter: Rabelais and the Medical Humanities' in Daniel Derrin and Hannah Burrows, eds., *The Palgrave Handbook of Humour, History, and Methodology* (London: Springer International Publishing, 2021), pp. 293-312 and ''Acquiers toy parfaicte cognoissance de l'aultre monde, qui est l'homme': Rabelais, the History of Medicine, and Medical Humanism', *Essays in French Literature and Culture*, 58 (2021), 121-137.
[23] Kathryn Montgomery, *Doctors' Stories: The Narrative Structure of Medical Knowledge* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 25.
[24] Rita Charon, *Narrative Medicine: Honoring the Stories of Illness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Arthur Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1995); see also Arthur Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives: Suffering, Healing and the Human Condition* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

substantial way in which Rabelais scholarship has thus far engaged with the medical humanities: the positioning of Rabelais as a precursor to an instrumentalist view of literature.[25]

I hope, in this thesis, to challenge how Rabelais's texts are constructed in relation to medicine either as a transparent tool of representation or as a form of literary cure. In the second two parts of this introduction, I will examine two further medical scenes through which the form of this challenge will emerge. I will first consider a medical scene that is indicative of the conventional mode of understanding the medical and literary encounter in early modern French studies: the well-known dissection scene on the title-page of Flemish physician Andreas Vesalius's *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, published in 1542, which Sawday reads in *The Body Emblazoned* as an emblem of a broader culture of dissection.[26] But I will then turn to something less conventional: my own experience of observing a surgical scene in December 2019. Moving from an account of dissecting a decaying corpse in order to contribute to medical knowledge to witnessing an operation on a sedated patient in order to save their life, I will suggest that attending to the temporality of medical practice, an understudied form of care and cure, helps us to think through the interpretative work required to bring Rabelais's work back to life.

[25] Claude La Charité, 'Rabelais, Rondibilis et la cure des amants selon Guillaume Rondelet', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 4 (2020), 779-790 (p. 779).
[26] Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*.

II. The Dissection Scene

On the title-page to *De humani corporis fabrica*, Vesalius's hand peels back the skin of a dead woman, displaying her womb to the crowded array of observing figures:



Figure 1: Andreas Vesalius, *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem*, frontispiece woodcut (1543), © The Trustees of the British Museum.

We might expect, in an early modern anatomical theatre, to see an anatomist accompanied by a physician, who interprets for the crowd the functioning of different parts of the body as the anatomist silently points and prods. In this scene, however, it is a skeleton who is paired with Vesalius, mirroring Vesalius's demonstrative gesturing by pointing, with his own pole, at the woman's body. In so doing, the skeleton dissects the image itself. We see a cross-section of the circular stage, as if standing, as reader, in our own part of the crowd at the cadaver's feet, but the skeleton's pole cuts through this circular shape to create a competing vertical axis. The skeleton thus connects the suspended armorial crest and cartouche announcing the book's title, complete with dismembered head, to the almost vertical disposition of the woman's body and Vesalius's upright stance, down to the figures who appear to be squabbling over surgical instruments underneath the table and the cartouche bearing the privilege at the bottom of the title-page; a central line that is bolstered by the Corinthian columns supporting the arcade and entablature either side. Around this axis rotate the figures of the crowd, including classical authorities and the most often vivisected animals, a dog and a monkey. For Sawday, whose reading of this scene in *The Body Emblazoned* solidified its status as an emblem of early modern culture, this vertical plane of vision focuses our attention on the 'intellectual superstructure' that transforms the criminal body in the Renaissance anatomy theatre: 'from being an object of contempt or horror, whose provenance was the gallows, within the theatre the corpse was remoulded into an iconic lesson in human destiny'.[27]

[27] Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, p. 72.

Sawday draws a crucial distinction between the distracted figures of the crowd, 'ironically oblivious' to the symbolic significance of this demonstration of life and death, and the viewer, who is drawn into the scene by Vesalius's outward gaze but remains, from their position, able to dissect the image themselves and so understand the connection between the skeleton and the woman, the tomb and the womb. Brancher has, more recently, examined how the anatomical theatre could serve as a 'pornographic' space by proxy when women's bodies were dissected; Laurent Joubert's lewd jokes to his students about female sexual organs will appear in Chapter Two of this thesis, where I consider in more detail how masculine medical communities constructed women as objects of desire as well as of medical knowledge. The woman's body here, however, is shown in her entirety, her fleshy legs and her sketched arms not dissimilar to the limbs, adorned in billowing cloth, of the men reaching towards her. The display of her interior – one that reveals the secrets of generation – is then a formative part, for Sawday, of a broader culture of enquiry; one in which the anatomist-reader seeks to go beyond the surface to access a more profound understanding of their subject. Their shared bond is not one of subversive desire, but of both anatomical and interpretative expertise; their shared goal is not erotic arousal but an enquiry into both the nature of the human body and of humanity.

Sawday only gives a passing reference to Rabelais in his consideration of visual and textual examples of the culture of display and enquiry that he proposes dissection emblematises in the early modern period, excluding Xenomanes' demonstration of Quaresmeprenant's anatomy in the *Quart Livre*. Yet key qualities of this interpretative mode are evident in Rabelais scholarship. Huchon has developed an alternative visual vocabulary of concealing and revealing in her work on

steganographic reading, where she proposes that Rabelais's narratives contain 'modalities of encryption', 'steganographic figurations [that] play off one another or are scrambled together, offering a non-linear reading in which subtle correspondences are established among elements of each of Rabelais's "designs"'.[28] Jeanneret similarly characterises the Rabelais scholar as needing to 'elucidate zones which are obscure and draw out the text's hidden logic […] their objective is to understand, to order, to rationalise; scholarly commentary implies, by definition, a will to mastery' over the text.[29] The term 'design', so central to Edwin Duval's scholarship, is indicative of Huchon and Jeanneret's interest in Rabelais's fictions as complex interpretative structures which the reader must become expert at properly decrypting.[30] This task involves understanding how Rabelais fits into early modern coded ways of understanding literature, as Huchon has done in her meticulous Pléiade edition which traces every source and reference, allusion and context, as components making up Rabelais's fictions.

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[28] In particular, see Mireille Huchon, 'Rabelaisian Encryptions', trans. by Mary Byrd Kelly, *Yale French Studies*, 134 (2018), pp. 51-63 and 'Thélème et l'Art stéganographique' in Michel Simonin, ed., *Rabelais pour le XXIe Siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1998), pp. 149-60. This citation is from: Huchon, 'Rabelaisian Encryptions', p. 51; p. 52. Huchon has, furthermore, traced Rabelais's own alchemical activities, comparing his biography to that of Denis Zecaire, the pseudonym of a sixteenth-century alchemist who spent his life searching for the famed 'pierre philosophale': see Huchon, *Rabelais*, pp. 125-134. The definition of steganography as the search for hidden, higher meanings comes from the polymath Béroalde de Verville; for a compelling account of how de Verville outlined competing conceptions of knowledge in both his fictional and learned work, see: Neil Kenny, *The Palace of Secrets: Béroalde de Verville and Renaissance Conceptions of Knowledge* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[29] Michel Jeanneret, 'Rabelais' Strength and the Pitfalls of Methodology' in John O'Brien and Malcolm Quainton, eds., *Distant Voices Still Heard: Contemporary Readings of French Renaissance Literature* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), pp. 68-84 (p. 68).

[30] Edwin Duval wrote a series of hugely influential texts on the design of Rabelais's narratives; 'My purpose here', he wrote, 'has been to discover the coherence of both form and meaning in a work usually assumed to be fragmentary, disjointed, open-ended, and thus inconsistent, ambiguous and perhaps uninterpretable'. This quotation is from: Edwin Duval, *The Design of Rabelais's 'Quart Livre de Pantagruel'* (Geneva: Droz, 1998), p. 11; see also Edwin Duval, *The Design of Rabelais's 'Pantagruel'* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991) and Edwin Duval, *The Design of Rabelais's 'Tiers Livre de Pantagruel'* (Geneva: Droz, 1997). François Rigolot has addressed the lacuna in Duval's scholarship, *Gargantua,* in the following article: François Rigolot, 'The 'Design' of Rabelais's *Gargantua*: A Note on Structure and Meaning at Midpoint', *Yale French Studies*, 134 (2018), 11-19.

I want to return now, however, to the skeleton's dissection of Vesalius's image, directing our attention at the woman's womb as harbouring the principal (if no longer potential, now) of life, as a way of rethinking the steganographic approach to Rabelais's fictions. For I am interested in how this gesture might reveal something of the temporality of this anatomical scene as a learning encounter. We have already commented on how the woman's limbs have a fleshy quality, especially in contrast to the bones of the skeleton hovering above her. Without a means of preserving the body, the order of dissection was determined by the rate of decay of different parts of the body: the abdomen was first, followed by the chest, the brain, and finally the limbs. This is a woman who is only recently dead, suspended in the image between being in a still life-like state and the skeletal form that awaits above her; suspended in the time of decay.[31] It is by way of this suspension, *during* this suspension, that the learning encounter can take place: for it allows for a window of time in which the anatomist and physician are able to demonstrate the still intact body. We can reframe, therefore, our first reading of the skeleton's visual dissection of the scene as a demonstrative gesture that participates in Vesalius's instruction to the reader. For rather than following Vesalius and precipitately searching for symbolic meaning, we can see in this image a foregrounding of the temporality of the decaying body; one which, ultimately, foregrounds the temporality of knowing the body.

[31] Historian of anatomy Rafael Mandressi writes that the aim of a dissection was 'to show knowledge, to show how to access knowledge, to show the body and the science it revealed' as well as 'to expose publicly the anatomical apparatus, to render visible its new methods, its powerfulness, its accomplishments, and its ambitions'. This second element of the culture of display – the advertising of anatomy as a respected discipline – is beyond the scope of my introduction, here, but Mandressi's research shows how dissection was a form of science 'in the making' for the audience members. Rafael Mandressi, 'Of the Eye and of the Hand: Performance in Early Modern Anatomy', *TDR: The Drama Review*, 59 (2015), 60-76 (p. 63).

It is this notion of the body temporally suspended between flesh and skeleton, death and decay, and how this body helps us to think about the temporality of medical knowledge as a process, that I want to draw out further as I now turn to the final medical scene of this introduction: my own experience of observing abdominal surgery. Attending to temporality has already altered how we might read the composition of Vesalius's image; now, I want to think more carefully about how we will approach Rabelais's fictional writing differently in what follows.

III. The Surgical Scene

In December 2019, I spent two days as an observer in the Churchill Hospital, Oxford.[32] The trip was facilitated by surgeon Peter McCulloch, Trinity College, under whose watchful eye I observed five abdominal surgeries: an open-chest hernia removal, two endoscopies (key-hole surgeries) to treat endometriosis and a vaginal prolapse, and two robot-assisted surgeries to remove prostate and kidney tumours. Different forms of suspension shaped this final operation, in which two surgeons excised a tumour from a kidney in anticipation of a later transplant: the suspended animation of the patient, facing death but still alive; the suspension of certain of the

[32] I carried out this surgical observation under an observer contract with the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, approved by Oliver Jones, Clinical Director of Surgery. Surgeon Peter McCulloch supervised me at all times during my observation, and was responsible for securing consent from participants in the operations, which he did by explaining the context and aim of my observation as related to my research. I was not allowed to get involved with any clinical activities or access any patient records, and was advised by Peter McCulloch on patient confidentiality and dignity. I have kept all participants anonymous. Further information about the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust's policies can be found on their website: https://www.ouh.nhs.uk/about/. I have published on this experience for *Nursing Clio*, a peer-reviewed online medical humanities journal; this piece focused on touch, and links early modern and modern surgery to the experience of the Covid-19 pandemic. Rachel Hindmarsh, ''Blindness and Boldness': Haptic Imaginaries from the Operating Theater to the Pandemic Everyday', *Nursing Clio*, 2021, accessed online: https://nursingclio.org/2021/04/22/blindness-and-boldness-haptic-imaginaries-from-the-operating-theater-to-the-pandemic-everyday/ (27.04.2022).

surgeon's sensory capacities; and my own experience of suspending, temporarily, the patient's humanity as I witnessed the unfolding danger of the operation. Reflecting on these different forms as I work through the operation, I will put forward the challenge my thesis makes to the understanding of time, medicine, and fiction in Rabelais.

On entering the operating theatre, a sense of continuity with Vesalius's sixteenth-century anatomical theatre unexpectedly emerged: the scene before me was, comparably, structured by technologies of vision granting access to the interior of the patient's body. Vesalius used his hand to peel back the skin of the woman's torso, and the skeleton used his pole to both direct the reader's gaze and dissect the image into different screens or planes of vision. In this surgical scene, only a small section of the patient's body was visible among the draped blue sterile sheets; a square of swollen skin, yellow with antiseptic, and punctured by four quarter-inch incisions. Poking through these openings were a rod, used by a nurse to move parts of the interior of the body; a high-definition camera, relaying two-dimensional footage to a screen above the patient's feet and three-dimensional footage to two stereoscopic monitors that were manned by two surgeons, both of whom sat hunched over consoles in two corners of the theatre; and, finally, two robotic arms that the surgeons also remotely manoeuvred. The nurse's rod and the remote apparatus created criss-crossing lines of vision, as the surgical team members reoriented their gaze from the patient body itself to the screens displaying the interior and back again.

The patient body was, therefore, both barely and hyper- visible; it was reduced to only a square of discoloured and isolated skin that had lost much resemblance to a human body, and yet the nature and materiality of this body was viscerally revealed by the cameras tunnelling inside it. This uncanny distinction was made all the more

jarring by the fact of the patient's foot, poking out surreptitiously of the sterile cloths, a foot that I only noticed once the set-up of the operation had been explained to me, and that startled me to the point of gasping; more so, even than the alien presentation of the patient's torso, prepared as it was for surgical intervention. I had willingly suspended my acknowledgement of the patient's humanity in order to cope with the unfamiliar, and potentially dangerous, scene which was about to play out. It was easier to avoid reflecting on the fact that this was a human life, easier to think of this patient's body as if an image I had seen in medical textbooks, rather than to face the possibility that I might become a witness not to a routine operation but a more distressing event. Writers on medical compassion have uncovered a comparable tendency from the early modern period to today: compassion compels a surgeon to treat his patient well, yet a suspension or compartmentalisation of this compassion – often framed as a steadfastness or resolve – is necessary for a surgeon to be able to carry out their work.[33] The patient's foot made tangible this tension for me as an observer, grappling with how to account for the patient's humanity in the surgical encounter.

This tension also helps us to think about how the patient body is suspended in the surgical theatre. They lie on the table under general anaesthetic, entering a controlled, temporary state with loss of all sensation and awareness. Their waking

[33] This double feature marks the history of pre-anaesthesia surgery: see Lynda Payne, *With Words and Knives: Learning Medical Dispassion in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) as well as Stephen Pender's compelling chapter on compassion in medicine more broadly: Stephen Pender, 'Friendship, Counsel and Compassion in Early Modern Medical Thought', in *Compassion in Early Modern Literature and Culture: Feeling and Practice* ed. by Kristine Steenbergh and Katherine Ibbett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. 82-103. Ibbett also writes on compassion and nursing in the context of affective relations in Seventeenth-Century Montreal's first hospital, run by nuns: Katherine Ibbett, *Compassion's Edge: Fellow-Feeling and Its Limits in Early Modern France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), pp. 196-223. For a reflection on humanity and surgery in contemporary medicine, see: Jonathan Kaplan, *The Dressing Station: A Surgeon's Chronicle of War and Medicine* (London: Grove Press, 2001).

lives are put on hold, as they will emerge, groggily, with no memory of the surgery that they have just experienced; yet what happened next in the interior of the body, displayed on the screens, demonstrated how this suspended life was still, resolutely, animate. The surgeons needed to first reach the patient's kidney; they patiently cauterized the fat and flesh between the skin-opening and the surgical site within the body. Having done so, they clamped the veins and arteries around the kidney with plastic clips, giving a thirty-minute window in which the blood supply to the kidney was cut off, and they could safely excise the tumour clinging to its edge. The anaesthetist counted down this window in five-minute intervals; around fifteen minutes in, with nearly half of the tumour cut away, the patient's body began, unexpectedly, suddenly, to bleed. The very capacity to bleed demonstrates the existence of life and, therefore, the chance it can be extinguished. Where the dissected body on Vesalius's title page was on the point of decay, here the blood was evidence of the body's continued agency, or force.

Red billowed across the screens, suspending the surgeon's visual ability – which had been until now extraordinary, only possible because of the modern technology of medicine – to see the patient's interior. Earlier in the day, another surgeon had reflected on the displacement of touch in robot-assisted surgery. The robotic fingers on the console which the surgeons operated could not provide any sense of texture of depth perception, he explained: you must 'translate your knowledge about touch into vision […] you can see the body part and you know what to expect, how it should feel, and you act accordingly'. His language of condition and probability accounts for the ways in which this bleeding patient body had become unpredictable, had responded in an unexpected way to the surgeon's interventions and thus transformed the surgical encounter into one of risk, contingency, and error.

Training – including dissection – helps to prepare surgeons for the set of possibilities that different bodies, and different encounters, might present; in the words of Montgomery, they learn to understand how their knowledge is 'contextual, embodied, and potentially uncertain' once they enter the operating theatre.[34] The surgeons in this instance had both their vision and their touch suspended, the two sensory capacities that mediate how they might 'know' the patient body in surgery. But their knowledge-making is here, as in Vesalius's title-page image, also temporally bound: these surgeons only had a small window, marked by the anaesthetist's tolling warnings, in which they could attempt to reorient inside their patient's body and choose how to act. If bleeding revealed the agency of the patient body in suspended animation, the need to stem it within the constraints of the operation then changes how we think about the agency of the surgeon. It is an agency structured by both the temporality of knowing the patient body and the temporality of the process of the surgical operation itself.

The surgeons decided to cut, and it worked: the bleeding slowly lessened, and the tumour was able to be cut fully away in the allocated thirty minutes. I drew an initial parallel between Vesalius's dissection scene and this surgical scene in terms of the screens and the rods, the visual technologies, that helped to make sense of the corpse and the patient's bodies. Yet two more important points of comparison have emerged, in connection to time: that this patient's body is suspended yet still animated; that these surgeons' ability to put their surgical knowledge into practice, in the navigation of error and risk, is shaped by the temporal constraints of the operating theatre as well as temporal features such as memory and anticipation.

[34] Montgomery, *The Narrative Structure of Medical Knowledge*, p. xxii.

These points of comparison change how we value the framework of the encounter as a way of thinking about the relation between medicine and literature. I have examined both how the therapeutic encounter and the anatomical encounter has structured interdisciplinary scholarship thus far. Both share an interest in where expertise lies in the encounter, but they assign alternative analogical roles: in the first, the physician-writer intentionally hopes to cure their patient-reader, with the text becoming the figurative medication with which to do so; in the second, the expertise needed to dissect a body is mapped onto a readerly expertise that can be honed in order to read as if dissecting the body of the text. I have already registered a scepticism in this introduction about the value of making equivalent the roles of physician and patient onto that of Rabelais and his reader; now, this surgical scene has demonstrated that temporality has emerged as a lens through which we can challenge or expand the analogy of the medical and literary encounter.

IV. Structure

Attending to the temporality of this operation has allowed us to think about medical encounter as a process, made up of different stages in which medical knowledge takes different forms. This temporal vitality informs the structure this thesis. Each chapter will focus on four key temporal stages of a medical consultation, identified by Ian Maclean in his rich study of early modern medicine, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance*: anamnesis, the patient's account of their medical history; diagnosis, the identification of the nature of an illness by examination of the symptoms; prognosis, the prediction of the likely course of the illness; and, finally, the hoped-for end of the

consultation, cure, which in this thesis will be focused on pharmaceutical treatment.[35] Maclean records that, on the authority of several Galenic texts, rational doctors are obliged to engage in both diagnosis and prognosis as linked modes of judgement (as opposed to an empiric, who prescribes a remedy without engaging in either), with the first aspect of both being the gleaning of information from the sickroom, the attendants, and the patients.[36] This temporal pattern is further grounded in the Hippocratic position that, when considering the signs of the patient, the physician must 'Declare the past, diagnose the present, foretell the future; practice these acts'.[37] In what follows, I am interested both in how these four stages would have given the medical encounter a recognisable shape to learned early modern physicians and patients, and in how they are shown to operate differently, or not always to plan, in Rabelais's fictions.

I will introduce each chapter with a consideration of a piece of Rabelais's medical correspondence, that will serve to set up the key issues at stake for these four temporal modes. These letters and poems become a way of accessing the queries and doubts that occupied Rabelais and his contemporaries as they considered what makes an expert and an erroneous physician, and how such forms of knowledge and practice are temporally bound. Following Worth-Stylianou, who writes that 'it is important not to think of the relationship between literature and medical texts as a one-way quest for sources', I will be attentive to the ways in which the contemporaries that I examine drew on a range of disciplines with which they were familiar, and shared

[35] Maclean, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance*, pp. 293-303.
[36] Maclean, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance*, p. 293.
[37] Hippocrates of Cos, 'De morbis popularibus' in *Hippocrates Collected Works* ed. by W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1868), 1. 2. 11. Accessed online: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0251%3Atext%3DEpid.%3Abook%3D1%3Achapter%3D2%3Asection%3D11 (07.09.2022).

strategies of literary discourse in their writing.[38] Which is to say, I will keep the 'inter' in 'inter-disciplinary' alive, recovering the interpretative force of the *Vulgariser la médecine* scholars (including Worth-Stylianou) as they placed different forms of texts, discourses, and knowledge together to release, as it were, new units of energy. This will allow me to avoid moving 'one-way': my thesis will engage in a critically reflexive movement that doubles back on the initial disciplinary frontier between medicine and literature, proposing that Rabelais's texts demand that we think more expansively about the capacity of early modern fiction to address medical concerns. For Rabelais's work encourages us to understand fictional texts as not just reflecting or capturing early modern medicine, but as interrogating the practice and the limits of medicine; and, at the same time, using this interrogation as a springboard for an exploration of the function of fictional writing.

Each chapter will then focus on one or more of Rabelais's medical scene(s) pertaining to each of the four stages, which are all part of a broader medical process. I will contend that we can trace, through each stage, different ways in which 'thinking with medicine' takes place and that, when we do so, each stage emerges as having its own temporal features, its own particular energy and movement. I will suggest that attending to how Rabelais represents each of these moments uncovers new ways of thinking about the energy and movement of Rabelais's own fictional writing. This is a radical departure from conceptualising interpretation as 'dissecting the text': I am rather suggesting that Rabelais's texts can be more productively thought of as in

[38] Valerie Worth-Stylianou, 'Exchanges between Medical and Literary Discourses in the French Renaissance: Comparing the Fascination with 'des amas et pieces de chair informes' in Montaigne's *Essais* and Joubert's *Erreurs populaires*', *Australian Journal of French Studies*, 52 (2015), 290-305 (p. 292).

'suspended animation' and that interdisciplinary tools are what can 'reanimate' them.

I open the first chapter, Anamnesis, with three poems written by Dolet that celebrate Rabelais's dissection of a hanged man in 1537, while he was practising as a physician at Lyon's Hôtel-Dieu. These poems imagined how the anatomical corpse might voice a history of their experience of dissection, with Dolet drawing both on shifting definitions of the term *historia* in medicine and the trope of speaking with the dead in literary history in order to ventriloquise the dead criminal-turned-object of medical study. Dolet's poems reveal a curiosity about the value of testimonies of experience – both medical and literary, both voiced by the patient and the physician – that I argue Rabelais also shares when considering anamnesis, the patient's account of their own medical history, in his own fictional writing. I reconsider the renowned episode in *Pantagruel* where Epistemon dies on the battlefield, is resurrected by Panurge, and goes on to recount his experience of the underworld to the rest of the characters. I argue that Panurge's twofold touch – in the form of his diagnosis and his suturing of Epistemon's head and body back together – turns Epistemon's analeptic testimony into a form of upturned anamnesis. Speaking only after being sutured, Epistemon troubles the expected order and exemplarity of this scene, allowing us to consider how Rabelais makes his narrative into a compensatory space in which he questions the limits and the capacity of both medicine and fiction. The chapter ends with a methodological reflection, as I 'suture together' Epistemon's anamnesis with both François Villon's *Epitaphe*, in which Villon imagines his own dead voice and posthumous presence, and surgeon Ambroise Paré's case history about a patient who also speaks after suturing in order to exonerate his servant in the court of law. I explore, therefore, how the practice of suturing can be seen as a

metaphor for thinking through Rabelais's intertextuality and my own interdisciplinarity.

The second chapter, Diagnosis, moves from Panurge conjuring with death to an exploration of how both bodies and Rabelais's texts are brought into life. It considers how birthing bodies – my term for women in various stages of conception, pregnancy, and birth – offer a diagnostic challenge in early modern medicine, subject to different forms of expertise and error from different communities of medical learning. An epistolary diagnosis by Manardi opens this chapter, concerning the swelling of the Domina Alphonisa's womb, a curiously illegible symptom that has confounded Manardi's junior colleagues. This letter serves to introduce two key elements of temporality for the analysis of Rabelais's birthing women that follows, both medical and literary: what I term the practitioner's 'diagnostic present' and how it compares to textual dynamics of dilation that Patricia Parker has examined in her work on romance narratives.[39] Where Chapter One focused on one of Rabelais's episodes, this chapter follows the stages of birthing to examine three medical scenes in which the text comparably moves in terms of suspension, pause, and delay. Firstly, I consider how Gargantua's conception in *Les Chroniques gargantuines*, a set of narratives most likely derived from oral storytelling before being printed in 1532, and widely considered as an important source text for Rabelais's giants, is reworked in Panurge's fable of an encounter between a lion, a fox, and an old woman, told to justify his idea of building the walls of Paris out of women's genitalia in *Pantagruel*. My reading shifts focus from the political body of the city to the misdiagnosis within the fable of the woman's 'playe' (in reality, her vagina) and her flatulent response to

[39] Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

treatment; this is a conception gone wrong, which I suggest serves to challenge the authority of a masculine medical community and the formal expectations of the fable in relation to the main narrative that it has paused. Secondly, I examine Gargantua's mother Gargamelle, drawing a distinction between the delay of her eleven-month pregnancy and the diagnostic present of her birth, in which Alcofribas, in response to meddling, misdiagnosing midwives, commands the embodied reader's imagination as they pause and 'pensent' the mother's body. To conclude the chapter, I consider how Badebec's death consolidates the link between diagnostic error and textual movements of suspension and pause that I read as characteristic of Rabelais's representation of birthing bodies.

The death of du Bellay in the *Quart Livre*, which Epistemon testifies that 'Rabelays' attended as a physician, establishes a possible story of prognosis based on portents, prognostication, and posthumous presence. I argue in Chapter Three, however, that this real medical scene integrated into Rabelais's fiction reveals the necessity of prudential prognosis, which structures a collaborative relation of physician and their patient as they imagine and manage the future course of an illness together. I examine further this dynamic by turning to a second, lesser-read moment of authorial presence, again witnessed and recalled by Epistemon: a play about an imprudent physician, performed by Rabelais while studying in Montpellier, and told in the context of Panurge and Rondibilis's medical consultation in the *Tiers Livre* to determine whether Panurge should get married, and if he will be cuckolded if he does. Rondibilis is most often read as an avatar of the Montpellier physician Guillaume Rondelet, but I examine how Rondibilis's exhortation that Panurge write his initial prognosis 'en vostre cervelle avecques un style de fer' rather allows for a consideration of imagination, medical pedagogy, and the materiality of the brain that

reframes Panurge as corresponding to Rabelais as a medical student in the 'Morale comédie de celuy qui avait espousé une femme mute'. I suggest that Epistemon draws out the medical fakery of the physician within the play – further forms of medical error – to warn Panurge as an alternative figure of medical authority, prompting us to rethink the force and function of fiction in staging the ethical and epistemological stakes of prudential prognosis. This chapter alters the rhythm of those that have come before, therefore, replacing an examination of Rabelais's medical correspondence with that of the integration of the fictional and the real, and of the medical encounter and medical performance, which both refigure how we think about the very disciplinary frontier his self-representation highlights.

The final chapter, Cure, at first glance promises a therapeutic end to the medical stages the thesis works through. Yet its focus on pharmaceutical treatment in *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* reveals a series of unintentional and accidental cures that offer a means of reflecting on both medical and authorial prescription. This chapter recalls several elements of the first chapter, Anamnesis. Both begin with a textual encounter between Rabelais and Dolet: here, Rabelais sends a vial of *garum*, accompanied by a poem that reads as if a prescription, for how this fermented fish sauce can be used to restore an appetite lost by reading too much and, I suggest, 'too literarily', as Rabelais insists on the medicinal rather than metaphorical quality of digestion. Epistemon's analepsis was, in the first chapter, transformed into an upturned anamnesis; this chapter is, too, interested in the temporality of order and interpretation. I examine first Gargantua's accidental swallowing of pilgrims seeking spiritual cure for the plague; when the pilgrims repurpose their staffs in Gargantua's mouth, they set up a string of unintentional cures, reinscribing pilgrimage as a form of alternative medical practice. This is then compared to Pantagruel's swallowing of

peasant labourers encased in metal pills, as prescribed by his physicians, who clear a blockage in his stomach; an explicitly medical discourse of pharmaceutical intervention that, I argue, serves as a reflection on intertextuality and interpretation. If Chapter One considered how suturing might work as a metaphor for understanding Rabelais's relation to literary and medical texts that precede and follow him, then this chapter concludes with suggesting that the process of prescribing and preparing a pharmaceutical recipe opens up new ways of thinking about how we understand the work of Rabelais's fiction.

When I was observing the surgical operation in the Churchill Hospital, I was aware that I was dehumanising the patient: I was willing to see the isolated torso dissected by the sterile blue clothes as if it was the life-like corpse in the anatomical theatre; as if a piece of flesh ready to be made into an object of medical knowledge in my own learning encounter rather than a whole body, a life at stake. Having outlined the structure of my thesis, I am aware that it might seem like I am selectively dissecting a small area of Rabelais's fictions; that I am only paying attention to isolated moments, and not taking into account the text as a whole. It is true that by focusing on medical scenes, I am setting aside the many avenues of study that Rabelais engages with and that his texts invite. This is partly because I argue that Rabelais's medical scenes are what need treating now; as I have shown in this introduction, there has been a lacuna in scholarship in addressing medicine beyond the curative or dissection analogies that we have discussed. More importantly still, I argue that it is by treating these moments that we can reorient Rabelais's texts at the disciplinary boundary between medicine and fictional literature, and that by doing so we can most productively reflect on the particular energy and force of his writing.

I will, furthermore, allow myself different ways of making this reorientation happen. I will be open to reading Rabelais alongside a broader range of early modern physicians and writers than those who we can trace that he read, in the same spirit as the Genevan scholars of *Vulgariser la médecine*; at various moments, this thesis will examine Rabelais alongside Paré's late sixteenth-century case histories, Jacques Daleschamp's seventeenth-century writings on childbirth, and instances from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Ben Jonson's *Volpone*. I will, furthermore, draw on work done in the contemporary medical humanities, bringing Rabelais into dialogue – across the centuries – with scholars who have recently articulated how medicine and literature relate to each other. The surgical operation that I witnessed would not have been able to take place in Rabelais's time; general anaesthetic did not exist to suspend the patient's life, as blistering accounts such as Paré's treatise on battlefield medicine attest to. In the same way, sixteenth-century readers will not have read Rabelais in the way that I do; the set of interpretative or conceptual tools that I will draw on did not exist for contemporary readers.

And this reflects, in a way, how my thesis does not only seek to think about Rabelais's sixteenth-century readers, but modern readers too. For I aim to demonstrate how Rabelais's narratives offer a form of challenge to the critical assumptions that shape how literature is understood in relation to medicine today. Rabelais's texts radically alter our understanding of how the relation between medicine and literature worked in early modern France: this thesis certainly intervenes in the field of early modern studies, to suggest that Rabelais's writing carries a particular force which enables us to think more deeply about how this disciplinary boundary operates in sixteenth-century France. Yet its broader ambition is to go beyond Rabelais; or, rather, to allow Rabelais to be a form of case study for

a broader experiment in where disciplinary boundaries between literary analysis, the cultural history of medicine, and the medical humanities meet. Even recent inter- and multi- disciplinary work has tended, as we have already seen, to think of literature and medicine as fixed, defined disciplines; ones that might refer to each other, or be instrumentalised in service of one another, but ultimately remain discrete. They are two categories that we think we know, with whose boundaries we think we are familiar. I want in this thesis to suggest, however, that if we are to read Rabelais properly, the working of the categories of medicine and literature are called into question. Rabelais's texts become, therefore, a challenge to the dominant discourse within the contemporary medical humanities: for I will suggest that early modern literature has the capacity to disrupt how we still conceive of the relation between medicine, time, and fiction today.

Chapter One:

Anamnesis

I. Voices of the Dead

In 1537, while practising as a physician at Lyon's Hôtel-Dieu, Rabelais dissected a hanged man.[1] Guillaume Colletet, in his seventeenth-century *Notice sur François Rabelais,* described the event as a 'fameux […] spectacle public': Rabelais '[connut] encore si exactement toutes les parties du corps humains', Colletet gushes, 'qu'il passa pour un des plus renommez anatomistes de son temps'.[2] Colletet's characterisation of Rabelais as a distinguished member of the learned Lyonnais medical community is corroborated by the first of three poems written by Etienne Dolet, a humanist printer thriving in mid-sixteenth-century Lyon, in which Rabelais as anatomist appears. As part of a longer poem setting out the intellectual life of Lyon's elites – the 'petite confrérie d'humanistes, de philologues, de poètes qui porte dans leurs lettres et leurs oeuvres le nom de *sodalitum Lugdunense'*, again in the words of Colletet – Rabelais is glimpsed as follows:

> Franciscus Rabelaesus honos et gloria certa
> Artis Pæoniae, qui vel de limine Ditis
> Extinctos revocare potest et reddere luci.
>
> Francois Rabelais, honneur et gloire assurés

[1] Antonioli, *Rabelais et la médicine*, p. 65.
[2] Guillaume Colletet, *François Rabelais: Extrait des vies des poètes françois publié par Philomneste junior* (Geneva: J. Gay et fils, 1867). Colletet is also cited in John Lewis, 'From *Gargantua* to the *Tiers Livre*: 1535-1543, Rabelais's Quiet Years', *The Modern Language Review,* 107 (2012), p. 732.

De Péon, qui, du seuil même d'Hadès,
Peut rappeler les morts et les rendre à la vie.[3]

Dolet plays on the trope of bringing the dead back to life, here, that was instrumental in structuring how early moderns conceptualised conversing with the masters of the past as a rhetorical skill; one that can usefully be seen as part of that longer discourse of lively or vivid representation, which Terence Cave refers to, in his writing on *enargeia*, as 'the rhetoric of presence'.[4]

In the preamble to his 1545 anatomical treatise, Dolet and Rabelais's contemporary Charles Estienne draws on how an anatomist may be comparable to a historian:

> L'estat de celuy qui entreprend la description des parties du corps humain ne me semble en riens different de l'office d'ung historien auquel incumbe produire & montrer par escript ce qui sert a la memorie des gestes & affaires publiques. Car comme entre aultres choses, riens ne soit plus messeant a l'historiographe qu'en ses escriptz proposer mensonge, chose fabuleuse ou sans aucun jugement controuvee : en laquelle y pourroit avoir plusieurs aornementz de belles et sententieuses paroles, de verité si peu que riens : au cas pareil est bien necessaire a l'historien du corps humain prendre garde que ce dont il doibt escripre, luy soit manifeste et apparent a l'œil : & n'ayt ceste hardiesse de dire ou proferer cas qui ne contienne verité.[5]

When Gianna Pomata uncovers the polysemic restlessness of the term *historia* as meaning both knowledge based on sense perception as well as the report thereof, she recognises its prominent position in a growing vocabulary and discourse of early modern experience that Estienne draws upon here.[6] Beyond both the reductive

[3] Etienne Dolet, *Carmina* (1538), trans. by Catherine Langlois-Pézeret (Geneva: Droz, 2009), pp. 382-383.
[4] Terence Cave, '"Enargeia": Erasmus and the Rhetoric of Presence in the Sixteenth Century', *L'Esprit créateur*, 16 (1976), 5-19.
[5] Charles Estienne, *La Dissection des parties du corps humain divisee en trois livres, faictz par Charles Estienne, docteur en medecine : avec les figures et declaration des incisions, composees par Estienne de La Riviere chirurgien* (Paris: Simon de Colines, 1546), p. a.ii.
[6] Gianna Pomata, '*Praxis Historialis*: The Uses of *Historia* in Early Modern Medicine' in *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* ed. by Gianna Pomata and Nancy Siraisi (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).

scholastic understanding of the term as mere descriptive knowledge without causes and its humanist reappraisal over the first half of the sixteenth century as anything which '[tells] the truth', *historia* first began to be recuperated in the medical sphere as knowledge based on sense perception or observation.[7] Pomata traces this renewed emphasis as owing to Galen's and ancient surgeon Celsus's reporting of the Empiricists' commitment to experiential knowledge; translations and re-editions of their texts abounded in the Lyonnais medical community to which Rabelais belonged, thus allowing this ancient sect's theorising to continue to be disseminated.[8] Galen as doxographer writes, for example, that *historia* according to the Empiricists is 'the report of those things that have been seen or are as if they had been seen'; a definition seized as permitting *historia* to be used in early modern medicine as encompassing both the narration of what one has either seen oneself (also called in Greek *autopsia*) or read in books as having been seen by others, if examined critically.

What is important about Estienne's use of the term is that it is combined with the rhetorical mechanism of *enargeia*: he insists that 'l'historien du corps humain doibt prendre garde que ce dont il doibt escripre, luy soit manifeste at apparent a l'oeil'; Cave's explanation of *enargeia* as writing 'as if the reader were present as spectator' then fittingly echoes Estienne's, a few paragraphs later, yet more explicit articulation of a desire to describe accurately enough so that it is 'comme si les dictes parties estoyent encor de present exposees devant voz yeulx'.[9] Estienne's text allows us to see how Dolet uses the calling from the dead trope to position Rabelais as an

[7] Pomata, 'The Uses of *Historia* in Early Modern Medicine', p. 109.
[8] The Universal Short Title Catalogue records an impressive 161 editions and translations of Galen, printed in Lyon between 1500 and 1555 in Lyon, and 5 editions and translations of Celsus in the same period. In the fourth chapter of this thesis, Cure, we will encounter in particular editions and translations of Galen's *De usu partium.*
[9] Cave, 'Erasmus and the Rhetoric of Presence in the Sixteenth Century', p. 6; Estienne, *La Dissection des parties du corps humain*, p. a.iii.

exemplary anatomist. Rabelais's participation in the emerging tradition of *historia anatomica* both roots him in a shared lineage with the ancient past and embeds him in the Lyonnais present, as captured by Dolet's poem as a whole. Estienne describes this dissected corpse so well as to figuratively bring it to life for his readers; Dolet suggests that Rabelais, too, is able to animate the knowledge he draws out from the dead body. Doing so expertly means that Rabelais proves capable of not only recovering the cultural legacy of which anatomy is part, but of continuing it, too.

The second and third of Dolet's poems on the subject of Rabelais's dissection, however, suggest that both of these men were interested in more contestatory ways of drawing out the histories of the body than those which serve to reinforce the '*sodalitum Lugdunense*'. Dolet experiments further, in these poems, with the trope of calling the dead back to life: in both works he gives voice to the dissected body to tell its own history from across the 'seuil même d'Hadès'. He therefore sets this reclaimed voice into a starkly different relation to their anatomist, Rabelais; gesturing, as he does so, to a further field of medicine: anamnesis. This first part of the medical consultation sees the physician gleaning information about the patient's illness before examining it themselves. They would mine the observations of the attendants and the nurses who have been tending the patient, as well as asking the patient to recount their own experience of the onset and changes of symptoms; the latter a practice still termed in modern medicine as taking a patient's history. These questions would have been, firstly, about the natural, vital, and animal faculties, which take their origin in respectively the liver, the organ that prepared the blood, the heart, distributing the principles of heat and life through the arteries, and the brain, from which sensation and movement were derived. A prominent example would be questions on the

changes of the pulse, which is connected with the vital and animal faculties.[10] Secondly, these questions would concern excretion: urine, faeces, sweat, spit, vomit, and so on. Maclean, having identified sixteenth-century Italian physicians Hieronymus Capivaccius and Giovanni Argenterio as the most coherent records of the method of this practice in the early modern period, writes that the sequence of these questions 'reveal[ed] not so much a sensitivity to the issue of enfolding narrative and of progressive revelation of the patient's condition as a rigorously directed series of enquiries structured by medical theory'.[11]

Dolet's second and third poetic imaginings of how the dead body speaks, however, serve as literary spaces in which the patient's 'enfolding narrative' might not be flattened into a fixed interpretative framework but allowed room to prompt a new set of questions: about the value of recounting one's own experience, and the way in which this patient voice is shaped by the physician both within the consultation and in the form of a case history, or *historia medica*, that they write up afterwards. Dolet, in other words, takes the rigid structure of early modern anamnesis and expands it to constitute a broader enquiry into experience, how it is remembered and recounted, and how it is received. Examining how what we might term Dolet's 'corpse-response poems' contrast to the anatomical histories of the body, we will take a sideways look at early modern anamnesis, suggesting that Dolet can help us to approach how Rabelais, too, takes the framework Maclean outlines as a prompt for a more expansive exploration of the practice of taking, and giving, a history.

[10] Maclean, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance*, p. 283.
[11] Maclean also notes that these questions had the effect, among others, of increasing patient confidence in the physician and consolidating his authority over them: Maclean, *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance*, p. 294. We will turn to this question of how the physician fosters confidence in his patient in more detail in Chapter Three, Prognosis.

The first of what we might term Dolet's 'corpse-response poems', takes the form of a parody of an epitaph. It begins by tracing the hanged man's journey to the scaffold:

> Stygem paludem et quicquid ater Orcus habet,
> Fortuna iuraret furens,
> Damnum mihi omne se reperturam et probrum.
> Quod dum studet atque nititur
> Et viribus totis suum in me dirum odium
> Explet saturatque ut collibitum est,
> Tibi ecce, puncto temporis claudor carcere,
> Educor et laqueo miser
> Mox strangulatus pendeo. At quid non potest
> Fati imperium contrarii?
> Ut temporis puncto perieram turpiter,
> Pari celeritate assequor,
> Quod vix liceat cuiquam a Iove summon poscere.
>
> Par le marais du Styx et tout ce qu'enferme le noir Orcus
> La Fortune avait juré, dans sa fureur,
> De trouver pour moi tort et honte à satiété.
> Tandis qu'elle s'y applique, s'y efforce,
> Et de toutes ses forces assouvit contre moi
> Sa noire haine et la rassasie à sa guise,
> Voilà qu'en un clin d'œil on m'enferme au cachot,
> On me tire au dehors, et pour mon malheur
> Bientôt étranglé par un lacet, je suis pendu. Mais que ne peut
> La décision d'un sort contraire ?
> De même qu'en un clin d'œil j'avais honteusement péri,
> Avec la même rapidité on m'attrape,
> Chose qu'on se permettrait à peine de demander au très grand Jupiter.[12]

The criminal corpse laments the hastiness of his conviction, yet Dolet offers a hint of an alternative fate, accentuated by Langlois-Pézeret's translation of 'puncto temporis' as 'en un clin d'œil'. For here he plays on Paul's conviction, in Corinthians 15:51-53, of the possibility for transformation in the afterlife: 'Behold, I shew you a mystery', Paul exclaims, 'We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed'. While Paul speaks of a

[12] Dolet, *Carmina (1538),* pp. 592-595.

resurrection not in flesh, as was accorded to Jesus, but rather a spiritual resurrection as the body passes into heaven, Dolet disrupts the reader's expectations by having this corpse's fate diverted by Rabelais's anatomical intervention. The temporal (and Christian) framing of death, and the afterlife, now shifts through an altered vocabulary of bodily form:

> Spectaculo lato expositus
> Secor; medicus doctissimus planum facit,
> Quam pulchre et affabre ordineque
> Fabricata corpus est hominis rerum Parens.
> Sectum frequens circunspicit
> Corona miraturque molem corporis
> Tanto artificio conditi.
> Quare quid agat potius, quam ad extensum laqueum
> Fortuna frendens convolet
> Et morte finem odio semel quaerat suo,
> Non invidia diutius
> Rumpenda? Totus ad extremum cumulor
> Honoribus circunfluoque
> Iam gloria, quem monstrum atrox voluit rapidis
> Corvis cibum esse et flantibus
> Ludibrium ventis. Furat Sors, iam furat;
> Honoribus cicunfluo.
>
> Me voilà disséqué ; un médecin très savant expose clairement
> Avec quelle beauté, art et méthode
> La Mère des Choses façonna le corps humain.
> Une fois disséqué, me voilà entouré et observé par un continuel
> Cordon de badauds, qui admire l'appareil d'un corps
> Créé avec tant d'artifice.
> Ainsi, que pouvait-elle faire d'autre, le Fortune enragée, que
> D'accourcir à la corde tendue
> Et de chercher pour une fois dans la mort la fin de sa haine,
> Sans avoir à combattre plus longtemps
> Son envie ? Tout entier, au plus haut point, me voilà comblé
> D'honneurs et entouré
> Désormais de gloire, moi dont un monstre affreux voulut
> Faire la pâture des rapides corbeaux
> Et le jouet des souffles du vent. Qu'il soit furieux, le destin, qu'il soit furieux :
> Me voila entouré d'honneurs.[13]

[13] Dolet, *Carmina (1538)*, pp. 592-595.

We might have expected a language of fragmentation and rupture, here, that Sawday comments as so often accompanying literary representations of dissection.[14] Yet Dolet instead moves into a lexicon of recuperation, once again emphasised by Langlois-Pézeret's artful translation as it tracks from 'me voilà disséqué', to 'me voilà entouré' by bolstering bodies in the crowd, to 'me voilà comblé' of honours and glory. When the commonplace crows appear it is only as a product of Fortune's unruly imagination, now thwarted from materialising. It is through this corporeal restitution that Dolet's corpse is therefore able to project a sense of stability in the posthumous glory he feels he will enjoy long after Rabelais's handiwork is done. This corporeal restitution is granted to one singularly lucky individual, plucked from the scaffold to play his part in the development of early modern medicine; Dolet has created space, therefore, for a singular voice that is able to narrate his own death in order to reshape both the narrative of the criminal life that came before, and the narrative of how this life is remembered in the continuing present.

The first of Dolet's poems making reference to Rabelais's dissection gestured towards the tradition of *historia anatomica* and the trope of resurrection as a mark of at once medical and rhetorical skill. In this second poem, the staging of the voice of the reanimated corpse shifts focus from the anatomist's demonstrative skill to a questioning of the value of singular experience. And with this shift comes an enquiry into the dead patient and their capacity to shape the interpretation of both past and present. This draws parallels with a second form of *historia* emerging in first half of sixteenth century: *historia medica*, or the account of specific cases encountered in medical practice. Pomata and others have traced how a renewed attention to the uses

[14] Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*.

of case histories in Hippocratic and Galenic texts converged, in the first decades of the sixteenth century, with a broader reappraisal of the value of the particular also evident in the development of corresponding forms in sister disciplines such as the legal *consilia*.[15] These histories presented a way in which Rabelais's medical contemporaries could further grapple with the positioning of the rare and the exceptional in relation to functional medicine and the value of direct experience in relation to the citation of others'. From the first mention of the term *historia* in early modern French medicine in Symphorien Champier's collection of extracts from Galen's recorded case histories, they exploded into an established genre in the latter decades of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries[16].

Recent years have seen a reframing of critical attention on case histories rather than on the culture of dissection that, as we saw in the introduction to this thesis, has been so fundamental to understanding the relation between medicine and literature in early modern France.[17] Heeding Roy Porter's programmatic call to 'do medical history from below', scholars have examined how case histories record traces of patients speaking of their own experience of illness, presenting an opportunity to

[15] For early modern case histories, Pomata's meticulous body of work is exemplary. See, notably: *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* ed. by Gianna Pomata and Nancy Siraisi (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005); 'The Medical Case Narrative: Distant Reading of an Epistemic Genre', *Literature and Medicine,* 32 (2014), 1-23; 'Sharing Cases: The *Observationes* in Early Modern Medicine', *Early Science and Medicine,* 15 (2010), 193-236. For an exemplary study of the relation more broadly between the domains of history and medicine, see Nancy Siraisi, *History, Medicine, and the Traditions of Renaissance Learning* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008). Alongside Pomata, see also Ian Maclean, 'Evidence, Logic, the Rule and the Exception in Renaissance Law and Medicine', *Early Science and Medicine* 5 (2000), 227-256; Chiara Crisciani, 'Histories, Stories, *Exempla* and Anecdotes: Michele Savonarola from Latin to Vernacular', in *Historia: Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* ed. by Pomata and Siraisi, pp. 297-324.

[16] Symphorien Champier, *Claudii Galeni Pergameni historiales campi ... in quatuor libros congesti, et commentariis ... illustrati. D. Symphoriani Campegii ... clysteriorum camporum secundum Galeni mentem libellus ... Ejusdem de phlebotomia libri duo (Basel: Andreas Cratander and Bebel Johann, 1532)*. Accessed online: https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2082/docview/2090360475?&imgSeq=10 (05.09.2022).

[17] On ancient case histories, for example, see: Georgia Petridou and Chiara Thumiger, ed., *Homo patiens: Approaches to the Patient in the Ancient World* (Leiden: BRILL, 2015).

uncover patient voices that are otherwise elusive in written record.[18] Their value is then further derived from how they demonstrate the ways in which such voices informed, but also revealed, the shifting priorities and perspectives of sixteenth-century physicians as outlined above. For they are voices, ultimately, penned by their doctors.

Dolet's writings are of particular value in this context, in that Dolet engages literary forms in the work of grappling with the questions around *historia* in medical culture. In the second of the Dolet poems we have examined here, the corpse ultimately finds voice in order to both praise the skill of his anatomist, and the wondrous 'artifice' that is the human body. The criminal's recuperated narrative serves the medical knowledge that Rabelais, the 'médecin très savant', has mastered so well. The corpse finds voice, then, only to reinforce Rabelais's reputation as the medical expert that we glimpsed in Dolet's first poem.

The third of Dolet's poems, however, troubles this construction of both the expert anatomist and the patient's recuperated voice. Shorter and sharper, this poem addresses a set of insistent questions to Rabelais himself:

> LXVI *Ad Franciscum Rabelaesum De medico quodam indocto*
> Secti notabat corporis partes medicus
> Iners et in docendo inepte garrulus;
> Secti iacebat et silebat corporis
> Compago. Dic, quaeso te, utrum mutum magis
> Corona iudicaret illic inspiciens ?
> An qui iacebat et silebat mortuus ?
> An ea medicum narrantem inerter, quae quidem
> Nec ipse, nec qui aderant modo ullo intellegerent?
>
> LXVI A François Rabelais, d'un médecin ignorant
> D'un corps disséqué un médecin désignait les parties ;
> Il était sans talent, inepte et bavard dans son exposé.
> Du corps disséqué le squelette gisait, silencieux.
> Dis-moi, je t'en prie : qui est le plus muet des deux,

[18] Roy Porter, 'The Patient's View: Doing Medical History from Below', *Theory and Society,* 14 (1985), 175-198.

Aux yeux du cercle des spectateurs ?
Le mort, qui gisait, silencieux ?
Ou le médecin racontant sans talent ce que, sans doute,
Ni lui-même ni son auditoire ne comprenaient en aucune façon ?[19]

Dolet asks Rabelais to consider a physician outside the mould of the expert anatomist. The polysemy of his Latin 'iners' expands the fault of this physician even beyond Langlois-Pézeret's translation of 'sans talent': it could mean idle as well as incompetent, thus suggesting a physician that is unable, or unwilling, or even both, to successfully describe the interior of the corpse's body.[20] Dolet moves away, here, from demonstrating Rabelais's skill and acceptance in the Lyonnais medical community to interrogating the man, carving open a space beyond the idealised anatomical encounter in which Rabelais must consider the roles of error and wrongdoing in medicine.

The anatomist's fault becomes a question of voice: he is too garrulous ('garrulus'), while the body lies at first silent ('silebat'), and then mute ('mutum'). We have seen that, as an alternative way of understanding the practice of medicine, the growing critical focus on case histories stemmed from a desire to shift attention from the doctor's skill, and to effect a revalorisation of the patient's experience; a comparable impulse motivated the first scholars developing the medical humanities. These early researchers – such as Frank, Charon, and Arthur Kleinman – recast the task of the physician in relation to the patient voice. 'The ill body is not mute –', Frank writes in the introduction to his foundational 1995 *The Wounded Storyteller:*

[19] Dolet, *Carmina (1538)*, pp. 364-365. A further avenue of study could be to compare the corpse's voice in this poem to the images of corpses demonstrating their own anatomies, most often interpreted as a bid on behalf of the author of the medical text to show some form of complicity between the corpse and the anatomist. Such an argument has been proposed by Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned*, pp. 111-136 and *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture, c.1540-1660* ed. by Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), pp. 124-127.
[20] 'Iners' in Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879. Accessed online: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.04.0059 (05.09.2022).

Body, Illness, and Ethics, 'it speaks eloquently in pains and symptoms – but it is inarticulate. [The patient] must speak for [their] body'.[21] Frank's vocabulary echoes that of Dolet's across the centuries; if we allow this cross-temporal reverberation to sound, Frank's comments can help us to make sense of Dolet's vocal shifts from 'garrulus' to 'silebat' to 'mutum'. The physician must be able to interpret the signs of the 'inarticulate' body. Rabelais, and the practice of anatomy itself, was cast as able to do so in Dolet's first and second poem. Yet Frank suggests that this expertise is also constituted from listening to how the patient themselves interprets their body in illness. The patient is recast, then, as a form of expert spokesperson of their own bodily experience. For Frank, Charon, and Kleinman, the patient hones this expertise through writing narratives of their experience.

Yet Dolet's 'garrulus' médecin leaves no room for listening. Nor – perhaps more importantly – does Dolet invest the corpse in this third poem with a voice able to narrate their own experience of the dissection. Rather, he creates a hesitation over the corpse's silence: firstly, by introducing the suggestion that the silence could be selective, by exploiting the semantic ambiguity of 'mutum' as referring to being unable to *or* refusing to speak; secondly by suggesting that it is relative, in his questions to Rabelais ('Dic, quaeso te, utrum mutum magis/ Corona iudicaret illic inspiciens?'). Dolet opens up, therefore, a question of whether the corpse's silence, and stillness, is a choice; he suggests that they might have something more to say

[21] Charon, *Narrative Medicine*; Kleinman, *The Illness Narratives*; cited, Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller*, p. 2. For more on this wave of medical humanities scholarship on narrative medicine, and the ways in which current scholarship (including this thesis) is seeking to nuance it, see: Anne Whitehead, 'The Medical Humanities: A Literary Perspective', in *Medicine, Health and the Arts: Approaches to the Medical Humanities* ed. by Victoria Bates, Alan Bleakley, and Sam Goodman (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), pp. 107-128 and Anne Whitehead and Angela Woods, 'Introduction', in *The Edinburgh Companion to the Critical Medical Humanities* ed. by Anne Whitehead, Angela Woods, Sarah Atkinson, Jane Macnaughton, and Jennifer Richards (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 1-35.

about their own corporeal experience, something that could undo Dolet's negations, 'inars', 'inapte', 'indocto'. Yet this is kept conditional by Dolet; he introduces this possibility of an expert patient only to refuse to resolve or confirm it within the poem itself. It is up to Rabelais, the poem's recipient, to determine.

Angela Woods belongs to a second generation of medical humanities scholars who have begun to question the construction of the patient voice; she ends her article on 'Beyond the Wounded Storyteller: Rethinking Narrativity, Illness and Embodied Self-Experience' with the question: 'what place is there for formlessness, for meaningless, for silence?'[22] Her principal aim in this article is to resist the ways in which patient narrative is cast by Frank, Charon, and Kleinman as a form of testimony which re-claims and re-orients the self during illness; in so doing, she allows for different ways in which patients' testimonies are articulated – or, as her questions suggest, remain inarticulate. Dolet *does* makes room for silence within his poem: the mute corpse never has the chance, or the will, to tell its history. This dissection, furthermore, happens by way of a poetic encounter between Dolet and Rabelais, of which we never hear Rabelais's answers to Dolet's pressing questions. We, also, have to sit in the silence which the poem generates.

In Dolet's third poem, as we have seen, Rabelais is no longer the glimpsed genius, the expert anatomist. He and Dolet are, instead, at once literary and medical practitioners, curious about ways in which both the physician's and the patient's histories and knowledge collide in the anatomical-turned-anamnestic encounter. This chapter does not suggest that Rabelais's texts might offer a form of response to Dolet;

[22] Angela Woods, 'Beyond the Wounded Storyteller: Rethinking Narrativity, Illness and Embodied Self-Experience', *Teksty drugie*, 1 (2021), 245-266 (p. 125). See also Angela Woods, 'The Limits of Narrative: Provocations for the Medical Humanities', *Medical Humanities*, 37 (2011), 73-78.

it does not try to trace their conversation across poetry to narrative. It is interested, however, in how Rabelais's fictions comparably operate as a literary space in which Rabelais explores, like Dolet does, a more contestatory view of anamnesis as the first part of the medical consultation. Dolet gave us three poems about Rabelais's anatomical capabilities that split into different endings: with corpses that could speak their history, and another with one who chose not to; with Rabelais displaying skill, and another anatomist whose errors were revealed. These variable endings complicate how we understand both the patient voice and the physician's expertise. They open up the medical encounter as a space in which different testimonies – to repeat Woods's vocabulary – of experience can be articulated; testimonies that are relative rather than resolved, fluctuating rather than fixed. This chapter will attend to both questions of medical testimony and of narratorial testimony as it considers how Rabelais experiments with representing the practice of anamnesis. Such attention can, this chapter contends, transform how we think about the contextual work of Rabelais's fictional writing, and how we think of our position, as contemporary readers, in relation to his still living text.

There are moments of Rabelais's text that are explicitly interested in anatomy and dissection, from the description of Frere Jan's beheading of a soldier in the *Gargantua* wars to Quaresmeprenant, the *Quart Livre*'s monstrous allegory of Lent who 'est anatomisé et descript' by Xenomanes in one of Rabelais's most exuberant lists. The latter has become a point of cathexis in Rabelais scholarship engaging with the overlap of medicine and fiction in his texts. Scholars such as Marie-Madeleine Fontaine and Paul J. Smith are emblematic in their readings of how Rabelais draws on his personal experience of dissection to participate in contemporary debates on

Galen's use of analogy, and comparison more broadly, in early modern medicine.[23] We are told that Quaresmeprenant's tongue is like a harp, but we never hear his voice; and, in this key respect, the Quaresmeprenant dissection differs radically from the curiosity that drives Dolet's poem: the question as to whether the voice of the corpse can be recovered. This chapter will turn from Quaresmeprenant, therefore, to a more perplexing case: that of Epistemon, in chapter thirty of *Pantagruel*, 'Comment Epistemon qui avoit la coupe testée, feut guery habillement par Panurge. Et des nouvelles des diables, et des damnez' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 30, pp. 321-327). This is to turn our focus onto a dead body that *is* resuscitated in Rabelais's text, that has its capacity for speech rescued, and that, as a consequence, animates twice over the trope that we saw so interested Dolet. Decapitated in the heat of the *Pantagruel* battle, Epistemon goes to the underworld and converses with the historical and fictive figures he meets there; after Panurge intervenes to suture his head back onto his body, Epistemon then relays his experience in a list. This list is not quite as long as Xenomanes' list describing Quaresmeprenant; more crucially, it is voiced by the body in question himself in the form of an analeptic recollection.

Even Antonioli writes that 'la médicine n'y intervient pourtant qu'incidemment' in this episode.[24] Yet this chapter will argue that Panurge's twofold

[23] We will explore in more detail in the second half of the chapter the innovative readings by Brancher, among others, of Quaresmeprenant's body which go beyond this methodology. Paul J. Smith, *Dispositio: Problematic Ordering in French Renaissance Literature* (Leiden: BRILL, 2007); Marie-Madeleine Fontaine, 'Quaresmeprenant: l'Image littéraire et la contestation de l'analogie médicale,' in *Rabelais in Glasgow,* Proceedings of the Colloquium held at the University of Glasgow in December 1983, ed. James A. Coleman and Christine M. Scollen-Jimack (Glasgow, 1984). See also: Lacore-Martin, 'Rabelais's Anatomy of Emotion and Soul', 33-58.

[24] Antonioli, *Rabelais et la médicine*, p. 114. A recent chapter addressing the Epistemon episode focuses on the drugs that Panurge uses before suturing – the implicitly nonsensical Latinate 'pouldre de diamerdis', and then Alcofribas's explicit description of 'je [Alcofribas] ne scay quell oignement' – in relation to Rabelais's contested relation to Arabic medicine and Symphorien Champier, but neglects the role of suturing: Dorothea Heitsch, *Writing as Medication in Early Modern France: Literary Consciousness and Medical Culture* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2017). For a reading focused on the

touch, in the form of his diagnosis and his suturing treatment turns this renowned analepsis into, in fact, an anamnesis; one that is upturned, its order inverted, to question the temporality of knowledge in this opening stage of the consultation. Ending with a reflection on my own methodological suturing of different texts, in order to make dead writers speak anew, this chapter will suggest that Rabelais's altered anamnesis offers a radically altered view of his writing project. Cave uses acoustic metaphors of 'listen[ing]', 'strain[ing]', and 'attend[ing]' to reflect on how encounters with early modern texts help us to understand the past; this chapter hopes to demonstrate how this is possible through attention to Rabelais's singular voice. But, more than that, it will explore how the study of anamnesis in Rabelais's texts allows for a broader meditation on the relation between medicine and fiction.[25]

II. Bringing the Dead back to Life

In the wake of the Picrocholean war's devastation, Rabelais stages a set of competing responses to the spectacle of a fatally wounded patient:

> Ceste desconfite gigantale parachevée, Pantagruel se retira au lieu des flaccons et appella Panurge, et les aultres, lesquelz se rendirent à luy sains et saulves, excepté Eusthenes lequel un des Geans avoit egraphiné quelque peu au visaige : ainsi qu'il l'esgorgetoit. Et Epistemon qui ne se comparoit poinct. Dont Pantagruel fut si dolent qu'il se voulut tuer soymesmes, mais Panurge luy dict. « Dea seigneur attendez un peu, et nous le chercherons entre les mors, et voirons la verité du tout. »
>
> Ainsi doncques comme ilz cherchoyent, ilz le trouverent tout roidde mort et sa teste entre ses bras toute sanglante.
>
> Lors Eusthenes s'escria. « Ha male mort, nous as tu tollu le plus parfaict des hommes ? »

Christian resonances of Epistemon's resurrection, see Steven T. Brent, 'Concerning the Resurrection of Epistemon', *Romance Notes*, 12 (1971), 392-396 and Vincent Corentin Robert-Nicoud, *The World Upside-Down in 16th Century French Literature and Visual Culture* (Leiden: BRILL, 2018), pp. 106-108.

[25] Terence Cave, *Retrospectives: Essays in Literature, Poetics, and Cultural History* ed. by Neil Kenny and Wes Williams, (Abingdon: Legenda, 2009), pp. 10-20; pp. 146-158.

> À laquelle voix se leva Pantagruel au plus grand dueil qu'on veit jamais au monde […] Mais Panurge dist. « Enfans ne pleurez goutte, il est encores tout chault. Je vous le gueriray aussi sain qu'il fut jamais. »
>
> Ce disant print la teste et la tint sus sa braguette chauldement affin qu'elle ne print vent. Eusthenes et Carpalim porterent le corps au lieu ou ilz avoient bancquetté : non par espoir que jamais guerist, mais affin que Pantagruel le veist.
>
> Toutesfois Panurge les reconfortoit, disant. « Si je ne le guery je veulx perdre la teste (qui est le gaige d'un fol) laissez ces pleurs et me aydez » (*Pantagruel,* ch. 30, p. 321).

Pantagruel is 'si dolent' as to be suicidal, stricken with the 'plus grand dueil qu'on veit jamais au monde'. When Eusthenes and Carpalim find Epistemon 'tout roidde mort [avec] sa teste entre ses bras toute sanglante', and bring the body to Pantagruel, 'non par espoir que jamais guerist, mais affin que Pantagruel le veist', they seek to translate an act of showing into an act of *collective* mourning. Panurge, however, responds against the grain of this shared despair: he not only puts forward an alternative 'verité' of the situation predicated on a tactile diagnosis that Epistemon 'est encores tout chault', but claims that he has the expertise to solve it: 'Si je ne le guery je veulx perdre la teste (qui est le gaige d'un fol)'. Both assertions are framed by the tears of Pantagruel and their companions ('ne pleurez goutte'; 'laissez ces pleurs et me aydez'): it is a compassionate desire to lessen his Prince's suffering that motivates Panurge, confident that he is not inert or inept but capable of conjuring with death. Epistemon's medical history seems, at first, impossible to be disputed; decapitation is, in Patricia Palmer's words, 'that baleful manifestation of extreme violence', unique in its capacity to portray the upending, grotesque spectacle of war.[26] Yet Panurge insists that Epistemon may not yet be, in fact, 'tout roidde mort'; that the other characters are making a medical error, which only he can correct.

[26] Patricia Palmer, *The Severed Head and the Grafted Tongue: Literature, Translation and Violence in Early Modern Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 1.

Rabelais sets up, here, a medical scene in two parts. Firstly, Panurge corrects the companions' (mis)judgement that Epistemon is not saveable; secondly, he will now try to correct the 'error' of dissection by suturing Epistemon's head back onto his body. This medical scene is far from the idealised anatomical encounter that we saw both interested Sawday and framed the first two of Dolet's poems; it is a space of contingency and error more akin to the surgical encounter that I observed and the third, more contestatory of Dolet's poems. There is, furthermore, no Dr Rabelais, nor even a physician of Rabelais's standing, present; it is Panurge who models himself as the surgeon with the necessary skills, and the patient – who will turn narrator, as we shall see – is Epistemon. The scene is neither one of literal nor figural dissection, therefore; it stages neither the anatomy of Quaresmeprenant nor the ramblings of Rondibilis, meaning that we begin with a departure from Rabelais scholarship of, or concerning, recognisably medical figures in the text. The minor characters and companions are the key actors in this scene; even if they act for Pantagruel's sake, both medical and narrative function are distributed beyond the giant protagonist. We will examine first Panurge's twofold intervention, and then Epistemon's analepsis-anamnesis, to unpick the effect of these divergent medical and literary encounters.

The term 'tout roidde mort' anticipates Panurge's alternative reading of Epistemon's state of death. To understand what this means for the status of Epistemon's body in an early modern context, we can examine contemporary meanings of the phrase. While it leaves little trace in contemporary medical texts or autopsy reports, two appearances of it in Michel de Montaigne's first book of the *Essais* gesture towards an instability of the phrase's common usage produced by a grammatical ambiguity. We learn, in 'De la peur', of an anonymous 'gentil-homme',

who 'tomba roide mort par terre' due to the 'peur' of the battlefield. Then, in 'De la force de l'imagination', Montaigne reports on a man who dies from fear in anticipation of the executioner's blow: 'celui qu'on débandait pour lui lire sa grâce, se trouva roide mort sur l'eschafaut', Montaigne reports, with John Florio translating the unusual use of 'se trouva' in the passive as 'was found starke dead'.[27] The body falls or finds itself/is found by others; Montaigne uses these sister phrasal verbs to clarify his temporal framing of death, as either the swift means of dying or the finality of being dead, as either the process itself as experienced by the body or the searching for proof by way of visible signs by others. Yet Montaigne is only able to perform these verbal alterations because of the grammatical suppleness of the terms 'roide' and 'mort' themselves. The ambiguity to be exploited from the oscillation between 'mort' as adjective and as the past participle of the verb 'mourir' is well-trodden ground in the poetics of mortality; perhaps less immediately apparent here, however, is how this grammatical shift yields two alternative meanings of 'roide'.[28] Montaigne's 'se trouva' works by reading 'roide' in its more conventional definition of rigid – Cotgrave's 1611 dictionary, in fact, only records this term as 'stiffe, steadie, firme, stable, strong; sturdie, stubborne; rough, fierce, rude, invincible, violent; constant, inflexible; untractable' – and thus as an adjective qualifying 'mort' in its past-participle form.[29] Yet his use of 'tomba' gestures towards its adverbial usage as 'avec force et rapidité' or 'sans hésiter'; an adverbial qualification, then, of 'mort' as

[27] Michel de Montaigne, *Les Essais*, ed. by Pierre Villey and Verdun L. Saulnier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2013), p. 75; p. 98. John Florio, *The Essayes, or Morall, Politike, and Millitarie Discourses of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne … Now done into English by … John Florio.* (1603), accessed online: http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/montaigne/1xx.htm (20.05.2022).
[28] See, for example, Kenny's compelling study: Neil Kenny, *Death and Tenses: Posthumous Presence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). We will return to Kenny's incisive analysis later in this chapter; it is worth noting now, though, that Kenny does not consider Epistemon in his chapter on Rabelais in the book.
[29] 'Roide' in Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues.* Accessed online: http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/832smallsmall.html (12.07.2020).

the adjective that, just as in its use in early modern French to denote fast-flowing water, adds a forceful temporal specificity to the phrase.[30] Moving between the adjectival and the adverbial therefore entails a shift of 'roide' between a sense of material fixity and finality to one of vital temporality.

When early modern dictionaries record the example of 'tuer quelqu'un tout roide' as 'tuer quelqu'un tout net, d'un seul coup', they register the force of this adjectival and adverbial ambiguity; for the notion of a single mortal swoop contains the slippage of sense between finality and speed, rigidity and rapidity.[31] We can work through this slippery change of aspect between the adjectival and the adverbial by setting Epistemon's single-strike decapitation alongside that of an unfortunate victim of Frere Jan's ruthless aggression in *Gargantua*'s Picrocholean war. The re-enactment of the violence of war through the professional language of dissection precedes the usage of 'roidde mort' here:

> Lors d'un coup luy tranchit la teste, luy coupant le test sus les os petrux et enlevant les deux os bregmatis et la commissure sagittale, avecques grande partie de l'os coronal, ce que faisant luy tranchit les deux meninges et ouvrit profondement les deux posterieurs ventricules du cerveau et demoura le craine pendent sus les espaules à la peau du pericrane par derriere, en forme d'un bonnet doctoral, noir par dessus, rouge par dedans. Ainsi tomba roidde mort en terre (*Gargantua*, ch. 43, p. 120).[32]

Our eye is forced to follow the swooping motion of the single 'coup' as it carves through and lifts up the layers of the head, before settling on the visually arresting final image of the inverted 'bonnet doctoral, noir par dessus, rouge par dedans'. By

[30] Jacques Amyot, for example describes fast-flowing water as such: 'Il trouva la riviere si enflée et courant si roide, qu'il ne s'oza approcher du fil de l'eau'. Accessed online: http://dictionnaire.sensagent.leparisien.fr/cours/fr-fr/ (12.07.2020).
[31] *Trésor de la Langue Française*. Accessed online: http://stella.atilf.fr/Dendien/scripts/tlfiv5/advanced.exe?8;s=484690485 (13.07.2020).
[32] See Lacore-Martin, 'Rabelais's Anatomy of Emotion and Soul', pp. 33-58 for the implications of this scene for the exploration of early modern emotions, an aspect beyond the scope of this chapter.

the time we reach the clarification that the body 'ainsi tomba roidde mort en terre', we have almost forgotten that this guard was once a person at all: that final figurative transformation from skin to 'bonnet doctoral' cloth working to reduce the vitally material human body to an object of anatomical knowledge. The quality of 'roidde' now becomes jarring. Adverbially, it refers simply enough to the act of the dead body falling hard onto the ground. But, adjectivally, it can be read to describe a death that has already been worked through on the page; to objectify a body that the reader has already accepted as a corpse lacking all hope of renewed movement or life, already accepted as an image denoting a world of medical *savoir* and jargon.

It is this sense of interpretative hesitation that marks the discovery of Epistemon's body. The professional language of anatomy that guides the reader's confrontation with Frere Jan's combative violence is, in the chapter preceding Epistemon's retrieval, displaced by the simple explanation that 'c'estoit de pierres de gryson, dont un esclat couppa la gorge tout oultre à Epistemon' (*Pantagruel,* ch. 29, p. 320). The spectacle of Epistemon's truncated head overwhelms Eusthenes and Carpalim; their conviction in the all-too-visible proof of death means they are content to go directly from seeing this body to showing it ('affin que Pantagruel le veist'), and so, mourning it. Yet, to return to the passage as a whole, we find that the 'roidde mort' phrase that precedes this chain of witnessing is bookended by two statements of Panurge that further undermine the finality of Epistemon's death:

> Mais Panurge dist. « Enfans ne pleurez goutte, il est encores tout chault. Je vous le gueriray aussi sain qu'il fut jamais. »
>
> Ce disant print la teste et la tint sus sa braguette chauldement affin qu'elle ne print vent. Eusthenes et Carpalim porterent le corps au lieu ou ilz avoient bancquetté : non par espoir que jamais guerist, mais affin que Pantagruel le veist.

> Toutesfois Panurge les reconfortoit, disant. « Si je ne le guery je veulx perdre la teste (qui est le gaige d'un fol) laissez ces pleurs et me aydez » (*Pantagruel*, ch. 30, p. 321).

Here, Panurge exhorts the group to '[attendre] ung peu' to '[voir]' a different 'verité du tout'. His interruption reframes the rigidity of the conclusion that the other characters had unquestionably accepted; 'attendez' removes us from their static world of anatomical and visual certainty and plunges us instead into a medical scene that is imbued with the potential for modification, for states to be paused, to be re-found, and to change. In the *Gargantua* passage, Rabelais deployed the phrase 'tomba roidde mort': we expected to read 'roidde' as an adverb, and when we attempted to read it as an adjective, we found an unsettling confirmation or re-presentation of death. In the *Pantagruel* passage, Rabelais writes that the characters 'trouverent tout roidde mort' Epistemon's body. 'Roidde' can, comparably, be read as both adverbial and adjectival here. On one hand, it qualifies the verb 'trouver', suggesting that Eusthenes and Carpalim have been too quick to judge on their vision alone. They have lacked the skill and expertise which would make a medical practitioner hesitate and check all possible avenues for life; they would accept, in fact, this scene turning into an anatomical one. On the other hand, an interpretative hesitation is generated by how 'roidde' can qualify 'mort' as an adjective; in so doing, shifting our focus from the fixed and found state of death to the temporal process of dying, and so from the body as an object (deconstructed under the anatomist's knife) to the body as a subject, still-animate.

Writing on posthumous presence in epitaph fictions in the late medieval ages, Helen Swift seizes upon the last two verses of *Le Testament* by Villon – who we will return to in the final part of this chapter – to argue for an approach suspicious of all

death as understood as a final, fixed state.[33] Adopting a mock-testamentary form, *Le Testament* refuses outright to stage the protagonist's moment of demise. The following two small passages from the text frame what would be the moment of death. We find the testator begging for mercy in the penultimate ballade, the *Ballade de Merci*:

> C'on leur froisse les quinze costes
> De gros mailletz, fors et massiz,
> De plombees et telz peloctes !
> Je crye a toutes gens mercys.[34]

Yet, at the beginning of the final ballade, *Ballade de Conclusion*, we experience a sudden transition from this first-person voice to a third-person voice that invites us to attend the burial of the now named Villon, who had served thus far as our narrating protagonist:

> Icy se clost le Testament
> Et finist du povre Villon.
> Venez a son enterrement,
> Quant vous orez le carillon,
> Vestuz rouge com vermeillon,
> Car en amours mourut martir ;
> Ce jura il sur son coullon
> Quant de ce monde voult partir.[35]

The moment of demise is absent from the work itself; for Swift, this absence demands a reconsideration of mortality in Villon. 'Death needs to be posed as a question', she writes, 'and the existence of aporias – difficulties, sources of puzzlement, gaps in understanding, uncertainties, impossibilities – embraced'.[36] Rabelais, rather than omitting the moment of death entirely, asks this very question when he renders the status of Epistemon's body as existing somewhere between falling and being found;

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[33] Helen Swift, *Representing the Dead: Epitaph Fictions in Late-Medieval France* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2016).
[34] François Villon, 'Ballade de Merci', *Œuvres complètes,* ed. by Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet and Laëtitia Tabard (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 2014), p. 165.
[35] Villon, 'Ballade de Conclusion', *OC,* pp. 165-167.
[36] Swift, *Representing the Dead*, p. 31.

somewhere between the moment of dying and the fixed state of death itself; both stiff and yet still warm. Rather than shifting into a narratively authoritative third-person voice and so into the tangled world of posthumous presence that Swift, and her early modern counterpart on this subject Neil Kenny, so persuasively explore, Rabelais exploits the grammatical ambiguity of the 'roidde mort' phrase to stage a set of competing interpretations of the status of Epistemon's body.[37] Panurge's exhortation for the group to '[attendre] un peu' has, therefore, sparked off an alternative reading of 'tout roidde mort'. He pressures both the visual and objectified understanding of the body in the *historia anatomica* tradition, and Villon's, Swift's, and Kenny's world of literary posthumous traces, redirecting instead the scene into a functional medical one, with a differently articulated temporality. The significance of Rabelais's addition of the emphatic adverbial 'tout', missing from the Frere Jan passage, now, finally, becomes clear; for it stresses the capacity of the body to change further still, the capacity of its story to continue.

Panurge then sketches out the alternative way forward. 'Enfans ne pleurez goutte, Panurge exclaims, '[Epistemon] est tout chault […] 'si je ne les guery je veulx perdre la teste (qui est le gaige d'un fol) laissez ces pleurs et me aydez' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 43, p. 321). In John 11:1-45, Jesus wept before calling Lazarus forth from the dead by his voice alone; in Rabelais's reworking of this scene, Panurge claims that what is needed is not a miracle, but hands-on surgical intervention. His touch has confirmed that here is a death not straightforwardly judged by sight, and so a life not straightforwardly ended. This sets him apart from the other characters in the scene; he has sought to correct their misinterpretation of the status of Epistemon's body.

[37] Kenny, *Death and Tenses.*

Now, however, his bold claim is itself 'corrected' by the mocking voice suggesting that Panurge's bet is 'le gaige d'un fol'.

Rather than a self-aware commentary of the risks of prognosing such a medical feat on the part of Panurge, Rabelais's esteemed editor Huchon and others widely accept that the withering parenthetical remark is that of the narrator Alcofribas.[38] Panurge struggles, here, against the reputation he has earned throughout *Pantagruel* so far, right from his first appearance as a polyglot in rags: 'Anybody who knew Greek in any of its forms would have "placed" Panurge at once', so reasons Michael Screech, reflecting on the term *panourgos* as both dextrous and deceitful, '[as] a trickster ready for anything. Not perhaps *a* trickster, but *the* Trickster: craftiness personified'.[39] Alcofribas's intervention makes the distrust of Panurge here, however, into a question of medical expertise. For it recalls the anxiety permeating both Dolet and Estienne's texts outlined in the beginning of this chapter: Dolet's interest in what makes a poor or skilled doctor; Estienne's passage on the need for rhetorical clarity, in order to persuade his reader that his history of the body does not contain a 'mensonge' or a 'chose fabuleuse', and to prove that he 'n'ayt ceste hardiesse de dire ou proferer cas qui ne contienne verité'.[40]

Rabelais thus has Alcofribas intervene to stage a new medical disagreement in this scene: not over how 'mort' Epistemon is, but over who is the more expert practitioner, the narrator Alcofribas, soon to be named as 'abstracteur de quinte

[38] See *Pantagruel,* ch. 30, p. 321n5.
[39] M.A. Screech, *Rabelais* (London: Duckworth, 1979), p. 70. Gérard Défaux neatly nuances Screech's '*the*' when he writes that Panurge is a rebel 'à toute classification, même à celle qui le définirait comme indéfinissable': Gérard Defaux, 'De *Pantagruel* au *Tiers Livre.* Panurge et le Pouvoir', *ÉR,* 13 (1976), 163-80 (p. 163). For more on Panurge's Odyssean links through this trickster persona, see: Gérard Defaux, 'Une Rencontre homérique: Panurge noble, pérégrin, et curieux', French Forum, 6 (1981), 109-122.
[40] Estienne, *La Dissection des parties du corps humain*, p. a.ii.

essence' on the title page of *Gargantua*, or the character Panurge. The discourse of risk, error, and capability that shapes the medical (rather than anatomical) encounter is now animated by Rabelais as a tussle between two different modes of medicine and of narration: on one hand, Alcofribas, who sticks with the conventional reading of the decapitated body and attempts to encourage the reader to accept this interpretation, using his authority as narrator to intervene in the very speech of his characters; on the other hand, Panurge, who claims an alternative knowledge of the body, and seeks to use this dissenting interpretation to steer the narrative in a new direction. To do so, Panurge now has to show a different sort of expertise: he sets about suturing Epistemon's head back onto his body.

Rabelais describes Panurge's suturing technique in the discursive form of the list: '[il] afusta [la teste et le corps d'Epistemon] justement veine contre veine, nerf contre nerf, spondyle contre spondyle, affin qu'il ne feust tortycolly' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 30, p. 322). This (short) list has received little critical attention in comparison to the anatomising description of Quaresmeprenant, and its array of vertiginous, unlikely comparisons, that we have already touched upon. There, Rabelais employs an increasingly fragile 'comme' to compare body parts to a whole range of quotidian objects, taking the descriptive capacities of language to the brink. 'Quaresmeprenant is a monster not because he is formless', argues Michael Riffaterre, 'but because he cannot be expressed, because he is literally unspeakable'; in the words of Alfred Glauser, this unspeakability amounts to 'un arrêt de vie, une stupéfiante momification' that finds correlation in Cave and Floyd Gray's readings of the list as 'an absence' and 'un vide'.[41] Yet Brancher's recent rereading of Quaresmeprenant

[41] Michael Riffaterre, *Text Production* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 20; Alfred Glauser, *Rabelais créateur* (Paris: A. G. Nizet, 1966), p. 252; Floyd Gray, *Rabelais et l'Écriture* (Paris: A. G.

thrills in the way in which she expands on the temporality of Glauser's idea of the 'arrêt de vie'; this list is a 'coupure dans le flot textuel', she suggests, that recreates in narrative form the instantaneous visual nature of the body in the anatomy theatre.[42]

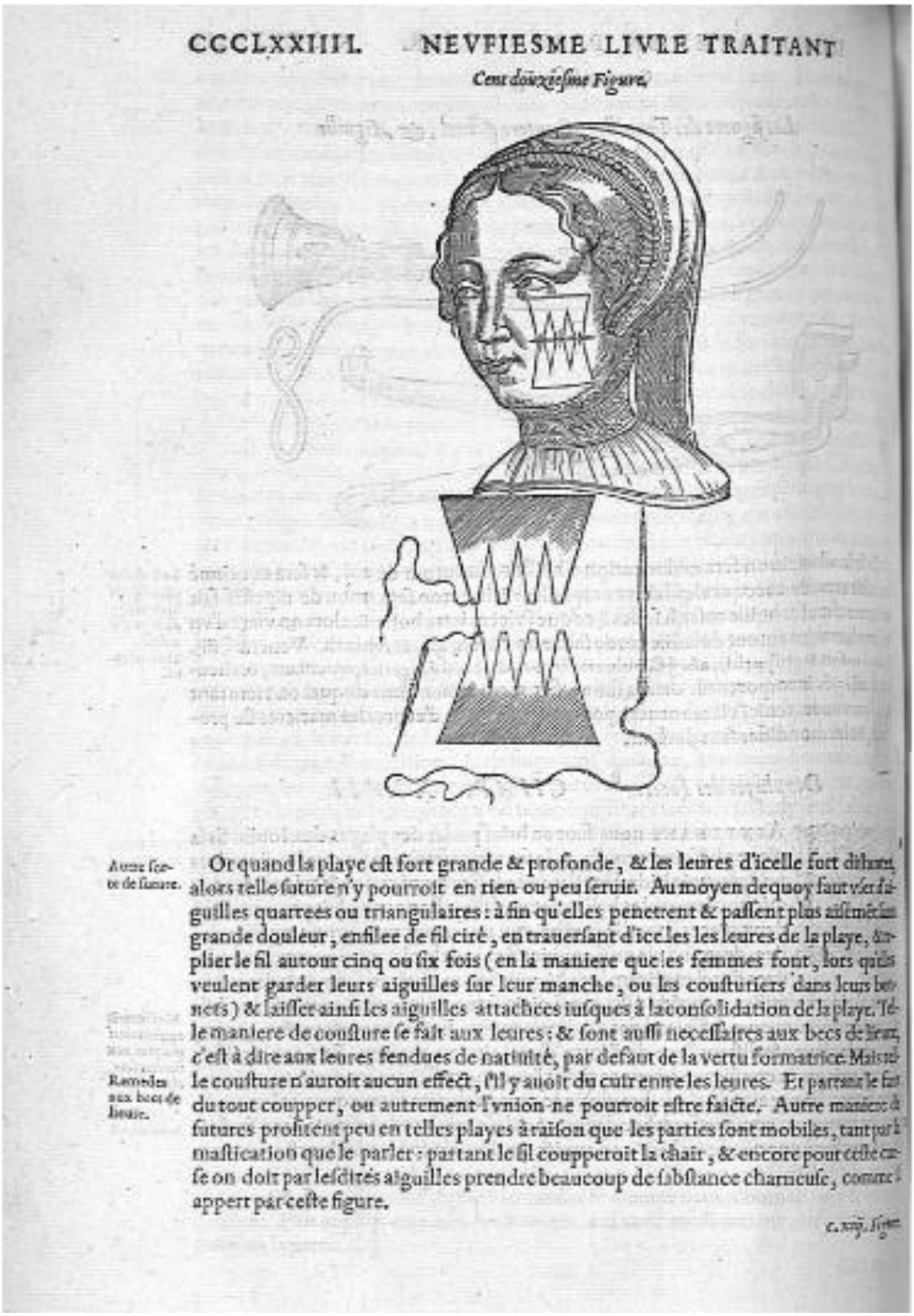
In a neat reversal of the 'comme' used to compare wildly diverging things in the Quaresmeprenant list, however, Rabelais uses 'contre' in the suturing list to facilitate the repetition of the anatomical terms describing the interior of Epistemon's body. It both intervenes along each individual part of the list ('veine contre veine') and is repeated across it ('veine contre veine, nerf contre nerf, spondyle contre spondlye'), thus marking a departure from the dissection encounter, where the body is prized apart, to emphasise how parts of the body can be brought back together again, with a seam of this connection visible. To understand what this might mean in an early modern context, we turn to the monumental surgical treatise of Paré, who includes an illustration and description of how to suture correctly that makes both the practical mechanisms and the narrative significance of Rabelais's 'contre' clear. Paré's illustration marks a significant departure from the woman in the only other illustration discussed in this thesis, that of the dissected woman in Vesalius's anatomy theatre. With an elaborate bonnet and a glimpse of her clothing, this woman represents an alternative form of the male gaze to the 'pornographic' space by proxy

Nizet, 1974), p. 183; Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text: Problems of Writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 208. A useful summary of critical commentary on Quaresmeprenant can be found in: Rowan Tomlinson, 'The Limits of Textual Dissection: The Case of Quaresmeprenant in Rabelais's *Le Quart Livre,*' in *The Flesh in the Text* ed. by Thomas Baldwin, James E. Fowler, and Shane Weller (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 21-39.

[42] Dominique Brancher, 'Un Monstre de langage: l'anatomie de Quaresmeprenant', *Versants*, 56 (2009), 115-137 (p. 126).

of the anatomy theatre; she appears to be borrowed from the world of Renaissance portraiture, elegantly displaying her neatly sutured cheek: [43]

[43] Ambroise Paré, *Les Oeuvres d'Ambroise Paré, conseiller et premier chirurgien du roy, divisées en vingt-sept livres : avec les figures et portraicts tant de l'Anatomie que des instruments de chirurgie et de plusieurs monstres : reveuz et augmentez par l'autheur pour la seconde Edition, Paris* (Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1579), p. 373. Brancher uses the term 'pornographic', but I am hesitant to repeat this vocabulary due to the association of pornography with money and the marketplace, and the sexual encounter as transactional. I choose in this thesis to use the term 'erotic' instead, to broadly cover or suggest the sexualisation of medical practice. Brancher, 'L'Anatomiste pornographe', 161-188.



CCCLXXIIII. NEVFIESME LIVRE TRAITANT

Cent douzieſme Figure.

Autre ſorte de ſuture.

Or quand la playe eſt fort grande & profonde, & les leures d'icelle fort dilatez, alors telle ſuture n'y pourroit en rien ou peu ſeruir. Au moyen dequoy faut vſer d'aiguilles quarrees ou triangulaires : à fin qu'elles penetrent & paſſent plus aiſément & en grande douleur, enfilee de fil ciré, en trauerſant d'icelles les leures de la playe, & replier le fil autour cinq ou ſix fois (en la maniere que les femmes font, lors qu'elles veulent garder leurs aiguilles ſur leur manche, ou les couſturiers dans leurs bonnets) & laiſſer ainſi les aiguilles attachées iuſques à la conſolidation de la playe. Telle maniere de couſture ſe fait aux leures : & ſont auſſi neceſſaires aux becs de lieure, c'eſt à dire aux leures fendues de natiuité, par defaut de la vertu formatrice. Mais telle couſture n'auroit aucun effect, s'il y auoit du cuir entre les leures. Et partant le fault du tout coupper, ou autrement l'vnion ne pourroit eſtre faicte. Autre maniere de futures profitent peu en telles playes à raiſon que les parties ſont mobiles, tant par la maſtication que le parler : partant le fil coupperoit la chair, & encore pour telle cauſe on doit par leſdites aiguilles prendre beaucoup de ſubſtance charneuſe, comme il appert par ceſte figure.

Remede aux becs de lieure.

c. xxij. ſigne.

Figure 2: Ambroise Paré, *Les Oeuvres d'Ambroise Paré, conseiller et premier chirurgien du roy, divisées en vingt-sept livres : avec les figures et portraicts tant de l'Anatomie que des instruments de chirurgie et de plusieurs monstres : reveuz et augmentez par l'autheur pour la seconde Edition, Paris*, (Paris: Gabriel Buon, 1579), p. 374. © Collection BIU Santé Médecine.

Representing the technique of dry suturing, whereby a layer of linen cloth is placed on the wound, Paré guides the reader to '[coudre] en les approchant l'une contre l'autre' as soon after the incision as possible 'à fin que les cicatrices ne demeurent laides'.[44] The intervening thread thus works alongside the overlaying piece of cloth to both prosthetically amend the face and erase as much trace of this amendment as possible. Suturing becomes a corrective practice, seeking to rectify any sign of change – the injury and the repair – to the skin surface. But this, of course, can only go so far: the smallest trace of error and correction will be visible in even the neatest scar. In his accompanying text, Paré references women twice. There are his typical patients (like the woman illustrated), who 'craignent tel accident, principalement les belles damoyselles', through which Paré emphasises the extent to which his suturing is cosmetic surgery, to which it is the visible quality of the skin remade that is of value.[45] He refers, too, more broadly, to 'les femmes' and 'les cousturiers' from whom he has learnt from; a gesture towards the sources of artisanal information that have developed his skill and now enrich his text.[46] In the passage depicting Frère Jean's anatomical violence, the cloth of the *bonnet doctoral* was an object of medical knowledge, a symbol of learned university medicine and the anatomy textbook. Here, Paré's suturing thread is a material which both structures the relation of his patients to others and reveals the development of his practical knowledge.

Before embarking on his cure, Panurge promised to the group that 'Je [gueriray Epistemon] aussi sain qu'il fut jamais' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 30, p. 321). The *futur* and *passé simple* tenses coalesce around the comparative value of 'sain': Panurge claims to be such an expert suturer as to be able to return Epistemon's body to the

[44] Paré, *Les Oeuvres d'Ambroise Paré*, p. 373.
[45] Paré, *Les Oeuvres d'Ambroise Paré*, p. 373.
[46] Paré, *Les Oeuvres d'Ambroise Paré*, p. 373.

state that it existed in prior to the battlefield injury; to completely correct, in other words, Epistemon's health. Compared to Paré's care over the impossibility of invisible correction, Panurge's claim is dripping in hyperbole. For Panurge doesn't even just suture the skin of the cheek; he sutures the entire head back onto the body, *and* leaves no trace of this impossible medical feat. Where Paré includes an image of one such 'bell[e] damoysell[e]' but ventriloquises their concern, Panurge's incredible suturing enables his patient, Epistemon, to speak his own history in the narrative that follows; he gives him back his voice. If Dolet, in the beginning of this chapter, deployed the power of his and his reader's imagination to allow the dead to speak, Panurge really has brought Epistemon back to life, and really allows us to hear his voice. And we can turn, now, to what Epistemon says.

Claude Blum writes that Epistemon's return from the afterlife rests around the central paradox that 'celui qui connaît la mort ne peut pas la narrer; celui qui narre la mort ne la connaît pas'.[47] The anxious uncertainty over the status of Epistemon's body that plagued the opening of this chapter translates, in Blum's analysis, into an uneasiness over how to grasp Epistemon's voice, and the validity or authenticity of what it can tell of the underworld. Epistemon's first words as he splutters back to life, however, resist such an anxiety:

> Et là commencza à parler, disant. Qu'il avoit veu les diables, avoit parlé à Lucifer familierement, et faict grand chere en enfer. Et par les champs Elisées. Et asseuroit devant tous que les diables estoyent bons compaignons. Au regard des damnez, il dist, qu'il estoit bien marry de ce que Panurge l'avoit si tost revocqué en vie. « Car je prenois (dist il) un singulier passetemps à les veoir.
>
> Comment ? dist Pantagruel.
>
> L'on ne les traicte pas (dist Epistemon) si mal que vous penseriez : mais leur estat est changé en estrange façon (*Pantagruel*, ch. 30, p. 322).

[47] Claude Blum, *La Représentation de la mort dans la littérature française de la Renaissance* (Paris: Classiques Garnier Numérique, 2006), p. 355.

A litany of references to sight ('il avoit veu', 'au regard des', 'un singulier passetemps à les veoir') position Epistemon as a privileged visual witness, promising the stability denied by the confusing spectacle-turned-dispute of decapitation in the opening of the chapter. It is as if Panurge's reconstruction of his head and body has allowed Epistemon to reconstruct, particularly accurately, what he saw in the underworld. For if Panurge twice over sought to correct – his companion's misdiagnosis and decapitation – then Epistemon, too, sets himself up as a necessary corrective figure. He challenges Pantagruel's companions' expectations of the underworld directly ('L'on ne les traicte pas […] si mal que vous penseriez'); only he understands the strange ways in which the figures of the underworld are changed.

The discursive form of the list reappears, now, as Epistemon details what he saw in a way that appears to serve as a counter to the oral and aural world of interpretative ambiguity we encountered as Panurge sought to alleviate Pantagruel's mourning:

> « Car je veis Alexandre le grand qui repetassoit de vieilles chausses, et ainsi gaignoit sa pauvre vie.
> Xercés crioit la moustarde.
> Romule estoit saulnier.
> Numa clouatier.
> Tarquin tacquin.
> […] » (*Pantagruel*, ch. 30, p. 322).

Epistemon seeks to persuade us that he is not only the privileged witness of the underworld but also able to bear witness to it as a historian-like figure, presenting a concrete, ordered overview. In the words of Chantal Liaroutzos, a list '[se définit] comme [un élément autonome] dans le contexte narratif ou argumentatif qui

[l'engendre]', a suspension of both narrative form and the ambiguity it can generate.[48] The opening lines of this list, describing the upturned fates of the underworld's inhabitants in a winking reworking of Paul (that we saw Dolet also allude to), at first glance prove convincing of the notional self-sufficiency of the literary game being played here.

Yet in one of the most convincing critical commentaries of this episode, Raphaël Cappellen and Paul J. Smith have demonstrated that the 'désordre' of the contents and form of Epistemon's list itself suggests something more than a reflection on literary history.[49] For Epistemon ultimately not only catalogues the curious reversal of professions in life and in death, but also gets drawn into explaining how the relations between its famous, indeed exemplary, inhabitants are animated. He ends up managing both a thematic and a stylistic, vertical and horizontal, ordering principle, Cappellen and Smith show, until his list eventually buckles to longer narrative descriptions which disrupt the order of exemplary history itself:

> « Au contraire les philosophes, et ceulx qui avoient esté indigens en ce monde, de par delà estoient gros seigneurs en leur tour.
>
> « Je veiz Diogenes qui se prelassoit en magnificence avec une grand robbe de poulpre, et un sceptre en sa dextre, et faisoit enrager Alexandre le grand, quand il n'avoit pas bien repetassé les chausses, et le payoit en grans coups de baston […] » (*Pantagruel*, ch. 30, p. 325).

Hayden White suggests that historical narratives seek to 'tell us what direction to think about [past] events'; John D. Lyons, analysing Erasmus, comparably argues that they are able to 'give some form to a mass that would otherwise lose its direction

[48] Chantal Liaroutzos, 'La Poétique des listes dans le *Quart Livre*', in Nathalie Dauvois and Jean Vignes eds., 'En relisant le *Quart Livre* de Rabelais', *Cahiers Textuel*, 35 (2012), p. 101.
[49] Raphaël Cappellen and Paul J. Smith, 'Entre l'Auteur et l'éditeur: la forme-liste chez Rabelais', *L'Année rabelaisienne,* 1 (2017), 121-144.

and structure'.[50] Rabelais has Epistemon, however, report on an underworld that upsets our expectations of exemplarity: he reverses the anticipated relation between life and the afterlife, and in so doing questions how one should learn from figures from the past in the pursuit of a better present. This, in turn, upsets our expectations of the list as a discursive form able to structure and organise our thought.

Epistemon is the lone voice that is saved – thanks to Panurge's suturing skill – before himself being 'changé en estrange facon'. The extent to which he can be read as an exemplary figure is, therefore, brought into question here. Kenny's persuasive work on tenses in Rabelais teaches us to expect the emergence of the *présent* or the *passé composé* as Epistemon narrates his experience, working to bridge between the deeds' status as fact and their exemplary efficacity in the present.[51] Yet Epistemon's insistent use of the *passé simple* 'je veis' rather keeps him a temporal step behind, never allowing for the verb to be 'thawed out'. This could be read as consolidating Epistemon's intermediary or outside status. For while among the figures of the past, Epistemon remains merely an outsider looking in; he is able to speak with the dead but is never really one of them in the fictional space of the underworld. When he returns to life, he presents himself as speaking *as one of* the dead; able to correct as an expert witness the impressions of the figures of the past. Yet his position as an outsider remains: his capacity to become exemplary like the dead is blocked; his capacity to organise, through the form of the list, his experience in order to inform the living is disrupted.

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[50] Cited in John D. Lyons, *Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 17. See also: Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 1-31.
[51] Kenny, *Death and Tenses,* pp. 212-214.

An alternative reading, however, might interpret Epistemon's status not as a fault or lack but rather evidence of a voice that is somewhat analogous to Panurge's hyperbolic characterisation of his own suturing practice. For Epistemon here achieves what Blum claims was impossible to do: he has been able to both die and relay his experience of dying. This makes him into an alternative form of exemplary figure; an exemplary patient, that proves that Panurge's hyperbolic practice is, in fact, justified.

In this episode, therefore, Rabelais twice-over allows the impossible to take place. Panurge performs an impossible surgical feat, suturing Epistemon's head back onto his body in order to bring him back to life. Epistemon then is able to, impossibly, relay his experience of the underworld to his companions. Dolet gave a voice to the dissected corpse to allow them to speak of their transformation from criminal to participating in the medical tradition of *historia anatomica*, in a medical lineage of which Rabelais's place was confirmed. Rabelais, here, is interested in what it means for Epistemon to be given a voice with which to narrate his own personal experience. Yet he has written a sort of reverse anamnesis by having Epistemon only speak after he has been sutured by Panurge, rather than speaking beforehand to inform what takes place in the medical encounter. Epistemon's narrative becomes a sort of compensatory space, in which decapitation on the battlefield can be corrected, in which death can be reversed, in which the boundaries of what is possible are expanded. Rabelais experiments, in other words, with the capacity of his and our literary imagination. This compensatory, imaginative mode is bound to, is only possible because of, is only able to follow, the medical scene. This episode asks not just a question of how we understand literary history, therefore but rather a question of how we think about both what medicine, and fiction, can do.

III. Suturing Texts

We started this chapter with Dolet's poetry as para-texts to Rabelais's narratives that embedded Rabelais in the medical culture of his time and place, sixteenth-century Lyon. Turning to the text proper, we found that reading Epistemon's analepsis as also an anamnesis, made possible by Panurge's suturing skill, has allowed us to think about how Rabelais's literary writing constitutes a compensatory fictional space, in which he can correct the forms of error, contingency, and risk that would characterise real battlefield surgery. To end this chapter, I want to bring the intertexts that have been in the background to Rabelais's narratives throughout my analysis – Villon's poetry, and Paré's surgical treatise – to the fore. This will allow us to reflect on Rabelais's place in the broader literary and medical landscape; on how his fictional narratives relate to Villon's late-medieval intertexts, and how he, in turn, can be seen as an intertext to the discursive writing of Paré. If it was Panurge's suturing that medicalised Epistemon's analepsis into an anamnesis, then perhaps we can allow ourselves a moment to experiment with how suturing can serve as a metaphor for thinking about these intertextual relations. This methodological suturing will, in turn, allow us to turn back to Rabelais's own fictions, and to reflect further on what an attention to anamnesis tells us about medicine, time, and fiction in his writing.

Villon is intentionally brought into the wider literary landscape of Epistemon's resurrection by Rabelais, appearing as one of the figures with his fate upturned in the underworld:

> 'Je veiz maistre Françoys Villon qui demanda à Xercés. "Combien la denrée de moustarde?'

> Un denier, dist Xercés." À quoi dict ledict de Villon. "Tes fievres quartines villain, la blanchée n'en vault q'un pinard, et tu nous surfaictz icy les vivres." Adonc pissa dedans son bacquet comme font les moustardiers à Paris (*Pantagruel*, ch. 30, p. 326).

Piss and mustard will take on healing properties in the war between Pantagruel and the Andouilles; here, they are materials more at the service of scatological humour, as Rabelais stages an encounter between the dead Villon and Persian king Xerxes. Villon is a fitting subject of the underworld not only for the influence he casts over the literature of Rabelais's day – not least in the figure of Panurge, as many Rabelais scholars have suggested – but for his own experiments in the writing of conversing with the dead. His most memorable instance – the *Epitaphe Villon* – was purportedly written when the execution of the poet seemed certain; when Villon imagines, then, his own dead voice and the posthumous echoes that might sound beyond his life. The poem teases its reader, Swift suggests, by refusing to disclose definitively the post-mortem position of its speaker until a pronominal shift midway through the poem:

> Frères humains, qui après nous vivez,
> N'ayez les coeurs contre nous endurcis,
> Car, si pitié de nous pauvres avez,
> Dieu en aura plus tôt de vous mercis.
> Vous nous voyez ci attachés, cinq, six :
> Quant à la chair, que trop avons nourrie,
> Elle est piéça dévorée et pourrie,
> Et nous, les os, devenons cendre et poudre.
> De notre mal personne ne s'en rie ;
> Mais priez Dieu que tous nous veuille absoudre !
>
> Se frères vous clamons, pas n'en devez
> Avoir dédain, quoique fûmes occis
> Par justice. Toutefois, vous savez
> Que tous hommes n'ont pas bon sens rassis.
> Excusez-nous, puisque sommes transis,
> Envers le fils de la Vierge Marie,
> Que sa grâce ne soit pour nous tarie,
> Nous préservant de l'infernale foudre.
> Nous sommes morts, âme ne nous harie,
> Mais priez Dieu que tous nous veuille absoudre !
>
> La pluie nous a débués et lavés,
> Et le soleil desséchés et noircis.

Pies, corbeaux nous ont les yeux cavés,
Et arraché la barbe et les sourcils.
Jamais nul temps nous ne sommes assis
Puis çà, puis là, comme le vent varie,
A son plaisir sans cesser nous charrie,
Plus becquetés d'oiseaux que dés à coudre.
Ne soyez donc de notre confrérie ;
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous veuille absoudre !

Prince Jésus, qui sur tous a maistrie,
Garde qu'Enfer n'ait de nous seigneurie :
A lui n'ayons que faire ne que soudre.
Hommes, ici n'a point de moquerie ;
Mais priez Dieu que tous nous veuille absoudre ![52]

It is only midway through the poem that the testator addresses the living as a plural 'we' ('nous sommes morts'), the dead spokesperson of the five or six dismembered skeletal remains still, somehow, swinging on their nooses. What Swift calls 'this corporeal being of 'nous'' is subject to the ravages of time in the form of continuing bodily decay: the spokesman laments their flesh 'pieça devoree et pourrie,' reduced to 'cendre et poudre'. At other moments, this decay is reformulated as part of a cyclical, life-giving force to the non-human actors pecking away in the poem: at one moment, 'Pies, corbeaux [leur] ont les yeux cavés'; at another, anticipating the skin of Frere Jan's victim as a 'bonnet doctoral', their skin is 'plus becquetés d'oiseaux que dés à coudre'.

The anxiety over such continuing corporeal torment finds compelling purchase in the commonplace refrain, 'Priez Dieu que tous nous veuille absoudre', which sets up a fraught dialogue between the increasing vulnerability of their material circumstances and the stretching uncertainty of their future in the afterlife. This is a

[52] Villon, *OC*, pp. 729-731. Swift, *Representing the Dead*, p. 46. For a reading of how the lack of certitude around Villon's death in this poem impacts his posthumous presence that compliments Swift's analysis, see Jonathan Patterson, *Villainy in France, 1463-1610: A Transcultural Study of Law and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 80-96. For a compelling reading of Villon's subjectivity in this poem more broadly, see Jane H. M. Taylor, *The Poetry of François Villon: Text and Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 33-58.

collective voice which prays for a release from their shared corporeal fate; the lines toll as a prayer repeated, but never quite granted, within the confines of the poem. This tolling further emphasises a dislocation between the speaker(s) and the body; how are we as readers meant to relate to this echoing voice, Swift asks, when the corpses are merely dismembered skeletal remains? These remains are held 'together by only the words of the poem', Swift continues, 'forming composition out of decomposition'.[53]

In the second edition of his *Oeuvres*, published in 1579, 26 years after Rabelais's death, Paré recounts an 'histoire memorable' which recalls Swift's language of composing corpses. For, here, Paré recounts the case history of a patient who is – temporarily – held together by suturing thread; this patient's words are then recomposed as part of Paré's composition of his own surgical experience. Swift's turn of phrase usefully characterises my own methodological work here, too, if we specify this composition work as a form of suturing. For Villon and Rabelais's texts can be thought of as sutured together across the turning of the sixteenth century; Rabelais's fictions are part of the world in which Villon's poems were created, picking up its threads, grafting the questions that it is interested in and that it generates onto the cloth-like skin of the new text, recomposing its ways of thinking about experience and voice. We can turn now to how Paré's case history tackles suturing and speaking, and in so doing helps us to reflect again on Rabelais's fictional work. I am suturing texts together, in other words, to make the dead speak again and, perhaps, more clearly.

[53] Swift, *Representing the Dead*, p. 46.

Paré's case study is one of three given as examples for how to treat wounds to the throat. The search for the 'vérité' of the body's history that occupied Estienne, and Eusthenes, Carpalim, and Panurge, on the battlefield, now unfolds in a domestic drama of an attempted suicide:

> La troisieme histoire presque semblable d'un Allemand, pensionnaire d'un banquier nommé Perot, demeurant a la ruë des Noyers en ceste ville de Paris, lequel par une phrenaisie & folle opinion, la nuict se coupa la gorge d'un cousteau, et se donna plusieurs autres coups, tant au thorax qu'au ventre, dont aucuns penetroient au dedans, & les autres estoient superficiels. Et le lendemain matin aucuns de ses compagnons le voulans visiter, le trouverent fort mal, avec grande quantité de sang respandu autour de luy. Et voyant tel spectacle, croyoyent et pensoient que s'eust esté son serviteur qui luy avoit fait tel excès, parce qu'il couchoit en sa chambre, lequel fut prins & mené prisonnier au Chastelet, en luy mettant sus avoir ainsi meurdry son maistre. Or je sus envoyé querir pour visiter & penser le malade : & voyant la trachee artete & l'oesophague coupé, avec plusieurs autres playes, n'eu aucune esperance de sa vie : parquoy fut d'avis qu'on appelast Estienne de la Riviere, Chirurgien ordinaire du Roy, & germain Cheval Chirurgien juré à Paris, & fut conclu entre nous qu'il falloit recourdre la playe de la gorge, comme il a esté recité cy devant : promptement la playe cousue & bandee, ledit patient Allemand commenca à parler : & confessa que luy mesme s'estoit fait tel excès, & deschargea du tout son pauvre serviteur en nos presences, & de plusieurs autres, & principalement de deux notaires, & d'un commissaire du Chastelet : par ce moyen fut mis ledit serviteur hors de prison, & absous entierement par la confession que feit son maistre : & vous puis asseurer qu'il vescut quatre jours […] seulement je t'asseurerary, que par le benefice de la Chirurgie fut donné moyen audit Allemand de parler par l'espace de trois jours, qui fut cause que son serviteur, & son hoste furent du tout deschargez, & la verité du fait entierement cogneuë.[54]

Paré's case history mirrors, remarkably, the key elements of Epistemon's resurrection. To sketch them, with a very broad brush: the history starts with a misdiagnosis, of sorts; surgeons use their expertise to suture the injured body parts; this enables the patient to speak of their own experience. Yet where Epistemon was merely a victim of the violence of war, the patient here, Perot, has attempted to commit the greatest of theological sins, and, in the eyes of canon law, a crime. This backdrop of suicidal intention and self-harm invests Paré's medical case history with

[54] Paré, *Les Oeuvres d'Ambroise Paré*, p. 379.

a legal complexity missing from Epistemon's story. Yet even from a first reading, the key legal question that emerges is of what makes an expert witness; a question that, I want to suggest, structures how Paré turns his patient into a medical case, turns Perot's history of his experience into Paré's own history of surgical expertise and community. Paré has, like Rabelais, written a sort of reverse anamnesis here, a case of speaking only after suturing. The legal dimensions of this upturned order, here, can therefore help us to crystallise how Paré's case history can serve as a broader reflection on the practice of anamnesis itself. Let's expand each initial shared step – the misdiagnosis, the surgical expertise, the speaking – in turn.

Epistemon's body was found by Eusthenes and Carpalim, who, faced with the spectacle of decapitation, immediately (and somewhat reasonably) pronounced him as 'tout roidde mort'. Perot's head is still attached to his body when he is found by visiting 'compagnons', but the 'spectacle' of his slit throat, multiple other stab wounds, and the body lying in a pool of blood is shocking enough to prompt a double misjudgement of the scene by these unfortunate friends who find him. They instantly presume that the servant, sleeping in the same room, has caused the injuries; they lead him to Chastelet for 'a[yant] ainsi meurdry son maistre', suggesting that they also presume that their friend has died. Their erroneous attribution of blame slips into a misdiagnosis of the sort that Eusthenes and Carpalim carried out.

When Paré first views Perot's bloodied body, he, too, is pessimistic: he '[n'eut] aucune esperance de sa vie'. After consulting 'Estienne de la Riviere, Chirurgien ordinaire du Roy, & germain Cheval Chirurgien juré à Paris', however, we see the moment of surgical possibility that shaped Epistemon's resurrection emerge. While Panurge was the lone outlier, betting that his suturing skill could bring Epistemon back to life, Paré writes that '[il] fut conclu entre nous qu'il falloit recourdre la playe

de la gorge, comme il a esté recité cy devant'; he includes himself in a surgical community that were able to successfully draw on their shared expertise. For, 'promptement la playe cousue & bandee, ledit patient Allemand commenca à parler : & confessa que luy mesme s'estoit fait tel excès'. Panurge's extraordinary skill turned Rabelais's narrative into a compensatory fictional space; we can now turn to how both Perot and Paré are constructed as forms of expert witness, and how this legal attention to the value of their respective anamneses sets the discursive form of the case history in relation to Rabelais's fictional writing.

Andrea Frisch's incisive work has taught us that the status of the late medieval witness was evaluated by the act of testifying itself rather than, necessarily, the contents of the testimony.[55] Her perspective is useful for us, here, as we consider how Perot's voice is valued in this both legal and medical drama. For Perot's voice is significant in its capacity to redress the fate of his servant, to reveal the real 'verité du fait' to the group of discerning listeners who judge his testimony: he 'deschargea du tout son pauvre serviteur en nos presences, & de plusieurs autres, & principalement de deux notaires, & d'un commissaire du Chastelet'.[56] But, also, it is valuable because Perot is in the unusual position of being able to speak his history at all. Attempting suicide but being saved, Perot is almost like his fictional counterpart, Epistemon, when he spluttered back to life: he both is, in Frisch's vocabulary now, a witness of or to his own experience and able to bear witness to his servant's innocence. His medical anamnesis, his recollection of his own corporeal experience, his suicide attempt, is useful insofar as it shapes the legal judgement of his servant.

[55] Andrea Frisch, *The Invention of the Eyewitness: Witnessing and Testimony in Early Modern France* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Studies in the Romance Languages and Literature, 2004).
[56] Paré, *Les Oeuvres d'Ambroise Paré*, p. 379.

The very opening line of the case history sees Paré himself grappling with the legal complexity of his patient's attempted suicide: Perot, 'lequel par une phrenaisie & folle opinion', Paré suggests, 'la nuict se coupa la gorge d'un Cousteau'. Suicide would be an irremediable mortal sin in canon law; perhaps Paré's Protestant faith motivated him to diagnose a 'phrenaisie & folle opinion' of his patient, offering in anticipation a form of medical absolution.[57] This sense of anticipation is important: for, if we recall Paré's initial fear that Perot was all but dead, and that we only knew it was attempted suicide after Perot was sutured and spoke, we can understand that Paré only made this judgement in hindsight. He could only add this explanation when writing up, afterwards, this encounter as a case history; one that is offered as an example in his chapter on suturing, a demonstration of successful practice, bolstered by his additional narration of his own inclusion in the community of contemporary surgeons. André Jolles's has classified the 'cas' as a specific narrative form that mediates between the particular, or the individual story-event, and the generality of principle; both leading towards an example and seen to derive illustratively from it.[58] Paré's case takes on this function: it transitions from being a rare and 'memorable' history to being 'probative and exemplary' (in the words of Nancy Siraisi describing in general the function of histories in Paré's texts); it

[57] With warm thanks to Ian Maclean for his help in understanding the legal complexity of suicide in Canon Law, and its differing interpretation in the Catholic and Protestant faiths.
[58] André Jolles, *Simple Forms* (New York: Verso, 2017 [1930]). For a compelling study on the case study and how it structures thought, see Jean Claude Passeron and Jacques Revel, *Penser par cas* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2005). Although in relation to a different cultural context, the introduction to the following volume is a useful further analysis of cases and thought: Charlotte Furth, 'Thinking with Cases' in *Thinking with Cases: Specialist Knowledge in Chinese Cultural History* ed by Charlotte Furth and Judith T. Zeitlin (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), pp. 1-30.

becomes a narrative that mediates from the particular to the general or the teachable.[59]

In a medical variant of Frisch's argument, therefore, Paré also undergoes the slippage between being and bearing witness here. By offering 'phrenaisie & folle opinion' as a possible explanation, he draws our attention to the peculiar status of the medical expert witness in a legal setting: he is trusted as having the capacity to reveal, consolidate, or justify Perot's version of 'verité' in the court. Yet by reconstructing the chronology of the encounter within his history to offer this explanation, he performs his own anamnesis, bearing witness not only to his patient's experience but creating a narrative of his own surgical endeavour.

Paré's suturing has given Perot's body a voice to lay out what really happened. But Paré does not simply amplify this patient voice in his text: rather he narrativizes it to create a memorable history of his own, to both consolidate his reputation and help his future readers. This is made all the more pertinent by the very context of the attempted suicide – this is a patient that no longer wanted a voice for himself, and spoke, from beyond the grave, only to exonerate the innocent lives of others. At the beginning of this chapter, we engaged with the work of Woods on the contested testimonies of the medical encounter; Paré's medical case history is a space in which such contested testimonies collide, and influence each other. It does not display a prescriptive anamnesis of the sort that Maclean described, where the physician asks a rigid set of questions to the patient at the beginning of the medical encounter. Rather, Paré's case has helped us to think about how the practitioner and the patient's

[59] Nancy G. Siraisi, *The Clock and the Mirror: Girolamo Cardano and Renaissance Medicine* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 205.

voice, experience, and memory are – to repeat the methodological metaphor running throughout the end of this chapter – sutured together in the form of the case.

And we can, now, reflect on how Paré's suturing and speaking case history helps us to bring Rabelais's fictions back from the dead. We have seen how both Paré and Rabelais, earlier in the chapter, sutured body parts 'contre' each other to remake the body. This 'contre' gesture has helped us to think about both the medical and the narrative elements operating within each scene. Both Panurge and Paré (alongside his fellow surgeons) suggest surgical intervention that goes 'contre' the initial interpretation of the body. They are able to correct the assumptions of others because of their expertise; they know that the technology of suturing offers a way of restoring, against all odds, the dead or near-dead body. This intervention allows both Epistemon and Perot to speak 'contre' external interpretations of the scene by revealing their own personal experience. Epistemon seeks to correct how we understand the workings of the underworld and how we learn from it, while Perot speaks to correct the presumed cause of his injury. Both show a reluctance to come back to life; both voices take on an 'intermédiaire' quality in the realm of the living. For while Epistemon is trapped between the present and the past, between being witness and historian, in Rabelais's fictional text, Perot is trapped between two, if not three, cases: Paré's medical history, the legal fate of his wrongly convicted servant, and the 'truth'. He only speaks for three days; it is implied that he does then, unlike Panurge, die. Paré can only go so far in rewriting Perot's story: he can write 'contre' the erroneous legal drama unfolding but can't write 'contre' the fate of his patient; nor can he control the patient's afterlife, the further narrative which begins with public realisation of his attempted suicide.

This suturing technology allows for a new way of articulating the aim of this thesis as a counter ('contre')-discourse to the anatomical and curative encounters that currently dominate our understanding of the relation of medicine and fiction in early modern France. This chapter began by examining how Dolet made the dissected dead speak. This already invited a departure from the critical lens of Sawday on the culture of inquiry and dissection: Dolet's poems revealed an interest in the value and the status of the patient voice when it speaks for the anatomist, and when it speaks – or refuses to, or is unable to, speak – for itself. This exploration emerged as a way into thinking about anamnesis, the first temporal mode of the medical encounter in which the patient relays the history of their own experience of illness to the physician. Epistemon's trip to the underworld is renowned in Rabelais scholarship as analeptic; this chapter has shown how this episode can rather be read as an upturned anamnesis, an act of speaking only made possible by suturing, that interrogates how questions of experience, error, and expertise are reworked in Rabelais's fictional writing. The minor characters are the key players in this episode; Epistemon and Panurge introduce and encourage perspectives that not only run 'contre' to the giant protagonists, but to our expectations of anamnesis as prescriptive, and of what medical intervention can achieve.

Epistemon's anamnesis operates in a fictional hinterland; the same that allows Villon to imagine his future death, and what it would mean to speak from the scaffold; the same that Paré's case history hovers on the boundary of, as the legal and medical 'verité' of an attempted suicide is narrativized by both Perot and Paré, patient and surgeon. This intertextual 'suturing' has enabled us to think about what it means to place different sorts of texts 'contre' each other; texts from both different times and different disciplines, but which share an interest in the value of the

particularity of experience, of how to recount that experience, of how that experience becomes exemplary. Rabelais's fiction emerges, now, as a thinking ground for these sets of overlapping ideas about how the dead, the nearly dead, or the resurrected speak: this methodological suturing helps us to see how medicine does not just trickle out of its disciplinary boundary to inform literary writing, or *vice versa*, but that both disciplines drew – and still draw – interest and legitimacy from each other.

Emblematic of a bibliotherapeutic reading of Rabelais was, then, the placing of the book against the skin in the *Pantagruel* prologue, as noted in the introduction. The materiality of this gesture has been imbued with tension in this chapter, as figurative and physical seams between bodies and matter – the 'bonnet doctoral', Paré's 'cicatrices', Panurge's suturing thread – reveal the need and nature of corrective practice in a world of medical error and contingency. Rabelais's narrative has experimented with the temporality and order of anamnesis to create a fictional space in which impossible cures are possible. But this does not make his text therapeutic; rather, as our comparison with Dolet, Villon, and Paré has shown, Rabelais's texts explore what fiction can do in relation to what medicine and surgery can. His writing reanimates the dead as a sutured, speaking patient; our intertextual suturing has, then, reanimated Rabelais's text, and the questions about the force and function of fictional narrative.

We can afford a final parting word to the character whose voice has helped to shape this chapter, Epistemon. In the *Quart Livre*, Epistemon does not narrate his own near-death experience but the actual passing of Rabelais's friend, Du Bellay: 'Il m'en souvient (dist Epistemon) et encores me frissonne et tremble le cœur dedans sa capsule, quand je pense es prodiges tant divers et horrificques les quelz veismes apertement cinq et six jours avant son départ' (*Quart Livre*, ch. 27, p. 602). Cave notes

that it is following this passage that we find, 'parmi les témoins de la mort de Langey,' the name of Rabelais himself (*Quart Livre*, ch. 27, p. 602). For Du Bellay was not only Rabelais's friend but his patient; one who, unlike Epistemon through Panurge's suturing hands, Rabelais could not save. The risks of being an ineffective doctor, of being unable to cure or save the body, are all too keenly felt by the grief that is shared, here, between character and writer. In making Panurge not an inept, inert, nor garrulous anatomist but a successful suturer who can give back speech when it is lost, it is tempting to think of this *Pantagruel* episode as one of fictional possibility in which Rabelais's fears of his own practice can be rewritten.

Woods, who has emerged as an insightful interlocutor throughout this chapter, questions in a further article on narrative and medicine how illness or injury 'alters our temporal and hence narrative orientation'.[60] The thinking with hindsight that allows us to experiment with reading Du Bellay's death in parallel with Epistemon's resurrection recalls the fundamental alteration of anamnesis in this episode: having the patient, Epistemon, speak only after he has been sutured by Panurge. We can now read Woods's 'and hence' in a new way: it is by way of Panurge's suturing, and Epistemon's speaking which hence follows – both as a consequence, and afterwards – that Rabelais is able, in this episode, to put forth a new understanding of the relation between the past and its narration, between the patient and the surgeon, and between medicine and fiction.

[60] Woods, 'The Limits of Narrative', p. 73.

Chapter Two:

Diagnosis

I. Diagnosing from a Distance

> Casus huius preclariss. D[ominae] adeo difficilis cognitu mihi uidetur, ut non modo absenti, sed etiã presentibus quotidie cuncta indicia examinantibus magnã ingerere debeat perplexione.
>
> The case of this most excellent lady seems so difficult to me in terms of understanding it, that not only to the absent but even to those present and examining all these signs daily ought to bring a great deal of confusion.
>
> […]
>
> Haec sunt quae mihi in hoc brevi tempore, alioqui & publicis lectionibus, & aliis negotiis occupato, occurrere.
>
> These are the things which occurred to me in this short time, as I have been occupied to some degree by public lectures and other business.[1]

The lines above open and close the third letter of book ten of Manardi's second publication of medical letters by Sebastian Gryphius, appearing just in time for the Lyon fair of August 1532. This letter is not addressed to Rabelais, as Dolet's poems, that we examined to open the previous chapter, were; rather, they are written by Manardi in response to a junior colleague, who has sought his advice over a particularly perplexing case: a patient, named elsewhere as 'D[omina] Alphonisa', with a painfully swollen womb. Perhaps Alphonisa's (unknown to us) age is a factor

[1] Giovanni Manardi, *Epistolarum medicinalium: numquam antea in Gallia excusus* (Sebastian Gryphus: Lyon, 1532), p. 490; p.498. Manardi's letters were divided into six books, and written in 1521; after the first edition, which was reprinted in Paris in 1528 and Strasbourg in 1529, a further six books were published at Bologna in 1531 and in Lyon – the edition which I cite above – in 1532. Warm thanks to Thomas Murphy for translating the Latin into English. The orthography of the Latin has been modernised.

in why Manardi never considers that she is pregnant, yet it remains that the illegibility of the woman's reproductive organs (compounded, in any case, by the symptom of swelling) presents a diagnostic challenge that requires Manardi's intervention.

Anamnesis, the first chapter of this thesis, was about the capacity of medicine to conjure with death. Panurge reanimated rather than dissected Epistemon's dead body, letting him speak anew; attending to this resurrection as a form of reverse anamnesis allowed us to reanimate Rabelais's text, as a compensatory space of fictional possibility. Suturing as a material practice became, through my reading, an emblem for a newly figured relation between medicine and literature that goes beyond the now conventional framework of dissection and reading articulated by Sawday. Starting with Alphonisa's perplexing womb, this second chapter, Diagnosis, will explore how both bodies and Rabelais's texts are brought *into* life. It is the woman's birthing body – a term I will use to encompass women in different stages of fertility, conception, pregnancy, and childbirth – that will serve as the emblem for the problems of the next temporal stage of the medical encounter, diagnosis; for Manardi's patient, and Rabelais's old women, mothers, and midwives, require us to go beyond the sutured skin surface and attend to parts of the body that are not 'manifest[es] et apparent[es] à l'œil' (as Estienne described the radical anatomical body, in Chapter One), that swell to contain perplexing hidden interiors, that are particularly susceptible to error and so demand particular forms of expertise to diagnose.[2] Rabelais stages this diagnostic error and expertise in a range of scenes

[2] The place of women in Rabelais's texts has been subject to rigorous debate during recent decades in Rabelais scholarship. The introduction of Olivia Tolley's doctoral thesis provides an excellent overview on women in Rabelais scholarship from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present day: Olivia Tolley, *'Comment les femmes ordinairement appetent choses defendues': Writing Women into the History of Rabelais' Reception (1628-1785)* (Doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2019), pp. 1-20. I seek to contribute to these broader debates by focusing on how Rabelais's birthing bodies, and the midwives that treat them, are figured as medical objects/subjects.

across *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* in which the bodies of women and their children are 'read' by others; scenes that will, in what follows, tell us of how Rabelais's own texts came restlessly into being, as literary and medical intertexts combined to create fictional life.

We will firstly sit a little longer with Alphonisa, Manardi's recognition of her perplexity, and his attempts to advise from afar. The title of Manardi's first collection of letters, the 1525 *Epistolae medicinales, in quibus multa recentiorum errata et antiquorum decreta reserantur*, had already announced its doubled innovation: Manardi sought to continue the pioneering work of his former teacher in Ferrara, Niccolò Leoniceno, who, in the latter fifteenth century, had boldly denounced a number of errors in the natural history of Pliny, but for the first time – as the first recorded mention of 'epistolae medicinales' attests – in the form of the letter.[3] From readings of Dioscorides, Galen, and Marcellus, through polemic with colleagues over the identification and remedial properties of taxa (a kind of laurel), the 'petrose linon' (a herb), and cardamon, to patient cases (how to prognose epilepsy, how to treat painful urination, how to cure inner ear infections, among others): this second collection of Manardi's letters reveals a panoply of activity, sustained as letters were passed between – and in so doing, consolidated the community of – physicians across Europe. Maclean, writing on this new genre of medical writing, is most drawn to how Manardi's patient cases distinctively bring together the existing form of the *consilium*, in which a patient or a doctor consulted a senior practitioner and received

[3] Editions of Pliny's vast compendium, together with paratexts and commentaries, abounded in early modern Europe: see Martin Davies, 'Making Sense of Pliny in the Quattrocento', *Renaissance Studies*, 9 (1995), 240–57 for a full survey. For a compelling overview of Pliny's errors and how they shaped his reception in early modern France, see Rowan Tomlinson, ''Plusieurs choses qu'il n'avoit veuës': Antoine Du Pinet's Translation of Pliny the Elder (1562)', *Translation and Literature*, 21 (2012), 145-161.

written advice, with the circulation of rare and new cases – from medical oddity to monster – which were thriving under publishers such as Gryphius.[4]

In Chapter One, Paré's case history also staged both advice and a memorable case, both the consolidation of medical community and the particularity of Perot's resurrection as witness in his own legal drama. The facts of the case mean that both Paré and Perot were only able to recount their experiences in hindsight, reversing the expected order of anamnesis; the case enabled, therefore, a broader reflection on how to speak and write a history that fed into Rabelais's own fictional upturning of suturing and speaking in Epistemon's resurrection. To return to the citations which open this chapter, Manardi's display of *negotium* – 'Haec sunt quae mihi in hoc brevi tempore, alioqui & publicis lectionibus, & aliis negotiis occupato, occurrere' (These are the things which occurred to me in this short time, as I have been occupied to some degree by public lectures and other business) – appears to foreground how this great physician is turning over Alphonisa's perplexity in a moment snatched from his proudly productive life. To repurpose Robert Hatch's analysis of Conrad Gesner's letters – written in the wake of Eramsus's *Libellus de conscribendis epistolis*, and suggested by Hatch as spontaneous expressions of 'science in the making', recording Gesner's thoughts as if he is pondering them, in conversation – Manardi's letters reveal the second stage of the medical encounter, his diagnosis 'in the making', as he works through Alphonisa's myriad symptoms in the letter.[5] Over the course of eleven

[4] Ian Maclean, 'The Medical Republic of Letters before the Thirty Years War', *Intellectual History Review*, 18 (2008), 15-30 (p. 20). Maclean clarifies in his text that this is not to say that doctors had not been communicating by letter to a public wider than the addressee before that; manuscript publication by copying from an exemplar is well attested at this date.

[5] Robert. A. Hatch, 'Correspondence Networks', in *Encyclopedia of the Scientific Revolution from Copernicus to Newton*, ed. by W. Applebaum (New York and London: Garland, 2000), p. 168; Hatch is also cited in H. Steinke and M. Stuber, 'Medical Correspondence in Early Modern Europe: An Introduction', *Gesnerus*, 61 (2004), 139–160 (151). See also: C. Delisle, 'The Letter: Private Text or Public Place? The Mattioli–Gesner Controversy about the 'aconitum primum'', *Gesnerus*, 61 (2004), 161-176.

pages, he offers his conjectures on the cause of the swelling and explains some in more detail but not others: 'Quoniam aegritudo ipsa multis ex causis quas silentio praetereo, difficilis est' (Since the illness itself is difficult for many reasons which I pass over in silence).[6] Gestures such as these contribute to the impression of thinking on the spot, as Manardi suggests treatments that are not only recommended by Galen and Paul of Aegina, but also have been used successfully in his own previous practice.[7] He slowly relocates Alphonisa into a pattern of patients in both the classical, and his own professional, past; slowly makes her less perplexing, in what we might think of as the unfolding diagnostic present of him writing the letter.

There is a distinction, however, between this epistolary diagnostic present and the daily observation of Alphonisa's physician and attendants; a distance and a delay, as the actual encounter is paused while Manardi is consulted remotely. As Manardi reflects on how the female reproductive organs are commonly understood, this particular temporal context emerges as characterising the diagnosis of the woman's reproductive organs more broadly. Manardi writes, on the pain that attends Alphonisa's swelling:

> Quidam dolor, a sanguine illo pituitoso factus, in una ventris parte uteri cervice congregato, quem qui scripserunt, obtenebratum, et obscurum sensum vocant.
>
> [a certain] pain having been produced from that pituitous blood, blood that accumulated in one part of the belly, namely the neck [cervix of the uterus] which people whenever they have written about it call the understanding [of it] dark and obscure.

The language of secrecy abounds in the depiction of woman's reproductive organs in obstetric treatises across the sixteenth century – from the euphemistic references to

[6] Manardi, *Epistolarum medicinalium*, p. 497.
[7] Manardi, *Epistolarum medicinalium*, pp. 496-498.

privacy to describe the neck in Euchaire Rösslin's early bestseller birth treatise, first translated into French as *Des divers Travaulx* in 1536, right up to Jacques Guillemeau's (a pupil of Paré) acknowledgement in his 1609 *De l'heureux Accouchement* that a surgeon assisting birth works blindly because of the need to protect the woman's modesty as well as the nature of her anatomy. It is important that the woman's uterus 'ne soit apparente et manifeste à l'oeil', Guillemeau writes, 'au contraire, en ceste operation, tant pour la presence de ceux qui assistent, que pour la crainte que pourroit avoir la femme, lon est contrainct de cacher seulement l'entrée par laquelle il faut mettre la main'.[8] When Guillemeau repeats Estienne's same vocabulary of what is 'apparente et manifeste', it is to recognise that visual proof is not available or even possible for the interior of the living woman's body. Drawing on a sensory vocabulary to describe his contemporary's knowledge of the woman's neck of the womb as 'dark and obscure', Manardi plays into, therefore, the very way in which the object of this knowledge, the woman's body, resisted interpretation by the learned, male, medical community of sixteenth-century France; a resistance that is compounded by the anxiety, or 'la crainte', around the appropriate access to this body in the medical consultation.[9] In this way, Manardi's remote diagnosis illuminates (to draw on this

[8] Jacques Guillemeau, *De l'heureux Accouchement des femmes. Où il est traicté du gouvernement de leur grossesse. De leur travail naturel et contre nature. Du traictement es tant accouchées, et de leurs maladies* (Paris: Nicolas Buon, au mont Sainct Hilarie a l'enseigne S. Claude, 1609), fol. ei[v]. Valerie Worth-Stylianou examines this passage in terms of secrecy in: *Les Traités d'obstétrique en langue française au seuil de la modernité: bibliographie critique des "Divers travaulx" d'euchaire Rösslin (1536) à l'"Apologie de Louyse Bourgeois sage femme" (1627)*, (Geneva: Droz, 2007), pp. 82-84.

[9] Writing on menstruation in sixteenth-century France, Cathy McClive has argued that the physical examination of women in early modern medical encounters has been underestimated: while scholars may presume that a desire to remain respectable discouraged woman from allowing their bodies to be touched by male practitioners, factors such as trust in the individual practitioner and their perceived competence could override such hesitancy. Cathy McClive, *Menstruation and Procreation in Early Modern France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015). See also Wendy D. Churchill, *Female Patients in Early Modern Britain: Gender, Diagnosis, and Treatment* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

same sensory vocabulary) the already difficult negotiation of how to 'mettre [s]a main [sur]', to touch, the interior parts of the female patient's body.

Writing on romance literature, Patricia Parker examines how the 'dilated, or dilatory, space' of fictional writing 'simultaneously moves towards and delays a definite resolution or presence'.[10] Defining 'romance' as a 'mode or tendency' rather than in relation to a specific genre or period, Parker is interested in the ways in which writers make their fictional texts into a sort of 'threshold state' – whether by resisting 'naming, identity, and closing or ending', by prioritising 'half-knowledge over certainty or fact', or by having their narratives 'err' in unexpected ways.[11] Her use of the term 'dilation' is of interest to us here due to its crossover with the very medical patient we have been discussing. Alphonisa suffers from a swollen womb; as we shall see later in the chapter, with Gargamelle's pregnancy, the swollen belly becomes an uncomfortably visible or intrusive expression of the anxiety of diagnosing women for male physicians. Dilation doubles here as a physical symptom that allows us to continue our thinking in Chapter One about medical error in a new context and new conceptual framework. Furthermore, thinking about dilation introduces a new question of medical time; for it alerts us to both the temporality of diagnosis, as we have tracked through Manardi's letter with its distances and delays, and the temporality of gendered experience, as we shall see in more detail in Gargamelle's long pregnancy, in old women's (in)fertility (as Alphonisa might be subject too, here), and in the event of childbirth.

[10] Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode*, p. 14; p. 11. For Parker's further exploration of the dynamics of dilation in relation to women's bodies, see Patricia Parker, *Literary Fat Ladies: Rhetoric, Gender, Property* (London: Methuen, 1987).
[11] Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode*, p. 11; p. 5.

To consider how these three elements of dilation – narrative, medical, and temporal – might come together in this chapter, we can turn, briefly, to the ending of Gargantua's 'estrange nativité' – a birth we will examine in more detail later in this chapter. Following the birth, Rabelais's narrator instructs the reader to turn away from the narrative to consider a yet more incredible text on monstrous births:

> Mais vous seriez bien davantaige esbahys et estonnez, si je vous expousoys presentement tout le chapitre de Pline, auquel parle des enfantements estranges, et contre nature. Et toutesfoys je ne suis poinct menteur tant asseuré comme il a esté. Lisez le septiesme de sa *naturelle histoire, capi. III*, et ne m'en tabustez plus l'entendement (*Gargantua*, ch. 6, p. 22).

Pliny – whose errors framed, we have seen, the project of Manardi's letter writing – is invoked here in a further capacity: as the writer of the source text for most Renaissance marvels, the *Histoire naturelle*.[12] This text fed a growing curiosity in early modern France for marvellous bodies of all kinds; it is used here by Rabelais to turn the question of 'étrange'-ness, of what is or is not 'contre nature', into a proto-scientific and medical enquiry.[13] Alcofribas is quick to distinguish himself as more trustworthy than Pliny, and so to establish his credentials as a member of a modern medical community. But this doesn't stop him directing the reader to 'li[re]' for themselves Pliny's text, and so to sustain a critical relationship with medicine's history and its rich traditions. We can compare this strange and unnatural birth to another, briefly told by Pantagruel during the voyage of the *Quart Livre* – a text swarmed by all manners of monsters, as the all-too-grown-up giant finds himself

[12] Pliny, *Natural History, Volume II: Books 3-7* trans. by H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), pp. 526-549.
[13] Ambroise Paré, for example, also cites Pliny when writing about monstrous births in his *Monstres et prodiges*. See Ambroise Paré, *Des Monstres et prodiges,* ed. by Jean Céard (Geneva: Droz, 1971), p. 35.

navigating conflict, heresy, and disorder – to better understand the significance of this instructive 'lisez'.

Following on from the most monstrous of Rabelais's modern bodies, Quaresmeprenant – the 'estrange et monstrueuse membeure d'home', 'anatomisé et descript' by Epistemon – Pantagruel is reminded of the ancient 'forme et contenance' of the two monstrous children of Antiphysie (*Quart Livre*, ch. 32, p. 614).[14] Antiphysie, jealous of Beauté and Harmonie, the children of Physie, decided in spite to copulate with Tellumon; her two children, Amodunt and Discordance, are strange, spherical figures, with feet sprouting at the top and heads rolling the bodies around in circles from the bottom. Pantagruel's retelling of this story stages two scenes of interpretation. Firstly, he presents Antiphysie's maternal reading of her offspring: she offers a 'demonstration', Pantagruel suggests, of the ways in which her children are in fact *more* natural than Physie's, 'comme vous sçavez que es Cingesses semblent leurs petits Cinges plus beaulx que chose du monde' (*Quart Livre*, ch. 32, p. 615). And, secondly, Pantagruel himself ridicules how Antiphysie is believed only by 'tous les folz et insensez', 'desguarniz de bon jugement, et sens commun', and reinscribes in his closing sentence how the children are exemplary 'monstres difformes et contrefaicts en despit de Nature' (*Quart Livre*, ch. 32, p. 615). Antiphysie's maternal instincts cloud her judgement, and make her interpretative skills not to be trusted; Pantagruel happily reframes the story for her, demonstrating its 'real' meaning. No characters challenge his understanding of this monstrous birth,

[14] For an analysis of how this episode fits into Rabelais's broader analogical writing, see Louise Million, 'Le Tremblement de la figure analogique chez Rabelais. Entre la Bête et l'homme', *Images re-vues : histoire, anthropologie et théorie de l'art*, 6 (2009), 1-24.

as the *Quart Livre* pushes forward to the next (natural historical) monster, the Physetere.[15]

In *Gargantua*, however, the handling of maternal and narratorial authority takes on a different form. Gargamelle – who we shall see become the subject of such intense interpretation over her swollen words and body – immediately exits the text after the birth. Much as Rabelais denies here even a moment to respond to her new-born, so too does Alcofribas advocate for a disappearance of sorts: telling the potentially perplexed reader to set *Gargantua* to one side, to stop troubling him ('ne m'en tabustez plus l'entendement'), and to 'li[re]' Pliny for themselves. Rabelais has set the fictional text alongside the natural philosophical and the medical, has set Alcofribas against Pliny, only to then resist telling the reader too hastily what is erroneous and what is not in each account. Such resistance directs our attention resolutely back into the reader's world; not just to imagine their desk with Rabelais and Pliny's books set side-by-side, but to ask a question of the reader's experience of pausing, consulting, thinking, and imagining the text. Using Parker's terminology, the 'lisez' 'dilates' the readerly present, sustaining the reader in this mode of reflective, uncertain, and embodied reading.

In Chapter One, we concluded that Rabelais's consideration of medical error and expertise opened up a way of thinking about his fiction as compensatory, as a space in which the expected temporality of death and speaking could be upturned, at least for a time. In this chapter, I will suggest that these temporal elements of diagnosing birthing bodies further consolidate the value of an alternative approach

[15] For a compelling reading of the Physetere episode, and the context of Natural History in Rabelais, see Wes Williams, *Monsters and their Meanings in Early Modern Culture: Mighty Magic*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 27-75.

to Rabelais's texts that focuses on the relation between medicine, time, and fiction. Taking inspiration from Parker's writing on narrative dilation, I will consider how Rabelais employs suspensions, pauses, delays, and misnaming in his writing of the beginning of life: from considering the reworking of conception in Panurge's fable about a lion, fox, and old woman in *Pantagruel* to analysis of Gargamelle's pregnancy and labour in *Gargantua*. I am interested in how such devices reposition Rabelais's reader in relation to his text, and how this work changes how we perceive the capacity of fiction in relation to medicine from our point of conclusion in Chapter One. Worth-Stylianou, Brancher, and Holly Tucker have all carried out exceptional work on the exchanges between medical and literary discourses in early modern France, and how such interdisciplinary research allows for a real understanding of how 'a culture of birth' operated, and the ways in which the woman's body was conceived of within and beyond this culture, to emerge.[16] Instead of considering how Rabelais's texts also stage a culture of birth, I want to add to this critical conversation by examining how Rabelais's birthing bodies make us reflect back on the work of fiction in this period.

[16] Works which address the woman's body in general include: Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) and Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore, *Un Corps, un destin. La Femme dans la médecine de la Renaissance* (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 1993). Works which address single texts include: Helen King, *Midwifery, Obstetrics and the Rise of Gynaecology: The Uses of a Sixteenth-Century Compendium* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) and Monica Green, 'The Sources of Eucharius Rösslin's *Rosegarden* for Pregnant Women and Midwives (1513)', *Medical History,* 53 (2009), 167-192. Works which address specific practices include: Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski, *Not of Woman Born. Representations of Caesarean Birth in Medieval and Renaissance Culture* (Cornell University Press: New York, 1990); and the body of work on midwifery, which shall be discussed in the second part of the chapter. Works exploring the crossover of medical and literary discourse that have been most influential include: Worth-Stylianou, *Les Traités d'obstétrique*; Valerie Worth-Stylianou, 'Exchanges between Medical and Literary Discourses in the French Renaissance', pp. 290-305 and Valerie Worth-Stylianou, 'Telling Tales of Death in Childbirth: The Interface between Fiction and Medical Treatises in Early Modern France', *Women: A Cultural Review*, 17 (2006), 325-340; Holly Tucker, *Pregnant Fictions: Childbirth and the Fairy-Tale in Early Modern France* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003); Dominique Brancher, 'L'Anatomiste pornographe: narration obscène et figuration de soi dans la littérature médicale renaissante (1580-1630)', *Studies in Early Modern France*, 14 (2010), 161-188.

Finally, Rabelais does play a part in our opening epistolary story: he wrote a letter to his friend, jurisconsultant André Tiraqueau, which prefaces Manardi's published collection. If Dolet's poetry situated Rabelais in the 'cercle ludigneux', then Rabelais's participation in this second publication solidifies his position at the European forefront of medical erudition and innovation; 'un choix lourd de sens', so Jean Céard writes, with which 'Rabelais se range ouvertement parmi les modernes'.[17] His letter celebrates Manardi's expertise, but also reveals a concern with diagnostic error:

> Prionde quemadmodum naufragio pereuntibus usu uenire didicimus, ut quam siue trabem, siue uestem, siue stipulam semel discissa pessumque eunte naue arripuerint, eam consertis manibus retineant, natandi interim immemores, ac securi, modo ne quod in manibus est, excidat, donec uasto gurgite funditus hauriantur : Ad eum pene modum amores isti nostri quibus libris a pueris insueuerunt, etiam si confractam uideant et undiquaque hiantem pseudologiæ scapham, eos sic qua ui quaque iniuria retentant, ut si extundantur, animam quoque sibi e sedibus extundi putent. […] quod omnibus prope ordinibus suboleuit quosdam esse inter medicos […] Qui experimenta per mortes agunt (ut est Plinii querela uetus) a quibusque plus aliquanto periculi quam a morbis ipsis imminet.
>
> L'expérience nous enseigne que ceux qui vont périr dans un naufrage saisissent une poutre, un vêtement, ou de la paille tandis que le navire disloqué est en train de couler, et conservent cet objet dans leurs main serrées, oubliant pendant ce temps-là de nager, et se croyant en sécurité, pourvu que ce qu'ils ont dans les mains ne leur échappe pas, jusqu'au moment où l'immense abîme les engloutit dans ses profondeurs. Il en va à peu près de même pour nos braves gens : les livres auxquels ils sont accoutumés depuis leur enfance, même s'ils voient la barque de leur fausse science brisée et faisant eau de toutes parts, ils les serrent avec une violence qui leur fait tort, au point que si on les leur arrachait, ils croiraient qu'on leur arrache la aussi la vie. […] On a senti que certains hommes qui sont au nombre des médecins et qui passent pour tels […] mènent leurs expériences à force de morts

[17] Jean Céard, 'Rabelais, Tiraqueau et Manardi', in *Les grands Jours de Rabelais en Poitou* ed. by Marie-Luce Demonet (Geneva: Droz, 2006), 217-228 (p. 219). Smith draws on Céard's research in his chapter 'Correspondance et stratégie d'auteur: les lettres de François Rabelais' in *Between Scylla and Charybdis: Learned Letter Writers Navigating the Reefs of Religious and Political Controversy in Early Modern Europe* ed. by Jeanine De Landtsheer and Henk Nellen (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 69-93. In particular, he expands on this category of 'moderne'. Manardi is 'moderne' for his restoration of ancient medicine, Smith writes, 'sachant bien le grec et l'arabe. Il est un galéniste, qui n'hésite pas à critiquer Galien. Il est un médecin philologue, qui associe la théorie à l'observation directe. Tout comme Rabelais, il s'intéresse fortement à la botanique, à la diététique, à l'étude des affections. Certaines expressions médicales chez Rabelais semblent être inspirées par Manardi, et certains passages médicaux du *Tiers Livre* (l'éloge des dettes, l'épisode de Rondibilis) contiennent des échos de Manardi', p. 75n12.

> (comme Pline le déplorait jadis) et les dangers qu'ils font courir sont passablement plus grands que ceux des maladies elles-mêmes.[18]

Rabelais imagines an unruly sea, a wrecked ship, and a drowning reader as metaphors for the perils of misreading in the truly dangerous arena of practical medicine. In what follows, diagnostic errors made about and by women are part of how Rabelais imagines his reader, too, navigating the form, function, and possibility of his fictional writing.

II. Conception? Fables and Foxes

Anamnesis ended with an experiment in 'suturing' texts; we set Rabelais's fictional writing of resurrection and anamnesis alongside a possible literary intertext, Villon's poetry of articulate corpses, as well as imagining how Rabelais might work as an intertext for Paré's case history of a real event of speaking after suturing. To introduce the first temporal mode of Rabelais's birthing bodies – conception – we can go back to, and in so doing reflect on, the very conception of Rabelais's own text: *Les Grandes et inestimables cronicques: du grant et enorme geant Gargantua*.[19] This short narrative, about how Merlin created the giants Grant Gosier and Galemelle, was most likely derived from oral storytelling before being printed in 1532 as part of the *Chroniques gargantuines*.[20] Rabelais himself encourages his reader to recognise this text as an important source: he has Alcofribas present *Pantagruel* as a continuation of this text

[18] The 'Épître-dédicace du tome second des « Lettres Médicales » de Manardi', is printed in full and translated by Huchon, pp. 979-982.
[19] Huchon prints 'Les Grandes et inestimable cronicques: du grant et enorme geant Gargantua' in the appendix to *Gargantua*, pp. 154-173. Hereafter I will refer to this text as *Grandes et inestimables cronicques*.
[20] *Les Chroniques gargantuines*, ed. by Christiane Lauvergnat-Gagnière and Guy Demerson with the collaboration of Roland Antonioli (Paris: Société des Textes Français Modernes, 1988).

and reworks many of its details in the opening chapters, as only the beginning of a set of intertextual games across the 1530s.[21]

The story of Gargantua's birth in the *Grandes et inestimables cronicques* focuses on the strange circumstances of his conception. As Grant Gosier descends a mountain ahead of his wife, he turns to look back and 'prenoit plaisir à regarder' the singular 'playe de nature' between her thighs:

> Le membre lui dressa : lequel il avoit gros comme le ventre d'une cacque de haren : et long à l'advenant : il dist à Galemelle que […] de son membre feroit esprouvette pour sçavoir si la playe estoit parfonde : à laquelle playe il ne trouva nul fons : toutesfoys si bien leur agrea le jeu que ilz engendrerent Gargantua.[22]

The term 'esprouvette' first appears in Guy de Chaulic's *Guideon en Francoys* to name a 'sonde médicale', a long, thin instrument inserted into the body, to probe or to dilate. Here, Grant Gosier, playing doctor, claims his erect penis can be similarly used to better 'scavoir' his wife's wound; a medical examination that turns quickly into a 'jeu', as Galemelle's 'playe' becomes recognisable as, in fact, her vagina.[23] This sexualisation of diagnosis both obscures and reveals the female body; a pattern that Brancher seizes on in her innovative work on the anatomy theatre as a 'pornographic' space by proxy.[24] Brancher builds first on both Katherine Park's re-elaboration of Thomas Laqueur's foundational analysis of the one-sex body, which established that as the generic body in anatomical treatises was male, the female body came to be typified by her interior; she then draws on Worth-Stylianou's invaluable research on

[21] For an exploration of this text's position in the rich web of Rabelais's intertextual sources deriving from 'popular' culture, see: Neil Kenny, 'Making Sense of Intertextuality' in *The Cambridge Companion to Rabelais* ed. by John O'Brien (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 57-73.
[22] *Grandes et inestimable cronicques*, p. 158.
[23] 'Esprouvette' in the ATILF (Analyse et Traitement Informatique de la Langue Française) *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500)*. Accessed online: www.atilf.fr/dmf/ (20.06.2020).
[24] Brancher, 'L'Anatomiste pornographe', 161-188.

how early modern vernacular writers navigated a desire to elucidate female sexual anatomy while avoiding offense or obscenity.[25] The female corpse, put on display in the anatomy theatre, becomes for Brancher the object of both knowledge and desire for the writer and the reader, the medical text revealing itself to be a space of 'plaisir discursif'.[26] When physician Joubert defends his occasional use of risky terms by writing, 'aussi que le bon Homere aucunes-fois sommeille et resve, que je pensois (par aventure) parler à mes ecoliers, ainsi que je fais ès anatomies publiques', he gestures towards this crossover.[27] Making use of the commonplace derived from Horace's *Ars Poetica* (first translated into French in 1541) of even Homer's vulnerability to suffer a drowsy lapse of attention and so make a mistake, Joubert suggestively obscures his alternate motive for dissecting the female body.[28] Such a winking acknowledgement of 'error', whilst it may be related to Manardi's worried reassurances that his treatment should work, or Rabelais's lambasting of his erroneous medical contemporaries, is, in this game of male community building, distinctly different. For it is a ruse designed to reinforce a sexualisation of the female body that simultaneously pleases and binds into complicity Joubert's titillated students in the anatomy theatre and his 'ecoliers'-readers, too. Grant Gosier, playing doctor with his probing penis, is analogously twinned with not only the medical

[25] Katherine Park, *Secrets of Women: Gender, Generation, and the Origins of Human Dissection* (Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books, 2006); Worth-Stylianou, *Les Traités d'obstétrique*.
[26] Brancher, 'L'Anatomiste pornographe', p. 161. It is not only Joubert's texts which display this same discursive pleasure; see Hélène Cazes, 'Plaisir de l'anatomie, plaisir du livre: *La Dissection des parties du corps humain de Charles Estienne* (Paris, 1546)', *Cahiers de l'association internationale des études françaises*, 55 (2003), 251-274.
[27] Laurent Joubert, *Erreurs populaires* (Bordeaux: Simon Millanges, 1578), p. 14.
[28] Joubert, *Erreurs populaires*, p. 14. The original Latin is: 'indignor, quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus' (l. 359); Horace, *Ars Poetica*, ed. by Friedrich Klingner, (Los Altos, CA: Packard Humanities Institute, 1991). Accessed online: https://latin.packhum.org/loc/893/6/0#0 (20.06.2020). Brancher has also written specifically on Joubert's text: see 'Jeux de la mediation dans les *Erreurs populaires* de Laurent Joubert' in *Vulgariser la médecine*, pp. 213-243. For more on how early modern writers suggestively obscure their speech intentions, see Brancher's work on lapsus: Dominique Brancher, '"When the tongue slips it tells the truth": Tricks and Truths of the Renaissance Lapsus', *Renaissance Studies*, 30 (2016), 39-56.

confraternities to which Rabelais so clearly belonged, but also the knowing reader of the *Grandes et inestimable cronicques*.

The *Grandes et inestimable cronicques* passage, however, then moves from being ambivalently pleasurable to productive; this is a conception story, whereby Grant Gosier's 'esprouvette' and Galemelle's 'playe parfonde' both, ultimately, function as not only sexual but also reproductive organs. It is surprising, then, that Rabelais chooses to rework this narrative not in the episodes leading up to Gargamelle's unusual, even monstrous, birth of Gargantua (the aftermath of which we have briefly seen, but an episode that will be examined in detail later in the chapter); but, rather, in an animal fable, told by Panurge, concerning an old woman: the encounter of a 'vieille sempiterneuse' with a lion and a fox (*Pantagruel*, ch. 15, pp. 269-271). What remains constant between both accounts is the accidental exposure of a woman's genitalia, its misdiagnosis as a 'playe', and the sexualisation of further probing of the hidden interior of the body. Yet in Panurge's reworking this does not lead to the happy conception of a giant protagonist. Rather, the old woman disrupts the reader's expectation of how the source text plays into or becomes the text proper.

Only a few chapters after being established as Pantagruel's mischievous companion, Panurge is called on to suggest a solution to a particularly difficult political – as opposed to (at least initially) medical – problem: how to defend the city of Paris; how to strengthen its walls? Panurge immediately suggests that the walls be built out of female genitalia, so as to form a cheap and effective olfactory barricade against potential invaders. The fact that the pugnacious smell of this genitalia may detract enemies but also attract flies poses no problem: 'voicy comment l'on y remediroit', Panurge declares: 'Il fauldroit tresbien esmoucheter [les murailles] avecques belles quehues de renards' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 15, p. 269).' As a 'bel exemple'

to explain the logic of this method, he proposes a quasi-medical fable. It begins with an injured lion in the forest, suffering from an axe wound made from a 'villain charbonnier'.[29] The lion is found and treated by an accommodating carpenter, who 'regarda la playe' and fills it with 'mousse', in order to detract 'mousches', while he goes to search for yarrow to treat it properly (*Pantagruel*, ch. 15, p. 269). When a 'vieille sempiterneuse' meanwhile happens upon the wounded lion, she falls back in fright and accidentally exposes her genitals. The lion – just as Grant Gosier had done in relation to Galemelle – reads her vagina as a wound, asking 'O pauvre femme qui t'a ainsi blessée?' before extending the play with euphemism found in the *Grandes et inestimables cronicques* by referring to the woman's 'wound' as a 'comment a nom' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 15, p. 270). He calls on a nearby fox to help clean the wound and in so doing allows Rabelais to introduce a further name for the vagina, as he develops the scene of medical (mis)diagnosis:

> Quand le regnard fut venu, il luy dict : "Compere mon amy, l'on a blessé ceste bonne femme icy entre les jambes bien villainement et y a solution de continuité manifeste, regarde que la playe est grande : depuis le cul jusques au nombril mesure quatre : mais bien cinq empans et demy, c'est un coup de coignie, je me doubte que la playe soit vieille, pourtant affin que les mousches n'y prennent, esmouche la bien fort je t'en prie, et dedans et dehors, tu as bonne quehue et longue esmouche mon amy esmouche je t'en supplye, et ce pendent je voys querir de la mousse pour y mettre. Car ainsi nous fault il secourir et ayder l'un l'aultre […]" (*Pantagruel*, ch. 15, p. 270).

The conclusion of this passage that we should treat 'l'un l'aultre' the same leads one of this episode's most compelling critics, Hampton, to suggest that Rabelais is setting us up to realise the limitations of a Christian-humanist vision of the world, here, whereby the processes of knowledge acquisition and of displaying charity –

[29] For the cultural significance of the term 'villain', see Patterson's thoughtful reading of this episode in *Villainy in France,* pp. 130-134.

motivated by 'pitié' – can be drawn into conflict.[30] Yet Hampton's dismissal of the little-noticed description 'solution de continuité' as 'medical jargon', contributing to a 'kind of parody of medical diagnosis via observation', risks overlooking how communities of medical knowledge are redrawn in this fable.[31] The phrase marks a shift in register in the narrative, at once displacing the euphemistic 'comment a nom' and intensifying the *Chroniques gargantuine*'s medically measured 'playe': a 'solution de continuité', as De Chauliac notes, refers to a rupture that could happen either on the skin surface or the bone.[32] Its Latin root *solution*, meaning both 'explication' and 'dissolution, désagrégation', in fact anticipates how the lion frames his following diagnosis and then the treatment of the old woman by the fox, his medical asssistant: first, the conceptual task of resolving his understanding of the injury and its cause, and secondly, materially re-solving what he perceives of as an open 'wound'.[33] Working through these two stages will reveal how the negotiation of medical knowledge sets communities into at turns firm and fraught relation in this fable.

We can begin with the logic of the lion's (mis)diagnosis. In the epistolary diagnosis with which we opened this chapter, we saw how Manardi attempted to interpret the signs of Alphonisa's perplexity in comparison to other women that he had treated, and read about in classical case histories; how he attempted to mediate between the functioning of the 'general' body, in other words, and the particularities of the patient being he was consulting (from afar). The lion, in this fable, has just been wounded himself, and takes this first-hand experience as the 'general'; without

[30] Timothy Hampton, ''Comment a nom': Humanism and Literary Knowledge in Auerbach and Rabelais', *Representations*, 119 (2012), 37-59.
[31] Hampton, 'Humanism and Literary Knowledge in Auerbach and Rabelais', p. 47.
[32] I wrote on De Chauliac as a guide to the 'esprouvette'; he reappears now, cited by Jean Falcon, to further guide the analysis of medical terms in this chapter. Jean Falcon, *Remarques sur la Chirurgie de M. Guy de Chauliac* (Lyon: Jean Radisson, 1649), pp. 676-694.
[33] 'Solution' in Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*. Accessed online: http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3atext%3a1999.04.0059 (09.09.2021).

even stopping to probe the woman's 'playe', he immediately presumes an exact equivalence between the woman's experience and his own, that her 'playe' is also only a break on the surface and not an orifice leading to interior sexual organs. This is animated masterfully by repetition in the text, as the description of the carpenter finding the lion is mirrored in how the lion finds the old woman: the carpenter and the lion are both said to 'regarde[r] la playe'; the 'villain charbonnier' is echoed in the observation of the woman as 'blessé[e …] villainement'; the real axe used by this 'charbonnier' slips into what the lion reads as the cause of the woman's wound, the 'coup de coignée'. The linguistic slippage which reflects the lion seeing double between his body and the woman's turns into an epistemological slippage as the lion diagnoses that the cause of the woman's 'playe', 'la coignée', takes the same figurative form as the fox's 'queue', another stock term for the male member; the cause thus calling forth the cure.[34]

The lion is, then, able to do what Manardi in the epistolary consultation couldn't: touch the affected part of the woman's body. He measures the size of the wound in relation to his own paws, with the term 'empans' referring to the width of a hand, from thumb to stretched-out little finger. He even corrects himself as he goes ('quatre: mais bien cinq empans et demy'), as if demonstrating for ecoliers watching his diagnosis. Yet this contact doesn't map neatly onto the diagnosis 'in the making' that Manardi's letter showed; coming, instead, after he has completed his diagnosis, his tactile measurement recalls more closely the performance of expertise – at the female body's expense – in Joubert's anatomy theatre. For even if the reader by now

[34] Alanna Skuse explores the prevalence of 'cause calling forth the cure' remedies specifically connected to animals and meat; a fascinating overlap with this chapter which could be explored further. See: Alanna Skuse, *Constructions of Cancer in Early Modern England: Ravenous Natures* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 63-64.

knows that the lion's conclusion from his observation is wrong – 'je me doubte que la playe soit vieille', he announces, misplacing wound, womanhood, and what is 'vieille' – the lion's performance of a successful diagnosis ultimately tells the reader about how he intends to relate to the ecolier-fox, who he addresses as 'Compere mon amy'. Urquhart translates 'compere' as 'gossip', reflecting how the early modern understanding of gossips was linked more broadly to companionship and friendship; fourteenth- and fifteenth-century usage suggests 'celui qui est lié à quelqu'un par des rapports d'entente, d'amitié, compagnon', while Cotgrave's dictionary records both 'gossip' and 'friend' as definitions for 'compere'.[35] Emily Butterworth has written authoritatively on the perception of the early modern female gossip as a subversive political force, women's cunning speech leaking from confined, private spaces into a public sphere reserved for men.[36] Here, however, the lion embeds himself and the fox into a shared, friendly, masculine medical community, just as Joubert cultivated a complicit relationship with his sniggering students. This community displaces women as agents as they are turned into patients in the diagnostic encounter.

The lion presumed that the woman was wounded in the same way as he was; he presumes, too, that he can recreate the cure that he received from the 'charpentier' in order to resolve this wound. And yet, in having the lion ask the fox to diligently 'esmouch[er]' the old woman's 'wound' with his tail, Rabelais, as we shall see, challenges both the obscuring of the woman's particularity and her isolation from this shared masculine medical community. Rabelais's readers might recognise in the

[35] Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Accessed online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1200/1200-h/1200-h.ht (20.06.2020); 'Compere' in the ATILF (Analyse et Traitement Informatique de la Langue Française) *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500)*. Accessed online: www.atilf.fr/dmf/ (20.06.2020); 'Compere' in Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*. Accessed online: http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/832smallsmall.html (19.12.2022).
[36] Emily Butterworth, *The Unbridled Tongue: Babble and Gossip in Renaissance France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 59-80 and 172-197.

fox's furiously wiping tail (encouraged by the lion's increasingly frenzied instructions, 'esmouche seulement, esmouche et rien plus') a stand-in for or reworking of Grant Gosier's probing penis. The fox's gesture is, in truth, the inverse of Grant Gosier's; its purpose is to treat rather than to diagnose, yet, despite this, the old woman's response leads to a clarifying discovery:

> Mais la faulse vieille vesnoit et vessoit puant comme cent diables.
>
> Le pauvre regnard estoit bien mal à son ayse : car il ne sçavoit de quel cousté se virer : pour evader le parfun des vesses de la vieille : et ainsi qu'il se tournoit il veit que au derriere estoit encores un aultre pertuys, non si grand que celluy qu'il esmouchoit, dont luy venoit ce vent tant puant et infect (*Pantagruel,* ch. 15, pp. 270-271).

This woman farts, and this olfactory externalisation of what was for Galemelle the unknown interior forces the fox into turning away from the assumptions and instructions of the lion and, finally, noticing the *real* particularity of the woman's body in relation to the man's: that the woman has two orifices, the vagina and the 'puant et infect' anus.

Françoise Charpentier credibly locates the significance of the old woman's farting response in its obscenity: the 'secrete horreur du sexe féminin' reveals 'un état infantile de la sexualité, où la scatologique se mele étroitement au sexuel', she suggests, bringing a shadow of what Charpentier identifies as a Freudian fear of castration and punishment over the narrative.[37] Olivia Tolley is interested in the sensory dimension of Rabelais's description: the repeated sounds of 'vesnoit et vessoit', she uncovers, suggest an association between farting and sexual pleasure that reappears across early modern literature. The description of the woman as a 'faulse vieille' is Rabelais's winking acknowledgement, for Tolley, of the woman's

[37] Françoise Charpentier, 'Le Lion, la vieille et le renard: Rabelais et l'obscène', *Europe*, 757 (1992), 80-91 (p. 88).

sexual appetite, one that, even if not in a Freudian sense, is abhorrent for the animal characters.[38] Tolley translates, against the grain of scholarship on this encounter as a violation, the woman's sexual pleasure as an indication of her agency; although brought about inadvertently from the fox's perspective, it was for Tolley 'exactly what she went out looking for when she stepped into the woods'.[39]

In the *Grandes et inestimable cronicques*, the medical diagnosis turned into a 'jeu' that led to the conception of Gargantua. We examined how the sexualisation of this medical encounter granted Galemelle little agency when read in the context of Joubert's dissected female bodies in the 'pornographic', as Brancher suggests, space of the anatomy theatre. In an earlier draft of this chapter, I had referred to Galemelle as a 'silent medical patient' in contrast to the farting (old) woman in order to suggest that Rabelais wants his reader to reconsider, here, how women might be made into medical objects in the course of diagnosis as well as dissection. What, on reflection, I am interested in here is how Rabelais's reworking of this story to make his woman fart makes us reflect on the very construction of knowledge about the woman in this encounter; how, in other words, the woman as patient plays a role in her own diagnosis, and how this perspective is encouraged or elided in the text. This entails a reframing of this section of the text's origins; for Rabelais not only reworks the *Grandes et inestimables cronicques* in this passage, but also the generic expectations of the fable, presented here by Panurge to function as a 'bel exemple' to solve the quandary over Paris's city walls. This, in turn, can help us to reframe the (old) woman's agency, and the fart as a symbol or expression of that, in this scene.

[38] Tolley, *Writing Women into the History of Rabelais' Reception (1628-1785)*, pp. 115-118.
[39] Tolley, *Writing Women into the History of Rabelais' Reception (1628-1785)*, p. 118.

Panurge's opening line – that the fable takes place 'Au temps que les bestes parloyent (il n'y a pas troys jours)' – can be illuminated by a reading of 'La quatre fable de l'asne et de la peau du lyon' from *Les Subtilles fables de Ésope*, printed at least six times in Lyon from the 1480s onwards (including by Claude Nourry, the publisher who printed *Pantagruel*).[40] The 1499 edition of *Les Subtilles fables de Ésope* records the fable as follows:

> Nul ne doit glorifier des biens d'aultruy comme il apport d'ung asne qui trouva la peau d'ung lyon & la vestit: mais il ne se peust si bien abiller qu'il ne monstrast les oreilles: & quant il fut habillé il s'enfoyt au boys: & quant le bestes sauvages le virent, commencerent a fouyr, cuidant que ce fust le lyon & le maistre de l'asne le cerchoit par tous lieux: et quant il l'eut bien cerché il s'en alla au bois pour veoir s'il le trouveroit: & incontinent qu'il fut au bois il le rencontra ainsi habillé qu'il estoit: c'est assavoir d'une peau de lyon: mais il le congneut bien par ses grandes oreilles. & lors il le prist & luy dist: "Ha, Maistre Asne es-tu vestu de la peau lyon? Tu fais paour es bestes sauvages: mais se elles te congnoissoyent aussi bien comme moy elles n'auroyent poit paour de toy: maus ie te promectz que tu en seras bien froté." Adonc luy despouilla la peau du lyon & puis print ung baston & le bastit tant que toute la vie luy en souvint. Et pour ce il n'est pas honneste de soy vestir des robes d'autruy: ne de faire d'autruy cuir large couroye.[41]

This fable is a tale of deception and presumption hinging on the materiality of the skin, and whether it can hide one's true nature. The donkey's ears, peeking out of the lion skin and so betraying its deception, propel the reader towards the one-line flourish, the single instructive instance, that closes the fable. This appears to fit neatly into Kenny's compelling research on 'curiosity' as manifested either as a process of accumulating fragments within a literal or metaphorical space (such as the curiosity cabinet) or as a passion, vice, or virtue situated in a temporal, teleological chain of

[40] Romain Menini and Olivier Pédeflous, ''Æsope le François'. Autour de dix-sept fables éditées par Rabelais (1534)' in *Séductions de la fable, d'Ésope à La Fontaine*, ed. by Frédéric Calas (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2014), pp. 193-221.

[41] Ésope, *Les subtilles Fables de Ésope, avec celles de Avien, de Alfonce et de Poge, florentin, avec pluseurs beaulx ditz mouraulx. [Avec la Vie d'Ésope. Traduit du Latin par frère Julien, des Augustins de Lyon]* (Lyon: Pierre Mareschal et Barnabé Chaussard, 1499), p. 126. Accessed online: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k70105d/f7.item.r=Les%20subtilles%20fables%20de%20Esope (04.01.2022). Transcribed with generous help from Kaitlin Sager, Tulane University.

actions. Here, we have a desire for knowledge controlled and circulated as a narrativized, teleological conclusion.[42] Yet the visible ears also work as a material reminder that these beasts have not totally suspended their animality; we, as readers, are not tricked into thinking that each animal could *really* portray a trait or skin different to how we learn to read them (the fox always cunning, the lion always brave, the wolf always big and bad).[43] These animals ultimately live in a world, in the words of Annabel Patterson writing on their political import, that is a 'flexible and constantly renewable system of metaphorical substitutions for actual events that can, but need not, be recognised as such'.[44] The force of the anticipated, teleological end within the fable only works, then, in conjunction with the genre's ability to be repeated, endlessly, and adapted according to allegorical demand.

The opening of Panurge's fable asks a question, however, of how this exemplarity works. In saying that 'Au temps que les bestes parloyent (il n'y a pas troys jours), un pauvre Lyon […]' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 15, p. 269), Panurge establishes the expected temporal framework of the fable's action, its repeatable present, only to immediately situate it in the recent past. The parenthesis unravels the fable logic, releasing the animals from their obligation to repeat the universal actions of their typecasts. In so doing, it disrupts how we expect knowledge to be produced,

[42] Neil Kenny, *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 1-25. See also pp. 328-332 for a compelling discussion on curiosity-as-narrating in relation to *Exempla*.
[43] In her study on animals in Shakespeare, Laurie Shannon explores startling moments where the beast's animality does irrupt on the page: Laurie Shannon, *The Accommodated Animal: Cosmopolity in Shakespearean Locales* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 73.
[44]Annabel M. Patterson, *Fables of Power: Aesopian Writing and Political History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 51. For more on the reception of Aesop in Europe, see Jill Mann, *From Aesop to Reynard: Beast Literature in Medieval Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 28-53.

controlled, and circulated by way of the fable form; warning from the outset against the hope of a single instructive instance that can be universally applied.

It is within this context that we can think through the significance of the old woman's fart as a moment in which a double diagnosis and misdiagnosis is made; a moment in which the fox recognises that the body he treats is different to what he expected, but still cannot recognise that she is not wounded after all, but a woman. On the one hand, the 'diagnosis', from the fox's perspective, demonstrates the different modes of medical touch at play in this episode. The lion had misplaced assumptions concerning her wound; he set about measuring it, but insisted on examining only the surface of her body. The fox, however – who now insists on the lion as still his 'compere', but repeats the 'je te prie' instructive formula as if to now suggest better practice to his medical companion – has been able to make a 'new' discovery by attending to the sensory signs of the interior of her body. Rather than merely repeating an expected action, the fox has been able to acknowledge the particularity of the body in his present, set by Panurge not as the fable-time but only three days hence. Turning to the 'compere lyon', '[s]on amy', the fox says, '« je te prie ne metz icy toute la mousse, gardes en quelque peu, car y a encores icy dessoubz un aultre petit pertuys »' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 15, p. 271).

On the other hand, the woman's fart can help us understand the element of misdiagnosis at play here, too. Tolley read Rabelais's description of her as a 'faulse vieille' as purely about sexual pleasure, without considering that her fertility, her ability to conceive from this medical 'jeu' may also be under question here. In reality, early modern physicians encouraged women hoping to conceive to eat foods likely

to produce heat and flatulence, both commonly believed to favour conception.[45] Rabelais brings the medical context of the *Grandes et inestimables cronicques* into focus, therefore, only to simultaneously obscure it, as if to make the woman into simultaneously an old woman and a potential mother, her fart simultaneously a sign of sexual pleasure beyond the menopause and of imminent conception.

For Rabelais has both the fox and the woman act against their archetypes here; his refutation of the fable's repeatability has not translated into a neat, linear or anticipated end, a curiosity for medical knowledge straightforwardly narrated. Indeed, the force of Kenny's argument on temporal curiosity comes from his exploration of how a chain of cause and effect can find itself pushed and pulled in different directions by different forms of narrative: fictional narrative's specific usefulness, he contends, lies 'not in the way in which it subordinated particulars to universals, making the former illustrate the latter, but also in its capacity sometimes to make particulars exceed or even resist universal definitions'.[46] It is exactly this exceeding or resisting function which has played out in Panurge's fable, as the particularity of the (old) woman's body and of the fox's diagnostic present cuts loose the fable from a straightforwardly exemplary function. Rabelais's fictional writing in the last chapter, Anamnesis, created a compensatory space, a narrative in which what seemed medically impossible was made possible, for a while; here, a conception story is turned into a question of how to diagnose, of how to definitively know, a woman's body, with the work of fiction being Rabelais's experimentation with both the source text, the *Grandes et inestimables cronicques,* and the form of the fable.

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[45] For example, see: Louis de Serres, *Discours de la nature, causes, signes, et curation des empeschemens de la conception, et de la sterilité des femmes. Mis en Lumiere en faveur des jeunes Dames, ausquelles Dieu ne donne point d'enfans ez premieres années de leur mariage* (Lyon: Antoine Chard, 1625), p. 155. We will return to this text shortly.

[46] Kenny, *The Uses of Curiosity in Early Modern France and Germany,* p. 324.

Panurge's conclusion to the narration of this 'bel exemple' marks an abrupt re-entry into the narrative proper: 'Ainsi fauldroit garder ces murailles des mousches et mettre esmoucheteurs à gaiges' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 15, p. 271). Pantagruel, by way of response, queries only the price of female genitalia; he cheerfully accepts Panurge's proposition, refers to him as his 'gentil compaignon' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 15, p. 271), gives him his renowned codpiece, and accepts him into the court. The shift in vocabulary from the more ambiguous use of 'compere' within Panurge's fable to describe the relation between the lion and the fox to 'gentil compaignon' to define Panurge and Pantagruel's relationship is important; 'gentil' might suggest nobility, where early modern uses of 'compaignon' can indicate an equality of professional activity or rank (as when used in terms of 'un office, une charge, un métier, une profession, une activité).[47] As a differently accented social marker, 'gentil compaignon' therefore serves as a sign of Panurge's acceptance or belonging into the homosocial group of the court, as if a revalorisation of Panurge and Pantagruel's masculine community were necessary following the threat of the (old) woman and her refusal to be pinned down. What this means is that Rabelais chooses his moment of fictional experimentation to happen in a suspension from the main narrative. In other words, he suspends the text to allow for a concurrent fictional world, populated by an (old) woman who introduces the possibility of medical half-knowing and error, to emerge.

We move now into the next part of this chapter: from conception to birth, from possibly old women to new mothers, and in so doing, from Panurge as a central figure (the fable's narrator) to the bodies of the giants and how their narrative beginnings are shaped by alternative female medical community (and a gossipy one

[47] 'Gentil' and 'Compaignon' in the ATILF (Analyse et Traitement Informatique de la Langue Française) *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500)*. Accessed online: www.atilf.fr/dmf/ (07.09.2022).

at that): that of Gargantua and Pantagruel's midwives. We make a shift in our intertextual tools too, to make sense of how this next stage of mothering is made medical in Rabelais's text. For, as we shall see, alternative forms of suspension modulate how we understand the relation between diagnosis and fictional writing in terms of pregnancy and birth; Rabelais will not pause the text to make way for a source text reworked as a fable, but he does experiment with making his embodied reader pause to consider their own position in relation to the text. It is instructive texts that will help us to make sense of this new focus; 'how-to' medical texts, dictionaries, and recipe-books.

III. Pregnancy: Swelling Balls and Bellies

The birthing scenes of *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* are compared most often in terms of their environmental context; they are scenes of respective drought and plenty, in which the new-born baby appears as an allegorized response – seen most clearly, perhaps, in Pantagruel's name ('panta' meaning 'all', and 'gruel' meaning 'thirsty', in Greek).[48] What risks being overlooked in such readings, however, is the fact that animating both of these scenes are narratives of swelling bodies, bodies that recall Alphonisa, the subject of Manardi's letter. The men in *Pantagruel* have sexual organs which expand upon gorging on a bumper crop of medlars, whereas the sole female giant of *Gargantua* has the growing baby inside her mistaken for 'belle matiere fecale' (*Gargantua*, ch. 4, p. 17). Focusing on swelling bodies, and unravelling the contrast between those of different genders, will help us to locate the particularity of the

[48] See, for example: Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, pp. 368-437.

woman's body in pregnancy, and the significance of its diagnostic challenge for understanding Rabelais's fictional writing.

Describing the 'enfleure tres horrible' caused by the over-eating of medlars, the opening chapter of *Pantagruel*, 'De l'origine et antiquité du grand Pantagruel', lingers on the swelling of the male sexual organs as follows:

> Les aultres enfloyent en longueur par le membre, qu'on nomme le laboureur de nature : en sorte qu'ilz le avoyent merveilleusement long, grand, gras, gros, vert, et acresté, à la mode antique, si bien qu'ilz s'en servoyent de ceinture, le redoublans à cinq ou à six foys par le corps. […] Et d'yceulx est perdue la race, ainsi comme disent les femmes. Car elles lamentent continuellement, qu'*il n'en est plus de ces gros* etc. Vous sçavez la reste de la chanson (*Pantagruel*, ch. 1, pp. 218-219).

Readers may know the rest of the song; they also know the tune to which Rabelais sings when he transforms the swollen penis into an instrument ploughing the fields; as Sainéan notes, 'l'agriculture, dès la plus haute antiquité, a été féconde en termes de comparaison érotique […] De là les métaphores tirées des notions labourer et champ'.[49] The value of this slippage between the agricultural and the corporeal (named as such: 'qu'on nomme le laboureur de nature') is troubled, however, by reading this passage alongside the proverb in the opening pages of Erasmus's *Lingua*: '*ubi mel, ibi fel, ubi uber, ibi tuber'* (where there's honey, there's poison, where there's abundance, there's cancer).[50] For Erasmus, the unheeding fertility of language can tip into monstrous and garbled expression if not properly controlled; we have a hint of his unruly tongue in Rabelais's passage by the 'continuellement' lamenting voice of women, silenced in the text by the use of 'etc' (an unruly set of voices which we have seen gestured to by the use of 'compere' in Panurge's fable and to which we will

[49] Sainéan, *La Langue de Rabelais*, pp. 302-3.
[50] Desiderius Erasmus Roterdamus, *Opera omnia*, Vol. IV-I, ed. by O. Herding and F. Schalk (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing Co., 1974), pp. 239-40. Also cited in Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 188.

return with the appearance of Gargantua's midwives).[51] Erasmus demonstrates this potential unruliness not by following the linguistic movement from the body to the agricultural metaphor, but rather by doing the inverse: he moves from the example of honey and poison to the more forceful, even monstrous, image of the swelling of a body riddled with cancer. Searching for means to describe the endowment of the penis that makes the women sing, Rabelais's narrator here also moves away from the agricultural to nuance the superiority of the swelling: he displaces the commonplace 'laboureur de nature' image with one of the penis as a belt wrapping around the body. He transforms the penis into a useful, prosthetic appendage, yet, in doing so, reveals the emptiness, the solely figurative import, of that agricultural image in the first place; he performs what Cave, referring to other moments in Rabelais's texts, calls a 'generative movement [depending] on its fictionality', an inverse movement towards absence, an emptying out.[52]

The swelling penis is then followed by three swelling testicles. First explaining the abundance of medlars in a parody of the biblical fratricide story, Rabelais writes:

> […] peu aprés que Abel fust occis par son frere Cain, la terre embue du sang du juste fut certaine année si tresfertile en tous fruictz qui de ses flans nous sont produytz et singulierement en Mesles, que on l'appella de toute memoire, l'année des grosses Mesles : car les troys en faisoyent le boysseau (*Pantagruel*, ch. 1, p. 217).

Rabelais then repeats a description of a trio fitting into a container:

> Aultres croissoient en matiere de couilles si enormement, que les troys emplissoient bien un muy (*Pantagruel*, ch. 1, p. 219).

[51] The specific use of 'etc' to silence voices in the text will be re-examined in the analysis of the pilgrims episode in *Gargantua*, in Chapter Four, Cure.
[52] Cave, *The Cornucopian Text*, p. 187.

It is not just the repetition of three items filling up a container that prompts us to connect the 'Mesles' and the 'couilles'; this is already anticipated, as the shape and form of the medlar fruit made it a gift for early modern writers playing around with the twinning of agricultural and sexual metaphors we have been exploring, Cotgrave adding 'open arse' to his dictionary definitions in a winking reference to the dipped centre at the top of the round fruit.[53] But, just as the displacement of the imagery of the swollen penis asked us to think about this figurative import in a new way, so does Rabelais's use of repetition shift our attention to the materiality of the fruit itself: using the medlars as a reference point of size comparison now serves to divert our attention from its status as sexual innuendo and prompts us to take more seriously its physical form.

This heightened insistence on materiality goes beyond shape and size, as the medlar's particularity comes from its rotted state: after picking the fruit, you must wait for it to soften, a process known as bletting, before it can be eaten. 'Take Medlars that be rotten', the sixteenth-century *Good Huswifes Handmaid for the Kitchen* instructs, 'and straine them then sette them on a chafingdish of coales'; another means of eating would be to peel open just the tip of the fruit and then push out the squidgy, rotted insides.[54] Invoking a fruit to be eaten when rotten feels satisfyingly 'Rabelaisian'; in the chaos of fratricide, where blood permeates the earth as a morbid fertiliser, the

[53] 'Mesle' in Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*. Accessed online: www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/ (20.06.2020). In Mercutio's taunting remarks to Shakespeare's love-sick Romeo we find a further example of the medlar acting as a metaphor for female sexuality: 'Now will he sit under a medlar tree/ And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit/ As maids call medlars when they laugh alone./ Ah Romeo, that she were, ah that she were/ An open etc, thou a popp'rin' pear.' William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. by Jill L. Levenson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), II. 1. 34-38. Medlars are discussed in Kitzie McKinney, 'Diversions of Transformation in *Pantagruel*'s Medlar Myth', *The French Review*, 59 (1986), 546-552.

[54] Cited in a recipe, 'To Make a Tarte of Medlars', in Robert W. Allen and Ken Albala, *Food in Early Modern Europe* (London: Greenwood Press, 2003), p. 51. The recipe-book is a genre with the same instructive or 'how-to' function as the medical treatises and the dictionaries explored throughout this section of the chapter; I examine further this epistemic form in Chapter Four, Cure.

medlars allow Rabelais to problematise even further the honey/poison, *'uber'/'tuber'* dualities. But, not only this: the medlars make the interpretative task into a temporal one. By choosing a fruit that demands an anticipation of the correct moment of eating, Rabelais is concerned with how the attention of the reader is implicated and manipulated over time, and in what ways that sense of 'ripeness' impacts a reading of his text. This has already been borne out in this passage, as the reader glances back and forth, reads and rereads, when they notice the repetition of threes, searching for order in the fratricidal chaos. Our agricultural metaphor started off with 'le laboureur de nature'; ploughing work that we saw dissipate as a Cave-inspired reading asked us to think about swelling as a filling up versus emptying out movement. Attention to the materiality of the medlars, however, has redirected our focus from Cave's formative interpretative framework to the labouring of the reader. Panurge's reframing of the fable's time allowed us to read its exemplary function differently; it is the temporality of reading that we will now take forward as we turn to Gargamelle's pregnancy and her labour.

Gargamelle's body is pushed to the very limits of what was thought possible for pregnancy among Rabelais's contemporaries, her eleven-month gestation gesturing towards a subject of significant medical and legal debate.[55] It is how this extended pregnancy repeats the temporality of the medlars – delay, anticipation, intervention – however, that will form the crux of our reading of the work of diagnosis here. It is a temporal dynamic that is immediately teased by the text: the narrator announces that 'L'occasion et maniere comment Gargamelle enfanta fut telle', before

[55] For the most extensive explanation of this eleven-month pregnancy, see: M. A. Screech, 'Eleven-month Pregnancies: A Legal and Medical Quarrel A Propos of *Gargantua*, Chapter Three: Rabelais, Alciata and Tiraqueau', *ÉR,* 8 (1969), 93-106.

pausing to tease his reader even further with a series of displacements that delay his explanation. The first of these plays out as follows:

> Et si ne le croyez, le fondement vous escappe. Le fondement luy escappoit une apresdinée le III. jour de febvrier, par trop avoir mangé de gaudebillaux. Gaudebillaux : sont grasses tripes de coiraux. Coiraux : sont beufz engressez à la creche et prez guimaulx. Prez guimaulx : sont qui portent herbe deux fois l'an (*Gargantua*, ch. 4, p. 16).

Thomas Elyot's 1538 Latin-English dictionary entry for the root *fundo* connects 'fondement' to the agricultural metaphors that have permeated the text as metaphors of sexual organs and of interpretative work so far (labouring and eating the fruits of those labours): it indicates 'founde, make stable', illustrated by its closeness to 'fundus' as 'that whyche is used to be callyd lande or soyle'.[56] We saw the agricultural allusion lose its import for the male bodies above as they swelled and protruded outwards, prompting a confrontation with a cornucopian emptiness: here, a shift from the agricultural to the animal complicates a similar reading. It feels as if Rabelais is enjoying himself with the 'tripe de coiraux': tripe is the edible stomach of a cow or other ruminant widely eaten in early modern Europe. Gargamelle's fundament, then, is her guttural insides, filled with the insides of an animal, the meaning of which unfurls by means of delving further inside the final word of each explicatory sentence ('par trop avoir mangé de gaudebillaux. Gaudebillaux : sont grasses tripes de coiraux. Coiraux : sont beufz engressez à la creche et prez guimaulx. Prez guimaulx : […]'); all acting as a displacement of the real 'inside' we want and expect to see, the baby. The prolapse is an emptying out of the female body, therefore, but one that at each

[56] Cited in: Jeffrey Masten, 'Is the Fundament a Grave?' in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 135.

stage, materially and linguistically, loops us back round to unsettle our grasp on exactly what is emptying out.

We can begin to pinpoint this slippery grasp when the narrator lingers over Gargamelle's overindulgence of the tripes at the end of the chapter. 'O belle matiere fecale que doivent boursouffler en elle' (*Gargantua*, ch. 4, p. 17), he seems to gush; the attentive reader would recognise not only a shift from 'fundament' to 'matiere fecale', but more importantly one from male bodies that 'enfle[nt]' in the opening pages of *Pantagruel* to a female body imagined as 'boursoufflée', still inflated but, this time, possibly puffed up with wind. The old woman in Panurge's fable gave us a farting female body that defied her diagnosers' expectations; here, it is the possibility of wind trapped inside that introduces the risk of diagnostic error. An anxiety over mis-interpreting the woman's pregnancy is evident among early modern physicians, in part motivated by what Worth-Stylianou sees as a fascination extending from that of monstrous births with molar pregnancies, a rare abnormality in which a placental tissue grows in the absence of any foetus or with only the development of a malformed, non-viable foetus. In his 1573 text on conception, Paré – whom we encountered in Chapter One – for example, laments the mistakes of 'quelques medicins' who insisted on a diagnosis of oedema ('hidropique', swelling caused by excess fluid) when in fact the woman suffered from a molar pregnancy; 'Si bien que quelques medecins voiant les mois passés de sa grossesse, l'ont traictée comme hidropique, toutefois n'ont sceu rien gaigner sur l'enfleure de son ventre, et demeure toujours en un mesme estat.'[57] Louis de Serres's 1625 *Stérilité et faux accouchements* represents the culmination of the sixteenth-century understanding on false

[57] Ambroise Paré, *Deux Livres de chirurgie. 1. De la generation de l'homme, et maniere d'extraire les enfans hors du ventre de la mere, ensemble ce qu'il faut faire pour la faire mieux, et plus tost accoucher, avec la cure de plusieurs maladies qui luy peuvent survenir* (Paris: André Wechel, 1573), p. 191.

pregnancies, including a case of a 'boursoufflé' bump. We have noted the perception in early modern obstetrics that foods producing heat and flatulence could favour conception; De Serres records how these foods can, deceptively, produce symptoms resembling labour:

> Mais qu'en arriva-il ? Certes les neuf moys estans expirez, ladite Damoyselle ne fit que du vent pour tout potage et tomba en une grande maladie de laquelle elle cuida mourir ; et ce pour n'avoir usé que de choses fort chaudes et venteuses durant la grossesse imaginaire par l'ordonnance dudit Medecin, lequel fut grandement blasmé d'avoir entreprins un peu trop legerement la guerison d'une telle sterilité avant que l'avoir bien cogneue.[58]

While both of these accounts square blame with the inept surgeons who ultimately misread their patient's body, they present pregnancy as a condition that resists sound interpretation. An assured pregnancy can morph into water retention, a foetus into a bout of gas or lump of flesh, before their colleague's eyes.[59] But they also expose the role of the woman who, it was expected, should recognise in the moment of conception that she is pregnant and report on her experience to others. Physicians relied, therefore, on the woman to first be able to correctly interpret their own bodies, and then to truthfully relay this to make a successful diagnostic encounter. This expectation leaves just a hint of mistrust; the woman could purposefully deceive her physician, absolving them of all blame for a misdiagnosis.

Rabelais's use of 'boursouffler' is accented unusually, however, towards the end of this scene, recalling the ambivalent connection between conception and pleasure that we saw in the (old) woman in Panurge's fable. As early as the fourteenth century, this verb was being used figuratively to mean 'gonflé (de vanité, d'orgueil,

[58] De Serres, *Discours de la nature, causes, signes, et curation des empeschemens de la conception, et de la sterilité des femmes*, p. 155.
[59] Sara Luttfring, *Bodies, Speech, and Reproductive Knowledge in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 85.

de colère…)'.[60] It seems to be no accident that Rabelais follows Gargamelle's indeterminately puffed-up belly with, two chapters later, her puffed up words. Ruminating on the upcoming pain and discomfort of birth, she jokingly desires to castrate Grandgousier for getting her into this mess. Yet Grandgousier responds by immediately fetching a knife, and an interpretative game follows: Gargamelle gently suggests to her husband that 'vous estes bon homme, vous l'entendez bien', before clarifying her intentions and seeking to moderate his response: '[je] ne le dis de bon cueur : et pour ma parole n'en faictes ne plus ne moins' (*Gargantua*, ch. 6, p. 21). It is not only Gargamelle's swollen body which is tricky to interpret, but also her speech; her words are pregnant, now, less with pride or anger and more with the playfulness of her joke, with a hidden humour that Grandgousier either struggles to understand or is, indeed, running with in a rare example of legitimate marital (as opposed to adulterous) sexual play. On a first reading, this overlap of swollen bodies and swollen words could be seen as humiliating Grandgousier and consolidating a male anxiety over the interpretation of the pregnant woman's body, a sign of how far we have come from Grant Gosier playing doctor with Galemelle's 'playe'. Yet this mutual play, directed by Gargamelle as soon-to-be-mother *and* sexual partner, rather consolidates the interpretative challenge of women in Rabelais's fictions; one that is continued as we now turn to the birth itself.

[60] 'Boursoufler' in the ATILF (Analyse et Traitement Informatique de la Langue Française) *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500)*. Accessed online: www.atilf.fr/dmf/ (20.06.2020).

IV. Birth: 'Penser' the Body

The 'soubdain' arrival of midwives on the scene at first appears to reinscribe an anxious mistrust of women. 'Et la tastant par le bas', these midwives 'trouverent quelques pellauderies, assez de maulvais goust, et pensoient que ce feust l'enfant, mais', Alcofribas interjects, 'c'estoit le fondement qui luy escappoit […] par trop avoir mangé des tripes' (*Gargantua*, ch. 6, p. 21). Rabelais turns over the expectation of blame: here is not a false pregnancy, mistaken because of the female body's illegibility or the woman's ability to know herself, but a real pregnancy that the midwives are initially incapable of diagnosing correctly, as they mistake the 'pellauderies' for the 'enfant'. Critical readers of Rabelais's midwives seize Alcofribas's interrupting, clarifying voice as a re-inscription of the gendered policing of bodies, and of the boundaries of medical knowledge, that we saw established in *Pantagruel* by the 'compere' lion and fox, and the companionly Pantagruel and Panurge.[61]

Such a reading would risk reinscribing the dissection scene as a mode of conceptualising the relation between medicine and fiction in this passage, however. For it suggests that Rabelais transfers these collegiate relationships onto Alcofribas and the reader, as if we are the imagined 'ecolier' in the lecture theatre, watching an 'anatomie publique' play out before our eyes with a mother who has as little agency as the unmoving cadaver on the dissection table. This conceptualisation of the reader as analogous to the 'ecolier' would mean both that we are automatically complicit with the masculine medical community and their construction of motherhood; and

[61] Kirk D. Read, *Birthing Bodies in Early Modern France: Stories of Gender and Reproduction* (Oxford: Routledge, 2011) and Timothy Hampton, 'The Fallen Fundament: Jargon, Gender, and Literary Authority in the Birth of Gargantua' in *Esprit généreux, esprit pantagruélicque: Essays by His Students in Honor of François Rigolot* ed. by Reinier Leushuis and Zahi Zalloua (Geneva: Droz, 2008), pp. 161-177.

that we are mere observers to this scene, willing to accept Alcofribas's expert interjections as given. I want to argue that the role of the midwives in this birthing scene rather disrupts this analogical relation of student and reader. In encouraging the reader to reflect differently on their position in relation to the text, these midwives reshape more broadly how we conceptualise the relation between medicine and fiction.

The midwives who 'tast[ent]' Gargamelle have access to an experiential and practical knowledge of the particularity of the female body which, unlike for the male (or animal) practitioners we have seen throughout this chapter, does mirror their own. These midwives are accompanied by 'une horde vieille de la compaignie, laquelle avoit reputation d'estre grande medicine', whose following intervention suggests that Rabelais is interested in a different mode of reading in this episode. The wise-woman 'feist un restrinctif si horrible' to Gargamelle's vagina that:

> tous ses larrys tant feurent oppilez et reserrez, que à grande poine avesques les dentz, vous les eussiez eslargiz, qui est chose bien horrible à penser. Mesmement que le diable à la messe de sainct Martin escripvant le quaquet de deux gualoises, à belles dentz alongea son parchemin (*Gargantua*, ch. 6, p. 21).

In Panurge's animal fable, the lion was at fault for focusing too much on the skin surface of the old woman; here, it is the stretching skin of Gargamelle's vaginal membrane that is newly significant. In the reference to St Martin's Mass, Rabelais evokes the figure of Titivillus, a demon said to have noted down every idle word uttered in church. Carla Mazzio has traced his evocation throughout the medieval and early modern period to warn of the dangers of a particularly female gossip; one story that has a clear influence on Rabelais's passage above recounts how Titivillus, recording two exceptionally gossipy women (the 'deux gualoises' mentioned here),

had to stretch out his parchment with his teeth to be able to record all of their speech.[62] Rabelais's use of 'quaquet' in this context is significant: it recalls, as Butterworth has shown, birthing texts such as *Caquet de l'accouchée*, where the onomatopoeic and animalistic resonances of the term heightened an anxiety about the untamed speech of women and, particularly, midwives.[63]

It is at this moment that Rabelais chooses to reach beyond the page to the reader, asking us to imagine this stretching movement, 'avesques les dentz, vous les eussiez eslargiz, qui est chose bien horrible à penser'. We explored above Brancher's work on how anatomical texts traded in both medical and sexual depictions of the woman's body to create a 'plaisir discursif'; returning to her argument here can help us to explain the significance of Rabelais's reaching 'vous'. Brancher makes sense of the rhetorical, and ultimately instructive, manipulation of erotic voyeurism by writers such as Joubert by thinking through the mechanisms of the reader's response. These texts become 'pornographic', she suggests, because they generate in the reader a memory of pleasure experienced during an earlier act; an image or word inflames their imagination, translating into present action as the reader anticipates and then uses their own bodies to repeat such sexual pleasure.[64] We have moved away from such patterns of erotic desire or sexual climax in this chapter to focus on the birthing body; but what we can develop here is Brancher's compelling way of thinking about writing and reading as processes of generating and employing embodied knowledge

[62] Carla Mazzio, *The Inarticulate Renaissance: Language Trouble in an Age of Eloquence* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), p. 29.
[63] Butterworth, *The Unbridled Tongue: Babble and Gossip in Renaissance France,* pp. 172-197. For a further exploration of voice and sound in relation to Rabelais's birth scenes, see: Tolley, *Writing Women into the History of Rabelais' Reception (1628-1785)*, pp. 147-186. For a detailed exposition of the use and significance of animal skin for parchment, see: Sarah Kay, *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in Medieval Latin and French Bestiaries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
[64] Brancher, 'L'Anatomiste pornographe:', pp. 161-188.

in terms of temporality.[65] For, returning to the passage quoted above, we now see how it tracks several temporal shifts: the narrator moves from the Simple Past actions of the wise-woman who 'feist un restrinctif', to the Pluperfect subjunctive 'eussiez eslargiz' as he asks the reader to imagine pulling with their own teeth, to the Present and Infinitive 'qui est chose bien horrible à penser'. This explicit move into the readerly present mirrors the translation into present action that Brancher suggests; where readers of Joubert repeat a means of achieving sexual desire from the text to their bodies, here the reader is asked to contemplate – 'penser' – themselves the act of biting.

In Panurge's fable, Rabelais staged a moment of almost-diagnosis. When the old woman farted, the fox was finally able to observe the particularity of the female body in comparison to the lion's, even if he was ultimately incapable of diagnosing her as not wounded but simply a woman. Panurge's following instructive conclusion flattened out this ambiguity, re-establishing a masculine community of medical knowledge in the narrative proper. In this birthing scene, Rabelais first stages a moment of misdiagnosis, as the midwives mistake Gargantua for the 'fundament'. The narrator has, of course, himself suggested that it is 'O belle matière fecale, que doivoit boursouffler en' Gargamelle; when the midwives make this mistake, however, it leads to the closing up of the expectant mother's vaginal membrane. It is at this very moment that the reader is drawn into the text: not only by the concretised particularity of the pregnant body with its stretched parchment-skin; not only by the explicit 'vous' reaching beyond the page: but also, and indeed especially, by

[65] For a compelling example of such cognitive criticism in relation to Rabelais, see: Kathryn Banks, 'Metaphor, Lexicography, and Rabelais's Prologue to *Gargantua'* in *Movement in Renaissance Literature: Exploring Kinesic Intelligence* ed. by Kathryn Banks and Timothy Chesters (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), pp. 81-107.

Rabelais's use of the present tense. For the invocation of the readerly present by the shift of mood and tense displaces the fox's and the midwives' agency onto the reader. What we have been thinking of as the practice of the diagnostic present, therefore is transformed into an embodied practice of reading: that to read Rabelais is to 'penser' with one's own body.

From this present tense mode of biting and thinking, Alcofribas retreats to the safety of the Simple Past, as the infant 'sursaulta' and 'sortit' his way through Gargamelle's body and the narrative proper of our eponymous protagonist can begin. Our much-anticipated birth has arrived; but it is with this startling momentary present tense, as Rabelais stretches his page into the reader's mouthy imagination, that the anticipatory tension of displacement and delay throughout this episode finally bursts. It is fitting that it is this alternative climactic moment in the expected teleology of birth that, now, forces the baby Gargantua to turn around and seek an alternative way out of Gargamelle's body, the ear.[66] This reworking of the legend of Virgin Mary's aural conception of Christ – that the baby must be immaculately born by the same route, in this 'estrange nativité' – is, for Wes Williams, Rabelais asking 'how it is we are to distinguish one monstrous birth from another: the legend from the sacred from the fiction'.[67] Rabelais makes room for an oral and aural space of storytelling, one which distorts how we might have expected the shape of his fiction (a conventional birth story, a conventional parody of nativity) to form. The reader is drawn into this narrative movement towards equivocality, and ultimately tasked with determining its shifting boundaries.

[66] Worth-Stylianou discusses how the mother as passive and the birthing baby as active was a commonly understood notion in the early modern period. Worth-Stylianou, 'Telling Tales of Death in Childbirth', pp. 325-340.
[67] Williams, *Monsters and their Meanings in Early Modern Culture*, p. 45.

At the very beginning of Gargamelle's birth sequence, we saw a first instance of an explicit reaching out to a readerly 'vous': 'Et si ne le croyez, le fondement vous escappe', Alcofribas warned (*Gargantua*, ch. 4, p. 16). Dorothy Coleman, reading the dizzying displacements of the fundament that followed, proposes that Rabelais demands, by this, a readerly reorientation for the birth sequence as a whole: these chapters are all about mischievous conflation, she suggests, forcing the reader to navigate between the fantastic and the real, the gigantic and the human, the epic and the comic.[68] Yet Gargantua's birth scene also translates into a diagnostic encounter that has rather troubled the relation, or 'conflation', between the medical and the fictional. Rabelais's text has emerged as a space which feels far from a friendly winking towards a 'compere' or an 'écolier', far from that of a doctor-author using fiction to reflect or bolster masculine communities of medical knowledge. It has moved, furthermore, from a mode of questioning that only exists in a formal suspension in the narrative, in the voice of Panurge rather than the narrator. Rather, Rabelais has now, to represent pregnancy and birth, brought delay, dilation, and suspension into the narrative proper.

Rabelais's dilatory representation of birthing bodies is significant because it brings us back to our original proposition in the introduction of this thesis: that the relation between medicine and literature, as seen through Rabelais's texts, is not about dissection or cure but about the temporality of suspended animation. In the first chapter of this thesis, it was the status of Epistemon's body and voice, and the practice of anamnesic suturing, which informed this alternative approach. In this chapter, I have focused more explicitly on moments of temporal disjuncture; these

[68] Dorothy Coleman, *Rabelais: A Critical Study in Prose Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 23-25.

have been emblematised by scenes in which women, at different stages of conception, pregnancy, and birth, are erroneously diagnosed. These scenes have in common a demand for the reader to reflect on how the formal movement of narration itself can be suspended. It is only by momentarily sustaining this suspension that the reader can, then, recover a fresh understanding of Rabelais's fictional writing, and in so doing reanimate the text itself. What was suggested in the narrativization of Epistemon's resurrection as a medical scene plays out now in the very structure of the text: scenes of misdiagnosis suspend the narrative, and the reader's response reanimates it.

I want by way of a conclusion to this chapter to return to the birthing scene in *Pantagruel*, where Pliny is, again, invoked as an intertextual pair to modulate the reading of the baby Pantagruel's body. Considering the erroneous diagnoses this chapter has been focused on, this, at first, seems like a barely difficult interpretative task at all. We have already seen how Pantagruel's name immediately reveals the context of drought in which he was born. He must one day become the 'dominateur des alterez', the narrator suggests: 'ce que luy fut monstré à celle heure mesmes par aultre signe plus evident' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 2, p. 224). 'Monstrer' loses the ambiguity of meaning that was attached to Antiphysie's 'demonstration', that we examined in the opening moves of this chapter; here is a monstrous, giant body whose significance couldn't be more 'evident'. Women are granted a voice in this scene, but only – even if 'elles caquetoyent' – as they support this unequivocal 'evidence' of Pantagruel's promise: 'en esperit propheticque', the midwives proclaim that, 'tout velu comme un Ours', Pantagruel 'fera choses merveilleuses, et s'il vit il aura de l'eage' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 2, p. 224).

At the beginning of the following chapter, however, we find out that Badebec has died during or shortly after labour:

> Quand Pantagruel fut né, qui fut bien esbahy et perplex, ce fut Gargantua son pere, car voyant d'un cousté sa femme Badebec morte, et de l'aultre son filz Pantagruel né, tant beau et tant grand, ne sçavoit que dire ny que faire. Et le doubte que troubloit son entendement estoit, assavoir s'il devoit plorer pour le dueil de sa femme, ou rire pour la joye de son filz ? (*Pantagruel*, ch. 3, p. 225).

At first glance, Badebec appears to have succumbed to the same fate as Gargamelle: her body only valued as a vessel for pregnancy, her narrative function only to facilitate the shift of focus to our protagonist's new life. But Gargantua's tortured response shows that her death brings no straightforward sense of narrative release or relief; rather, Gargantua now finds himself suspended, pulled between looking back to the past and looking to the future promise of the baby's life, caught between the two. The force of Badebec's even fleeting presence in the text is evident here as she forces a final moment of narrative error that we have seen twin together diagnosis and women in Rabelais's fictions.

Manardi described the case of Alphonisa's swollen womb as bringing much 'perplexione', or confusion; Gargantua is, here, 'perplexed' on seeing the concurrent birth of his son and death of his wife, recalling the legal term 'casus perplexus' to indicate being caught between two impossible situations.[69] If the first chapter of this thesis focused on the witness and testimonies of the dead, then this chapter has shifted attention to the perplexity of life's beginnings, from conception to pregnancy and childbirth. Rabelais's birthing bodies have been subject to various forms of

[69] M. V. Dougherty records a thirteenth-century definition of *casus perplexus* as 'Perplexity is an entrapment between opposites, so that one seems always to be bound to sin, in whatever side one might choose (*Perplexitas est inbolutio inter opposite, ita quod videtur semper vergere in peccatum, quamcumque partem eligat*)' in M. V. Dougherty, *Moral Dilemmas in Medieval Thought: From Gratian to Aquinas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 7.

misdiagnosis, and various attempts at correction. These have, first of all, revealed the communities of medical knowledge who come into dispute when the child-bearing woman is the medical case in question: from Manardi's letter to his junior colleagues, the fable's lion and his 'compere' fox, the midwives and Alcofribas, to Gargantua responding to his own baby in the shadow of his wife's death. Still more importantly, these errors and corrections revealed how the diagnostic present that we saw in Manardi's letter have insistently prompted forms of suspension and reanimation within Rabelais's narratives themselves. Rabelais's child-bearing women are not trapped in the eroticised space of the anatomy theatre, as Brancher has examined, neither do they deliver the giant protagonists to start Rabelais's narratives without fear or complication. Rather, they help to bring into life a more 'perplex' form of the relation between medicine and literature, where error can be productive and corrections can be disruptive; and where, more importantly still, the reader learns to reanimate Rabelais's world using their own bodies.

Chapter Three:

Prognosis

I. Prognosis, Prudence, and Performance

The previous two chapters have opened with establishing Rabelais in his contemporary medical culture, as a means of introducing the first two temporal modes of medicine: the poems written by Dolet that were about or addressed to him, to think about (resurrective) anamnesis, and the letters written by Manardi that were prefaced by him, to consider (mis)diagnosis. The temporalities of error and misdiagnosis – and how Rabelais's fictions compensate for it or accommodate it – have emerged as key themes in the discussion thus far. The high stakes of medical practice are, as we saw at the close of Chapter Two, emblematised in Gargantua's 'perplexity' at the simultaneous birth of his son and death of his much-loved wife. This followed on from the conclusion to Chapter One, a reflection on a rare moment of authorial self-representation: Rabelais at the deathbed of Du Bellay.

I want to return to this second moment, now, to offer an alternative set of opening moves to this chapter: rather than focusing on a further medical trace from Rabelais's parallel career, I want to think more carefully about how Rabelais puts himself into his fictional text as means of introducing the third temporal mode, prognosis. Rabelais chooses to eschew the (ambivalent) guise of Alcofribas in the passage recounting Du Bellay's death, but he still does not employ an

autobiographical narratorial stance; rather, he has Epistemon attest to his presence and his ultimate failure to resuscitate Du Bellay. This real, historical event is integrated into a fictional world, then, but one in which Epistemon is tasked with bearing witness to things – including, even, the impossible witness of the underworld that we saw in Chapter One. I want to examine how Rabelais in this scene stages prognosis as a way of asking a question about the witness and narration of medical error, and fiction's response. This question is important for understanding how Rabelais's fictional world works; but, more so, for considering how Rabelais perceives his own medical career and how the fictional genre in which he chooses to write plays a role in how he represents this.

Epistemon's narration of Du Bellay's death is as follows:

> Il m'en souvient (dist Epistemon) et encores me frissonne et tremble le cœur dedans sa capsule, quand je pense es prodiges tant divers et horrificques les quelz veismes apertement cinq et six jours avant son depart. De mode que les seigneurs de Assier, Chemant, Mailly le borgne, Sainct Ayl, Villeneufve laguyart, maistre Gabriel medicin de Savillan, Rabelays, Cohuau, Massuau […] et tant d'aultres amis, domesticques, et serviteurs du deffunct tous effrayez se reguardoient les uns les aultres en silence sans mot dire de bouche, mais bien tous pensans et prevoyans en leurs entendemens que de brief seroit France privée d'un tant perfaict et necessaire chevallier à sa gloire et protection, et que les cieulx le repetoient comme à eulx deu par proprieté naturelle (*Quart Livre*, ch. 27, p. 602).

In the second chapter of this thesis, Diagnosis, we saw Pantagruel's midwives engaging in the same prophetic energy of Du Bellay's mourners: reading in an 'esperit propheticque', they interpreted Pantagruel's ursine skin as a sign of 'choses merveilleuses' to come (*Pantagruel*, ch. 2, p. 224). In these Rabelaisian moments of birth and death, bodies – whether yet to be fully formed or faltering too soon, whether sparking extra-natural 'prodiges tant divers et horrificques' or forming that prophetic object themselves – are infused with a signification that tells their onlookers

something deeper about the future of the world they however fleetingly inhabit.[1] These moments spur us towards telling a story about prognosis that locates it within a broader culture of portents and monsters, where the reading of the signs of the body merges with that of prophecy and divination.[2] To follow this story might find Rabelais morph from mourning physician to prognosticator, his fictional texts brought alongside the mock and real prognostications and almanacs that he published between 1533 and 1544.[3] The *Tiers Livre*, penned under the name of Dr Rabelais rather than the hawkish Alcofribas, would make for a compelling companion in its preoccupation with predicting not only Panurge's marital dilemma (whether to find a wife) but also the course this marriage might take (whether he will be cuckolded by this wife).

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[1] The early modern period has been recently articulated as defined by reimagined visions of the future; the artistic, technological, and proto-scientific manifestations of which have been explored by two edited volumes, *The Uses of the Future in Early Modern Europe* ed. by Andrea Brady and Emily Butterworth (New York: Routledge, 2010) and *Renaissance Futurities: Science, Art, Invention* ed. by Charlene Villaseñor Black and Mari-Tere Álvarez (Oakland: University of California Press, 2020).

[2] The scholarly understanding of the culture of monstrosity in early modern Europe has been shaped by two hugely influential texts, spanning both francophone and anglophone critical spheres: Jean Céard, *La Nature et les prodiges: l'insolite au 16e siècle, en France* (Geneva: Droz, 1977) and Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998). More recent critical interventions of note include *Monstrous Bodies/ Political Monstrosities in Early Modern Europe* ed. by L. Lunger Knoppers and J.B. Landes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), M. Schildrick, *Embodying the Monster: Encounters with the Vulnerable Self* (London: Sage, 2002), and, with a particular focus on the literary articulation of monsters and portents, Williams, *Monsters and their Meanings in Early Modern Culture: Mighty Magic*. Williams dedicates a chapter to Rabelais's Physetere in the *Quatre Livre* (pp. 27-74), thus bringing Rabelais's literary text into dialogue with writers of natural history, including Rondelet.

[3] These texts have been recently published in a carefully compiled and annotated edition by M. A. Screech, which will hopefully invite further study to this body of work. François Rabelais, *Pantagrueline Prognostication pour l'an 1533. Avec les Almanachs pour les Ans 1533, 1535 et 1541, La grande et vraye Pronostication nouvelle de 1544*, ed. by M. A. Screech with assistance by Gwyneth Tootill, Anne Reeve, Martine Morin, Sally North, and Stephen Bamforth (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 2015). Hugh Roberts has studied mock prognostications as part of his work on nonsense in early modern France, situating readings of Rabelais in the popular culture of the medical marketplace: Hugh Roberts, 'Mocking the Future in French Renaissance Mock-Prognostications', in *The Uses of the Future in Early Modern Europe* ed. by Brady and Butterworth, pp. 198-215. Although this chapter will, later, engage with charlatanism and mountebank culture, it will focus on prognosis in Rabelais's functional medical encounters rather than this broader context of popular predictions of the future. For readings of divination and prophecy as a mode of predicting the future, see Emily Butterworth, 'Scandal in Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*': Divination, Interpretation, and Edification', *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, 34 (2011), 23-43 and Kathryn Banks, ''I speak like John about the Apocalypse': Rabelais, Prophecy, and Fiction', *Literature & Theology*, 26 (2012), 417-438.

Yet in the moments before Epistemon's affective recollection, Pantagruel offers us an alternative model of thinking the future that draws closer attention to Epistemon's narration of his act of witnessing. Pantagruel begins the chapter by comparing the act of reading the 'signification' of the sky to the 'signes' of the dying body:

> Car aulcunes telles ames tant sont nobles, precieuses, et Heroicques, que de leur deslogement et trespas nous est certains jours davant donnée signification des cieulx. Et comme le prudent medicin voyant par les signes prognosticz son malade entrer en decours de mort, par quelques jours davant advertist les femme, enfans, parens, et amis du decés imminent du mary, pere, ou prochain, affin qu'en ce reste de temps qu'il a de vivre, ilz l'admonnestent donner ordre à sa maison, exhorter et benistre ses enfans […] et [qu'il] ne soyt de mort surprins sans tester et ordonner de son ame et de sa maison : semblablement les cieulx benevoles comme joyeulx de la nouvelle reception de ces beates ames, avant leur decés semblent faire feuz de joye par telz cometes, et apparitions meteores. Les quelles voulent les cieulx estre aux humains pour prognostic certain et veridicque prediction, que dedans peu de jours telles venerables ames laisseront leurs corps et la terre (*Quart Livre*, ch. 27, pp. 601-602).

Peter Anthony Motteux, the second translator of Rabelais, translates the second line of this passage as follows: 'And as a prudent physician, seeing by some symptoms that his patient draws towards his end, some days before gives notice of it to his wife, children, kindred, and friends […]'.[4] Rendering 'signes' as 'symptoms', Motteux immediately suggests a shift from supernatural interpretation into the far more human medical drama of the deathbed scene here; yet he struggles more with the act of linguistic creativity through which this shift is calcified by Rabelais as the passage

[4] Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Accessed online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1200/1200-h/1200-h.htm#link32HCH0031 (04.02.2022). Thomas Urquhart translated both *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* in full and started work on the *Tiers Livre* before his death; Peter Anthony Motteux, a Huguenot refugee who arrived in England in 1685 following the Edict of Nantes, completed his work on the *Tiers Livre* before taking on the *Quart Livre* and the *Cinquiesme Livre* himself. The impact of his religious and political background on his translation has been explored in Shaun Regan, 'Translating Rabelais: Sterne, Motteux, and the Culture of Politeness', *Translation and Literature*, 10 (2001), 174-199 and Wes Williams, ''Foutys vous descoss': Rabelais, Urquhart et les enjeux de la traduction' in *Inextinguible Rabelais* ed. by Mireille Huchon, Nicolas Le Cadet and Romain Menini (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2021), pp. 677-688.

continues. For Rabelais uses for the first time in French the expression 'signes prognosticz': he turns the noun 'prognostic', used at the end of the passage alongside its cognate 'prediction', into a more elastic adjective that suggests something of the act of thinking the future itself; that interpreting 'signes prognosticz' requires a specific 'prognosticz' skill. This elasticity is bolstered by the satisfyingly Rabelaisian 'pour prognostic certain et veridicque prediction' at the end of the passage, where the chiasmic insistence rather undercuts any 'certain' reading of its meaning. Motteux's translation of 'seeing by some symptoms that his patient draws towards his end' feels lacking, not quite registering the precision or significance of this new medical grammar; especially as his translation of the end of the passage as 'those comets and blazing meteors, which they at the same time kindly design should prognosticate to us here that in a few days one of those venerable souls is to leave her body' flattens out the adjectival ambiguity that suggests the physician's mode of enquiry, and rather returns it, through 'should prognosticate', to the alternative object of enquiry, the signs in the sky.[5]

When Cave reads Du Bellay's death in Rabelais, he, like Motteux, focuses on its broader signifiance: the 'passé, présent et futur se confondent dans une seule conjoncture', he writes, 'la prospérité d'une civilisation antique, la mémoire vivante d'un grand homme, le choc immédiat de sa mort, les prophéties qui pointent vers un future étranger et lugubre – tout cela est conçu comme un faisceau enchevêtré de signes historiques'.[6] Rabelais is for Cave, therefore, a 'docteur dont le témoignage est enregistré ici comme un hommage et un acte d'interprétation'.[7] Rabelais creates, in

[5] Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel.* Accessed online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1200/1200-h/1200-h.htm#link32HCH0031 (05.02.2022).
[6] Terence Cave, *Pré-histoires : textes troublés au seuil de la modernité* (Geneva: Droz, 1999), p. 91.
[7] Cave, *Pré-histoires*, p. 92.

other words, a narrative rooted in a temporally collapsed space recalling the diagnostic and writerly present that we traced in Chapter Two. Rabelais's 'regard de médicin' makes him into a 'co-témoin' to Epistemon in this space, who we have seen 'pense es prodiges tant divers et horrificques'.[8] Neither Motteux's seventeenth-century grappling with a new vocabulary of thinking the future, nor Cave's contemporary critical response to Rabelais's maelstrom of grief, seem to quite convey the shifting agency that Rabelais's text demands: that it is now the 'medicin' who is granted the capacity and the chance to see into the future, not only to diagnose the present state but to prognose precisely so that his patient 'ne soyt de mort surprins'. The terms 'prédire', 'presager', 'speculer', and 'prenommer' proliferate in early modern dictionaries to describe the act of predicting the future; yet 'prognosticz' here lends Rabelais's text a newly powerful emphasis that sets this act of the physician, facing his patient, apart.

This new type of looking into the future is specified as able to be carried out by the ideal 'prudent medicin'. Writing on Panurge's adamant refusal throughout the *Tiers Livre* to opt for or against marriage until he knows whether he will be cuckolded, Elizabeth Chesney Zegura and Marcel Tetel foreground a sense of disorder to Panurge's patterning of thought that will be central to understanding why Pantagruel invokes the virtue of prudence when experimenting with this new term, 'prognosticz'. 'Panurge challenges the expanding limits of human knowledge – and the nature of textuality itself', Chesney Zegura and Tetel suggest,

> by demanding prognostic or prophetic certainty prior to action. His bull-headed insistence upon seeing his own personal destiny implicitly rejects the predictive and pedagogical value of biblical and classic behavioural models upon which Pantagruel and other humanists base their conduct and make reasonable assumptions about the future. In their place, he ambitiously

[8] Cave, *Pré-histoire*s, p. 92.

> proposes a more exact science of living based on a knowledge of his own personal future. What he hypothesises is not absolute destiny, which would make his own decision-making quandary moot, but rather a future of alternative destinies, each of which can be activated or eliminated by choosing one course of action over another.[9]

Striving for an 'exact science of living' is ambitious because it would refigure the very relation between interpretation and action evoked by Chesney Zegura and Tetel. 'Prognosis or prophecy' are acts of interpreting the future; acts which, in this critical account, then feed into a deliberation of how to act accordingly. The crux of Panurge's 'bull-headed insistence' is thus rendered two-fold. Not only does Panurge fail to recognise the conjectural nature of such knowledge about the future, but doing so stops him from bridging the gap between interpretation and action at all, stops him from moving his and Rabelais's narrative forward as he continues his loop of consulting an expert, engaging with their behavioural model, and then starting the process all over again a few chapters down the line.

The classical virtue that Chesney Zegura and Tetel don't name, but gesture towards here, is what early moderns would have called *prudentia*, or practical reason. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle outlines prudence as a state of the soul 'grasping the truth, involving reason, concerned with action about human goods […] for it is to that which observes well the various matters concerning itself that one ascribes practical wisdom, and it is to this that one will entrust such matters.'[10] Prudence emerges as the bridging virtue that Panurge, who so wishes to see the 'alternative futures' before him, lacks for Chesney Zegura and Tetel: for, Raphaële Garrod

[9] Elizabeth Chesney Zegura and Marcel Tetel, *Rabelais Revisited* (New York: Twayne, 1993), p. 102. For further discussion of prudence in Rabelais, see Eric Macphail, 'The Ethic of Timing and the Origin of the Novel: Speaking Too Soon in Rabelais and Cervantes', *Symposium (Syracuse)*, 52 (1998), 155-164.
[10] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics (3rd edition)* trans. by Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2019), Book VI, ch. 5, p. 1141.

explains in her recent article on prudence and animal ingenuity, a prudent person is one who can ascertain the aim of action and direct a response mediated by their imagination of their future state.[11] In tracing the political life of early modern imagery of ingenuity, Garrod's article continues the valuable work carried out by Victoria Kahn on the value of prudence as a political virtue. Both scholars are keenly aware of the early modern writer's belief in the importance of an active life and conviction that their reader would be best persuaded to ethical praxis by the rhetorical practice of literature.[12]

What is important about Rabelais's invocation of prudence in this passage of the *Tiers Livre* is how he extends the discourse of politics and the social to include medicine, too. Spanish physician and Aristotelian scholar Juan Huarte defined medical prudence as a virtue that 'appartient à l'imagination, par le moyen de laquelle se cognoist ce qui est à venir'.[13] This imaginative force propels the medical encounter from diagnosis to treatment: imagining the future course of the illness, and deciding how to act accordingly, constitutes the work of prognosis.[14] Yet there remains a strongly social force to the prudential prognosis invoked by Rabelais in this passage; part of the physician's skill, he suggests, is to allow the dying man to settle his affairs before death takes him. When sociologist and physician Nicholas

[11] Raphaële Garrod, ''The animal outside': Animal Ingenuity and Human Prudence in French Renaissance Political Thought', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 49 (2019), 531-540.
[12] Victoria Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism in the Renaissance* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).
[13] Juan Huarte de San Juan, *Anacrise ou parfait jugement et examen des esprits propres et naiz aux sciences* trans. by Gabriel Chappuis (Lyon: François Didier, 1580), f. 95 r°. Cited in Berriot-Salvadore, 'Théories et pratiques de la médecine', p. 343.
[14] When Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore writes that 'La médecine est une connaissance rationnelle tournée vers l'action, comme la prudence peut être une sagesse tournée vers l'action', she articulates how medicine is, too, marked by the enduring, fundamental tension of how to move from theoretical knowledge into action, or practice. Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore, 'Théories et pratiques de la médecine' in *La Vertu de prudence entre Moyen Age et Age classique* ed. by Catherine Pascal, Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore, Trung Tran, François Roudaut, and Claude Blum (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2012), pp. 339-352 (348).

Christakis writes that prognosis is 'used by physicians, both advertently and inadvertently, to fulfil other objectives such as fostering compliance, cultivating hope, managing expectations, relieving anxiety, and engendering confidence', he articulates the enduring and expansive significance of prognosis beyond its clinical purpose; the ethical demands, informing still the Hippocratic Oath that doctors take upon qualification, that structure the relation between the physician and their patient.[15]

In our first reading of this episode, in Chapter One, we were struck by how Rabelais might use the space of fiction to reflect on the failures of his own medical practice; as if he opens up a gap between the grieving 'Rabelays' named in this *Tiers Livre* passage and the hypothetical prudent physician that perhaps he wishes to have been, or imagines he can still become. We read Epistemon's resurrection as Rabelais's experimentation with the compensatory capacity of fiction; a consideration of what both medicine and fiction can and cannot achieve. Returning to this episode now, a more muted imaginative force emerges; the 'Rabelays' in the text might not have been able to save his friend, but has succeeded in allowing Du Bellay the fantasy of the family deathbed scene, has succeeded in expanding Du Bellay's final dying moments so that those present can participate in what Kenny, in his compelling reading of this episode, calls a 'social' and 'intersubjective' commencement of grief.[16] This constitutes a uniquely prognostic imagination; one rooted in the prudential skill of the physician imagining and acting for the good of their patient. This prognostic imagination has changed the texture of Rabelais's fiction, drawing it inwards from the fantasy of resurrection and the impossibility of

[15] Nicholas Christakis, *Death Foretold: Prophecy and Prognosis in Medical Care* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 42.
[16] Kenny, *Death and Tenses*, p. 226.

narrating the underworld and rooting it, instead, in a real event that can be learned from, investing it, now, with a concern for the sort of ethical praxis identified by Garrod and Kahn above.

Cave characterises Epistemon as a 'co-témoin' to 'Rabelays' in this scene, yet in truth Epistemon exceeds that function: he narrates this real event. In the only other instance of Rabelais penning his name into his text, Epistemon reappears in this double capacity. During the *Tiers Livre*, the intellectual odyssey in which Panurge seeks advice from scholarly experts and folk figures alike while deliberating on his future, Panurge encounters Dr Rondibilis, commonly understood to be based on Rabelais's contemporary in Montpellier, Rondelet, and to stand in the text as the representative of university medicine.[17] Coming right at the end of this consultation, Epistemon recalls having watched Rabelais perform a play, 'La morale comœdie de celluy qui avoit espousé une femme mute', with his fellow medical students while at Montpellier (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 34, p. 460). Epistemon proceeds to narrate the play's plot, centred around the imprudent prognosis of the physician attending to the aggrieved husband, to Panurge in a bid to advise him further on his marriage quandary. Animating our reading will be the force of the performance's historical and cultural contexts: staged on the streets of Montpellier during carnival-time, the play both

[17] See La Charité, 'Rabelais, Rondibilis et la cure des amants selon Guillaume Rondelet', pp. 779-790. The Rondibilis set of episodes have often been read to confirm a fuller reading of this challenging and elusive text. Scholars such as Duval and Gray, for example, parse this medical consultation as one of many 'grotesque parodies' seemingly endlessly paraded in the text as an opportunity for Pantagruel to ultimately guide Panurge towards moral clarity: Duval, *The Design of Rabelais's 'Tiers Livre de Pantagruel'*; Floyd Gray, 'Structure and Meaning in the Prologue to the *Tiers Livre*', *L'Esprit créateur*, 3 (1963), 57-62. Carla Freccero also teases apart this central relation, reading in the protagonist and his side-kick a mediation on genealogy, filiation, and the generic instability between epic and romance: Carla Freccero, *Father Figures: Genealogy and Narrative Structure in Rabelais* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991). The medical student's 'morale comœdie' slots into these arguments: Alice Berry, for instance, proposes a feminist reading of the genre of conjugal farce to invest theoretical weight into the 'marriage problem' animating the accounts above: Alice Berry, ''Written in the mind with an iron pen': The Failure of Misogynistic Cliché in the Rondibilis Episode of Rabelais's *Tiers Livre*', *French Studies*, 3 (1995), 275-282.

formed part of medical training, as a way of negotiating power dynamics between students and the faculty, and reveals a contemporary anxiety around charlatanism and the perceived imprudence of engaging with medical fakery. [18] Such fakery is not only the exact sort of practice that goes against Christaskis's careful outline of the ideal prognosing physician, but also extends our opening discussion of the relation between the fictional and the real in these passages; the Montpellier play becomes, therefore, a reflection on the credibility and reliability of the fictional text in which it is incorporated.

It is Epistemon who narrates this play to Panurge, in an attempt to steer how he receives Rondibilis's advice. This chapter will ultimately suggest that Rabelais grants Epistemon a more powerful role than the 'co-témoin' that Cave affords him; that, as witness and narrator of Rabelais's own life, Epistemon demonstrates Rabelais's consideration of his own medical and literary history, his own reflective gesture concerning the force and function of fiction. Attending to these two strands in what follows will allow us to pursue our own exploration of the complex, often perplexing, relation between medicine and literature in early modern France.

[18] For the history of charlatanism in Early Modern Europe, see: Brockliss and Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France*, pp. 230-238; Alison K. Lingo, 'Empirics and Charlatans in Early Modern France: The Genesis of the Classification of the 'Other' in Medical Practice', *Journal of Social History*, 19 (1968), 583-604; M. A. Katritzky, 'Marketing Medicine: The Image of the Early Modern Mountebank', *Renaissance Studies*, 15 (2001), 121-153; M. A. Katritzky, *Women, Medicine and Theatre, 1550-1750: Literary Mountebanks and Performing Quacks* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007). For the use of theatrical language in classical medical texts, see Amy Coker, 'Galen and the Language of Old Comedy: Glimpses of a Lost Treatise at *Ind.* 23b-28', in *Galen's Treatise Περὶ Ἀλυπίας (De indolentia) in Context* ed. by Caroline Petit (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 12-27; for the relation more broadly between the body and theatre, Simon Shepherd, *Theatre, Body and Pleasure* (London: Routledge, 2006).

II. Impressions on the Brain

At first glance, the consultation with Rondibilis seems to give Panurge the 'prognostic or prophetic certainty prior to action' that Chesney Zegura and Tetel suggest that he so desires in the *Tiers Livre*. Panurge begins by asking the physician the same question as he has asked his previous counsels: 'Me doibz je marier ou non?' (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 31, p. 448). Rondibilis immediately suspects that Panurge is subject to 'les poignans aiguillons de sensualité', and outlines the different ways in which a man can sate his sexual desires. Running through wine, certain drugs and plants, labour, and study, he finally prescribes marriage, confident that Panurge, being so 'bien proportionné en ses membres, bien temperé en ses humeurs, bien complexionné en ses espritz', is an ideal candidate for finding a wife (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 31, pp. 448-52 (p. 452). Yet when Panurge, who has been distracted until now by a fly stuck in his ear, reveals the real question that worries him – 'seray je poinct coqu?' – Rondibilis's firm diagnosis slips into an impatient and, in fact, irresolute prognosis:

> Havre de Grace (s'escria Rondibilis) que me demandez vous ? Si serez coqu ? Mon amy je suys marié, vous le serez par cy aprés. Mais escrivez ce mot en vostre cervelle avecques un style de fer, que tout home marié, est en dangier d'estre coqu. Coqüage est naturellement des apennages de mariage. L'umbre plus naturellement ne suyt le corps, que Coqüage suyt les gens mariez. Et quand vous oirez dire de quelqu'un ces trois motz : 'Il est marié', si vous dictez, 'il est doncques, ou a esté, ou sera, ou peult estre coqu' (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 32, pp. 452-543).

Both the shift into the impersonal 'il' and the 'peult estre' that closes Rondibilis's breathless response reveal that even faced with a relation as 'naturel' as 'coqüage' and 'mariage', the physician still encounters the edge of his capacity to predict with complete certainty the future of this particular patient. Rondibilis's seemingly exasperated direction that Panurge should 'escri[re] ce mot en vostre cervelle

avecques un style de fer' rather shifts our attention onto Panurge's body, and his role in managing it, in this prognostic encounter.

We might at this point turn to biblical metaphors of writing on the interior of the body to help us understand Rondibilis's instructions (and indeed are directed this way by Rabelais's editor, Huchon). The most pertinent example is 2 Corinthians 3:3, where the heart is invoked as a means of thinking through the depth of a believer's faith. 'Clearly you are an epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart'; this passage sets ink against spirit, Moses's commandments as externalised in and inscribed on an object against a more convincing, internalized faith. If we cross cultural boundaries to early modern England, however, Hamlet's evocations of writing on the 'table of my memory', to be stored 'within the book and volume of my brain', draw attention not to the materials but the process of writing itself.[19] Peter Stallybrass, Roger Chartier, J. Franklin Mowery, and Heather Wolfe locate Hamlet's tables in the pedagogical structures of commonplacing.[20] The knowledge gathered by reading is made one's own through memory and judgement; this is a process which, they suggest, is concretised through the act of writing such commonplaces down first in notebooks, or Hamlet's 'tablets of memory', and then in commonplace books, or, the 'book and volume' of the brain. 'Recopying induces thought', so writes Francis Goyet. The act of writing down becomes an intellectual exercise that renders internalisation as not depth of faith but rather part of making

[19] William Shakespeare, *The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke* (London: 1605) [*The Cambridge Dover Wilson Shakespeare, volume 7,* ed. by John Dover Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 29 (I.5.98); p. 30 (I.5.103).

[20] Peter Stallybrass, Roger Chartier, J. Franklin Mowery, and Heather Wolfe, 'Hamlet's Tables and the Technologies of Writing in Renaissance England', *Shakespeare Quarterly,* 55 (2004), 379-419. Ann Moss has written the most comprehensive study of the practice of commonplacing in the early modern period: Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

memory permanent, and eventually making thought independent.[21] It is this Shakespearean mediation on memory, writing, and the mind that encourages us to look beyond the Bible to the brain to unpick what Panurge's act of bodily writing can tell us about the prudential, prognostic encounter between him and Rondibilis. To do so, we turn to two translations of the first of the Hippocratic aphorisms in sixteenth-century France, that were translated precisely as part of a revival of Hippocratic ideas on prognosis; in particular, on the ways in which prognosis frames the relation of the physician and the patient.[22] The first is Jean Breche's translation of the Hippocratic aphorisms and their Galenic commentaries, published in Paris just before Rabelais's death. And the second is by Jean Canappe, a physician known to have studied with Rabelais in Montpellier and have later practiced, and been published, in Lyon; his 1532 translation and commentary of Guy de Chauliac's reading of this first Hippocratic aphorism.[23]

The first Hippocratic aphorism reads as follows: 'Life is short, the Art long, opportunity fleeting, experiment treacherous, judgement difficult. The physician must be ready, not only to do his duty himself but also to secure the co-operation of

[21] Francis Goyet, 'A Hypothesis on the Meaning of 'To be, or not to be'', *La Réserve: Livraison Septembre 2015,* (online review, 2015) Accessed online: http://ouvroir-litt-arts.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/revues/reserve/123-a-hypothesis-on-the-meaning-of-to-be-or-not-to-be#bodyftn18 (02.11.2021). Raphael Lyne has written authoritatively on memory in the early modern period, drawing on theories of memory derived from cognitive science in order to reconsider intertextuality, or how literary works 'remember' other literary works. I will engage with Lyne's work more precisely later in this chapter. Raphael Lyne, *Memory and Intertextuality in Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[22] For a further examination of how Rabelais read and edited Hippocrates, see: Claude La Charité, 'Rabelais and Medicine', in *A Companion to François Rabelais*, ed. by Bernd Renner (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 49-74; R. R. Bolgar, 'Rabelais's Edition of the *Aphorisms* of Hippocrates', *The Modern Language Review*, 35 (1940), 62-66; and Olivier Pédeflous, 'L'Hippocrate grec de Rabelais (BnF RES-T-23-1 alpha): nouveau regard sur une Aldine', *L'Année rabelaisienne,* 2 (2018), 439-449.

[23] Jean Breche, *Les Aphorismes d'Hippocrates prince des médecins avec le commentaire de Galien sur le premier livre desdits aphorismes traduictz du grec mesme en françois par M. Jean Breche,... plus certaines annotations... par ledict Breche* (Paris: Jacques Keruer, 1552). Accessed online: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k54369r/f5.item (10.10.2021); Jean Canappe, *Opuscules de divers autheurs médecins, redigez ensemble pour le profit & utilité des chirurgiens* (Lyon: Jean de Tournes, 1552). Accessed online: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k53439v/f114.item (10.10.2021).

the patient, of the attendants and of externals'.[24] The first part of this aphorism articulates the tension of medical knowledge that we have seen be inherent to an understanding of medical prudence. Unfolding over five clauses, it tracks the challenge of moving from a vast theoretical knowledge (the 'Art') into the unpredictable and contingent world of practice ('experiment' and 'judgement'). It tracks, too, a second narrative of how this transition is temporally determined when it pits the physician's mammoth task to learn such medical theory ('short'/'long') against the immediacy of the medical encounter with the patient ('fleeting'). The Hippocratic writer asks not just a question of how to put learning into action, but at what decisive moment: a question, therefore, that adds temporal weight to the Aristotelian notion of *prudentia* and its relation to prognosis that we explored in the opening moves of this chapter.

Breche's translation draws us into Hamlet's world of note-taking and tablets, memory and re-copying. First suggesting that this Hippocratic text be read as the 'proeme' of the medical art by all aspiring physicians, Breche translates Galen's gloss that only 'ceulx qui ont le temps pour apprendre, & leur nature plus encline & convenable à cela' are advised to continue with their training.[25] Leaving for future generations 'des commentations & livres speculatifz' such as these *Aphorismes* is an important part of the mechanisms of this learning: 'telle maniere d'enseigner, est tres utile, & a ceulx qui commencent à apprendre, & à retenir en memoire ce que auront apprins, ou ce que auront oublié, le remettre en memoire'.[26] Turning to Canappe's

[24] Hippocrates of Cos, *Volume IV: Nature of Man, Regimen in Health, Humours, Aphorisms*, *Regimen 1-3, Dreams, Heracleitus: On the Universe*, trans. by W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), p. 99. The original Greek is: 'Ὁ βίος βραχύς, ἡ δὲ τέχνη μακρή, ὁ δὲ καιρὸς ὀξύς, ἡ δὲ πεῖρα σφαλερή, ἡ δὲ κρίσις χαλεπή', p. 98.
[25] Breche, *Les Aphorismes d'Hippocrates,* p. 7.
[26] Breche, *Les Aphorismes d'Hippocrates,* p. 9.

translation, we find more detailed descriptions of the textures of the brain that flesh out exactly what being possessed of a 'nature pus encline & convenable' to learning might mean. Examining this early modern medical understanding of the brain will allow us to move from memory in Shakespeare to the particular art of learning prudential prognosis in Rabelais.[27]

De Chauliac and Breche's translations of this first Hippocratic aphorism deviate at one crucial moment: to translate 'the opportunity fleeting', Breche suggests 'l'occasion est soubdaine', while De Chauliac writes that 'le temps est agu'.[28] Medieval French dictionaries, covering the period in the twelfth century when De Chauliac was writing, do record an explicitly temporal use of 'agu' in a medical context to demarcate an illness 'à évolution rapide' from a chronic one. Yet early modern dictionaries map only how the physical quality of 'agu' as 'pointu' or 'qui pique' finds figurative expression as 'subtil' or 'intelligent'.[29] This discrepancy appears to be borne out twofold in Canappe's following two commentaries of this passage: in the first, he retreats to writing 'occasion soubdaine', as if searching for safer, or more conventional, translational ground; in the second, he uses the term

[27] A further useful study of cognition in Shakespeare that goes beyond memory is Mary Thomas Crane, *Shakespeare's Brain: Reading with Cognitive Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). Crane expands her scope to consider how the brain is a site where body and environment, brain and culture, meet to form the subject and its expression in language. Shakespeare is her case study for this cognitive reading, as she examines how the self is formed within the body, as the embodied mind seeks to make sense of and negotiate its physical and social environment. A more recent study on cognitive approaches to early modern literary, philosophical, and scientific texts by Miranda Anderson questions Crane's approach; Anderson develops a theory of the 'extended mind', based on 'the cumulative uncovering of evidence that a human being is a physical, mental, technological and social amalgam, a coalition-forming entity with negotiable and contestable boundaries': Miranda Anderson, *The Renaissance Extended Mind* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 65. Both of these works are important for recognising the role of embodied cognition in the broader body politic; a subject that is beyond the scope of this chapter.
[28] Breche, *Les aphorismes d'Hippocrates,* p. 7; Canappe, *Opuscules de divers autheurs médecins,* p. 112.
[29] 'Agu' in the ATILF (Analyse et Traitement Informatique de la Langue Française) *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (1330-1500).* Accessed online at www.atilf.fr/dmf/ (20.09.2020).

'agu' but only to describe the 'engin' of the medical student grappling with the Hippocratic aphorisms.[30]

How can 'agu' refer to both time, and the 'engin' of the brain? In her article on Rabelais's war 'engins', Jennifer Oliver has traced a continuum of the term's synonyms in sixteenth-century French: shifting from the admiring 'habilité', through the more neutral 'moyen', 'tactique', or 'procede', to the more morally dubious 'ruse'.[31] Oliver's article persuasively seeks to foreground the material as well as metaphorical resonances of 'engin' to explore the machines themselves and the cognitive power behind their creation; her research helps us to recognise that it is this materiality of the very organ, the 'cerveau' facilitating such medical prudential thought, that is foregrounded in Canappe's translation. 'Il faut que le Medecin [ait] le bonne rememoration, bon jugement, bonne solertie, & prudence,' De Chauliac first writes, signalling his awareness of learned debates over the particularity of *sollertia* and to what extent it forms a part of prudence, before continuing with a list of practical skills; good eyesight, firm hands, slight fingers.[32] Canappe's commentary collapses the distinction between 'solertie' and 'prudence' into the 'facilité dapprendre'; into how, in other words, the physician is able to hone their medical skills:

> Or lengin: memoire, solertie, cestadire facilité dapprendre, bon jugement, ce sont dons de nature : lesquelz peuvent estre augmentez, & amplifiez par art, & exercitation. Quant à l'engin agu, il signifie subtile substance de cerveau : au contraire tardité d'engin signife grosse substance de cerveau. Facilité d'apprendre signifie que la substance de cerveau facilement reçoit les formes, & espèces : au contraire difficulté d'apprendre. Memoire signifie substance de cerveau stable et ferme : au contraire oubliance signifie substance fluide.[33]

[30] Canappe, *Opuscules de divers autheurs médecins,* p. 116.
[31] Jennifer Oliver, 'Rabelais's Engins: War Machines, Analogy, and the Anxiety of Invention in the *Quart Livre*', *Early Modern French Studies,* 38 (2016), 97-110.
[32] Cited in Canappe, *Opuscules de divers autheurs médecins,* p. 125.
[33] Canappe, *Opuscules de divers autheurs médecins,* p. 126.

Canappe uses the term 'engin' to figure the capacity of the very substance of the brain to receive a 'forme', or an impression. In his research on memory and cognition, Raphael Lyne puts forth one compelling model of early modern memory whereby memories are traces of these impressions on the brain, and the nature of each brain changes the way in which one can access those impressions.[34] It is this same tension between how the brain receives and how it retrieves an impression that animates Canappe's passage. The faculties of 'l'engin' are presented as 'dons de nature', shaped by how the brain, 'subtil' or 'grosse', 'stable et ferme' or 'fluide', is able to 'reç[evoir] les formes'. And yet such 'dons' are framed as able to be 'augmentez, & amplifiez par art, & exercitation'. In other words, Canappe suggests that you are able to train yourself to get the best out of your brain's materiality. This makes learning not something passive, not merely the reception or transferral of a 'forme', but an activity that determines what happens to this 'forme'.

'Agu' – as both 'pointu' and figuratively 'subtil' or 'intelligent' – in this context draws out the overlap of the material and the metaphorical meanings that the early modern definitions of 'engin' contain. Both terms together allow us to uncover an early modern understanding of not only how the organ of the brain works, but also how it can be made to work differently; how its texture and material form is connected to cognitive ability. When Canappe uses the term 'tardité' to describe what he deems as the contrasting texture to 'agu' – 'Quant à l'engin agu, il signifie subtile substance de cerveau : au contraire tardité dengin signife grosse substance de cerveau' – he indicates that he hasn't fully lost sight, however, of De Chauliac's temporal use of this adjective, in the passage that he cited just a page before. Cotgrave's dictionary,

[34] Lyne, *Memory and Intertextuality in Renaissance Literature*, pp. 1-19.

for example, gives a litany of translations for 'tardité' which are focused not only on materiality (the haptic feel of 'coldness, dullness, unweldiness'), but also on temporality ('tardiness, loitering, lingering, delay, tediousness, laziness'), even suggesting some terms able to evoke both aspects ('slackness').[35] Is Canappe's use of 'engin agu' asking us to recall de Chauliac's 'temps agu'? And, therefore, asking us to make a connection between the temporality of a prudential medical thinking (knowing when, and how, to bridge between theory and practice) and the very processes of the brain which allow this thinking to take place? If so, Canappe's repetition of 'agu' would anticipate the later Huarte passage cited in the opening part of this chapter, where prudence is seen to 'appart[enir] à l'imagination, par le moyen de laquelle se cognoist ce qui est à venir'.[36] For the activity of learning is geared now not only towards memory, or how to best learn the 'long' art of medicine in the 'short' life of the physician; but, rather, towards imagining the right (or 'agu') moment in which this learning is put into practice. To train the prudent brain to anticipate what may happen and to act accordingly, is, therefore, for the early moderns, to understand that the imagination is itself a site of cognition. It is this site of imagination which is activated in the very act of prognosis, as the physician is faced with predicting the future outcome of the patient's illness, and imagining at what point this prediction must be translated into action. The ability to mediate between interpretation and action becomes, in Canappe's echoing of De Chauliac, the foundation of a prognostic thought that is, by its very nature, prudential.

[35] 'Tardité' in Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues.* Accessed online: www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/ (20.06.2020).
[36] Huarte de San Juan, *Anacrise ou parfait jugement et examen des esprits propres et naiz aux sciences*, f. 95 r°.

Underlying the semantic polyvalence of a term like 'agu' is, therefore, the very question of how the skill of prudential prognosis can be learnt by the aspiring medical student; one where Breche's description as 'encline et convenable' encompasses both the nature of their brain, and their capacity to train its imaginative faculties. We saw that for Stallybrass, Chartier, Mowery, and Wolfe, the training of Hamlet's memory was achieved through the very act of writing; first in the 'tablets of memory', to be re-transcribed, repeatedly, into the 'book and volume' of the brain. After having now understood how the texture of the brain maps onto the temporality of learning how to imagine the future of the patient, we can return to Rabelais's invocation of writing – Rondibilis's demand that his cuckoldry prognosis be imprinted *by* Panurge, onto his *own* brain.

There is no tablet that Panurge holds here; it is not recopying in order to remember which is at stake. Rather, this is writing as an act of imagination. The figurative pen Panurge is asked to hold forms a direct link between his brain and hand, between the theoretical knowledge he is being asked to internalise (that cuckoldry is probably inevitable) and the practice this knowledge informs (getting married). Rondibilis's metaphor of writing directly onto the brain collapses the 'tablet' and the 'book and volume'; it draws on how the malleable materiality of the 'cerveau' shapes the performance of the 'engin'. In so doing, Rondibilis implicates Panurge's own 'encline et convenable' nature; as if he were the medical student reading through Breche and Canappe's translations of the Hippocratic aphorism, grappling with how best to learn the 'long' art of medicine. Rondibilis, the master of medical arts, appeals to Panurge's own capacity not just to receive a prognosis and understand it, but to learn himself how to replicate it, prudently.

This slippage between Panurge receiving and replicating prudential prognosis refigures how we think of Panurge as Rondibilis's patient in this encounter. For it brings us to, finally, the second part of the first Hippocratic aphorism: 'The physician must be ready, not only to do his duty himself,' the aphorism continues, 'but also to secure the co-operation of the patient, of the attendants and of externals.'[37] We have seen that sociologist and physician Christakis writes that prognosis is 'used by physicians, both advertently and inadvertently, to fulfil other objectives such as fostering compliance, cultivating hope, managing expectations, relieving anxiety, and engendering confidence'; returning to this quote helps us to locate the enduring role of the patient in facing their illness that Rondibilis demands of Panurge.[38] Prognosis for Christakis becomes, in part, a therapy of words, where rhetoric is figured not only as an instrument of exhortation and persuasion but for consolation and cure. The patient takes on a new agency in this understanding of the prognostic relation; their own 'duty' of 'co-operation' as they move, *with* the physician, in a timely way between the worlds of theory and practice. The question of what makes a prudent physician turns into, therefore, what makes a prudent – hopeful yet realistic, confident yet compliant – patient. When Rabelais has Rondibilis demand that Panurge should write on his own brain with his own pen, his use of a metaphor that insists on the materiality of Panurge's brain as it was understood in sixteenth-century medicine concretises the power of language in the prognostic encounter. For it locates Panurge at the very turning point of being a medical student, learning how to prognose, and being a patient, playing their part in the prognostic outcome. At the very turning point, that is to say, of the Hippocratic aphorism as it shifts between

[37] Hippocrates of Cos, *Aphorisms,* pp. 99. The original Greek is: δεῖ δὲ οὐ μόνον ἑωυτὸν παρέχειν τὰ δέοντα ποιέοντα, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν νοσέοντα καὶ τοὺς παρεόντας καὶ τὰ ἔξωθεν.
[38] Christakis, *Death Foretold: Prophecy and Prognosis in Medical Care*, p. 42.

physician's skill and patient's duty. Rondibilis's metaphor reveals the extent to which the art of prognosis was therefore understood in the sixteenth century as not straightforwardly directive or prescriptive, but implicating the brains on both sides of the university lecture theatre, and the prognostic encounter.

It is out of this context of the coincidence of what makes a good medical student and a good patient that Epistemon recounts having seen 'La morale comœdie de celluy qui avoit espousé une femme mute'. Performed by medical students in Montpellier – named as 'Ant. Saporta, Guy Bouguier, Balthaser Noyer, Tollet, Jan Quentin, François Robinet, Jan perdrier' and, finally, 'François Rabelais' in Rabelais's text – this play stages a medical encounter between a wife with a tied-tongue and the physician and surgeon who come to her aid. Epistemon's recall of this theatrical performance follows a set of exemplars and anecdotes told by the other characters present; literary forms that function throughout the *Tiers Livre*, Monique Léonard suggests, to 'tenter de s'approprier le futur, de la maitriser'.[39] Rondibilis himself, firstly, provides a tale of Jupiter who, while sorting out the calendar of feasting days after a period of tumultuous weather, forgets 'le paouvre Diable Coqüage' and must pair him with Jealousy; the way in which married men worship both, then, provides a scheme for how Panurge may ultimately cope with an unfaithful wife (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 33, pp. 456-457). Carpalim, who is accompanying Panurge on this consultation, agrees, confirming that such 'lois, exemples, raisons, et experiences quotidianes' exist to back up Rondibilis's 'Rhetorique' (*Tiers Livre,* ch. 34, p. 458). Ponocrates finally jumps in with the archetypal story that he has heard of women's dangerous curiosity – the opening of a forbidden box – before Epistemon

[39] Monique Léonard, 'Anecdotes, exemples et récits secondaires dans le *Tiers Livre*' in *Rabelais: à propos du 'Tiers Livre'*, ed. by James Dauphiné and Paul Mironneau (Biarritz: 1995), 71-91 (p. 71).

sets about recounting the Montpellier play that he once viewed (*Tiers Livre,* ch. 34, pp. 459-500).

The first half of this chapter has explored how the processes of imagining, inscribing, and learning animate the prudential act of prognosis in contemporary medical texts, and inform the language that Rabelais uses in his literary text. The second half will now examine how Rabelais refigures these processes: first of all, in the play performed by medical students, demonstrating an imprudent physician at work; and, secondly, in Epistemon's narration of the play. We revisit, then, the structure of imagined experience which Rabelais sets out at key points in his text: an event, followed by its recounting, and reinterpretation by one of the giant's companions, often, as it turns out, the man whose name represents both knowledge and expertise, Epistemon. These differing temporalities instantiated in the play and its recollection in turn refigure how we understand the relation between medical sources and literary fiction when reading Rabelais. The medical does not just inform the literary; the literary becomes a space in which ways of imagining and inscribing, learning and knowing, are negotiated anew.

III. Medical Fakery: The Montpellier Play

'Je y estoit', Epistemon says, and it is worth citing his account of the play in its entirety:

> Le bon mary voulut qu'elle parlast. Elle parla par l'art du Medecin et du Chirurgien, qui luy coupperent un encyliglotte qu'elle avoit soubs la langue. La parolle recouverte, elle parla tant, et tant, que son mary retourna au Medicin pour remede de la faire taire. Le Medicin respondit en son art bien avoir remedes propres pour faire parler les femmes : n'en avoir pour les faire taire. Remede unicque estre surdité du mary, contre cestuy interminable parlement de femme. Le paillard devint sourd par ne sçay quelz charmes

> qu'ilz feirent. Sa femme voyant qu'il estoit sourd devenu, qu'elle parloit en vain, de luy n'estoit entendue, devint enraigée. Puys le Medicin demandant son salaire, le mary respondit qu'il estoit vrayement sourd : et qu'il n'entendoit sa demande. *Le Medicin luy jecta on dours ne scay quelle pouldre, par vertus de laquelle il devient fol. Adoncques le fol mary et la femme enragée se raslierent ensemble et tant bastirent les Medicin et Chirurgien qu'ilz les laisserent à demy mors.* Je ne riz oncques tant, que je feis à ce Patelinage (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 34, p. 460)

Nicholas le Cadet's careful and erudite study of theatre in Rabelais is emblematic of Rabelais scholarship more broadly when it turns to the *Farce de Maistre Pathelin* – an anonymous farce estimated to have been first performed in 1456, staging an economic and a legal dispute, which Epistemon himself reads as a possible source text to this play – as a means of explaining the crucial editorial change between the 1546 and 1552 editions of the *Tiers Livre*, marked by italics in the above quotation.[40] Rabelais's 'chute comique' in the first edition rested solely on the husband, made deaf by the physician, claiming to then not hear when said physician demands his salary. This mirrors the ending of the Pathelin farce, in which a legal case turns into a comical pay dispute: lawyer Pathelin instructs his client, shepherd L'Aignelet, accused of stealing sheep, to bleat in court to feign madness; when Pathelin attempts to collect his legal fee at the end, the shepherd merely continues to bleat. In the 1552 edition, however, Rabelais complicates his dénouement by having the physician and the surgeon beaten by a wife and husband who have joined forces in their rage. It is worth noting, before exploring this dénouement further, that Rabelais scholarship also teaches us to read both forwards and backwards across Rabelais's work in understanding the source, or signification, of this play, notably in terms of the 'Dindenault' episode of the *Quart Livre* (the subject of Katherine Ibbett's recent article on sheepships in early modern France) or to earlier in the 'haute dame de Paris'

[40] Nicholas le Cadet, *Rabelais et le théâtre* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2020), pp. 129-181.

episode of *Pantagruel* (with a focus suggested by Bruce Hayes on Panurge as the ultimate trickster). [41]

Le Cadet pivots at this moment to the history of conjugal farces, reading the anger from the archetypal 'femme bavarde', redirected here from the husband to the physician and the surgeon, as an opportunity to unpick the status of the female voice. In so doing, he concurs with the work of David LaGuardia, who reads the wife's garrulity as one of the most evident expressions of Rabelais's misogyny in his texts, the husband's consequent loss of hearing a warning shot against those who indulge in listening to women's speech.[42] It is Rabelais as an avatar of the physician in the play himself, in Alice Berry's reading, who is both writer and intended recipient of this warning: she suggests that he has learnt, as a medical student, to not give into the temptation of hearing women speak, and has then inscribed this lesson into his own text.[43] My reading, however, will suggest that Rabelais has Epistemon alert the reader to the possible origins of Rabelais's text in order to emphasise the extent to which it takes a different direction. This new, angry, violent end invites, I want to suggest, a realisation of how our expectations of the role of the physician, and his power to restore the voices of his patients (as we examined in Chapter One), are disrupted in this play. This disruption gives Epistemon a lesson in prudence and prognosis; one which he repeats for Panurge's benefit in the medical scene in the narrative proper.

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[41] Katherine Ibbett, 'Sheepships: Robin Mouton Goes to Sea (Rabelais, Choisy, Voltaire)', *French Studies,* 74 (2020), 189-202; Bruce Hayes, *Rabelais's Radical Farce: Late Medieval Comic Theater and its Function in Rabelais* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 139-170.
[42] David LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity in French Renaissance Literature: Rabelais, Brantôme, and the 'Cent nouvelles nouvelles'* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
[43] Alice Berry, 'The Mix, the Mask, and the Medical Farce: A Study of the Prologues to Rabelais's *Quart Livre*', *Romanic Review*, 71 (1980), 10-28.

Tolley, in her thesis on women readers of Rabelais, compellingly focuses on orality of the woman's recovered voice in the opening of the play: 'Elle parla par l'art du Medecin et du Chirurgien, qui luy coupperent un encyliglotte qu'elle avoit soubs la langue. La parolle recouverte, elle parla tant, et tant' (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 30, p. 460). Tolley tracks the use of phonic patterning in 'parla par l'art', and its echo in the assonance of 'ella parla tant, et tant' and 'langue', to suggest a connection between the 'doctor's art and the power of speech' – one that spills, for Tolley, into a connection between Rabelais and his use of excessive language.[44] Tolley's careful attention to the woman's voice risks obscuring, however, what may initially seem to be a small and insignificant distinction of professional identity: that the woman speaks thanks to uniquely *surgical* skill. A chapter is dedicated to how such a 'retraction de la langue', caused by an 'encyliglotte', or 'filet soubz la langue', can be surgically corrected, for example, in Pierre Tolet's 1540 translation of *La Chirurgie de Paul d'Egine*; the same Tolet who allegedly performs alongside Rabelais on the streets of Montpellier.[45]

Furthermore, such a distinction *is* picked up in Motteux's translation, where the return of speech is described as thanks 'partly [to] the industry of the physician, [in] other part [to] the expertness of the surgeon'.[46] It is noteworthy that the terminology of expertise that was so crucial in both the first two chapters of this thesis is accorded here, by Motteux, to the surgeon, while the 'industry', the practical labour, is accorded to the physician; a reversal of how we might expect these roles to

[44] Tolley, *Writing Women into the History of Rabelais' Reception (1628-1785)*, p. 139.
[45] *La Chirurgie de Paulus Aegineta: qui est le sixiesme livre de ses oeuvres. item, ung opuscule de Galien, des tumeurs contre nature. plus, ung opuscule dudict Galien, de la manière de curer par abstraction de sang, le tout traduict de latin en françois par maistre Pierre Tolet* (Lyon: Estienne Dolet, 1540), pp. 76-79. (ch. XXIX, 'De la retraction de la langue').
[46] Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Accessed online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1200/1200-h/1200-h.htm#link32HCH0031 (04.02.2022).

correspond. For Motteux's choice serves to emphasise what comes next. The surgeon successfully does his job in this scene: he restores the woman's voice, and effectively exits the stage. The husband, however, goes back to the physician for help in, now, getting his wife to stop talking. The physician realises that 'en son art' there is no remedy for this, so he invents one, a 'remede unicque' using 'ne sçay quelz charmes' (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 30, p. 460): he takes away the husband's ability to hear his wife. We might reasonably praise the physician's 'industry' in both instances: his practical skill achieves the desired effect in both of his interactions here. He does successfully direct the surgeon to cure the wife; his secret charms (to which we will return shortly) do, perversely, work to disable the husband's hearing.

But, in truth, the physician's industry calls attention to the form of expertise that he lacks here, that of prudence. He first directs the wife's surgery without thinking through what is suggested as an inevitable consequence – that the wife will talk *too* much. His ability to mediate between theory and practice – so crucial, as we have seen, to the development of prudential skill – is proven to be fundamentally flawed; he rushes straight to practice, enacted in the surgical treatment, without fully taking into account the underlying theory of women and speech of which he should be aware. The physician has failed to predict the future outcome of his plan, and the future response of his female patient. He then replicates this lack of expertise: for he jumps, next, straight to treating the husband's symptom (that he suffers from his wife talking to him too much) without even examining the cause (his and the surgeon's treatment). He therefore moves straight into a second treatment (making the husband deaf) without thinking through the fact that he will now not be able to negotiate his pay. It is this second move, therefore, that ultimately sparks off the 'Pathelinage'. For there is no feigning of deafness to be done here; the physician has irreversibly disabled

the husband's power of hearing. The first instance of im-prudential prognosis, with the wife, has caused the second medical encounter, with the husband, to disintegrate entirely. The prognostic therapy of words that Christakis suggested is nowhere to be seen, as the second edition of the performance ultimately gives way to violence.

This second act of disabling, by 'ne scay quelz charmes' (doubled at the end of the play by 'ne scay quelle pouldre'), goes further than the Pathelin farce ever did in mocking professional identity and exchange: it calls into question the very foundational merits of the medical endeavour. This gesture towards the material tricks of charlatan practice draws out an anxiety around the very performative element of the physician's prognosis that we saw, in the introduction to this chapter, must be cultivated; the need identified by Christakis to '[foster] compliance, cultivat[e] hope, manag[e] expectations, reliev[e] anxiety, and [engender] confidence'. The trickster charlatan was a key archetype in sixteenth-century comic theatre, alongside the 'édificat[eur] et mora[l]' physician, seen in, for example, *La Condamnacion de Banquet*, a play written by a practising physician himself, Nicole de La Chesnaye, which staged allegories of different ailments and animations of different classical medical authorities to treat them.[47] If Shakespeare was our cross-cultural reference point for understanding the brain in the first half of this chapter, then his English contemporary Ben Jonson can serve now for locating the significance of Rabelais's secret 'charmes' and 'pouldre' for the representation of a physician here, who does not fit into either of these briefs: he is, rather, a physician *as* charlatan.

[47] M. Boutarel, *La Médecine dans notre théâtre comique, depuis ses origines jusqu'au XVIe siècle* (Caen: Impr. A. Le Boyteux 1918), p. 22. Accessed online: https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6523717k/f167.item.

Below is a passage from *Volpone; Or the Fox*, where the principal character disguises himself as a mountebank to sell his own secret powder:

> Here is a poulder, conceal'd in this paper, of which, if I should speake to the worth, nine thousand volumes were but as one page, that page as a line, that line as a word: so short is this pilgrimage of man (which some call life) to the expressing of it. Would I reflect on the price? why, the whole world were but as an empire, that empire as a prouince, that prouince as a banke, that banke as a priuate purse, to the purchase of it. I will, onely, tell you; It is the poulder, that made Venvs a goddesse (giuen her by Apollo) that kept her perpetually yong, clear'd her wrincles, firm'd her gummes, fill'd her skin, colour'd her haire; from her, deriu'd to Helen, and at the sack of Troy (vnfortunately) lost: till now, in this our age, it was as happily recouer'd, by a studious Antiquarie, out of some ruines of Asia, who sent a moyetie of it, to the court of France (but much sophisticated) wherewith the ladies there, now, colour their haire.[48]

Volpone spends the first two sentences linguistically distilling, slowly shifting scale from a book to a word, from a world to coins. This prepares the audience for the rhetorical flourish of concentrating the dazzling mythology and legend of Venus and Helen, Apollo and Troy into his life-changing powder. Rediscovered in the 'ruines of Asia' before making its way to the 'much sophisticated' court of Renaissance France: this is a performance of the movements of Renaissance learning that doubles as an attempt to convince the audience that this mountebank does not engage in medical fakery; an insistence on the authenticity of his drugs doubles up as an insistence on the authenticity of his character.[49] Jonson's staging of this mise-en-abyme performance allows him to tease out for his real, knowing, audience the questions of trust and transparency that characterise charlatan medicine. Furthermore, it transforms the theatrical stage into the medical marketplace where the early modern

[48] Ben Jonson, *Volpone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
[49] Patricia Kingori has written on this relation between the authenticity of drugs and of practitioners, and how it is negotiated in global health, as part of the project that she leads on Fakes, Fabrications, and Falsehoods in Global Health. Although treating a far different context to Rabelais's charlatans, the question of authenticity, fakery, and bioethics resonate for my research here. See, for example: Patricia Kingori and R. Gerrets, 'Why the Pseudo Matters to Global Health', *Critical Public Health*, 29 (2019), 379-389.

charlatan oscillated between different modes of show; from elaborately feigning the quality of his goods (as above) to putting on either run-throughs of procedures or fictive plays in order to attract an audience.[50] When Rabelais hints at the 'ne scay quelz charmes' and 'ne scay quelle pouldre' in Epistemon's account of the Montpellier play, he deepens the physician's imprudence by marrying it to the connection between performativity and medical fakery that his reader will have been familiar with. And this is borne out in the very real consequences that this imprudent physician did not prognose: he does not heal, but harms the husband. He is a physician that has gone resolutely against his brief; renouncing the very Hippocratic oath that structures the early modern (and enduring) understanding of how the physician should relate to their patient.

'Je y estoit (dist Epistemon)'; 'Je ne riz oncques tant, que je feis à ce Patelinage': the lines framing the play mark a transition from Epistemon seeing the play to him telling it, from a moment of witness to a moment of recollection. LaGuardia reads Epistemon's closing laughter as a re-inscription of the gender dynamics of the original farce: 'The comfort and familiarity that men experience by staging the spectacle of their gender', LaGuardia suggests, 'is expressed as [Epistemon's] laughter'.[51] It is a classic case, in his argument, of men displaying their erudition to other men, 'demonstrating that knowledge itself for them consists of this mode of working and reworking stereotypical images of femininity'.[52] This would make the play straightforwardly serve as an exemplar akin to the stories told by Rondibilis, Carpalim, and Ponocrates that we noted earlier precede Epistemon's

[50] Katritzky outlines the theatrical strategies of charlatans in 'Marketing Medicine: The Image of the Early Modern Mountebank', pp. 121-153.
[51] LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity,* p. 166.
[52] LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity,* p. 166.

intervention; stories that remind the reader of a wife's inevitable unfaithfulness (Jupiter and Jealousy) and dangerous curiosity (Pandora's Box). Each instance would shore up, in La Guardia's reading, a mode of masculine paradigmatic thinking based on a shared farcical and medical familiarity with the pejorative topos of the garrulous, and curious, woman.

The context in which this real play was performed, however, casts doubt on it being a 'spectacle' straightforwardly demonstrating shared knowledge. Historian of medicine in Montpellier, Louis Dulieu, has unearthed the 'fetes estudiantines' enjoyed during the period of carnival in the city: a banquet, he writes, would be preceded by 'un cortège carnavalesque à travers les rues de la ville, à la lumière des torches' before a 'moralité' would be performed 'sur des tréteaux dressés en un lieu fréquenté de la cité, en général au carrefour de la Peyre, là où la Grand'rue débouche sur la rue de la Loge.'[53] The 'moralité' would tend to be followed by a farce, 'qui provoquait le rire de tous, y compris des acteurs'; a laughter that wouldn't last for long, however, as records show a fast reduction in such plays after 1534, suggested by Estelle Doudet to indicate a souring of relations between faculty and the student body, a tension, or 'décryptage herméneutique', whose specifics evade us today.[54]

The significance of this history derives from how it reframes the individual harm of the imprudent practitioner within the play – a bad apple, visiting from the world of farce – into a question of power, and its potential misuse by the institution of medicine itself. The students self-ridiculing, their gentle mocking of their own practice, becomes tinged with the possibility that a broader questioning of authority

[53] Louis Dulieu, *La Médecine à Montpellier* (Avignon: Presses Universelles, 1975), pp. 78-80.
[54] Estelle Doudet, *Moralités et jeux moraux, le théâtre allégorique en français: XVe-XVIe siècles* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018), p. 77.

is at play here. Might Epistemon's closing laughter not participate in this, too? Taking on some of the ambivalence of Bakhtin's writing on carnival laughter as one that 'asserts and denies […], buries and revives', Epistemon infuses the 'morale comœdie', in this parting moment, with an instability over which side of the institution of medicine, mocked by its own medical students, he is really on.[55] The performance of the play, therefore, feels suspended between the two terms or forms of 'moralité' and 'comedie', between the faculty and the students, between complicity and critique.

Both the husband's disability and the context in which the play was performed therefore present a challenge to, rather than a re-inscription of, the patterns of knowledge-making or exemplarity that LaGuardia might want us to expect here. Deafness is not feigned, temporary, reversible, as the bleating was for L'Aigneult in the Pathelin farce, but rather represents a mode of suspension of the bodily norm that might reasonably shake the Montpellier audience's conviction in the power or capacity of the physician to sustain such a norm. In turn, Epistemon's ambivalent laughter represents a second suspension of the bodily norm, one that now shakes our readerly conviction in the exemplary status of what he recounts for Panurge; of the power or capacity of the profession or institution of medicine to heal rather than harm. How this impacts Panurge's response to Rondibilis is the focus of what follows in the final section of this chapter.

[55] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 12.

IV. ‘Cela s’entend’: Lessons Learnt

It is tempting, on a first glance, to read the courteous and respectful financial exchange between Panurge and Rondibilis which ends the set of Rondibilis episodes in the *Tiers Livre* as a professionalisation of the carnivalesque, slapstick, tongue-in-cheek Montpellier play that we have just seen. Panurge pays his medical fee; Rondibilis tries to refuse payment, but ultimately thanks Panurge and praises his good nature. ‘Retournons à nos moutons’, Panurge says (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 34, p. 460), claiming to want to bring the narrative back on track, to lift the suspension of social norms, to resume the gentlemanly structures of knowledge exchange that la Guardia prepared us to read.

Yet this return to the status quo is quickly undermined. Panurge firstly makes a mistake in reciting a commonplace insult given towards medical students, to which Rondibilis responds – ‘Vous prenez mal, (dist Rondibilis) le vers subsequent est tel […]’ (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 34, p. 460).[56] Rondibilis then projects a medical encounter onto the body of an imagined future wife, explaining how ‘[il] en vouldroi[t] veoir l’urine (dist Rondibilis) toucher le pouls […] avant oultre proceder’, to which Panurge responds, ‘Non, non (dist Panurge) cela ne faict à propous’ (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 34, p. 461). These two instances are important because they are constructed as teaching moments: Rondibilis directly intervenes to correct Panurge’s mashed-up medical commonplace, and then gives Panurge an example of how he, as the professional, would treat the body of his future wife. Rondibilis concretises our reading of the

[56] Panurge‘s mistake is: “Stercus et urina Medici sunt prandia prima./ Ex aliis paleas, ex istis collige grana’; Rondibilis corrects with: “Nobis sunt signa, uobis sunt prandia digna.” The first verse comes from the Régime de l’École de Salerne to describe ‘les inconvénients de la pratique médicale (‘Excrément et urine sont les premiers mets des médecins’); the jurists used this verse to make fun of physicians, who would reply with the verse that Rondibilis then uses, which translates as ‘Pour nous, ce sont des signes; pour vous, des mets mérités’.

image of writing on the brain with an iron pen in these closing moments; he, himself, constructs Panurge as a patient seeking a figurative prognosis as well as a student in the process of learning medical practice. Yet Rondibilis's authority as a teacher is dismantled, as Panurge both refuses Rondibilis's offer of future medical aid for his wife and insists on paying him. '"En poyant", dist Panurge. "Cela s'entend", respondit Rondibilis': Panurge won't be made deaf, like the Montpellier husband, won't have his capacity to speak or to communicate disrupted, like the Montpellier wife (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 34, p. 461). He carries on to the next expert, his mind not having been fully persuaded. The epistemological journey of the *Tiers Livre* continues; with Panurge, a student still learning, still navigating each discipline in search of answers.

Rabelais has foregrounded different types of teaching and learning prognosis that are operating across the Rondibilis episode. The prognostic encounter between Panurge and Rondibilis as a figure of medical authority is framed in terms of how the brain receives and retrieves impressions in order to bridge between medical theory and practice. Panurge's construction as both a patient seeking a prognosis of sorts about his marital future and as a (medical) student writing what he has learned on his brain tells us something new about the prognostic encounter in early modern medicine: that the physician does not simply impart knowledge on a passive patient, but requires their timely collaboration for a favourable outcome. The professional physicians present in this episode – Rondibilis, and the doctor in the Montpellier play – only imperfectly embody medical expertise; in not attempting to be prudent, or perhaps in being unaware of how important *prudentia* is in their profession, they struggle to authoritatively prognose.

It is Epistemon who, rather, is able to intervene at the right moment to warn Panurge with his recollection of the cautionary play. If we look right back to

Rondibilis's initial prognosis of Panurge, we find imprudence: he launched straight into a defence of marriage, in chapter thirty-one, without even thinking through, or prognosing, the possibility of cuckoldry. It was his frustrated afterthought, an inevitability that he presumed Panurge had to know already, and that did not alter his prognosis 'que [Panurge] marie[rait] hardiment, et que ne [s]e soucie[rait] d'estre coqu'. What I want to suggest, now, by way of a conclusion to this chapter, is that Epistemon's recounting of the play stopped Panurge becoming, in turn, an imprudent patient. It is as if Epistemon saw the medical students' play and understood that the physician there was engaged in medical fakery; not only through the drugs that he used, but because of a lack of prudence that saw him neglect his fundamental ethical imperative as a physician. Rather than performing confidence and hope in order to engage (and so maximise the potential of) his patient's role in their own recovery, the physician in the play revealed the emptiness of his own, literal, performativity and harmed them. This experience encouraged Epistemon to mistrust Rondibilis, even if he is the emblematic figure of medical authority and power in the *Tiers Livre*.

So, now, Epistemon chooses his moment to intervene and to reshape the course of Panurge's story, providing for him not a consolidation of masculine, medical knowledge but a warning of its pitfalls, or its imprudent practitioners. And Panurge, who we have already seen is holding his own pen, ready to inscribe lessons on his own brain, now listens to Epistemon's narration of the play and is ready to write his own future. Panurge's first response to Epistemon is to lift a phrase from the very *Farce de Maistre Pathelin* to restart the suspended narrative: 'retournons à nos moutons'.[57] The reference to the 'moutons' is a playful consolidation of the extent to

[57] The original phrase is: 'revenons à ces moutons', in *Farce de Maistre Pierre Pathelin* in *Théâtre français avant la renaissance (1450-1550). Mystères, moralités et farces,* ed. by Edouard Fournier (Paris: Laplace, Sanchez et Cie, 1873), p. 108.

which Epistemon's intervention has changed how Panurge is willing to relate to Rondibilis: by making present the farce's missing sheep in his proverbial language, Panurge indicates that he knows to place Rondibilis in the same world of feigning, fakery, and performance marking both the play, and the context in which it was performed by Rabelais himself.

An anxiety around the temporality of medical expertise and error, and what bodies and texts are exemplary, has been a thread running throughout this thesis so far. The Montpellier play reveals a further exploration of it: Rabelais reworks the Pathelin farce into a medical warning about the dangers of practitioners who can only imperfectly embody expertise; whose actually imprudent practice causes errors that they try to hide; who deliberately, like the charlatans, trick their patients; who bring the art of medicine into disrepute. What sets this episode apart, however, is that Epistemon's timely recollection – allowing for the course of the episode, and the meaning we take from it, to change – forms the properly medical intervention, akin to Panurge's suturing and the midwives' touch in chapters one and two. Epistemon undermines Rondibilis by asking Panurge to interpret the plot of the play in the middle of his prognostic encounter, prudently just before Panurge is set to walk away; and, in so doing, investing him with the ability to *not* collaborate, to *not* be complicit, with Rondibilis's instructions – at just the right moment.

Epistemon repeats, in part, the anamnesis that he performed on the *Pantagruel* battlefield here: he recounts in both instances his own experience as a form of medical expertise. Yet Epistemon's exemplary status was there left unresolved, exploited by Rabelais to play a game with what we can learn from history and from fiction. Here, Rabelais has Epistemon's past experience qualify him to intervene in Rondibilis's and Panurge's consultation, allowing his anamnesis to function as an alternative

prudential prognosis. Scholars such as Berry and Tolley want Rabelais to be a contemporary physician of Rondibilis, or Rondelet, in these episodes; they read him as the professional prescribing knowledge about the nature of women to his readers. Yet it is Rabelais's memory of being a medical student that shapes this episode: for by expanding the interventional capacity of Epistemon's witness and bearing witness from the *Pantagruel* battleground to the *Tiers Livre* consultation, to be received by Panurge as a collaborative patient against the advice of the established physician, Rabelais foregrounds the teaching and learning of medicine.

This pedagogical focus of prognosis is rooted, as we have seen, in the training of the physician's imagination. This is why it is not only important that Rabelais makes Epistemon remember his time as a medical student, but structures this memory in the form of a play that stages a broader set of questions about imagination in both medicine and fiction. For the play serves as an example of medical fakery that teaches Epistemon and Panurge about how to prudentially imagine the future of the body; in so doing, Rabelais explores the possibility that fiction can play a role in the structuring of medical imagination. The play, really performed by Rabelais and his fellow medical students, on the streets of Montpellier, is transformed in his fictions into a reflection on the power of the imagination in relation to medicine in early modern France. We saw, in the introduction to this thesis, that scholars in the contemporary medical humanities are interested in how literature can be instrumentalised in order to better train medical professionals. Rabelais resists this interpretation by staging how fiction might be instrumentalised within an episode that asks a continual question of fakery, credibility, and trustworthiness; a question that turns the limits of imprudential medical practice into an opportunity to consider the imaginative force of fictional writing.

Chapter Four:

Cure

I. Simples, Pharmacy, and Fiction

Somewhere between 1536 and 1538, Rabelais sent to Etienne Dolet a small vial of *garum* from Rome, where he was visiting in the company of his protector at the time, Jean du Bellay. A sauce originally produced as a happily accidental by-product in the salting, pickling, and fermenting of fish in harbours across the classical Mediterranean, *garum* appears in Apicius' first century recipe book *De re culinaria* as a condiment used to give an extra kick of strong, salty flavour to a dish.[1] Dolet replies with a poem which, as in his anatomical poems seen in the first chapter of this thesis, praises Rabelais's 'ingenium' in rediscovering this ancient product:

> Tuo ingenio, Rabelaese, garum salsamentum
> Aetate ab antiqua reductum est. Iam nostris,
> Marote, versibus celebreteur animose,
> Quando palatum utrique nostrum tam belle
> Irritat est stomachum recreat tam odorato
> Sapore. Res tam grata non est reticenda.
>
> Grâce à ton génie, Rabelais, l'assaisonnement du garum
> Nous a été rapporté de l'Antiquité. Que nos vers,
> Marot, le célébrant désormais avec passion,
> Puisqu'il excite nos deux palais si délicieusement
> Et ranime notre estomac par sa saveur
> Si relevée. Une chose si agréable ne doit pas être tue.[2]

[1] Cited in La Charité, 'Rabelais and Medicine', p. 56.
[2] Dolet, *Carmina (1538)*, pp. 406-407. The most comprehensive study of *garum* and how it was made and preserved can be found in Robert I. Curtis, *Garum and Salsamenta: Production and Commerce in Materia Medica* (Leiden: BRILL, 1991); of particular significance to this chapter is Chapter Three,

Dolet welcomes fellow poet Clément Marot to share his sample of the delicious *garum*, as if able to extend his poetic exchange with Rabelais through the sharing of food in a symposium of the kind figured in Jeanneret's *Des mets et des mots*.[3] And yet, when humanist poets are writing about food, they are inevitably writing about literary imitation; about how such modern communities of poets can rework substances of the past. Seneca provides perhaps the most recognisable imitation metaphor of swallowing and digestion for early modern writers: 'alimenta, quaeaccepimus, quamdiu in sua qualitate perdurant et solida innatant stomacho, onera sunt, at cum ex eo, quod erant, mutata sunt, tum demum in vires et in sanguinem transeunt ('The food we have eaten, as long as it retains its original quality and floats in our stomachs as an undiluted mass, is a burden; but it passes into tissue and blood only when it has been changed from its original form').[4] Dolet's language of reanimation ('recreare') at the end of poem hints at this metaphorical undertow: that textual and bodily

'Salted Fish Products in Ancient Medicine', pp. 27-38. La Charité confirms that Rabelais did, as Dolet lauds, rediscover *garum*: comparing its rediscovery to the surgical instruments described by Galen that Rabelais also attempted to materially reconstruct, La Charité writes that: 'These inventions are of the same order as that of the garum, the Roman sauce with therapeutic effects that Rabelais reproduced at the end of the 1530s, using a combination of the information found in Apicius' *De re culinaria* [On Cooking] and Cassianus Bassus' *Geoponica* [Agricultural Pursuits]': La Charité, 'Rabelais and Medicine', pp. 49-74. La Charité also has a piece entitled 'Rabelais, Alban Thorer et la chasse au *garum* des Anciens' forthcoming.

[3] Michel Jeanneret, *Des Mets et des mots: banquets et propos de table à la Renaissance* (Paris: J. Corti, 1987). Food in Rabelais more broadly has received vast critical attention. See Jeff Persels, 'The World in Pantagruel's Gut' in *A Companion to François Rabelais*, pp. 515-540. Elise-Noël McMahon, '*Gargantua*, *Pantagruel* and Renaissance Cooking Tracts: Texts for Consumption', *Neophilologus*, 76 (1992), 186-197, Daniel Soudan, 'La Table de Rabelais', *BAARD*, 6 (2002), 39-40. Food in the *Quart Livre* takes on a particular prominence, notably in the figure of Gaster. See, for example, Edwin Duval, 'La Messe, la cène et le voyage sans fin du *Quart Livre*', ÉR 21 (1988), 131-141 and Timothy J. Tomasik, 'Fishes, Fowl, and *La Fleur de toute cuysine*: Gaster and Gastronomy in Rabelais's *Quart Livre*' in *Renaissance Food from Rabelais to Shakespeare: Culinary Readings and Culinary Histories* ed. by Joan Fitzpatrick (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 25-55.

[4] Seneca, 'Epistle 84: On Gathering Ideas' in *Epistles, Volume II. Epistles 66-92* trans. by Richard M. Gummere (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920), pp. 276-284 (pp. 280-281), accessed online at: https://www.loebclassics.com/view/LCL076/1920/volume.xml (04.03.2022). Cave discusses Seneca's metaphors of literary imitation in: Cave, *The Cornucopian Text,* pp. 53-60.

nourishment only works when substances are themselves reworked as part of the process.

Yet, unlike for Dolet and Rabelais's exchange in Anamnesis, in this instance we have Rabelais's response; one which suggests that Dolet has misinterpreted Rabelais's intended use of the *garum*:

> Quod Medici quondam tanti fecere priores
> Ignotum nostris, en tibi mitto Garum.
> Vini addes acidi, quantumuis, quantum olei uis :
> Sunt, quibus est oleo plus sapidum butyrum,
> Deiectam, assiduus Libris dum incumbis, orexim
> Nulla tibi melius pharmaca restituent.
> Nulla et Aqualiculi mage detergent pituitam :
> Nulla aluum poterunt soluere commodius.
> Mirere id potius, quantumuis dulcia sumpto
> Salsamenta Garo nulla placere tibi.
>
> Ce garum si fort prisé des médecins de jadis, ignoré des nôtres, voici que je te l'envoie. Tu ajouteras autant de vinaigre, autant d'huile que tu voudras ; il en est pour qui le beurre a plus de saveur que l'huile. L'appétit que tu as perdu à force d'être penché sans arrêt sur tes livres, aucun remède ne te le rendra mieux. Aucun ne purgera davantage l'estomac de ses mucosités ; aucun ne pourra plus opportunément relâcher les intestins. Tu seras plutôt étonné de constater que quand tu as pris du garum, aucune salaison, si douce soit-elle, ne te semble bonne.[5]

Garum is not important insofar it can be used a culinary ingredient, Rabelais suggests, but as a pharmaceutical simple: a material with curative properties that can be used on its own, or mixed with other materials to produce a compound medicine. He undermines the very mechanics of a comparison between the two: no remedy will better cure a lost appetite, no purge or intestine-loosener is better for you, no salting is even needed; *garum*'s medicinal properties are beyond superlative.[6] Rabelais has

[5] 'Francisci Rabelaesi Ad Doletum, De Garo Item, *Carmen* (Poème de François Rabelais à Dolet, Sur le garum, derechef', p. 1025.
[6] Rabelais perhaps draws on Galen and Celsus's writings on *garum*'s pharmaceutical properties here. Galen wrote that *garum* was a 'very pleasant and exceedingly useful medicine and food for not a few suffering from chronic diarrhea'; Celsus suggested that it could be used to help move the bowels; both are cited in La Charité, 'Rabelais and Medicine', p. 56. Ancient dietetics refers to attempts to

altered the form of Dolet's poetry, adjusting his friend's Latin verse to include a medical recipe, or prescription, alongside this prediction of successful cure.[7] He displaces Dolet's use of the first-person plural with the insistent second-person singular of instruction, thereby restricting an imagined poetic community including Marot to a curative encounter between physician and their patient. Rabelais's diagnosis that Dolet has spent too long reading crystallises what he sees as Dolet's interpretative error, here: that Dolet has missed the *garum*'s curative properties in favour of a reading of digestion and imitation. Dolet, stuck in his books for too long, has carried out an overly literary interpretation of what Rabelais sees as a pharmaceutical drug. Rabelais's prescription-poem, therefore, serves as a corrective to Dolet's ready reliance on the commonplace digestion analogy. In the previous chapter, we saw that the prognostic relation works best when it is collaborative;

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guide a healthy life and to prevent disease through adherence to diet and exercise, both geared to variations not only of a personal kind, such as temperament, age, and sex of the person, but also of an external kind, such as the season of the year, geographic location, and so on. See Mark Grant, 'Dietetics: Regimens for Life and Health' in *Oxford Handbook of Science and Medicine in the Classical World* ed. by Paul T. Keyser and John Scarborough (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 543-551.

[7] Recent studies by Alisha Rankin and Elaine Long have done much to address a critical lacuna in early modern studies in terms of pharmaceutical recipes, enlivening our understanding of the range of practitioners working with pharmaceutical matter and the texts, pharmacopoeias, that may have helped them, from physicians, pharmacists, and surgeons, through empirical practitioners compiling 'books of secrets', to women in the domestic sphere. Their texts include: Elaine Leong, *Recipes and Everyday Knowledge: Medicine, Science, and the Household in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018); Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin, 'Testing Drugs and Trying Cures: Experiment and Medicine in Medieval and Early Modern Europe', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 91 (2017), 157-182; Elaine Leong and Alisha Rankin, eds., *Secrets and Knowledge in Medicine and Science, 1500-1800* (London: Routledge, 2016); Alisha Rankin, *Panaceia's Daughters: Noblewomen as Healers in Early Modern Germany* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013). See also The Recipes Project and The Making and Knowing Project, two collaborative online projects that study recipes in early modern Europe, found respectively at https://recipes.hypotheses.org/ and https://edition640.makingandknowing.org/#/ and the introduction, 'Thinking with Pharmacopoeias' by the editors to *Drugs on the Page: Pharmacopoeias and Healing Knowledge in the Early Modern Atlantic World* ed. by Matthew James Crawford and Joseph M. Gabriel (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2019), pp. 3-15. For Hippocratic recipes, see Laurence M. V. Totelin, *Hippocratic Recipes: Oral and Written Transmission of Pharmacological Knowledge in Fifth-and-Fourth-Century Greece* (Leiden: BRILL, 2008). The preparation of Pantagruelion, in *Tiers Livre*, ch. 49-52, pp. 500-513 is beyond the scope of this chapter; for a compelling reading of it, see François Rigolot, 'Rabelais's Laurel for Glory: A Further Study of the Pantagruelion', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 42 (1989), 60-77.

Rabelais sets out, here, a mode of reading this prescription-poem that is further based on a balance between his intention as physician and Dolet's agency as patient, making up the recipe himself according to his own taste ('autant d'huile que tu voudras') as he participates in his own recovery. We have traced multiple forms of medical error and expertise across this thesis; here, as we consider cure, the final stage of the medical encounter, it is Dolet's interpretative error and expertise which is in question.

Richard Cooper suggests that 'Rabelais has done little to make [this poem] more than an elegant doctor's prescription', noting that Rondelet identifies the same medicinal properties of *garum* and uses similar vocabulary to describe it in his 1554 *Libri de piscibus marinis*.[8] If Dolet's interpretation of the *garum* was overly literary, then Cooper's interpretation of Rabelais's prescription-poem is not literary enough; it obscures, in other words, the poetic dimensions of the poem. For Rabelais's critique of Dolet is double: be objects to both Dolet's use of the *garum* as an ingredient, and his resulting poetic use of analogy. By making this critique in the form of an integrated prescription and poem, he sets out how he sees the practice of pharmacy and the work of poetry as linked. Attending to the possible medical use of an object, even when it is less obvious, can open up a new function; this can be extended to how we think about literary interpretation, then, for the repurposing of a poem into a prescription can open up a new way, Rabelais seems to suggest, of considering how poetry functions. Rabelais's reworking of food into medicine indicates to Dolet not only that his use of commonplace digestion analogy is misplaced, therefore, but

[8] Richard Cooper, 'Rabelais's Neo-Latin Writings' in *Neo-Latin and the Vernacular in Renaissance France*, ed. by G. Gastor and T. Cave (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 49-70 (pp. 61-62). Cooper refers specifically to the vocabulary in Rondelet's recipe: 'hinc optimum remedium ad deiectam appetentiam recreandam, ad crassae pituitae attenuationem, citandamque alvum', cited p. 162.

suggests a way of rethinking it in terms of pharmacy that can lead to wider enquiry into the work of literary writing. In this way, the 'elegance' of the poetic form allied to the function of the prescription is key.

I want to now turn to a medicalisation of digestion within Rabelais's narratives themselves to examine how a closer attention to the sorts of pharmaceutical intention and error introduced by this prescription-poem can help us to think about the form and function of Rabelais's fictional writing. To do this is, we can bring Panurge – the wily sidekick who we have followed so faithfully throughout this thesis from suturer, to fable-teller, to patient-student – back, if only briefly, into our story, as he attempts to explain to Pantagruel the mechanics of digestion in the *Tiers Livre* by calling on two very different sorts of texts: Aesop's fable of the belly and Galen's *De usu partum*, published in Latin in Lyon by Guillaume Rouillé in 1550. Aesop's fable describes the members of the body in revolt against a belly they perceive to be slacking, yet when the belly begins to starve, all other parts of the body are, in turn, weakened too; while Galen's text sought to prove that the human body was a direct product of divine and intelligent design, showing how the body's different parts were constructed in precise accord with the functions assigned to them. This Galenic text is part of the history of Rabelais's professional medical life that we have traced in this thesis: scholars such as Romain Menini have now begun to visit the University of Sheffield archives to decipher the annotations made by Rabelais's own hand in his copy of the Aldine edition of the complete works of Galen in Greek, published in Venice by the heirs of Aldus Manutius in 1525–1526.[9] Reading this passage will help

[9] The Aldine edition (1525) at the University of Sheffield contains book IV of Galen's *De usu partium*, as outlined in: Romain Menini, 'Mots de gorge: voir (et savoir) dedans la bouche de Pantagruel', *Arts et savoir*, 8 (2017), 1-17 (p. 7n16); see also François-Jean Plattard, 'Le Galien de Rabelais à la bibliothèque de Sheffield', *Revue du seizième siècle*, 13 (1926), 303–304; and Vivian Nutton, 'Rabelais's Copy of Galen', *ÉR*, 22 (1988), 181–187.

to prepare us to read two further instances of digestion in Rabelais's texts as pharmaceutical narratives in what follows: that of a group of pilgrims nearly swallowed by a thirsty Gargantua, and a group of peasants encased in metal pills that, once swallowed, clear a blockage in Pantagruel's stomach. What this chapter 'does', therefore, is follow Rabelais's example in the last of the Dolet poems here cited: it seeks to 'correct' a reading of the digestion analogy which omits its curative, medical dimensions.

When Panurge retold the fable of the lion and the fox, as examined in Chapter Two, it was to propose that the female body could protect Paris's walls: his retelling of the Aesopian fable similarly, now, is in consideration of a political body. For he sets out a frenzied description of the cosmographical confusion and community collapse that could be caused in a society with no borrowers and debtors, and so no functional economic exchange. He imagines an analogical corporeal fate 'plus pernicieuse, que n'a figuré Æsope', a body that, to continue his plosive panic, 'perira sans doubte : non perira seulement : mais bien tost perira, feust ce Æsculapius mesme', the Greek God of medicine himself (*Tiers Livre,* ch. 4, p. 364).

This medicalisation of the classical fable continues as Panurge turns to the Galenic text in order to dig further into the mechanisms of the belly itself; the following passage summarises parts two, three, and four of part four of *De usu partium* to set out digestion as the transmutation of blood:

> En ceste forge sont tous membres en office propre : et est leur hierarchie telle que sans cesse l'un de l'autre emprunte, l'un à l'autre preste, l'un à l'autre est debteur. La matière et metal convenable pour estre en sang transmué, est baillée par nature : Pain et Vin. En ces deux sont comprinses toutes espèces des alimens. Et de ce est dict le companage en langue Goth. Pour icelles trouver, præparer, et cuire, travaillent les mains, cheminent les piedz, et portent toute ceste machine : les œilz tout conduisent. L'appetit en l'orifice de l'estomach moyenant un peu de melancholie aigrette, que luy est transmis de la ratelle, admonneste de enfourner viande. La langue en faict l'essay : les

> dens la maschent : l'estomach la reçoit, digere, et chylifie. Les venes mesariaïcques en sugcent ce qu'est bon et idoine : delaissant les excremens. Les quelz par vertus explusive sont vuidez hors par exprès conduictz : puys la portent au foye. Il la transmue de rechef, et en faict sang. Lors quelle joye pensez vous estre entre ces officiers, quand ilz ont veu de ruiseau d'or, qui est leur seul restaurant ? Plus grande n'est la joye des Alchymistes, quand aprés longs travaulx, grand soing et despense, ilz voyent les metaulx transmuez dedans leurs fourneaulx (*Tiers Livre*, ch. 4, pp. 365-6).

Panurge has morphed into a critical reader of Galen, offering a form of mini-translation – even before Jacques Dalechamps, who translated *De usu partium* into French for Lyonnais printer Rouillé in 1566 – of this authoritative tract on the functioning of the body. Carlino and Jeanneret, in their research on vernacular medicine, trace the value of translation in early modern France for not only medical practitioners who 'reposent traditionnellement plutôt sur l'apprentissage pratique et l'expérience que sur une formation universitaire formalisée et sur le savoir autonome' but also a 'public curieux' seeking 'accès à des connaissances et à des remèdes autrement contrôlés et monopolisés par les divers acteurs du marché thérapeutique.'[10] Translation into the vernacular – a form of textual reworking – is concerned, therefore, with the application of medical knowledge in practice, with the 'marché thérapeutique' in which both materials and texts circulate.

Midway through the passage cited above, Panurge describes what form 'l'apprentissage pratique' might take: 'la langue en faict l'essay : les dens la maschent, l'estomach la reçoit, digere, et chylifie'. Cotgrave records how 'chilifier' can mean both 'to digest' and 'to concoct', and it is digestion as a form of concoction which Rabelais draws out in this passage.[11] For the digestive capacities of the imagined

[10] Carlino, 'Introduction' in *Vulgariser la médecine*, p. 23. See also: Évelyne Berriot-Salvadore, 'Enseigner les 'Indoctes', vulgariser la médecine', *Seizième siècle,* 8 (2012), 141-154.
[11] 'Chilifer' in Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*. Accessed online: www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/ (20.02.2022).

patient's stomach are made comparable to the embodied knowledge of those who work on maintaining such capacities, themselves 'fai[sant] l'essay [de la]' matter of the world and concocting it into cures, to be swallowed and work their further concocting magic back in the patient body. This doubled meaning of 'chilifier' has been anticipated in Panurge's rendering of the body as 'ceste forge', populated by 'membres en office propre' that are at the end of the passage revealed to be the labouring body parts of the joyous 'Alchymistes', who, 'aprés longs travaulx, grand soing et despense […] voyent les metaulx transmuez dedans' this bodily 'fourneaulx'.[12] For it creates an analogy within an analogy, that almost reads as if bodies are at work within a body: Aesop's metaphorical body has now transmuted to Panurge's economic society, back to Galen's material body, and now to a figurative 'forge' or 'fourneaulx' in which the human alchemists are the small bodies at work. Panurge's language of labouring limbs becomes, therefore, the language of an embodied knowledge, a tacit know-how learnt by observation and comparison by the 'divers acteurs du marché thérapeutique'.[13]

Returning to Carlino and Jeanneret's writing on vernacular medicine allows us to understand the significance of this representation of embodied knowledge in Rabelais's literary narrative. *Vulgariser la médecine*'s introduction sets out the fundamental tension to writing in the vernacular:

> L'opposition latin/vernaculaire non seulement est greffée sur la tension entre médecine théorique et pratiques thérapeutiques subordonnées, mais révèle

[12] There is a broad body of work on early modern alchemy, and its relation to medical practices, that is beyond the scope of this chapter's focus of narratives of medical treatment between giants and the human bodies that they encounter. Pioneering works in this field include: Kathleen Perry Long, *Gender and Scientific Discourse in Early Modern Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) and William Newman and Anthony Grafton, *Secrets of Nature: Astrology and Alchemy in Early Modern Europe* (London: MIT Press, 2001).

[13] Alongside the work of Rankin, and Leong on the writing of such tacit knowledge, Tim Ingold's body of work has been influential in developing understanding of craft epistemologies. See especially: Tim Ingold, 'Of Works and Words: Craft as a Way of Telling', *European Journal of Creative Practices in Cities and Landscapes,* 2 (2020), 5-17.

> une série de clivages fondamentaux (savoirs livresques/savoirs pratiques, savoirs monopolisés/savoirs diffusés) et, surtout, empiète sur des questions d'ordre philosophique, voire épistémologique, comme, par exemple, la primauté de l'expérience […] ou encore l'essence matérielle de la Nature, constituée par des *choses* et, par conséquent, la réduction des *mots* à une fonction purement énonciative et descriptive.[14]

Rabelais does not just have Panurge translate and summarise *De usu partium* to consolidate a medicalisation of the fable of the belly; it is, rather, precisely this epistemology of medical practice, shaped by 'la primauté de l'expérience', that is represented by Panurge in the passage above. For here, too, Rabelais has explored the trope of digestion by shifting focus onto the embodied 'expérience' of working with digested matter; this time, the practice of alchemy as the experimentation of chemical matter.

Panurge's account helps us to elucidate Rabelais's own 'expérience' when sending the *garum* to Dolet: Rabelais intentionally '[a] essay[é]' the ingredients that he found on his voyage; experimented with how they could be altered, transformed, repurposed into medicinal 'metaulx'; recorded the results of this process in his prescription-poem, so that Dolet can recreate it for himself, according to the 'essay' of his own 'langue'. We saw how Rabelais's poem demanded Dolet's own embodied knowledge in order to interpret these instructions; how between the descriptive and prescriptive 'mots' on the page it is the reader's manipulation of the 'choses' that will ultimately bring the recipe to life. Rabelais's narrative text, therefore, records the very process underlying that 'essay'-ing itself. Reworking both the Aesopian fable and the Galenic text on digestion in narrative, Rabelais repurposes 'choses' through his repurposing of 'mots'. What emerges is a narrative form that reads as an

[14] Carlino, 'Introduction' in *Vulgariser la médecine*, p. 23. Italics added.

experimentation with the possibilities of 'chylifi[ant]', concocting, with those very categories.

In her article 'Ways of Making and Knowing', Pamela Smith describes her scholarly endeavour as 'a collaborative space in which objects, and indeed matter itself, are part of the cognitive and productive process'; reflecting, while doing so, on how her methodology compares to the very 'vernacular science' she seeks to map in the practical texts she studies.[15] Bringing together Rabelais's poem-prescription for Dolet and this passage from the *Tiers Livre* has helped us to see how Rabelais's narrative departs from the digestion metaphors of writing and reading that Dolet insisted on: it rather stages the 'cognitive and productive process[es]' of vernacular medicine – more precisely, the pharmaceutical experimentation with elements – in early modern France. Rabelais's fiction emerges as a form of collaborative space where pharmacy meets literary writing. This has equipped us with a new means of re-reading two swallowing encounters in *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, to further examine how this idea of a collaborative space contributes to our consideration thus far of the relation between medicine and fiction in and beyond Rabelais. We move firmly away from the world in which Dolet places Rabelais at the beginning of this chapter, a world of *garum* and learned humanist symposia, of reanimating classical models of taste and imitation. Rather, we will focus on a set of material objects in these episodes, tracing how cabbages and walnuts, pilgrim staffs and spades, are repurposed into objects of pharmaceutical cure and self-care. We will pay particular attention to those who handle these objects, and how they do so. This focus on

[15] Pamela Smith, *Ways of Making and Knowing: The Material Culture of Empirical Knowledge* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2014), p. 40. See also Pamela Smith, 'In the Workshop of History: Making, Writing, and Meaning', *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture,* 19 (2012), 4-31.

objects is not as opposed to texts; rather, the texts that Rabelais draws from will come under consideration for the ways in which they, too, are things that can be used in different ways, with different intentions, or different prescriptions.

Panurge and Epistemon have been guiding figures in this thesis under various guises, allowing us to insist on Rabelais's interest in those on the peripheries of elite medical practice and in the distribution of narrative voice. We finally leave Panurge and Epistemon behind in the main body of this final chapter, in order to foreground the even more peripheral figures at work in these episodes who find themselves going into the bodies of the giants: the pilgrims who enter Gargantua's mouth, and the peasant labourers who enter Pantagruel's stomach. Our consideration of error in terms of simples and pharmacy runs through these two episodes: encounters happen by mistake; cures are not intended; different designs happen to work out well. The pilgrims episode starts off as a pilgrimage to protect against the plague; when the pilgrims repurpose their staffs in the toothy terrain of Gargantua's mouth, they set up a string of unintentional cures that then re-inscribes the pilgrimage journey as not just a sacred practice, or even a discourse on travel, but as an alternative medical practice. The pills episode is framed by an explicitly medical discourse of pharmaceutical intervention, but the peasants' intentional cure in the visceral space of the stomach shifts our attention to our own interpretative encounter with Rabelais's texts. If the pilgrimage episode affirms an unintentional treatment encounter, therefore, the pills episode will then unravel the intentional medical narrative. We saw how Rabelais's prescription-poem implicated his reader, Dolet, in the 'essay'-ing process; this chapter will end with this examination of how the reader of Rabelais is drawn into the 'collaborative space' of his narrative, and encouraged to make their own interpretative 'essays' of Rabelais's texts.

The previous chapters have opened by establishing each stage of the medical encounter as a temporal mode; they have begun by attending to, in other words, the temporality of these different elements of medical practice. Dolet's poems which opened Anamnesis were interested in what happens to the trope of speaking with the dead when it is transposed to the anatomical theatre; this allowed us to consider how the states and the order of living, death, and speaking are fixed or shifting, and how this alters how the physician listens to the patient's history. In Diagnosis, Manardi's letters introduced a diagnostic present that shaped both his manner of interacting with – touching, or not being able to – the woman's body and how he wrote about his medical practice. The extent to which prognosis must be prudential was the key question opening Prognosis, allowing for a consideration of what it means to not only predict the course of the patient's illness but to intervene – to shift from theory to practice – at the right moment to change this course. Attending to these temporal aspects of medical practice opened up new ways of considering how Rabelais's narratives work as the chapters progressed. Anamnesis proposed how suturing, as opposed to dissection, might work as an alternative model to read medicine within Rabelais's texts and to read his texts in relation to others, prioritising the ways in which his writing operates as a form of compensatory fictional space. Diagnosis focused on how the diagnostic present translates into moments of suspension and reanimation in Rabelais's narratives, which require an embodied mode of reading that departs from both previous models of reading as a form of dissection, and as a form of cure. In Prognosis, it is the recollection and retelling of a medical performance by Epistemon which allows Panurge's medical narrative to be altered, extending the question of medical prudence into one of the role fictional writing plays in exploring forms of exemplary, timely witness.

This chapter, however, will take on a different rhythm to what has come before. We have established that modes of pharmaceutical care and self-cure, prescription and intention, are of interest; we will focus, in what follows, on how pharmacy opens up ways of thinking about Rabelais's own authorial intention. It is in this second stage – how the reader attempts to grapple with this intention, attempts to unravel it, or trace it backwards – that proves to be especially thought-provoking in terms of temporality. Rather than having the question of time imposed on the fictional text by medicine, therefore, this chapter swaps this order around to conclude our exploration of medicine and fiction in early modern France.

II. Prescription, Pilgrims, and Piss

In the terror of the *Quart Livre* storm scene, Panurge, pleading to swap places with a cabbage planter who '[a] toujours en terre un pied', makes a vow to 'faire un pèlerin' (*Quart Livre*, ch. 18, p. 583; ch. 20, p. 588): to send a pilgrim by proxy to ensure his safety. Panurge sees the potential reward of the pilgrimage journey; called by Peter Brown a 'therapy of distance', both the displacement from home to a localised holy space, and the touch of relics protected in this space, offer the promise and joy – and even cure – of proximity to the divine.[16] Williams notes, however, that the storm scene is an exemplary instance of pilgrim danger, signalling the working powers of divine intervention.[17] Already in the chaos of his own displacement, Panurge therefore seeks to send a mediating figure to go through the additional peril of

[16] Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1981), p.87.
[17] Wes Williams, *Pilgrimage and Narrative in the French Renaissance: 'The Undiscovered Country'* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 267-269.

pilgrimage on his behalf; so that he can accrue the benefits of protective divine touch without dealing with the complexities, or the hazardous contacts, of actual further travel.

Midway through *Gargantua,* we get a differently focused glimpse of the early modern pilgrim's vacillating modes of encounter, as our eponymous protagonist accidentally eats up six pilgrims in a salad. The episode begins as one framed by an impression of divine intervention; the pilgrims are on their return journey from Saint-Sébastian de Nantes, a site of pilgrimage named after the saint venerated as a patron for plague sufferers. Even texts that put forward tentative proto-scientific explanations of contagion were quick to assert that the plague was God's bidding: Paré wrote that 'le Seignuer punit l'idolatrie et la profanation de son service par le fléau de peste', for example, echoing Claude de Rubys's claim that the primary cause of contagion, alongside infected air and touch, was the 'volonté de Dieu, pour punir quelque vice ou péché du peuple'.[18] But the conviction that God could cure as well as punish transformed pilgrimage to saints connected to disease into an alternative form of medical practice; one that despite being pervasive in medieval and early modern culture, has been neglected both in Antonioli's account of medicine in Rabelais and in medical scholarship of these periods more broadly.[19]

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[18] Ambroise Paré, *Traicté de la peste, de la petite verolle et rougeolle, avec un bresve description de la lèpre* (Paris: André Wechel, 1580), p. 7; Claude de Rubys, *Discours sur la contagion de peste qui a esté ceste presente annee en la ville de Lyon* (Lyon: Jean D'Ogerolles, 1577), p. 6. For a detailed exploration of more, similar examples, see Justine Semmens, 'Plague, Propaganda and Prophetic Violence in Sixteenth-Century Lyon' in *Aspects of Violence in Renaissance Culture,* ed. by Jonathan Davies (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 83-107.

[19] Antonioli, *Rabelais et la médecine.* David Gentilcore's reflective article on early modern popular medicine acknowledges the instrumental role of Christianity in healing practices: David Gentilcore, 'Was There a 'Popular Medicine' in Early Modern Europe?', *Folklore,* 115 (2004), 151-166. Furthermore, a recent edited collection starts to address this lacuna: Barbara S. Bowers and Linda Migl Keyser eds., *The Sacred and Secular in Medieval Healing: Sites, Objects, and Texts* (London: Routledge, 2017). Ruth Harris dedicates, furthermore, two chapters of her book on nineteenth-century Lourdes to cure, examining healing narratives, bodily experiences and the recurring theme

Secondly, this too is an episode where the humble cabbage planter and his relation to dry land crops up, although in rather different circumstances: the six fearful pilgrims are hiding silently in the salad patch when they are plucked by an unknowing Gargantua, are nearly drowned when the giant proceeds to wash them in a fountain, and again when he unintentionally scoops them up into his mouth with a lettuce leaf and a swig of wine. Rabelais found *garum* during his trip to Italy; he found, on a second trip, lettuce seeds that he sent to Geoffroy d'Estissac with a letter: 'Mons[eigneu]r, je vous escrivy du XXIX^{e}. jour de Novembre bien amplement et vous envoyay des graines de Naples pour vos salades de toutes les sortes que l'on mangue de par deçà, excepté de pimpinelle, de laquelle pour lors je ne peus recouvrir.'[20] Just as the *garum* was transformed by Rabelais from culinary ingredient to pharmaceutical simple, these lettuce leaves will be fundamental to our reading of accidental cure in this episode which, ostensibly, has no doctors, no prescriptions, no certified or professionally produced drugs; it is the lettuce leaves that will become an unintentional vehicle for cure, a form of pill.

Finally, critical readers of the *Quart Livre* storm scene often conclude that it becomes an allegory of reading. Rabelais incorporates themes and motifs from The Acts of Apostles, Folengo, and Erasmus' *Naufragium*; as we will pick up later, the cabbage planter can be read as a borrowing from Lucian. Such incorporations transform the scene, as Frank Lestringant and others propose, from theological allegory into a broader exercise in classical as well as Christian *imitatio*.[21] One of the

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of communion with the divine as well as polemics surrounding science and religion: Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age* (London: Allen Lane, 1999), pp. 288-357.

[20] Lettres d'Italie, 'À Monseigneur de Maillezais', p. 1000. This letter is also cited and discussed in Richard Cooper, *Rabelais et L'Italie* (Geneva: Droz, 1991), p. 107.

[21] Frank Lestringant, *André Thevet: cosmographe des derniers Valois* (Droz: Geneva, 1991), pp. 49–56; Screech, *Rabelais*, pp. 341–50; Williams, *Pilgrimage and Narrative in the French Renaissance: The*

Gargantua pilgrims, Lasdaller, ends the episode in which he has just almost lost his life with this very interpretative exercise; he sits down to read, for his fellow pilgrims, their encounter with the giant in line with a psalm. We will work through how the repurposing of various materials throughout this episode – a pilgrim staff, a lettuce leaf, a walnut tree, and, finally, a different sort of material, a 'pisser son malheur' proverb – makes the pilgrimage into a medical cure that reconsiders Lasdaller's interpretative gesture; how he instrumentalises this episode, in other words, in terms what he hoped to read all along. This will allow us to reconsider the conventional view of literature as able to be instrumentalized as therapeutic.

It is worth untangling further the relation between touch, objects, and the divine in the context of sixteenth-century Christian pilgrimage before homing in on this repurposing of materials in the *Gargantua* episode. When Cyril, fourth-century Bishop of Jerusalem, scoffed at the power of narrative accounts of pilgrimage compared with the experience itself by saying that 'others only hear, but we [pilgrims] both see and touch', he articulates the yearning for proximity central to Brown's theory of pilgrimage's 'therapy of distance' as a tactile one – expressed at the pilgrimage site as the touch of a relic or statue, the gathering of dirt, the rubbing of fingers over inscriptions.[22] Georgia Frank explains that such gestures were motivated by a late-medieval understanding of holiness as able to leak from the sacred personage either in life or after death to affect objects with which he or she had come

Undiscovered Country, pp. 273-279. For a reading that focuses more closely on the materiality of shipwreck and the figure of Panurge, see: Jennifer Oliver, *Shipwreck in French Renaissance Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 65-100. We will encounter Lucian's cabbage planters and their relation to familiarity again, and explore them in more detail, in the second half of the chapter.

[22] Patricia Cox Miller skilfully explains the overlap between touch and vision that could be operating in Cyril's comment: rays were understood to form a sort of contact with the eyes, furnishing an idea that seeing involved reaching out and touching its object. Patricia Cox Miller, 'Visceral Seeing: The Holy Body in Late Ancient Christianity', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 12 (2004), 391-411.

into contact.[23] This model of tactile material transmission worked on two levels: firstly, it confirmed the physical presence of the incarnated Christ as a body able to touch and be touched, thus validating physical contact as a means of fleeting access to the divine; secondly, it means that any object, no matter how quotidian, mundane, or even disgusting, had the potential to become a vessel for holiness. It is this tactile piety, motivated by what Joe Moshenska elegantly terms a 'sanctification of the ordinary', that Erasmus, among other early reformers, targets in a passage laying bare the shifting value of divine touch:

> Equidem vt non aspernor simplicem vulgi pietatem, ita non possum non mirari tam praeposterum multitudinis iudicium. Calceos sanctorum et sudariola mucco sordentia exosculamur, et eorundem libros, sanctissimas et efficacissimas diuorum reliquias, neglectos iacere patimur.
>
> For my part, far as I am from despising the simple piety of common folk, I cannot but wonder at the absurd judgment of the multitude. The slippers of the saints and their drivel-stained napkins we put to our lips, and the books they wrote, the most sacred and most powerful relics of those holy men, we leave to lie neglected.[24]

The perceived value of the relic persists here, but only as a metaphor: the scripture is, for Erasmus, powerful enough to provide and sustain proximity to God. His visceral reaction to the material reality of the slippers and napkins testifies to his fundamental rewiring of the system of values within which relics were embedded and from which they derived their meaning. He is able to recognise enduring behaviour as 'simple piety', but he is unable to subscribe to an easy or linear transfer of meaning between

[23] Georgia Frank, *The Memory of the Eyes: Pilgrims to Living Saints in Christian Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 102-133. See also; C. M. Woolgar, 'What Makes Things Holy? The Senses and Material Culture in the Later Middle Ages' in *Sensing the Sacred in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, ed. by Robin MacDonald, Emilie K. M. Murphy and Elizabeth L. Swann (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 60-79 (p. 73).
[24] Cited in Joe Moshenska, *Feeling Pleasures: The Sense of Touch in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 26.

the past and present use of such objects.[25] This 'lingering of the literal', as Timothy Chesters calls it, writing on studies of cognitive approaches to literature, persuasively ties the concern over the value of tactile experience to the question of how to repurpose the material artefacts that already mediate one's relationship to the divine.[26] Underlying this repurposing relation are the fundamental questions of how to interpret value, and how to value reinterpretation.

The pilgrims who wander into Rabelais's texts are unlikely to have been readers of Erasmus; their intentional journey to Saint Sebastien de Nantes was motivated by their conviction regarding the tactile cure they would receive there. Yet this context of anxious touch, potential for repurpose, and shifting interpretation seeps into their return journey: it is when hiding among the cabbages and lettuces of Gargantua's garden, fearful of being misread by others as 'espies', that they are launched into a series of unintentional encounters with the thirsty giant. Examining how these encounters force the pilgrims into themselves repurposing objects, and how these are, unintentionally, turned into objects of cure, can help us to understand how we might begin to recognise this episode as a medical scene, and more specifically still, an episode of pharmaceutical treatment. We can start with the pilgrim staff.

In an article on disability in hagiographical writing, Jessica Chase draws on how the pilgrim staff all too readily becomes a symbolic marker of saintly identity, while its capacity as an enabling instrument, constructing what Lennard J. Davis has

[25] On objects in the Reformation, see Alexandra Walsham, 'Recycling the Sacred: Material Culture and Cultural Memory after the English Reformation', *Church History*, 86 (2017), 1121–1154; Caroline Bynum, 'Are Things 'Indifferent'? How Objects Change Our Understanding of Religious History', *German History*, 34 (2016), 88–112.
[26] Timothy Chesters, 'The Lingering of the Literal in Some Poems of Emily Dickinson' in *Reading Beyond the Code: Literature and Relevance Theory* eds. by Terence Cave and D. Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 147.

termed a 'prosthetic space' between the body and the world it moves through, remains overlooked.[27] As the pilgrims episode develops, we see this tension between appearance and action play out. The first mention of the pilgrim staff in fact sparks off an actual (as opposed to feared) *mis*identification: the giant has plucked, washed, dressed and almost swallowed up five of the unlucky pilgrims with a gulp of wine when Grandgousier catches glimpse of the staff of the sixth, otherwise hidden, pilgrim and warns: '« Je croy que c'est là une corne de limasson ne le mangez poinct […] » Et tyrant le bourdon ensemble enleva le pelerin et le mangeoit tresbien'. The pilgrims now enter the mouth:

> Les pelerins ainsi devorez se tirerent hors les meulles de ses dentz le mieulx que faire peurent, et pensoient qu'on les eust mys en quelque basse fousse des prisons. Et lors que Gargantya beut le grand triact, cuyderent noyer en sa bouche, et le torrent du vin. Presque les emportant au gouffre de son stomach, toutesfoys saultans avec leurs bourdons comme font les micqeulotz se mirent en franchise l'orée des dentz.
>
> Mais par malheur l'un d'eux tastant avecque son bourdon le pays à sçavoir s'ilz estoient en sceureté […] (*Gargantua*, ch. 38, p. 105).

Rabelais appears to momentarily reinscribe the instinctive symbolic connection between instrument and identity that Chase encountered in hagiographical scholarship: the pilgrims are described as 'toutesfoys saultant avec leurs bourdons comme font les micquelotz', those who take a pilgrimage to Mont-Saint-Michel. Yet in navigating this space, Rabelais's pilgrims not only 'sault[ent]', but 'tast[ent]': 'l'un d'eux tastant avecques son bourdon le pays à sçavoir s'ilz estoient en sceureté […]'. Urquhart translates 'tastant' as 'groping and sounding', in line with Cotgrave's

[27] Jessica Chase, 'Animal, Vegetable, Prosthesis: Medieval Care Networks in the Lives of Three English Saints', *Exemplaria: Medieval, Early Modern, Theory,* 29 (2017), 1-20; Lennard J. Davis, *The End of Normal: Identity in a Biocultural Era* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2013), p. 77. Chase does explore how the non-normative body of the pilgrim – one that requires a walking aid, in a reminder of the physical toil of the pilgrimage journey – was embraced by a 'medieval audience of clerics and pilgrims for whom disease, debility, and chronic illness were not only daily struggles but understood to be reflections of the divine': the use of prosthetics as a disability aid is a further avenue of study, bridging between medical and environmental humanities, worth pursuing.

definition of 'taster' as 'to take an essay of, to handle, feele, touch, or grope for' (recalling Rabelais's use of 'faire l'essay de' in the *Tiers Livre* digestion passage).[28] The pilgrim now uses his staff, therefore, to not just imitate exemplary, conventional behaviour – happy skipping – but to tentatively feel through this new interior environment of Gargantua's body. Urqhart's use of 'sounding', which could reference a testing out of the depth of water, suggests that this environment is a particularly liquid one.

Moshenska's persuasive readings of English Archbishop Thomas Cranmer's own use of the term 'groping' in relation to liquidity suggest one means of thinking through this repurposed tactile mode of pilgrim exploration.[29] In a doctrine published in 1550, Cranmer writes that 'the washing in water of baptism is, as it were, shewing of Christ before our eyes, and a sensible touching, feeling and groping of him, to the confirmation of inward faith, which we have in him'.[30] For Moshenska, Cranmer's addition of 'as it were' shies away from a full explanation of whether the water's touch, the feeling of wetness, constitutes a real, physical, material touch of the divine, or merely a metaphor using the language of touch as the best available equipment for describing an experience that resists full expression. For Rabelais's pilgrims, the staff's exploratory mode of touch therefore literalises the anxiety around divine touch that motivated Panurge's pilgrimage by proxy. Using their staff not just to skip along the pilgrim trail, but to feel their way through an unmapped and undefined terrain, it feels as if the 'joy of proximity' crucial to the pilgrims' journey is also diverted: they

[28] Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel.* Accessed online: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1200/1200-h/1200-h.ht (20.03.2019); 'Taster' in Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*. Accessed online: www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/ (20.03.2019). In John Kersey's 1708 dictionary, one meaning for 'sound' is 'To Sound, to yield a Sound or Noise; to try the Depth of the Water in the Sea'. John Kersey, *Dictionarium anglo-britannicum; or, A general English dictionary* (London: J. Wilde, 1708), p. 600.
[29] Moshenska, *Feeling Pleasures*, pp. 47-69.
[30] Moshenska, *Feeling Pleasures*, p. 40.

can now only touch using a prosthesis which ultimately enforces distance. The staff becomes a material object that takes on the role of Cranmer's 'as it were' in the text, as the pilgrims grope their way through their own ambiguous liquid encounter with Gargantua's body.

The significance of that initial comparison to Mont-Saint-Michel now, however, comes into view. The Mont-Saint-Michel pilgrims distinctively use their staffs to make their way through a marshy, hybrid land- and sea-scape to get to the tidal island, sitting as it does peripherally to the mainland. Rabelais's pilgrims have here, similarly, entered an undefined space, one both flooded by 'le torrent du vin' and lined with solid teeth, that sits on the periphery of the body (the pilgrims manage to stay there, after all, rather than be washed into the stomach). From the supposed rootedness of the cabbage garden in both the *Quart Livre* and *Gargantua*, the *Quart Livre* stormy sea has now been swapped out for the unpredictable body of Gargantua himself.

The particularity of the hybrid environment of Mont-Saint-Michel plays on the analogical language used by Galen himself in the *De usu partium*, the tract that Panurge was repurposing in the introduction of this chapter, and that we know Rabelais to have himself annotated. The passage below appears in Dalechamps's later translation of this text in 1566, and while its envisioning of the roads of the body may be familiar to a reader focused on Alcofribas's more famous buccal voyage in Pantagruel's mouth (to which we will turn, briefly, later), it is the elemental end that I want to draw attention to here:

> Estant necessaire que les membres de l'animal soyent nourris, estant aussi une seule entrée de la viande par la bouche, Nature à bonne raison, a depuis icelle divisé beaucoup de voyes, les unes comme grands chemins et publiques à toutes parties comme des ruelles, sentiers, et passages estroicts, qui portent le nourrissement à chacune partie. Un de ces chemins commun à tout le

> corps, grand, et principal, conduict la viande de la bouche en l'estomach, qui est comme une despence et gardemanger commun à toutes les parties, et situé au milieu de l'animal. Le nom propre de ceste entrée est οἰσοφάγος, comme si nous disions Porte-manger, et son commun στόμαχος, en François le gosier. Car tout passage long comme un col, et estroict comme une langue de terre, battue çà et là de la mer, que les Grecz appellent ἴσθμος, mis au devant de quelque ventre ou capacité, se nomme stomachus en general.[31]

The description of the passageways of the body as 'estroict comme une langue de terre' recalls the dizzying analogical work that Panurge performed in the *Tiers Livre* passage, playing on terminology that renders a simultaneous transfer of meaning from land to body and vice versa. Yet the following clarification, 'battue cà et là de la mer', pushes us to take more seriously the materiality of this analogy, and so the nature of this interior bodily space. For it renders the comparison to Mont-Saint-Michel, itself reached by a 'langue de terre, battue cà et là de la mer', into an analogy particularly able to evoke the materiality of the humoral body.

It is tempting, at this juncture, to anticipate what our conclusion might be. Is not any cure that follows going to fit into an argument that Rabelais is dismissing pilgrimage as a nonsense here, and setting up humoral medicine as the real agent of cure? When the pilgrim's probing touch 'par malheur' 'frapp[e] rudement' Gargantua's tooth and hits a nerve, however, we can turn our attention to the intentional *and* unintentional actions of the giant to nuance this conclusion. Gargantua responds to the 'tresforte douleur' caused by the pilgrim's staff by repurposing the 'noyer grollier' in his garden as a toothpick:

> Pour doncques se soulaiger du mal feist aporter son curedentz, et sortant vers le noyer grollier vous denigea messieurs les pelerins.
>
> Car il arrapoit l'un par les jambes, l'aultre par les espaules, l'aultre par la bezace, l'aultre par la foilluze, l'aultre par l'escharpe, et le pauvre haire qui l'avoit feru du bourdon le accrochea par la braguette, toutesfoys ce luy fut un

[31] Galenus, *De l'Usage des parties du corps humain,* p. 212.

> grand heur, car il luy percea une bosse chancreuze, qui le martyrisoit depuis le temps qu'ilz eurent passé Ancenys (*Gargantua*, ch. 38, p. 105).

Earlier in the episode, the lettuce in Gargantua's garden was described as '[grande] comme pruniers ou noyers'; there is now a further pleasing shift between the apparent and the actual as the imaginary walnut tree becomes real, only to then be re-imagined and used as something else entirely. This potential toothpick quality in turn connects the walnut tree to the staff, which also acted as a sort of defective toothpick while helping the pilgrims to navigate the banks of Gargantua's mouth – to, in a further linguistic slippage, avoid the alternative meaning of 'noyer': to drown. It doesn't end there: this resemblance of shape, material, and use only becomes embedded further when we read the thrust of Gargantua's walnut-tree-toothpick as responding to the thrust of the pilgrim's staff, an action which paves the way for Gargantua's tooth pain to cease and the piercing of a 'bosse chancreuze' of the very pilgrim who carried the staff in the first place. It is no longer just the humoral nature of the giant's body which is revealed by the pilgrim's repurposing of their staff in this episode; Gargantua's own improvisational agency has set into motion a reciprocal cure.

Cave, reflecting on embodied cognition as a means by which we can reanimate the work of literature, might read the walnut-tree here as an open-ended affordance – an object which, adapting psychologist James Gibson's original term, can offer a whole range of potential uses to a being endowed with the cognitive fluidity and improvisational capacity to imagine such uses.[32] Thinking about the world in terms of such open-ended affordances fosters, for Cave, a vision of the environment as a 'site of potentialities for behaviour and adaptation […] an ecology

[32] Terence Cave, *Thinking with Literature: Towards a Cognitive Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); James Gibson, 'The Theory of Affordances' in *Perceiving, Acting, and Knowing: Toward an Ecological Psychology* ed. by R. Shaw and J. Bransford (Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum, 1977), pp. 67-82.

in which individual things collectively form a complex network of reciprocal relations.'[33] Yet a closer look at how the lettuce is being used in this string of intentional and unintentional cures offers an alternative reading. The encounter between the pilgrims and Gargantua had begun when the giant, 'se trouva[ant] quelque peu alteré […] demanda si l'on pourroit trouver de lectues pour faire sallade' (*Gargantua*, ch. 38, p. 105). Hearing of their great size, he wanted to go out and pick them for himself: 'y voulut aller luy mesmes et en emporta en sa main ce que bon luy semble' (*Gargantua*, ch. 38, p. 105). The fountain he went to wash them in could have provided water to quench his thirst; rather, Rabelais highlights Gargantua's intentional picking of the right lettuce leaf, in a way that recalls Rabelais's own discovery and sending of the lettuce seeds back from Naples. This is in contrast to the then entirely unintentional cures that follow.

Yet there remains no medical professional intending anything in this episode. Rabelais avoids, here, the model of the practitioner and their patient, that we saw was so essential to understanding the prognostic encounter in the previous chapter, in favour of an encounter between two parties who aren't even aware of, or misjudge, each other's existence. But in narrativizing Gargantua's intentional moves as the pilgrim's unintentional cures, Rabelais is able to foreground the very questions that determine the making of a pharmaceutical recipe: what can be swallowed, how does the body accommodate the foreign object, what might be unintended consequences? Examining how Rabelais plays with purpose – or lack thereof – has allowed us to work with objects in Rabelais's text in a way that is less predicated on Cave's readings of affordances, and more on a mode of repurposing that turns the matter of the world

[33] Cave, *Thinking with Literature*, p. 48.

into *specifically* medical matter. Returning one last time to the lettuce leaf makes this clear: for it is not that Gargantua has seen in the lettuce leaf the potential for something that can cure him; but that Rabelais has made him use, without him really knowing it, the lettuce leaf as a pill-of-sorts to transport the pilgrims up into his mouth and cure his tooth-ache.

While Cave, and earlier, Chase, have offered us more recent reinventions of how to read early modern culture and literature in relation to disability and cognitive studies, it is to Erich Auerbach's formative reading of Rabelais that we can turn to understand how this staging of medical intention reframes Rabelais's own authorial intention:

> Rabelais's entire effort is directed toward playing with things and with the multiplicity of their possible aspects upon tempting the reader out of his customary and definite way of regarding things, by showing him phenomena in utter confusion; upon tempting him out into the great ocean of the world, in which he can swim freely, though it be at his own peril.[34]

Auerbach consolidates our reading of how Rabelais literally 'plays with things' in order to layer the stories of the giant and the pilgrims in this episode. As they are repurposed, the lettuce, the staff, and the walnut tree take on different meanings and uses for each side of the treatment encounter. Gargantua and the pilgrims not only 'regard', but through these repurposed objects touch in new ways: they grope and strike, thrust and cure. Attending to these tactile modes of relation has not only 'tempted' but forced us out of our 'customary and definite way' of thinking about medicine and pilgrimage in this episode. The mutual cure ensures that there is no clear-cut narrative of Rabelais as an unequivocal representative of Erasmus's

[34] Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature,* trans. By Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003 [1949]), p. 276.

Christian humanist critique of pilgrimage, or even of Rabelais straightforwardly extolling the virtues of a Galenic humoral medicine. Rather, as if experimenting with the combination of different ingredients as he did with the *garum* and the lettuce, Rabelais has brought together a set of repurposed materials that reveal the multiplicity of different stories accommodated in this single episode.

The unintentional cures that follow ask, then, a question of the extent to which Rabelais prescribes how to read such 'phenomena in utter confusion'. Auerbach figures an answer through his metaphor of the reader 'swim[ming] freely', if perilously, in the 'great ocean' of the world. Yet in this episode the watery environment of the *Quart Livre* sea is swapped out for the marshy, hybrid environment of Gargantua's mouth; once they have escaped this hazardous space, the pilgrims face Gargantua's stream of piss, a final liquid form that they – rather than swimming freely in – nearly drown in (again). Turning to the embedded scene of reading as the pilgrim Lasdaller attempts to make sense of this repeated near-drowning experience, we can, comparably, explore an alternative approach to Auerbach's metaphor of reading. For conceptualising the reworking of different materials as a medicinal process recasts the task of the reader as working out how the 'materials' of Rabelais's writing might fit together and for what (repeated, or renewed) purpose or prescription.

Called to dinner shortly after recovering from his mysterious toothache, Gargantua stops to relieve himself: '« Je m'en voys doncques (dist il) pisser mon malheur. » Lors pissa si copieusement, que l'urine trancha le chemin aux pelerins' (*Gargantua*, ch. 38, p. 105). His choice of proverb was conventionally used, Huchon

notes, to express dismay at losing a bet.[35] Such proverbs draw on a set of shared experiences, or a collective memory, that can bridge between past instruction and present action.[36] This form could therefore be read, to return to Cave's vocabulary of objects, as taking on a sense of linguistic affordance. It becomes for Kenneth Burke in his sociological literary criticism, for example, an 'equipment for living', a 'strateg[y] for dealing with situations'.[37] Yet Rabelais rather turns the proverb back into its material history, as Gargantua quite literally pisses to rebalance his humours. The traditional or everyday knowledge of the functioning of the body that was originally calcified in the oral and textual form of the proverb has now been cracked open again in Rabelais's writing and turned into a narrative motor; 'pisser' migrates out of its figurative use in Gargantua's speech and now, as physical entity, animates the narrative proper.

Lasdaller hopes to set his fellow pilgrims back onto a safe interpretative course when he sets about interpretating this urine. The 'aventure avoit esté', he says reassuringly to his attentive fellow pilgrims, 'predicte par David':

> « *Cum exurgerent homines in nos, forte uiuos deglutissent nos*, quand nous feusmes mangez en salade au grain de sel. *Cum irasceretur furor eorum in nos : forsitan aqua absorbuisset nos*, quand il beut le grand traict. *Torrentem pertransiuit anima nostra*, quand nous passames la grande boyre, *forsitan pertransisset anima nostra aquam intolerabilem*, de son urine dont il nous tailla le chemin […] *Adiutorium nostrum* etc. » (*Gargantua*, ch. 38, p. 106).

[35] See *Gargantua*, ch. 38, p. 105n4. Bakhtin specifically discusses the ambivalence of proverbs in his exploration of language in the marketplace; Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, pp. 423-424.
[36] Moss, *Printed Commonplace-books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*, pp. 103-106.
[37] Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action* (New York: Vintage Books, 1941), p. 296. See also, on proverbs, Wes Williams, 'Epilogue: 'The proof of the pudding…': Common Knowledge and the Matter of Taste', *Paragraph,* 37 (2014), 143-151 and Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 112-172 (Chapter on 'Proverbial Wisdom').

Lasdaller does exactly what we would expect a good Christian pilgrim to do, one who doesn't recoil in disgust like Erasmus would: he interprets the base urine in terms of the sacred, as part of his wider motivation to interpret his physical journey in terms of spiritual worth. If Rabelais literalised the 'pisser son malheur' proverb by working backwards from its figurative to its original, physical meaning, Lasdaller works, inversely, from the physical to the scriptural; translating, line-by-line, Psalm 124, he takes the pilgrims' corporeal experiences and reinscribes them within the textual interpretative frame of the Bible.[38]

Lasdaller's choice to translate the Latin Bible into French to benefit his fellow pilgrims recalls both the shifting contexts of divine words and touch and the vulgarisation of medical texts examined earlier. Yet what I am most interested in is how this form of textual reworking is paired with Rabelais's turning of the proverb into a narrative motor. For Lasdaller's translation between the material and the textual works as a reading of intention back into the haphazard and accidental events we have seen the pilgrims survive in this episode. There was an intended meaning behind their peril, after all, Lasdaller suggests; God had combined their experiences in such a way – repeating exactly the order of the psalm – as to create an effect that the faithful pilgrim simply has to unpick properly. It just warranted waiting until the end for the intention, or prescription, to come into focus; the joke of the interpreting pilgrims' name, Lasdaller, or 'slow-going', slowly coming into focus for us, too. It is as if, here, the Bible functions as a medical text in which Lasdaller can read about his

[38] Psalm 124 reads as follows:

> If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say;
> If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us:
> Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:
> Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:
> Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.
> Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.
> Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.
> Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

symptoms on behalf of his community; as if everything that happened was a prescription by God. This makes us reconsider how Lasdaller's recounting of his and the pilgrims' experience might expand how we have thought about anamnesis across this thesis; from Epistemon bearing witness to his time in the underworld in Chapter One and recalling the play in order to prognose in Chapter Three, now Lasdaller performs a form of anamnesis which works to uncover God's prescribing will.

Yet when Lasdaller tails off in the 'etc.' that closes not just the passage but the entire episode, Rabelais shakes our conviction in the value of this reverse reading. For whether the pilgrims *do* reproduce this scriptural instance or foolishly supplement their experience in hindsight is left uncertain. There is no meddling voice of Alcofribas to guide (or divert) us, no Bible for us to check against, nor even the response of the fellow pilgrims on the receiving end of Lasdaller's mediation. It feels particularly pertinent that Lasdaller's 'etc.' even replaces what would have been the final translation of '*Adiutorium nostrum*', or 'notre secours'; the value of the (pharmaceutical) aid that has facilitated the reciprocal cures across the episode is left resolutely unclear. Rabelais has combined the elements of pilgrimage and pharmacy, combined the reworking of materials and of proverbs and the Bible, to create an effect that is up to his faithful reader to unpick; they must themselves work backwards through the episode as they attempt to clarify their own interpretative stance. In his compelling work on intention in Rabelais, James Helgeson argues that in playing with what is presented as intended, Rabelais is fundamentally playing with the 'status of meaning or interpretation'.[39] Rabelais's pharmaceutical narrative has made the

[39] James Helgeson, *The Lying Mirror: The First-Person Stance and Sixteenth-Century Writing* (Geneva: Droz, 2012), p. 198.

reader's task to uncover this status into a temporal one; led into thinking that meaning comes together at the very end, only to realise that perhaps this isn't true.

By the time we get to the pilgrims' reappearance six chapters later, some of this ambiguity feels lost. No longer peripheral figures almost swallowed up with Gargantua's lunch, we find the pilgrims sat around the table with Gargantua, Grandgousier – the fatherly figure of authority – the companions, and the monk who found the pilgrim. Invited to the Erasmian common table, the pilgrims seem to accept without question the remonstrations of their 'otieux et inutiles voyages' (*Gargantua*, ch. 45, p. 123), the possibility of the plague to empoison not just their bodies but their dangerously open, journeying souls. Pilgrimage reverts to a ridiculed practice, leading only to moral contamination and to neither spiritual nor medical cure: the table happily correct the error of the pilgrims' ways. Yet reading the near-swallowing of the pilgrims as a pharmaceutical narrative of unintentional yet reciprocal cure has opened up a way of thinking about interpretative error that is neither corrected within the episode itself nor easily corrected by even the expert reader of Rabelais. The digestion metaphors that we started this chapter by examining have been, here, medicalised; yet in this medicalisation, Rabelais does not offer up an easy interpretative cure for his reader. Rather, his authorial intention is refracted even further than when he has Epistemon (as in the previous episodes discussed earlier) witness and narrate; for Rabelais has turned his narrative over to Lasdaller, whose expertise as a reader is at once consolidated and called into question.

We have spent this thesis tracing what makes an expert and erroneous physician; it is the non-identical but analogous question of what makes an expert or erroneous reader of Rabelais, one able to successfully reanimate and repurpose his text, that we now turn our attention to as we examine one last medical scene. This is

one last chance to think about an encounter between a physician, their patient, and whoever else might be present; what goes inside the body and comes out of it again; what is incorporated into Rabelais's narrative; and how all of this reframes how we have come to think about the relation between medicine, temporality, and fiction in early modern France.

III. Pantagruel, Pills, and Peasants

Where Gargantua was preoccupied with the bodily lack that expresses itself as thirst, chapter thirty-three of *Pantagruel*, 'Comment Pantagruel feut malade, et la façon comment il guerit', sees his son seeking medical advice from professional physicians for an excess, that of faecal matter blocking his stomach. The title signals that this *will* be an episode of intentional medical intervention, and even outlines its causal temporality as such: this giant is ill, the physicians will work out why, and will act accordingly. This thesis has now returned to more familiar ground – a medical encounter in and of treatment, where it is the prescribing physicians which demand our immediate focus, as they direct Pantagruel to swallow a group of agricultural labourers in mechanical pills to clear the blockage.

Critical accounts of this episode have tended to be more preoccupied with how this medical swallowing links with Rabelais's most renowned swallowing episode, and his most renowned piece of cultivated land, however: Alcofribas's conversation with a cabbage-planter inside Pantagruel's mouth, that happens only a chapter before. Both Auerbach and Cave's readings of *this* cabbage planter correspond to Panurge's storm-stricken conviction, that we saw at the beginning of this chapter: for them, the cabbage planter's tongue-in-cheek French response to

Alcofribas (‘« je plante, dist-il, des choux »’), reasserts the agricultural topos as a means of signifying ‘[naturalness] and [homeliness]’ in an encounter with alterity in the context of New World exploration.[40] Auerbach then doesn’t mention the episode of Pantagruel’s cure at all, while Cave focuses on the ingenuity of the mechanical pills but never fully reconciles how they sit alongside the ‘corporeal narrative’ of ‘ogre-like swallowing and vomiting and the descent into an infernal body’.[41] In a reimagining of his earlier work on *copia*, Cave attends to swallowing and digestion here not as classical metaphors for interpretation and imitation, but rather as folkloric motifs that recall the possible literary origins of Rabelais’s texts. In what follows, I will examine how Rabelais reworks both folkloric and classical intertexts in the episode of Pantagruel’s cure – taking as my examples an edition of the *Chroniques gargantuines*, and Lucian’s *True History*. I will consider how Rabelais’s intentional pharmaceutical frame makes us think differently about the nature of his textual incorporations here; about how, in other words, making material and medical the swallowing metaphor encourages the reader to think differently about their interpretative expectations. If the pilgrims episode started off as a narrative about pilgrimage and became one about pharmacy, I want to examine what happens if we start with a pharmaceutical encounter, and how that changes how we as readers now think about how Rabelais’s literary narrative relates to the work of fiction.

The differently articulated temporality of this treatment cure to that of the *Gargantua* pilgrims episode is made immediately evident by the physicians’ first move: diagnosing Pantagruel as having ‘une pisse chaulde’, they prescribe ‘drogues lenitives et diureticques’ to make the giant ‘piss[er] son malheur’ (*Pantagruel*, ch. 33,

[40] Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature,* p. 268; Cave, ‘Travelers and Others’, pp. 39-56.
[41] Cave, ‘Travelers and Others’, p. 54.

p. 333). This proverb crowned, as we saw, the unintentional events incrementally staged across Gargantua and the pilgrims' encounter, its literalisation marking the decisive moment after which the pilgrims were able to, with hindsight, invest meaning in what they had experienced. Now, however, it is the physicians who literalise the proverb at the beginning of their pharmaceutical treatment, by writing a prescription. Such differing intentions seem to change the very value of the urine itself: for where it is submerging and scriptural in *Gargantua*, and at further moments in the first two of Rabelais's texts it drowns (the people of Paris) and drenches (the 'dame de Paris'), it is here rendered curative: Pantagruel's 'pisse chaulde' forms (real) 'bains chaulx' across France and Italy that were steadily amassing popularity in early sixteenth-century Europe.[42] The very opening of the episode therefore reframes our previous examination of Gargantua and the pilgrims' reciprocal cure, as Pantagruel's relief immediately promises to replicate itself therapeutically among his subjects, as long as his hot piss springs flow. For the physicians, it seems, the material history of the proverb as based in humoral medicine was always the most meaningful; the narrative always already a treatment one. We had to wait until the end of the *Gargantua* episode to see a scene of reading in which the pilgrims attempted to piece together the component parts of the episode. Here, the physician's use of 'pisser son malheur' presents a miniature scene of medical interpretation which promises to undo some of the uncertainty generated by Lasdaller; the physicians' repeating of the

[42] Gargantua pisses over the people of Paris in *Gargantua*, ch. 17, pp. 48-49; Panurge has dogs piss on the 'haulte dame de Paris' in Pantagruel, ch. 21, pp. 291-295. For closer analysis of these episodes and their contexts, see respectively Butterworth, *The Unbridled Tongue*, pp. 59-80 (Chapter Three, 'Public Voice: Rabelais'); Carla Freccero, 'Damning Haughty Dames: Panurge and Haulte Dame de Paris (*Pantagruel*, 14)', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 15 (1985), 57-67; François Rigolot, 'Rabelais, Misogyny, and Christian Charity: Biblical Intertextuality and the Renaissance Crisis of Exemplarity', *PMLA*, 109 (1994), 225-37. For the interpretation of urine in Rabelais more broadly, see Jeff Persels, 'Taking the Piss out of Pantagruel: Urine and Micturition in Rabelais', *Yale French Studies*, 110 (2006), 137-151.

proverb seems to promise a prescription for how the narrative can (once again) continue to be read.

It is only fitting that the baths created by Pantagruel's piss will turn into literary waters, with the first mentioned, Coderetz (or Cauterets), for example, being where Marguerite de Navarre will go on to set the storytelling of a group of stranded characters who had been visiting the spa in the *Héptameron*.[43] For this second instance of the 'pisser son malheur' proverb now encourages us to focus our attention on how this medical narrative of the physicians is incorporated into Rabelais's text. To do so, we can examine the first of Rabelais's literary intertexts; a bit of lettuce leaf, or *garum*, as it were, that Rabelais has repurposed himself. The motif of swallowing has a rich history in the various *Chroniques gargantuines* texts, but only one, undated (although estimated between 1532-1533) and known by a single copy currently housed in the Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Médecine in Montpellier, contains a swallowing that becomes explicitly medical. The significance of this (little discussed) episode means that it is worth quoting in full:

> [Gargantua] avalla ung grand basteau le tout chargié de pouldre à canon lequel venoit pour renforser ladite ville contre ledit Gargantua : puis après qu'il eut ainsi avallé ledit basteau il se trouva ung peu en malaise, car il estoit tout estourdy du basteau. Parquoy il siffla en sa paulme pour faire venir ses gens qui le attendoyent sur le bord de la marine : Lesquelz quand ilz furent tous venuz et qu'ilz eurent apperceu que leur cappitaine estoit ainsi mallade : ils envoyerent tout incontinent en court deux messagiers lesquelz firent le recit de la malladie dudict Gargantua, dont le Roy fut fort troublé quand il sceut ses nouvelles, car tout subit il manda querir Merlin auquel pria qu'il s'en allast avecques lesdictz messagiers pour visiter ledict Gargantua et qu'il menast avec luy ses quatre medecins pour le penser ainsi que bien faire le sçavoient. Lequel Merlin par son art fit incontinent venir une grosse nuée toute noyre, puis luy et lesdicts quatre medecins et messagiers se trouverent tout aussitost où estoit malade ledit Gargantua, lequel toutesfoys se resjouist ung peu pour la venue de son bon maistre Merlin. Adonc ledict Merlin dist aux médecins "messeigneurs il vous fault descendre à tout voz mulles dedans le ventre de ce noble capitaine, pour veoir dont luy procede ceste maladie", lesquelz dirent que tresvoulentiers le feroyent et que son opinion estoit

[43] Marguerite de Navarre, *Heptaméron*, ed. by Renja Salminen (Geneva: Droz, 1999).

> tresbonne. Adonc ledict Merlin bailla une torche toute allumée à celluy qui devoit aller devant à celle fin qu'ilz peussent mieulx veoir à leur aise dont procedoit ladicte maladie, lesquelz medecins après ce qu'ilz eurent bien partout regardé advisèrent que ceste maladie luy procedoit à cause de ce basteau qu'il avoit avallé, parquoy firent venir Merlin pour luy monstrer dont procedoit ladicte maladie, Quoy voyant Merlin leur dist "messeigneurs vuydons d'icy à celle fin de y remedier bientost". Lors Merlin dist à Gargantua, "noble capitaine il fault que vous en alliez vers la première porte de la ville puis quant serez là arrivé faictes ce que je vous conseilleray". Adonc ledict Merlin à l'ayde desdicts medecins le fist coucher le cul vers la ville, Puis luy firent ouvrir la bouche et luy mirent dedans trois chartées d'allumettes lesquelles ilz allumerent à tout leur torche, puis incontinent que le feu fut prins esdictes allumettes le gentil Gargantua fermit sa bouche comme luy avoyent conseillé lesdictz medecins, et puis ouvrit son derriere duquel sortit ung terrible bruyt, car pour lors vous eussiez dict que c'estoit ung tonnoirre le plus merveilleux que on vit oncques, car du bruyt qu'il fist et du feu qui luy sortit hors de son corps tous les faulxbourgs en furent bruslez. Ce faict Merlin et lesdictz medecins s'en retournerent en court comme ilz estoient venuz bien joyeulx de la bonne santé du gentil capitaine Gargantua.[44]

Gargantua begins by swallowing a ship full of canon powder, 'lequel venoit pour renforser ladite ville contre ledit Gargantua'; the first part of the narrative's action then takes place between 'le bort de la marine' and the court, as messengers alert the king of Gargantua's illness, who summons Merlin to attend the scene accompanied by four physicians. This shipwreck inside the giant's body calls attention to the political space where the queasy Gargantua has taken ill; it is not the marshy environment of the giant's mouth that is emphasised here, but the political landscape of a court and 'tous les faulxbourgs' (or areas beyond city walls) in conflict, in which the symbolic health of the King's power is at stake. Gargantua's body is, here, perceived as a threat to the residents of the 'faulxbourgs', but as a figure worth saving by Merlin and the King.

[44] Menini and Antonioli have both written compellingly on the different iterations of the swallowing motif in the *Chroniques* texts: see Menini, 'Mots de Gorge', 1-17 and Roland Antonioli, 'Le motif de l'avalage dans les *Chroniques gargantuines*', *Études seiziémistes offertes à V.-L. Saulnier par plusieurs de ses anciens doctorants* (Geneva: Droz, 1980), p. 77-85. The edition from which I cite is *Les Chroniques gargantuines* ed. by Christiane Lauvergnat-Gagnière and Guy Demerson, with the collaboration of Roland Antonioli, C. Bonilauri, Mireille Huchon, John Lewis, and B. Teyssot (Paris: Nizet, 1988), pp. 246-247.

Merlin directs the physicians to go inside the body of the giant itself, using the light of torches to 'mieulx voir à leur aise' the cause of the stomach-ache. The purpose of this trip inside the body is, therefore, to diagnose: the physicians have a good look around, then get Merlin to come and see the ship once they find it. When it comes to the cure itself, Merlin commands the physicians first with a prescriptive pun – 'vuydons ici' – and then, once they reach collective safety outside of the giant's body, he instructs them to position Gargantua's 'cul' towards the town and to make him swallow lit matches and quickly close his mouth. These set fire to the powder in the swallowed ship, thus encouraging evacuation by explosion (a thundering 'bruyt' and fire both released out of 'son derriere' no less). Gargantua returns to full health, and so does the King's polity; the fire burns 'tous les faulxbourgs' that had originally intended to use the ship and its cargo of canon powder.

When Rabelais reworks this story in *Pantagruel*, however, both the context and the cure are newly articulated. Alcofribas's voyage into the mouth in the previous chapter of *Pantagruel* engaged in a comparable questioning of bodily and national boundaries that the *Chroniques gargantuines* did, yet it is only obliquely suggested that this is what caused Pantagruel's health problems in this following episode. 'Peu de temps après le bon Pantagruel tomba malade', Rabelais writes, while the hot piss afflicts the giant 'par ce qu'un malheur ne vient jamais seul' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 33, p. 333); Pantagruel's urine, in something of a reversal, both creates new landscapes and cures his subjects. The politicisation of the giant's body then gives way to a more intentional medical scene of curing Pantagruel's stomach blockage that alters the key elements of this source text. Rabelais's Prince does not exist in a world with this more authoritative 'Roy' and with Merlin, and there is no replacement figure who assumes Merlin's role of sourcing physicians and overseeing the following cure; rather, it is

suggested that Pantagruel's personal physicians ('ses medicins' is their only introduction) were on hand. These 'medicins' will not go down into the body of the giant themselves as Merlin and his physicians readily did, however; in a shift away from the collective effort indicated by Merlin's first-person plural of 'vuydons' that we see in the *Chroniques gargantuines*, Rabelais's physicians send a group of peasant labourers into Pantagruel's body on their behalf. They task these labourers with carrying out what Merlin's physicians did: both diagnosing and treating what they find. If the *Chroniques gargantuines* passage is concerned with the power of the King's court, then Rabelais's reworking rearticulates how body politics are accented in a medical context: these physicians are presented as a class of people that can prescribe but will not touch their patient's body; it is the peasants who go inside Pantagruel's body, and who carry out the manual labour of medicine.

Rabelais's peasant labourers emerge out of their pills to find – unlike for Merlin's physicians – their lanterns of little use:

> […] et premier celluy qui portoit la lanterne, et ainsi cheurent plus de demye lieue en un goulphre horrible, puant, et infect plus que Mephitis, ny la palus Camarine, ny le punays lac de Sorbone, duquel escript Strabo. Et n'eust esté qu'ilz estoient tresbien antidotez le cueur, l'estomach, et le pot au vin (lequel on nomme la caboche) ilz feussent suffocquez et estainctz de ces vapeurs abhominables.
>
> O quel parfum, o quel vaporament […] Aprés en tactonnant et fleuretant aprocherent de la mateire fecale et des humeurs corrumpues (*Pantagruel*, ch. 33, p. 335).

Once we have knowingly laughed at the reference to the Sorbonne, the classical examples that Alcofribas sifts through – Mefitis as goddess of poisonous gases emitting from the ground in swamps, the perilous marshes of Camarine – re-inscribe the liquid indeterminacy that we read when comparing Rabelais's Gargantua's body to Galen's *De usu partium* in the first half of this chapter. On a first reading, Antoine

Oudin's definition of 'tactonner' as 'faire différent essais dans une direction approximative pour arriver à un résultat' might consolidate an analogous groping touch of the Mont St Michel pilgrims: these peasants must also feel their way through the interior of the giant's body.[45] It is only by 'tactonnant et fleuretant' that they are able to clear the sensory haze and identify what they find as made up of 'matiere fecale et des humeurs corrumpues'; able to diagnose correctly, therefore, what Merlin's physicians could do by vision alone. Alcofribas suddenly feels futile: his narratorial translation of 'le pot au vin' into medical terminology, '(lequel on nomme la caboche)', reads less and less like his customary authorial sleight of hand as he slips into the sensory overload and narrative imprecision of 'O quel parfum, o quel vaporament'.

Yet as the labourers get to work on this 'matiere fecale', they enact an elemental shift: from fire in the *Chroniques*, to liquid indeterminacy in *Gargantua*, to, now, tilling the body as if it is their land:

> Finablement trouverent une montjoye d'ordure, lors les pionniers frapperent sus pour la desrocher et les aultres avecques leurs pasles en emplirent les corbeilles: et quand tout fut bein nettoyé, chascun se retira en sa pomme (*Pantagruel*, ch. 33, p. 335).

Jeffrey Persels is the most avid reader of constipation in Rabelais's texts; he takes seriously the constipated body as a metaphor for religious or political error, unlike more squeamish criticism in Rabelais scholarship that tidies its presence away as part of Rabelais's broader play with scatological humour.[46] But our second shipwreck-ful intertext, that of Lucian's *True History*, can teach us to read constipation in terms of

[45] 'Tactonner' in Antoine Oudin, *Curiositez Françaises* (Paris: A. de Sommaville, 1640), p. 522.
[46] Jeff Persels, ''Straitened in the bowels', or Concerning the Rabelaisian Trope of Defecation', *ÉR 31* (Geneva: Droz, 1996), 101-112.

profit, rather than error.[47] Lucian outlines, in this text, the story of some maritime traders who are swallowed by a whale, but resourcefully plant vegetables on the whale's tongue: they 'become creatures of the sea', Lucian writes, and 'swim around with this beast that contains [them]'.[48] Rabelais's peasant labourers resemble these canny sailors, seeking out as they do firm ground ('une montjoye d'ordure') in the hazy chaos of the interior of the body.

There remains a crucial difference in the relation of the labourers to the shipwreck, however. Lucian's traders are stuck in their purgatory state as 'contained swimmers' unable to return to their previous lives as maritime traders, their resourcefulness a necessary requirement for survival in a 'land' not really as fixed and firm as it first appears. The peasants in Rabelais's reworking are, in contrast, resourceful in that they adapt their expertise in a new environment; the 'montjoye', described in Cotgrave's dictionary as 'a heape […] layed in, or neare a highway for the better discerning thereof, or in remembrance of some notable act performed, or accident befallen, in that place', suggests this sense of recognition or identification, as the peasants find a part of the body they can flourish in, 'joye'-fully.[49] In treating the obstructive excrement as manure, these peasants are therefore able to transform Pantagruel's constipation not into a story of containment or of retaining filth, as Persels would contend, but of repurposing filth into profit. This, once again, leads to a doubled or reciprocal cure: for when Pantagruel vomits them back up after the blockage has been cleared, the peasants become 'swimmers' of sorts, but ones able to

[47] Oliver offers a compelling reading of Lucian's *True History* alongside the *Quart Livre* storm scene: Oliver, *Shipwreck in French Renaissance Writing*, pp. 73-101.
[48] Lucian, 'A True History', in *Selected Dialogues*, trans. by C. D. N. Costa (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 214.
[49] 'Montjoye' in Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*. Accessed online: www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/ (04.08.2022).

'swim' out of the body rather than being contained within it. We have already seen in this episode urine being repurposed as curative thermal baths; now excrement is repurposed as manure, and vomit repurposed as a means of return – both the peasant's safe journey back out of giant body, and Pantagruel's return to health.

This sense of reciprocity turns our attention from the *Chroniques gargantuines* and Lucian intertexts back to the doubled cure that marks the *Gargantua* pilgrims episode. For both episodes taken together rewrite swallowing as not a digestion metaphor but a medicinal process, and so rewrite pharmacy as a new way of thinking about intention and interpretation. In the *Gargantua* swallowing, it is both the intentional and unintentional repurposing of objects that propels the narrative forwards. The pilgrim's repurposed staffs first gave us a story about how humoral medicine demands the embodied knowledge of its practitioners. When the encounter in the mouth between the pilgrims and the giant resulted in an unintentional double cure, the lettuce leaf that Gargantua used to transport the pilgrims into the mouth could be read as a form of pill. This episode thus became a particularly pharmaceutical narrative; one in which materials were repurposed as simples and containers, in which both medical and authorial prescription were called into question, making us reflect on how both recipes and narratives work. The repurposing of the 'pisser son malheur' proverb in the *Pantagruel* swallowing rewrites the temporality of this pharmaceutical cure: it seems to demonstrate the end of embodied and experimental phase of preparing the recipe that we find in *Gargantua,* setting out immediately the direction that the medical narrative will take. And for all of its technical ingenuity, in many ways it is a cure which is more straightforward: the physicians prescribe some pills, Pantagruel actually swallows them; they reach the stomach instead of getting stuck in the mouth, so are able to carry out the intended

cure. We don't fear that the agricultural labourers will get stuck like Lucian's ones did, nor that Pantagruel will be struck by an unintended side effect; we expect, rather, that if the prescription is followed correctly, then the cure will happen, too.

We saw that the *Gargantua* swallowing episode ends with Lasdaller's analeptic message to his fellow pilgrims; we considered, recalling the first chapter of this thesis, whether Lasdaller could be understood as performing a form of anamnesis, in which he seeks to uncover God's prescribing will. This *Pantagruel* episode ends with a moment that recalls our discussion of embodied reading in Chapter Two, Diagnosis: Alcofribas describes how the mechanical pills, vomited back up by Pantagruel, appear in the giant's throat: 'Ce faict, Pantagruel se parforce de rendre sa gorge, et facilement mist [les gens] dehors, et ne monstroyent en sa gorge en plus q'un pet en la vostre, et là sortirent hors de leur pillules joyeusement' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 33, p. 225). We have seen a fart, of sorts, in this chapter already: that of the explosion coming out of Gargantua's 'cul' in the *Chroniques gargantuines*, as the lit matches planted by the physicians under Merlin's instruction, and with Gargantua's mouth firmly shut, succeeded in curing the giant. Rabelais's rearticulation of this fart demonstrates the distance he has travelled from this source text to his own work of fiction. The great fart from the giant's 'cul' is replaced by a little 'pet' in the reader's 'gorge' (which could also be understood as a little burp); this characteristically Rabelaisian 'joyeuse' game of scale and size redirects the reader to their own body, and how it is implicated in keeping up with the imaginative force of Rabelais's writing. Transplanting the fart to the mouth is a further expression of the upturning, reordering logic and temporality of the episodes we have examined in this chapter; one which stops a reader who might be tempted to conclude that cure is also redirected onto the reader. For the reader ends this episode with the *Chroniques gargantuines* cure in the wrong place,

inverted in their body. Rabelais's reworking is a final indication that it is, rather, his fictional experiment that is key.

We have proposed, in this chapter, that swallowing is recast by Rabelais in terms of pharmacy; a putting together of different materials and ingredients that can offer a new way of thinking about how Rabelais puts together his text. Three scenes of reading across the episode have then examined the task of the reader in response: Dolet's active reading of Rabelais's prescription-poem as he sets about recreating the recipe for himself, Lasdaller's careful piecing together of unintentional events as if, in hindsight, they had proved intentional all along, and finally, now, the explicit implication of the embodied reader themselves, here tasked with piecing together a fictional story of how Rabelais reworks classical and contemporary intertexts, and how they should in turn swallow, digest, and further repurpose his text. These scenes operate in different ways – a real-life instance of epistolary pharmacy, a pilgrimage narrative that became a pharmaceutical one, a pharmaceutical narrative that became a fictional fantasy – but I want to suggest that each share similar demands on the reader that concretise what we have demonstrated throughout this thesis.

Rabelais's reader is not a patient, passively cured, laughing their way through the text as in the bibliotherapeutic model of reading; nor are they asked to mirror the expert anatomist as in the dissection model, imitating a stereoscopic view of the unmoving cadaver. Rather, I have demonstrated a need in the episodes discussed in this thesis for the reader to – like the surgeons in the modern-day surgical theatre and on the early modern battlefield, the midwives, the pharmacist making up a recipe – enter into the body of the text, think about what their own bodies and other bodies can do, and use these experiences to imagine and understand the force of Rabelais's writing.

This radically alters what we think of as an expert reader of Rabelais; for it suggests that expertise consists in a need and a willingness to experiment with the text, and how to read it. This idea of experimental reading allows for a final reflection on my own methodological work in this chapter. For I have uncovered how matter, proverbs, tropes, and texts have been repurposed between the two swallowing episodes in this chapter: peripheral characters who 'tast[ent]' and 'tactonn[ent]' the giant's body; the land as where cabbages and lettuce grows and where peasant labourers labour; recipe-making as Gargantua prepares his salad and the *Pantagruel* doctors prescribe lenitive drugs; swallowing and near-swallowing; giants 'pisse[nt leur] malheur'. I have pieced together these different elements to suggest something bold about Rabelais's writerly process: that the frame of pharmacy can help us to understand how Rabelais thinks about the work of his fictional writing. This has demonstrated that Rabelais does not so much represent medicine in his narratives to hold up a mirror to early modern medical culture, but rather that the practices of assembling medication and assembling a fictional narrative exist on a continuum. Each affects the other, with both shaped by the recurring questions of bodily experience and how to structure it, of authority and how to question it, of knowledge and how to hone it. My critical work to 'unmake' his narrative, to interpret the original and then shifting purpose of his repurposed elements across and between the 'body' of Rabelais's chronicles consolidates the interpretative task that we have traced throughout this thesis; the need for an experimental – embodied, collaborative, 'tactonn[ant]' – search for meaning in Rabelais's challenging text. Yet it is also to make a broader conclusion: that the early modern reader was challenged by Rabelais to rethink the purpose of fictional literature, in a way that demands an experimental and interdisciplinary method of study for the modern reader.

Conclusion

I opened this thesis with a spruce-like scholar whom we never saw treated by a physician, who suffered from a 'remord toute sa vie', and who 'disoit souvent que Pantagruel le tenoit à la gorge' (*Pantagruel*, ch. 6, p. 232; p. 235). The unresolved nature of his story's ending has, in some ways, troubled this thesis throughout, despite its seemingly linear movement towards cure. Passing through the key stages making up the time of medicine – anamnesis, diagnosis, and prognosis – we have seen a solider decapitated and a beloved friend slip away, a resurrection of a character somewhat enjoying the underworld, a German man promised a second chance at life to only be able to speak for three days, an old woman whose body was never understood, a mother dying after childbirth, a prognosis by a leading doctor that doesn't settle his patient's problem. The final stage of this process – promising a successful resolution, a triumphant return to health – contains, in truth, cures that are at once unexpected, unintentional, and unexpectedly intentional.

These unresolved endings are a function, in part, of one of the key strands running throughout the four chapters: medical error. This has emerged in relation to poor practitioners, who swarm the pages of Chapter Two: the lion and fox in Panurge's fable, for example, who are never able to diagnose the old woman's 'playe' as they, in turn, too hurriedly expect her body to mirror their own and then reach the limit of their understanding faced with her farting second orifice; or Alcofribas's accusation of the midwives, compared to gossipy women, who mistake the baby giant's body for fundament. In Chapter Three, this error takes the form of imprudent

physicians, derived from or drawn into the world of medical fakery, performance, and charlatanism, who lead their patients and encounters astray. More importantly still, however, I have been interested in how forms of medical error participate in a broader reflection, on the part of Rabelais, on the edges of medical knowledge; on the moment in which the physician falters, as the known boundaries of their comprehension meet the contingency of medical practice. A focus on the temporality of medicine has been essential to addressing this pulse of the thesis: that Rabelais is always interested in how to know another's body and one's own, and in how this knowledge is produced, learnt, remembered, adapted, and transmitted at each stage, and on both sides, of the medical encounter.

The main argument of this thesis has been that Rabelais deliberates on this vital nature of medical knowledge and practice through the writing of his fictional narrative. I hesitated, writing that sentence, on what prepositions to use, just as I hesitated on whether my title should be Medicine, Time, and Fiction *in*, *and*, *with*, or indeed *through* Rabelais. For such prepositional slipperiness reveals the contrasting ways in which interdisciplinary study can be imagined; *interdisciplinary* itself, in a characteristically Rabelaisian unfurling, could also alternatively be *inter-*, *cross-*, *multi-disciplinary*. I have settled on using *inter* throughout this thesis for the mobility and the multi-directionality that it implies. Worth-Stylianou memorably warned of the limits of a 'one-way quest for sources' that characterises explorations of how literature relates to medicine; I have found that this methodological impulse underpins Antonioli's and others' biographical approach to Rabelais's fictions. In pursing valuable historical work on Rabelais's medical career, these scholars often tidy away his suggestive array of medical vocabulary, references, and representations

of medical scenes into examples and evidence able to illuminate Rabelais's position or innovation in a contemporary debate.

This focus tends to be skewed towards elite or learned modes of care and cure; to theoretical knowledge with less concern as to its application, to literate practitioners versed in Latin, to medical communities in Lyon and Montpellier. Whilst I have taken care to acknowledge Rabelais's relation to these contexts, an important part of the thesis's work has been to suggest that to regard them as finally determining the significance of his work misrepresents what it can teach us about how early modern medicine operated. I have, rather, been attuned to the multivarious ways in which medicine was practiced in this period, pausing on forms and figures that learned and operated beyond the world of medical book learning: notably Panurge's and Paré's suturing and surgery, midwifery of *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, and the pharmacy that made both pilgrims and peasants forms of medical practitioner. My focus on the temporality of medicine has expanded the concept of the encounter to better reflect the work of these forms of knowing the body, allowing us to see how early moderns understood practical medicine as a process, a set of actions and methods that, when combined, could lead to the cure of the patient. The conditional here is important; for this thesis has proposed that the medical and the fictional inform each other as they are both conditional modes of thinking.

Each stage in the medical process – anamnesis, diagnosis, prognosis, and cure – has its own energy and movement that shapes the rhythm of the medical scenes that Rabelais has written. Yet this thesis has, more boldly, examined the incorporation of medicine as transforming Rabelais's shapeshifting fictional writing into this form of conditional thinking ground; a space in which literary form and function is tested, experimented with, and – to bring this preposition back into play

– thought *through*. Against the linear trajectory of the thesis – the structure of moving through the different stages of the medical encounter, anamnesis, diagnosis, prognosis, and cure – this fundamental claim echoes across the project as a whole. Chapters One and Three were interested in imagination, both extrapolating from individual medical scenes Rabelais's reflections on the very work of fiction. Comparing Epistemon's resurrection and anamnesis to Du Bellay's death, and Panurge's expert suturing to Paré's, I suggested that Rabelais was exploring how fictional writing could operate as a compensatory space, one in which the medically and narratorly impossible could happen, for a time. The threads of this critical 'suturing' were then picked up again in Epistemon's narration of the Montpellier play. Here, Rabelais staged the force of the imagination within the narrative itself, investing Epistemon with the authority to ask Panurge to imagine a different future to the one that Rondibilis was presenting to him. In doing so, Rabelais opened up, in the form of the recounted play, a form of compensatory space that could redirect Panurge's participation in the prognostic consultation.

Chapters Two and Four focused more closely, then, on the work, or the mechanics, of Rabelais's fiction. Tracing the diagnosis of woman's body across conception, pregnancy, and birth, Chapter Two was interested in how dynamics of dilation, suspension, and pause connected the elements of the pregnant women's swollen belly, her particular diagnostic challenge and how it demands that the physician engage in the 'diagnostic present', and Rabelais's tasking of the reader to use their own bodies to imagine the medical scene of birth. In Chapter Four, I examine a pilgrimage narrative that is reinscribed as a (double) medical cure, and a narrative of cure that unravels into a reflection on this very mode of embodied reading. This chapter also considers pharmacy – the making and following of a

prescription – as a conceptual framework for rethinking the long-established questions in Rabelais scholarship on intention and interpretation, and in early modern medical scholarship on expertly dissecting the text.

What emerges from this set of investigations across Rabelais's fictions is his compelling demand for an experimental mode of reading, in which the reader is able to move between disciplines in order to uncover the force of his fictional transformative work. This conclusion of the need for an embodied, experimental, and interdisciplinary mode of reading is anticipated right back in Chapter One, and its methodological metaphor of suturing texts across periods and disciplines together.

As acknowledged above, an important aspect of this thesis's argument has been to foreground the practical medical encounter, in an effort to rebalance the attention of much early modern medical scholarship. This renewed focus on temporality, materiality, and practice infuses, also, the work of Rabelais's reader. Indeed, as I hope to have shown, it radically reframes how we understand the force and function of Rabelais's writing, with the shifting position of the reader pointing us, always, back to how his fictional texts operate; how, to return to the medical imagery of the introduction, these texts bleed and breathe, how they are alive and animated. The embodied, experimental, and interdisciplinary method I have pursued in this thesis has emerged organically, necessarily, out of what Rabelais's texts – as it were in suspended animation – demand of contemporary readers.

It is to one final medical ending that I want to turn, now, for a closing reflection on medicine, time, and fiction in Rabelais: the final pages of the *Quart Livre*, in which Panurge shits himself from fear. This ending replays – in keeping with the mirroring and echoing that we often see in Rabelais's narratives, and that has also

typified how this thesis has moved around its linear structure – the excremental horror of the spruce-like scholar's encounter with Pantagruel. Frere Jan smells Panurge before he sees him in this final ship-based scene, the characters still navigating the terrifying – to Panurge at least – seas of the *Quart Livre* as the book ends, having not yet returned home. 'La vertus retentrice du nerf qui restrainct le muscle nommé Sphincter (c'est le trou de cul)', explains Alcofribas in his characteristic interventionist style, providing the medical theory behind uncontrollably shitting out of fear:

> estoit dissolue par la vehemence de paour qu'il avoit eu en ses phantasticques visions. Adjoinct le tonnoirre de telles canonnades : lequel plus est horrificque par les chambres basses que n'est sus le tillac. Car un des symptoms et accidens de paour est, que par luy ordinairement se ouvre le guischet du serrail on quel est à temps la matiere fecale retenue. (*Quart Livre*, ch. 67, p. 698).

The chapter, and book, then ends, however, with a displacement of fear with laughter:

> « Allez, dist Pantagruel, allez de par Dieu, vous estuver, vous nettoyer, vous asceurer, prendre chemise blanche, et vous revestir. »
>
> « Dictez vous, respondit Panurge, que j'ay paour ? Pas maille. Je suys par la vertus Dieu, plus couraigeux, que si j'eusse autant de mousches avallé, qu'il en est mis en paste dedans Paris, depuys la feste sainct Jan jusques à la Toussains. Ha, ha, ha ? Houay ? Que Diable est cecy ? Appellez vous cecy foyre, bren, crottes, merde, fiant, dejection, matiere fecale, excrement, repaire, laisse, esmeut, fumée, estront, scybale, ou syprathe ? C'est (croy je) sapphran d'Hibernie. Ho, ho, hie. C'est sapphran d'Hibernie.
>
> Sela, Beuvons. » (*Quart Livre*, ch. 67, pp. 700-701).

These final words perform a satisfyingly Rabelaisian linguistic expansion, as shit shifts through more and more sophisticated synonyms (the 'matiere fecale' most familiar to a reader of this thesis, having proved fundamental to both Gargantua's birth in Diagnosis and Pantagruel's stomach blockage in Cure) before landing, after a burst of laughter, at 'sapphran d'Hibernie'. Scholars such Myriam Marrache-

Gouraud and Menini are interested in the 'déréalisation' of the list, the breathless acceleration from merely 'merde' to the world of 'mots', but Garrod sees here a philological game that references debates in *materia medica*, or medical botany, over an ingredient called *crocomagma*, or the residue (the 'excrement') of saffron, used in ancient medicine in various ointments.[1] Garrod concludes that this 'copieuse invention médicale' creates an enigma which demonstrates Rabelais's 'potential poétique':

> Que l'énigme, ce jeu littéraire inventif par excellence à la Renaissance, soit ici associée à une catharsis comique […] Suspendons un instant une impossible lecture didactique et évaluative, qu'elle soit éthique ou esthétique, pour lire dans cette énigme finale la réflexion d'un poète-médecin sur les processus inventifs. Rabelais nous rappelle une dernière fois que l'invention – la sienne, la nôtre à le lire – est métamorphose issue d'un corps animé. Merde et mots : produits de concoctions et d'esprits divers à l'œuvre en nous, témoignages d'incarnation indépassable.[2]

Garrod's voice emerges as one with which this thesis hopes to be in future conversation; a signal of a promising new direction that will hopefully steer Rabelais scholarship towards valuing the power of medicine in Rabelais's texts to reframe his 'processus inventifs'.

Panurge's saffron-shit and Garrod's reflection on it is important for this conclusion in two ways. Firstly, it illuminates the guiding thread of my thesis: that from my starting interest in the analogy of the medical and literary encounter, I have traced Rabelais's medicalisation of matter, literary forms, and literary texts. In my own copious, Rabelaisian list, this has encompassed lettuce leaves, pilgrim staffs, and

[1] Menini, 'Incontinence cryptographique? Notes sur le dernier chapitre du *Quart Livre*' in *Illustrations inconscientes: écritures à la Renaissance* ed. by Bernd Renner and Phillip John Usher (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2014), pp. 185–201; Myriam Marrache-Gourraud, ''Hors toute intimidation': Panurge et la parole singulière', *ÉR 41* (Geneva: Droz, 2003), p. 291; Raphaële Garrod, ''Rire jaune': l'énigme du safran au final du *Quart Livre*. Du Jeu philologique à la satire politique', *L'Année rabelaisienne,* 6 (2022), 245-267.
[2] Garrod, ''Rire jaune': l'énigme du safran au final du *Quart Livre*', p. 267.

agricultural tools in the last chapter; case histories, fables, metaphors of writing on the brain, performances, and proverbs across the thesis; and the reworking of source texts, classical narratives, medieval poetry, and early modern tales into the medical scenes we have explored. Rabelais's continual experimentation with medicalisation is not only fundamental to all that we have examined of the work of his fiction, but, therefore, to my methodology too. For my own interdisciplinary practice emerges organically from the interdisciplinary nature of Rabelais's writing: the way in which Rabelais draws on the medical in order to transform his fiction, asking us to think differently about both of these categories and how they intersect.

One of these transformations in the *Quart Livre* passage above leads us to our second point: Rabelais's saffron-shit transforms fear into laughter. This is, too, medically informed: 'Le safran, véritable panacée, or végétal pour les alchimistes,' Huchon explains, 'permet de résister à l'ivresse et provoque le rire'.[3] Just as for the Limousin spruce-like scholar, there is no prescribing physician here: Panurge shits, and makes himself laugh, and the page remains blank for the reader to register their own response. We can allow ourselves a small excursion into Rabelais's letter to Odet de Chastillon, written to dedicate the *Quart Livre* to his patron to unpick this curative laughter. Rabelais imagines, in the letter, medicine as a 'farce jouée à trois personnages : le malade, le medicin, la maladie' (*Quart Livre*, 'À mon siegneur Odet, cardinal de Chastillon', p. 518). The Hippocratic injunction to 'Declare the past, diagnose the present, foretell the future; practice these acts' was cited in this thesis's introduction as guiding its following structure; now, in our closing pages, we see Rabelais cite Petrus Alexandrinus's edition of the Hippocratic Epidemics to suggest

[3] See *Quart Livre*, ch. 67, p. 702n2.

that the physician performs for 'le gré du malade, lequel [il] visite : auquel seul [il] veul[t] entierement complaire : en rien ne l'offenser ne fascher' (*Quart Livre*, 'À mon siegneur Odet, cardinal de Chastillon', p. 518). This recalls our examination in Chapter Three of the collaborative nature of the ideal prognostic encounter, further bolstered by how early modern dictionaries track the bodily mechanisms of seeking to please: Cotgrave defines 'complaire à' not only in terms of to 'like, delight; serve, observe, be obedient,' but as to 'conforme, or apply himself to the humors of'; echoed in the later *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Francaise*'s (1694) entry, 's'accommoder, se conformer au sentiment, au goust, à l'humeur de quelqu'un pour lui plaire'.[4] It is this relational understanding of 'complaire à' that I want to draw out here as shaping Rabelais's closing exploration of Panurge's laughter. For it strikes me that here Rabelais consolidates his interest across his texts in playing with what other people see as humorous, in shocks and surprises, in changes of position, in transformations: all of which, as we have seen throughout this thesis, can be read through the lens of medicine.

Such an interpretation of these closing lines expands the model of laughter as curative that we have seen typify how Rabelais scholarship engages with the medical humanities. For we can read Panurge's laughter, here, as a response to the movement and animation of the fictional text that can turn shit into a cure; it is a humoral, embodied expression that reveals the working of Rabelais's 'processus inventifs' that we have traced throughout over the last four chapters. Panurge's laughter participates, therefore, in the key argument of this thesis: that Rabelais's texts must

[4] 'Complaire' in Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*. Accessed online: www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/ (20.01.2022). 'Complaire' in *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*'s (1694). Accessed online: https://www.dictionnaire-academie.fr/article/A1P0291-01 (20.01.2022).

go beyond the analogous medical and literary encounter in which Rabelais writes prescriptively, in which fiction can be instrumentalised for cure. For attention to the temporality of medicine – and to medicalisations as an at once pragmatic, cognitive, and fictional mode of repurposing – opens up a newly expansive understanding of the form, function, and force of Rabelais's fictional writing.

Panurge's saffron, shit, and laughter goes one step further still. If the radical reframing of the relation between medicine and fiction that I have pursued in this thesis is significant, it will be precisely because it goes beyond these final pages of the *Quatre Livre*. The bolder aim of this thesis has been to suggest that early modern literature is not only valuable insofar as it can provide historical depth to current articulations of medical practice and its representation, but that it can offer a challenge to long-held assumptions about fiction's value residing in its utility, in improving physician and patient experience alike. I have rooted this clarion call in the particular persuasiveness of Rabelais's fictions, but I see them as functioning as a case study for this far-reaching aim of revalorising the force of literary writing: writing that I see as always able to shock and surprise, reposition and transform our understanding of the body and of the role of our own bodies as readers. My introduction saw me finding, in the Churchill operating theatres, surprising continuity with how the early modern physicians I read about faced the contingencies and challenges of the encounter with their patient, despite the astonishing technologies of contemporary medicine. I end my thesis now by foregrounding continuities between how early modern readers reach for literature and how we do, today. I have certainly found it 'complaisant' to follow this question with Rabelais, his fictions having accompanied me in the long pandemic years in which I have

written this thesis; providing, when time has otherwise stood still, a challenge that has sustained me beyond consolation and cure.

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