‘Comment les femmes ordinairement appetent choses defendues’ : Writing women into the history of Rabelais’ reception (1628-1785)



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Submitted for the degree of D.Phil in Medieval and Modern Languages

Acknowledgements

In March 2016, the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao hosted an exhibition of work by Louise Bourgeois (1911-2010) that was entitled *Structures of Existence: The Cells.* On approaching the museum, visitors were encouraged to walk under her nine-metre tall bronze sculpture, *Spider,* whose seemingly spindly but strong legs straddled the walkway, joined together by its tightly wound body. Bourgeois described this spider, along with the other spiders in her work as an ode to her mother, who was 'a tapestry woman [...] a weaver'. There aren't any spiders in this thesis (although there are flies, dogs, birds, a fox and a lion!), but it is dedicated to my mother, who was a tapestry woman too. I hope I've done you proud, mum. I miss you every day.

My deepest gratitude goes to Kate Tunstall and Wes Williams for their invaluable support, guidance and patience. I am infinitely grateful to you both for the time and energy you have put in to helping me detangle the webs I encountered whilst putting together this thesis, and for enabling me to find some sort of wood amidst what at times felt like an unmanageable cluster of trees. Enormous thanks go to my examiners, Pollie Bromilow and Katherine Ibbett for their constructive feedback and deliciously helpful food for thought. Heartfelt thanks also go to Caroline Warman, who has been there from the very beginning. I'm not sure I'd have made it to this point without your steadfast encouragement and words of wisdom.

Huge thanks go to the members of the early modern French community in Oxford whose voices have helped shape my own. In particular (and apologies to those I have missed), Emma Claussen, Richard Cooper, Nicholas Cronk, Jess Goodman, Neil Kenny, Jonathan Mallinson, Jonathan Patterson, Jean-Alexandre Perras, Gillian Pink, Richard Scholar, Catriona Seth, and Alain Viala. And 'un grand merci' too goes to the crew from the University of Fribourg.

I am tremendously grateful for the financial and institutonal support I have received as a graduate student, namely from the Heath-Harrison Besse fund at St Edmund Hall, and the AHRC in conjunction with Wadham College. My doctoral studies have been delightfully enriched by the wonderful community at Wadham. Special thanks go to Carolin Duttlinger, Jane Garnett, Laura Hoyano, Caroline Mawson and Emily McGlaughlin, who have offered invaluable advice along the way. And to Jonah and the Wales, Wendy and Tom, who are, well, just bloomin' marvellous.

A massive 'whoop, whoop' goes to Sarah Jones, Jenny Oliver, Gemma Tidman and Cameron Quinn who have not only been incredible friends throughout, but who have also generously lent me their eyes and ears as proof readers and intellectual interlocutors over the past few years. You are all glorious human beings. Enormous thanks go to Mirela and Ed for being gorgeous rays of sunshine and absolute legends; to Matt and Claire Reza (and the fluffies) for your endless warmth and kindness; to Grace Remmington, Steph Hall and Crystal Biggin, who are all stars, and who have inspired me in their own way; to Katie Allan, Helen Taylor and Marie Tidball, you wonderful women; and to Liz Kay, who has become a bit of a big sister to me, and who has provided much needed hugs over the past ten years.

Huge thanks go to my utterly marvellous family who have stood by me throughout. To Dad, Zak and Thea, who remain mildly bemused by my fascination with farting monks and barking women, but without whom I would not have been able to see this thing through. To my dear aunts Claire and Catherine who have picked me up and put me back together again on many an occasion. To Big Lynne for the groovy postcards that have never failed to bring a smile when I needed it most. And to my grandparents, particularly my grandmothers; Margaret, I hope this will raise a smile, and dearest Irene, whose annotated French dictionaries adorn my shelves. And to Ali, Dave and Mike for welcoming me into their family too. Thank you all for believing in me even in those moments when I had lost all belief in myself.

Thanks also go to Jupiter, my feline friend, who has dilligently sat by my side, day and night, during the final stages. And to Rachel Clement; thank you for being in my world – we did it, *ma mie*!

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'COMMENT LES FEMMES ORDINAIREMENT APPETENT CHOSES DEFENDUES: WRITING WOMEN INTO THE HISTORY OF RABELAIS' RECEPTION (1628-1785)

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Supervised by Dr Kate Tunstall and Professor Wes Williams

Short Abstract

This thesis makes three key contributions to early modern French studies; it reintroduces forgotten perspectives into the history of Rabelais' reception, offers new, less phallocentric, ways of reading the major episodes in Rabelais' work that feature questions of women and femininity, and reconsiders early modern processes of authorial construction and posterity more generally. Women readers and audiences have thus far been excluded from the history of Rabelais' afterlives. This study addresses this gap in scholarship by exploring a diverse range of thus far neglected seventeenth and eighteenth-century re-appropriations of Rabelais' work. These sources take the form of literary genres associated with feminine culture in the early modern world: ballets, anecdotes, letters, journals and illustrations. I consider the ways in which these moments not only complicate the critical narrative of Rabelais' literary afterlives but also help us to reread those episodes of Rabelais' work that have proved to be the most problematic when it comes to the issue of women in Rabelais' world.

Through detailed analysis of these instances of re-appropriation in conjunction with close readings of Rabelais' primary text, I make the case for a feminist reading of Rabelais' work whereby the woman reader may take linguistic pleasure in the text. I debunk the current critical characterisation of Rabelais' text as masculinist by demonstrating the extent to which the misogyny of the text is a fabrication of posterity related to the narratives surrounding Rabelais' life, rather than an aspect inherent to the work itself. Despite the important contributions to Rabelais studies made by queer criticism in recent years, this work has thus far been predominantly phallocentric in nature. My thesis readdresses this imbalance, offering a more balanced approach to reading gender in Rabelais' text. I suggest that the figure of 'Dame mouche' provides a

useful model for thinking about what it means to read Rabelais' work as a woman. By underlining the ways in which re-appropriations of texts and constructions of authorial personas serve to both include and exclude, this thesis reveals the gendered and class-based power structures that shape a writer's posterity. By taking more seriously the lessons of reception history, this study distinguishes Rabelais' work from the mythmaking surrounding the author's life, and offers a fresh perspective on reading Rabelais' women.

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Long Abstract

This thesis explores the diverse ways in which Rabelais' text was appropriated and adapted for women in seventeenth and eighteenth-century France. By considering a wide range of sources that have thus far been neglected by scholars of Rabelais' work, this thesis offers a less homosocial account of Rabelais' reception in the early modern world than that which has generally been promoted by critics. The corpus comprises several different genres that were associated with feminine culture in the early modern world, namely court ballets, anecdotes, letters and journals. As well as revealing a great deal about early modern France and its changing cultural climate, these sources also offer us new ways of thinking about the relationship between women, language and silence in Rabelais' original writings.

Every one of the sources I consider exists at the nexus of a range of cultural, social and historical factors, and touches on several critical debates. This thesis brings together historicist and theoretical approaches to reading Rabelais' text. Each chapter begins by offering a thorough exposition of the particular seventeenth or eighteenth-century source in question, placing it in its literary and historical context, and paying particular attention to questions of publication, audience, and genre. The second part of each chapter uses that particular moment of reading as new lens through which to reread

a related passage in Rabelais' writings. It is as much a thesis about the delights (and challenges) of reading Rabelais' text today as it is about reading Rabelais in the early modern world.

The focus on women arose out of a startling awareness of their absence in pre-existing studies of Rabelais' reception. This homosocial narrative of Rabelais' reception partly stems, I argue, from the kinds of sources that have been privileged by critics with an interest in reception and posterity. In order to paint a picture of Rabelais' reception in early modern France, critics have generally turned either to the presence of references to Rabelais and his text in the work of canonical male authors such as Voltaire, or to editions with what Theodore Fraser terms 'scholarly apparatus'. Whilst navigating this secondary literature, I began to ask, 'where are the women in this story?' It gradually became clear that in order to gain access to the voices of women who were interacting with Rabelais' work in the early modern world it was necessary not only to consider an alternative set of sources, but also to adopt a different methodological approach. Instead of turning to the writings of canonical male authors, or to the erudite commentary of editors like Le Duchat, therefore, this thesis directs its attention towards performances, paratexts, private correspondence and objects, all of which give us access to different voices. Methodologically speaking, this thesis approaches each and every one of the sources in question as a particular instance of 'reading', operating within a broad understanding of 'reading' whereby the term refers not only to the act of directly interacting with written words on a page, but also the act of listening to something being read aloud, looking at visual images, watching ballets, and internalizing discourse.

It is often said that women in Rabelais' writings are silent. This thesis challenges this view, and argues that it is not Rabelais' text but rather the criticism surrounding it that has contributed to the silencing of women inside and outside of Rabelais' books. The representation and treatment of women in Rabelais' text has long been the subject

of considerable critical interest. Over the course of the twentieth century scholars debated the nature of Rabelais' own views on women. From Arthur Tilley's suggestion in 1907 that Rabelais had a 'respect incontestablement [...] profond' for women, through to Françoise Charpentier's suggestion that Rabelais' text constitutes 'un univers d'hommes', women inside (and outside) of Rabelais' work have attracted a great deal of attention. What has attracted much less attention, however, is the way in which women in the early modern world read and interacted with Rabelais' work, if indeed they did at all. The only mention of women in the story of Rabelais' reception comes from Marcel De Grève who mentions the existence of certain 'coquettes' in the salons who had scenes from Rabelais' work depicted on their fans, before going on to dismiss any such presence of Rabelais' work among women as irrelevant in comparison to his presence among the more scholarly 'érudits' of the seventeenth century to which De Grève devotes his attention. This thesis responds to this gap in criticism. Yet it also seeks to address the imbalance in Rabelais studies today between the study of masculinity and femininity. The work of critics such as Todd Reeser and David LaGuardia has offered valuable insights into the renegotiation of masculinity in Rabelais' text, but have done so to the detriment of related questions surrounding femininity and womanhood.

By considering the ways in which Rabelais' text was adapted for women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this thesis also reflects on the ways in which gender was negotiated in the early modern world more generally. This is particularly true in Chapter One. Here, I offer an analysis of two court ballets dating from the first half of the seventeenth century, *Le Ballet des andouilles* (1628) and the *Balet de la vénérable Sibylle de Panzoust* (1645), both of which were addressed 'aux dames', and both of which explicitly adapt episodes in Rabelais' text. Before considering the ways in which they help us to reread these two moments in Rabelais' text, I examine the ways in which these gender-bending ballets not only play with notions of masculinity and femininity but

also have something to tell us about pre-modern sexualities. Both of these ballets present us with constructions of women as desiring sexual subjects. In light of this, I go on to propose a feminist erotics of reading, whereby the metaphor of the clitoral orgasm and textual climax functions as an alternative way of unlocking Rabelais' prose.

In my second chapter, I examine the biographical material written about Rabelais in 1651 and 1663, and in particular the collection of anecdotes surrounding his life, entitled the *Particularitez*, which were derived from episodes in Rabelais' text. I examine the roots of these anecdotes and consider what they can tell us about early modern practices of Life writing. I engage with the debate surrounding the relationship between man and work that has resurfaced in recent years and which José Luis Diaz has recently argued is far from being an exclusively nineteenth-century phenomenon. Rather than a case of 'l'homme et l'œuvre', I suggest that these early modern sources constituted a case of 'l'œuvre et l'homme', in so far as they drew conclusions about Rabelais' life and character from the lives and personalities of the characters in his work. I argue that Rabelais' misogyny, and the related notion of his text as 'misogynistic' is a construct of posterity rather than of Rabelais' own making which stems from a conflation between Rabelais the man, Rabelais' narrator, and the character of Panurge. After destabilising this identification, I go on to offer a rereading of the episode of the 'Haute Dame de Paris' (*Pantagruel*) which has proved to be notioriously problematic amongst readers of Rabelais concerned with questions of gender.

Chapter Three offers an insight into the ways in which Madame de Sévigné both interacted with Rabelais' work and encouraged her daughter to do the same. It also considers a Rabelaisian intertext in one of La Fontaine's *Fables* in which a man, rather than a woman, is arguably the butt of the narrator's joke. This chapter also looks at the figure of 'Dame Mouche' who appears in another one of La Fontaine's Fables and, incidentally, is a figure that Madame de Sévigné likened herself to. I suggest that this

construction of 'Dame Mouche' offers us an alternative lens through which to read Rabelais' text. Using this lens, I go on to offer a rereading of *Pantagruel*, 15, which is often understood to feature a violent scene of female violation, whereby the woman in the story can be understood as the subject rather than the object of the trick.

In Chapter Four I consider the *Parallèle Burlesque d'Homère et de Rabelais*, by the journalist and writer Nicolas Lenglet-Dufresnoy. This text was included in a 1711 issue of the journal, *Le Mercure Galant*. I argue that, despite the deceptive title, this text was in fact not about Homer but rather about women's access to, and interaction with, Rabelais' work. In so doing, I locate Rabelais within the context of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes and the inextricably related Querelle des Femmes. In the second part of this chapter I focus on one particular section of Dufresnoy's text in which he rewrites the *Farce de la Femme Muette* (*Tiers Livre*, Chapter 34). Prompted by this instance of reappropriation, in my third section I revisit the trope of the mute woman that haunts scholarship of Rabelais' work. I also place the myth of Philomela and Procne at the forefront of this episode, and argue that Rabelais' engagement in this story is crucial to reaching a further understanding of women's voices in Rabelais' world.

I take a further step into the eighteenth century in Chapter Five and revisit the idea of motherhood in Rabelais' work by considering the previously unexamined illustrations included in the edition of 1741. I argue that the very existence of these illustrations served to impose a generic classification on to Rabelais' corpus, and witnessed the beginning of the construction of Rabelais' work as a novel. I then go on to offer a detailed analysis of the illustration depicting Gargamelle giving birth to Gargantua. I argue that this illustration serves to domesticate Rabelais' text, and not only removes the corporeal element of the episode but also draws up a divide between masculine and feminine spaces that is overwhelmingly absent in Rabelais' original text.

This kind of homosocial paradigm would later be emphasised in an issue of the *Bibliothèque Universelle des romans* dating from March 1776, which featured a selection of extracts from Rabelais' work which had been adapted for its women readers. This chapter thus reveals a key paradox in the history of Rabelais' reception; as the text gradually began to be marketed for women, and thus opened up to the woman reader, the women's bodies inside of the text began to be closed down and tamed.

An attentiveness to what Roland Barthes described as 'le bruissement de la langue' emerges as central to all of the readings of Rabelais' text that I offer over the course of these five chapters. The related notions of listening, hearing, mediating, empowering and silencing are also crucial to my approach to reading Rabelais' text. This thesis injects new energy into questions of women and gender in Rabelais' work, but my hope is that it will be of use not only to readers of Rabelais' œuvre, but also to those interested in the early modern period more generally, and particularly in the fields of book history, early modern biography, reception theory, and the study of gender and sexuality. This thesis makes three key arguments: firstly, that there is a long and complex history of women interacting with Rabelais' work, secondly, that Rabelais' writings in and of themselves are neither masculinist nor misogynistic and thirdly, that the meaning of Rabelais' text is often inescapably linked to the sound of the text. By exposing the editorial, cultural and critical mechanisms that have served to exclude women from Rabelais' world, this thesis also prompts broader critical reflection regarding current scholarly practices, and encourages us to listen not only to the presence but also the absence of certain voices in the history of reading.

Notes on spellings and abbreviations

Original spellings have been preserved. When the source in question references Rabelais' original text directly, the reference will be given from the contemporaneous edition.

The following abbreviations have been used for publishers and journals frequently cited :

CUP	Cambridge University Press
OUP	Oxford University Press
ER	*Études Rabelaisiennes*
RER	*Revue des Études Rabelaisiennes*
JMRS	*Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*
PMLA	*Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*
MLR	*Modern Language Review*
BHR	*Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et de Renaissance*
RR	*Romanic Review*

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Figure 2 — 'Rabelais et les environs de Chinon', Romain de Hooghe, *Œuvres de Maître François* Rabelais, ed. by Jacob Le Duchat (Amsterdam: Bordesius, 1711), 3 Vols., Vol. 1.

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Introduction

Only a few minutes in to Michel Deville's film, *La Lectrice* (1989), inspired by Raymond Jean's novel of the same name (1986), Constance, played here by Miou Miou, sets out to meet the second in her eclectic collection of new found clientele in her occupation as a 'reader-for-hire'. She knocks on the door and is greeted by her maid, played by Marianne Denicourt, who escorts her to the bedroom of an elderly Hungarian woman, widow to an old general, played by Maria Casarès:

> — «Entrez, entrez, Nouchka. Approchez. Asseyez-vous. Parlez un peu, pour entendre. Mais je sais, d'habitude, on dit pour voir, moi je ne vois presque plus. Allez, dites une chose.
> — Mais, vous n'avez pas cent ans, Madame la générale.
> — Mais, tu es jolie, Nouchka.
> — Tu as la voix d'une qui est jolie.
> [...]
> — Alors maintenant un petit essai de lecture. Tiens, Marx, page cent soixante-six.
> — Le passage marqué d'une croix?
> — Oui; un merveilleux texte sur les métaux précieux.
> — L'or et l'argent ne sont pas seulement le caractère négatif des choses superflues, c'est-à-dire dont on peut se passer, dont on peut se passer. Leurs qualités esthétiques en font les matériaux naturels du luxe, de la parure, de la somptuosité, des besoins des jours de fête, en un mot, la forme positive du superflu et de la richesse.
>
> — *La forme positive du superflue et de la richesse*. Parfait, et tu as une belle voix, très claire.»

This sonorous exchange exists in stark contrast to those Constance has with the men who call on her. They are preoccupied not so much with her voice, but with her voice as it exists as part of her body, and, although she reads to them aloud, their encounter with her is primarily governed by their male gaze. But this scene is about voices, and specifically the voices of women.

Women have not yet been given a voice in the story of Rabelais' reception, whether they be women reading the text for themselves, listening to the text being read

aloud, writing about the text, or existing within it. This thesis aims to offer new approaches to reading Rabelais' work by considering thus-far neglected moments in the story of Rabelais' reception which prompt us to think about the text in a different way, combining historical contextualisation with close reading of the primary text, paying close attention to not only the sounds but also the silences within.

I. La réception de Rabelais; est-elle 'déjà écrite' ?

In 2003, Olivier Donneau declared, '[l]'histoire de la réception de Rabelais est déjà écrite'.[1] It is true that a considerable body of work on the topic already exists, but scholars have thus far generally approached the subject in one of two ways. Some such as Jacques Boulenger, Lazare Sainéan and Richard Cooper, for example, have considered the ways in which canonical male authors, such as Voltaire and Diderot, read and wrote about Rabelais and his texts.[2] Whereas others, such as Paul Pierre Plan, Michael Screech and Paul J. Smith, to name but a few, have approached the question of Rabelais' reception by offering comprehensive studies of the major early modern editions of Rabelais' work.[3] This scholarly work has provided invaluable insights into the twenty-seven French language editions of Rabelais' *Œuvres* that were produced in France and Holland over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, all of which

[1] See Olivier Donneau, '*Réceptions, études et usages de l'univers Rabelaisien aux refuges protestants*', *Refuge et Désert: L'évolution théologie des huguenots de la Révocation à la Révolution française*, eds., Hubert Bost et Claude Lauriol (Paris: Champion, 2003), pp. 185-206, (p. 1).

[2] See, for example, Jacques Boulenger, *Rabelais à travers les âges* (Paris: Le Divan, 1925), pp. 58-76; Lazare Sainéan, *L'Influence et la réputation de Rabelais* (Paris: Gamber, 1930), pp. 125-246 and Richard Cooper, 'Charmant mais très obscene: Some French eighteenth-century readings of Rabelais', in *Enlightenment Essays in memory of Robert Shackleton*, ed. by G. Barber and C. P. Courteney, (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1988), pp. 39-60.

[3] See Paul Pierre Plan, *Bibliographie Rabelaisienne: Les Editions de Rabelais de 1532-1711* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1904); Avenir Tchemerzine, *Les Éditions Anciennes de Rabelais: bibliographie 1532-1742* (Paris: M.Pléem, 1933); Michael Screech, *A new Rabelais bibliography: editions of Rabelais before 1626* (Genève: Droz, 1987) and Paul J Smith, 'Rabelais aux pays-bas', in *Éditer et Traduire Rabelais à travers les âges* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997), pp. 141-174.

included *Gargantua*, *Pantagruel*, *Le Tiers Livre*, *Le Quart Livre*, and *Le Cinquiesme Livre*.[4]

This thesis in fact started life as a study of the 1741 edition of Rabelais' work, which would have acted as a kind of sequel to Theodore Fraser's analysis of the edition of 1711.[5] Following the work of Fraser, Smith, and Screech, my original aim had been to explore the ways in which a monumental edition such as this serves to construct and canonise a particular image of an author, in Foucault's sense of the word.[6] This edition still bookends this thesis, and I originally came across several of the sources I consider here as paratexts in this edition. But along this journey I began to ask, 'where are the women in the story?' This in turn led me to consider whether the history of the book necessarily equates to the history of reading. I gradually became aware of the extent to which the privileging of certain sources and objects over others has a direct impact on whose voices are heard, and on which stories are told.

The closest I came to finding any trace of women in the story of Rabelais' posterity was in the work of Marcel de Grève, who casts a cursory glance towards the female members of seventeenth and eighteenth-century salons he refers to as 'coquettes', who had scenes from Rabelais' work depicted on their fans (I will consider these curious objects in my conclusion), but De Grève goes on to dismiss any such presence of Rabelais' work among women in salons as irrelevant in comparison to its presence among the more scholarly 'érudits' of the seventeenth century, to which he devotes his attention.[7]

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[4] Although twentieth-century Rabelais scholarship has been preoccupied with the question of its authenticity and legitimacy, early modern editors generally agreed that Rabelais was the author of the *Cinquiesme Livre*. For a conspectus of the current debate, see Richard Cooper, 'L'Authenticité du *Cinquiesme livre*: état présent de la question', in *Actes du colloque international de Rome: Rabelais, le 'Cinquiesme Livre'*, ed. by Franco Giacone, (Geneva: Droz, 2001) pp. 9-22.

[5] Theodore Fraser, *Le Duchat: First Editor of Rabelais* (Genève: Droz, 1971).

[6] Michel Foucault, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?', *Bulletin de la société française de philosophie*, Vol. 3 (1969), pp. 73-104.

[7] Marcel de Grève, *ER*, 5 (1964), p. 41.

Pierre Tanjé's illustration on the front cover emblematises the story I am telling in this thesis. It originally appeared as the frontispiece to the 1741 edition of Rabelais' work, which, despite its status as the most prestigious edition to have been produced in the early modern world, has not received much critical attention from either book historians or literary scholars.[8] It is not mentioned, for example, in Sainéan's work, whereas six pages are devoted to Jacob Le Duchat and the 1711 edition. Like the allegorical frontispieces that became so fashionable in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries,[9] this frontispiece functions on several different levels, presenting us with a set of heavily symbolic images which all have their own narrative.[10]

One's eye is immediately drawn to the bust of Rabelais that stands defiantly in the centre of the imposing library. Hovering above this idolising image, we see a second figure who places a laurel wreath, an incontestable sign of recognition, onto the head of Rabelais the man. This Rabelais is Rabelais 'The Writer' who crowns the bust and bestows the title of writer onto Rabelais the man. The third Rabelais, the bas-relief lurking in the bookshelves to the right of the image is Rabelais 'The Author', occupying a place on the shelves. Soaring above these three avatars of Rabelais we see an old, albeit very muscular bearded man wearing a toga; he can be none other than the allegorical incarnation of temporality, 'Old Father Time'. This figure pulls back a curtain to reveal Rabelais' work as a 'classic'.[11] These images collectively tell the story of Rabelais'

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[8] Theodore Fraser, *Le Duchat: First Editor of Rabelais* (Genève: Droz, 1971).

[9] See, for example, Margery Corbett and Ronald Lightbown, *The comely frontispiece: the emblematic title-page in England 1550-1660* (London: Routledge, 1979); Marc Fumaroli, *L'école du silence: le sentiment des images au XVII^e siècle*, (Paris: Flammarion, 1994), pp. 324-42. My thanks go to Neil Kenny for drawing my attention to this body of scholarship.

[10] Elizabeth Salter and Derek Pearsall, 'Pictorial Illustration of Late Medieval Poetic Texts: The Role of the Frontispiece or Prefatory Picture', in *Medieval Iconography and Narrative: A Symposium*, ed. by Flemming Gotthelf Andersen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1980).

[11] I evoke here Alain Viala's notion of 'un processus de *classicisation*'. Among the particular 'seuil[s] de légitimiation et consécration' he provides as examples, Viala identifies the 'entrée dans telle forme prestigieuse d'édition ou de publication'. Viala, 'Qu'est ce qu'un classique', *Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France* (1992) p. 9. 'La critique, les académies, les cénacles, les salons, l'entrée dans telle forme prestigieuse d'édition ou de publication, les institutions de la vie littéraire, toutes ces formes instituées de la réception au sein du champ littéraire, font le premier seuil de légitimation et consécration' p. 10. See also Frank Kermode, *The Classic: Literary Images of Permanence and Change* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975).

canonisation and establishment of an 'érudit' for other 'érudits', which has been the main focus of the majority of scholars interested in Rabelais' reception.

At the same time, the masks in the frontispiece symbolise the construction of Rabelais the satirist. This is underscored by the group of cheeky cherubs who are huddling around a globe in the right hand corner carrying a piece of parchment depicting a grimacing face. But whose face is it? It looks, at first glance, much like the well-known portrait of the seventeenth-century writer Scarron. But on closer examination, however, it seems more likely that the individual depicted is not Scarron but rather the laughing philosopher Democritus, after the seventeenth-century painting by Paulus Moreelse (Fig. 1).



(Fig. 1) Johannes Moreelse
Democritus, the Laughing Philosopher (c. 1630)

Even if we identify Scarron in the image, it is ultimately Scarron presented as Democritus. The presence of the globe in the right hand corner supports this identification, given that Democritus is often visualized with his trusty globe which represents the universality of satire. What does the presence of Democritus, then, bring to the meaning of this frontispiece? Here, we see that Democritus is being reincarnated

as Rabelais – Rabelais is the new, modern, French Democritus. This story also has a well-established place in the history of Rabelais' reception. Samuel Kinser argues that '[t]he atmosphere of official sanctimony, which in the course of the seventeenth century waxed and waned but deepened considerably in the later years of Louis XIV's reign, enhanced Rabelais' appeal as a daring satirist. So the uses to which Rabelais was put by érudits, libertines, femmes savantes, and femmes galantes reinforced the narrowing comprehension wrought by both time and the moralistic atmosphere of official propriety'.[12]

Unlike the other groups mentioned by Kinser, the 'femmes savantes' and 'femmes galantes' have not yet been the object of any significant critical attention. These women are embodied in the two winged female figures to the left of the image, and constitute the main protagonists of my story. The woman in the foreground is dressed in drapery, indicating her allegiance to the classical tradition. She wears a laurel wreath on her own head, which identifies her as a writer in her own right. This kind of visualisation of women and their role in constructing national literature was not unprecedented in the eighteenth century. Consider the frontispiece of Romeyn de Hooghe for Zayde (1671), in which, in the words of DeJean, he 'stages the importance of female literary authority in literary history'.[13] What is particularly interesting here is that the woman writer appears to be looking up to Rabelais and listening to him, and transcribing what Rabelais is saying to her. And not only that, but the woman behind her, whose naked breast and aroused nipple rest on the other woman's arm, is reading that which the woman is transcribing. These women are the women listeners, interpreters and in some case transmitters of Rabelais' work who have thus far been left out of the story of Rabelais' early-modern

[12] Samuel Kinser, *Rabelais' Carnival: Text, Context, Metatext* (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1990), p. 132.
[13] See Joan DeJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 171-173. Consider also Eliza Haywood across the channel. On this, see Patrick Spedding, 'Imagining Eliza Haywood', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2017), pp. 345-372.

reception. Rabelais scholarship has been, and to some extent remains, dominated by the question of whether 'Rabelais' was a democratic writer of the people[14] or an erudite scholar and Royalist, who wrote for an intellectual elite.[15] This debate, however, misses out another construction of Rabelais: the woman's Rabelais.

This thesis brings these women and their 'Rabelais' into the foreground. In so doing, it offers a less homosocial account of Rabelais' reception, and considers how these instances of re-appropriation and interpretation offer us new ways of reading the women in (and outside of) Rabelais' work.

II. Rabelais and "gender trouble"

It was over a decade ago that Amy Staples implored critics to take up 'more and more "gender trouble in Rabelais studies"',[16] yet the subject still constitutes an underexplored and fruitful field of enquiry. Before considering the current stakes of the debate, it is worth outlining the different trends and positions that have characterised discussion around Rabelais and gender up until this point, so as to better contextualise and historicise contemporary critical approaches to the text.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, scholars and editors of Rabelais' work have taken the time to address what Francis Parkman (un)helpfully described as 'The Woman Question'.[17] In his 1907 edition of Rabelais' work, Arthur Tilley said of

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[14] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

[15] Mireille Huchon, *Rabelais* (Paris: Gallimard, 2011). Wes Williams criticises Huchon's lack of attention to the Bakhtinian paradigm in his review of Rabelais, published in the *Times Literary Supplement* (6 April, 2012). Philippe Desan has recently constructed an equivalent image of Montaigne in *Montaigne: Une biographie politique* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2014).

[16] Amy Staples, 'Primal Scenes/Primal Screams: The Homosocial Economy of Dirty Jokes', *High Anxiety: Masculinity in Crisis in Early Modern France*, ed. by Kathleen Long (Truman State University Press, 2002), pp. 37-55. Staples is here using a term employed originally employed by Ann Rosalind Jones in her response to François Rigolot's article, 'Rabelais, Misogyny and Christian Charity: Biblical Intertextuality and the Renaissance Crisis of Exemplarity', *PMLA* 109 (1994). Rosalind Jones says of Rigolot's analysis of the episode of the haute dame de Paris that he 'suggests that present-day feminist readings of Panurge's love trick are a source of gender trouble in recent Rabelais studies'. See Rosalind Jones, 'Introduction: Cluster on Early Modern Women', *PMLA*, 109 (March 1994), pp. 187-189, (p. 188).

[17] Francis Parkman, 'The Woman Question', *The North American Review*, Vol. 129, No. 275 (October 1879), pp. 303-321.

Rabelais that 'il a eu pour elles [les femmes] un respect incontestablement [...] profond'.[18] Arthur Chappell seconded this in 1924, arguing that 'dans ces derniers livres, Rabelais manifeste de plus en plus de respect pour la femme [...] il en est venu à mieux connaître la vraie valeur de la femme'.[19] This critical position shifted in the 1930s with the work of Abel Le Franc, who placed Rabelais firmly in the camp of what he termed the 'agresseurs du sexe féminin'.[20]

No doubt partly as a result of the shadow cast by the Second World War, scholarship around Rabelais' work turned to focus on questions of religion and politics.[21] This brought scholarly interest in the representation of women to an abrupt halt, before it re-emerged in the 1950s and 1960s. Building on the insights of Tilley, Chappell and Le Franc, this wave of criticism was generally concerned with establishing the nature of Rabelais' own attitudes towards women. By drawing attention to the equality between the sexes that is written into Rabelais' fictional Abbé de Thélème (*Gargantua*, Chapter 57) Michael Screech argued against Le Franc and declared that Rabelais was not hostile towards women.[22] This was then followed by the work of Marcel Tetel, who considered Rabelais' position to be ambivalent, placing the treatment of women in Rabelais' work firmly in the context of popular culture and comedy.[23] Verdun Léon Saulnier addressed the question of Rabelais' views on women by considering the broad range of views towards women expressed in the work, and argued that Rabelais' opinions underwent an evolution over the course of the five books.[24]

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[18] Arthur Tilley, *François Rabelais* (Lippincott: Philadelphia, 1907), pp. 196-197.
[19] Arthur Chappell, *The Enigma of Rabelais: an essay in interpretation* (Cambridge: CUP, 1924), pp. 79-80.
[20] Abel Le Franc, *Œuvres de François Rabelais* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1931), 5 Vols., Vol. 5, pp. 55-62, (p. 61).
[21] Consider Lucien Febvre, *Le Problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle: La religion de Rabelais* (Paris: Michel, 1942). On this, see Nathalie Zemon Davis, 'Rabelais among the Censors (1940s, 1540s)', *Representations*, No. 32 (Autumn, 1990), pp. 1-32.
[22] Michael Screech, 'Rabelais' Position in the Querelle des Femmes', *Francois Rabelais* (Genève : Droz, 1953), pp. 131-146.
[23] Marcel Tetel, *Rabelais* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1967), p. 63.
[24] Verdun. Léon Saulnier, *Rabelais dans son enquête* (Paris: S.D.E.S., 1983), 2 Vols., Vol.1, pp. 166-169.

Aside from a few cursory comments here and there, discussion of 'women' in Rabelais' work saw somewhat of a dearth in the 1970s, before resurfacing during the mid-to-late 1980s when it reached a significant level of concentration.[25] This scholarship, however, saw a marked shift in approach. As part of a more general critical move away from the author, epitomised by Roland Barthes' essay *La Mort de l'auteur* (1967), the focus of this critical attention shifted away from the task of ascribing views to Rabelais the man and turned more towards the status of the work itself.[26] Françoise Charpentier, for example, described Rabelais' work as 'un monde sans femmes, royaume d'un seul sexe'.[27] This was later reiterated by Pierre Goumarre, who declared that '[l]'univers de Rabelais est un univers d'hommes, un univers dans lequel la femme existe pour l'homme, dans lequel elle joue un rôle en tant que mère – ou en tant que putain –, mais jamais en tant que compagne ou épouse'.[28] Carla Freccero then took this one step further, and argued that Rabelais' text in fact effaces women, and as such, poses considerable challenges to the 'woman reader' of Rabelais' work.[29] Charpentier revisited the issue of women in Rabelais in 1986, taking back her claim that Rabelais' work constitued 'un monde sans femme', and instead arguing that women were indeed present, but only in so far as they served the purposes of men, or served as plot devices in Rabelais' narrative.[30] Elizabeth Chesney Zegura's pivotal article of 1985 stands out amidst this crowd of negativity. Zegura argued that Rabelais 'experiments with a nonauthoritarian, almost

[25] Consider Lucien Fevre in his preface to Pierre Michel's edition of the *Tiers Livre*: 'Que voulait-il...ce Rabelais, dans sa plenitude d'homme? L'argent? C'est peu probable. La gloire? Ce n'est pas impossible. L'amour? Mais la femme n'existe pas dans l'œuvre pantagruelicque', *Le Tiers Livre* (Paris: Folio Classique, 1973), p. 16.
[26] I discuss biographical criticism and man/work conflation in depth in Chapter Two.
[27] Françoise Charpentier, 'La Guerre des Andouilles', *Etudes seiziémistes offertes à Monsieur V. L. Saulnier* (Genève: Droz, 1980) pp. 119-135, (p. 134).
[28] Pierre Goumarre, 'Rabelais: misogynie et misogamie', *Littératures,* 15 (Automne, 1986), pp. 59-72, (p. 72).
[29] Carla Freccero, 'Damning Haughty Dames: Panurge and the Haulte Dame de Paris (*Pantagruel*, 14)', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, Volume 15 (1985), pp. 56-67.
[30] Françoise Charpentier, 'Un royaume qui purdure sans femmes', in *Rabelais's Incomparable Book*, ed. by Raymond de la Charité (Lexington: Lexington French Forum Publishers, 1986), pp. 195-213.

feminine narrative voice in order to interrogate phallocentric culture'.[31] Her conceptualisation of an androgynous narrator heavily informs the readerly approach that I adopt over the course of this thesis.[32]

The 1990s saw scholars such as Lawrence Kritzman turn to psychoanalysis as a theoretical lens through which to understand the question of gender in Rabelais' work.[33] Although this work offered innovative ways of reading Rabelais' work, the (somewhat inevitable) effect of drawing on the work of thinkers such as Lacan and Freud resulted in questions of gender in Rabelais' text being reduced to questions orientated around the phallus. It is important to contextualise this interest in masculinity in Rabelais' work against the backdrop of the rise in masculinity studies across the humanities more generally, which first emerged in the mid 1990s with the work of Raewyn Connell and John McInnes.[34] In recent years, this field of study has shifted away from the study of masculinity as an analytical tool and towards the study of masculinity as a cultural object to be analysed.[35] Particular interest has been paid to the notion of masculinity in the medieval and early modern world.[36] This, in turn, has resulted in an outpouring of scholarly work concerning masculinity in Rabelais' text, whether that be moderate

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31 Elizabeth Chesney Zegura, 'Towards a Feminist Reading of Rabelais', *JMRS*, Vol. 15 (1985), pp. 124-134 (p. 134).

32 I return to Zegura's article, and particularly to her notion of the reader as cuckold in Chapter Four.

33 Lawrence D. Kritzman, *The Rhetoric of Sexuality and The Literature of the French Renaissance* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991).

34 See, for example, Raewyn Connell, *Masculinities* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1995) ; John McInnes, *The End of Masculinity: The Confusion of Sexual Genesis and Sexual Difference in Modern Society* (Open University Press, 1996) and George L. Mosse, *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: OUP, 1996).

35 Michael Schwalbe, *Manhood Acts: Gender and the Practices of Domination* (London: Routledge, 2014) ; Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (Oxford, New York: OUP, 2012) ; Herbert Sussman, *Masculine Identities: The History and Meanings of Manliness* (Santa Barbara, CA, Denver, CO, Oxford, England: Praeger, 2012) and Christopher Forth, *Masculinity in the Modern West: Gender, Civilization and the Body* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

36 *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (London: Longman, 1999), ed. by Dawn Hanley; *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, ed. by Scott Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008); Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) and *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), ed. by Clare Lees, Thelma Fenster and JoAnn McNamara.

masculinity, as is the case in the work of Todd Reeser,[37] or intertextual masculinity, as is the case in the work of David LaGuardia,[38] who has elsewhere characterised Rabelais' text as a 'hysterical male outburst of discourse'.[39] Although Reeser and LaGuardia adopt slightly different approaches to the study of masculinity, they are united in the view that Rabelais was ultimately writing about men, for men, and 'between men'.[40] Despite appearances, scholars engaging with this critical trend have not always been primarily concerned with debunking gender as a concept, and their analyses have sometimes served to prematurely absorb questions surrounding femininity, womanhood, and the conceptualisation of other non-binary gender categories.

Although there is an undeniable proliferation of phalluses in Rabelais' work (and there are quite a lot in this thesis too !), part of the problem with the framework of critics such as LaGuardia is that they conceptualise the phallus as an exclusively masculine object, overlooking the possibility that a phallus might be a consituent part of a woman's body too. Gary Ferguson and Carla Freccero have done much to disrupt the binary thinking of this kind of scholarship through incorporating queer theory into their critical treatment of the early modern world. I draw on much of this kind of work over the course of this thesis, but I avoid the term 'queer' for two reasons. Firstly, because 'Queer (Re)Readings' of the early modern world have thus far tended to privilge same-sex relationships between men as objects of study at the expense of those between women.[41] And secondly, because the term lends itself to being mobilised as a 'productive

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[37] Todd Reeser, *Moderating masculinity in early modern culture* (London: Eurospan, 2006).
[38] David LaGuardia, *Intertexual masculinity in French Renaissance literature : Rabelais, Brantôme, and the Cent nouvelles nouvelles* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
[39] David LaGuardia, 'Masculinity and Metaphors of Reading in the *Tiers Livre*, 16-18', *L'Esprit Créateur*, Vol. 43, Issue 3 (2003), pp. 5-15, (p. 13)
[40] See Eve Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985) and *Entre Hommes: French and Francophone Masculinities in Culture and Theory,* ed. by Todd Reeser and Lewis Seifert (USA: University of Delaware Press, 2008).
[41] See, for example, Gary Ferguson, *Queer (Re)Readings in the French Renaissance: Homosexuality, Gender, Culture* (USA: Ashgate, 2008). See also Carla Freccero, 'Queer Rabelais', in *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Rabelais,* ed. by Todd Reeser and Floyd Gray (New York: Modern Languages Association, 2011), pp. 182-191.

indeterminacy', and thus ends up becoming far removed from the lives, bodies and people that this kind of scholarship professes to write into accounts of the past, the present and the future, as is the case with the work of Freccero.[42]

I am not suggesting in this thesis that bodies are not important. In fact, quite the contrary. But what I am suggesting is that the notion of bodies as fluid and transient might help us to reach a greater understanding of the exciting potentialities of Rabelais' "gender trouble". As critics such as Ann Rosalind Jones and others have argued with regards to women's bodies, the critic concerned with questions of gender needs to be wary of analogical thinking that is based on a conceptualisation of the body, whether the body of a man or a woman (or, of course, something in between) is either defined or static.[43]

III. Bakhtin, bodies and Marguerite de Navarre

In my conspectus of twentieth-century work on Rabelais and gender I left out Mikhail Bakhtin, whose discussion of gender and its implications for the way we think about 'woman' and 'women's bodies' in "Rabelais' world" merits a section of its own. I use the term "Rabelais' world" not only as a homage to Bakhtin, whose work has informed my thinking in a multitude of ways inside and outside of this thesis, but also because the term 'world' as opposed to 'text' or 'work', embodies the notion that Rabelais' books serve to create a particular paradigm through which we, as readers, can then come to understand the world in which we live. Most important for current purposes is Bakhtin's

[42] Carla Freccero, *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durnham: Duke University Press, 2005), p. 5.
[43] See, for example, Ann Rosalind Jones, 'Writing the Body: Towards an Understanding of l'Écriture féminine', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 7 (Summer 1981), pp. 247-63; Mary Ellman, *Thinking about Women* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979), pp. 93-208; Elaine Showalter, 'Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness', Critical Inquiry, 8 (Winter 1981), pp. 187-88; Nina Auerbach, 'Artists and Mothers: A False Alliance', *Women and Literature*, Volume 9 (Spring, 1978), pp. 3-5 and Susan Rubin Suleiman, '(Re)Writing the Body: The Politics and Poetics of Female Eroticism', in *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by Susan Rubin Suleiman (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 7-29.

conceptualisation of the "grotesque" body. Unlike the classical, defined body, this body is characterised by openness and movement :

> Contrary to modern canons, the grotesque body is not separated from the rest of the world. It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, through which the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world. This means that the emphasis is on the apertures or the convexities, or on the various ramifications and offshoots: the open mouth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus, the potbelly, the nose. The body discloses its own limits only in copulation, pregnancy, childbirth, the throes of death, eating, drinking, or defecation. This is the ever unfinished, ever creating body, the link in the chain of genetic development, or more correctly speaking, two links shown at the point where they enter into each other.[44]

This body, as conceived by Bakhtin, is always in flux and is in constant exchange and interaction with the world. The way in which Bakhtin privileges moments of pregnancy and childbirth led Jefferson Humphries to argue that Rabelais in fact places woman at the centre of his world.[45] Pollie Bromilow picks up on this in her treatment of 'female bodies' in Rabelais' work :

> It is uncontroversial to assert that by naming copulation, pregnancy and childbirth as privileged moments where the body discloses its own limits, Bakhtin ascribes to woman a central place in the definition of the body. What is more difficult to establish, however, is whether Bakhtin's theory ultimately allows the female body the liberty to transcend the constraints usually imposed on it by male-dominated systems of representation. In other words, could Bakhtin's analysis allow the female body to move beyond the "specific" and act as a paradigm through which bodies of all kinds can be read and understood? Bakhtin's refusal to lend any order or hierarchy to the body has left this question unanswered. Furthermore, critical reactions to his writing have not provided a coherent response.[46]

Bromilow's argument is premised upon a binary and essentialising distinction between male and female, whereby the male body is synonymous with 'man' and the female body synonymous with 'woman'. Her overall argument is that Rabelais' text ultimately rewrites

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[44] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his world*, p. 26.
[45] Jefferson Humphries, 'The Rabelaisian "Matrice"', *RR* (May, 1985), Vol. 76, Issue 3, pp. 251-270.
[46] Pollie Bromilow, 'Inside Out: Female Bodies in Rabelais', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 44, No.1 (2007), pp. 27-39, (p. 28).

and covers up the 'female body', by absorbing it into what she calls the 'safer, less dangerous 'one-sex body',[47] as conceptualised by Thomas Laquer.[48] Rabelais' text, she argues, closes off the orifices of the female body, enclosing them in that which is codifiable.[49] But since when was Rabelais' world an 'enclosed', let alone a 'safe' space ? And might a one-sex body not be positive ?

Since the publication of Bromilow's article scholars have begun to shed considerable light on the ways in which Bakhtin's work can in fact help us to reconsider how we think about gender in terms of heteroglossia, that is to say movement, flux and multiplicity.[50] What lies underneath Bromilow's argument is the notion that androgyny equates to the erasure of woman and man. But this need not be the case, certainly not in Rabelais' world. The grotesque body is a transgressive body which pushes up against and moves past its own limits. And this kind of a body has particular implications for the conceptualisation of gender, and the idea of 'woman' in particular, whereby a person is not confined to their own body, whether that body be traditionally 'male' or 'female', without writing the body out altogether.[51]

Rabelais conceptualises the transcendance beyond the body in his dedication to Marguerite de Navarre, which has long been acknowledged by critics, but which merits further exploration :

Esprit abstraict, ravy, et ecstatic,
Qui frequentant les cieulx, ton origine,
As délaissé ton hoste et domestic,
Ton corps concords, qui tant se morigine
À tes edictz en vie peregrine

47 Bromilow, 'Inside Out', p. 36.
48 Thomas Laquer, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 25-63.
49 In this sense, Bromilow builds on Peter Stallybrass' chapter, 'Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed', in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Margaret Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan and Nancy Vickers (London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), pp. 123-145.
50 Becky Francis, 'Gender monoglossia, gender heteroglossia: the potential of Bakhtin's work for re-conceptualising gender', *Journal of Gender Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, March 2012, pp. 1-15, (p. 3, p. 12).
51 My reading of the grotesque body here is informed by Mary Russo, *Female grotesques: carnival and theory* (Milwaukee: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

Sans sentement, et comme en Apathie:
Vouldrois tu poinct faire quelque sortie
De ton manoir, divin perpetuel?
Et çà bas veoir une tierce partie
Des faictz joyeux du bon Pantagruel?[52]

With the exception of Cathy Schiffer, who argued that this dedicatory poem is best understood as a 'sincere appreciation' of Marguerite de Navarre and her 'esprit', critics have generally explained this dedication (away) through a range of different arguments.[53] Jean Céard has argued that the dedication simply 'prouve que la reine soutient ouvertement Rabelais'.[54] Marcel de Grève argues that Marguerite de Navarre read the *Tiers Livre* and enjoyed it, but concludes his analysis there.[55] Edwin Duval considers the portrait to be unflattering anyway, and interprets it as further indication of Rabelais' misogyny.[56] Cathleen M. Bauschatz has argued that Rabelais dedicated this work to Navarre because they shared similar views on clandestine marriage.[57] Carla Freccero is the only critic to have regarded the dedication as a creative problem, claiming that it further problematises gender trouble in Rabelais' work.[58] In order to embrace what Freccero rightly suggests is a 'creative problem', we might turn our attention to the significance of the word 'ecstatic' ; that which is outside of itself, or outside of the body. Huchon notes that '[l]es autres emplois d'ecstatic [dans le texte de Rabelais] n'ont pas les connotations positives de celui-ci'.[59] But how might we understand this instance of the word, 'ecstatic' ? For Juliana Kitty Lerner, this word suggests that Rabelais was asking Marguerite de Navarre to leave the upper realm and bring herself back to the worldly

[52] François Rabelais, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. by Mireille Huchon (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), p. 341. Further references to this edition will be given as page references, between parentheses, in the main body of my text.
[53] Cathy Schiffer, 'Contextual Misogyny in the *Tiers Livre'*, *Chimères*, Vol. 17, Issue 2 (1984), pp. 53-67.
[54] *Le Tiers Livre*, ed. by Jean Céard (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1995), p. 4, n. 1.
[55] De Grève, *La Réception de Rabelais*, pp. 62-63.
[56] Duval, *Le Tiers Livre*, pp. 130-131.
[57] Cathleen M. Bauschatz, 'Rabelais and Marguerite de Navarre on Sixteenth-Century Views of Clandestine Marriage', *The Sixteenth-Century Journal*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Summer 2003), pp. 395-408.
[58] Carla Freccero, *Father Figures: Genealogy and Narrative Structure in Rabelais* (Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 150, n. 22.
[59] Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, p. 1362.

order,[60] whereas Mary B. McKinley sees this invocation in a more positive light, arguing that Rabelais was imploring Navarre to become more politically active in the Church's fight against the Calvinists.[61]

What I am particularly interested in here, however, is the way in which the relationship between body and mind is reconfigured in this dedication ; 'Qui fréquentant les cieulx, ton origine/As delaissé ton hoste et domestic/Ton corps concords' (v.2-4). McKinley argues, in reference to these lines in particular, that, '[l]a libération des contraintes du corps fait figure d'étape nécessaire et, en fin de compte, de convention dans la quête mystique'.[62] Although McKinley is not expressely concerned here with questions of sex or gender, her analysis opens up the possibility that Rabelais' imagined ideal reader does not have a particular kind of body, if they have a body at all. Much like the construction of the androgynous narrator that Zegura proposes as a useful lens through which to read Rabelais' text, the construction of a disembodied reader might also offer new ways of thinking about approaching Rabelais' work from the point of view of gender ; disembodiment need not be understood as the eradication of gender, but rather as the eradiction of a concept of gender which is defined by the body that one finds themselves in.[63] Bodies are something that we generally process throught sight and touch. But what do bodies sound like ? And is sound gendered?[64]

IV. Looking, listening and 'reading'

[60] Juliana Kitty Lerner, 'Introduction', *A Companion to Marguerite de Navarre*, eds. Gary Ferguson and Mary B.McKinley (Leiden: Brill, 2013), p. 14.
[61] Mary B. McKinley, 'Rabelais, Marguerite de Navarre et la Dédicace du *Tiers Livre*: Voyages Mystiques et Missions Terrestres', *RR*, 94, 1-2 (2003), pp. 169-184.
[62] McKinley, 'Rabelais, Marguerite de Navarre et la Dédicace du *Tiers Livre*', p. 179.
[63] For exploration into androgyny in the work of Marguerite de Navarre has been explored by Lynn T. Ramey, 'Androgynous Power and the Maternal Body in Marguerite de Navarre's Les Prisons', *Dalhousie French Studies*, Vol. 71 (Summer 2005), pp. 31-38 and Jeff Kendrick, 'Gender Flexibility and Androgyny in Marguerite de Navarre's Chansons spirituelles', *L'Esprit Créateur*, Vol. 57, Number 3 (Fall 2017), pp. 105-117.
[64] On the relationship between sound and gender in the field of music in particular, see Sarah Hickmott, '(En) Corps Sonore: Towards a Feminist Ethics of the 'Idea' of Music in Recent French Thought', Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford (2017).

'Dès le début de l'oeuvre rabelaisienne, le lecteur entend la voix d'un homme qui fait appel à d'autres hommes en affichant son être comme sujet masculin'[65] - so goes the argument surrounding the relationship between the voice of Rabelais' narrator and Rabelais' imagined reader that is generally supported by critics.[66] But does the narratorial voice in Rabelais' work really have a gender? Or does it only become gendered when it is spoken aloud by someone?

In his ironically named article 'Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism', Wayne Booth tells the following tale of his wife's reaction when he read her the scene which recounts the joke Panurge plays on the Haute Dame de Paris that I will consider in detail in Chapter Two:

> When I read, as a young man, the account of how Panurge got his revenge on the Lady of Paris, I was transported with delighted laughter; and when I later read Rabelais aloud to my young wife, as she did the ironing (!), she could easily tell that I expected her to be as fully transported as I was. Of course, she did find a lot of it funny; a great deal of it is very funny. But now, reading passages like that, when everything I know about the work as a whole suggests that my earlier response was closer to the spirit of the work itself, I draw back [...]- and here is a scandal indeed – I find that my pleasure in some parts of this text has now been diminished by my critical act.[67]

Booth inscribes the place of woman as auditor of a seemingly male-authored text mediated by a male reader who determines her identity in relational terms, 'my wife', and paradoxically writes her out of the story of Rabelais' reception by appropriating her voice, subsuming her into his own gendered narrative, and subsuming Rabelais' text along with her. Booth takes it for granted that Rabelais' implied reader is a heterosexual

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[65] David La Guardia, 'L'écriture polymorphe de la masculinité chez Rabelais', *Itinéraires: Littérature, textes, cultures, Itinéraires*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2008), pp. 49-61, (p. 50).

[66] Consider Madeleine Lazard, 'C'est du point de vue masculin et traditionnel que Rabelais envisage les rôles respectifs des conjoints dans la société', *Images littéraires de la femme à la Renaissance* (PUF: Littératures Modernes, 1985), p. 143.

[67] Wayne Booth, 'Freedom of Interpretation: Bakhtin and the Challenge of Feminist Criticism', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (1982), pp. 45-76, (p. 68).

male, and feels threatened by the fact that feminist criticism has forced him to imagine himself in the position of the woman.[68]

The scandal, for Booth, is that feminist criticism has made readers think rather than simply laugh. It is highly unlikely, Booth suggests, that a woman might take critical pleasure in a text that features the mistreatment of female characters. Booth would further sketch out his notion of ethical criticism in *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (1988) in which he placed emphasis on the ways in which texts influence readers. But as Amy Staples has pointed out, this kind of criticism does not leave much room for the woman reader of Rabelais' work: '[d]espite [Booth's] best efforts, his very reluctance to allow female critics into Rabelais studies is keenly evident'.[69] Significantly, Booth's wife does laugh at some parts of the text, but the point is that her experience of Rabelais' work is mediated by the man who reads to her, and we are never told which parts of the text she laughed at. We do not get to hear her response.

Rabelais' narrator often mentions men reading to women. Aside from the 'gentils hommes et autres...faisant beaux et longs narrez' (213) to their women, we also find Grandgousier in *Gargantua,* 28, who '[…] après souper se chauffe les couilles à un beau clair et grand feu, et […] écrit on foyer avecq un bâton brûlé d'un bout […] faisant à sa femme et famille de beaux contes du temps jadis' (82). The trope of men reading to women reoccurs over the course of the five chapters that follow. But so does the figure of the woman who speaks either in response to, or in orderto pass on, what she has heard. When I use the word 'reading' in this thesis, then, I mean it in a broad sense, incorporating not only the act of looking at a text but also of reading a text aloud, or listening to that text being spoken out loud.[70] An emphasis on orality and aurality serves

[68] See Jane Gallop, *Thinking Through the Body* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 34.
[69] Staples, 'Primal Scenes/Primal Screams', p. 52. See also Richard Berrong, 'Finding Antifeminism in Rabelais; Or, a Response to Wayne Booth's Call for an Ethical Criticism', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (June 1985), pp. 687-696.
[70] On the validity of a broad understanding of 'reading' in the early modern period, see Roger Chartier,

as another means by which we can reach a greater understanding of how women fit in to traditions of reading Rabelais' work.[71] As well as the woman's response, this thesis is also interested in the ways in which the sounds a woman might have heard (or might hear) when she listened (or listens) to Rabelais' text being read aloud might actually have an effect upon the meaning of the text itself.[72] Like the widow in the scene from *La Lectrice* with which this introduction began, I am interested in what Roland Barthes describes as 'le bruissement de la langue':

> Et la langue, elle, peut-elle bruire? Parole, elle reste, semble-t-il condamnée au bredouillement; écriture, au silence, et à la distinction des signes: de toute manière, il reste toujours trop de sens pour que le langage accomplisse une jouissance qui serait propre à sa matière. Mais ce qui est impossible n'est pas inconcevable: le bruissement de la langue forme une utopie. Quelle utopie? Celle d'une musique du sens; j'entends par là que dans son état utopique la langue serait élargie, je dirais même dénaturée, jusqu'à former un immense tissu sonore dans lequel l'appareil se trouverait irréalisé; le signifiant phonique, métrique, vocal, se déploierait dans toute sa somptuosité, sans que jamais un signe s'en détache (vienne naturaliser cette pure nappe de jouissance), mais aussi – et c'est là le difficile – sans que le sens soit brutalement congédié, dogmatiquement forclose, bref châtré. Bruissante, confiée au signifiant par un mouvement inouï, inconnu de nos discours rationnels, la langue ne quitterait pas pour autant un horizon du sens: le sens, individus, impénétrable, innommable, serait cependant posé au loin comme un mirage, faisant de l'exercice vocal un paysage double, muni d'un «fond»; mais au lieu que la musique des phénomènes soit le «fond» de nos messages (comme il arrive dans notre Poésie), le sens serait ici le point de fuite de la jouissance. Et de même que, attribué à la machine, le bruissement n'est que le bruit d'une absence de bruit, de même, reporté à la langue, il serait ce sens qui fait entendre, un exemption de sens, ou – c'est la même chose – ce non-sens qui ferait entendre au loi un sens désormais libéré de toutes les agressions dont le signe, formé dans la «triste et sauvage histoire des hommes» est la boîte de Pandore.[73]

'Introduction: Reading Practices and the Materiality of Texts', *French Historical Studies,* Vol. 41, No. 3 (August 2018), pp. 397-401; 'in the early modern period, reading was closely associated with practices of orality: reading aloud, spontaneous exchanges, or more structured discussions', p. 398. See also Wendy Perkins, 'Women, conversation and silence', *Seventeenth- Century French Studies* (2006), Vol. 28, Issue 1, pp. 205-220 and Myriam Dufour-Maître, 'La culture de la voix', in *Les précieuses: Naissance des femmes de lettres en France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Champion, 1999), pp. 448-457.

[71] On the gendered nature of oral history, see Joan Sangster, 'Telling our stories: feminist debates and the use of oral history', *Women's History Review*, (1994) Vol. 3, No. 1,pp. 5-28 and Susan Geiger, 'What's so feminist about women's oral history?', Journal of Women's History?', *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 2., Number 7 (Spring 1990) pp. 169-182. Nadine Berenguier also speaks of the 'oral culture that traditionally characterized female upbringing', *Conduct Books for Girls in Enlightenment France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 21.

[72] Note François Bon's website and blog launched in 2008, which features readings of 'Rabelais à haute voix': https://www.tierslivre.net/spip/spip.php?rubrique23. Last accessed, 1 Oct 2018.

[73] Roland Barthes, *Le bruissement de la langue: Essais critiques,* IV (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1984), pp. 100-101.

I cite this passage in its entirety for three reasons. Firstly, because it foregrounds a key focus of analysis that runs throughout this thesis; the importance of listening not only to the sounds but also the silences in Rabelais' text. Secondly, because it raises the question of whether the meaning of a text is located with the author or the reader. And thirdly, because it associates the freedom of meaning acquired through sounds with Pandora's box, which exists in Rabelais' text as an alternative model for reading. In the Prologue to Gargantua that I mentioned above, not only are we given the phallic 'os' from which the reader is invited to suck the 'sustantificque mouelle', we are also given Pandora's box:

> Mais ouvrans ceste boyte: eussiez au dedans trouvé une celeste et impreciable drogue, entendement plus que humain, vertus merveilleuse, couraige invincible, sobresse non pareille, contentement certain, asseurance parfaicte, deprisement incroyable de tout ce pourquoy les humains tant veiglent, courent, travaillent, navigent et bataillent. (5-6)

Rather than suck at the phallic bone, the reader is here invited to become intoxicated with an 'entendement plus que humain'. That is to say, not only with an understanding but also a sound that transcends the body, be that a body with a phallus or not. This thesis argues that if we listen to the sound of Rabelais' text we will also hear more clearly the sounds and voices of the women in Rabelais' world, and in the history of Rabelais' reception who have been muted.[74] *Pour bien entendre, il faut entendre.*

V. Corpus and chapter outline

The story of Rabelais' reception amongst women in the early modern world is inextricably linked to the social, cultural and aesthetic climate of seventeenth-and eighteenth-century France, and its changing conditions of cultural production. The

[74] I follow Elizabeth Guild here in drawing a distinction between 'silence', which is the lack of sound, and 'mutisme', which is the quietening of a sound that is in fact there. See Guild, "Et les interpréter là où elles n'exhibent que leur mutisme", *Michigan Romance Studies*, Vol. 15, (1995), pp. 133-150.

forgotten perspectives that this thesis seeks to unveil are inextricably linked to the kinds of sources that we privilege when writing reception history and the history of the book. Thanks to the work of scholars such as Robert Darnton and D.F. McKenzie, the study of book history has begun to take pay more attention to the 'communications circuit'[75] and the social structures that shaped people's interaction with a particular text.[76] But the question of how gender served to frame modes of circulation is yet to be fully investigated. Literary history and book history still privilege dominant modes of narrative and transmission at the expense of the more fragmented elements that feature in the dissemination and interpretation of a given text.

This thesis attempts to synthesise the approaches of book history and gender studies, by considering who was reading and interacting with a text or edition, and, more controversially, because in part speculatively, by engaging in close analysis of the text which itself helped to generate and influence its own posterity.[77] The woman's Rabelais of the early modern period does not emerge from dominant narratives, grandiose editions, or the words of the 'grands écrivains'. Accordingly, this thesis considers a range of seventeenth and eighteenth-century re-appropriations of Rabelais' work that take the form of literary genres associated with feminine salon culture in the early modern world: ballets, anecdotes, letters, journals and the emerging genre of the novel. It combines close-text analysis with broader historical contextualisation, drawing attention to the ways in which context shapes meaning, and the way text can in turn shape context. Each chapter takes as its starting point a moment of contemporary critical debate regarding the question of gender in a particular episode of Rabelais' work. It then goes on to analyse an instance of re-appropriation or reception, with a view to considering what this can tell us

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[75] Robert Darnton, 'What is the History of Books?', *Daedalus*, Vol. 111, No. 3. Representations and Realities (Summer, 1982) pp. 65-83.
[76] Donald Francis McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999)
[77] This approach is informed by that of Roger Chartier, *Lectures et lecteurs dans la France d'Ancien Regime* (Paris: Seuil, 1987).

about the way in which Rabelais' work was read by, or adapted for, women in the early modern world. The third part of each chapter returns to the related episode from Rabelais' original text and offers a feminist rereading of that episode in light of that moment of reception. As such, this thesis adopts an analogous readerly approach to that advocated by Helen Swift in her 2008 publication.[78] This manner of using moments of reception to inform my readings ensures that the readings I offer are rooted in moments in Rabelais' text that were of interest to early modern audiences. As such, I combine historicist and theoretical approaches to the study of Rabelais' work. These previously neglected sources not only complicate the critical narrative of Rabelais' literary afterlives but also help us to reread the configurations of woman in certain key episodes of Rabelais' *Chroniques*, offering new strategies for reading Rabelais' work.

My first chapter explores two court ballets dating from the first half of the seventeenth century, *Le Ballet des andouilles* (1628) and the *Balet de la vénérable Sibylle de Panzoust* (1645), both of which were addressed 'aux dames', and both of which explicitly adapt episodes in Rabelais' text. These gender-bending ballets not only play with notions of masculinity and femininity but also have something to tell us about pre-modern sexuality and gender, in so far as both of these ballets present us with constructions of both men and women as sexual subjects, some of whom have non-heterosexual desires. In light of this, I go on to propose a feminist erotics of reading, whereby the metaphor of the clitoral orgasm and textual climax functions as an alternative way of unlocking Rabelais' prose in Chapters 16-18 of the *Tiers Livre*, and Chapters 29-42 of the *Quart Livre*.

In Chapter Two I turn my attention to two seventeenth-century accounts of Rabelais' life. I focus in particular on the collection of anecdotes surrounding his life, entitled the *Particularitez*, which were derived from episodes in Rabelais' text. I argue

[78] Helen Swift, *Gender, Writing and Performance: Men Defending Women in Late Medieval France (1440-1538)* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

that each of these anecdotes has its roots in a particular episode in Rabelais' text. This chapter engages with the critical debate surrounding the relationship between man and work that has resurfaced over the past decade, and which José Luis Diaz has argued is far from being an exclusively nineteenth-century phenomenon.[79] Rather than a case of 'l'homme et l'œuvre', I suggest that these early modern sources constituted a case of 'l'œuvre et l'homme', in so far as they drew conclusions about Rabelais' life and character from the lives and personalities of the characters in his work. I argue that Rabelais' misogyny, and the related notion of his text as 'misogynistic' is a construct of posterity rather than of Rabelais' own making which stems from a conflation between Rabelais the man, Rabelais' narrator, and the character of Panurge. After destabilising this identification, I go on to offer a rereading of the 'Haute Dame de Paris' in Chapters 22-24 of *Pantagruel*. If we read the episode with the voice of an androgynous narrator, rather than a man akin to Panurge, the episode emerges not as an instance in which women are silenced, but rather an exploration of why, when and how men might attempt to contain women.[80]

Chapter Three shifts the focus away from the trickster Panurge, an archetypal 'Maistre Mouche', over to the construction of 'Dame Mouche'. Here, I offer an insight into the ways in which Madame de Sévigné, the self-proclaimed 'Dame Mouche', both interacted with Rabelais' work and encouraged her daughter to do the same. I place Sévigné's engagement with Rabelais' work alongside her appreciation of La Fontaine. Section Two of this chapter considers a Rabelaisian intertext in one of La Fontaine's *Fables* in which a man, rather than a woman, is argaubly the butt of the narrator's joke. I suggest that this construction of 'Dame Mouche' offers us an alterantive lens through

[79] José-Luis Diaz, *L'homme et l'œuvre: contribution à une histoire de la critique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2011).
[80] The most biting study of this episode remains Carla Freccero, 'Damning Haughty Dames: Panurge and the Haulte Dame de Paris (*Pantagruel* 14)', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, Volume 15 (1985), pp. 56-67.

which to read Rabelais' text. Using this lens, I offer a re-reading of *Pantagruel*, 15, which is often understood to feature a violent scene of female violation.[81] By paying close attention to Rabelais' use of the word 'mouche' and the proliferation of sounds in this particular part of the text, I argue that the woman in the story might alternatively be understood as the pleasure-seeking subject rather than the object of the trick that occurs.

We meet more tricksy women in Chapter Four, in which I consider the *Parallèle Burlesque d'Homère et de Rabelais*, by the journalist and writer Nicolas Lenglet-Dufresnoy. This text was included in the March 1711 issue of the journal*, Le Mercure Galant* – a journal that had a readership comprised predominantly of 'women'. Building on the work of Joan DeJean and Helena Taylor, I argue that, despite the deceptive title, this text was in fact not about Homer but rather about women's access to, and interaction with, Rabelais' work.[82] In so doing, I locate Rabelais within the context of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes and the inextricably related Querelle des Femmes. I move on to focus on one particular section of Dufresnoy's text in which he rewrites the *Farce de la Femme Muette* in Chapters 31-34 of the *Tiers Livr*e. I consider how this recontextualisation helps us to revisit the trope of the mute woman that haunts scholarship of Rabelais' work. As part of this, I place the myth of Philomela and Procne at the forefront of this episode, and argue Rabelais' engagement in this story is crucial to reaching a further understanding of women's voices in Rabelais' world.

I take a further step into the eighteenth century in my fifth and final chapter. Here, I revisit the idea of motherhood in Rabelais' work by considering the previously

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[81] On the apparent misogyny of this episode, see Françoise Charpentier, 'Le lion, la vieille et le renard: Rabelais et l'obscène', *Europe*, 757 (1992), pp. 80-91 and David La Guardia, "Un bon esmoucheter par mousches jamais esmouché ne sera': Panurge as Trickster', *RR*, 88, No.4 (1997), pp. 519-528.
[82] See Joan DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns:* Culture Wars and the making of a fin de siècle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997) and Helena Taylor, 'Ancients, Moderns, Gender: Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier's 'Le Parnasse Reconnaissant, ou, le Triomphe de Madame des-Houlières', *French Studie*s, Vol. 71, No. 1, (Nov, 2016), pp. 15-30.

unexamined illustrations included in the aforementioned edition of 1741. I argue that the very existence of these illustrations served to impose a generic classification on to Rabelais' corpus, witnessing the beginning of the construction of Rabelais' work as a novel. I then go on to offer a detailed analysis of the illustration depicting Gargamelle giving birth to Gargantua in *Gargantua,* Chapter 6. Here I argue that this illustration domesticates Rabelais' text ; not only does it remove the corporeal element of the episode, it also strikes up a divide between masculine and feminine spaces that is overwhelmingly absent in Rabelais' original text. This homosocial paradigm would later be emphasised in an issue of the *Bibliothèque Universelle des romans* dating from March 1776 that I consider towards the end of this chapter. This bite-sized version of Rabelais' work featured a selection of extracts from the original text which had been adapted for its women readers, as was the case with the *Parallèle Burlesque* I examined in the previous chapter. In contrast to the *Parallèle Burlesque*, however, the extract in the *Bibliothèque Universelle* closes up Rabelais' text. This chapter thus reveals a key paradox in the history of Rabelais' reception; as the text gradually began to be marketed for women, and thus opened up to the woman reader, the women's bodies inside of the text began to be closed down and tamed.

The varied nature of my corpus allows me to consider the ways in which genres, contexts and publics shape meaning. Although the sources I consider take a range of forms, they are all united by the fact that they adapt Rabelais' text with a view to either including or excluding women from Rabelais' world. And they all touch on questions of orality and aurality. As such, each and every one of them helps us to approach the question of women's voices inside and outisde of Rabelais' text with fresh eyes and ears.

Chapter One. Court Ballets: Performing Gender with Rabelais (1628-1645)

Rabelais' work enacts a 'performance of masculinity'.[1] The relevance of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity for our understanding of early modern court ballets is becoming increasingly recognised by critics.[2] As I noted in the introduction, much scholarly attention has been paid to the ways in which masculinity is navigated, constructed and interrogated in Rabelais' five books. But this emphasis on masculinity in Rabelais' work tends to loose sight of the fact that any interrogation or renegotiation of masculinity also brings with it a renegotiation of femininity. Two particular seventeenth-century court 'ballets' deriving from Rabelais' text, the *Ballet des Andouilles* (1628), and the *Ballet de l'Oracle de la venerable Sibylle de Panzoust* (1645) offer further avenues into discussing the performance not only of masculinity and male sexuality, but also femininity and female sexuality in Rabelais' work.

Despite significant critical interest in the intersection between Rabelais' work and theatre[3], the two ballets that are my focus here have often been quoted only in passing in studies of Rabelais' reception, but have not received the critical attention they merit.[4] The most substantial critical study of them remains Françoise Lavocat's chapter, 'Danser le roman', in a collection of essays about dance more generally. Helpful as her study is

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[1] LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity,* p. 108.

[2] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990). See, for example, Lewis Seifert, *Manning the Margins: Masculinity and Writing in Seventeenth-Century France* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009). On gender performativity in court ballets in particular, see, for example, Joseph Harris, *Hidden Agendas: Cross-Dressing in 17th-Century France* (Germany: Gunter Narr Verlag Tübingen, 2005) and Julia Prest, 'Cross-Casting in French Court Ballet: Monstrous Aberration or Theatrical Convention ?', *Romance Studies* (Nov, 2003), pp. 157-168.

[3] E. Bruce Hayes, *Rabelais's Radical Farce: Late Medieval Comic Theatre and its Function in Rabelais* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010).

[4] Jean Plattard mentions these ballets in *La Vie de François Rabelais* (Paris: van Ouest, 1930), p. 285. Henri Clouzot has considered these ballets but makes no mention of gender. See H.-E Clouzot, 'Ballets tirés de Rabelais au XVIIe siècle', *RER*, 5 (1907), pp. 90-97. Mark Franko cites Clouzot's study in *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body* (Oxford: OUP, 2015), p. 197, though the ballets themselves do not form part of Franko's study.

for scholars of the genre of court ballet more generally, the main focus of her study, however, is on what these ballets reveal about the relationship between novels and performance in the period, rather than what this can tell us about the circulation and interpretation of Rabelais' work in the context of the French court. This chapter addresses this gap in criticism and considers not only what these early modern performances can tell us about Rabelais' reception but also how they can help us to reread two particular episodes in Rabelais' original text that remain to be fully explored from the perspective of sexuality and desire.

1.1. Strapping it on in Rabelais' World (1628)/(1552)

On their way to visit Quaresmeprenant on Tapinois Island, Pantagruel and his fellow travellers anchor at Farouche Island following the battle with the Phystere. They then become aware that they are being spied on by the andouilles. Panurge and Pantagruel's encounter with the andouilles and the battle that ensues in the *Quart Livre*, Chapters 38-42, has been the subject of considerable critical attention. Critics have focused on what it can tell us about Rabelais' own military knowledge,[5] Rabelais' relationship to the genre of the epic[6], and the ways in which Rabelais' pushes analogy and meaning to its limits.[7] The question of gender and sexuality in the episode has not gone unnoticed. Florence Weinberg has argued that the bisexuality of the chitterlings destabilises the kind of behaviour that is bound up in a phallocentric world view.[8] Todd Reeser responded to this by offering a reading of the episode from an entirely phallocentric perspective,

[5] S. Gigon, « L'Art militaire dans Rabelais », *RER*, V (1907), pp. 1-23.
[6] Guy Demerson « Paradigmes épiques chez Rabelais », in *Rabelais en son demi-millénaire: Actes du colloque de Tours*, *ER* 21 (Genève: Droz, 1984) and Dorothy Lintner, 'Le Combat dans le Quart Livre: Renouvellement d'une topique epique chez Rabelais', *Camenae*, no.4 (June 2008), pp. 1-13.
[7] Jennifer Oliver, Rabelais's Engins: War Machines, Analogy, and the Anxiety of Invention in the Quart Livre, *Early Modern French Studies* (2016), 38:2, pp. 97-110; EW. Marshall, "The Great Al- legory," *Australian Journal of French Studies,* 26 (1989): 12-51 and Paul J. Smith, *Voyage et ecriture: Etude sur le Quart Livre de Rabelais* (Geneva: Droz, 1987), p. 367.
[8] Florence Weinberg, 'the bisexuality of the phallic chitterlings is a threat to male supremacy', 'Layers of Emblematic Prose: Rabelais' Andouilles', *The Sixteenth-Century Journal*, Vol. 26, No.2 (Summer, 1995) pp. 367-377, (p. 368).

arguing that '[i]f Panurge represents the man lacking courage, the enigmatic andouilles ("chitterlings") embody men with too much courage [...] the andouilles imply a simultaneous failure of masculinity and motivation'.[9] In this section, I bring the bisexual female andouilles back into the picture, and take Weinberg's argument one step further to argue that the bisexuality of the chitterlings destabilises not only a phallocentric world view, but also a heteronormative and cisnormative world view. And in order to do so, I begin by considering a queer court ballet, (and I mean *queer* here in both senses of the term), which reappropriates Rabelais' andouilles and stages them firmly in the territory not only of gender ambiguity but also sexual ambiguity.

1.1.1. 'Dames' and dildos in *Le Ballet des Andouilles* (1628)

The script of the *Ballet des Andouilles* recently appeared in Jean-Paul Goujon's anthology of erotic literature.[10] Goujon does not offer any substantial background to this piece, but rather seconds the theatre fanatic and collector, André Martineau de Soleinne, in attributing it to the satirical poet Charles-Timoléan de Beauxoncles, known by the name of the sieur de Sigogne (1560-1611).[11] Whether or not Sigogne was in fact the author of this piece or not, this authorial attribution functions, among other things, as a way of drawing our attention to the erotic dimensions of this curious performance, which Soleinne describes as 'la plus libre qu'on ait osé représenter à la cour'.[12] Eventually featuring in Théophile de Viau's *Parnasse des poëtes satyriques* (1622) Sigogne was one

[9] Reeser, *Moderating Masculinity*, p. 174.
[10] *Le grand siècle déshabillé: anthologie érotique du XVII siècle*, ed. by Jean-Paul Gougon (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2017), pp. 43-47. All quotations and page numbers provided refer to this edition.
[11] 'On peut l'attribuer au poete Sigogne, sans lui faire injure', *Bibliothèque Dramatique* (Paris: Administration des Alliances des arts, 1845), Vol. 3, p. 91.
[12] Martineau de Soleinne, *Bibliothèque Dramatique* (Paris: Administration de l'Alliance des Arts, 1843-1845), 8 Vols. in 6, Vol. 3, p. 91. Jules Gay describes each sestet as being 'fort leste', *Bibliographie des ouvrages relatifs à l'amour, aux femmes, aux mariages* (Paris: Quai des Augustins, 1864), p. 267.

of the many poets writing under Louis XIII who produced erotic verse, including the unashamedly entitled collection, *Erotica Selecta* (1610). The ballet thus needs to be considered in this context.

The extant script is comprised of fifteen individual sestets, all of which describe a particular figure, nine male, six female, each of whom come up individually to offer a penis, or dildo, in the form of a sestet, as a gift to the Seigneur de la Nigaudière, described by Jules Gay as a 'gentilhomme de village'.[13] The ballet begins with the following introductory sestets:

AUX DAMES

Voicy des masques de renom,
Qui vous apportent un Momon,
Affin de rejiouyr les Dames:
Car ils portent entre ces plats
La figure d'un certain cas,
Dont elles appaisent leurs flames.

Ce n'est point chose qui desplaist,
Lors que vous sçaurez ce que c'est,
Vous en pasmerez tous de rire:
Hazardez quatre ou cinq testons,
Et vous verrez que nous portons
Ce que je ne vous veux pas dire.

Sçachez que c'est un bon morceau,
Belles, je croy que j'en voy l'eau
Desia vous venir à la bouche,
Il ne se peut faire autrement,
Ou vous seriez asseurément
Plus insensibles qu'une souche.

C'est un manger delicieux
L'Ambroisie même des cieux
Ne sçauroit estre plus exquise:
Mais pour faire un si bon repas,
Depeschez vous de mettre bas
Le Cotillon & la Chemise.[14]

[13] Jules Gay, *Bibliographie*, p. 267.
[14] *Le Balet des andouilles*, p. 44. The word 'momon' here means 'masquerade'. See Goujon, *Le grand siècle déshabillé*, p. 917.

The mention of masks immediately places the piece within the context of carnival and the overthrowing of precedent. It designates 'dames' as its primary audience and sets out its intentions to please them. The innuendo 'certains cas/ Dont elles appaisent leurs flames', immediately signals that the audience are in the territory of sexual appetite and gratification.

This flirtatious rhetoric is then accentuated in the invocation of nipples, 'testons', and the description of the audience's salivating mouth. This audience, who are designated as 'women' are then invited to undress in preparation for the spectacle. During the reign of Louis XIII, the performers in court ballets were exclusively men, and thus the women in the piece would have been played by men in women's clothing.[15] So were the 'Dames' intended to be actual women, or were they satirical performances of homosexual men who, under the folds of their dresses - 'entre ces plats' - had a penis - '[un] certain cas'? The ambiguity of what exactly 'cas' referred to is what makes this performance so tantalisingly interesting.

This is followed by nine satirical portraits of different masculine tropes who each come to offer an 'andouille' to the seigneur de la Nigaudière, Gentilhomme de Village: un Capitaine, un Soldat, un mignon de Couchette, un Juge de Village, un Advocat, un Procureur, un Notaire and un Sergent. Each of the figures introduces themselves in hyperbolic fashion, and claims to be held in high esteem, particularly by the 'dames' of the court. Consider, for example, the Capitaine:

Tous les plus vaillans de la Terre
Me croyent le Dieu de la Guerre,
Et les Dames dedans la Cour,
Pour une flèche que je porte,
M'honorent toutes de la sorte,
Que si j'étois le Dieu d'Amour.[16]

[15] On the practice effeminising the notion of 'masculinity' on stage in early modern England, see Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization, 1579-1642* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009).
[16] *Le Balet des andouilles,* p. 44.

Phallic arrogance is also held up for ridicule in the portrait of the lawyer that is sketched in the fifth sestet. The lawyer says of himself, 'Je sçay tout le Texte du Droict/ J'en apprens aux dames la glose'.[17] This could be read as a comic portrayal of a condescending male who is bound up in the performance of his own masculinity in order to assert his dominance.

It is not only allegedly masculine men, however, who are the butt of ridicule here, but also those who are associated with more feminine attributes. This is most clearly seen in the portrait of the 'mignon de Couchette':

Je hay la guerre, & les excez,
Je fuy les debats & procez,
J'ayme les voluptez plus douces;
Et telle ne se vante pas
D'une Andouille de douze pouces,
Que je luy donne à son repas.[18]

The expression 'mignon de couchette' was used in early modern France to refer to the King's favorites who would sleep in his chamber. The 'telle' who is implied here, then, is not a woman but rather the King, albeit referred to in feminine pronouns. Here we see the same kind of gender play and pronoun performance that Rabelais exploits in the episode of the andouilles that I will consider in a moment. The andouille 'de douze pouces' that he gives the King is a euphemism for the mignon's penis, or dildo, and the homosexual act that he engages in with the King. This supposed effeminate behavior is further emphasised by the fact that the 'mignon' confesses his dislike for stereotypically manly pursuits, such as war and debate, for example (much like the fearful behaviour demonstrated by Panurge during the storm in Chapter 23 of the *Quart Livre*). This sestet

[17] Ibid. p. 45.
[18] Ibid. p. 45.

draws attention to the performativity of gender and the fragility of masculinity, which is all the more present in the sestet relating to the Sergeant:

J'exploite la nuict, & le jour,
Je donne en la Chambre d'Amour
Des assignations secrettes:
C'est mon ordinaire déduict,
De faire à cinquante fillettes,
Ce qu'Hercules fit une nuict.[19]

The 'fillettes' in question might be interpreted as girls, but, given the prevalence of seventeenth-century associations with Hercules and the ambiguity of gender and sexuality, it seems equally possible, if not more likely, that the word 'fillette' is being used to describe a homosexual or bisexual man.[20] What this indicates, then, is that Rabelais' battle against the andouilles had become, or was becoming, a point of reference akin to that of Hercules' labours. At this juncture, one might be forgiven for concluding that the ballet acts as further evidence of the prevalence of male homosexuality in the French courts – something which has been the topic of considerable critical attention.[21] But to do so would be to overlook the lesbian undertones that are also present in this exploration of gender performativity and sexual fluidity.

[19] Ibid. p. 46.
[20] On Hercules and the ambiguity of sex and gender in the early modern period, see Gary Ferguson, *Queer (re)readings in the French Renaissance: Homosexuality, Gender, Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), p. 130; Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), p. 43 and Sarah Carter, *Ovidian Myth and Sexual Deviance in Early Modern English Literature* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 84.
[21] See, for example, Michael Sibalis, "Homosexuality in Early Modern France", in *Queer Masculinities, 1550-1800: Siting Same-Sex Desire in the Early Modern World*, ed. by Katherine O'Donnell and Michael O'Rourke (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2006), pp. 211-231 and Robert Oresko, 'Homosexuality and the Court Elites of Early Modern France: Some Problems, Some Suggestions, and an Example', in *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe*, ed. by Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (New York: Haworth University Press, 1989), pp. 105-128.

With the story of Hercules' labours also comes the story of his battle against the Amazonian women, or, to use Monique Wittig's term, 'Les Guèrillères'. The figure of the Amazonian woman would later emerge as a symbolic figure for the *salonnières* in the latter half of the seventeenth century.[22] The second part of the piece makes us wonder whether the 'Dames' were in fact men playing lesbian or bisexual women wearing strap ons. What follows are the portraits of six women: 'la Dame des Grimaces', 'la grand' Cataut', 'la Dame Ysabelle', 'Dame Jacqueline', 'Dame Paquette' and 'Une Matrone'. The first woman we meet is 'la Dame des Grimaces', who introduces herself with a battle cry: 'je ne combas que des fesses'.[23] The reference to Rabelais' *Quart Livre* is clear here – we are in the territory of a gender war. But this grimacing woman is deeply sexualised. Not only does she battle with her buttocks, she also knows how to 'perce[r] les plus fortes presses'. The 'presses' in question here are ambiguous: are they the buttocks of a man? Or a woman? Or a vagina?

The 'grand Cataut', diminutive of Catherine, turns the traditional romance trope of the amorous woman on its head, declaring:

Dedans l'amoureux exercice
Je pratique plus de malice
Qu'un Pedant ne sait de Latin:
Je fais à l'envers la grenouïlle,
Et je m'instruis sur l'Arétin,
À tirer le jus d'une andouïlle.[24]

The allusion to Pietro Aretino in line 5 places us firmly in the context of the pornographic.[25] This sestet is a relatively explicit reference to the Queen Mother Catherine de Medici, who used her ladies in waiting as female spies to form sexual

[22] See Joan DeJean, 'Violent Women and Violence Against Women: Representing the "Strong" Woman in Early Modern France', *Signs*, Vol.29, No.1 (Autumn, 2003), pp. 117-147.
[23] *Le Balet des andouilles*, p. 46.
[24] Ibid., p. 46.
[25] On the importance of Aretino in the early modern world, see Raymond B. Waddington, *Aretino's Satyr: Sexuality, Satire and Self-projection in Sixteenth-century Literature and Art* (NY: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

liaisons with men of the court in order to seduce them and extract information.[26] But what is particularly interesting for current purposes is that Catherine de Medici was renowned not only for her supposed sexual deviance[27], but she was also rumoured to have been responsible for introducing the dildo into France.[28] Catherine's strap-on here, then, is not only performative; it also helps her to penetrate bodies literal, i.e. of her women and metaphorical, i.e. the inner workings of the court. Although this reference to Catherine could be understood as satirical or offensive, the use of the diminutive 'Cataut' is noteworthy in so far as it is used instead of the word 'Catin' that Pierre de L'Estoile employed to refer to Catherine in a derogatory sense: 'Catin, vous este fortunée/D'avoir un haras de putains!'[29]

As we will see in Rabelais' text, Pantagruel and his men first encounter the andouilles when they become aware that they are being spied on. In the ballet, then, Catherine's women become analogous to the Andouilles, and Catherine de Medici herself becomes Niphleseth, Queen of the Andouilles, whose name is stated in the sixteenth century *Briefve Déclaration* as meaning 'membre viril'.[30] What Cataut learns from this source is how to take the juice from an andouille, i.e. a phallus or a dildo. The term 'malice' here is also particularly important as it was used in the early modern world to refer specifically to acts of sodomy.[31] It is not entirely clear, then, what exactly Cataut is sucking; is it the penis of a biological male, or a dildo worn by a biological female who

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[26] Una McIlvenna, *'A Stable of Whores'? The 'Flying Squadron' of Catherine de Medici'*, in *The Politics of Female Households Ladies-in-waiting across Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 179-208.
[27] See Stephen Murphy, 'Catherine, Cybele, & Ronsard's Witnesses', in *High Anxiety*, pp. 55-70, (p. 60).
[28] Pierre de Bourdeille, Seigneur de Brantôme, 'Des Dames', *Œuvres Complètes*, vol. 9 (Paris: Renouard, 1876), pp. 193-208. On the history of the dildo and its uses amongst women in the early modern world, see Patricia Simons, 'The cultural history of Seigneur Dildoe', in *Sex Acts in Early Modern Italy: Performance, Perversion, Punishment*, ed. by Allison Levy (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 77-91.
[29] Pierre de L'Estoile, *Registre-Journal du règne de Henri III*, 6 vols., eds. Madeleine Lazard and Gilbert Schrenk (Genève: Droz, 1992), vol.5, pp.139-40.
[30] François Rabelais, 'Briefve déclaration', *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. by Demerson (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973), p. 778.
[31] See Merry Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 163.

performs masculinity? Or a man born in a female body? Or a man trapped in a female body who wears a dildo?

Whatever the case may be, Cataut is presented as a strong woman with agency, as is emphasised by the expression, 'à l'envers la grenouille'. In the early modern period, this expression referred to a sex position in which a woman lies on her back with her knees bent in the air, like a frog, in order to then be penetrated.[32] But Cataut does the opposite of this, adopting the position of the frog so as to assume the role of penetrator rather than penetrated.[33] These women are beings who fart and fuck, thereby presenting a different kind of femininity to that performed by the 'men' in the first half of the ballet. There are 'men' performing femininity, and 'women' performing masculinity. The ballet stages a seductive web of gender performativity, inversion and subversion.

The invocation of sexual positions is all the more striking in the portrait of 'la Dame Ysabelle', which could be understood as a direct reference to Isabelle de Limieul, who was one of Catherine de Medici's ladies in waiting.[34] This sestet is also the first and only time that the narrative voice asks for the person in question to be brought to her, which further suggests that these women are all part of Catherine de Medici's group of ladies in waiting:

Menez-moy la Dame Isabelle
Contre une forte Citadelle
Car elle pete si souvent,
Que du gros canon qu'elle porte,
Elle peut enfoncer la porte,
Et jeter la muraille au vent.[35]

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[32] See Rose Bidler, *Dictionnaire érotique: Ancien français, Moyen français, Renaissance* (Montréal: CERES, 2002), p. 336.
[33] This repositioning was highly politically charged. See Linda Carroll, "Who's on Top? Gender as Societal Power Configuration in Italian Renaissance Drama," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20, no. 4 (Winter 1989), pp. 531-58.
[34] On Catherine de Medici's affection for Isabelle de Limeuil in particular, see Una McIlvenna, 'Venomous Rumours: The Scandal of Isabelle de Limeuil', in *Scandal and Reputation at the Court of Catherine de Medici* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 102-131. The scandal in question here is Limieul's affair with the French Huguenot, Le Prince de Condé.
[35] *Le Balet des andouilles*, p. 46.

The woman's fart here is something that the woman produces herself, yet she does not have complete agency – she is led to Cataut by someone else at Cataut's command. Following as it does Cataut's description of her own sex positions, this demand for Dame Isabelle to be brought to her and placed against a fortification reveals Cataut's desire for sexual interaction with women as well as men. Read in this context, Isabelle's 'gros canon' of a fart might equate to the post-coital flatulence that she experiences due to the relaxation of her sphincter.[36] The military associations then serve to create a double performativity on the court stage: here we have a male dancer, playing the role of a woman who performs masculinity.

The sestet to Dame Jacqueline clearly lays out the close, dependent relationship that holds between Catherine and her women:

Dieu vous gard Dame Jacqueline
Vraiment vous avez bonne mine,
Parée de ces beaux atours:
Votre contenance si sûre
Me feroit bien faire gageure
Que vous avez monté sur l'ours.[37]

The Queen is reassured here that Jacqueline has fulfilled her duty and engaged in sexual activity with a man for the sake of the Queen's own advancement. The woman in question might legitimately be understood to be Catherine's old friend Jacqueline de Longwy, Duchesse de Montpensier, who Catherine entrusted with the task of persuading Antoine de Bourbon to relinquish his claims to the throne.[38] But what is particularly interesting in the sestet is the fact that the Queen knows this purely by looking at her. Her pleasure is two-fold: she is pleased because she has been obeyed, but she also gains a

[36] See Lynn Hunt, *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500-1800* (New York: Zone Books, 1993), p. 44.
[37] *Le Balet des andouilles*, p. 46.
[38] See Caroline Zum Kolk, 'Catherine de Médicis et sa maison: La fonction politique de l'hôtel de la reine au XVIe siècle', Unpublished PhD thesis, Université Paris VIII (2006), p. 173.

voyeuristic sexual pleasure at imagining the woman engaged in sexual activity. This reading is supported by the fact that Brantôme included Catherine de Medici and her women in his collection entitled *Dames galantes,* which had been in circulation in the French court for several years by 1628. Although La Guardia locates the *Dames galantes* within the context of early modern masculinity, arguing that texts and stories such as Brantôme's were constructed shared amongst men to warn eachother of 'women's wiles', the existence of these tales can equally be understood as evidence of same-sex activity amongst women in the early modern world.[39] The use of the expression 'bonne mine' is also ambiguous, referring equally to the woman's facial expression and her genitalia, the latter suggesting that the queen is intimately acquainted with Jacqueline whose private parts are in fact anything but private. And this is brought out all the more strikingly in the final three sestets. Following Jacqueline, we meet Dame Pacquette, Catherine de Medici's servant, who has done everything she can, 'par bond & par sault', to resist the temptations of love affairs, '[e]lle en est toute fendue'.[40] The use of the word 'fendre' here implies that she has been consumed by it[41], which is indicative of a female desire for pleasure.

The penultimate sestet depicts 'une Matrone', which in the seventeenth century could refer to either a 'dame d'honneur' or a midwife.[42]

J'entends les œuvres de Nature,
Je sçay bien faire une ouverture,
Et retrecir les plus grands cas,
Que si d'hazard il vous chatouille,
Filles, ne vous epargnez pas,
De vous le frotter[43] d'une andouille.[44]

[39] LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity*, p. 8.
[40] *Le Balet des andouilles*, p. 47.
[41] The expression here is used specifically in reference to a woman's private parts. See Bidler, *Dictionnaire érotique*, p. 275.
[42] 'On appelle, *Femme de chambre*, ou absolument *Femme,* Une femme ou fille qui sert une Dame à la chambre. Et, *Femme de charge,* Celle qui a soin du linge, de la vaisselle d' argent &c. *Sage-femme.* s. f. Matrone, Celle qui aide les femmes à accoucher. *Chercher une sage-femme. envoyer querir une sage-femme*', *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (Paris: J.-B. Coignard,1694), 2 tomes in 1 vol., p. 443.

The genitalia here referred to as nature's 'œuvres', and the allusion to a woman's 'ouverture' might at first seem to be about childbirth. But the lexis of sex that has preceded it and that which follows, 'chatouille, frottez', indicates that the Matrone is not only a midwife, but also a woman who knows how to open up other women in a sexual sense. Her claim that she knows how to 'retrecir les plus grands cas' could be interpreted in several ways: is she able to shrink the penises of women born in male bodies to help them achieve self-realisation? Or might this claim be understood as the words of a woman who is threatening to remove the penises of men so that they cannot impregnate women and burden them with childbirth? The only certainty that we can derive from this ballet is ambiguity.

The subject in question in the phrase, 'Que si d'hazard il vous chatouille', then, is not necessarily a penis- it could instead be a vagina, or it could even be an anus. And she goes on to tell the audience, 'Filles', that the way to stop the tickling is to rub it with 'une Andouille', be that a penis, a finger or a dildo.

This ballet could be read as an instance of satire in which sodomites, both male and female, are poked fun of.[45] But the rhetoric of secrecy and coded behaviour in the final sestet suggests that there are at least two different conclusions aimed at two different audiences. The final sestet, addressed to 'la Compagnie', goes as follows:

Beaux & divins esprits dont la juste cesure.
Au poids de la raison toutes choses mesure.
Vous rirez de ceste action:
Mais si vous sçaviez bien le secret de l'affaire,

[43] Panurge uses the word 'frotter' in relation to the Haute Dame de Paris that I will consider in Chapter Two: 'O dieux et deesses celestes, que heureux sera celluy à qui ferez celle grace de ceste cy accoller, de la baiser et de frotter son lart avec elle' (292-293).
[44] *Le Balet des andouilles*, p. 47.
[45] On satires of sodomy in the period, see Lewis Seifert, "Masculinity and Satires of 'Sodomites' in France, 1600-1715", in Homosexuality in French History and Culture, ed. by Jeffrey Merrick and Michael Sibalis (New York: Haworth Press, 2001), pp. 37-52.

Vous prendriez notre invention
Pour estre asseurément quelque sacré mystere.[46]

This sestet than draws up a distinction, similar to one that we will see in Chapter Four, between those who take things too seriously, 'au poids de la raison toutes chose mesure' and those who will understand the 'secret'. Those who rate it by reason alone will simply be amused, but those who decode the sexual innuendos will understand it as such, and then, for their own protection, declare that it is simply a mystery so as not to jeopardize their own modesty.

What is important here is that the sodomy that is staged in this ballet need not be read as solely homosexual sodomy between men, but also same-sex behaviour between women, including between women who may have phalluses. As well as a performance of effeminised masculinity in the ballet, there is also a performance of masculinised femininity, like that mentioned by Joan DeJean in her study of obscenity in the early modern world.[47] Although it might initially appear as a performance of exclusively effeminised masculinity in the seventeenth-century French court, this ballet can also be read as an exploration and staging of gender and sexual ambiguity more generally. In this space, anything goes. Rabelais world is being understood as one in which fluidity and freedom in the realms of gender and sexuality is celebrated rather than satirised, and in which any attempt to clearly define 'masculinity' and 'femininity' is rejected. So how can this early modern instance of appropriation help us to re-evaluate the renegotiation of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' in Rabelais' text?

1.1.2. *Masculin/Feminin* in the *Quart Livre* (29-42)

[46] *Le Balet des andouilles*, p. 47.
[47] See Joan DeJean, *The Reinvention of Obscenity*: *Sex, Lies and Tabloids in Early Modern France* (University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 20.

The reader first becomes aware of the existence of the andouilles in Chapter 29, when Xenomanes offers the following warning to Frère Jean:

> - Sont elles (demandoit frere Jan) masles ou femelles? anges ou mortelles? femmes ou pucelles?
> - Elles sont, respondit Xenomanes, femelles en sexe, mortelles en condition: aulcunes pucelles, aultres non.
> - Je me donne au Diable, dist frere Jan, si je ne suys pour elles. Quel desordre est ce en nature faire guerre contre les femmes? (607)

Frère Jean demonstrates unshakeable binary thinking in his questions, and this interaction between him and Xenomanes stages the relationship between words and the thing when it comes to questions of gender. Xenomanes specifies that the andouilles are 'femelles en sexe', rather than simply 'femelles', which hints at the possibility that they may be 'males' in other respects, just as la Grand Cataut and her women are associated with traditionally masculine domains such as warfare in the ballet I considered above. Frère Jean deduces from this that they are women both in terms of their physical bodies and their gender identity, declaring that it would be against nature to fight against them, and thus resolving to take their side. Frère Jean's use of the word 'desordre' is of course a nod to the chaotic episode that is about to ensue, and his use of the word 'nature' also places the episode in the context of moral judgement, preparing the reader for the kind of seemingly unnatural appearance and countenance of the andouilles.

The andouilles are described as being phallic in shape, but 'femelle en sexe'. Samuel Kinser has argued that, as such, the feminine andouilles capture the discrepancy that frequently exists in the French language between the grammatical gender of the noun and the actual gender of the thing to which it refers.[48] But could we not interpret the female sex yet phallic shape of the andouilles as more than just mere wordplay? The andouilles might be 'femelles en sexe', but might they not be 'males en genre', as we saw

[48] Kinser, *Rabelais's Carnival,* pp. 109-118.

in the performance of Grand Cataut and her masculine women in the *Ballet des Andouilles*? Michel Jeanneret sees their gender fluidity as more than just wordplay, but argues that this renders the Andouilles 'l'image d'un monde primitif, un chaos dont les êtres, transitoires, chercheraient leur moule définitif'.[49] But what if the Andouilles are not chaotic? What if their transitory nature is paradoxically permanent? Might it not be the very notion of gendered 'moule[s] définitif[s]' that Rabelais' text is encouraging the reader to question?

Once he realises what the creatures are trying to do, Gymnaste threatens to castrate them: '«Par Dieu (dist Gymnaste) tu n'y entreras qu'à taillons: ainsi entier ne pourrois tu.» Si sacque son espée Baise mon cul (ainsi la nommoit il) à deux mains, et trancha le Cervelat en deux pieces' (634): these creatures threaten the masculinity that he had constructed for himself around the phallus, and which is embodied in his sword. The name that he gives it, 'Baise mon cul', reflects the fragility of the masculinity that he has constructed for himself and which is threatened by the prospect of one of the andouilles entering one of his orifices. And the narrator places the emphasis on Gymnaste's act of naming and speaking, '(dist Gymnaste)... (ainsi la nomoit il)'. But this fear does not necessarily stem purely from his fear of male-male fellatio, as Reeser suggests.[50] Gymnaste may feel threatened by their bisexuality, and he might also feel threatened at the realisation that he can be entered because he too has an orifice.

Threatening as they are, the andouilles do eventually retreat at the sight of the large pig constructed by Frere Jan: 'soubdain que l'apperceurent jecterent leurs armes et bastons, et à terre toutes se agenoilerent, levantes hault leurs mains joinctes sans mot dire, comme si elles le adorassent', but their retreat is only performative, 'comme si' (636). Queen Niphleseth, whose name is stated in the *Briefve Declaration* as being

[49] See Michel Jeanneret, 'Rabelais, les monstres et l'interprétation des signes (Quart Livre, 18-42)', in *Writing the Renaissance: Essays on Sixteenth-Century French Literature in Honour of Floyd Gray*, ed. by Raymond C. La Charité (Lexington: French Forum, 1992), pp. 65-76, (p. 72).
[50] Reeser, *Moderating Masculinity*, p. 175.

Hebrew for 'membre viril', also performs obedience, but this time does so towards the women of the court: 'A la requeste des Dames de la court Royalle feut Niphleseth la jeune saulvée et honorablement traictée. Depuys feut mariée en bon et riche lieu, et feist plusieurs beaulx enfans, dont loué soit Dieu' (637). The rhyme between 'lieu' and 'Dieu' relocates the reader in the terra-firma of the classifiable, both in terms of language and of behaviour, as the Queen moves into court and has children, but the rhyme self-consciously draws the reader's attention to the fact that this superficial harmony is only created through language. The fact that the Queen has been beckoned by the women at court suggests that, although Niphleseth performs as child-bearing, there might in fact be other behaviour occurring behind the scenes.

The reader is told that she was 'honorablement traictée', but exactly what that meant is left to the reader's imagination. The fact that Niphleseth has been described by the narrator as akin to the explicitly gender-fluid Mellusine, however, leads the reader to wonder whether the desire expressed by the women at court for Niphleseth to be brought to them is suggestive of their own sexual appetite, much like the sexual appetites of Catherine de Medici and her women as portrayed in the ballet. The *Ballet des Andouilles* refocuses our attention on to the sexual fluidity of Rabelais' andouilles, but also the gender fluidity, which encourages the reader to think above and beyond the realms of cisnormative and heteronormative categorisation. The encounter with the andouilles in Rabelais' text can be understood as an encounter with what Toril Moi would theorise as a 'feminism of freedom', whereby a woman becomes that which any given woman conceives of it to be.[51] But the phallic shape of the 'female' andouilles might also lead one to wonder whether women in Rabelais' world can only be conceived of as having sexual desires and appetites in so far as they possess or resemble a phallus.

[51] Toril Moi, *What is a Woman?: And Other Essays* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), pp. 121-252.

Is the phallus always male? And where, one might ask, does the vagina or clitoris come in to the equation?

1.2. Reading as Clitoral Stimulation (1645)/(1546)

The portrayal of the Sibyl de Panzoust has generally been dismissed by critics as deeply misogynistic,[52] satanic[53], or farcical at best.[54] Florence Weinberg has reinstated the Sibyl amongst the other oracles and truth-tellers in Rabelais' work, arguing that the episode is a satire of Panurge rather than of women.[55] But the curious and thus far neglected *Ballet de l'Oracle de la Sibylle de Panzoust*, performed at the Palais Royal in 1645, offers an alternative more sexualised reading of this character, who has thus far been stripped of her erotic charge. Marcel Tetel reads her as an embodiment of a dialectical procedure, concluding that the union sought by Panurge throughout the *Tiers Livre* is not with a woman but with Dame Rhetoric.[56] LaGuardia has argued that Tetel's interpretation of the episode as Rabelais' musing on ancient rhetoric is meticulous but is ultimately cut off from Panurge the character and the phallic and bodily elements that this character entails.[57] But in so doing, LaGuardia refocuses our attention onto Panurge at the expense of the Sibyl. A consideration of the Ballet of 1645, however, helps us to refocus our attention on to the figure of the Sibyl herself.

1.2.1. Staging desire in *Le Ballet de l'Oracle de la vénérable Sibylle de Panzoust* (1645)

[52] Cathy Schlifer, 'Contextual Misogyny in the Tiers Livre', *Chimères* ,17 (1984), pp. 53-67.
[53] Jean Céard, *La Nature et les prodiges: l'insolite au XVI siècle, en France* (Genève: Droz, 1977).
[54] Charpentier, 'Un Royaume qui perdure sans femmes', pp. 195-209.
[55] Florence Weinberg, 'Written on the Leaves: Rabelais and the Sibylline Tradition', *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol.43, No.4 (Winter 1990), pp. 709-730.
[56] Marcel Tetel, 'Rabelais et Lucien: de deux rhétoriques', *Rabelais' Incomparable Book*, pp. 127-138, (p. 132).
[57] LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity*, pp. 137-144.

By 1645 female ballet dancers played an increasing role in the French court ballet, which disrupted the previously held dichotomy between male performers and female observers.[58] This focalisation of the female character is made particularly clear in the *Ballet de l'Oracle de la Sibyl de Panzoust*. The script for the ballet appears in Paul Lacroix's collection of early modern court ballets.[59] Lacroix notes that this ballet has been attributed to Molière, but provides no evidence for this.

The first to enter the stage is the Sibyl, who is designated as 'la renommée', accompanied by the two graces, curiosity and truth, declaring herself to be 'l'illustre vagabonde'. This insistence on her status as one who is renowned. She is presented as a character associated with, and sympathetic to, '[les] Dames':

Aux Dames

Je voy dans le futur,
Et sçay ternir l'azur
Dont le ciel se colore
Je fay partout eclore,
Ou les maux ou les biens:
J'ay de puissantes armes,
Et toutesfois je tiens
Le moindre de vos charmes
Plus fort que tous les miens.[60]

Just like 'la Grand Cataut' we saw in *Le Ballet des Andouilles,* the Sibyl is constructed as the head of a group of women, comprised in this instance of two Magiciennes, Armide and Urgande; two reoccuring metamorphosising figures in seventeenth-century ballets.[61]

Over the course of the ballet, the Sibyl is visited by various groups of men who she subsequently chastizes. The most striking of these are the two jealous men in the

[58] See Julia Prest, 'Female Roles in Court Ballet I: Men Playing Women', in *Theatre under Louis XIV : cross-casting and the performance of gender in drama, ballet and opera* (New York : Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 77-101.
[59] *Ballets et mascarades de cour de Henri iii à Louis xiv* (Genève: Gay et Fils, 1868) 6 Vols., Vol.6, pp. 103-117.
[60] *Le Balet de la Sibylle de Panzoust*, pp. 103-104.
[61] See Ad Graafland, *Versailles and the Mechanics of Power: The Subjugation of Circe, an essay* (Rotterdam: Publishers 010, 2003), p. 15.

'quatrième entrée' : 'Deux jaloux, doubtans de la sagesse de leurs femmes, viennent conjurer la Sibylle de leur donner quelques nouvelles qui les puissent mettre en repos. Ils sont chassez avec injures et menaces d'un chastiment eternel, s'ils ne changent de sentiment'.[62] This chastisement of the jealous husbands offers, as Marianne Closson argues, an opportunity 'de se rire des cocus'.[63] But there is something else at play here. The Sibyl is not primarily interested in laughing at Panurge - she is interested in ensuring that women are kept sexually satisfied, and she tells men to stop using fables as a way of understanding women, drawing attention to the uses and abuses of such stories - 'sortir du royaume des Fables'. I will return to the genre of the fable in Chapter Three. During Panurge's own consultation he is told,

> Si ta maistresse est jeune et belle,
> Tasche de n'en pas mal user:
> Mais te mariant avec elle,
> Garde-toy bien de l'espouser.[64]

The Sibyl emphasises the importance of treating a woman well and of gratifying her sexual needs. The Sibyl's own fantasy of the young and beautiful woman that she conjures up may be read as suggestive of her own erotic desires.

It is not only men who come to consult the Sibyl. Towards the end of the piece, she is visited by '[u]ne jeune fille de chambre demesurement amoureuse [qui] vient consulter les moyens de contenter ses appetits, sans laisser de tache à son honneur'.[65] The Sibyl gives no response here, but her silence might be understood as a suggestion that masturbation is the way forward. The Sibyl is portrayed as a sexualised being who is consulted by both men and women for advice on how to keep women satisfied. Yet this

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[62] *Le Balet de la Sibylle de* Panzoust, p. 107.
[63] Marianne Closson, *L'Imaginaire Demonique en France 1550-1650: genèse de la littérature fantastique* (Genève: Droz, 2000), p. 372.
[64] *Le Balet de la Sibylle de Panzoust*, p. 120.
[65] Ibid., pp. 123-124.

sexualised element of the Sibyl de Panzoust has lost its currency in contemporary criticism of this episode in Rabelais' original text.

1.2.2. Delayed Gratification in the *Tiers Livre* (16-18)

Although Weinberg describes old women as 'a class especially reviled by Rabelais'[66], it is fascination rather than revulsion that best characterises Rabelais' portrait of the Sibyl. This vulgar yet poetic description of the old woman's body is a striking example of what Mary Russo terms the 'female grotesque' which is at one and the same time disgusting and appealing.[67] The narrative voice delights in describing her, using a long list of adjectives : 'mal en poinct, mal vestue, mal nourrie, edentée, chassieuse, courbassée, roupieuse, langoureuse' (402).

This eroticisation of the scene appears all the more striking when we consider the description of the old woman's hands. Victoria Harvey has shed considerable light on the ways in which the figure of the old woman was used as a vehicle for satire in early modern poetry, and has argued that old women in these texts become active subjects rather than objects.[68] Harvey's study helps us to reread Rabelais' old women (this one is the first of two old women that feature in this thesis) as sexually active subjects rather than objects of satire. If we pay close attention to the way in which the narrator describes her actions, the old woman's existence as a sexual subject begins to emerge:

> La vielle resta quelque temps en silence pensive et richinante des dens, puys s'assist sus le cul d'un boisseau, print en ses mains troys vieulx fuseaulx, les tourna et vira entre ses doigtz en divers manieres: puys esprouva leurs poinctes, le plus poinctu retint en main, les deux aultres jecta soubs une pile à mil. Aprés

[66] Weinberg, 'Written on the Leaves', p. 729.
[67] Mary Russo, *The Female Grotesque: Risk, Excess and Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1997).
[68] Victoria Harvey, *Satirical representations of the figure of the Vieille in French Renaissance poetry, 1549-1622,* Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge (2016).

> print ses devidoueres, et par neuf foys les tourna, au neufvieme tour consydera sans plus toucher le mouvement des devidoueres, et attendit leur repous perfaict. (403)

As Weinberg has pointed out, her status as weaver associates the 'vieille' with the cluster of female weavers and spinners in mythology and literature; Arachné, Penelope, Helen etc.[69] But what is particularly interesting here is not just the fact that she is a spinner, but rather the way in which the narrator describes her practise. The description of the way in which the Sibyl fingers her yarn is indicative of her artfulness and precision. The detailed account of her actions indicates a fascination on the part of the narrator, rather than a sense of disgust. And the description is also deeply sexual. This sensual and tactile description which pays particular attention to the sound of her teeth and the touch of her hands places the portrait in the realm of the bodily erotic.[70] Her 'silence pensive' is in fact not so silent at all. The accumulation of actions, the emphasis on repeated action, and the recurring use of 'puys' creates a sense of textual build up. Her work finishes in her withholding her touch and waiting for the climactic 'repous parfaict'. The narrator then breaks the old woman's (and the reader's) afterglow by asserting his presence for the first time in the *Tiers Livre*[71], in this instance as voyeur : 'Depuys je veidz qu'elle deschaussa un de ses esclos' (403). Shoes, another form of offering that were generally associated with sorceresses in the early modern world, bring with them further erotic connotations. [72] From a Freudian perspective, a woman's act of weaving as masturbation symbolises the weaving of her pubic hair in order to create the penis that she lacks. But we do not

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[69] Weinberg, 'Written on the Leaves', p. 720.
[70] See Anne Sophie Refskou and Laura Søvsø Thomasen, 'Handling the Theme of Hands in Early Modern Cross-Over Contexts', *Early Modern Culture Online*, Vol.5 (2014) pp. 31-51. Michel Jeanneret has argued that Rabelais' Sibyl signals a move towards the human rather than the sacred. See 'Rabelais' Strength and the Pitfalls of Methodology (*Tiers Livre*, chapters 7-18)', *Distant Voices Still Heard: Contemporary Readings of French Renaissance Literature*, John O'Brien and Malcolm Quainton, eds. (Liverpool, 2000) pp. 69-84.
[71] Huchon notes that this is the 'premiere attestation de la présence du narrateur acteur dans le *Tiers Livre'*. Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, p. 1400, note 5.
[72] See Maria Tausiet, *Urban Magic in Early Modern Spain: Abracadabra Omnipotens*, trans. Susannah Howe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 77.

know what, if anything, the Sibyl has created. She has simply woven for her own pleasure before reclining into her chair and taking off her shoes. Although she keeps the phallic thread that is 'le plus poinctu' in her hands, it is the seemingly relentless 'tour[s]' and the delayed gratification stemming from the clitoral stimulation of the ninth turn that results in her orgasm, or 'repous parfaict'.[73] Although David LaGuardia writes otherwise in the aptly entitled collection, *Entre Hommes,* the reading of the Sibyl that I propose here suggests that the clitoris does in fact occupy a place in Rabelais' world.[74] Rabelais' old woman possesses a clitoris, and she doesn't need to be helped by anyone in order to gain pleasure and release from her weaving.[75]

Following this temporary satiation, the old woman then goes to make a fire but becomes frustrated at the fact that the laurel will not burn:

> [elle] tira un grand traict du bourrabaquin, print de la couille beliniere trois carolus, les mist en trois coques de noix, et les posa sus le cul d'un pot à plume: feist trois tours de balay par la cheminée, jecta on feu demy fagot de bruiere, et un rameau de laurier sec. Le consydera brusler en silence, et veid que bruslant ne faisoit grislement ne bruyt aulcun. Adoncques s'escria espouvantablement, sonnant entre les dens quelques mots barbare et d'estrange termination, de mode que Panurge dist à Epistemon, «par la vertus Dieu, je tremble, je croy que je suis charmé, elle ne parle poinct Christian.» (403)

The frustration that the Sibyl experiences at not being able to burn the phallic piece of wood results in an outburst of behaviour that Panurge simply does not understand: 'Que signifie ce remument des badiguoinces ? Que pretend ceste jectigation des espaulles ? A quelle fin fredonne elle des babines, comme un Cinge demembrant Escrevisses ?' (403).

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[73] Anne Koedt, 'The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm', *Notes from the First Year* (New York: New York Radical Feminists, 1968) and Elizabeth Lloyd, *The Case of the Female Orgasm: Bias in the Science of Evolution* (Massachusettes: Harvard University Press, 2005).

[74] Todd Reeser and Lewis Seifert (eds.) *Entre Hommes: French and Francophone Masculinities in Culture and Theory* (University of Delaware Press, 2008), p. 84

[75] On early modern knowledge of the clitoris more generally, see Katharine Park, 'The Rediscovery of the Clitoris: French Medicine and the Tribade, 1570–1620', in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 171-93; Michèle Clément, 'De l'anachronisme et du *clitoris*', *Le Français préclassique*, 13 (2011), 27-45 and Dominique Brancher, 'Poétique de l'insurrection: de l'impudeur naturelle des femmes', in Hugh Roberts, Guillaume Peureux and Lise Wajeman, eds., *Obscénités renaissantes* (Genève: Droz, 2011), pp. 301-17.

At a glance, this animalistic description might appear to be an instance of misogynistic humour, but, as Weinberg suggests, the one who actually comes out looking ridiculous is Panurge. The monkey and the crayfish are important here too. Not only was the monkey associated with sorceresses and mythology in the early modern world, but it also symbolised eroticism and passion.[76] The crayfish that is being pulled apart by this grimacing sexualised monkey woman is the male genitalia that she wants to pull apart. The encounter with the Sibyl concludes with the following sequence of moves:

> Là estoit un Sycomore antique: elle l'escroula par trois foys, et sus huyct feuilles qui en tomberent, sommairement avecques le fuseau escrivit quelques briefz vers. Puys les jecta au vent, et leurs dist. «Allez les chercher si voulez, trouvez-les si povez: le sort fatal de vostre mariage y est escript».
>
> Ces parolles dictes, se retira en sa tesniere, et sus le perron de la porte se recoursa robbe, cotte, et chemise jusques aux escelles, et leurs monstroit son cul. Panurge l'aperceut, et dist à Epistemon, «Par le sambre guy de boys, voy là le trou de la Sibylle». Soudain elle barra sus soy la porte: depuys ne feut veue. Ilz coururent aprés les feuilles, et les recuillerent, mais non sans grand labeur. Car le vent les avoit esquartées par les buissons de la vallée. Et les ordonnans l'une après l'autre, trouverent ceste sentence en metres.
>
> T'esgoussera
> de renom.
> Engroissera
> de toy non.
> Te sugsera
> le bon bout.
> T'escorchera
> mais non tout.
>
> Les feueilles recuillies, retournerent Epistemon et Panurge en la court de Pantagruel, part joyeulx, part faschez. Joyeulx pour le retour: faschez pour le travail du chemin, lequel trouverent raboteux, pierreux, et mal ordonné. (404)

This enigmatic message, and the attempt of Panurge and Pantagruel to decipher it, has ellicited a range of responses from scholars of Rabelais' work. Through an exploration of the intertexts at play in Chapter 18, 'Comment Pantagruel et Panurge diversement

[76] Elizabeth Liebman, 'Unspeakable Passions: The Civil Representation and Savage Lessons of Early Modern Animal Representation', in Richard Evan Meyer, ed. by , *Representing the Passions: Histories, Bodies, Visions* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003), p. 140.

exposent les vers de la Sibylle de Panzoust', Marcel Tetel has argued that the episode signifies Panurge's quest for harmony with Dame Rhetoric or Copia.[77] Following this Floyd Gray has focused on the divergent forms of debate displayed respectively by Panurge and Pantagruel.[78] In the aforementioned article, Florence Weinberg has located the Sibyl against the backdrop of the classical tradition which preceded her.[79] LaGuardia's analysis of this episode focuses exclusively on Panurge and Pantagruel's reaction and centres around the idea that the Sibyl provokes fear in Panurge, leading him to assert his virile masculinity in the face of such a threat. But the road to interpretation of the Sibyl's words is an arduous one. To perceive Panurge and Pantagruel's inability to decipher the Sibyl's words as another part of the *Tiers Livre*'s demonstration that 'all consultations about the future are dubious', is to overlook and undermine the gendered dimensions of the interaction. They are unable to agree on how best to understand *her* words. The episode thus strikes a parallel with the lady's letter in *Pantagruel* XXIV that I will consider in Chapter Two.

Panurge and Pantagruel struggle to understand the words that the Sibyl has cast into the wind. Before even attempting to understand the Sibyl's words, Panurge demonstrates a lack of comprehension of the female anatomy. Accordingly, LaGuardia argues that 'th[e] discursive construction of a masculine identity is provoked by a problematic glimpse of a feminine icon: 'le trou de la Sibylle', the defining characteristic of the female, perceived as an incomprehensible void and emptiness, and as an object of scorn that must be bombarded by an hysterical masculine outburst of speech, transcribed as the Rabelaisian text itself'.[80] But to equate Panurge's speech with the Rabelaisian text

[77] Tetel, 'De deux rhétoriques'.
[78] Floyd Gray, "Deciphering the Sibyl: The Third Book, Chapters 16-18," in Todd Reeser and Floyd Gray, eds., *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Francois Rabelais* (New York: MLA, 2011), pp. 226-232.
[79] Weinberg, 'Written on the Leaves'.
[80] LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity*, p. 144.

as a whole is to overlook the fact that poetic and fetishized description of the old woman's hands is as much a part of the Rabelaisian text as Panurge's perplexed reaction.

Panurge interprets the Sibyl's words as further indication of woman's evil intentions that encourage them to act against men and then proceeds to give what LaGuardia rightly describes as a 'hyperbolic account of the third strophe', in which he praises his own male virility: 'Le tiers dict. Ma femme me sugsera le bon bout. Je m'y dispose. Vous entendez assez que c'est le baston à un bout, qui me pend entre les jambes. Je vous jure et promectz que tousjours le maintiendray succulent et bien avitaillé. Elle ne me le sugsera poinct en vain'. But his interpretation of the fourth strophe, 'T'escorchera, mais non tout' centres around what he understands to be women's desire to skin and emasculate men:

> Les femmes, au commencement du monde, ou peu après, ensemblement conspirerent escorcher les homes touts vifz, par ce que sus elles maistriser vouloient en tous lieux. Et feut cestuy decret promis, confermé, et juré entre elles par le sainct sang breguoy. Mais ô vaines entreprinses des femmes, ô grande fragilité du sexe féminin. Elle commencerent escorcher l'homme, ou gluber, comme le nomme Catulle, par la partie qui plus leurs hayte, c'est le membre nerveux, plus de six mille ans, et toutesfoys jusques à praesent n'en ont escorché que la teste. (407)

Aside from the hyperbolic ode to male virility that preceded it, Panurge's interpretation of Catullus' work is exclusively, albeit unsurprisingly, phallocentric. All editors of the *Tiers Livre* have remarked that the poem cited here is number VIII,[81] which depicts Lesbia as a prostitute, 'glubit magnanimi Remi nepotes', translated by Boylan as "she jerks off the grandsons of greathearted Remus'.[82] But what LaGuardia, like Panurge, chooses to ignore, is that Catullus describes Lesbia in this way because she has left him. It is a vengeful portrait of her, not necessarily a faithful one, and contrasts with the portrait of Lesbia that Panurge alludes to when trying to interpret the words of Triboulet:

[81] Huchon, *Œuvres Completes*, p. 1401, n. 7.
[82] Rebecca Boylan, 'Eros the Man, Eros the Woman: Conflicting Identities and Gender Construction in the Catullan Corpus', *Classics Honors Projects* (2014), p. 51.

'Il dict à ma femme, "guare moyne". C'est un moyneau qu'elle aura en delices, comme avoit la Lesbie de Catulle' (Chapter XLVI).[83] Although Lesbia's sparrow has often been regarded by critics as a metaphor for Catullus' penis, other scholars such as Leah Kronenberg have suggested that the sparrow might equally be understood to be a metaphor for a dildo.[84] Lesbia's desire, then, would become not the desire for the male member as such, but for sexual gratification by whatever means possible, the old woman's fingering being an alternative means of satiating her desires, for example.

When read against the backdrop of the *Ballet de la Sibylle*, which reconfigures the old woman as a woman attuned to the reality of her own sexuality and concerned with the sexual appetites of other women, the desire to castrate the male that the Sibyl expresses both in her burning of the wood and the comment 'T'escorchera mais non tout', might conceivably stem from the widely-held belief in the sixteenth century that castrated men were more considerate lovers who could last longer in the bedroom.[85]

But how does this then map on to the so frequently used metaphor of sexual activity as a way of thinking about reading Rabelais' work? LaGuardia argues that the masculine anxiety and insecurity painted by Rabelais' text means that 'the male erection is the symbol for the moment when interpretation attains its goal, and the true meaning of a text is revealed', in so far as the task of reading Rabelais' work is about lowering the foreskin of the male reader through intercourse with the text.[86] In uncovering the exterior, i.e. the foreskin, (through sexual intercourse or an equivalent movement), La Guardia argues, you find the meaning of Rabelais' text (the uncovered penis). But neither Panurge, the embodiment of masculine anxiety, nor the reader, are ever guided along to

[83] Huchon simply footnotes this, 'Catulle a célébré dans certains de ses poèmes (II et III notamment) une femme qu'il nomme Lesbie'. *Œuvres Completes*, p. 1445.
[84] Leah Kronenberg, Invited Lecture entitled 'Lesbia's Sparow and the Poetics of Dildos', delivered at Trinity University, San Antonio, March 2014.
[85] See Valeria Finucci, 'The Manly Masquerade and The Fertile Eunuch: Twelfth Night, Early Modern Intercourse, and the Fruits of Castration Keir Elam', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Spring, 1996), pp. 1-36.
[86] LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity*, p. 141.

one true meaning. In fact the Rabelaisian text constantly destabilises the notion that a text has one true meaning, disrupting the notion that there might in fact be an ultimate goal like the one that La Guardia understands as the male erection.

In an article of 1976, Hélène Cixous argued that the act of reading as a woman is the act of disrupting the phallic order of things. But is it not possible for a man to also disrupt the phallic order of things by, for example, enjoying sex from behind? might a woman not disrupt the phallic order of things by adopting a phallus for herself? and what about women who are born with phalluses? or men with vaginas? One need only consider the gender fluidity present in the *Balet des andouilles* and, I argue, in Rabelais' original text, to see that the kind of binaries in operation in Cixous' framework suffocate the conceptions of gender and sexuality at play in Rabelais' world.[87] So what if we use the kind of sexual activity explored in the two ballets I have considered in this chapter as an alternative methodological framework for how to read Rabelais' work?

Behind La Guardia's privileging of the male phallus as a metaphor for the process of reading Rabelais' work lies the prologue to Gargantua, in which Rabelais' narrator famously invites the reader to 'par curieuse leçon, et meditation frequente rompre l'os, et sugcer la sustantificque mouelle' (7). But what if the bone is not a male phallus but rather a dildo? Or an engorged clitoris? Or an anus?[88]

The episode of the Andouilles destabilizes not only a phallocentric worldview, but also a cisnormative and heteronormative framework for understanding the world and the language within it. The erotic description of the old woman's spinning hands demonstrate a narratorial pleasure in verbal dexterity and poetry that is not necessarily concerned with uncovering meaning but rather with having fun; reading, like sex,

[87] Hélène Cixous, "La Sexe ou la tête?", *Les Cahiers du GRIF*, Vol.13 (1976), pp. 5-15.
[88] I invoke here Debra Roth's theorization of an 'engorged lesbian clitoris' as a way of 'infusing vernacular language with a form of female genital privilege that is as aribitrary and idealized as its predominating male counterpart'. Debra Roth CSW, 'Engorging the Lesbian Clitoris', *Journal of Lesbian Studies* (2004) Volume 8, Issue 1-2, pp. 177-189, (p. 177).

Rabelais' text suggests, might not be about climaxing or procreation, but you can still have fun along the way. The 'jeune fille' who comes to consult the Sibyl in the 1645 Ballet as to how to satiate her desires without tarnishing her name does not need to engage in any inner/outer movement – she need only to tickle her clitoris in order to gain sexual pleasure. The Sibyl de Panzoust's action with the spinning wheel, weaving nine times and then sitting back and enjoying the 'repous parfaict' offers the reader an alternative allegory for how to read Rabelais' work: rub away at it and then sit back and enjoy. Rather than thinking about the process of reading Rabelais' work as a process of attaining a goal through reaching a definitive interpretation, might we not think of the process of reading Rabelais' work as clitoral or anal stimulation? You might get somewhere, you might not, but you'll definitely enjoy the ride if you listen not only to the words on the page but also to the silences in between them.

In this chapter I have considered two previously neglected instances of re-appropriation which offer further avenues for exploration into gender and sexuality in Rabelais' work and, as such, set the tone for the rest of this thesis. Drawing on the first of these previously neglected sources I have argued that the Andouilles in the *Quart Livre* symbolise a disruption to the phallic order of things not only through their bisexuality, but also through the ways in which they destabilise notions of 'masculine' and 'feminine' more generally. I have drawn on the second of these ballets to reconsider the erotic and sexualised undertones of Rabelais' Sibyl de Panzoust, and have argued that the narratorial description of this character encourages us to focus on the sounds and silences of Rabelais' text. I have also suggested that Rabelais' world is a space in which there is no singular or collective notion of 'Woman', but rather several different configurations of 'woman'. Accordingly, each of the four chapters that follow ultimately re-examines a particular configuration of 'woman' in Rabelais' text, whilst acknowledging the fluidity of gender and sex that runs through Rabelais' writings. Bakhtin locates these

court ballets in a time when 'Rabelais' influence [was] combined with the still living, direct tradition of the people's festive laughter', and goes on to say that '[l]ater the atmosphere in which Rabelais was understood vanished almost entirely, and he became a strange and solitary author who needed special interpretation and commentary'.[89] In the next chapter I examine an instance of the kind of isolation and containment of Rabelais' text that Bakhtin mentions here, and consider the implications that this had for the extent to which women, broadly conceived, were invited into Rabelais' world, or not.

[89] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his world*, p. 107.

Chapter Two. Anecdotes: Panurge and The Problem of Identification in Rabelais' Early Modern Lives (1651-1663)

'It was agreed on all sides that anti-feminism could be funny; we often laugh at things we are expecting to laugh at, and among the oldest of conventions was the one which made antifeminism comic, antifeminist attitudes as a source of amusement. This is an area of laughter we may even now be losing'.[1] Michael Screech made these comments with regards to the trick Panurge plays on the Haute Dame de Paris, which he interpreted as a clear example of typical anti-feminist Renaissance humour, denouncing the way in which the ability to take amusement in such sources has been jeopardised by feminist critics. So what methods of reading are available to the feminist critic when faced with a scene in which Panurge causes a woman to be chased down the street by a group of sex-crazed dogs in revenge for the fact that she refused to court him?

In this chapter, I argue that the reading of this episode as misogynistic is ultimately bound up with the identification of Rabelais with his character, Panurge. I consider the emergence of this identification in the underexplored collection of four main anecdotes entitled *Particularitez de la Vie de Maître François Rabelais* (1663). All of the anecdotes are drawn from the parts of the *Vie de Maître François Rabelais* that had attracted the greatest amount of attention. According to Dinah Ribard, 'particularités' were used in the period 'pour indiquer ce qui a intéressé les lecteurs dans tel ou tel ouvrage biographique'.[2] The very existence of these kind of private stories reveal that

[1] 'Anti-feminist humour of the kind we find in *Pantagruel* seems to have been particularly appreciated precisely because in other moods men were placing women on pedestals, killing dragons for them or, in the Renaissance, abusing Platonism by turning them into goddesses'. See Screech, *The Rabelaisian Marriage* (London : Arnold, 1958), p. 53.
[2] Dinah Ribard, *Raconter Vivre Penser: Histoire(s) de philosophes, 1650-1766* (Paris: EHESS, 2003), p. 37.

Rabelais was a person who had been of great interest to the public.[3] In order to embellish the story of his life[4], these anecdotes constructed Rabelais in the guise of three of his characters: the orator Janotus de Bragmardo, Pantagruel, and, most importantly, Panurge. I argue that this particular conflation between Rabelais the man and author with the character of Panurge goes someway to accounting for the construction of Rabelais as misogynist that has haunted Rabelais scholarship for years. In her biography of Rabelais published in 2011, Mireille Huchon stated that the Life of Rabelais 's'est enrichie de traits légendaries, de confusion entre l'homme et l'œuvre', but she does not specifically mention the conflation between Rabelais and his characters, nor between Rabelais and Panurge in particular.[5] This chapter considers an early modern instance of the equation between Rabelais and Panurge, examining the mechanisms by which such a conflation can arise. In exposing this practise, my aim is to liberate Rabelais' text from the construction of Rabelais as Panurge that has shaped so much of the pre-existing criticism surrounding the episode of the haughty lady of Paris.

In the first part of this chapter I consider the 'apocryphal'[6] anecdotes included in the 1663 *Particularitez de la Vie de Maître François Rabelais,* and argue that the four anecdotes included therein rewrite episodes from Rabelais' text and construct Rabelais in the shape of his characters. Huchon is right to argue that the story of Rabelais' life has been bound up in a conflation between man and work, but the relationship that holds

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[3] See Jean Sgard, 'Poétique des vies particulières', in *Les Vies de Voltaire: discours et représentations biographiques, XVIIIe-XXIe siècles*, ed. by Christophe Cave and Simon Davies (Oxford: SVEC, 2008) pp. 29-41.

[4] Throughout this chapter, I will be attentive to the difference carefully articulated by Alain Cantillon between the life/ 'vie' of Rabelais and a Life/ 'Vie'. This distinction emphasises the element of creativity involved in constructing a posthumous, narrated Life, or *Vie*, as opposed to the actual lived experience of someone. Cantillon remarks, in reference to the *Vie* of Pascal and the transformations the writing of this *Vie* underwent between 1665 and 1779, that 'ce n'est pas tant, dans ce cas, la mort qui transforme la vie en destin que l'écriture biographique ou le passage de vie à *Vie'.* Alain Cantillon, '«La vie infiniment plastique de Blaise Pascal», ou: La vie, la *Vie,* et les Œuvres de Pascal, 1665-1684 et 1776-1779', *Écrire des vies: Espagne, France, Italie XVIe-XVIIIe Siècle*, eds. Danielle Boillet, Marie-Madeleine Fragonard et Hélène Tropé (Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2012), pp. 135-145 (p. 141).

[5] Mireille Huchon, *Rabelais* (Paris: Gallimard, 2011), p. 16.

[6] Theodore Fraser describes them as 'a collection of the most popular and colorful apocryphal anecdotes that had been handed down about [Rabelais]'. Theodore Fraser, *Le Duchat: First Editor of Rabelais* (Genève: Droz, 1971) p. 42.

between them is actually the reverse of what she suggests; it is not so much a case of 'l'homme et l'œuvre', but rather 'l'œuvre et l'homme'. I then focus on two of these anecdotes which both recount Rabelais' encounter with women using Panurge as a model: one which configures Rabelais the man as an instrumentaliser of women, and the other which shows him remarking upon the incomprehensibility of women. In so doing, I reveal that this early modern construction of Rabelais as a misogynist was a product of posterity that had its roots in the identification of Rabelais the man, and his narrator, with the character of Panurge. In the second part of this chapter I consider the ways in which this trope has informed the reading of the episode of the 'Haute Dame de Paris'. I conclude this chapter by offering a reading of this episode that liberates Rabelais' narrator from the gendered constraints that have been placed upon this narrative voice, locating it within the context of the chapters that precede and follow it.

Sixteenth-century readers practised what we might now refer to as biographical criticism, deducing Rabelais' behaviour from the behaviour of Rabelais' characters and deploring Rabelais because of it. Ronsard was responsible for consecrating the myth of Rabelais as a drunken buffoon that Voltaire would initially adopt.[7] The first few lines of his 56-line epitaph that originally appeared in the *Bocage* of 1554 are evidence enough of this construction:

Si d'un mort qui pourri repose
Nature engendre quelque chose,
Et si la generation
Ce fait de la corruption,
Une vigne prendra naissance
De l'estomac et de la pance
Du bon Rabelais, qui boivoit
Tousjours ce pendant qu'il vivoit.[8]

[7] Voltaire describes Rabelais as 'un philosophe ivre qui n'a écrit que dans le temps de son ivresse' *Lettres Philosophiques* (1734), *Œuvres Complètes de Voltaire,* éd. Moland (Paris: Garnier, 1877-1855), Volume 22, p. 470.
[8] *RER*, I (Paris: Champion, 1903), pp. 145-146.

De Grève remarks of Ronsard that, 'comme tout le monde, il applique le mode de vie de Gargantua et de Pantagruel à leur créateur'.[9] According to de Grève, '[l]e «vrai» Rabelais […] n'existe pas. Le seul Rabelais qui existe pour eux [sixteenth century readers], c'est celui qu'ils créent, qu'ils fabriquent à plaisir, à la semblance du livre et de ses héros'.[10] Opinions of Rabelais' work were, during the sixteenth-century, somewhat indistinguishable from opinions of Rabelais himself.

Modern critics of Rabelais' work have attempted to draw parallels between Rabelais the author and the fictional characters that feature in Rabelais' work, as a way of understanding the text and the person who wrote it. W. F. Smith was quite clear in his equation of Rabelais with Pantagruel in 1918,[11] and Jacques Boulenger's Rabelais 'franciscain' is in all but name modelled on Frère Jean.[12] Michel Jeanneret has drawn an equivalence between Rabelais the author and the omnipresent narrator, 'Alcofribas Nasier'.[13] As has been argued in a collection of essays edited by David Martens, however, the use of pseudonyms is a far more creative act than Jeanneret's analysis assumes.[14] Rabelais the author does not equate themselves with Alcofribas Nasier. In fact, as I will consider in Chapter Four, Rabelais actually writes himself into the text as a distinct character in the *Tiers Livre,* in order to further distinguish himself from the narrating persona. The narrator also features independently in the story they narrate, climbing into the mouth of one of their characters in Chapter 32 of *Pantagruel,* for example. This constant critical desire to identify Rabelais the author with one of his characters or with

[9] De Grève, *La Réception de Rabelais*, p. 103.
[10] Ibid., p. 98.
[11] 'It is interesting to note that Pantagruel (i.e. Rabelais) lodged at the Hôtel St Denis'. See W. F. Smith, *Rabelais in His Writings* (Cambridge: CUP, 1918), p. 33.
[12] Jacques Boulenger, *Rabelais* (Paris: Editions Colbert, 1942).
[13] Michel Jeanneret argues that, '[l]e plus souvent, ce sont les auteurs eux-mêmes qui, s'attribuant un visage ou un action remarquable, préparent le travail des biographes'. He goes on to contend that 'Rabelais, sous le masque d'Alcofribas Nasier, adopte l'allure du joyeux compagnon rieur et buveur, il élabore au cœur de ses récits un autoportrait farcesque, qui pourtant lui collera désormais au visage. Il s'installe dans son œuvre et la façonne de telle manière qu'il soit, à son tour, façonné par elle'. Jeanneret, 'La Vie E(s)t L'Œuvre', *Nottingham French Studies*, Volume 49, No.3 (Autumn 2010), p. 11.
[14] *La Pseudonymie dans la littérature française: de François Rabelais à Éric Chevillard*, ed. by David Martens (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2017).

the narrating persona itself goes some way to explaining the attributions of misogynistic beliefs and attitudes to Rabelais the man.

2.1. Lives in Dialogue

Recent years have witnessed a renewed[15] critical interest in life-writing[16] and its early-modern forms.[17] Despite this critical interest in life-writing, Rabelais' seventeenth-century Lives have thus far only received limited critical attention. This lack of critical attention is surprising given that both texts were published together in all subsequent seventeenth and eighteenth-century editions up until 1783, indicating that early modern readers were as interested in Rabelais' life as they were his work.[18] As is the case with many sixteenth-century writers, Rabelais' biography has always been, and remains, notoriously difficult to write due to the lack of contemporary documentation.[19] Few known facts exist surrounding Rabelais' life, and the evidence we have at our disposition with regard to matters as fundamental as the precise dates of his birth and death remains limited.[20] The

[15] I use the word renewed in light of the move away from an interest in author's lives that was triggered by Barthes and Foucault. See Roland Barthes, 'La Mort de l'auteur', *Manteia*, 5 (1968) pp. 12-17 and Michel Foucault, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?' [1969], in *Dits et écrits*, ed. by Daniel Defert, François Ewald, and Jacques Legrange, 4 Vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), Vol. 1, pp. 789-821.

[16] See for example, Helena Taylor, *The Lives of Ovid in Seventeenth-Century French Culture* (Oxford: OUP, 2017); Jonathan Patterson, 'Life Writing in the Early Modern Period: The Case of Guillaume Colletet's "Vie de François Villon"', *French Studies Bulletin*, Vol. 36, Issue 134 (Spring 2015) pp. 4-7 Ann Jefferson, *Biography and the Question of Literature in France* (New York: OUP, 2007); Katherine Macdonald, *Biography in early modern France 1520-1630: Forms and Functions* (Leeds: Legenda, 2007) and Patricia Eichel- Lojkine, *Le Siècle des Grands Hommes: Les recueils de vies d'hommes illustres avec portraits du XVIe siècle* (Louvain: Peters, 2001).

[17] In the introduction to a recent study of Life writing in the early modern period, Marie - Madeleine Fragonard remarks that '[l]'écriture biographique n'est pas rare, mais elle apparaît sous des formes et des appellations diverses', in *Écrire des vies: Espagne, France, Italie XVI-XVIIe,* ed. by Danielle Boillet, Madeleine Fragonard and Hélène Tropé (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne nouvelle, 2012), p. 9. Some forms, such as the *Vie*, derived from antiquity, whereas others, like the anecdote or dictionary entries, were seventeenth-century creations. On this see also Diaz, *L'homme et l'œuvre*, p. 9.

[18] The pseudo-Elzevir editions reprinted both texts, as did the editions of 1711 and 1741.

[19] Jules Michelet famously wrote, '[p]lût au ciel qu'on pût faire une vie de Rabelais […] Cela est impossible'. Michelet, *Renaissance et Réforme* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1982), p. 388

[20] See for example, Jean Dupèbe, 'La Date de la mort de Rabelais?', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, Vol. 42, no. 3 (1980), p. 657 and John Lewis, 'Rabelais Quiet Years?', *The Modern Language Review*, Vol.107, No.3 (July 2012), pp. 729-755.

difficulties and fictionalization that this lack of evidence gives rise to goes some way to explaining why the frères Sainte Marthe, and the anonymous author(s) of the *Particularitez* turned to Rabelais' work as a source for building an account of Rabelais' life.[21]

The collection of anecdotes that make up the *Particularitez* was first published as part of the paratextual material included in the 1663 Elzevir edition of Rabelais' work along with the *Vie de Maître François Rabelais*.[22] The *Vie* and the *Particularitez* worked together to form a particular construction of Rabelais that lies at the forefront of the Elzevirs' editorial project: 'l'enterprise de réhabilitation du texte de Rabelais repose dans un premier temps sur la construction d'une figure d'auteur qui en montre à la fois l'érudition et la liberté de ton et de mœurs'. Arzoumanov argues that the *Vie* 'relève plutôt d'une entreprise de réévaluation des Œuvres de Rabelais qui se confirme dans les «Particularités»'.[23] The writing of Rabelais' Life, then, was an attempt at repudiating him and his work. Faith E. Beasley's reconfiguration of seventeenth-century society and the modes of communication found therein help us to consider the two as complementary rather than in isolation:

> To judge from many of the myths and histories surrounding the salons, especially the *chambre bleue*, one might be tempted to view the worldly public as diametrically opposed to the *doctes* and their academic norms, in particular to the illustrious, state sanctioned French Academy. While their values may have differed, their habitués were the same. In reality the two spheres were enmeshed in each other, leading to a dynamic, but very complicated literary scene.[24]

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[21] Mireille Huchon describes Rabelais' Life as one which 's'écrit en pointillé et laisse place à l'imagination'. *OC*, p. xv.

[22] This *Vie* was based on the work of Antoine le Roy who, in 1649, wrote of Rabelais' life in the *Floretum Philosophicum seu Ludus Meadonianus in termios totius Philosophie, premissis diversis, Meudonii Elogiis & amplissima Franci Rabelesi commendatione* and in a follow up work entitled the *Elogia Rabelaesina,* both of which only appeared in manuscript form. See De Grève, *La Réception de Rabelais*, pp. 82-83.

[23] Anna Arzoumanov, *Pour lire les clefs de l'ancien régime: anatomie d'un protocol interprétatif* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2013), p. 376.

[24] Faith E. Beasley, *Salons, History and the Creation of Seventeenth-Century France : Mastering Memory* (Aldershot: Burlington, 2006), p. 24.

The neglect suffered by the *Particularitez* can be somewhat explained by a predisposition on the part of some scholars of Rabelais' reception to dismiss sources related to the salons in favour of those that are generally associated with the *doctes*, such as the etymological and historical *clefs* for example,[25] or the *Vie*. As Beasley's re-evaluation of seventeenth-century society and culture shows us, however, the two texts interracted with and circulated alongside one another, just as the scholarly world and the world of the salons were inextricably interconnected.

2.1.1. *La Vie de Maître François Rabelais* (1651)

The *Vie* was the first vernacular Life of Rabelais to appear in print, and it appeared in the context of an increasing seventeenth-century interest in Lives not only of public figures but also of 'savants'.[26] Accordingly, the *Vie* places its overall emphasis on Rabelais' skills, merit and erudition, constructing him as an érudit or sçavant. The *Vie* recounts Rabelais' birth in Chinon, his education, his standing at court, his role as negotiator, his career as a doctor, and his occupation as a writer, constructing an image of Rabelais that can be understood as somewhat of a precursor to Jean Plattard's 'savant'[27], or Mireille Huchon's 'grand intellectuel', which both reflect a desire to present Rabelais as a man of the elite[28]

[25] Marcel De Grève, 'Rabelais et les érudits du VIIe siècle', *La Réception de Rabelais en Europe du XVIe au XVIII siècle*, eds. Claude De Grève and Jean Céard (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2009) pp. 62-96

[26] Consider, for example, Gilberte Périer, *La Vie de Monsieur Pascal* [1684], ed. by Alain Couprie (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1994) and A. Baillet, *La Vie de Monsier Des-Carstes* (Paris: Horthemels, 1691). This 'democratising' shift continued into the eighteenth century. See Marc Fumaroli, 'Des "Vies" à la biographie: le crépuscule du parnasse', *Diogène*, Vol. 139, 1987 p. 12-13; Jean Sgard, 'Problèmes théoriques de la biographie', in *L'Histoire au XVIIIe siècle* (Aix: Édisud, 1980), pp. 187-199 and Jean-Claude Bonnet, *Naissance du Panthéon: Essai sur le culte des grands hommes* (Paris: Fayard, 1998).

[27] Jean Plattard, *La Vie et l'Œuvre de Rabelais* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1939)

[28] Huchon's reference to Rabelais as a 'grand intellectuel' is of course strikingly anachronistic. In presenting Rabelais as a figure belonging to the elite, Huchon reignited a long-standing debate regarding whether Rabelais is an author of the elite or the people. See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky (Indiana University Press, 1984). For other twentieth-century examples of 'low' and 'high' portrayals of Rabelais, see Carol E. Clark, *The Vulgar Rabelais* (Glasgow: Pressgang, 1983) and Michael Screech, Rabelais (London: Duckworth, 1979).

and a particular reading of Rabelais' work as historical commentary.[29] It emphasises Rabelais' knowledge of languages, citing the extensive use of different languages over the course of his corpus, and it draws attention first and foremost to his Greek and Latin translations. The *Vie* writes of Rabelais' impressive knowledge of Greek and uses jealousy as a means of explaining away the discontent that Rabelais stirred among his fellow monks in the Franciscan monastery of Fontenay-le-Comte:

> François Rabelais nasquit en la ville de Chinon au pais de Touraine; estant jeune il se fit Religieux au Convent des Cordeliers de la ville de Fontenay-le-Comte [...] et dans peu se rendit fort docte, comme on l'apprend des Epitres Grecques de Budée, qui le loue de ce qu'il possédait en excellence cette Langue, & néanmoins deplore son infortune, puisqu'il se trouva atteint de l'envie de ses confrères.[30]

After acknowledging Rabelais' level of erudition, the *Vie* turns its focus towards the production of *Pantagruel*, by drawing attention to its inception, publication and initial reception:

> Dans ce lieu [Meudon] il ne composa pas, comme aucuns ont cru, son Pantagruelisme, mais plus vray-semblablement ce fut une maison nommé la Devinière, du Bourg de l'Abbaye de Nostre Dame de Sevillé près de Chinon, qui a fourny matière à cette fameuse Satyre. Le commerce que Rabelais avoit avec les Religieux de ce Monastere, qui en ce temps-là ne vivoient pas de l'austerité de leur Regle, luy fait emprunter souvent dans sa narration le personnage du Sacristain, du baston de la Croiz, du clos de vigne de Sevillé, de Lerné, de Basché, de la Sibylle de Panzoust qui sont lieux voisins de cette Abbaye dont il fait mention.[31]

This kind of comment serves to draw a substantial link between context, place and literary production. The interest in the place and context in which Rabelais produced his work would later be emphasised in the editions of 1711 and 1741 which both included fold-out engravings depicting a map of Chinon, La Devinière, and two visualisations of

[29] 'c'est dans l'ensemble de son œuvre, fortement inscrite dans le contexte intellectuel, artistique et politique de son époque […] qu'apparaît le vrai Rabelais, la figure d'un grand intellectuel confronté aux misères du temps'. Huchon, *Rabelais*, pp. 18-19.
[30] *Vie* (1651), non paginated.
[31] Ibid.

Rabelais' bedroom.[32] Underneath the map of Chinon we are presented with three medallions depicting three different visualisations of Rabelais, all of which bring out a particular aspect of Rabelais' supposed character (Fig. 2)



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Fig. 2. 'Rabelais et les environs de Chinon', Romain de Hooghe, *Œuvres de Maître François* Rabelais, ed. by Jacob Le Duchat (Amsterdam: Bordesius), 3 Vols., Vol. 1.

These three different manifestations are succinctly described by Georges D. Albanas in his 1880 study of Rabelais' portraits:

[32] This interest in location and context as a way into understanding a writer's work is still evident in contemporary French culture. The past century has seen the establishment of several writers house museums, such as the Musée Rabelais, Le Château de Montaigne and Les Charmettes, for example. Alongside this, reconstructions of writers' bedrooms constitute the chief selling point of museums such as the Musée Carnavalet in Paris.

> [ils]sont inspirés par l'un des côtés de sa vie, où il y a, comme on sait, deux parts, l'une de savoir et d'étude, l'autre de farce et de joyeusetés ; de ces deux faces dérivent particulièrement : le type sérieux et noble dans la maturité de l'âge, auquel nous rattachons le portrait de l'école de Médecine de Montpellier ; le type vieilli, sévère, où perce la malice, qui se retrouve sous le burin de L.Gaultier et de M.Lasne ; enfin le type satirique et bouffon, que nous donne Sarrabat.[33]

And the idea that Rabelais was a multifaceted man and writer is certainly evident in the way in which his work is discussed in the biographical material. The *Vie* goes on to describe Pantagruel as a 'divertissement innocent', emphasising that Rabelais was the author of other more serious works, and encouraging the reader to understand this 'divertissement' within the context of a more erudite corpus:

> Ce travail Satyrique [*Gargantua* et *Pantagruel]* n'empescha point Rabelais de vacquer à d'autres ouvrages plus sérieux & plus doctes ; comme aux Aphorismes à Hipocrate qu'il mit fidèlement & purement en Latin, & à la composition de quelques Epistres Françoises & Latines, qu'il écrivit d'un beau style [...] il publia aussi la Sciomachie & festins faits à Rome, au Palais du Cardinal du Bellay, pour la naissance du Duc d'Orleans.[34]

This passage praises Rabelais' writing, using adjectives such as 'fidèlement', 'purement' and describing his style as 'un beau style', in order to build an image of Rabelais as a skillful man of letters. The *Vie* also seeks to strengthen its account of Rabelais as an *érudit* by claiming the that 'plusieurs personnes doctes ont fait mention de luy dans leurs ouvrages' and that 'ses Œuvres sur Hippocrate' are 'estimées par les plus sçavans Medecins'.[35] Towards the end of the *Vie*, the text invokes Guillaume Budé, Jacques Auguste de Thou and Pierre de Ronsard 'le Prince des poètes', among others, as

[33] Georges D. Albanas, *Les Portraits de Rabelais* (Montpellier: Librairie Camille Culot, 1880), p. 10. Albanas mentions the inclusion of these portraits in the 1711 edition on page 48.
[34] *Œuvres* (1741) III, non paginated.
[35] Ibid.

authorities on Rabelais' merit.[36] The widespread renown among poets is provided here as justification for the writing of Rabelais' Life, and the wide range of Rabelais' writings alluded to in the *Vie* suggest that *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel* should be understood first and foremost as a 'divertissement' in the context of a wider corpus of more scholarly work.

2.1.2. *Les Particularitez de la Vie de Maître François Rabelais* (1663)

The *Particularitez* embellished the account provided by the *Vie*, addressing the curiosity that it had stirred up and filling in the gaps, so to speak, without replacing or challenging its overall narrative. Élodie Bernard mentions the *Vie de Maître François Rabelais* in her study of Life writing in early modern France, and argues that it presents Rabelais as a 'savant', but she has little time for the *Particularitez*.[37] Arzoumanov mentions the biographical texts in her study of early modern clefs, but she does not pay any attention to the style and literariness of the texts themselves.[38] Paul J. Smith briefly mentions this 'complementary combination of paratexts' but characterises the *Particularitez* merely as 'an amusing anthology of non-historical anecdotes about Rabelais'.[39] This anonymous text provides us with 'anecdotes' regarding Rabelais' life. I am here going to refer to the things recounted in the *Particularitez* as anecdotes, given that the word 'particularité' has evolved diachronically into anecdote. The word 'anecdote', which etymologically means unpublished, was not introduced into French until 1685, by Antoine Varillas, in *Les*

[36] 'plusieurs personnes doctes ont fait mention de luy dans leurs ouvrages [...] ses Œuvres sur Hippocrate' are 'estimées par les plus sçavans Medecins'. Vie (1651), non paginated.
[37] Élodie Bernard, *Les Vies d'ecrivains français: developpement et mutations d'un genre (1570-1770)* Unpublished PhD Thesis, Université Paris-Sorbonne (2015).
[38] Arzoumanov, *Pour lire les clefs de l'Ancien Régime*, pp. 374-376.
[39] See Paul J. Smith, 'Three Paratextual Biographies in French Literature', *Die "Vita" als Vermittlerin von Wissenschaft und Werk: form- und funktionsanalytische Untersuchungen zu frühneuzeitlichen Biographien von Gelehrten, Wissenschaftlern, Schriftstellern und Künstlern*, ed. by K.A.Enenkel and Claus Zittel (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013), pp. 83-104, (p. 97).

Anecdotes de Florence ou l'Histoire secrète de la Maison de Medicis. In this text, Varillas claimed that anecdotes actually constituted a more accurate picture of reality than that offered by more dominant historical narratives: 'l'Historien considère presque toujours les hommes en public, au lieu que l'écrivain d'anecdotes ne les examine qu'en particulier'.[40] The *Encyclopédie* would later define a 'particularité' as something that we would now commonly understand to be an anecdote - a 'circonstance particulière, secrete d'un événement, d'une affaire.'[41]

Mid-seventeenth-century France saw a great rise in the publication of texts surrounding the private lives of writers. The nature and role that the anecdote and its cousin the 'ana'[42] played in the construction of this kind of early modern biographical materiual has received renewed critical attention.[43] Thanks to the efforts of New Historicist critics[44], anecdotes have been re-examined and re-evaluated as a historical source,[45] a literary genre in and of themselves,[46] and a way into understanding previous discursive practices.[47]

The *Particularitez* writes itself into oral culture through the use of conversational markers associated with gossip and the telling of tales such as 'on dit que'. And the anonymity of the text allows for the possibility of a multiplicity of voices that could be

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40 *Les Anecdotes de Florence ou l'histoire secrète de la maison de Medicis* (La Haye: Arnout Leers, 1685) pp. 4-5.
41 *L'Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris: Pancouke, 1751-1772) 17 Vols., Vol. 12, p. 99.
42 See, for example, Francine Wild, *Naissance du genre des Ana* (Paris: Champion, 2001).
43 See, for example, Tom Conley, 'From Antidote to Anecdote: Montaigne on Dissemblance', *SubStance*, Vol. 38, No. 1, Issue 118: The Anecdote (2009), pp. 5-15 and Sabine Chaouche (éd), *La Scène en contrechamp: anecdotes françaises et traditions de jeu au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Champion, 2005).
44 See Lionel Gossman, 'Anecdote and History', *History and Theory*, Vol.42, No. 2 (May, 2003) pp. 143-168; Joel Fineman, 'The History of the Anecdote', *The New Historicism*, ed. by Haram Veeser (1989) pp. 49-76 and Richard N. Coe, 'The Anecdote and the Novel', *Journal of French Studies*, No. 22, (1985) pp. 3-23.
45 See Ch. Jouhaud, D. Ribard and N. Schapira, *Littérature, Histoire et Témoignage: Écrire les malheurs du temps* (Paris: Gallimard, 2009).
46 See, for instance, Katherine Abiven, *L'anecdote ou la fabrique du petit fait vrai: De Tallemant des Réaux à Voltaire (1650-1750)* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2015);
47 See Delphine Denis, 'Documents, textes, discours', J.P.Bardet and F.G. Ruggiu, *Au plus près du secret des cœurs?* (Paris: PUPS, 2005) pp. 63-71.

those of both men and women.[48] Though we can only speculate as to whether or not these stories were passed down by women, the association between women and oral and aural culture suggests that these tales might have been passed down by women before they appeared in print.[49]

The gossiping nature of the stories recounted in the *Particularitez* would later lead eighteenth-century historians such as Jean-Pierre Nicéron to dismiss them. He would state that the things included therein are unfounded and imagined. According to Nicéron, these anecdotal stories, 'ont été imaginés longtemps après sa mort par des gens, qui ne le connoissoient que suivant les préjugés populaires'. Nicéron is concerned by the ways in which knowledge about Rabelais' life has been acquired and passed on. Although Nicéron acknowledges that some of the stories have been written down and have therefore acquired a certain truth value in his mind, it is what 'on [a] dit' that is questionable and he is overtly sceptical of the 'préjugés populaires' and 'l'opinion vulgaire'.[50] This might, then, be regarded as a further instance in which women's voices were written out of Rabelais' afterlives.

2.2. Rabelais and his Characters

In comparison to the wealth of scholarship concerning Rabelais' erudition, language, narrative structure, religion etc., the study of Rabelais' characters *as* characters has received much less critical attention. They are often considered by critics primarily as vehicles for the exploration of ideas or as plot devices. But as Donald Frame argued in an article of 1972, Rabelais offers his reader a range of particularly memorable

[48] My thanks to Jess Goodman for this suggestion following my research presentation at the Early Modern French Seminar, Graduate Showcase, Oxford (June, 2015).
[49] 'Women were the producers or transmitters of a good deal of popular culture'. Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London : Routledge, 1979), p. 82.
[50] Jean-Pierre Nicéron, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire des hommes illustres* (Paris: Briasson, 1732) Vol.32, p. 363 and p. 364.

characters.[51] Like the seventeenth-century court ballets I considered in the previous chapter and which were named after Rabelais' characters, the anecdotes in the *Particularitez* attest to an early modern interest in Rabelais' characters themselves, rather than as tools for satire. Although my primary focus here is on the anecdotes involving women and the construction of Rabelais as Panurge, the two anecdotes that precede it bring the construction of Rabelais as Panurge into starker relief.

2.2.1. Rabelais as Janotus de Bragmardo

The first anecdote in the *Particularitez* brings colour to Rabelais' time at the University of Montpellier that is only briefly mentioned in the *Vie* and is done so in a way which focuses on the work that he produced during his stay there:

> ayant deposé l'habit régulier & pris celuy de Prestre seculier, il courut longtems vagabond parmi le monde, & s'en ala en la ville de Montpellier en Languedoc, prit tous ses degrez en l'Université, & se mit à exercer la profession de Medecine avec réputation. Ce fut en cette ville qu'il enseigna cette science en public dans un celebre Auditoire, comme il écrit à l'Eveque de Maillezais son Mecene, & qu'il composa ses œuvres sur Hippocrate, estimées par les plus sçavans Medecins. (1651)

Rabelais' time at university had clearly sparked the public's curiosity, because the *Particularitez* then offers the following explanation of why Rabelais came to acquire such a sterling reputation during his time there:

> Il estoit sous le règne de François I; & l'on dit que le Chancelier du Prat ayant conceu quelque mauvaise volonté contre la ville de Montpellier fit donner Arrest portant l'abolition des Privileges de la Faculté de Medecine de ladite ville; Rabelais qu'on sçavoit capable cognu de Monsieur le Cardinal du Bellay, fut deputé pour venir en Cour poursuivre la révocation de cet Arrest […] Etant à Paris & ne pouvant avoir accès pres dudit Soeir Chancelier, il fit le fol, se revestit d'une robe verte & d'une grande barbe-griffe, se promena longs-temps devant sa porte […] quantité de monde, mesme des domestiques dudit Sieur Chancelier, le

[51] Donald Frame, 'Interaction of Characters in Rabelais', *Modern Languages Notes*, Vol. 87 (Nov, 1972).

> pressant de dire quel il estoit, il leur dit qu'il estoit l'escorcheur de veaux, & que ceux qui voudroient estre les premiers escorchez se hastassent. Le chancelier ayant entendu ce discours, commanda à ses gens de le faire entrer sur l'heure de son diner; Et estant entré, Rabelais luy fit une harangue si docte & si pleine d'autorité, qu'il le fit mettre à sa table, & diner avec luy avec promesse de faire confirmer les privilèges de Montpellier; ce qui fut depuis executé: Et en memoire de ce tous les Medecins qui sont receus à Montpellier portent la robe dudit Rabelais, laquelle est en vénération ainsi que chacun sçait.

This anecdote is about how and why Rabelais is remembered. But it is also about Rabelais' erudition as well as his ability to play 'le fol'. We see here a reinstatement of the construction found in the *Vie*. But what is the source of the story? Although the gowns are invoked as justification enough, the text does not state a particular source of inspiration for the narration. The story is, I argue, a rewriting of the episode concerning the bells of Notre Dame in *Gargantua* XVII-XIX.

In Chapter XVII, Gargantua steals the bells of Notre Dame to put around his mare's neck. The theologian Janotus de Bragmardo is then delegated by the Sorbonne to go and get these bells back. He dresses up in his theologian's gown and goes to Gargantua in the hope of restoring the bells to their rightful place:

> Maistre Janotus tondu à la Cesarine, vestu de son lyripipion à l'antiqu, et, bien antidoté l'estomac de coudignac de four, et eau beniste de cave, se transporta au logis de Gargantua, topuchant davant soy troys vedeaulx à rouge muzeau [...] A l'entrée les rencontra Ponocrates: et eut frayeur en soy les voyant ainsi desguisez, et pensoit que feussent quelques masques hors du sens. Puis s'enquesta à quelqu'un desdictz maistres inertes de la bande, que queroit ceste mommerie? Il luy feut respondu, qu'ilz demandoit les cloches leurs estre rendues. [...] Gargantua admoneste du cas appella à part Ponocrates son précepteur, Philotomie son maistre d'hostel, Gymnaste son escuyer, et Eudemon, et sommairement confera avecques eulx sus ce que estoit tant à faire que à respondre. Tous feurent advis qu'on les menast au retraist du goubelet [...] Après ce iceulx presens l'on oyroit sa belle harangue. Ce qui fut faict, et les susdictz arrivez, le Sophiste feut en plane salle introduict, et commença ainsi que s'ensuit en toussant. (50)

During this 'harangue', Janotus presents three absurd 'arguments' for why the bells should be returned. Janotus' 'arguments' are wrapped up in archetypes and traditions. He

argues that the bells should be returned because i) he needs them to preserve the vines from bad weather, ii) he can offer pardons and iii) the faculty needs the bells just as much as Gargantua does. Janotus thinks of himself as an orator but his speech chaotically violates every rule of Ciceronian rhetoric.[52] Rabelais employs several neologisms in the speech to further satirise the abstract language used by the *sophistes*.[53] This shambolic speech, interrupted in fits and starts by Janotus' own coughs and splutters, is the catalyst for the heartiest laughter in the whole of the five books – the reaction of Ponocrates and Eudémon to Janotus' ridiculous speech. Gargantua takes pity on Janotus and decides to give him bread and wine instead of chide him, 'veu qu'il leurs avoit donné de passetemps, et plus faict rire que n'eust Songecreux'. Janotus does not get the bells back, but nor is he chided. Gargantua sees through his pretentious demands and gives the old man what he actually needs, which is soup and wine. In early editions of Gargantua, Janotus was given the title of *theologien,* which made the episode a satire of Sorbonne theologians. In the later censored versions of 1542, however, Janotus became a *sophiste* which compromised the polemical thrust of the episode somewhat but appeased the censors enough to make them remove the book from their list of censored works.

Critics have differed in their interpretation of this episode and the character of Janotus de Bragmardo, the so-called 'pitieux orateur'.[54] The long-standing debate between Gérard Defaux and Michael Screech over whether or not these chapters surround the exile of Sorbonne theologians in 1533 has dominated much twentieth-century discussion of the episode.[55] Barbara Bowen has analysed this episode as a further example of Rabelais' comedy, and has suggested that the episode demonstrates Rabelais'

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[52] See Barbara Bowen, *Rabelais Encyclopoedia*, p. 134.
[53] See Lazare Sainéan, *La Langue de Rabelais* (Paris: Boccard, 1922-1923) 2 Vols., Volume 2, p. 97.
[54] *Œuvres Complètes*, p. 1110.
[55] See Gérard Defaux, "Rabelais et les cloches de Notre-Dame." *ER*, 9 (1971), pp. 1-28 and Screech, *Rabelais*, pp. 150-162.

belief in laughter as something that can undermine and subvert the arrogance of the repressive Sorbonne and their theologians. Bowen argues that Janotus can be understood not only as a bumbling orator but also as 'the dazzlingly in- ventive linguist'.[56] But what can the rewriting of the story as anecdote tell us about the way in which seventeenth-century readers interpreted Janotus de Bragmardo?

When considered side by side, it becomes clear that the anecdote is a rewriting of the above episode. Gargantua becomes the Chancelier du Prat who has taken the privileges (i.e. the bells). And Rabelais becomes Janotus who is delegated to get the privileges restored. What the anecdote does, however, is inverse the perspective. Rather than being written from the perspective of Gargantua and his men, this is written from the perspective of Janotus. Rabelais is Janotus, but in this instance, his 'harangue' does not so much make his audience laugh but rather convinces them. The allusion to the calves that Janotus had with him likens Rabelais to Janotus, but in the anecdote Rabelais proclaims himself to be a calf skinner. As well as being evocative of the episode featuring Janotus de Bragmardo, the designation of Rabelais as calf skinner is significant because it associates him with the production of vellum, which was used to make books in the early modern period.[57] Rabelais, then, becomes associated not only with words but also with manuscript and print culture. The Chancellor feeds Rabelais, just as Gargantua feeds Janotus. The most obvious difference in the rewriting is of course the fact that Rabelais, unlike Janotus in the original text, succeeds in getting back what he came for. But how are we to understand these changes?

This could mean that the anonymous author(s) of the anecdote read Janotus as being a successful orator, but this seems hard to imagine given the hyperbolic and clearly farcical language that Rabelais puts in the mouth of this character. In constructing

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[56] Barbara Bowen, 'Janotus de Bragmardo in the Limelight', *The French Review*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (1998), pp. 229-237 (p. 234).
[57] See Merry E. Wiesner, *An Age of Voyages, 1350-1600* (New York: OUP, 2005), pp. 56-57.

Rabelais under the guise of Janotus but by making him successful in his task, the anecdote presents Rabelais as a man of the institution who uses hyperbole and disguise, but does so successfully.[58] This construction of Rabelais as a linguistic acrobat would predominate during the 1960s and 1970s with the work of critics such as Leo Spitzer, who made the case for a purely aesthetic approach to reading Rabelais' work which focused on the philosophy of language.[59]

2.2.2. Rabelais as Pantagruel

This critical trend was to some degree a response to the work of Michael Screech, who, through thorough contextualisation and attention to biblical intertexts, argued that Rabelais' work might best be understood as the product of an anti-clerical protestant evangelical. [60] A similar position is promoted by the second anecdote in the *Particularitez* which embellishes the 'trait facétieux que l'on raconte de luy' alluded to in the *Vie*. The *Particularitez* offers the following account of Rabelais' time in Rome:

> Le Cardinal du Bellay ayant este deputé Ambassadeur par le Roy François à Rome, il y mena Rabelais comme son Medecin. Il est ordinaire aux Ambassadeurs d'aller baiser les pieds de sa Sainteté, ce qu'aucuns appellent adoration; Le Cardinal du Bellay l'ayant fait & ce de la fuite, il ne resta que Rabelais, lequel se tenant contre un pillier dit assez haut, que, puisque son Maitre qui estoit grand Seigneur en France, il n'estoit pas digne de baiser les pieds du Pape, partant qu'on luy fit baisser ses chausses & laver le derrière, afin qu'il l'assast baiser. Cela commença à le mettre en fort mauvais predicament. Une seconde fois le Cardinal du Bellay; ayant mené avec toute la famille pour demander quelque grâce aux Pape, [..] il dit qu'il ne demandoit rien au Pape sinon qu'il l'excommuniast.[61]

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[58] Diderot would later celebrate Rabelais' linguistic creativity in his *Plan d'un Université*: 'Ce ne sont pas les écoles, ce sont les grands auteurs qui font une langue. Notre langue a été faite par Rabelais, Marot…', *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. by Roger Lewinter (Paris: Le Club Français du Livre, 1969-1973) 15 Vols., Vol. 10, p. 662.

[59] Leo Spitzer, 'Rabelais et les rabelaisants', *Studi francesci*, 1960.

[60] Consider, for example, Michael Screech, *L'evangelisme de Rabelais: Aspects de la satire religieuse au XVIe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1959).

[61] *Œuvres* (1659), non paginated. François-Joseph-Michel-Noel provides two examples of the usage of the expression 'à beau pied sans lance', meaning on foot. This is one of them, and the other is taken from the

Here, we are presented with a Rabelais who is not afraid to critique and mock figures of authority, including the pope. The French Huguenot Pierre Le Motteux would later criticise the clumsy nature of this anecdote in his 'Life of Rabelais' that appeared in the 1694 English translation of Rabelais' text, which was begun by Thomas Urquhart in 1651 and completed by Le Motteux in 1694.[62] Le Motteux makes the following comments regarding the above anecdote:

> the real source of the story is obvious enough, and may be found in Chapter 48 Book IV of his romance. It needed but a poor invention to construct such a tale out of the extravagant devotion of the worthies, who greeted Pantagruel and his band on the arrival at the Island of Papimany.

The scene Le Motteux is referring to in Chapter 48 of the *Quart Livre* goes as follows:

> «Nous parlons de Dieu en terre. L'avez-vous oncques veu? Ils entendent, dist Carpalim, du Pape, fus mon honneur [...] Adoncques s'agenoillarent devant nous, & nous vouloient baiser les pieds. Ce que ne leur voulusmes permettre, leur remonstrans qu'au Pape, si là defortune en propre personne venoit, ils ne sçauroient faire d'avantaige. Si ferions, si, respondirent-ils. Cela est entre nous ja resolu. Nous luy baiserons le cul sans feuille, & les couilles pareillement. Car il ha couilles le Pere sainct, nous le trouvons par nos belles Decretales, autremement ne seroit-il Pape. [...] Il est Pape, il a donc couilles [...] (649-650)

The striking similarites between the stories certainly support Le Motteux's analysis of the anecdote. Le Motteux himself regarded Rabelais' works to be primarily anti-clerical in nature and, like the anecdote, he drew conclusions about Rabelais' own beliefs from the content of his work. But what Le Motteux did take issue with was the way in which the anecdote was written:

> What, however, as told by Rabelais himself, is a stroke of the most caustic satire, makes but a sorry jest in the hands of those who first built up a theory of his

letters of Sévigné, who I will consider in Chapter Three. See *Dictionnaire Etymologique, Critique, Historique, Anecdotique et Littéraire* (Paris: Le Normant, 1839), 2 Vols., Vol.2, p. 127.

[62] See, for example, Alexis Tadié, 'The networks of quarrels: the strange case of Peter Anthony Motteux', *Études Anglaises* (2013) Vol. 2, Issue 66, pp. 147-160. Tadié's work has shed light on Motteux's role as a cultural mediator between France and England.

> character, according to an idea of their own, and then fabricated anecdotes to support and illustrate it.[63]

According to Le Motteux, Rabelais' talent was his ability to present anti-clerical and provocative material in a way which meant that he was protected from charges of heresy presented in allegorical, satirical form as a means of protection.

The construction of Rabelais as an anti-clerical satirist remained popular well into the eighteenth century, as is evidenced by the fact that Le Motteux's prefatory notes were republished in translation in the *Bibliothèque Brittanique* (1733) before being subsequently included in the third volume of the 1741 edition that book ends this thesis.[64] But it was not only early modern critics that used Rabelais' work to draw conclusions about his own beliefs. Fred W. Marshall argues that it is these chapters that have 'led eminent critics to regard Rabelais as a Papefigue, one who gives the Pope the finger'.[65] Here, we see that the 'l'Œuvre et l'homme' paradigm characterises not only early modern, but also modern narratives of Rabelais' life and character.

2.2.3. Rabelais as Panurge

This practice of embellishing Rabelais' own life and behaviour by constructing him under the guise of his characters is all the more stark in the final two anecdotes. These two stories both implicate women and renegotiate their position in relation to Rabelais who is cast in the role of Panurge. Mary E. Ragland has explored the connection between Rabelais and his character Panurge from what she called a 'psychological approach' in

[63] *The Works of Francis Rabelais* (London : Baldwin, 1694), 2 Vols., Vol.1, p. xxvi.
[64] *Œuvres* (1741) Vol. 3, pp. 217-364. Bernard states in his 'Avertissement' that,'[l]e public avoit généralement souhaité que l'on donnât dans une nouvelle Edition les remarques que feu le Motteux avoit ajoutées à sa Traduction Angloise des Œuvres de Rabelais. […] J'ai satisfait à ce désir'. Non paginated.
[65] Fred Marshall, 'Papimanes and Papefigues', *Rabelais Encyclopaedia* (2004) pp. 181-183 (p. 182).

1976.[66] Although Ragland's approach has been subject to criticism,[67] Ragland's overall suggestion that Panurge can be read 'as a real and believable character who attains an emotional reality because of his impact on the reader is certainly played out here. According to the *Particularitez*, following his scandalous behaviour in front of the Pope, Rabelais journeys on with Du Bellay and stops at an inn run by a certain old woman:

> Et ma raison est que venant ces jours avec Monsieur le Cardinal du Bellay en cette ville nous passames par les Tarantaises, où les froidures estoient fort grands : Et ayant atteint une petite café où une pauvre femme habitoit ; Nous la priasmes de faire du feu à quelque prix que ce fust pour allumer un fagot, elle brusla de son lit, & ne pouvant avoir du feu, elle se mit à faire des imprécations & dire, sans doute ce fagot est excommunié de la propre guele du Pape, puisqu'il ne peut brusler : & fusmes contraints de passer outre sans nous chauffer. Ainsi donc il se plaisoit à Votre Sainteté de m'excommunier, je m'en irois sain et libre en mon patrie.

The encounter here with the old woman is an obvious rewriting of Panurge's encounter with the Sibyll de Panzoust that I considered in the previous chapter. This woman's failure to burn the wood is akin to that of the Sibyll de Panzoust. Rabelais here demands his excommunication in order to get away from the old woman's hysterical outbursts. The woman is configured here as both incomprehensible and reprehensible.

The second of these tales is notable as the longest anecdote in the collection. It goes as follows:

> Ayant gagné la ville de Lion il s'avisa d'un plaisant stratagème, & qui eust esté fort dangereux à un homme moins cognu: à la porte de la ville par où il entra, il prit de meschans haillons de divers couleurs, les mit dans une petite valise qu'il portoit, & ayant abordé une hostellerie il demanda à loger, une bonne chambre, disant à l'hostesse qu'encore qu'elle le veist en mauvais estat & à pied, il estoit homme pour luy payer le meilleur escot qui fut jamais fait chez elle; demanda une chambre escartée & quelque petit garçon qui sceut lire & escrire, avec du pin & du vin : cela estant fait en l'absence du petit garçon, il fait plusieurs petits sachets

[66] Mary E. Ragland, *Rabelais and Panurge: A Psychological Approach to Literary Character* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1976).
[67] Dorothy Gabe Coleman criticises Ragland for her lack of evidence and scholarship. See her review in *French Studies*, Vol. 33 (1980), pp. 617-618.

de la cendre qu'il trouva dans la cheminée; & le petit garçon étant arrivé avec du papier & de l'ancre, il luy fit faire plusieurs billets, en l'un desquels il y avoit, Poison pour faire mourir le Roy, en l'autre, Poison pour faire mourir la Reyne, au troisiesme, Poison pour faire mourir Monsieur le Duc d'Orleans; & ainsi des autres enfans de France; appliqua les billets sur chacun des petits sachets, & dit au petit garçon, Mon enfant, gardez-vous bien de parler de cela à votre mere ny a personne ; Car il y a de vostre vie & de la mienne: puis remit tout en sa valise, & demanda à diner qu'on luy apporta.

Pendant son diner l'enfant compta tout à sa mère & elle transie de peur creut estre obligée d'en advertir le Prevost de la ville, veu la mauvaise mine du pèlerin.

C'estoit en ce temps là que Monsieur le Dauphin avoit esté empoisonné & que toute la France avoit esté affligée au dernier point; Le Prevost est adverti de tout, fait quelques légers informations, entre dans la chambre de Rabelais, se saisit de luy, & de sa valise, sa mauvaise mine, le travail qu'il avoit souffert par le chemin, & les mauvaises responses qu'il rendoit, le firent grandement soupçonner ; car il ne leur dit rien, sinon, Prenez bien garde à ce qui est dans ma valise, & me menez au Roy; J'ay des choses étranges à luy dire.

Il est empaqueté, mis sur un bon cheval, & fait partir sur l'heure; on luy fit bon chere sur le chemin sans qu'il luy cousta rien, & en peu de jours arrive à Paris, est presenté au Roy qui le cognoissoit fort bien, & luy demanda où il avoit laissé Monsieur le Cardinal du Bellay, & qui l'avoit mis en cet estat; Le Prevost fait son rapport, montre la valise, les paquets & les informations qu'il avoit faites; Rabelais raconte son histoire, prend devant le Roy de toutes les poudres qui estoit de pures cendres : le tout se termina à rire, & la Cour à s'en moquer.[68]

Taking its cue as it does from the letter to the Cardinal, the 'plaisant stratagème' becomes an allegory for the literary production that Rabelais the writer engages in. If the 'stratagème' symbolises Rabelais' creative act, and this then implies that Rabelais' work, and more precisely *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, is first and foremost *plaisant*. But to whom? Rabelais' production is revealed to be 'de pures cendres'. The prank is revealed and the King and court laugh. There is no 'sustantifique moëlle' for the dog of the Prologue to chew and suck on, but only ash and 'os'. The anecdote characterises Rabelais' work as an amusing joke which instrumentalises this particular woman for the amusement of men. It is the woman who has been used who is in fact revealed to be the

[68] *Particularitez* (1651), non paginated.

object of laughter because, as Rabelais-Panurge had predicted and in fact counted upon, she fell for the joke.

In inscribing the woman in the text primarily as mother to the son, the anecdote makes her existence and status inextricably linked to that of the son. She is classified specifically as 'mère', just as Booth designates his spouse as 'wife' before she is a woman.[69] And, like Booth's wife, her interaction with what Rabelais-Panurge has written in the anecdote is mediated by a masculine figure, in this case her son. The mother does not interact with Rabelais' text directly, but is positioned as passive listener to the male figure who narrates Rabelais' text to her. Her scandalised reaction functions almost as a warning to women not to get too close to Rabelais' text.

Any reader of Rabelais' work will be immediately struck by the similarities between the 'plaisant stratagème' and Chapters 21-22 of *Pantagruel*. The ash, the Parisian woman and the Eucharistic setting of the third anecdote are strikingly reminiscent of the prank that Panurge plays following his failed attempt at wooing the anonymous 'Haute Dame de Paris'. Like the haughty lady of Paris, the woman in the anecdote is instrumentalised for the purposes of a joke. A key difference between the anecdote and its source, however, is that, in the anecdote, the woman becomes absent from the narrative as soon as she has fulfilled her function - no attention is paid to how the woman reacted once the prank was revealed. The anecdote positions Rabelais and his work in an entirely homosocial setting and does not allow the woman space to reply. But in Rabelais' original text, this is far from the case. The anecdote can be understood as an example of the way in which posterity has fabricated the myth of Rabelais' misogyny as a means of keeping women out of his world. So how might this lesson of reception history help us to reread this particular episode in Rabelais' text? And what happens once we remove the identification of Rabelais the man with Panurge?

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[69] See Introduction, section IV. Looking, listening and 'reading'.

2.3. Putting the 'Dame' back into the episode of the 'Haute Dame de Paris' (*Pantagruel*, 22-24)

2.3.1. Towards an intersectional reading of the 'Haute Dame de Paris'

In order to take his revenge on a Parisian Lady who has refused his advances, Panurge finds a bitch in heat that he then feeds during the night and subsequently kills and 'le mist en pieces le plus menu qu'il pust, & les emporta bien caché'. Panurge puts the ashes of the bitch in heat into little packets in order to eventually humiliate the Lady who has resisted his advances. Armed with this hidden concoction, Panurge goes off to find the woman in the place where she would traditionally sit at mass. As in the anecdote, the prank takes place against the back drop of a religious setting. Panurge joins the lady, and gives her a rondeau that he has composed, and waits for the opportunity to enact his farce:

> Et alors qu'elle entra, Panurge luy donna de l'eau beniste, bien courtoisement la saluant, & quelcque peu de temps apres qu'elle eut dict ses menus suffraiges il se va joindre à elle en son banc, & luy bailla ung Rondeau par escript: *Pour ceste fois, qu'à vous, Dame très belle/ Mon cas disois, par trop feustes rebelle/De me chasser sans espoir de retour/Veu qu'à vous oncq ne feis austere tour/Un dict, ny faict, en soubçon, ny libelle./ Ne tant à vous deplaisoit ma querelle,/Vous pouviez par vous sans maquerelle,/Me dire, amy, partez d'ici entour/Pour ceste fois/Tort ne vous fais, si mon cueur vous decelle/En remonstrant comme l'ard d'estincelle/De la beaulté que couvre vostre tour/Me faciez dehait la combrecelle, Pour ceste fois.*
>
> Et ainsi qu'elle ouvroit ce papier pour veoir que c'estoit, Panurge promptement sema la drogue qu'il avoit sus elle en divers lieux [...] puis luy dist: Madame, les paovres amans ne sont tousjours à leur aise. [...] Panurge n'eut achevé ce mot, que tous les chiens qui estoient en l'Eclise accoururent à ceste Dame pour l'odeur des drogues qu'il avoit espandu sus elle, petits et grands, touts y venoient tirans le membre, & la sentens, & pissans par tout sus elle, c'estoit la plus grande villanie du monde [...] ces villains chiens la conchoient toute, & compissoient touts ses habillemens, tant qu'ung grand levier luy pissa sus la teste, les aultres aux manches, les aultres à la croppe: les petits pissoient sus ses patins. En sorte que toutes les femmes de là autour avoient beaucoulp affaire à se saulver. Et Panurge de rire [...] par tout où elle passoit les chiens frais venus la suivoient à la trasse, pissans par le chemin [...] Tout le monde s'arrestoit à ce spectacle, considérant les contenances de ces chiens qui luy montoient jusques au col [...] à quoy ne sceut

> trouver aulcun remede sinon soy retirer en son hostel. Et chiens d'aller après, & elle de se cacher, & chambrières de rire. (296-297)

Some critics have resolved the uncomfortable question of gender in this episode by removing the woman altogether and placing the emphasis on something else. François Rigolot, for example, argues that the episode is best understood as evidence of Rabelais' Christian Humanism and argues that the 'inoffensive joke' functions as a visual distraction from what is actually an attack against the church.[70] Edwin Duval tackles the episode by arguing, bizarrely, that Panurge never actually harms his victims physically.[71] And Raymond La Charité dismisses the obscenity of the scene by describing it as 'an unequaled scene of spicy irreverence and sexual display'.[72]

In her analysis of the episode, Carla Freccero argued that Panurge's prank derived from the sense of demasculinisation that he experienced as a result of the Lady's rejection of him. [73] But E. Bruce Hayes responded to Freccero's suggesting by arguing that 'the debasing of the Parisian Lady represents an underlying ideological critique in which Rabelais intentionally juxtaposes contrasting theatrical forms to show the triumph of evangelical humanism over haughty forms of hypocritical devotion'.[74] Hayes emphasises the fact that the farce takes place in the middle of an elaborate religious procession, and he argues that Panurge's initial resentment of the woman stems from the fact that she refused to formulate her rejection in egalitarian terms that Panurge would understand, as he expresses in the rondeau: '*Vous pouviez par vous sans maquerelle, Me dire, amy, partez d'ici entour, Pour ceste fois'.* Hayes makes a very persuasive argument

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[70] François Rigolot, 'In Rabelais' hands the ambivalence of the representation of ideal women reflects the crisis of Renaissance exemplarity', 'Rabelais, Misogyny and Christian Charity: Biblical Intertextuality and the Renaissance Crisis of Exemplarity', *PMLA*, Vol. 109, No.2 (1994), pp. 225-237.
[71] Edwin Duval, *The Design of Rabelais' Pantagruel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 140.
[72] Raymond La Charité, *Recreation, Reflection, and Re-Creation: Perspectives on Rabelais' Pantagruel* (Lexington: French Forum Publishers, 1980).
[73] 'Damning Haughty dames: Panurge and the Haulte Dame de Paris', *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance* Studies, Vol. 15, No.1 (1985), pp. 57-67.
[74] E. Bruce Hayes, 'Putting the 'Haute' Back into the 'Haute Dame de Paris': The Politics and Performance of Rabelais's Radical Farce', *French Forum*, Vol. 32, No. 1/2 (Winter/Spring 2007), pp. 39-52, (p. 42).

about the way in which Rabelais appropriates and subverts the standard female characterisations in farce, and he is adamant that a focus on gender differences in this episode should not lead readers to ignore the significance of the word 'haute' which refers to the Lady's social status and disposition, in comparison to those of Panurge. For Hayes, the issue of class in the episode trumps the issue of gender.

Although Hayes is right to emphasise the woman's social status, he overlooks the significance of the fact that it is precisely because he is faced with a 'Dame' who is 'haute', rather than an 'haut homme', that Panurge's masculinity is threatened. When viewed as part of a series of events, the episode of the Haute Dame de Paris looks quite different. Rabelais in fact draws attention to the ways in which issues of social class, gender and language all intersect and holds them up for the reader to critique. And this intersectionality is made all the more clear when we consider Panurge's prank in the context of the chapters that precede and follow it, much like the identification of Rabelais with Panurge in the anecdotes is made all the more clear through contextualisation. I will now offer a reading of these three episodes which holds as crucial the premise that Rabelais the author is not synonymous with the character Panurge. Rabelais is here providing us with an example of Panurge's fascination with hybridity and a desire to dominate and control the idea of the other, which ultimately stems from his realisation of his own fragile masculinity that has been threatened both by the woman's sexuality and her rejection of him. In the words of Kritzman, '[t]he rabelaisian text enacts a narrative account of the menace of female sexuality, a phenomenon which ultimately threatens the phallocentric figure with the imaginary loss of its being'. [75]

Unlike traditional farce which usually casts women as the winners, the Haute Dame is, like the mother in the anecdote, the butt of the joke at this stage. And like the

[75] Kritzman, *The Rhetoric of Sexuality*, p. 31.

crowd at court in the anecdote, the chambermaids all burst out in fits of laughter. What has thus far gone overlooked in criticism is the fact that the Lady is punished not just for rejecting Panurge, but for taking the letter and opening it. It is the fact that she reads the rondeau for herself that results in her being dowsed with Panurge's concoction. This could be read as an indication that Rabelais' narrator is concerned with warning women about the dangers of reading things for themselves. But what follows the scene with the dogs allows for an alternative reading of this troublesome episode.

2.3.2. The Lady's last laugh

Although interest in Panurge the character has varied significantly over the course of the twentieth century, it is Panurge's nature as a trickster or farceur that continues to attract the most critical attention.[76] The past decade, however, has also witnessed increasing critical interest in the question of Panurge's gender identity and sexual anxiety.[77] This aspect of his character can be seen in the events that precede the prank that he plays on the 'Haute Dame'. She is not at all convinced or persuaded by the gossip that the implicitly lower class women and children have been spreading; she quells the vainglorious attitude that resulted from Panurge's victory against Thaumaste and the popularity that he acquired as a result. During this battle, Panurge draws frequent attention to his braguette. This could be read as a sign of Panurge's triumphant masculinity, but it might also be read as a sign of his insecurity.[78] The masculine insecurity that Freccero draws our attention to in terms of the Lady's rejection of him is

[76] See, for example, Anne-Pascale Pouey-Mounou, 'Panurge comme lard en pois: paradoxe, scandale et propriété dans le '*Tiers Livre*', (Genève: Droz, 2013); David LaGuardia, 'Un bon esmoucheteur par mousches jamais emouche ne sera: Panurge as trickster', and Alison Williams, *Tricksters and pranksters: roguery in French and German literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000).

[77] LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity* and Ferguson, *Queer (re)readings* (2006).

[78] My analysis differs from that of Jeffrey Persel, who argues that Rabelais' lingering over the braguette is a sign of triumphant masculinity. See 'Bragueta Humanistica, or Humanism's Codpiece', *Sixteenth Century Journal,* Vol. 28, No. 1 (Spring, 1997), pp. 79-99.

also visible here in the fact that Panurge beckons Pantagruel over to witness the success of the trick. This, combined with the fact that it is this victory in signs that prompts him to try his luck with the Lady of Paris adds a different, gendered dimension to the episode that Freccero only briefly acknowledges in *Father Figures*.[79] David LaGuardia argues that early modern men 'seem to have been obligated to recount, to give an account of, or simply to count the myriad faces of their (often phantasmic) relations with women'.[80] Male reputation in the early modern period was often based on claims of virility.[81] Panurge relies on the fact that the Parisian woman will be persuaded and convinced by the word of mouth and gossip surrounding his 'braguette' and Panurge's resultant supposed masculinity:

> Panurge commença estre en repitation en la ville de Paris par ceste disputation qu'il obtint contre l'Anglois, & faisoit des lors bien valloir sa braguette [...] Et le monde le loüoit publiquement, & en feut faicte une Chanson [...] & estoit bien venu en toute compaignie des Dames Damoiselles, en sorte qu'il devint glorieux, si bien qu'il entreprint venir au dessus d'une des grandes Dames de la ville. (291)

Her refusal to be seduced by either the gossip or Panurge's behaviour, and the formal and elevated way in which she speaks to him causes Panurge to question her gender identity: 'vous n'estes tant male que vous dictes, non, ou je suis bien trompé votre physionomie'. (292) She breaks the paradigm within which Panurge thought he could operate in which women spread and listen to gossip, defying the expectations that Panurge places upon her. Had she been convinced by the gossip surrounding Panurge or by his performance of masculinity, then Panurge might not have played the trick on her in an attempt to put her back in her place. What Rabelais is doing here is not reinstating

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[79] 'The chapter begins with the familiar equation between rhetorical power and erotic persuasion and playfully calls attention to the analogy between rhetorical contest and the project of seduction'. *Father Figures*, p. 31.
[80] LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity*, p. 184.
[81] Consider Valeria Finucci, *The Manly Masquerade: Masculinity, Paternity, and Castration in the Italian Renaissance* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2003).

misogynistic limits but rather showing up Panurge's own binary paradigms and holding them up for criticism.[82]

Whereas Chapters 22 and 23 of *Pantagruel* have attracted a great deal of critical attention, Chapter 24, 'Lettres que un messagier aporta à Pantagruel d'une dame de Paris, et l'exposition d'un mot escript en un anneau d'or', has been comparatively neglected by scholars, with the exception of Carla Freccero.[83] This chapter acts as a kind of counterpart to the prank that Panurge pulls on the 'Haute Dame' who, I argue, symbolises not so much a particular lady but rather the idea of Lady. In this chapter, just as Pantagruel is preparing to leave Paris to defend Utopia, he receives a diamond ring and an apparently blank letter from a Parisian woman. Panurge attempts to decipher it by sprinkling the paper with various different substances, just as the dogs in the previous chapter had doused the 'haute dame' with urine and semen. But Panurge cannot, however, decipher its meaning. Giving up on the paper, they manage to decipher what is written on the ring and then call on Epistemon to translate. Panurge puts two and two together and creates the message, 'Dy, amant faulx, pourquoy m'as tu laissée?' But Pantagruel cannot return and the woman's yearning for him remains unsatiated. We learn in this chapter that whilst Panurge had been pursuing his fancy, Pantagruel had also been courting a woman. Up until now, however, we have not heard anything about this courtship. This has led critics such as Screech to read the episode as a simple recontextualisation and rewriting of Masuccio Salernitano's collection of short stories, *Il Novellino*, in which Salernitano gathers together lots of short stories from a range of different traditions.[84]

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[82] Constance Jordan makes this argument with regards to Rabelais' *Tiers Livre*, arguing that Rabelais exposes 'what he saw as the unattractive features of the typical male reader of marriage treatises'. Constance Jordan, *Renaissance Feminism: Literary Texts and Political Models* (Ithaca: Cornell Univesrity Press, 1990), p. 192.
[83] Carla Freccero, 'The "Instance" of the Letter: Woman in the Text of Rabelais', *Rabelais's Incomparable Book: Essays On His Art* (Lexington: French Forum, 1986), pp. 45-59.
[84] Screech, *Rabelais*, p. 97.

Through examining the changes that Rabelais makes to Masuccio Salernitano's collection of short stories, Freccero argues that, although Panurge frees Pantagruel to assume the role of romance hero by demystifying the Lady for him, he remains troubled by the enigma. The piece of paper that accompanies the ring, incidentally another divergence from the Italian story, is described in Rabelais' text as *lettres* upon which is written 'Au plus aymé des belles, et moins loyal des preux, P.N.T.G.R.L.'. As such, it acts as a self-conscious metaphor for inscription through, Freccero argues, its designation as "letters", i.e. the graphic components of written language and through the unpronounceability of the name without vowels traced upon the sheet of paper. The Lady's letter, then, constitutes at once inscription and erasure. Panurge attempts to make visible what he assumes is in invisible writing on the page but the letter does not yield anything. The Lady refuses to be read in the way in which Panurge wants to read her – she enacts her resistance through silence and resists the masculine complicity that Panurge restores between himself and Pantagruel when he calls Pantagruel to witness the spectacle in Chapter 22: "Maistre, je vous prye, venez veoir tous les chiens du pays qui sont assemblés à l'entour d'une dame, la plus belle de ceste ville, et la veullent jocqueter" (297).

Freccero's consideration of the two episodes in conjunction with the other offers us a particularly nuanced way of reading Rabelais' lady, and allows us to read the Lady as a figure who is not silenced but whose silence speaks, and who is motivated to write following her unmediated access to the written text. If we consider these two episodes together, then, the episodes reveal that '[t]he enigma that is woman in the text of Rabelais is also the condition of possibility for writing; it inscribes Rabelais in a textual quest, a quest that is the impossibility of closure or the incorporation of that otherness'.[85] What remains strikingly unacknowledged in Freccero's conclusion, however, is that her

[85] Freccero, 'Damning haughty dames', p. 53.

characterisation of Rabelais and the writing act is ultimately bound up in an identification of Rabelais with his character Panurge, who is constantly baffled and propelled by a quest for understanding and synthesis with the idea of otherness. But we might also read this as an instance in which Rabelais' narrator stages the lack of comprehension and cohesion that so often persists between the sexes. Whether Rabelais the man himself held misogynistic views, we simply cannot know. But what we do know is that the narrator of his text allows us to read the haughty Lady and her letter as two sides of the same coin. The way of dealing with the problematic nature of the episode of the 'Haute Dame de Paris' is not to take the 'Dame' out of it, but to take Rabelais the man out of it.

It is not so much the case that Rabelais the writer was propelled by a quest for synthesis with the other, but that he presents his reader with the character that is Panurge; a character who is distinct from the author and from the narrator. Just like the *Particularitez*, Freccero equates Rabelais with his character, Panurge, and ascribes misogynistic views to Rabelais, despite the fact that his work resists any such clear delineation. In the episode of the 'Haute Dame de Paris' Rabelais presents the reader with 'sexual assault sublimated through a trick'[86], but he does so as part of his exposition of the 'crisis in masculinity, blurring the markers of an identity determined in terms of the established gender order of the Renaissance'.[87] The narrative of Rabelais' reception has thus far been written within the confines of a heteronormative paradigm whereby Rabelais' text becomes the woman who is trying to speak for herself but is dominated by the man who attempts to codify a text that at its core resists any such codification. The myth of the scandalised woman that is fabricated in the anecdote of 1663 exemplifies the process of writing women out of the story of the reception and interpretation of Rabelais' work that has characterised scholarship concerning his afterlives.

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[86] Rosa Alvarez Perez, 'The Workings of Desire: Panurge and the Dogs', *Laughter in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: Epistemology of a Fundamental Human Behaviour*, ed. by Albrecht Classen (Germany: Hubert & Co, 2010), pp. 587-601, (p. 600).
[87] Ibid., p. 601.

In considering the anecdote of 1663 alongside the pre-existing criticism surrounding the episode of the Parisian Lady, we can see the homosocial and heteronormative paradigm which has prevailed as the lens through which to understand Rabelais' work – a paradigm which is based upon the construction of Rabelais the man, and Rabelais' narrator, as Panurge. The *Particularitez* is an example of the kind of elision of women from Rabelais' world that I considered in my introduction, in so far as it constructs the women in Rabelais' life as incomprehensible vessels that provide services in his scheme, like the mother, but who are excluded from the laughter and can only access Rabelais' text when their interaction with it is mediated.

In this chapter I have considered the extent to which early modern accounts of Rabelais' life were shaped by particular episodes in Rabelais' work. I have argued that the anecdotes of 1663 construct Rabelais in the image of three of his characters: Janotus de Bragmardo, Pantagruel and, most importantly, Panurge. I have argued that this third image of Rabelais is an example of the ways in which Rabelais has been constructed as the misogynistic writer of a masculinist text. I concluded this chapter by offering a rereading of one of the most notoriously problematic scenes for the feminist reader of Rabelais' work, the 'Haute Dame de Paris', arguing that it is the woman in the sequence of episodes who actually has the last laugh. In the next chapter I explore the extent of the implications that the figuration of the woman as trickster has for the way in which the feminist reader might approach one of the most notoriously mind-boggling and seemingly offensive episodes in Rabelais text.

Chapter Three. Of *contes,* cabbages and cunts: Animals and aural sex with Sévigné and Rabelais, via La Fontaine (1671-1689)

In Chapter 34 of the *Tiers Livre,* Carpalim provides a long list of women in mythology who had sexual intercourse with animals, notably Pasiphae, Egesta and the Women from the Isle of Mandés as proof of the cheeky and disobedient nature of women (459). This association of women with animals has generally been understood as a further sign of the supposedly latent misogyny within Rabelais' text.[1] But might there be something else going on here? In a chapter that seeks to offer a rereading of female agency and interspecies clitoral pleasure in Rabelais, focused on *Pantagruel*, 15, a pairing of Carpalim on board the Thalamage with Madame de Sévigné listening, reading and writing in her salon might seem like an odd place to start. But Sévigné's encounter with Rabelais' work is useful here in so far as it acts as an instance of a woman who has a physical, impulsive and compelling reaction to Rabelais' text.

3.1. Rabelais in Sévigné's World

Jacques Boulenger's cursory narrative remains the predominant account of Madame de Sévigné's (apparent lack of) interest in Rabelais:

> il est bien peu de femmes sans doute qui aient pris plaisir à lire Pantagruel ou nos fabliaux. C'est pourquoi Mme de Sévigné, qui savait par coeur Corneille, Molière et jusqu'à des opéras de Quinault, ne cite guère Rabelais. Son cousin Bussy-Rabutin, en revanche, était bon rabelaisant.[2]

[1] See, for example, Goumarre, 'Rabelais: misogynie et misogamie', p. 63.
[2] Boulenger, *Rabelais à travers les âges*, p. 43.

De Grève presents this as the official line on Sévigné and Bussy-Rabutin, arguing that it shows us that Rabelais was instrumental in the (masculine) construction of the Grand Siècle.[3] And yet, as I hope to show in what follows, although Bussy-Rabutin was undoubtedly interested in Rabelais[4], Sévigné was in fact the most Rabelaisian of the two.[5] For what Boulenger's analysis reveals is not so much that Bussy Rabutin was a *rabelaisant* and his cousin Madame de Sévigné was not, but rather that critics have dismissed Sévigné's reading of Rabelais' work as insignificant, reiterating the critical myth that only men can qualify as *rabelaisants*.[6]

If Sévigné[7] occupies the centre of this project, she does so as the only early modern woman who we know for sure did in fact listen to Rabelais' work being read aloud to her, and who went on to quote Rabelais' work in her own writing and in her own words. In a letter of the 5th July 1671, however, Sévigné wrote:

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[3] Ibid., p. 73.

[4] It is said that Bussy-Rabutin had written the following lines under a portrait of Rabelais which hung in his house: 'Ce curé de Meudon, ayant fait un livre qu'on n'estimait pas parce qu'il étoit d'un savoir trop profond, composa cette folle et fine satire contre son siècle, qui eut ensuite un cours merveilleux et qui en aura toujours'. Quoted in Boulenger, *Rabelais à travers les âges,* p. 43.

[5] In her thesis, Anne Boisjoli Bélanger claims that Sévigné had a fan with Rabelais' work on, but she gives no indication of a source for this. See 'Lectures de Rabelais depuis La Bruyère jusqu'à la Révolution', Unpublished doctoral thesis, Université de Quebec (2014), p. 46.

[6] Virginia Woolf is the exception to this stance, listing Rabelais alongside La Rochefoucauld, Madame de La Fayette, Racine, Montaigne and Pascal as the writers that Sévigné was familiar with. Virginia Woolf, "Madame de Sévigné" [1942], in *Collected Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967), p. 66.

[7] In referring to Marie de Rabutin Chantal or Madame de Sévigné as 'Sévigné', I take my cue from Jean DeJean who notes that Sévigné kept her personal identity separate from her title and husband's family name and almost always signed off as either 'M de Rabutin Chantal', or 'La M de Sévigné'. I use Sévigné rather than Marie de Rabutin Chantal in order to explore the independence that her widowhood allowed her, whilst also allowing for the gender fluidity and identity formation that her work gives rise to. I respond here in particular to Pierre Zoberman who argues that any neutralisation of women writers' names serves to diminish the importance that they played in the formation of seventeenth-century culture and reaffirms what he calls 'la vigueur masculine de la langue française' which would benefit from this kind of 'gauchissement'. Représentation de l'écrivain et identités sexuelles', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies* (2008) Volume 30, Issue 1, pp. 77-91, (pp. 90-91). What Zoberman in fact does in his article is to reinstate the myths he tries to undermine. Zoberman builds on the argument made by Erica Harth that universalisation of names leads to neutralisation of the significance of gender at the time. *See* Harth, *Cartesian Women: Versions and Subversions of Rational Discourse in the Old Régime* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 5.

> vous savez que je ne m'accomode guère bien de toutes les pruderies qui ne me sont pas naturelles [...] je me laisse divertir, sous le prétexte de mon fils qui m'a mise en train. Il nous a lu aussi des chapitres de Rabelais à mourir de rire.[8]

Sévigné here explains to her daughter that in order to save face she could only engage with Rabelais' text under the pretext of her son's reading it to her. Sévigné inscribes herself as auditor within her letter but, unlike Booth's wife, she takes total pleasure in what she hears. She specifies that not only did her son read Rabelais' work to her, but he also '[lui] a mise en train [de lire Rabelais]', and there is evidence in her correspondence that this encounter with Rabelais' work led her to go and pick up his text for herself.

Not only that, but Sévigné played an active role in encouraging her daughter to do the same. There are two instances in her correspondence dating from over ten years later, in which Sévigné alludes to Rabelais' Abbé de Thélème. The first is in a letter to her daughter, dated the 8th October 1688, in which Sévigné describes the evening ahead:

> Je vous remercie, ma très chère, de trouver bon que l'abbé Bigorre vienne aussi; sans ce soulagement, j'aurois été embarrassée, et me voilà fort bien. Nous causons bonnement de nos affaires là-bas; j'y trouve toute la consolation qu'on peut attendre d'un esprit bien fait et d'un cœur admirable: plus on connoit le chevalier, plus on l'estime, et plus on l'aime. Je n'ai pas besoin de lui demander si vous m'aimez j'en suis persuadée par milles raisons; mais sans le questionner, il me rend mille témoignages charmants: nous mangeons ensemble, et mangeons fort bien. La philosophie de Corbinelli viendra ce soir. Il est écrit sur tous les appartements: fais ce que voudras; vive la sainte liberté![9]

In Sévigné's letter, the walls of Thélème become 'les appartements' in which Sévigné attended and hosted various salons littéraires. She constructs her own salon[10] in the model of Thélème, as a space outside of the court, with alternative values to the male-

[8] *Lettres de Madame de Sévigné de sa famille et des amis*, ed. by M. Monmerqué (Paris: Librairie de l'Hachette, 1862), 3 Vols. Vol. 1, p. 287. Henceforth referred to as *Lettres*.
[9] *Lettres*, Vol. 3, p. 364.
[10] Ironically, Freccero's analysis is pertinent here. She argues that Gargantua creates his own domain because he cannot claim possession of his father's. *Father Figures*, p. 98.

dominated life of the court,[11] but within which both men and women can interact freely, and where all present, as in Thélème, 'sçavent lire, escripre, chanter, jouer d'instruments harmonieux, parler de cinq ou six langues...'[12] She uses Rabelais' text to reflect on the make up of society, but also to engage with the possibility of another world in which people live and interact together.[13] What is also interesting here, however, is that Sévigné not only copies Rabelais' words but interprets them by adding the phrase 'la saincte liberté', which is a phrase first used not by Rabelais, but by François de Sales 'observant en tout degré d'oraison de tenir son esprit dans une saincte liberté, pour suivre les lumières & mouvemens que Dieu nous y donnera'.[14] In appending this phrase from François de Sales, Sévigné not only interprets Thélème's motto 'fais ce que voudras' in the context of religion and the freedom to act according to the will of God, she also likens the process of reading Rabelais' work, or listening to Rabelais' work, to the act of listening to a sermon.[15]

The possible world that she saw in Thélème was not the only alternative world in Rabelais' work that sparked Sévigné's interest and curiosity. Consider, for example, the letter of 4th November, 1671, for example, in which Sévigné references Rabelais' utopian cabbage planters:

> l'on remercie Dieu qu'il y ait des hommes qui, pour douze soles, veuillent bien faire ce que d'autres ne feraient pas pour cent mille écus: *O trop heureux, ceux*

11 Frances Mossiker, *Madame de Sévigné: A Life and Letters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), p. 22.
12 Sainte-Beuve briefly touches on this aspect of Madame de Sévigné's engagement with Rabelais' work. Sainte-Beuve, 'Madame de Sévigné', *Fin de Portraits Littéraires: Portraits de femmes, Œuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), 2 Vols., Vol. 2, pp. 991-1007, (p. 1007).
13 Nathalie Freidel, who delivered a paper entitled « Sévigné à Thélème : écrire, c'est vivre ensemble », at a conference entitled *Vivre en toutes lettres*, which was held at the ENS Paris on June 15th, 2017. I did not have the opportunity to hear this paper, but I have subsequently been in correspondence with Freidel regarding its content and overall argument. Private Correspondance, 20th February 2018.
14 *Les Œuvres de S. François de Sales, Evesque et Prince de Genève* (Paris: Leonard, 1669), 2 Vols., Vol. 2, 'Entretien XVIII', p. 476.
15 The editor of the 1669 edition of François de Sales' teachings says to the readers of the edition, who are the 'Religieuses du Monastere de la Visitation sainte Marie d'Annessy', 'quiconque aura eu le bon-heur de l'entendre [...] y reconnoistra aussi-tost son esprit', non paginated.

> *qui plantent des choux! Quand ils ont un pied à terre, l'autre n'en est pas loin*. Je tiens ceci d'un bon auteur.[16]

We first encounter the cabbage planter in *Pantagruel*, XXXII. On their journey into Pantagruel's mouth, Rabelais' narrator, Alcofribas Nasier, finds a whole society living in between the giant's teeth. The narrator stumbles along a man planting cabbages, and so ensues the following interaction:- «Mon amy, que fais tu icy?- Je plante (dist-il) des choulx.- Et à quoy ny comment? dis je. - Ha monsieur (dist il) chascun ne peut avoir les couillons aussi pesant qu'un mortier, et ne pouvons estre tous riches. Je gaigne ainsi ma vie: et les porte vendre au marché en la cité qui est icy derrière.- Jesus (dis je) il y a icy un nouveau monde' (331). This episode has elicited a range of responses from scholars of Rabelais' work, amongst the most compelling of which is that of Andrea Frisch, who has examined what the episode reveals about practices of testimony and iteration in the early modern world.[17] Frisch draws attention to what she calls Alcofribas Nasier's 'eyewitness narrative stance', underlining the ways in which this episode explores the distance that exists between worlds and modes of being.[18] This reading chimes with Sévigné's own reference to the cabbage planters, which is in fact taken from the *Quart Livre*. Aboard Pantagruel's ship, along with the rest of the fleet that Saulnier has described as a 'Thélème flottante'[19], Panurge cries out in the depths of the storm:

> Pleust à Dieur et à la benoiste, digne, et sacrée Vierge que maintenant, je diz tout à ceste heure, je feusse en terre ferme bien à mon aise. O que troys et quatre foys heureulx sont ceux qui plantent des chous. O Parces que ne me fillastez vous

[16] À Madame de Grignan, 4 November 1671, *Lettres*, Vol. 1, p. 376. Boulenger mentions this reference to Rabelais in his study of Rabelais' reception, but only in order to show that Rabelais was regarded in the seventeenth century as 'un bon auteur'. Boulenger, *Rabelais à travers les âges,* p. 43.
[17] Erich Auerbach places the emphasis on what he sees as the "paradigmatic realism" of the episode. Erich Auerbach, Mimesis, trans. Willard Trask (Princeton: UP, 1953 [1946]), Chapter 11, 'The World in Pantagruel's mouth' pp. 229-249 (p. 237). Bakhtin underlines the way in which the episode is another instance of Rabelais' use of the grotesque. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, p. 325. Edwin Duval integrates this episode into what they perceive to be the overall Christian meaning of the text. Edwin Duval, *The Design of Rabelais' Pantagruel*, p. 131.
[18] Andrea Frisch, 'Quod vidimus testamur: Testimony, Narrative Agency and the World in Pantagruel's Mouth', *French Forum*, Vol. 4, No. 3 (September, 1999), pp. 261-283, (p. 275).
[19] V.L. Saulnier, 'L'Enigme du Pantagruélion, ou: Du *Tiers* au *Quart Livre*', *ER,* 1 (1956), p. 69.

> pour planteur de Chous? O que petit est le nombre de ceulx à qui Juppiter à telle faveur porté, qu'il les a destinez à planter chous. Car ilz ont toujours en terre un pied: l'autre n'en est pas loing. (582-583).

Sévigné directly quotes from this episode, and adopts the words of Panurge in order to articulate her envy of the cabbage planter and the desire she has to be in his place. Sévigné's allusion to the cabbage planters adds a further gendered dimension to the episode in Rabelais' text. The cabbage planter is self-sufficient : 'c'est ainsi que je gagne ma vie'. In the context of Sévigné's own situation, a desire for self-sufficiency formed part and parcel of her proto-feminism.[20]

In quoting the episode directly Sévigné casts herself in the role of Panurge, who is not an urban character by nature – we initially meet him of course 'hors de la ville' (*Pantagruel*, IX). Like Panurge, she expresses a desire for rootedness, self-sufficiency and a closeness to nature.[21] This is not the only reference Sévigné makes to planting cabbages. In a letter of 6th June 1672 to Madame de Grignan, who was at that time in Les Rochers, Sévigné remarks: 'ce qui me console, c'est que vous êtes en lieu de planter des choux'. The act of cabbage planting became symbolic of the tranquil country life that she yearned for, epitomising proximity to nature and self-sufficiency. And we find a similar kind of longing to be closer to nature in a letter from June 26th 1680, in which Sévigné muses on how happy she would be if she were like the cicada:' Je serais fort heureuse dans ces bois, si j'avois une feuille qui chantât: ah! la jolie chose qu'une feuille qui chante! et la triste demeure qu'un bois où les feuilles ne disent mot [...]' This is yet another instance in which, like the fly, Sévigné adopts the guise of an animal to convey her own sentiments and to narrate her own life.[22]

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[20] See Catherine Montfort, 'Mme de Sévigné: Seventeenth-Century Feminist?', in *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800*, Vol. 140, eds. T. Schoenberg and L. Trudeau (Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale, 1996), pp. 114-132.

[21] Cato the Elder advocated the consumption of cabbages as a cure for melancholy. See Evelyne Bloch-Dano, *Vegetables: A Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 51.

[22] See John D. Lyons, *Before Imagination and Embodied Thought from Montaigne to Rousseau*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005: 122-147.

Sévigné's anthropomorphic forest talks and sings, providing a sanctuary from Sévigné's societal Parisian life.[23] Sévigné's invocation of Rabelais' cabbage planters helps us to rethink her own relationship to nature.[24] Importantly, it is the rural, organic natural world of Les Roches that Sévigné is drawn to, rather than the tamed gardens of Versailles, which she, along with La Fontaine, regarded as an imposition of tyranny over nature.[25]

Although she clearly enjoyed Rabelais' work, there is little more to be said about the direct references she makes to Rabelais' text. It was La Fontaine's *Fables* that was her real 'livre de chevet'.[26] Sévigné regularly quoted the fables in letters to her daughter[27], and her daughter would respond by sending her more. La Fontaine, Madame de Sévigné and her daughter constituted somewhat of a tripartite community of readers and writers. And this is reflected to some degree in the fact that La Fontaine's fourth book, which opened with *Le Lion amoureux*, was dedicated to none other than Mademoiselle de Sévigné. So if Sévigné occupies the centre of this project, La Fontaine occupies the centre of this chapter as the link between Sévigné and Rabelais.

3.2. A Rabelaisian Intertext in 'Le Jardinier et son Seigneur' (1688)

Unlike many of the other fables in the collection, including 'Le Lion amoureux', 'Le Jardinier et son Seigneur' (Book IV, 4) does not have a clear intertextual reference to

[23] See Zobeidah Youssef, Bois des Rochers, terrasse de Grignan, deux décors privilégiés dans les lettres de Madame de Sévigné", *Dix-septième Siècle*, 150 (1986), pp. 19-33.
[24] On Sévigné's relationship with the natural world, see Roland Racevskis, 'The Place of the Nonhuman in Madame de Sévigné's Letters: Towards a Transnational Early Modern Ecocriticism', *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, Vol. 19, Issue 1, 1 June 2012, pp. 142-161.

[25] See Chandra Mukerji, 'The Political Mobilization of Nature in Seventeenth-Century French Formal Gardens', *Theory and Society*, Vol. 23, No.5 (Oct, 1994), pp. 651-677.
[26] Brigette Dutheil, *Madame de Sévigné et la lecture* (Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Bibliothèques, 1984) p. 24.
[27] See Michael Vincent, *Figures of the Text: reading and writing (in) La Fontaine*, pp. 45-46 (Amsterdam: Benjamins Publications, 1992); Maya Slater, *The Craft of La Fontaine* (Associated University Press, 2000), p. 230, and Andrew Calder, *The Fables of La Fontaine: Wisdom Brought Down to Earth* (Genève: Droz, 2001), p. 199.

either Aesop or Boccaccio. This has led critics such as Dana Marie Chase to suggest that 'a more current source inspired La Fontaine's creation of this original story'.[28] To the reader of Rabelais' work, this story bears a striking resemblance to the trick that Panurge plays in *Pantagruel* 15, yet this intertextual reference has thus far gone unnoticed by scholars of either Rabelais or La Fontaine. La Fontaine's fable goes as follows,

Un amateur de jardinage,
Demi-Bourgeois, demi-Manant,
Possédait en certain village,
Un jardin assez propre, et le clos attenant.
Il avait de plant vif fermé cette étendue.
Là croissait à plaisir l'oseille et la laitue,
De quoi faire à Margot pour sa fête un bouquet,
Peu de jasmin d'Espagne, et force serpolet.
Cette félicité par un Lièvre troublée
Fit qu'au Seigneur du bourg notre homme se plaignit :
Ce maudit animal vient prendre sa goulée
Soir et matin, dit-il, et des pièges se rit.
Les pierres, les bâtons y perdent leur crédit.
Il est sorcier, je crois. Sorcier, je l'en défie,
Repartit le Seigneur. Fut-il diable, Miraut
En dépit de ses tours, l'attrapera bientôt.
Je vous en déferai, bon homme, sur ma vie.
Et quand ? Et dès demain, sans tarder plus longtemps.
La partie ainsi faite, il vient avec ses gens.
Ça, déjeunons, dit-il, vos poulets sont-ils tendres ?
La fille du logis, qu'on vous voie, approchez.
Quand la marierons-nous ? quand aurons-nous des gendres ?
Bon homme, c'est ce coup qu'il faut, vous m'entendez,
Qu'il faut fouiller à l'escarcelle.
Disant ces mots, il fait connaissance avec elle,
Auprès de lui la fait asseoir,
Prend une main, un bras, lève un coin du mouchoir ;
Toutes sottises dont la Belle
Se défend avec grand respect;
Tant qu'au père à la fin cela devient suspect.
Cependant on fricasse, on se rue en cuisine:
De quand sont vos jambons ? ils ont fort bonne mine.
Monsieur, ils sont à vous. Vraiment, dit le Seigneur,
Je les reçois, et de bon coeur.
Il déjeune très bien; aussi fait sa famille,
Chiens, chevaux et valets, tous gens bien endentés :
Il commande chez l'Hôte, y prend des libertés,
Boit son vin, caresse sa fille.

[28] Dana Marie Chase, 'Deflowering the Garden*: Le droit du seigneur* and La Fontaine', *Cahiers du Dix-Septième Siècle: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (2004), pp. 75-82, (p. 76).

L'embarras des Chasseurs succède au déjeuné.
Chacun s'anime et se prépare:
Les trompes et les cors font un tel tintamarre
Que le bon homme est étonné.
Le pis fut que l'on mit en piteux équipage
Le pauvre potager: adieu planches, carreaux ;
Adieu chicorée et poreaux ;
Adieu de quoi mettre au potage.
Le lièvre était gîté dessous un maître chou,
On le quête, on le lance: il s'enfuit par un trou,
Non pas trou, mais trouée, horrible et large plaie
Que l'on fit à la pauvre haie
Par ordre du Seigneur; car il eût été mal
Qu'on n'eût pu du jardin sortir tout à cheval.
Le bon homme disait: Ce sont là jeux de Prince.
Mais on le laissait dire; et les chiens et les gens
Firent plus de dégât en une heure de temps
Que n'en auraient fait en cent ans
Tous les lièvres de la province.

Petits Princes, vuidez vos débats entre vous.
De recourir aux Rois vous seriez de grands fous.
Il ne les faut jamais engager dans vos guerres,
Ni les faire entrer sur vos terres.[29]

Seeing that his garden is being eaten by rabbits, the 'demi Bourgeois' gardener decides to seek help from his seigneur to keep the creatures at bay. But the seigneur is more interested in the gardener's daughter than he is in helping the gardener. In fact, his efforts are entirely counterproductive, as he rides in with his cavalry, destroying the vegetables and massacring the garden, and trying his luck with the gardener's daughter along the way. This tale has been read by scholars in a range of different ways. Marie-Odile Sweetser has argued that it functions as a parody of the feudal idea that a seigneur will actually protect or help his people in times of need.[30] Maya Slater has taken this one step further and argued that the fable functions as a critique not of the feudal system in general, but of the great men in Louis XIV's circle in particular.[31] Dana Marie Chase has

[29] La Fontaine, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Vol. 1, edited by Jean-Pierre Collinet (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1991), pp. 143-44. My italics.
[30] Marie-Odile Sweetser, "Le jardin: nature et culture chez La Fontaine", *Cahiers de l'Association Internationale des études françaises*, 34 (1982), pp. 59-72.
[31] Slater, *The Craft of La Fontaine*, p. 186.

drawn attention to the sexual undertones of the fable by underlining the erotic connotations of vegetables in the early modern world that Lazare Sainéan has considered elsewhere.[32] She argues that the gardener's 'jardin assez propre' functions as a metaphor for his daughter's virginity and her ensuing value in sexual economic terms. Chase sees the seigneur's actions as a double attack, then, not only on the garden but also on the gardener's daughter who, she argues, is the victim of a sexual attack.[33] But this is not the only way to interpret the seigneur's behaviour towards the gardener's daughter. We can read his behaviour in a different way by considering more closely the character and the actions of the daughter. Although she resists the seigneur's advances, this is not necessarily a sign that they are unwanted, but rather that she is playing the tease, not to mention the fact that her father is in the room.

If we accept that the gardener's garden becomes a metaphor for his daughter's sexual value, we note also that her garden is good, but not perfect – it is only 'assez propre'. This could of course be read as misogynistic and objectifying, but we might also consider that the daughter might in fact have taken her own sexual pleasure from the activities that have rendered her only '*assez* propre'. The fable would then become less about social hierarchy and more about a father's inability to accept the independent sexual agency of his daughter.[34] And the trampled garden would come to symbolise not the destruction of her being as a result of a violent attack, but rather the destruction of the father's idealisation of his daughter and the associated constructions of chaste womanhood. And here is where we come to Rabelais.

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[32] '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'. Sainéan, *La Langue de Rabelais*, Vol.2, pp. 302-303.
[33] Dana Marie Chase, 'Deflowering the Garden*: Le droit du seigneur* and La Fontaine', *Cahiers du Dix-Septième Siècle: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (2004), pp. 75-82.
[34] Philip A. Wadsworth locates this aspect of the story within the context of La Fontaine's belief in marriage as something that should be about love rather than obligation. See Wadsworth, "La Fontaine and his Views on Marriage", *Rice University Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 3 (Summer, 1965), pp. 81-96.

Rabelais is not entirely absent from Chase's analysis: she notes that the sexual and fertile connotation of the herb 'serpolet' appears in Chapter 46 of the *Tiers Livre*, when Panurge says that he would prefer to take 'les guayes bergerottes eschevelées, es quelles le cul sent le serpoullet', rather than marry 'les dams des grandes cours, avecques leurs riches atours et odarans perfums de mauljoinct' (493-494).[35] The expression 'on se rue en cuisine' also has its roots in Rabelais' work, as François Joseph Noel noted in his *Philologie Française* (1831).[36] But there is another more striking Rabelaisian intertext that has thus far gone unnoticed.

Towards the end of *Pantagruel*, 16, the narrator recounts Panurge's tactic for fondling women's breasts:

> En un aultre [bougette] il avoit tout plein de Euphorbe pulverisé bien subtilement, et là dedans mettoit un mouschenez beau et bien ouvré qu'il avoit desrobé à la belle lingère du palays, en luy oustant un poul dessus son sein, lequel toutesfois il y avoit mis. Et quand il se trouvoit en compaignie de quelques bonnes dames, il leur mettoit sus le propos de lingerie, et leur mettoit la main au sein demandant, «et cest ouvrage est il de Flandre ou de Haynault». Et puis tiroit son mouschenez disant, «tenez, tenez, voyez en cy de l'ouvrage, elle est de Foutignan ou de Foutarabie», et le secouoit bien fort à leur nez, et les faisoit esternuer quatre heures sans repos. Ce pendent il petoit comme un rousin et les femmes ryoient luy disans «comment vous petez Panurge?»
>
> - Non foys: disoit il ma dame: mais je accorde au contrepoint de la musicque que vous sonnés du nez. (276)

Panurge uses the object that he has stolen from a woman in order to have his way with other women, and he capitalises upon their supposed interest in beautiful material possessions in order to distract them whilst he fondles their breasts. And so here begins the wordplay between mouche/mouchoir/mouschenez that was strikingly visualised in Chaveau's 1668 illustration of the story (Fig. 3).

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[35] Chase, 'De-flowering the garden', p. 82, note.2.

[36] 'La Fontaine, pleine de son Rabelais, a emprunté cette expression de cet auteur, liv. IV, c.10'. François Joseph Noel, *Philologie Francaise ou dictionnaire etymologique, critique, historique* (Paris: Le Normant Père, Librairie, Rue de Seine, 1831), p. 293.

Panurge's use of the handkerchief to woo the ladies is strikingly reminiscent of the way in which the seigneur approaches the gardener's daughter in lines 24-30. Like the gardener's daughter, the women in Rabelais' text resist Panurge's advances, and the scene concludes with the women laughing at the enormous farts that Panurge lets out as he concludes his attempt at seduction, which cause the women to laugh at him. This intertext allows us to reconsider the way in which the gardener's daughter reacts to the seigneur in La Fontaine's fable.



Fig. 3. 'Le jardinier et son seigneur', François Chauveau, *Les Fables de La Fontaine* (Paris : chez Bargin et Thierry, 1678), pp. 17-22, (p. 17).

I suggested above that she might in fact have wanted to accept the seigneur's advances were it not for the fact that her father was in the room. The Rabelaisian intertext also allows us to consider whether the daughter was in fact mocking the seigneur's attempts at wooing her – and this reading becomes all the more plausible when we consider that his behaviour is referred to as 'sottises' by the narrative voice.

But is 'Le Jardinier et son Seigneur' really a fable? Before turning to the genre of the fable, La Fontaine had published four volumes of *Les contes et nouvelles en vers*

(1665, 1666, 1671 and 1674). And in the words of Anne Birberick, 'the genre of the nouvelle or conte, unlike that of the fable, is inextricably linked to issues of gender', balancing the demands of *bienséance* with the desires and appetites of its (female) reader.[37] Unlike the majority of La Fontaine's *fables*, 'Le Jardinier et son Seigneur' features explicitly human characters, or at least it is human characters that are the protagonists. But this is not enough to make it a *conte* rather than a *fable*. I suggest, following Jean-Paul Sermain, that it is the plot and multi-dimensionality of the characters within it that make 'Le Jardinier et son seigneur' a *conte* rather than a *fable*: 'alors que la fable repose sur des dispositifs rhétoriques, le conte séduit par l'esprit du récit'.[38] The reading of the *conte* that I have offered help us to view the women whose breasts are fondled by Panurge and the seigneur respectively not as victims of a sexual attack but as the ones who hold the power and are ultimately amused by the men and their childish behaviour. Panurge and the seigneur then become the real objects of mockery.

Towards the end of Chapter 16, the reader is given a summative account of Panurge's nature as trickster: 'quand il changeoit un teston, ou quelque aultre piece, le changeur eust esté plus fin que maistre mouche, si Panurge n'eust faict esvanouyr à chascune foys cinq ou six grans blancs visiblement, apertement, manifestement, sans faire lesion ne blessure aulcune, dont le changeur n'en eust senty que le vent'. (276) The term *maistre mouche* was a well-established way of describing a trickster in the sixteenth century.[39] The title messire Mouche was originally given to Philippe le Bel's financial advisor Mucciato Guidi di Francesi, whose monetary exploits became well renowned.[40] The term appears again in this sense in the *Tiers Livre,* whilst Panurge is making his

[37] Anne Birberick, *Reading Undercover: Audience and Authority in Jean de La Fontaine* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), p. 83.
[38] Jean-Paul Sermain, 'Fables, contes, nouvelles: Liaisons poétiques', Études sur le conte merveilleux, XVIIe-XIXe siècle, 7 (2010), pp. 9-19 (p. 18).
[39] See LaGuardia, 'Un bon esmoucheteur par mousches ne sera: Panurge as Trickster', *RR*, Vol.66, No. 4, pp. 519-528.
[40] Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, p. 1299.

excuses for not getting any food: 'J'ay faict courvée trop extraordinaire. Il fera plus que maistre mousche, qui de cestuy an me fera estre de songeailles' (397). But this use of the term to refer to a man who was 'habile ou rusé' waxed and waned in the seventeenth century, and came to be replaced by the term 'Dame Mouche'.[41]

Perhaps as a result of the fashion for wearing artificial beauty spots that would later be visualised in François Boucher's portrait *La mouche, ou Une dame à sa toilette* (1738), the animal came to be associated not with men but women, and acquired different connotations all together.[42] This association was first concretized by La Fontaine's fable of 1678, 'Le Coche et la Mouche':

Dans un chemin montant, sablonneux, malaisé,
Et de tous les côtés au Soleil exposé.
Six forts chevaux tiraient un Coche.
Femmes, Moine, Vieillards, tout était descendu,
L'attelage suait, soufflait, était rendu.
Une Mouche survient, et des chevaux s'approche;
Prétend les animer par son bourdonnement;
Pique l'un, pique l'autre, et pense à tout moment,
Qu'elle fait aller la machine,
S'assied sur le timon, sur le nez du Cocher;
Aussitôt que le char chemine,
Et qu'elle voit les gens marcher,
Elle s'en attribue uniquement la gloire;
Va, vient, fait l'empressée; il semble que ce soit
Un Sergent de bataille allant en chaque endroit
Faire avancer ces gens, et hater la victoire.
La Mouche en ce commun besoin
Se plaint qu'elle agit seule, et qu'elle a tout le soin;
Qu'aucun n'aide aux chevaux à se tirer de l'affaire.
Le Moine disait son Bréviare;
Il prenait bien son temps! une femme chantait;
C'était bien de chansons qu'alors il s'agissait!
Dame Mouche s'en va chanter à leurs oreilles,
Et fait cent sottises pareilles.
Après bien du travail le Coche arrive au haut.
Respirons maintenant, dit la Mouche aussitot:
J'ai tant fait que nos gens sont enfin dans la plaine.
Ça, Messieurs les Chevaux, payez-moi de ma peine.

[41] Sainéan, *La Langue de Rabelais*, p. 424.
[42] See, for example, Sarah Jane Downing, *A Deadly Fashion: Beauty and Cosmetics 1550-1950* (Oxford: Shire Library, 2012).

Ainsi certaines gens, faisant les empressés,
S'introduisent dans les affaires:
Ils font partout les nécessaires,
Et, partout importuns, devraient être chassés.

The modern day expression 'la mouche du coche', meaning busybody, has its etymological roots in this fable, which has been somewhat neglected by criticism in comparison to some of the others in the collection.[43] On the face of it, the moral of this fable seems to be that people who self-importantly meddle in other people's business ought to be derided. But, as is always the case with a fable, there are multiple meanings at play here[44] - 'Les Fables ne sont pas ce qu'elles semblent être' (VI.1) In 1980, Michel Serres proposed a posthuman sociological framework for thinking whereby human relationships are likened to that of the parasite and the host body, and he did so through an analysis of La Fontaine's *Fables*.[45] Within this framework, minority groups could become major players in public dialogue by acting as an irritant to the dominant body. Despite his emphasis on minority groups, Serres says of 'la femme' that she is 'l'hôte au regard duquel tout autre hote, meme celui qui se dénomme ainsi, et meme le plus grand des dieux, peut etre et doit etre jugé parasite', remarking that '[n]ous n'avons pas pensé l'implication, l'inclus, le pli....Nous n'avons jamais vu ni écouté les femmes'.[46]

Although this fable could be read as a critique of the fly's self importance, read from the perspective of the fly, it could also be a critique of societal structure. The fly was trying to help, and believed that she was helping, but her assistance went unnoticed. She sings, 'chanter à leurs oreilles', but no-one understands her, and rather interprets her

[43] Strangely, 'Le Coche et la mouche' does not receive any focused attention from Birberick, Vincent or Calder.
[44] Consider Montaigne, for example: 'La plus part des fables d'Esope ont plusieurs sens et intelligences. Ceux qui les mythologisent, en choisissent quelque visage qui quadre bien à la fable: mais pour la pluspart, ce n'est que le premier visage et superficiel; il y en a d'autres plus vifs, plus essentiels et internes, ausquels ils n'ont sçeu penetrer'. 'Des Livres', *Essais,* eds. Pierre Villey and Verdun Saulnier (Paris: PUF, 1992), 3 Vols., Vol. 2, p. 410.
[45] Michel Serres, *Le parasite* (Paris: Grasset, 1980).
[46] Michel Serres, *Rome: Le livre des fondations* (Paris: Grasset, 1983), p. 89.

singing simply as something that is annoying. It is significant that she is put in confrontation with a manmade object, a coach, a symbol of civilisation and industrialisation, which is emphasised by La Fontaine's use of the word 'machine' to describe the coach from the perspective of the fly.[47] The fact that it is a coach rather than a carosse is significant and adds a further dimension to the fable.[48] Coaches were used by a wider group of people from lower classes, whereas the nobility or aristocracy would have had their own private carosse. But even within this hierarchy, the fly is ignored. She is signalled out as the excluded, individual agent in contrast to the 'Six forts chevaux' and the group of people within the coach. La Fontaine uses a combination of alexandrines, decasyllabic and octosyllabic lines in irregular fashion, which makes the Fable jarring and unsettling for the reader, reflecting the differences between the protagonists. The couplet, 'Dame Mouche s'en va chanter à leurs oreilles/ Et fait cent sottises pareilles' is the only instance in which a decasyllabic line and an octosyllabic line function as a rhyming couplet. This mirrors the opposing perspectives of Dame Mouche, who believes she is singing to the horses in an effort to help, and the outsiders who exclude her and dismiss her actions as 'sottises pareilles'.

La Fontaine's admiration for the fly who does what it can here is made all the more clear when we consider the fly's counterparts elsewhere in the *Fables*.[49] Consider, for example, 'Le Renard, les Mouches et l'Hérisson' (XII,13) which tells the story of a wounded fox who is bothered by flies that torment him. When a hedgehog offers to kill the flies with his spikes, the fox tells him not to bother because it would only encourage another swarm: 'Aux traces de son sang, un vieux hote des bois/Renard fin, subtil, et matois/ Blessé par des Chasseurs, et tombé dans la fange/ Autrefois attira ce Parasite ailé/ Que nous avons mouche appelé' (1.4-5). Although the fly is designated a parasite

[47] On this kind of framework for reading, see Andrew Calder, 'The Reader as Donkey, Frog and Hare', *Wisdom Brought Down to Earth*, pp. 100-103.
[48] Oddly enough, Serres does not in fact offer a reading of this particular fable.
[49] Slater, *The Craft of La Fontaine*, pp. 201-222.

here, the question really is who the 'nous' is. As Slater has pointed out in her analysis, the 'nous' could simply designate the poet, or it could reflect simply those who resort to the seventeenth-century cliché of the fly as parasite.[50] Serres' framework (leaving aside questions of gender for the moment) also leads us to wonder whether the 'nous' is in fact not the poet, nor adherents to a cliché, but the powerful who want to exclude others by designating them as parasitic. This reading is supported by the offensive behaviour of the ant in 'La Mouche et la Fourmi', who insults the fly by rudely saying 'Nomme t-on pas aussi Mouches les parasites?' (IV, 3). The same phrase is also used in 'L'Ours et l'Amateur des Jardins' (VIII, 10 1.47) which recounts the story of a bear who strikes up a friendship with the gardener and then inadvertently kills him by trying to swat away the fly who had made itself comfortable on the gardener's nose whilst he slept. In light of these various echoes, it becomes all the more possible to read the fly in 'Le Coche et la Mouche' as the character with whom the reader is encouraged to recognise and perhaps identify with. And in this fable, the fly is explicitly gendered, which adds a further set of imagined readers who would become actualised following the appearance of Book VII in 1678, which La Fontaine dedicated to Madame de Montespan.[51]

The work of Georges Couton has firmly grounded La Fontaine's work within the world of the French court.[52] And the afterlife of 'Le Coche et la Mouche' is no exception to this rule. And this brings us to Madame de Sévigné. Although she was well-versed in several of the fables[53], she had a penchant for 'Le Coche et la Mouche', which was sent to her by her daughter: 'Je vous remercie de la fable de la Mouche, elle est divine: on ne trouve en son chemin que des occasions de penser à elle: *Oh, que je fais de poudre!* Eh!

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[50] Ibid., p. 205.
[51] Greater critical attention is starting to be paid to La Fontaine's imagined and actual women readers, but more work on the subject remains to be done. Consider, for example, Anne L. Birberick, *Reading Undercover*, Chapter 4.
[52] Georges Couton, *La Politique de La Fontaine* (Paris: Les belles-lettres, 1959), p. 87.
[53] On this, see Michael Vincent, *Figures of the Text*, pp. 45-46 (Vincent focuses on La Laitière et le Pot au Lait); Slater, *The Craft of La Fontaine*, p. 230 and Andrew Calder, *Wisdom Brought Down to Earth*, p. 199.

Mon Dieu, que cela est plaisant! la Gillette ne doute point que ce ne soit elle qui fasse le tourbillon. Il y en a d'autres aussi qui ressemblent à cette autre Mouche de La Fontaine, et qui pensent toujours avoir tout fait' (23rd June, 1677)

Two years after receiving this fable, Sévigné identified herself with Dame Mouche: «Me voilà précisément comme la Mouche. Je me mets sur le nez du cocher; je pousse la roue, je bourdonne, et fais cent sottises pareilles, et puis je dis: J'ai tant fait que nos gens sont enfin dans la plaine» (6 December, 1679). Perhaps as a result of reducing Sévigné's status to that of a mother and neglecting her wit and literary merit, Michèle Longino understands this identification as an instance of Sévigné 'mistaking sequence for cause',[54] which is also based on a simplistic reading of La Fontaine's original text. In contrast, Cécile Lignereux and Julien Piat have argued that, in this instance, the fable 's'adapte plaisamment aux manoeuvres politiques de la Marquise dans les affaires de Provence'.[55] She had returned to Provence in September following her stay in Paris. But what this self-deprecating identification also does is draw attention to the lengths that Sévigné had to go to in order to become a force for change. And in light of the reading of the fable that I proposed above, this self-deprecation appears ironic rather than sincere.[56] Her identification with Dame Mouche is not so much a piece of self-mockery but rather a comment on her own situation and a kind of defiant self-deprecation. This is all the more clear in a further letter to her daughter from December 25th, 1679: 'Je vous épargne souvent de lire mes peines sur votre sujet, mais il m'est quelquefois impossible de vous les dissimuler. Il faut que je les bourdonne comme la Mouche' (25 Décembre, 1679). Sévigné reveals here that she is consciously speaking/acting/writing as a fly in order to communicate her deepest thoughts.

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54 Michele Longino Farrel, *Performing Motherhood: The Sévigné Correspondence* (Hanover; London: University Press of New England, 1991), p. 230.
55 Cécile Lignereux and Julien Piat, *Une langue à soi: Propositions* (Pessac; Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2009), p. 63.
56 On irony in Sévigné's correspondence, see Ann Marie-Recker, *Appelle-moi Pierrot: wit and irony in the lettres of Madame de Sévigné* (Amsterdam: Philadelphia, 1986).

It was not only herself, however, that Sévigné referred to as a fly. In a letter of the 23rd July 1677, Sévigné says unreservedly, 'la mouche est à la cour; c'est une fatigue mais que faire?' The particular fly in question here was Sévigné's friend, Madame de Coulanges, who was somewhat of an outsider in the French court, but who was greatly admired for her wit:

> Madame de Coulanges frequented court assiduously, but she enjoyed no place. Her species of intellect was characteristic of the times. The conceits, mystifications, and metaphysical flights of the Hotel de Rambouillet had given place to wit, and to sententious and pointed, yet perspicuous [...] equivoques, sous-entendres, metaphors, and antithesis, all kinds of trifles, sarcastic or laudatory, were lightly touched on, coloured for a moment with rainbow-hues, and vanished as fast [...] The airness of her mind is well expressed in the names Madame de Sévigné gives her in her correspondence: la Mouche, la Feuille, la Sylphide, all denote a mixture of lightness, gayety and grace, with a touch of coquetry, and the piquancé of wit, whose point was sharp, but free from venom.[57]

This kind of reference to the witty woman as a fly would continue into the eighteenth century. The most striking instance of this occurs in the *Parallèle Burlesque d'Homère et de Rabelais* (1711) by Lenglet-Dufresnoy, which will be the main subject of Chapter Four. Towards the middle of this curious text, Dufresnoy proposes a metaphor for understanding the aesthetic of badinage, arguing that it is a particularly effective means of disputation precisely because it is amusing:

> Comparons donc à present le badinage à l'abeille légère qui voltigent en folatrant autour de ce Taureau furieux. Elle badine en sureté entre ses cornes, le pique legerement: il ne fait que secouer l'oreille. Autre coup d'aiguillon qu'il méprise il ne voir point d'ennemi. Cependant la mouche le pique, ses piquures sont legeres, mais elles sont réitérées. La mouche se porte avec agilité par tous les endroits sensibles, les piqûres redoublent: il commence à s'irriter, & ne voiant à qui s'en prendre, il tourne sa colère contre lui-même.[58]

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[57] Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Lives of the most eminent French writers*: *Montaigne, Rabelais, Corneille, Rochefoucauld, Moliere, La Fontaine, Pascal, Madame de Sevigne, Boileau, Racine, Fenelon* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1840), 2 Vols., Vol. 1, p. 242.

[58] Nicolas Lenglet-Dufresnoy, *Parallèle Burlesque, ou dissertation ou dissertation ou discours, qu'on nommera comme on voudra, sur Homère et Rabelais* (1711), p. 203.

For Dufresnoy, this kind of dipterological badinage functions not only as a rhetorical tool, but also a polemical one, in so far as it gradually chips away at its opponent until they eventually turn against themselves.[59] Badinage is light and unassuming, and, for Dufresnoy, it is this apparent 'legereté' that makes it such a useful weapon.

Dufresnoy's metaphor here of the fly and the bull breaks with Jonathan Swift's Ancient vs. Modern metaphor of the bee and the spider (1704), which by this point had travelled across the channel,[60] and instead incorporates two different animals: the bull and the fly. The furious bull becomes an Ancient, whose weapons are its strength and size – it gains grandiosity from the heritage it draws on. The fly is the Modern who uses subtlety and agility to triumph over its opponent. But why a bull? The bull is not only characterized by its size but also by its horns, which are both evocative of the male phallus and also commonly understood as symbolic of the threat of cuckoldry that runs through the *Tiers Livre*.[61] In a Rabelaisian context, of course, horns also signify cornucopia – the vessel that supplies on demand. In Dufresnoy's metaphor, the Ancient bull has an inexhaustible, cornucopian wealth of knowledge but then becomes overwhelmed and turns his anger in on himself, suggesting an anxiety of the sort that Cave proposes as the negative side effect of cornucopia and phallic arrogance.[62] In Dufresnoy's metaphor, the Ancient is imagined as masculine and the Modern as feminine. But does this mean that the Ancient is necessarily male and the Modern female? Badinage was not confined to the use of any particular sex or gender – men

[59] 'le badinage a cela de bon, qu'il peut éclaircir certaines veritez qu'une dispute serieuse ne feroit qu'obscurcir. Le badinage a encore cet avantage sur la dispute, qu'au lieu d'attirer la colere des disputeurs graves, il n'en attire qu'un silence dédaigneux; & c'est en être quitte à bon marché, car la force des raisonnemens ne fait que les irriter au lieu de les convaincre'., *Parallèle Burlesque*, p. 203.

[60] Jonathan Swift, *The Battle of the Books* [1704] (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), p. 10. For a consideration of the ways in which the *Querelle* traversed national boundaries more generally, see *Ancients and Moderns in Europe: Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Paddy Bullard and Alexis Tadié (Oxford: Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment, 2016).

[61] See LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity*, p. 117.

[62] See Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text : problems of writing in the French Renaissance* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 187.

could 'badine' just as women could. But it *was* gendered in so far as it was a code of conversation that enabled both men and women to converse with one another, engaging in a social practise that transgressed, or bended, the boundaries of gender and which resulted in what some perceived to be an 'effeminacy' of men in the salons.[63] Dufresnoy's 'mouche' is a Modern who either is a woman or is a man who performs in society as, and thinks like, a woman. As I will explore in detail in the following chapter, Dufresnoy is concerned with giving his Modern reader, the 'mouche', a version of Rabelais that they can use as they 'badine' between the horns of the masculine Ancient, the 'taureau', during conversation, teasing their Ancient opponents without coming across as a masculine 'éruditionné'.

The title 'Dame Mouche' would later be claimed by Isabelle de Charrière, who used the term, like Sévigné, to articulate a sense of defiant self-deprecation.[64] This self-baptism as the coach fly first occurred in the twelfth issue of Charrière's *Observations et Conjectures Politiques* (1788) and was later used in the preface to her *Eclaircissements rélatifs à la publication des Confessions de Rousseau* (1790). Not only that, but 'La mouche du cocher' was the pseudonym that she used when signing off her political pamphlets, which would eventually come to be known as *Les épigrammes de la mouche du coche*.[65] La Fontaine's fable puts emphasis on the fly's 'bourdonnement', which translates to chatter or conversation, her defiant self-deprecation, and her 'pique', i.e. her sharp tongue and wit; all of which appealed to Sévigné and Isabelle de Charrière. But the

[63] Lewis Seifert has considered the anxieties felt by men in these salons and the strategies used to combat perceived effeminacy in *Manning the Margins: Masculinity and Writing in Seventeenth-Century France* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009) and 'L'Homme de ruelle chez les dames: Civility and Masculinity in the Salon', *Classical Unities: Place, Time, Action*: *Actes du 32e Congrès annuel de la North American Society for Seventeenth-Century French Literature* (Tübingen : Narr, 2002), pp. 95-111.
[64] Paul Smith notes that Isabelle de Charrière and Sévigné were united in their love of La Fontaine. See Smith, 'Madame de Charrière, lectrice de La Fontaine', in *Isabelle de Charrière (Belle de Zuylen): De la correspondance au roman épistolaire, Études réunies par Yvette Yvonne Marie Went-Dao*ust (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), pp. 49-65, (p. 54).
[65] On this, see Susan K. Jackson, 'Publishing without Perishing: Isabelle de Charrière, a.k.a. *la mouche du coche*', in *Going Public*: *Women and Publishing in Early Modern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 194-210, (pp. 198-199).

fly brings with her all sorts of other connotations: flies lay their eggs on dung. They are drawn to that which most cannot imagine being drawn to, they buzz, and they possess their own agency. Whilst the episodes in Rabelais' text that I have considered here help us to reread La Fontaine's 'Le Jardinier et son Seigneur' and 'Le Coche et la Mouche', the figuration of Dame Mouche, also helps us to revisit *Pantagruel*, 15, not only by turning our attention towards the woman as agent, but also by encouraging us to listen to the buzz of the text.

3.3. The sense of sound in *Pantagruel*, 15

3.3.1. Peeking through Panurge's Walls

The 'indecent' episode in which Panurge innovatively proposes that the walls of Paris be constructed primarily out of depersonalized female genitalia is unsettling for the woman reader to say the least.[66] Susan Gubar has described it as pornographic, and Susan Broomhall has seen it as evidence that Rabelais' work embodies an 'abhorrence of the vagina'.[67] The apparent crudeness and misogyny of this architectural innovation is shortly followed by what critics of Rabelais' work have thus far tended to consider to be a 'violation' of the female body – a body that is further objectified in the aforementioned *Pantagruel*, 16 in which Panurge plays a trick on a woman by distracting her with a handkerchief so that he can fondle her breasts.

During a dialogue with Pantagruel, Panurge lays out his innovative architectural plans for constructing the walls of Paris:

> « Je voys que les callibistrys des femmes de ce pays sont à meilleur marché que les pierres, d'iceulx fauldroit bastir les murailles en les arrengeant par bonne symmeterye d'architecture, et mettant les plus grans au premiers rancz, et puis en

[66] Carol Clark, *The Vulgar Rabelais* (Glasgow: Pressgang, 1983), p. 8.
[67] Susan Gubar, 'Representing Pornography: Feminism, Criticism and Depictions of Female Violation', *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Summer, 1987), pp. 712-741. (p. 712) and Susan Broomhall, *Women's Medical Work in Early Modern France* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), p. 234.

> taluant à doz d'asne arranger les moyens, et finablement les petitz. Puis faire un beau petit entrelardement à poinctes de diamans comme la grosse tout de Bourges de tant de bracquemars enroiddys qui habitent par les braguettes claustrales.
>
> «Quel diable defferoit telles murailles? Il n'y a metal qui tant resistast aux coups. Et puis que les couillevrines se y vinsent se froter, vous en verriez (par dieu) incontinent distiller de ce benoist fruict de grosse verolle menu comme pluye. Sec au nom des diables. Dadvantaige la fouldre ne tumberroit jamais dessus. Car pourquoy? Ilz sont tous benists ou sacrez.
>
> « Je n'y voy qu'un inconvenient.
>
> - Ho, ho, ha, ha, ha, (dist Pantagruel). Et quel?
>
> - C'est que les mousches en sont tant friandes que merveilles, et se y cueilleroyent facillement et y feroient leur ordure: et voylà l'ouvrage gasté. (268-269)

The equation of walls with human bodies was long-standing in the sixteenth century, but the specificity of the equation with the female body, and female genitalia in particular, was less common. Critics have understood this living female wall in a variety of different ways. Françoise Charpentier has read it as a further instance of misogyny in Rabelais' world.[68] And similarly, Hope Glidden has argued that this wall constitutes a mockery of Christine de Pisan's *Cité des Dames*.[69] Jacques Berthold, however, has argued that rather than Christine de Pisan, the wall actually mocks the phallocentric desire to build walls.[70] Elisabeth Hodges has read the moulding together of male and female genitalia in Panurge's walls to be a sign of Panurge's fascination with heterosexual sex.[71]

As part of a considerable body of recent work on the hybrid nature of Rabelais' text, Nadine Kuperty-Tsur has considered the implications that an appreciation of generic hybridity might have for a feminist reading of *Pantagruel*, 15.[72] By drawing attention to the different genres employed by Rabelais in this chapter (dialogue, *conte*, farce and fable), Kuperty-Tsur argues that Rabelais is critiquing the phallocentric way in

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[68] See Charpentier, 'Un royaume qui perdure sans femmes', pp. 205-207.
[69] Hope Glidden, 'Rabelais, Panurge, and the anti-courtly body', *ER*, 25, pp. 35-60.
[70] Jacques Berchtold, «Les mouches et les mousses aux orifices du corps: Les niveaux de sens dans lechapitre 15 du Pantagruel», in *Rabelais et la question du sens*, Jean Céard, Marie-Luce Demonet-Launay et Stéphan Geonget (dir.) (Genève: Droz, 2011), pp.59-73.
[71] Hodges, 'Rabelais and Feminism', in *Approaches to Teaching*, pp. 174-182, (p. 179).
[72] Nadine Kuperty-Tsur, 'Genre, Sexe et Construction du Savoir dans le Chapître 15 du Pantagruel', *ER*, Vol. 56 (2017), pp. 249-262.

which men come to relate to, and think about, women. This reading is all the more persuasive when we consider the fact that even Pantagruel laughs at Panurge's extreme objectification of this particular instantiation of the female form.

Although Tsur's reading is extremely helpful in so far as it offers a way of reading this chapter which is not based on the objectification of women, her account downplays the significance of the story of the old woman, the fox and the lion, which, I argue, constitutes an important instance of female sexual agency in Rabelais' text.

The only disadvantage that Panurge sees in building the walls in this way is that the genitalia might attract flies and result in the wall decaying and wasting away. The way to combat this, Panurge argues, is to apply 'belles quehues de renards, ou bons gros de vietz d'azes', which will put the flies off. The use of moss, foxtails and 'donkey pizzlers' stems from a story that Panurge has heard and, importantly, misinterpreted, involving a fox, a lion and a 'faulse vieille'.

3.3.2. Listening to 'la faulse vieille'

Whereas for Berthold, this episode in Rabelais' text might appear to be one of 'les éléments les plus triviaux', for the reader interested in questions of gender, it is far from trivial.[73] The *conte*, according to Panurge, goes as follows:

> «Au temps que les bestes parloyent (il n'y a pas troys jours) un pauvre Lyon par la forest de Bievre se pourmenant et disant ses menus suffrages passa par dessoubz un arbre auquel estoit monté un villain charbonnier pour abastre du boys. Lequel voyant le Lyon, luy getta sa coignée, et le blessa enormement en une cuisse. Dont le Lyon cloppant tant courut et tracassa par la forest pour trouver ayde qu'il recontra un charpentier. Ainsi le Lyon guery, se pourmenoist par la forest, à quelle heure une vieille sempiterneuse ebuschetoit et amassoit du boys par ladicte forest, laquelle voyant le Lyon venir, tumba de peur à la renverse en telle façon, que le vent luy renversa robbe, cotte, et chemise jusques au dessus des espaules. Ce que voyant le Lyon accourut de pitié, veoir si elle s'estoit faict aulcun mal, et considérant son comment a nom: dist, "O pauvre femme, qui t'a ainsi blessée?"

[73] Berchtold, 'Les mouches et les mousses', p. 60.

et ce disant, apperceut un regnard, lequel il apella, disant. "Compere regnard, hau czà czà, et pour cause".

«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 escmouche je t'en supplye, et ce pendent je voys querir de la mousse pour y mettre. Car ainsi nous fault il secourir et aider l'un l'aultre.

«Esmouche fort, ainsi mon amy, esmouche bien: car ceste playe veult estre esmouchée souvent, aultrement la personne ne peut estre à son aise. Or esmouche bien mon petit compere, esmouche, dieu t'a bien pourveu de quehue, ty l'as grande et grosse à l'advenent, esmouche fort et ne t'ennuye poinct, un bon esmoucheteur qui en esmouchetant continuellement esmouche de son mouchet par mousches jamais esmouché ne sera. Esmouche couillaud, esmouche mon petit bedaud: je n'arresteray gueres". Puis va chercher force mousse, et quand il feut quelque peu loing il s'escrya parlant au regnard. "Esmouche bien toujours compere, esmouche, et ne te fasche jamais de bien esmoucher, mon petit compere je te feray estre à gaiges esmoucheteur de don Pietro de Castille. Esmouche seulement, esmouche et rien plus". Le pauvre regnard esmouchoit fort bien et deçà et delà, et dedans et dehors: mais la faulse vieille vesnoit et vessoit puant comme cent diables. (270)

Interesting work has been done on what this episode has to tell us about the acquisition of knowledge. Timothy Hampton argues that the story stages the process of knowledge acquisition and the conflict between knowledge and charity.[74] The lion can only understand the old woman's orifice in relation to his own lived experience – he reads her body in the only way he knows, which, Hampton argues, becomes an instance of misplaced charity. But there is still something to be said about the gendered dimension of the episode. Critics interested in gender in Rabelais' work have responded to this scene in a variety of different ways. Françoise Charpentier describes the old woman as 'une sorte d'objet animé sans plus, et remarquablement passive'.[75] David La Guardia has considered the episode via an analysis of the term 'mouche' and 'esmoucher' in the episode, arguing that the story demonstrates the ways in which Rabelais' text subjugates

[74] "'Comment a nom": Humanism and Literary Knowledge in Auerbach and Rabelais', *Representations,* Vol.119, No.1 (Summer 2012), pp. 37-59 (p. 43).
[75] Charpentier, 'Le lion, la vieille et le renard: Rabelais et l'obscène', p. 87.

the female body via language: '[t]he violence done to [the old woman's] body is only slightly veiled by the use of the term esmoucher in an improper sexual sense'.[76] For La Guardia, Rabelais' word play serves to cover up the woman's body – a body that is defiled or stained. But is this the only way to understand Rabelais' wordplay?

Critics have tended to focus on the figures of the lion and the fox as the central protagonists of the scene. The dialogue that occurs between the lion and the fox is one in which the power dynamic is whole-heartedly weighted towards the lion, instructing the fox who wilfully obeys. This dialogue between the two has led Raymond La Charité to view them as the doubles of Pantagruel and Panurge.[77] But my interest lies not so much in the figures of the lion and the fox but rather the figure of the woman.

Perhaps as a result of the focus on the lion and the fox, the old woman in the tale has generally been dismissed to be a passive victim. But if we reconfigure our eyes, and ears, and consider that it might be the woman, rather than the lion or the fox who is the protagonist, then a very different scene emerges. We read that the woman 'tumba de peur à la renverse' at the sight of the lion. But it is easy to forget that this is Panurge's account of events – he is telling Pantagruel the story and thus the action is mediated by Panurge's own misogynistic attitude towards women. What if the woman was in fact not scared? It is possible that 'au temps que les bestes parloyent', the woman had heard Aesop's fable of the lion in love that La Fontaine would later revise and dedicate to Madame de Sevigne's daughter. And Aesop is the obvious intertext to the story of the lion, the fox and the old woman. When we consider this, an alternative reading comes to light, whereby the woman becomes reconfigured as the active agent, rather than the reactive one.

Rather than accept Panurge's account, we might wonder whether the woman is actually trying her luck with the lion. Rather than fall down in fear, the text allows for the

[76] La Guardia, 'Un bon esmoucheter par mouches jamais esmouché ne sera', p. 526.
[77] Raymond La Charité, *Recreation, Reflection, Re-Creation* (Lexington: French Forum, 1980), p. 102.

possibility that she in fact threw herself to the ground. The idea that a gust of wind should immediately strike at that moment, and not just a breeze but rather a gust strong enough to upturn not only her skirt but her overcoat and blouse seems somewhat unlikely, especially in the middle of a forest. Might she not have in fact flung herself to the ground and exposed herself in the hopes that the lion might be similar to Aesop's *lion amoureux*, and fall madly in love with her?

Although it is not the lion who becomes physically intimate with her, the fox comes along and provides a more than adequate service to satisfy her sexual appetite. Despite the assertions of several critics that this scene is a rape or violation of the female form, the text itself, and the musicality of the language in particular, allows us to read it in a different way. As the episode progresses, the word 'mouche' takes on a life of its own and acquires further poetic currency within the context of the scene. The reader gains textual and aural pleasure from the internal rhyme and repetition of the word 'mouche', and the insistent reiteration gains an erotic charge. This is all the more clear when the passage is spoken aloud; the phonetic nature of the word 'mouche' is such that, in order to say it repeatedly, one naturally has to move one's lips backwards and forwards in such a way that mimics the movement of the outer lips of the labia that generally occurs during either penetrative or non-penetrative sex – note that the fox 'esmouchoit fort bien et decà et delà *et dedans et dehors*' (270). If we imagine a man reading this passage out to a woman who listens, such as one of the 'gentilz hommes faisants beaux et longs narrez', what we have is a scene that is both visually and aurally erotic.

But Rabelais' use of language here does not need to be read as an instance in which the power of words subjugates and covers up the female body, as La Guardia has suggested.[78] The repetition and amalgamation of the word 'mouche' might instead mirror the action of the fox's tail rubbing against the woman's cunt, which then results in a

[78] See note 76.

sexual climax and release akin to that which the reader experiences when they finally get to the end of the intensely repetitive and elongated sentences that characterise this passage.

What has gone unnoticed by critics of this episode is the significance of the pairing, 'vesnoit' and 'vessoit' that characterises the woman's reaction to the fox's tickling of her clitoris, and which Thomas Urquhart would marvellously translate as 'fizzle and foist'.[79] The two words were synonymous in early modern French, so why did Rabelais include them both? Is this just a further instance of Rabelais' excessive and copious language? Or is there something else at play here? The rhyme between the two words and the anaphoric 'v' makes the pair sound pleasant, thus creating an association between the woman's fart and pleasure. The woman is farting because she is having such a good time. This association between farting and sex would become well-trodden ground in the early modern world. Consider, for example, the following extract from Pierre Le Loyer's translation of Aristophanes' *Birds* (1579), in which two old cuckolds discuss their wives:

GENIN
Voicy ta femme, ô qu'elle est joliette!
Qu'elle est sucrée, affaittée et douillette:
C'est bien le cas de son mary Cocu.

CORNARD
Comment elle a une grand' corne au cu?

JEAN COCU
Cela luy est provenu de nature.

CORNARD
Quand elle estoit femme par avanture,
Elle vesnoit, elle cornoit souvent,
Et sus cela estoit plaine de vent.

JEAN COCU
Tu ne mens pas, la vérité est telle.

CORNARD

[79] *The Works of Francis Rabelais,* translated from the French by Sir Thomas Urquhart and Motteux [1694] (London: Bohn, York Street, Covent Garden, 1849), 2 Vols., Vol. 1, p. 387.

Mais quand tu veus badouyner sur elle,
Sa corne longue est un empeschement
Que tu ne peuz l'enfonçer vivement.[80]

Le Loyer adds these sexual jokes about cuckolds in to the play. This particular passage is interesting in so far as this particular chapter is concerned, for the same kind of association that we find in *Pantagruel*, 15 between farting, 'vesnoit', which Keith Cameron notes means the same as 'vessoit', and the act of having sex, 'cornoit'.[81] What is interesting for the thesis more generally, is the fact that the man's wife, 'femme', acquires a 'corne longue' which ends up preventing her from being penetrated. Here we have an early modern 'femme', who possesses a body that seems to be male, much like Cataut in the *Ballet des Andouilles* of Chapter One. Le Loyer is explicit about his debt to Rabelais at the very beginning of his translation:

GENIN
Nous en allons où les Cocus habitent:
Là les destins d'un arrest ordinné
Nous en promis un repos fortuné.
O le bon vin, le vin a une oreille!
Je sens desja que je diray merveille.
Allons tout droict, nous ne faudrons jamays.

CORNARD
Tu parles bien, ton oracle, j'admetz:
Si nous eussions, malheureux et infames,
Cheminé droict sur le corps de noz femmes,
Ayans le manche et l'outil toujours prompt.
Nous n'aurions pas deux cornes sur le front.[82] (p.86)

The invocation of the dive bouteille is important for current purposes because it confirms the Rabelaisian intertexts in Le Loyer's play and posits the cuckolded men as the wrongdoers rather than the cuckolding women.

[80] Pierre Le Loyer, *La Nephelococugie ou La nuée des cocus*, ed. by Miriam Doe and Keith Cameron (Genève: Droz, 2004), pp. 154-155.
[81] Ibid., p. 154, n. 3.
[82] Ibid., p. 86.

Not only is the sound of the word 'vessoit' associated with pleasure because it is paired with 'vesnoit', but it also bears the traces of the word 'vesse', meaning a debauched or "over-sexed" woman.[83] Hodges argues that it is easier for readers of Rabelais to 'retreat into [the] text's pleasure' rather than address the seemingly violated female bodies and misogynistic scenes in Rabelais' work.[84] I have suggested in this chapter that the 'pleasure' of the text in *Pantagruel*, 15 is not in opposition with the action that takes place in the scene, but rather helps us to reconsider what is in fact occurring.

Whether they inhabit 'female' bodies with vaginas or 'male' bodies with phalluses, women in Rabelais' world are in possession of sexual appetites. La Guardia argues that 'the woman's farting anus stand[s] as the response of the violated body to its violation'.[85] And Tsur argues that it is at this point that what was a story turns into a farce. But we might instead understand the smell and sound that the woman produces and which so displeases the fox to be not a violation, nor indeed farcical, but rather a celebration of what has just occurred - the movement she makes stems from her arousal which subsequently results in her emitting a postcoital fart. Elisabeth Hodges has acknowledged that the woman is stimulated by the fox's tail, but she does not quite go far enough in her analysis: 'the fox inadvertently stimulates the old woman with his tail while diligently cleaning her wound, causing such a ruckus that she begins to fart'.[86] What is interesting here about Hodges' analysis is her use of the word 'ruckus'. Hodges implies that the woman is stimulated by the noise that the fox and the lion are making, overlooking the possibility that the stimulation may in fact result in an orgasm. Hodges still ultimately reads this episode as a violation of the female body, which in this case is also a woman's

[83] 'Le bon Marc-Aurele, ayant sa femme Faustine, une bonne vesse'. Brantôme, *Vies des dames galantes* (Paris; Garnier Frères, 1841), p. 64.
[84] Hodges, 'Rabelais and Feminism', p. 174.
[85] LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity*, p. 48.
[86] Hodges, 'Rabelais and Feminism', p. 180.

body. Although the fart may be brought on 'inadvertently' from the fox's perspective, from the perspective of the old woman, the post-coital fart, and the orgasm that preceded it was exactly what she went out looking for when she stepped into the woods.

Neither the fox nor the lion (nor Panurge, of course) can fully conceptualise what is going on with her body, but that is not to say the reader will naturally suffer the same misunderstanding. The fox may experience abhorrence, but the way in which the story is recounted in long sentences, punctuated by commas, thus delaying the textual climax, expresses a fascination and delight on the part of Rabelais' narrator. The fox and the lion may not have understood the woman's agency, but that does not mean that she did not have it. It is the fox and the lion, rather than the old woman, who become victims of a joke shared between the narrator and the reader. So is the woman in the story actually an *old* woman?

As the events come to a head, the reader learns that the old woman is in fact a '*faulse* vieille' (My emphasis, 270), which could be read as an indication (or affirmation) of the woman's sexual appetite. When juxtaposed with the disembodied vaginas that are shamelessly objectified by Panurge's visual image of the wall of genitalia, the old woman's embodied and pleasure-seeking sonorous vagina is all the more striking. The body of 'la faulse vieille' is a body that senses, whereas the vaginas that make up Panurge's wall are entities that signify. Neither the fox, nor the lion can conceptualise a body that is other than theirs and which might be sensing and moving differently. And they are incapable of understanding the woman's farting, oozing vagina as anything but 'punays'. Similarly, Panurge can only understand female genitalia in so far as it is an object that exists to offer him cheap pleasures; an embodied, uncontrollable and sensing vagina is not something that 'Maistre mouche' can contain or grasp.

The episodes of reading explored in this chapter lie at the intersection between questions of gender, animality, and (perhaps) compassion, and place aurality at the core

of what it means to find common ground and understanding. Building on Hampton's discussion of charity, Katherine Ibbett has argued that the seventeenth century saw the privileging of reason as central to compassion, and that women's natural animality meant that they were pushed out of discourse surrounding fellow-feeling.[87] But Rabelais' text occupies an alternative time-space continuum in which the primal sounds of animal women have something to tell us, if we just take the time to listen to them. We can only wonder at the stories the gardener's daughter in La Fontaine's *conte* must have had up her sleeve regarding the deviant behaviour that rendered her garden only 'assez propre'. And we can only imagine what Sévigné's laugh sounded like on hearing Rabelais' text being read aloud to her. But I'd hazard a guess that 'Dame Mouche' let out more of a howl than a giggle.

In the next chapter my focus turns away from the construction of the woman reader as trickster over to the construction of the woman reader as adultress. I argue that this trope functioned not as a misogynistic cliché in the history of reading Rabelais in the beginning of the eighteenth century, but rather as a way of guiding women readers not only in their interaction with Rabelais' texts, but also in their interaction with other people.

[87] Katherine Ibbett, 'Introduction [Compassion's Gender]', *Compassion's Edge: Fellow-Feeling and its Limits in Early Modern France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), pp. 15-19.

Chapter Four. Journals: Listening to Rabelais' Silent Woman in Nicolas Lenglet-Dufresnoy's *Parallèle Burlesque* (1711)

'[T]he silence of women' weighs heavily on Rabelais' work[1]: so goes the generally-accepted critical argument concerning the supposedly absent voice of women in Rabelais' world. The issue of woman's voice (or lack thereof) is brought to the fore in one particular episode in Rabelais' *Tiers Livre:* Panurge's consultation with the doctor Rondibilis in Chapters 31-34 and in particular Epistemon's story of the Farce de la Femme Muette.

The central subject of the *Tiers Livre* is the question of whether Panurge should marry or not. In an attempt to answer his question, Panurge consults a range of characters, but it is Rondibilis who is often cited as the most misogynistic of them all. Towards the end of the consultation with Rondibilis, Epistemon offers a nostalgic account of a farce that he saw performed in Montpellier, which he describes as a 'morale comœdie de celluy qui avoit espousé une femme muette'. Epistemon's story in Rabelais' original text goes as follows:

> Je [Epistemon] ne vous [Carpalin, Hippothadée, Rondibilis et Panurge] avais oncques puis veu que joüastes à Montpellier avecques nos anticques amis Ant Saporta, Guy Bourguier, Balthazer Noyer, Tolet, Jean Quentin, François Robinet, Jean Perdrier, & François Rabelais, la morale comedie de celluy qui avoit espousé une femme muette. J'y estois, dist Epistemon.
>
> Le bon mary vouloit qu'elle parlast. *Elle parla par l'art* du Medecin & du Chirurgien, qui lui coupparent ung encyliglotte qu'elle avoit soubs *la langue*. La parole recouverte, *elle parla tant & tant*, que son mary retourna au Medecin pour remede de la faire taire. *Le Medecin* respondit en *son art* bien avoir remedes propres pour faire parler les femmes: n'en avoir pour les taire. Remede unicque etre surdité du mary contre cestuy *interminable parlement de femme*. Le paillard devint sourd, par ne sçay quels charmes qu'il feirent. Sa femme voyant qu'il estoit sourd devenu, qu'elle parloit en vain, de luy n'estoit entendue, devint enragée.

[1] Alice Fiola Berry, 'Written in the Mind with an Iron Pen': The failure of Misogynistic Cliché in the Rondibilis episode of Rabelais' *Tiers Livre* (31-34)', *French Studies*, Vol. 49, Issue 3 (1995), p. 277.

> Puys le Medecin demandant son salaire, le mary respondit qu'il estoit vraiment sourd: et qu'il n'entendoit sa demande. Le medecin luy jecta on dours ne sçay quelle pouldre, par vertu de laquelle il devint fol. Adoncques le fol mary et la femme enragée se raslierent ensemble et tant bastirent les Medecin et Chirurgien qu'ilz les laisserent à demy mors. Je ne ris onques tant que je feis à ce patelinage.
>
> - Retournons à nos moutons, dist Panurge. Vos paroles translatées de Barragouin en François veulent dire que je me marie hardiment, & que ne me soucie d'estre coquu. (460)

This episode has thus far been exclusively read from the perspective of a masculine writer, reader and overall subject for whom woman becomes the objectified 'other'.[2] Some critics, most notably Jean Céard, have regarded this episode as worthy of commentary only in so far as it provides us with biographical detail pertaining to Rabelais' time at Montpellier.[3] Others, such as E. Bruce Hayes, have studied this episode for what it can tell us about Rabelais' use of farce.[4] Others have given slightly more attention to issues of gender and language raised by the episode. Berry argues that this episode is best understood as a display of bad medicine, and constitutes a warning to the author himself, who she argues is implicated as a student, not to give into the temptation to hear women speak.[5] Similarly, David LaGuardia argues that the episode is simply another reinstatement of masculinist discourse and a prime example of homosocial and misogynistic laughter.[6] These critical readings vary in the parts of the episode that they privilege, but are both united in the view that it is deeply misogynistic in both content and form. Although this episode could be read as a further instance of Rabelais' homosocial paradigm, this is not the only available interpretation. In the aforementioned article of 1985, Zegura argued that Rabelais' narrator is in fact not writing to one of the 'vrays fidèles', but rather the woman reader who will ultimately be unfaithful to the text

2 LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity,* p. 164.
3 In his edition of Rabelais' *Tiers Livre*, Jean Céard remarks, '[o]n sait que les étudiants de Montpellier aimaient à donner des représentations théâtrales [...] Rabelais se plaît à mentionner les amis et camarades auxquels ce spectacle l'associa'. (Paris: Livre de Poche, 1995) p. 326, n. 7. See also Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes,* p. 1429.
4 E. Bruce Hayes, *Rabelais's Radical Farce: Late Medieval Comic Theater and Its Function in Rabelais* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), p. 1.
5 Berry, 'Wrriten in the Mind with an Iron Pen', p. 271.
6 LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity* (2008) pp. 163-165.

and read between the lines, rather than accept the narrative voice. Rabelais' imagined reader, she argues, is the woman reader who will cuckold the text by reading against it and doing precisely what she is told not to do. This chapter uses Chesney-Zegura's characterisation of Rabelais' imagined reader as a cuckolding woman in order to unlock a Rabelaisian paratext of 1711, the *Parallèle Burlesque d'Homère et de Rabelais*, which subsequently helps us to reread the episode of the 'femme muette'.[7]

The *Parallèle Burlesque,* written by Nicolas Lenglet-Dufresnoy, provides a retelling of Epistemon's farce of the mute woman and, in so doing, casts a different light on the relationship between Rabelais' narrator and the voice of woman in Rabelais' work. Despite claiming to censor Rabelais' text for a female audience, in order to protect women from being suspected as immodest and therefore less womanly, Dufresnoy in fact, I argue, invites women to read Rabelais' work in its entirety, and to talk to other women about it.

The *Parallèle Burlesque* was published as a series of instalments in the literary journal, *Le Mercure Galant*, bearing the full title, *Parallèle Burlesque, ou Dissertation ou Discours qu'on nommera comme on voudra, sur Homère et Rabelais* between May and October 1711. Although the identification of Rabelais with Homer was well-established by 1711[8], this text is the first known instance of Rabelais' corpus being read alongside that of Homer. In light of this, the critical attention Dufresnoy's text has thus far received has considered it exclusively from the perspective of the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes,[9] neglecting to acknowledge sufficiently the significance of the fact that the readership Dufresnoy imagines is composed of women.[10] Joan Dejean changed the

[7] Chesney-Zegura, 'Towards a Feminist Reading of Rabelais', p. 126.
[8] On this, see De Grève, *L'Interprétation de Rabelais au XVIe,* p. 24.
[9] The capitalized form 'Ancien' and 'Moderne' is used here to designate those who insist on the superiority of writers of a past age, the 'anciens' as opposed to contemporary writers, the 'modernes'.
[10] See François Moureau, 'Un parallèle d'Homère et de Rabelais à l'aube du XVIIIe siècle ou le brut et le poli' in *La Littérature et ses avatars*: discrédits, déformations et réhabilitations dans l'histoire de la littérature : actes des cinquièmes journées rémoises, 23-27 novembre 1989, ed. by Yvonne Bellenger (Paris : Aux Amateurs de Livres, 1991), pp. 151-163. Isidore Silver briefly mentions Dufresnoy's text in terms of

stakes of the critical debate surrounding the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes when she argued that it was another version of the long-standing Querelle des Femmes.[11] This argument has been challenged by critics such as Marc Fumaroli and Larry Norman who emphasise the importance of aesthetics in the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes at the expense of such socio-literary concerns.[12] But this tendency is coming under an increasing degree of scrutiny. Helena Taylor has refined DeJean's argument and argued that the quarrels were not only interlinked, but rather that the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes was often subsumed under the larger Querelle des Femmes, arguing that the former often provided a way in to debates about women and culture.[13] Questions surrounding women's role in shaping French culture and society has attracted a significant amount of attention over recent years.[14] But relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to the ways in which Rabelais' work added fuel to that fire.[15] Building on the work of Helena Taylor, this chapter argues that Dufresnoy's *Parallèle Burlesque* exploits the point of intersection between the two Querelles, and uses the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes as a guise in order to discuss issues at the heart of the Querelle des Femmes, both sociological and rhetorical. And it does this, first and foremost, by explicitly addressing itself to women readers and by presenting what he calls 'extraits' from Rabelais' texts with those readers in mind.

Homer's reception in his work of 1987, but does not pay any attention to the extracts included in the Parallèle, claiming outright that '[t]here is very little to be learned from Dufresny's few and frivolous comparisons.' See Isidore Silver, *Ronsard and the Hellenistic Renaissance in France* (Genève: Droz, 1987), p. 17. Marc André Bernier has also described it first and foremost as an 'apologie des Modernes', in *Parallèle des anciens et des modernes : rhétorique, histoire et esthétique au siècle des Lumières*, ed. by Marc André Bernier (Québec: Presses Universitaires de Laval, 2006), 'Introduction', p. 10.

[11] Joan Dejean, *Ancients against Moderns.*

[12] See Marc Fumaroli, 'Les Abeilles et les araignées', *La Querelles des anciens et des modernes XVII-XVIIIe siècles*, ed. by Anne-Marie Lecoq (Paris: Gallimard, 2001) pp. 7-218 and Larry Norman, *The Shock of the Ancient: Literature and History in Early Modern France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

[13] Helena Taylor, 'Ancients, Moderns, Gender: Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier's 'Le Parnasse Reconnaissant, ou, le Triomphe de Madame des-Houlières', *French Studie*s, Vol. 71, No.1 (November 2016), pp. 15-30.

[14] See, for example, Armel Dubois-Nayt, Nicole Dufournaud and Anne Paupert (eds.), Revisiter la "querelle des femmes" : Discours sur l'égalité/inégalité des sexes, de 1400 à 1600 (Saint Étienne: Publications de l'Université de Saint Étienne, 2013)

[15] Martha Houle, 'The Marriage Question or, the Querelle des hommes in Rabelais, Molière and Boileau', *Dalhousie French Studies*, Vol. 56, 'Le mariage sous l'Ancien Régime' (Fall 2001) pp. 46-54.

4.1. Rabelais in the *Mercure Galant*

4.1.1. The *Mercure Galant* in Context

The *Mercure Galant* was launched in January 1672. It was explicitly targeted towards women readers. In reference to the importance of women as both readers of, and contributors to, the *Mercure Galant*, Monique Vincent has argued that 'leur [les femmes] présence domine depuis le premier jusqu'au dernier numéro'. [16] In the words of Linda Timmermans, '*le Mercure* [...] se soit montré si favorable aux femmes, voire au féminisme, qu'il ait pu, par sa vulgarisation littéraire et scientifique, favoriser la culture des mondaines'.[17]

Edited by Jean Donneau de Visé between 1672 and 1710, and then by Lenglet Dufresnoy himself between 1710 and 1714, the *Mercure Galant* was one of the most widely circulated early French journals,[18] and its publication lay at the heart of the debates that followed the abbé de Lavau's reading of Charles Perrault's narrative poem, *Le Siècle de Louis le Grand* on January 27th 1687. This twenty-six-page poem, which was published shortly after its premiere in the Académie Française, asserted the superiority of modern over ancient times and is generally considered among critics to mark the start of the Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes in France. Perrault began *Le Siècle de Louis le Grand* by asserting France's monarchical and military superiority over those of ancient times and by claiming Louis XIV to be worthy of comparison with Augustus. Such appraisal of the King is reaffirmed towards the end of the poem when Perrault writes, 'Quel siècle pour ses rois, des hommes révéré/ Au siècle de Louis peut être préféré?'

[16] Monique Vincent, *Le Mercure galant: Presentation de la premiere revue féminine d'information et de culture* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2005), p. 10.
[17] Linda Timmermans, *L'Access des Femmes à la Culture sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Champion, 2005), p. 338.
[18] Christophe Schuwey has considered whether, given the interactive nature of the *Mercure Galant*, the description of it as a 'journal' might in fact be too reductive. See Christophe Schuwey, « Le *Mercure galant* : un recueil interactif », *Cahiers du dix-septième*, Vol. 16, Issue 1 (2015), pp. 48-62. For current purposes, however, the noun will suffice.

[19]Following his initial defence of modern over ancient times on the grounds of military and monarchical might, Perrault turned to the question of literature. In this sense, he was following the footsteps of Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin who, more than a decade earlier, had published his *Traité pour juger des poètes Grecs, Latins et Français* (1673), in which he asserted that Modern writers were more inventive than Ancient writers. This is all of course reminiscent of Joachim Du Bellay's *Défense et Illustration de la Langue Françoyse* of 1549. But the seventeenth-century reiteration was more highly charged with questions of gender.

By featuring Rabelais, the journal brought Rabelais in to debates about literature, culture and gender, and invited its predominantly women readers to make their own judgments.[20] It was interested in promoting women's learning, be it literary, philosophical or scientific,[21] and was one of the few journals at the time to support women in their learning of Latin.[22] As such, it located itself within the social circles that developed over the course of the seventeenth century and which were predominantly founded by, and made up of, women.[23] This chapter considers the ways in which Dufresnoy's retelling,

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[19] Charles Perrault, *Le Siècle de Louis le Grand*, in *La Querelles des anciens et des modernes XVII-XVIIIe siècles*, ed. Anne-Marie Lecoq (Paris: Gallimard, 2001), pp. 256-274, (p. 272).

[20] See Vincent, *Le Mercure galant*, pp. 57-60. In the words of Moureau, 'il plut à cette clientèle nouvelle de la littérature qu'avait crée le siècle: les dames, les mondains [...]', Moureau, 'Un parallèle d'Homère et de Rabelais', p. 8. See also Alain Génetiot, *Poétique du loisir mondain, de Voiture à La Fontaine* (Paris: Champion, 1997).

[21] In 1686, for example, Donneau de Visé encouraged his readers to read Fontenelle's *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes*, assuring them that '[leurs] amies entreront sans peine dans tout son raisonnement... La physique y est ramenée à la portée de toutes les dames'. (Janvier 1686).

[22] See Henri Bardon, *En lisant le Mercure galant: essai sur la culture latine en France au temps de Louis XIV* (Roma : Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1962) and Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets: Language, Gender, and Authority from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: OUP, 2005). See also Monique Vincent, 'Anciens et Modernes dans le *Mercure Galant*. Prémices et échos de la querelle dans la société mondaine (1677-1710)', *D'un Siécle a L'Autre: Anciens et Modernes*, ed. by Roger Duchêne (Marseille: C.M.R, 1986), pp. 181-192. Vincent argues in this article, both that the Mercure Galant was Moderne, but also that it tells us the extent to which 'la société mondaine est imbue de la culture antique' (p. 181).

[23] On the role of these salons in shaping culture and society at the time, see Dena Goodman, *The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1998); Carolyn Chappell Lougee, *Le Paradis des femmes: women, salons and social stratification in seventeenth-century France* (Princeton, 1976); Linda Timmermans, *L'Accès des Femmes à la Culture sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1993), pp. 152-176 and Faith Evelyn Beasley, *Salons, history, and the creation of seventeenth-century France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006). On the varying extents to which these salons focused on literary criticism, see Roger Picard, *Les Salons littéraires et la société française, 1610-1789* (New York: Brentano's, 1943), pp. 77-79.

and recontextualisation, of Rabelais' 'femme muette' helps us to reread the episode in Rabelais' original text, and reconfigure the relationship between women and voice in Rabelais' work more generally.

4.1.2. Dufresnoy's Woman Reader

In the first instalment of the *Parallèle Burlesque*, Dufresnoy alludes to the simultaneous appearance in 1711 of Anne Dacier's translation of Homer's *Iliad*,[24] and Le Duchat's edition of Rabelais' *Œuvres*,[25] as a justification for writing his text, which suggests that Dufresnoy is primarily concerned with locating Rabelais amidst the ongoing debates surrounding the respective value of ancient and modern culture. But it soon becomes clear that Dufresnoy's heralding of Dacier was less in praise of the quality of her translation and more in praise of her own gender-bending[26] in so far as Dacier, as both a woman but also an *Ancien*, had transgressed and diverged from the gendered aesthetic framework proposed by the editor of the journal, Donneau de Visé in 1678, and later restated by Boileau. In a particularly important issue of the journal published in January 1678, Donneau de Visé published a supplement entitled the 'éloge des femmes', in which he made the argument that women are the best judges of contemporary taste because their judgment is not clouded by prejudice and learning, constructing woman as the

[24] *L'Iliade d'Homère*, traduite en français, avec des remarques par Madame Dacier (Paris: Rigaud, 1711) 3 vols. The Modern, Houdar de la Motte, would later attack her translation, offering a more populist translation in verse in 1714, *L'Iliade, poème. Avec un Discours sur Homère*. Par Monsieur de La Motte, de l'Académie Française (Paris: Gr. Dupuis, 1714). For further information on Dacier, La Motte and the 'Querelle d'Homère', see Geneviève Cammagre , 'De l'Avenir des Anciens: La Polémique sur Homère entre Mme Dacier et Houdar de la Motte', *Littératures Classiques*, (2010) Issue 2., No.72, pp. 145-156.

[25] *Œuvres de Maître François Rabelais publiées sous le titre de Faits et Dits du Géant Gargantua et de son fils Pantagruel, avec la Prognostication Pantagruéline: Nouvelle édition où l'on a ajouté des remarques historiques, etc.*, éd. J. Le Duchat and B. de la Monnoye (Amsterdam: Des Bordes, 1711). Henceforth referred to as *Œuvres* (1711). The spelling in the quotations from this edition has been modernized but the original punctuation retained.

[26] He praises Dacier's achievement, stating that 'on ne peut trop donner de louanges à une Dame qui fait trop d'honneur à son sexe'. *PB,* p. 169. For a critical consideration of Dacier's reputation and status in the period, see Susanna van Dijk, 'Madame Dacier jugée par les journalistes: femme ou savante?', *Traces des femmes: présence féminine dans le journalisme français du xviiie siècle* (Amsterdam-Maarsen: APA Holland UP 1988), pp. 191–225 and Emmanuel Bury, 'Madame Dacier', in *Femmes savantes, savoir des femmes*, ed. by Colette Netival (Geneva: Droz, 1999), pp. 209–20. See also Lewis C. Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality and Gender in France: Nostalgic Utopias* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996) p. 93.

epitome of Modern. Perrault's fictive Abbé (partisan of the Modernes) would later echo this in the *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* (1688-1692), declaring that women are the best arbiters of taste: '[o]n sçait la justesse de leur discernement pour les choses fines & delicates. La sensibilité qu'elles ont pour ce qui est clair, vif, naturel & de bon sens, & le dégout subit qu'elles témoignent à l'abord de tout ce qui est obscure, languissant, contraint, et embarassé'.[27]

Accordingly, Dufresnoy alleges that he limits the amount of comments he provides on the works of Rabelais and Homer in the *Parallèle Burlesque* because,

> '[t]rop de réflexions de suite seroient une Dissertation ennuyeuse, surtout pour les Dames, dont j'ambitionne les suffrages [...] Elles [les Dames] ont *le goût plus délicat* & plus vrai que les hommes, dont la plupart se piquant de critique profonde, *sont toujours en garde contre ce qui plait*; qui ont pour ainsi dire émoussé leur goût naturel à force de science & de préjugés; en un mot, *qui jugent moins par ce qu'ils sentent, que par ce qu'ils sçavent.*[28]

In order to appeal to these women readers, Dufresnoy adapts Rabelais' text into a series of so-called 'extraits'.[29]

4.1.3. Conceptualising the 'extraits'

The description of the episodes as 'extraits' is a playful rhetorical move on Dufresnoy's part, because he does not simply extract Rabelais' text directly, but rather amends and recreates the text, offering a particular interpretation of the episode. The word 'extrait' is deliberately misleading because he does not just extract from Rabelais' text but rather adapts it. Dufresnoy claims to be providing his woman reader with a selection of 'extraits' from Rabelais' text that he claims she can cite in conversation

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[27] *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes* (1690) I, p. 31. On this, see Elizabeth Berg, 'Recognizing Differences: Perrault's Modernist Esthetic in the *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*', *Papers on French Seventeenth-Century Literature*, 18 (1983), pp. 138-145.
[28] *PB,* p. 189. (My emphasis).
[29] Ibid., p. 189.

without making herself vulnerable to criticism. In the August instalment of the *Parallèle Burlesque*, Dufresnoy explains why and how he has adapted Rabelais' text. He states

> [i]l est vrai que le Poete grec [Homer] est à present traduit en bon François[30] *mais Rabelais est encore du grec pour elles* [those who are, or who perform as, women]. Je vais donc tacher d'*éclaircir* et de *purifier* quelques morceaux de Rabelais, pour les rendre moins *ennuyeux* aux Dames [...] [31]

But what exactly does Dufresnoy mean when he says that Rabelais is 'encore du grec' for women? This phrase works on several levels. Firstly, Dufresnoy suggests that, in terms of language, Rabelais' text, written in sixteenth-century French is as difficult as Greek for modern women to understand, since the learning of Greek remained a predominantly male domain in the period.[32] In the extracts Dufresnoy includes he does indeed modernise a considerable number of words in order to render them more comprehensible for his eighteenth-century audience. Yet he is also making a point about the comprehensibility of Rabelais' work more generally. It is not so much that women simply do not understand Rabelais' language, but that they have difficulties understanding its substance.[33]

Secondly, Dufresnoy explains that he has modified Rabelais' text in order to make it less 'ennuyeux' for women. Dufresnoy goes on to say that he has 'seulement conservé le fond, en ajoutant & retranchant tout ce qu'[il a] cru pouvoir le rendre & plus agréable & plus intelligible aux Dames',[34] making it clear that he has altered Rabelais' text with the aim of achieving both intelligibility *and* agreeability. At the heart of Dufresnoy's modification is a concern to provide amusement; it is not only intelligibility that is important, but also entertainment value.

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[30] Dufresnoy here refers to Anne Dacier's 1711 translation of Homer that he cites at the beginning of the *Parallèle Burlesque* (p. 169).
[31] *PB,* p. 189. (My emphasis).
[32] Consider Virginia Woolf's essay, 'On Not Knowing Greek', in *The Common Reader* (London, 1925), pp. 39-59.
[33] Dufresnoy is here echoing the Medieval Latin phrase 'Graecum est; non potest legi' (it is Greek; it cannot be read) which medieval scribes used to write on Greek texts that they could not understand.
[34] *PB,* p. 190.

Thirdly, the vocabulary that Dufresnoy uses to describe what he has done to modify the text is particularly interesting. Dufresnoy uses a lexis of censorship here, evidenced by the words 'éclaircir' and 'purifier', similar to that which I considered in Chapters One and Three. Dufresnoy says that the extracts he provides will please those who have decided against reading Rabelais' work in order to preserve their modesty:

> ces extraits épurés feront plaisir à celles qui, curieuses de lire Rabelais, n'ont jamais voulu contenter leur *curiosité* aux dépens de leur *modestie* [...] En donnant ce qu'il y a de meilleur dans Rabelais, je fixerai la *curiosité* de celles qui, en faveur du bon, auroient risqué de lire le mauvais [...] s'il y en a quelqu'une qui n'ait pû resister à la *tentation* de tout lire, elle pourra citer Maître François à l'abri de mes extraits, *sans être soupçonnée d'avoir lu l'original*.[35]

In describing his 'extraits' as *épurés*, Dufresnoy is suggesting that he has removed impurities that were there in Rabelais' original. Dufresnoy's act of translation is about making Rabelais' text less 'ennuyeux' for women, but it is also about censoring his text so that it will not compromise women's modesty, or at least will not compromise their performance in society *as* modest, were they to cite it in conversation.

Conversation was an integral part of salon culture[36] and, as such, also constituted a central component of the *Mercure Galant*'s aesthetic model.[37] Although Dufresnoy does not use the word 'obscene', the word 'modestie' suggests that the accusation of obscenity is lurking in the background.[38] The use of the word 'curiosité' here is also particularly important. Neil Kenny has demonstrated the gendered nature of the term and has argued that the word 'curiosité' was almost always negative when uttered in

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[35] Ibid., pp. 189-190. (My emphasis).

[36] See, for example, Benedetta Craveri, *L'âge de la conversation* (2005); Delphine Denis, *La Muse galante: Poétique de la conversation dans l'œuvre de Madeleine de Scudéry* (Paris: Champion, 1997); Peter Burke, *The Art of Conversation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993) and Elizabeth C. Goldsmith, *Exclusive Conversations: The Art of Interaction in Seventeenth-Century France* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988).

[37] Vincent describes the art of conversation as 'le plus beau fleuron d'une réunion mondaine' and goes on to say of the *Mercure galant* that 'la pratique de la conversation constitue dans toute sa nouveauté le principe de base de l'elaboration de la revue'. Vincent, *Le Mercure galant*, pp. 346-347.

[38] In the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1694), 'Obscène' is defined in contrast to 'la pudeur', which is in turn defined in association with 'modestie'.

relation to women.[39] Kenny suggests that this condemnation of female curiosity stemmed both from the notion that there was a certain knowledge to which women ought not be privy and, to a certain degree, from a male anxiety about female sexuality and their supposed lack of chastity. Dufresnoy's use of the word 'fixer', indicates a certain sense of anxiety and uncertainty around the idea of women's curiosity, and the opposition he draws between 'curiosité' and 'modestie' makes clear the negative and sexual connotations of the word: the satisfaction of curiosity would jeopardise women's modesty which was to be preserved at all costs.[40] But this is not necessarily an exposition of Dufresnoy's own view. I argue that he is suggesting here that gender is a question of performance: women must present themselves as modest. And by implication, men who present themselves as modest must accept that they may be thought of as womanly.[41]

Dufresnoy is not saying that his 'women' readers should not read Rabelais' work in its original form. Rather, he is saying that those who are concerned with their modesty can read his version without jeopardising their modesty, and that those who may indeed already have read it would do well to cite his version so as to avoid being suspected of having read the original. Such suspicion, according to Dufresnoy, would be bad for two reasons: 1) they would be thought of as immodest and thus less womanly and 2) they would risk being considered a bore in salon conversation were they to cite the original Rabelais that Dufresnoy describes as 'ennuyeux'.[42]

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[39] See Neil Kenny, *The uses of curiosity in early modern France and Germany* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), pp. 389-424.

[40] Although the term 'modestie' could be used with regards to men, the definitions provided in the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* in 1694 and 1762 both provide examples which pertain to women and indicate that it is generally referred to as something that should be preserved: 'Il se prend aussi quelquefois pour Pudeur. *La modestie sied bien à une fille. ces paroles-là blessent la modestie, choquent la modestie* (1694); Il se prend aussi quelquefois pour Pudeur. *La modestie est un des grands ornemens d'une fille. Ces paroles-là blessent la modestie, choquent la* modestie'. (1762). This association of women and modesty or *pudeur* dates back to the sixteenth century. See Timmermans (1993) p. 47.

[41] See Seifert, *Manning the Margins* (2009), pp. 70-71.

[42] Here we find echoes of Madeleine de Scudéry's argument that the 'savante' must be knowledgeable and well-read, but must not show that she is thus. She must have a substantial amount of erudition but must also know how to hide it: 'encore que je voulusse que les femmes sussent plus de choses qu'elles ne savent pour l'ordinaire, je ne veux pourtant jamais qu'elles parlent en savantes'. Madeleine de Scudéry, *Artamène ou le Grand Cyrus* [1649-1653] (Paris: Courbé, 1972) 10 Vols., Vol. 10, p. 401.

That Dufresnoy in fact encourages women readers is further supported by the way in which the 'Femme Muette' is presented alongside the other 'extracted' episodes. The first 'extrait' appears with no introduction or title, and is taken from Gargantua's letter to Pantagruel (*Pantagruel*, 8) in which Gargantua imparts the merits of diplomacy onto his son.[43] The second is entitled 'Les Moutons de Dindenaut' and tells the tale of Panurge's interaction with the Sheep merchant who mocks Panurge for his attire and warns him of the dangers of cuckoldry.[44] Dufresnoy also includes an excerpt from Panurge's encounter with the Limousin scholar, which he entitles 'La Vraie Eloquence',[45] and concludes with a short scene from the storm sequence in the *Quart Livre*.[46]

Unlike the other episodes, Dufresnoy does not provide any introduction to, or commentary of, Rabelais' 'femme muette' but presents it as a kind of conversational digression, which alone makes it stand out from the other Rabelaisian episodes that Dufresnoy includes. Dufresnoy's *Femme Muette* appears in the August instalment of the journal.[47] Rabelais' original 'femme muette' appeared in a work addressed to Marguerite de Navarre[48] who, significantly for the purposes of this chapter, wrote one of the most conversational works of the sixteenth century, the *Heptameron*.[49] And the *Tiers Livre* itself is the most conversational of Rabelais' five books, being comprised almost exclusively of dialogues. Dufresnoy encourages his woman reader to engage in a conversation with him and, through him, with Rabelais.

Dufresnoy also encourages his reader to converse with Homer. He accompanies all of the other extracts with a Homeric comparison or counterpart: Gargantua's speech is compared to that of Nestor to Achilles, the instance of 'Les Moutons de Dindenaut' is

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[43] *PB,* pp. 185-186.
[44] Ibid., pp. 190-194.
[45] Ibid., pp. 207-208.
[46] Ibid., pp. 210-212.
[47] Ibid., pp. 200-202.
[48] See note 21.
[49] For a consideration of conversation in the work of Marguerite de Navarre, see Mathieu-Castellani, *La conversation conteuse: les nouvelles de Marguerite de Navarre* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992).

paralleled with 'Les Moutons de Cyclope', and the Limousin's speech is presented against Jupiter's speech to Neptune. The storm scene from Rabelais' *Quart Livre* is not accompanied by what Dufresnoy calls the 'tempête d'Homère', but Dufresnoy concludes the *Parallèlle* with a promise, albeit one that he does not keep, that it will appear in the 'prochaine Mercuriale'.[50] No further instalment of the *Parallèle Burlesque* was in fact produced. Whilst it is possible that Dufresnoy intended to do so, I suggest that the absence of the Homeric equivalent for his 'La Femme Muette' poses a deliberate tease to the reader, intended to encourage them to engage in literary activity, and find the comparative Homeric episode for themselves.[51]

4.2. Rabelaisian Affairs: 'comment les femmes ordinairement appetent choses defendues'

Read in the context of a journal aimed at women and grounded in the aesthetics of conversation, Dufresnoy's retelling of Rabelais' farce is of obvious import. Aside from the content, Dufresnoy's version of the episode, to which he gives the shortened, anecdotal title of 'La Femme Muette', putting the emphasis on the woman rather than the husband as appears in Epistemon's original title, also stands out from the other 'extracts' he includes because it is the only episode that he actually makes longer than the original text. He draws attention to the length of his tale by ironically reiterating the word 'bref' throughout his retelling. This word both re-emphasises the conversational element of the *Parallèle Burlesque* (one can imagine someone telling this story in a salon and reassuring any weary listeners, or amusing those who are predisposed to find Rabelais' work tedious, by suggesting repeatedly that they are nearing the end of the tale) and

[50] *PB*, p. 212.
[51] Active reading encouraged from the outset - Not only did De Visé praise women's judgment, explicitly associating the *Mercure Galant* with a female public, he invited that female public to write in to the journal and express their views on novels, including, most notably, *La Princesse de Clèves*, for which de Visé staged a publicity campaign. See Dejean, *Ancients and Moderns*, pp. 59-66.

ironically draws attention to the fact that he has actually made the text longer than its original:

> Dans un certain pays barbare et non policé en mœurs, y avoit aucuns maris bourus, & à chef mal timbré, ce que ne voyons mie parmi nous Parisiens, dont grande partie, ou sont pour le moins sont merveilleusement raisonnans & raisonnables: *aussi onque ne vit-on arriver à Paris grabuge ni malefice entre maris & femmes*.
>
> Or en ce païs là, tant different de celui-ci nôtre, y avoit un mari si pervers d'entendement, qu'ayant acquis en mariage une femme muette, *s'en ennuya*; & voulant soi guerir de cet ennui, & elle de sa muetterie, le bon & inconsideré mari voulut qu'elle parlât, & pour ce eut recours à l'art des Medecins & Chirurgiens, qui pour *la demuettir*, lui inciserent & bistouriserent un enciliglote adherant au filet; *bref* elle recouvra *santé de langue*, & icelle langue voulant recuperer l'oisiveté passée, *elle parla tant, tant & tant*, que c'étoit *benediction*: si ne laissa pourtant le mari bouru de se lasser de si *planteureuse parlerie*: il recourut au Medecin, le priant & conjurant, qu'autant il avoit mis de science en œuvre pour faire *caqueter* sa femme muette, autant il employat pour la faire taire. Alors le Medecin confessant que limité est sçavoir medicinal, lui dit qu'il avoit bien pouvoir de faire parler sa femme, mais que faudroit art bien plus puissant pour la faire taire. Ce non obstant le mari supplia, pressa, insista, persista, si que le *sçavantissime* docteur découvrit en un coin des registres de son cerveau remede unique & specifique contre icelui *interminable parlement de femme*, & ce remede c'est surdité du mari. Oui deà, fort bien, dit le mari; mais de ces deux maux, voyons quel sera le pire, ou entendre sa femme parler, ou ne rien entendre de tout. Le cas est suspensif, & pendant que le mari là-dessus en suspens étoit, Medecin d'opérer, Medicin de medicamenter par provision, sauf à consulter par après.
>
> *Bref*, par certain charme de sortilege medicinal le pauvre mari se trouva sourd, avant qu'il eut achevé de déliberer s'il consentiroit à surdité. 'y voilà donc, il s'y tient faute de mieux; & c'est comme il faudroit agir en operation de medecine. Qu'arriva-t'il? écoutez, & vous le sçaurez.
>
> Le Medecin à fin de besogne demandoit force argent, mais c'est à quoi ce mari ne peut entendre, car il est sourd comme voyez. Le Medecin pourtant par beaux signes & gestes significatifs, argent demandoit & redemandoit, jusqu'à s'irriter & colerier; mais en pareil cas, gestes ne sont entendus, à peine entend-on paroles bien articulées, ou écritures attestées, & réïtérées par Sergens intelligibles. Le Medecin donc se vit contraint de rendre l'oüie au sourd, afin qu'il entendit à payement, & le mari de rire, entendant qu'il entendoit; puis de pleurer par prévoyance de ce qu'il n'entendroit pas Dieu tonner, dès qu'il entendroit parler sa femme. Or *de tout ceci résulte, conclusion moralement morale, qui dit, qu'en cas de maladie & de femmes épousées, le mieux est de se tenir comme on est, de peur de pis*.[52]

[52] *PB*, p. 200-202. (My emphasis). In this instance, I have retained the eighteenth-century spelling, so as to make clear what exactly Dufresnoy changed and modernised in his retelling.

Dufresnoy begins by making the tale immediately more relevant to his Parisian audience. He locates the tale in a 'certain pays barbare & non policé en moeurs' that is distinguished from Paris; 'en ce païs là, tant different de celui-ci nôtre'. This 'pays barbare' could refer to Montpellier, in which the farce was allegedly performed, according to Rabelais' own telling of the tale. It is not so much the description of the place as 'barbare' which is interesting, but rather Dufresnoy's act of making the location explicitly distinct from Paris; '[...] aussi oncque ne vit-on arriver à Paris grabuge ni malefice entre maris & femmes'.[53] This ultimately serves to make his reader reflect on the extent to which it could in fact also be true in Paris and thus functions as a comic rhetorical act. By humorously suggesting that disputes would never occur among Parisian couples, Dufresnoy immediately brings questions of marriage and cuckoldry to the fore, clearly placing the extract within the context of the Querelle des femmes – this is in and of itself an interpretative act on the part of Dufresnoy.

In his version of the episode, which would later be reprinted over the course of the eighteenth century,[54] Dufresnoy embellishes Rabelais' language, which further gives the impression that he is increasing rather than decreasing the richness of the passage. The word 'demuettir',[55] for example does not appear in Rabelais' text, nor does the word 'sçavantissime' which is used to describe the doctor – these are neologisms invented on the part of Dufresnoy, but which are perhaps intended to present Rabelais as a Moderne 'génie de la langue'.[56] When Dufresnoy describes the way the husband begs the doctor

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53 Ibid., p. 200.

54 Dufresnoy's retelling of the 'Femme Muette' appeared in Honoré Lacombe de Prezel's 1789 *Dictionnaire* alongside several other anecdotes relating to women: 'Femme à confesse', 'Femme Prévoyante', 'Femme Prudente par réflexion'. See *Dictionnaire d'Anecdotes, De Traits Singuliers et Caractéristiques, Historiettes, Bons Mots, Naivetés, Saillies, Reparties Ingenieuses &c.* (Lille: Lehoucq, 1789) 2 Vols., Vol. 1, pp. 194-196.

55 *PB,* p. 201.

56 Isabelle Landy-Houillon has argued that neologisms can be understood as a point of consensus between the Ancients and Moderns, in so far as they both agreed on their importance, but for different reasons; the Ancients took neologisms as evidence of the power of ancient geniuses, whereas the Moderns took them to be indicative of a modern power and ability to progress. See Landy-Houillon, 'Archaismes et

for help he creates a sense of Rabelaisian verbal excess by including a proliferation of synonyms: 'le mari suplia, pressa, insista, persista'.[57] This could be understood as an instance of Dufresnoy adopting what he calls a 'stile Rabelaisien.'[58] I suggest, however, that these additions work on two levels: they provide Dufresnoy's salon-going readers with an excessive, frivolous language that would have been particularly pleasing to those so-called 'précieuses' who were impressed by, and wanted in turn to impress others by, the use of refined speech.[59] On another level, however, the additions also draw attention to the fact that it is the liberated woman who has caused this verbal excess in the husband. The liberation of the woman's tongue has triggered in the man a loss of verbal control, reflecting the husband's anxiety surrounding his ability to control his wife and his fear of her infidelity. Dufresnoy describes the woman's speech as 'benediction', indicating that, from the narrator's perspective, her newfound freedom of speech is a positive thing. Although her words are subsequently reduced to 'planteureuse parlerie' and associated with the verb 'caqueter', this is the husband's point of view rather than that of the narrator.[60]

What is particularly striking in Dufresnoy's retelling, is the change that he makes to the ending of Rabelais' original tale. We remember that at the end of the farce in Rabelais' original text, both husband and wife become enraged and conclude by beating the doctor and surgeon and leaving them for dead. In Dufresnoy's retelling, however, the

néologismes: la Réconciliation des Anciens et des Modernes?', *D'un siècle à l'autre: Anciens et Modernes, Actes du XVI colloque du C.M.R. 17* (Marseille, Janvier 1986) pp. 193-205.

[57] *PB,* p. 201.

[58] Ibid., p. 178.

[59] Both Delphine Denis and Myriam Dufour-Maître recognise some characteristics that could be understood as particular to the language spoken by women in salons, whilst also arguing that the distinction made between their language and that of others may have been more for the purposes of satirising the 'prétieux' than anything else. See Denis, 'Ce que parler 'prétieux veut dire: les enseignements d'une fiction linguistique au XVII siècle', *L'Information grammaticale*, No. 78, (June 1998), pp. 53-58 and Dufour-Maître, *Les Précieuses,* pp. 432-457.

[60] By the early eighteenth century, the term 'caquet' had long been associated with women. In 1610, the theologian Jean-Pierre Camus described the term as being 'grandement hypothequé aux femmes'. *Les Diversitez de Messire Jean Pierre Camus Evesque & Seigneur de Belley*, VI (Lyons: Jean Pillehotte, 1610) p. 293. In the early 1620s, a set of pamphlets was published under the title of 'Caquets'. These pamphlets have been subject to critical re-examination, See Emily Butterworth, *The Unbridled Tongue: Babble and Gossip in Renaissance France* (Oxford: OUP, 2016) esp. Chapter 8 'Women: Les Caquets de l'accouchée'.

doctor ends up restoring the husband's hearing so that he can receive payment, and condemns him to listen to his now liberated wife's endless conversation, making the husband the ultimate butt of the joke.[61] Dufresnoy concludes his tale by stating 'de tout ceci résulte, conclusion moralement morale, qui dit, qu'en cas de maladie & de femmes épousées, le mieux est de se tenir comme on est, de peur de pire'. But this conclusion is addressed to both men and women: men, make do with what you've got, because the alternative might be worse; women, speak, but do so in moderation. And Dufresnoy says that this is not only a moral tale but rather it is a tale that is 'moralement morale: this hyperbolic adverb serves to parody the very notion of a moralising tale. Dufresnoy is presenting women readers with a Rabelais that they can cite in the company of both women and men without compromising their social performance as women by being thought of as immodest.

But is there an element of irony at work here? Remember that Dufresnoy also says that he is addressing readers who may indeed have read Rabelais' text in its original; 's'il y en a quelqu'une qui n'ait pû resister à la tentation de tout lire, elle pourra citer Maître François à l'abri de mes extraits, sans être soupçonnée d'avoir lu l'original.[62] I suggest, then, that Dufresnoy presents 'La Femme Muette' as a parable for his imagined 'women' readers. Dufresnoy is not himself suggesting that women should not read Rabelais' text in its original, but is acknowledging that some people hold such a view. He is thus suggesting that those who want to present themselves as modest women should avoid citing the entirety in public so that they do not jeopardise their status as such. One might say that Dufresnoy himself is not concerned with women's modesty, but is aware that they themselves might be – or might at least be concerned about *other people's* concern with it. I suggest, however, that Dufresnoy is very much concerned with

[61] The farce was originally entitled *Celui qui espousa une femme muette*. See Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, p. 1429.
[62] *PB,* pp. 189-190.

women's modesty, precisely because he understands that if women are seen as immodest as a result of their non-conformist reading habits, the reaction of society may well force a retreat away from such literary pursuits. Dufresnoy is keen both to encourage and direct women's reading of Rabelais (and Homer) and to also provide these women with the tools to continue their reading under a safe, socially acceptable guise of modest womanly conformity. In highlighting the very fact that he has adapted Rabelais' original text for the *Mercure Galant,* Dufresnoy is in fact provoking the curiosity of his women readers, encouraging them to go ahead and find out what actually *is* in the original. Dufresnoy's use of censorship to justify what is there also, like it so often does, serves to advertise - and provoke the reader's curiosity for - what is *not* there.[63] Go, Dufresnoy tells his women readers, satisfy your curiosity by going to see the doctor (read Rabelais' work in its entirety), but just don't say too much about it (quote my version instead). Much like Sévigné's use of her son Charles as a way of interacting with Rabelais' work that I considered in the previous chapter, Dufresnoy's 'La Femme Muette' encourages the woman reader to have an affair with Rabelais' text but to not tell anyone that they have done so.[64]

By reiterating the idea that women ought not to read the whole of Rabelais' work, Dufresnoy is deliberately encouraging them to do so, presenting 'La Femme Muette' as a parable for his 'women' readers in order to guide both their reading of Rabelais and their conduct in society. Dufresnoy reappropriates Rabelais' work and imbues the episode with further meaning by placing it in the context of a journal aimed

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[63] The use of interdictions vis-à-vis women had been a topic of debate towards the end of the seventeenth century. Fénélon had warned against banning women from acquiring certain knowledge in his 1687 treatise *Sur l'éducation des filles*: 'plus on leur interdit les sciences, plus leur curiosité s'irrite par cette défense; cette passion se tourne toute du côté des objets les plus vains et les plus dangereux'. *Œuvres*, ed. by J. Le Brun (Paris: Gallimard, 1983-97), 2 Vols., Vol. 1, p. 1203.

[64] This rhetoric of secrecy and temptation with regards to women as consumers and in some instances transmitters of Rabelais' texts was not unprecedented. Consider 'la librairesse', for example, in Jacques Berthod's poem, *La Ville de Paris en vers burlesques* who tells the reader: 'J'ay tout Rabelais et l'Agrippa/C'est pour porter à la pochette/Mais je vous le vends en cachette'. (Paris: Loyson, 1652), p. 10.

at readers who are imagined as gossiping women. Dufresnoy's recontextualisation of Rabelais' silent woman helps us to reread the episode in Rabelais' original text through the lens of an imagined woman reader, and to read it not as a warning to men that they should not unlock woman's voices, but rather as a parable to guide the woman reader in her reading of Rabelais' work.

4.3. The Speaking Woman

4.3.1. Unmuting the woman's voice

This feminist reading of Dufresnoy's retelling of Rabelais' text not only challenges the dominant critical narrative of Rabelais' eighteenth-century reception, but also allows us to return to Rabelais' original episode with fresh critical eyes. Although some critics such as Huchon and Gray have argued that the Querelle des femmes was purely a question of rhetoric for Rabelais, it is possible to understand the relationship between gender and speech in Rabelais' text in a more substantive way.[65] The critical consensus is that Rabelais' farce 'de celluy qui avoit espousé une femme muette' is an example of the author at his most misogynistic. Alice Fiola Berry argues that the episode constitutes a 'warning to men', and specifically to Rabelais himself, not to unlock women's speech.[66] She argues that the fact that Rabelais inscribes himself into the performance of the farce as a student of medicine suggests that the author himself has something to learn from this 'moral comœdie'.[67] But this reading is ultimately premised on a slightly different 'l'œuvre et l'homme' conflation than the one I considered in Chapter Two. Berry is assuming that François Rabelais the student who starred in the farce is the same figure as François Rabelais the author of the book who derived a particular conclusion from the

[65] Floyd Gray, Gender, *Rhetoric and Print Culture in French Renaissance Writing* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), p. 29 and Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, pp. 1341-1356.
[66] See note 1.
[67] On this, see V.L Saulnier, 'Médecins de Montpellier au temps de Rabelais', *BHR* (1957) Vol. 19, pp. 425-479.

farce he wrote himself into: namely, that men should not give in to the temptation to hear women speak.[68] But insights gleaned from Dufresnoy's retelling of the tale can be applied here, to offer a different interpretation of the episode in which Rabelais' narrator is not reinstating but rather critiquing the patriarchal structures that characterise the relationship between Rondibilis, Panurge and the trope of the mute woman.

The woman speaks, as the extract says, by the doctor's art – 'elle parla par l'art du Medecin & du Chirgurgien'. The use of rhyme in this sentence draws a connection between the doctor's art and the power of speech – the doctor's actions, with the help of the surgeon, have resulted in the woman's ability to talk. But not only has the doctor given her the power to talk, but he has also given her something to talk about: the subsequent use of the same word, rhyme and rhythm in the next line, 'elle parla tant & tant' serves to connect the giving of the art with the content of the words that are reiterated. The internal half rhyme of 'tant' with 'langue' also draws those two words together, associating the notion of excess with the action of the tongue. As well as expressing the idea of verbal excess, this notion of continual movement of the tongue also has obvious sexual connotations, reminiscent of the gesture used to symbolise cunnilingus.[69] Not to mention the parallels between the movement of a woman's upper and lower lips that were prevalent in the early modern discourse.[70] The doctor uses his 'art' to make the woman speak, and the repetitive movement she enacts with the tongue imitates the sex act that causes the husband to doubt his wife's fidelity: the wife, or reader, is having an affair with Rabelais' text.

It is not only the fact that the woman is talking 'tant & tant' that drives the husband to seek a remedy – it is also the fact that she is talking about what the doctor

[68] See François Rigolot, 'The Renaissance Crisis of Exemplarity', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 59, Number 4 (1998) pp. 557-563.
[69] This sexual wordplay is a further challenge to LaGuardia's claim that Rabelais lacked knowledge of the clitoris. *Intertextual Masculinity* (2008) p. 131.
[70] On this, see Alison Klairmont-Lingo, 'The Fate of Popular Terms for Female Anatomy in the Age of Print', *French Historical Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Summer, 1999), pp. 335-349 (p. 339).

has done for her; she is talking about Rabelais' work. And in this passage, the intimate act of restoring the tongue both connotes and constitutes a sexual act. It is not so much that the husband is desperate for his wife to stop talking, but rather that he is desperate for her to stop talking about the doctor and what he did to her. And the husband's reaction stems not so much from a frustration at the noise, but rather from a fear of having been made a cuckold by the doctor who has interacted physically with his wife - it is a manifestation of his anxiety surrounding his wife's sexuality and lack of chastity that is bound up with the condemnation of female curiosity that I mentioned earlier.[71] The doctor is able to make the woman speak but is unable to make her stop – he has caused in her a sexualised verbal excess that cannot be contained; an 'interminable parlement de femme'. The woman, then, becomes akin to Rabelais' excessive language; her active, talking *body* becomes to some degree, emblematic of Rabelais' figurative *body of work* and is made so by the sexually-charged act of invasion committed by the doctor, Rabelais. LaGuardia argues that it is impossible to read the woman as anything but abused, because the episode simply reproduces another masculinist stereotype: that women talk too much and that their talking drives men mad. This would be persuasive were it not for the fact that the final scene was only added in 1552, as a replacement for the original, in which the farce ended with the woman's rage, not that of the husband.[72] LaGuardia has argued that the *Tiers Livre* as a whole, and the Rabelaisian language found within it, can be read as a signifier of the masculine body and being that Rabelais' texts are trying to question and redefine.[73] The reading of the 'femme muette' episode I propose here, however, complicates this narrative, because it demonstrates that it is not only the masculine body that is questioned and redefined in Rabelais' text, but the

[71] See note 39.
[72] See Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, p. 1429.
[73] 'the extraordinary excess of the Rabelaisian text [...] is a signifier both of the linguistic and semantic procedures of Rabelais' works, and of the kind of masculinity that is peculiar to it', LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity,* p. 112.

feminine body too, which is given the power of speech that is akin to the verbal excesses of Rabelais' own writing.

Rabelais is here drawing attention to the fact that men bring cuckoldry upon themselves, which forms part of Rondibilis' overall remedy to cuckoldry, which is to be indifferent to it. But the point here is not necessarily that the husband wanted the women to speak, but rather that he did not know how to make her speak. Panurge interprets the tale as an indication that he should marry courageously and not worry about being cuckolded. But the indications that the narrator provides in his commentary on Rondibilis' speech suggest that the true remedy is to know how to give voice, i.e. sexual gratification, to your wife in the first instance, so that she will not need to go elsewhere. The result is not, however, the silencing of woman, but rather the sound of her aroused laughter in the background. In his analysis of the farce, LaGuardia argues that it is a reversal of Jacques de Vitry's exemplum in which a husband cuts off his wife's tongue because she talks too much.[74] But there is another possible intertext here that LaGuardia fails to mention, and which recurs in Rabelais' corpus: the myth of Philomela, a woman raped and then mutilated by her rapist in order to prevent her from speaking. The reversal of the myth in Rabelais' text lends further support to the reading of the episode proposed here: Rabelais is not muting women, but encouraging them to talk.

4.3.2. Freeing Philomela

In Ovid's original, Tereus removes Philomela's tongue so that she cannot tell people about the sexual act he inflicted upon her. The gods subsequently transform her into a nightingale giving her the power of song. In Rabelais' 'femme muette', however, the doctor's intrusion into the woman's mouth, unlike Tereus' intrusion into Philomela's body, is both that which enables her to talk and, more importantly, the thing that gives

[74] LaGuardia, *Intertextual Masculinity*, p. 164.

her something to talk about. And this time it is not a negative but rather a positive thing, as Dufresnoy suggested in his use of the word 'bénédiction'. Philomela, raped by her brother in law, Tereus, and mutilated in order to be silenced and incapable of revealing his crimes, is the figure who unites all the moments that make up the Rondibilis episode.[75] The doctor, Rabelais, restores the woman's speech and inverts the myth of Philomela. Instead of cutting off her tongue, he frees it by cutting off the thread that was trapping it to the roof of the mouth. But the Philomela that looms in the background of the episode is not the mutilated Philomela, but rather the Philomela metamorphosised into a nightingale who is constantly speaking back to a world that tried to shut her off. Despite this now obvious intertext, the farce of the 'femme muette', like the rest of the Rondibilis episode, has not yet been considered in relation to the myth of Philomela, whose significance in the early modern world, and analogous relationship to the writing of feminist literary history has attracted the attention of literary scholars.[76] The explicit reference made to her story in the *Quart Livre* has been the subject of some critical attention. At the beginning of the *Quart Livre*, Pantagruel and his companions arrive on the island of Medamothi. The characters come across a street fair where each of them buys a painting. The painting that Panurge selects depicts the tapestry that Philomela made in an attempt to tell her sister Procne what Tereus had done to her:

> Panurge achapta un grand tableau painct et transsumpt de l'ouvrage jadis faict à l'aiguille par Philomela exposante et representante à sa soeur Progné, comment son beaufrere Tereus l'avoit depucellée: et sa langue coupée, affin que tel crime ne decelast. Je vous jure par le manche de ce fallot, que c'estoit une paincture gualante et mirifique. Ne pensez, je vous prie que ce feust le protraict d'un homme couplé sus une fille. Cela est trop sot, et trop lourd. La paincture estoit

[75] Ovid, *Metamorphoses,* Book VI, 412-674, trans. Frank Justus Miller, ed. by G. P. Gould (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014) 2 Vols., Vol. 1, pp. 316-389.
[76] Consider, for example, Victoria Blud, *The Unspeakable: Gender and Sexuality in Medieval Literature* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2017) and Nancy A. Jones, 'The Daughter's Text and the Thread of Lineage in the Old French *Philomena*', *Representing Rape in Medieval and Early Modern Literature*, ed. by C. Rose. E. Robertson, (New York: Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 161-88.

> bien aultre, et plus intelligible. Vous la pourrez veoir en Theleme à main guausche entrans en la haulte guallerie. (541)

In his analysis of this particular allusion to Philomela, which he describes as the 'negative counterpart of masculine heroism', Terence Cave draws attention to the intervention of the narrator as character,[77] which he argues is evident in the narrator's reflexion on the quality of the tapestry; '[j]e vous jure, par la manche de ce fallot, que c'estoit une paincture gualante et mirificque'.[78] Cave goes on to argue that the complicity that one might assume between narrator-spectator and the male protagonist of the myth would be 'hard to justify' given the explicit content of the myth and the way in which the narrator not only describes the subject but also adds commentary. But Cave does not go on to explore the full implications of this. Nor does he ascribe any significance to the fact that the painting is said to be on display in the walls of Thélème. Cave also somewhat downplays the significance of the narrator-spectator's reaction to the painting. The Rabelaisian narrator reassures his reader that the painting does not depict a man mounting Philomela, because that would be 'trop sot et trop lourd'. The narrator does not, however, explicitly tell us what is on the painting, but rather gives us two interpretative keys: 'gualante et mirificque' and 'bien plus intelligible et autre'. In his analysis of this episode, Wes Williams argues that both of these pairs constitute a way of reading of the painting and of Rabelais' work in general, that conceives of it both as intelligible and inexplicable at the same time.[79] Cave echoes this by drawing a persuasive

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[77] Cave argues that the interventions of narrator as character often occur at moments of intensity. On this, see André Tournon, *'En sens agile': les acrobaties de l'esprit selon Rabelais* (Paris: Champion, 1995) p. 9 and Terence Cave, *Pré-histoires: textes troublés au seuil de la modernité* (Genève : Droz, 1999), 2 Vols., Vol. 1, pp. 144-145.

[78] See Terence Cave, '"Tua facta loquar": Philomela's Afterlives in Rabelais, Ronsard and Shakespeare', in *Retrospectives: essays in literature, poetics and cultural history*, eds. Neil Kenny and Wes Williams (London: Legenda, 2009) pp. 76-86 (esp. pp. 77-79).

[79] 'If Rabelais' fiction does represent historical events, places, or coordinates [...] then it is important to see that it does so in a manner analogous to that of a copy of Philomela's tapestry: a picture of a tapestry woven by one whose ability to speak directly had been taken from her in the course of a journey'. Wes Williams, *Pilgrimage and Narrative in the French Renaissance: 'The Undiscovered Country'* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), p. 294.

analogy between Philomela's story and the otherness of history, but in so doing he ultimately strips her of her gender: '[she] becomes the representation not only of an alien suffering that seeks to make itself intelligible, but also of the profound otherness of history itself'.[80]

It is important, however, not to lose sight of the gendered dimension to Philomela's story. The voice that was lost was, after all, was *her* voice.[81] The picture of Philomela that Panurge buys at the market stall of Medamothi is not analogous to history in general, but rather to women's history. And, as far as this thesis is concerned, to the history of women in the story of Rabelais' reception. From this perspective, then, it is all the more significant that the painting is said to be on display in the abbey de Thélème with its inclusion of women, which, as Zegura suggests, can be read as a key to conceptualising Rabelais' imagined woman reader and as a glimpse into the waiting room. The allusion to Thélème here, then, combined with the narrator-spectator's lack of complicity with Tereus, constitutes a further indication that it is possible to read the narrator as complicit with the female protagonist of the myth, and is conceivably speaking to a woman reader for whom Philomela's own story would be 'plus intelligible',[82] just as Procne is able to read Philomela's tapestry.

This is an instance in Rabelais' text in which women are figured as subjects that both compose and 'read' visual images as a means of coded communication.[83] Rabelais stages an instance of community and communication between women that is unintelligible to the group of men. Procne exists here as a model for reading silence. Although stripped of her tongue, Philomela is able to speak to her sister and her sister is

[80] Cave, 'Tua facta loquar', p. 84.
[81] 'It comes down to how, and by whom, the story which is overheard, or passed over, but mentioned in passing, comes to be told'. Williams, *Pilgrimage and Narrative*, p. 294.
[82] We are reminded here of Dufresnoy's use of the word when he claims to have made Rabelais' work 'plus intelligible aux Dames'. *PB*, p. 190.
[83] "The cloth finds its way to Procne who 'reads' her sisters woes". Belinda Jack, The Woman Reader (London: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 38.

able to *bien entendre* her silence. As Donna Perry argues, Procne embodies the task of the feminist literary critic, whose political agenda, in her words,

> originates in the critics recognition that women, whatever their race or color, experience the world differently from men, that their status outside the dominant white male middle-class culture allows (or even compels) them to critique it...The feminist literary critic is committed to changing the world by challenging patriarchal assumptions, judgments, and values, particularly as they affect women.[84]

In placing Rabelais' 'femme muette' within the context of a journal aimed at women readers, and by presenting it as a snippet that can be cited in conversation, Dufresnoy draws our attention to the possibility of reading Rabelais' episode of 'La Femme Muette' episode not as an instance of silencing women, but rather as allowing their voices to be heard.

In this chapter I have explored the extent to which context and perspective shapes meaning. I have argued that Dufresnoy's *Parallèle Burlesque d'Homère et de Rabelais* is not so much about the quarrel between Ancients and Moderns but the Querelle des Femmes. As such, I have argued that this text places Rabelais within early modern debates surrounding women's access to knowledge and culture. I have used Zegura's notion of the woman reader as a cuckolding reader to unlock Dufresnoy's playful rhetorical game of temptation with the woman reader of the Mercure Galant. I concluded this chapter with a rereading of Rabelais' text through the lens of the myth of Philomela, and argued that woman in Rabelais' work are not necessarily as silent as they might first appear. The next chapter takes a step away from sound over to sight by turning to the illustrated edition of 1741. In this fifth and final chapter I argue that the move to categorise and thus canonise Rabelais' work as a novel that was open to women readers outside of the text resulted in the closing up of women within the text.

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[84] Donna Perry, 'Procne's song: The Task of Feminist Literary Criticism', *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, ed. by Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), pp. 293-309, (p. 293).

Chapter Five.

Rabelais, *romancier*? Mothers, Midwives and Illustrations (1741-1776)

Rabelais' work enacts a 'murder of the mother', declared Carla Freccero in *Father Figures*.[1] Freccero's focus on filial lineage and paternity as a way of understanding the Rabelaisian narrative consolidated what I describe as a commiseratory farewell to the mother in Rabelais scholarship. This critical attention was primarily, though not exclusively, focused on Gargantua's 'monstrous birth'[2] from out of his mother's ear following her excessive consumption of tripe. It is this episode that will be the central subject of this final chapter. Following what we might call Bakhtin's fetishization of the mother in Rabelais as a 'vessel of conception', critics of Rabelais' work have dealt with Rabelais' mothers in a range of ways.[3] Freccero's precursor, Margaret Ferguson, first argued that '[a]though *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* thematize birth, it is a birth that 'kills' the mother and privileges the father as origin'.[4] Jefferson Humphries responded to this by reinstating the status of the Rabelaisian mother as an alternative 'silène'; a small static box waiting to be awakened by masculine language.[5] This approach then led critics to see the treatment of mothers in the text as a further instance of Rabelais' instrumentalisation

[1] Carla Freccero, *Father Figures: geneaogy and narrative structure in Rabelais* (Ithica; London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. xi.
[2] Wes Williams, *Monsters and their meanings in early modern culture: mighty magic* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), p. 46.
[3] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, pp. 240-241.
[4] Margaret Ferguson, *Trials of Desire: Renaissance Defenses of Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 132.
[5] Jefferson Humphries, 'The Rabelaisian Matrice', *RR*, May 1 (1985) Vol. 76, No. 3, pp. 257-270.

of women.[6] This critical stance culminated in Stephen Greenblatt's characterisation of the episode recounting Gargamelle's labour and Gargantua's birth as misogynistic.[7]

In Molière's *l'Ecole des femmes*, Agnès confesses her belief that women give birth to children from out of their ears.[8] This intertextual reference on the part of Molière indicates that this episode of Rabelais' text had attracted the attention of early modern readers. It is no surprise, then, that this episode was one of twelve to be illustrated in the prestigious, but thus far critically neglected, 1741 edition of Rabelais' work. I use the term 'illustration' in this chapter, as this term is frequently adopted in secondary literature on the topic, but it is important to note that the term did not gain its current meaning until the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. What we now commonly refer to as an 'illustration' would have been referred to during the period as 'estampe', 'gravure' or, as is the case in the edition of 1741, 'taille-douce'.[9]

This chapter begins by locating the images in the context of eighteenth-century book illustration more generally. In contrast to the previous four, this chapter offers a reading of Rabelais' primary text before going on to consider an early modern instance of re-appropriation. I do this here because the illustration of Gargamelle's labour functions differently as an example of how adaptations and re-appropriations of Rabelais' text can be understood to close women out and shut the text down, rather than open those

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[6] See Charpentier, 'Un Royaume qui perdure sans femmes', p. 197 and Diane Desrosiers Bonin, '[la mère] est liée aux mouvements fondamentaux de la vie et de la mort, l'inscription textuelles de ces deux figures féminines se révèle indispensable à la mise en marche du récit', 'Rabelais et la nature féminine', *Actes des conférences du Cycle "Rabelais et la nature"* (Genève: Droz, 1996), pp. 31-47, (p. 36).

[7] Stephen Greenblatt, *«Filthy Rites», Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 170.

[8] Arnolphe: 'Elle était fort en peine, et me vint demander/Avec une innocence à nulle autre pareille/ Si les enfants qu'on fait se faisaient par l'oreille', *l'Ecole des femmes,* Act One, Scene one (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), p. 47.

[9] See Benoît Tane, 'Le livre illustré au XVIIIe siècle', *L'ésthétique du livre* (eds.) Alain Milon and Marc Perelman (Pressses Universitaires de Paris Ouest, 2010), pp. 315-331. 'Illustration: s. f. v. Action d'illustrer, éclaircissement. Mot emprunté du Latin, & qui n'a guere d'usage que dans quelques titres de Livres. *Illustrations des Gaules par Jean le Maire* (Dictionnaire de l'Académie française, 1st edition, 1694); 'Illustration: s.f. Ce mot n'est guère d'usage qu'en parlant des marques d'honneur dont une famille est illustrée. *C'est une famille noble & ancienne, mais sans illustration, où il n'y a eu aucune illustration' (Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 4th edition, 1762*)*; 'Illustration: Il se dit encore des Figures et dessins composés pour être intercalés dans le texte d'un livre ou d'un journal' (*Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, 8th edition, 1932-35).

women's voices up and make them more visible. In visualising Rabelais' women, the illustration paradoxically both frames and tames them. And this act of domestication is inextricably linked to the generic classification that the illustrations served to bestow upon Rabelais' text.

5.1. Genre and Gender

5.1.1. Visualising Rabelais' Text through Time

It is well acknowledged by critics that there is a long history of visual material that derives from Rabelais' texts. Rabelais' work has had close links with illustration since its initial sixteenth-century publication. The architect, Philibert de Lorme, for example, is said to have sketched the Abbey of Thélème that Rabelais describes towards the end of *Gargantua*.[10] 1565 saw the appearance of the *Songes drolatiques de Pantagruel*.[11] These 120 woodcuts were initially attributed to Rabelais in the original edition of 1565 right up until the edition of 1797, but since the analysis of Paul Pierre Plan, it has been widely accepted that these images were not by Rabelais himself.[12] Whilst earlier editions included woodcuts and other engravingswhich bore occasionally productive relationships to the text, the illustrations of 1741 were the first to depict episodes drawn directly from Rabelais *Chroniques*. Despite Bernard's assertions to the contrary - 'ni l'impression, ni les figures de M. du Bourg, quoi que très bien executées, ni les belles vignettes du fameux Picart ne sont pas le principal avantage de cette nouvelle edition', it is in fact the

[10] See Margaret Harp, 'Illustrations', *The Rabelais Encyclopoedia,* p. 126.
[11] There is much to be said about gender in the *Songes drolatiques*. Jennifer Spinks has begun this work in 'Codpieces and potbellies in the *Songes drolatiques*: satirizing masculine self-control in early modern France and Germany', in *Governing masculinities in the early modern period: regulating selves and others*, ed. by Susan Broomhall and Jacqueline Van Gent (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 85-112.
[12] *Les Songes Drolatiques de Pantagruel, de l'invention de M. François Rabelais et dernier œuvre d'icelui pour la récréation des bons esprits* (Paris: chez Sallior, 1797). On this, see Paul Pierre Plan, *Bibliographie Rabelaisienne* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1965), pp. 240-245.

illustrations that really distinguish the 1741 edition from the other editions produced in the period.[13]

These illustrations have not yet been the subject of any critical study. The remarks offered by Didot l'ainé in the introduction to his 1823 edition of Rabelais' work provide the only real exception to this. He declares, for example, that the illustrations in the 1741 edition were 'sans doute d'un assez beau burin, mais d'une conception froide et peu ingénieuse'.[14] This is in stark contrast to the generous attention that has been paid to Doré's nineteenth-century illustrations.[15] The lack of attention given to the edition of 1741 is all the more surprising, given the considerable amount of recent and continued critical interest in eighteenth-century illustrations. The nature of this attention has varied considerably: some scholars have focused on the production of engravings;[16] others have considered the practices of collecting illustrated books;[17] some critics have tracked the illustration of a particular text or corpus through time;[18] whereas other scholars have considered the ways in which the act of reading and particular motifs were visualised in the period.[19] From a broader methodological perspective, it is also clear that recent years have witnessed a critical redirection away from Gérard Genette's treatment of illustrations. Genette provides an account of illustrations only as iconic supplements that reinforce a pre-existing textual message, whereas recent studies have shown that the

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13 *Œuvres* (1741), 'Avertissement', non paginated.
14 *Œuvres de Rabelais, edition variorum* (Paris: Dalibon-Imprimerie de Didot l'ainé, 1823), p. 16.
15 See for example, the 'Introduction' by Stanley Applebaum in his collection, *Doré's illustrations for Rabelais: a selection of 252 illustrations* (New York : Dover Publications, 1978) and *Fantasy and Faith: The Art of Gustave Doré*, ed. by Eric Zafran, Robert Rosenblum and Lisa Small (London: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 94.
16 See, for example, Christophe Martin, *Dangereux Suppléments: L'Illustration du roman en France au dix-huitième siècle* (Paris: Peeters, 2005).
17 Consider Michel Marion, 'Présence du livre illustré dans les bibliothèques privées à Paris (1750-1759)', in *L'Illustration du Livre en France et en Pologne* (Université de Varsovie, 1982).
18 See, for example, Marine Ganofsky, 'Illustrating Narrative Seduction: The Example of Choderlos de Laclos's *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* in the Illustrated Edition of 1796,' *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Vol. 38, No.1 (2015) and Jonathan Mallinson, 'Re-presentant les *Lettres d'une Peruvienne* en 1752: illustration et illusion', *Eighteenth- Century Fiction* (2003), 15, pp. 227-239.
19 See, for example, Nathalie Ferrand, *Livres vus, livres lus : une traversée du roman illustré des Lumières* (Oxford : Voltaire Foundation, 2009) and Jonathan Hensher, 'Images de Marque? Les Illustrations du Cabinet des fées au XVIII et XIX siecles', *Revue Electronique de Litterature Francaise* (2010) Vol. 4, Issue 2, pp. 109-141.

relationship between text and image is much more nuanced than Genette's analysis allows for.[20] Building on this, the focus of this chapter is on the ways in which illustrations not only decorate but also interpret (and censor) the texts that they accompany.[21]

It is difficult to deduce exactly how many illustrations were produced specifically for the 1741 edition, or indeed the ordering of these illustrations, given that the production of engravings in the eighteenth century was a separate endeavour from the production of the book as a whole and they were often distributed separately and added and removed by a given editor.[22] Evidence suggests, however, that there were twelve in circulation over the course of the eighteenth century.[23] Of these twelve, the illustration of Gargantua's birth particularly stands out because it is the only illustration that puts women at the forefront of the scene. This is all the more interesting given that, as a whole, the illustrations also impose a generic classification upon Rabelais' work that is inextricably linked to gender.

5.1.2. Rabelais and the 'roman'

Of the twelve illustrations, eight of them pertain to *Gargantua* and *Pantagruel*. The other four pertain to Books III, IV and V. It is difficult to determine who chose the

[20] Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987). See, for example, Hester Lees-Jeffries, 'Pictures, places and spaces: Sidney, Wroth, Wilton House, and the Songe de Poliphilie', *Renaissance paratexts*, eds. Helen Smith and Louise Wilson (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), pp. 185-204 (p. 186).
[21] On illustration as interpretation, see Catriona Seth, 'Picturing Les Liaisons Dangereuses: Eighteenth-Century Illustrations of Laclos' Novel', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies,* Vol. 39 No. 4 (2016) pp. 579-597; Craig Kallendorf, 'The Aeneid Transformed: Illustration as Interpretation from the Renaissance to the Present', *Poets and Critics Read Vergil* (Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 121-148 and Rachel Schmidtt, 'Book Illustration as Critical Interpretation of the Text', *Critical Images: The Canonization of Don Quixote through Illustrated Editions of the Eighteenth Century* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1999), pp. 3-27.
[22] See Anthony Griffiths, *Prints for books* (London: British Library, 2004), p. 8 and p. 167.
[23] The bibliophile J Lewine also says that this edition includes 12 plates after DuBourg by Bernaerts, Folkema and Tanjé'. See J. Lewine, *Bibliography of Eighteenth Century Art and Illustrated Bo*oks, *Being a Guide to Collectors of Illustrated Works in English and French of the Period* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & co., 1898), pp. 438-440, (p. 439).

episodes that were to be illustrated. Bernard does not say anything about the choice of episodes in the preface, nor does he say who made the selection. It is likely that it was Bernard himself, considering the way in which he parades the superiority of the 1741 edition over the illustrations of De Hooghe, but it is far from certain. Nicholas Cronk has explored the extent to which eighteenth-century authors were involved in selecting and producing the illustrations for their own editions[24], but no equivalent study exists which examines agency in the selection and production of eighteenth-century illustrations of sixteenth-century texts. Christophe Martin, however, has convincingly argued that the 'imprimeur-libraire' was generally responsible for choosing the artist and the episodes to be illustrated. This offers further support to my suggestion that Bernard was the one who made the selection. Carl Goldstein describes the illustrated book as 'the most costly and risky of print enterprises'.[25] With this in mind, it is not surprising that only twelve chapters out of the 257 chapters in Rabelais' chronicles were illustrated. But the choice of episodes selected for illustration is far from arbitrary and is, as Schmidt argues in the case of eighteenth-century illustrations of *Don Quixote*, 'intimately linked to different interpretative approaches to the text'.[26]

The reader-viewer of the 1741 edition is presented, for example, with scenes depicting encounters with enemies, such as the battle against the Picrocholean army in Chapter 15 of *Gargantua* (Fig. 4) and heroic victories, epitomised in the illustration of Pantagruel's triumphant victory over the Phystere, in which Pantagruel is brought forward as the heroic protagonist (Fig. 5).[27]

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[24] Nicholas Cronk, 'Picturing the Text: Authorial Direction of Illustration in Eighteenth-Century French Fiction' Eighteenth-Century Fiction, Vol. 14, Numbers 3-4 (April-July 2002), pp. 391–414.

[25] Carl Goldstein, *Print Culture in Early Modern France: Abraham Bosse and the Purposes of Print* (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), p. 127.

[26] Schmidt, Critical Images, p. 8. Edward Hodnett argues that the main decision for the illustrator is the 'moment of choice'. See Hodnett, *Image and Text: Studies in the Illustration of English Literature* (University of Michigan: Scolar Press, 1982), p. 7.

[27] Edwin Duval argues that the battle with the Phystere is a key episode in so far as it reveals Pantagruel to be the real protagonist rather than Panurge. See Duval, 'Rabelais and Textual Architecture', *A New History of French Literature*, ed. by Denis Hollier (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 154-159.



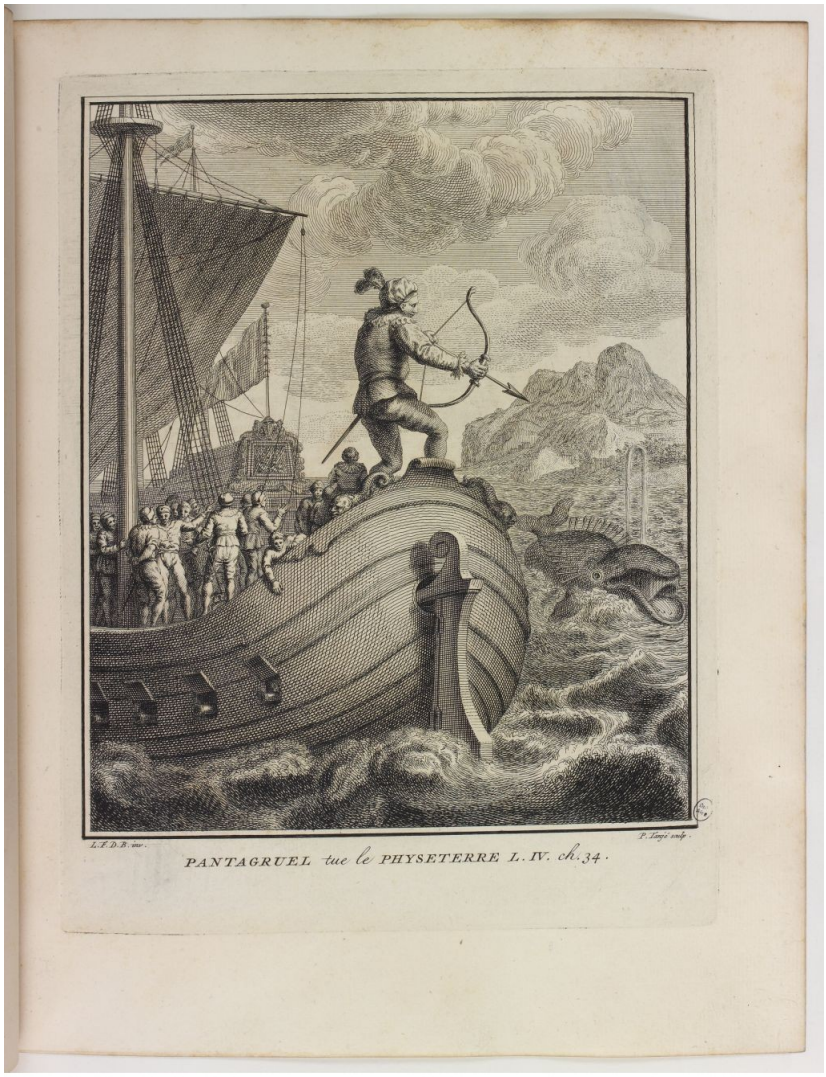
Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Fig. 4. 'Le MOINE se défait de ses gardes & bet les gens de PICROCOLE', I, ch. XIV

The illustrations depict moments in Rabelais' text that are reminiscent of a chivalric romance as characterised by Jean Plattard in his description of Rabelais' work: 'ce ne sont que pérégrinations de chevaliers errants, tournois, rencontres de brigands, rites de chevalerie minutieusement rapportés – bref, tous les épisodes ordinaires de la littérature romanesque de chevalerie'.[28] Yet there are no signs of the traditional romance plot in any of the illustrations, nor in Rabelais' text (at least not a heterosexual one). And like the physterre, Rabelais' work occupies a thus far unknown space – a middle ground between

[28] Jean Plattard, *L'Invention et la composition dans l'œuvre de Rabelais* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1908), p. 5.

text and reader, but also between old and new and, as Wes Williams has argued, between genres, notably chivalric romance and natural history.[29]



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Fig. 5. 'PANTAGRUEL tue le PHYSTERRE', IV, ch. 34

All illustrations lie at the centre of a nexus of various cultural references, and there are two interralated pieces of cultural contextualisation in particular that are

[29] Wes Williams, 'Rabelais's Monsters: Andromeda, Natural History, and Romance', *Monsters and their Meanings in Early Modern Culture: Mighty Magic* (Oxford; New York: OUP, 2011), pp. 28-76.

important when it comes to the illustration of these episodes in Rabelais' work. The first pertains to the question of generic classification. Although fables and pieces of theatre were also illustrated in the period[30], the illustrated novel was by far and away the most popular. Between 1741-1745 novels constituted two thirds of the illustrated books produced.[31] The presence of illustrations, then, served to construct Rabelais' work as a precursor to the eighteenth-century novel. In fact Bernard reprints the comments that Le Duchat made regarding Rabelais' knowledge of old chivalric romances: 'Il avoit lu nos Historiens les plus Gaulois, & possédant aussi tous nos vieux Romans, c'est avec ces dispositions que, tout en badinant, il s'est immortalisé par un autre Roman'.[32]

Readers and collectors would, at the time that the illustrations of Rabelais' work were published, have been increasingly familiar with encountering illustrations of novels, and publishers would have been aware of the increasingly fashionable nature of the illustrated novel. Benoît Tane remarks that '[l]e XVIIIe siècle est le siècle de l'illustration diraient les bibliophiles et nombre de commentateurs; il est aussi, d'une certain façon, celui du roman'.[33] The classificatory function provided by the illustrations served to locate Rabelais' work against the backdrop of the upsurge in novels produced in the period that were primarily aimed at, and associated with, a female public.[34]

The characterisation of Rabelais' work as a novel had been emerging throughout the end of the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth centuries. Jean Bernier

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[30] See Michael Hawcroft, 'Racine and Chauveau: A Poetics of Illustration', *French Studies* (2007) *61*(3), 280–297 and A.M Bassy 'Le Paradoxe du realisme et du merveilleux dans l'illustration des *Fables* de La Fontaine au XVIIIe siècle', *Bulletin du bibliophile*, No. 11 (Paris, 1979) pp. 216-238 respectively.

[31] See Christian Michel, 'Charles-Nicolas Cochin et le livre illustré au dix-huitième siècle, avec un catalogue raisonné des livres illustrés par Cochin 1735-1790', *Histoire et Civilisation du Livre*, 18 (Geneva: Droz, 1987), p. 50.

[32] *Œuvres* (1741) Preface, p. iii.

[33] Tane, 'Le livre illustré au XVIIIe siècle', p. 23. Christophe Martin argues that the eighteenth century witnessed 'la vogue du roman illustré au siècle des Lumières [...] [l]e roman, genre en plein essor, profite naturellement de cet engouement [pour l'illustration] général', Martin, *Dangereux Suppléments*, p. 3.

[34] See Joan DeJean, 'The Origin of Novels: Gender, Class, and the Writing of French Literary History', *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 159-182.

described Rabelais' work as a 'Roman' in *Le Véritable Rabelais Réformé* (1697).[35] In his preface to the 1711 edition of Rabelais' work, Le Duchat remarks that 'des Personnages très sérieux ont succombé à la tentation de commenter son Roman'. In *De l'Origine des Romans*, Pierre-Daniel Huet wrote of 'le Pantagruel de Rabelais', as being 'aussi merveilleux par le fond que tous les romans qui l'avaient précédé'.[36] And in the preface to his translation of Pierre Le Motteux's 1674 remarks on Rabelais, César de Missy makes several references to 'le Roman de Rabelais'.[37] This text was also included in the edition of 1741.

Critics of Rabelais' reception have recognised this, but have generally failed to acknowledge the gendered dimension inherent to such a renegotiation of Rabelais' work.[38] The generic classification of Rabelais' work as a novel *avant la lettre*, then, promoted women's access to Rabelais' world, but as a side effect brought with it a certain domestication of the text. Women could enter Rabelais' world, the illustrated edition suggested, but, to borrow Dufresnoy's phrase, only under 'l'abri' of the visual material.

5.1.3 Domesticating Rabelais' Text

Bernard declared that the illustrations were primarily ornamentation, stating that 'ces tailles douces [...] embellissent considérablement mon Edition'.[39] There will undoubtedly also have been a financial motivation (as well as risk) lying behind Bernard's choice to

[35] Jean Bernier, *Jugement et nouvelles observations sur les œuvres greques, latines, toscanes, et françoises de Maître François Rabelais,* ou *Le Véritable Rabelais Réformé* (Paris: Laurent d'Hory, 1697), p. 36.
[36] Pierre-Daniel Huet, *De l'Origine des Romans, suivi d'observations et de jugemens sur les romans français; avec l'indication des meilleurs romans qui ont paru, sur-tout, pendant le dix-huitieme siecle, jusqu'à ce jour* (Amsterdam: Kok, 1699), pp. 135-138.
[37] See, for example, *Œuvres* (1741), III, p. 12.
[38] See Richard Cooper, "Reading and unravelling Rabelais", in *The Cambridge Companion to Rabelais*, ed. by J. O'Brien, (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), pp. 141-56.
[39] 'Avertissement' (1741), non paginated.

include illustrations.[40] But the illustrations themselves offer a further interpretative lens through which to encounter Rabelais' work. Nathalie Ferrand makes the case for a 'rapprochement progressif' during the eighteenth century between the act of translating and that of illustrating, and argues that the eighteenth century witnessed a change or broadening in the function of the illustration from acting purely as ornamentation to being an interpretation of the text.[41] The 1741 illustration of Gargamelle's labour is a striking example of this, as I will show below. And the interpretative gesture performed by an illustration becomes all the more forceful by virtue of the fact that an engraving is by nature thicker than a page printed with text, and is visually appealing, therefore attracting the reader-viewer's attention and drawing it away from the text. Benoît Tane has drawn our attention to the extent to which the illustrations may in fact dominate the reader-viewer's experience of an illustrated book:

> le lecteur qui ouvre de tels livres est *aussi* un spectateur; il l'est parfois *avant tout* et s'attardera sur le frontispice; il l'est peut-être *surtout* et cherchera ces images dispersées dans le livre mais annoncés sur le page de titre – le pouce reconnaissant alors souvent l'estampe à l'épaisseur du papier. Qui sait même s'il lira ce livre, fût-il un roman? Les images le disputent au texte comme elles lui disputent l'intérêt de ce lecteur-spectateur.[42]

The 1741 illustrations exploit the capacity of the visual image to dominate the reader-viewer's encounter with a given edition.

Bernard reprints the preface in which Le Duchat is quick to acknowledge those who have condemned and censored Rabelais' work: 'J'ignore pas combien ce Livre a eu de Censeurs parmi les Catholiques bigots', for example. He then goes on to defend what he considers to be Rabelais' satirical portraits which earned him 'pour jamais ses

[40] Stewart, *Engraven Desire*, p. ix.
[41] Nathalie Ferrand (ed) *Traduire et illustrer le roman au XVIIIe siècle* (Oxford: SVEC, 2011). 'Introduction: l'illustration littéraire à l'épreuve de la traduction', pp 1-35, (p. 15).
[42] Tane, 'Le livre illustré au XVIIIe siècle', p. 21.

implacables ennemis'.[43] In so doing, Bernard follows in the footsteps of fellow Huguenot Le Duchat in denouncing those who have accused Rabelais of obscenity, heresy, and even atheism. But, despite Bernard's implicit suggestion that Rabelais' text ought not to be censored, the illustrations do in fact perform a similar function. As a by-product of highlighting certain points in the text, illustrations also serve to censor other parts of the text, as Claude Labrosse has pointed out with regards to illustrations of Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise*.[44] This censorship occurs in the edition of 1741 not only through the choice of episodes selected for illustration, but also in terms of the style of the illustrations. Bernard first mentions illustrations as part of his critique of the 1711 edition:

> On passe celui [le défaut] qui frappe si sensiblement dans les figures. Il n'est pas nécessaire d'être connoisseur pour les trouver très-mauvaises: mais il est bien vrai qu'H. D. s'étoit d'abord proposé de les donner beaucoup meilleures; pour cet effet il s'étoit adressé à Romain de Hooghe, Dessinateur estimé alors, mais qui n'etoit digne de l'être que par le feu d'une imagination qui ne se soumettoit jamais aux règles de l'art, & si j'ose le dire, par un débordement d'idées bizarres, dont la singularité est capable de fraper malgré leur désordre. Quoi qu'il en soit il semble que le caractère du Dessinateur auroit convenu parfaitement à celui qui règne dans Rabelais: & l'on peut ajouter que le Libraire, dont l'humeur et le génie avoient aussi assez de conformité à l'un & à l'autre, mesuroit en cela le gout du public au sien. [...] M. du Bourg, dont j'ai emploié les desseins & qui a été fecondé d'excellens graveurs, a su allier les règles de l'art avec les bizarreries ingénieuses et les agréables folies de Pantagruel et Gargantua: & si l'on est curieux de voir le peu de valeur des pièces croquées de Romain de Hooghe, M. du Bourg est en état d'en produire trois ou quatre aux connoisseurs, telles que je les ai reçues d'un Libraire de Genève, entre les mains duquel il s'en trouve une douzaine du même goût.

This passage is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, it indicates that some editors, like Bordesius, conceived of illustrations, regardless of their quality, as indispensable to any successful edition. Secondly, it indicates a link between a visual aesthetic ('les règles d'art') and the status of Rabelais' work. This is evidenced in Bernard's concern that the

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[43] *Œuvres* (1711), pp. iii-iv.

[44] Claude Labrosse 'Sur les estampes de la Nouvelle Heloise dessinees par Gravelot', *L'illustration du livre et de la litterature au XVIII siecle en France et en Pologne* (Warsaw: Editions de l'Universite de Varsovie, 1982) pp. 83-98, (p. 97).

illustrations should 'orner' rather than 'déparer' Rabelais' text. This comment on the part of Bernard indicates that he privileges visibility over audibility in the dissemination of Rabelais' work.[45] You can look at Rabelais' text, the illustrations suggest, but don't bother (or dare) to listen to it.

At the same time as Rabelais' text began to be marketed to women, the women in Rabelais' text began to be closed up and tamed. So how did this act of domestication affect the depiction of Gargamelle's birth? Although the other chapters in this thesis have begun by considering a moment in Rabelais' posterity before returning to the original text, this chapter will do the inverse. It will begin by offering a close reading of the episode of Gargantua's birth, or Gargamelle's labour before going on to consider the ways in which the illustration serves to block off the reader-spectator's access to Rabelais' women as they are depicted in the text. I do so here because this final chapter marks a turning point in the story I am telling.

5.2. Co-parenting in Rabelais' World

5.2.1. Bodies in harmony

The birth of Gargantua is an episode that both familiarises and destabilises; it familiarises in that every being must be born, but destabilises in that the child is born not from the mother's vagina, but rather out of the mother's ear following her excessive consumption of tripe after an 11-month pregnancy. Following Bakhtin's celebration of Gargamelle as the grotesque open ended body *par excellence*[46], critics have moved away from the question of the body, and have instead offered invaluable readings of the episode

[45] Christophe Martin notes, 'étant donné les risques financiers encourus par le libraire, l'illustration du roman au dix-huitième siècle ne saurait être *à priori* le lieu d'innovations artistiques majeures et que la prudence, voire le conformisme, sont souvent de mise'. Martin, *Dangereux Suppléments*, p. 4.
[46] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his world*, p. 23.

through the lens of religion[47], laughter[48] or sixteenth-century medical practices.[49] Up until relatively recently, critics interested in the gendered dimension of the episode have read Gargamelle's labour and subsequent disappearance from the text as a further sign of Rabelais' instrumentalisation of women and a sign of their absence from the text.[50] Pollie Bromilow's treatment of Gargamelle's labour is the most thorough exploration of gender in this episode to date. Bromilow follows in the footsteps of E. Jane Burns and rightly points out that Bakhtin's seeming celebration of Gargamelle as the ideal grotesque body actually serves to undo gender difference and removes female subjectivity.[51] Bromilow then goes on to offer a similar critique of Rabelais' text, and argues that Rabelais uses a variety of representational strategies to cover over the female body and undo her femininity. Helpful as Bromilow's analysis is, this de-gendering of Gargamelle's body need not be read in a purely negative and anti-feminist way. It could equally be read, I suggest, as a reiteration of the androgynous body that I propose as an alternative lens through which to read Rabelais' work. This becomes all the clearer if we attend to the sound and the noise of the text.

At the first few contractions, Gargamelle does complain of the ease with which men impregnate women and then shake off their burdens:

> Eulx tenens ces menuz propos de beuverie, Gargamelle commença se porter mal du bas. Dont Grandgousier se leva dessus l'herbe, et la renconfortoit honestement, pensant que ce feut mal d'enfant, et luy disant qu'elle s'estoit la herbée soubz la saulsaye et qu'en brief elle feroit piedz neuf: par ce luy convenoit prendre couraige nouveau au nouvel advenement de son poupon, et encores que la douleur lu feust quelque peu en fascherie: toutesfoys que ycelle seroit briefve, et la joye qui toust succederoit, luy tolliroit tout cest ennuy: en sorte que

[47] See Jean-Marie Jacques, "Sur l'accouchement de Gargamelle", *Bulletin de l'Association des Amis de Rabelais et de la Devinière*, 4/10, (1991) pp. 396-400.
[48] Colette Quesnel, *Mourir de rire d'après et avec Rabelais* (Montréal: Vrin, 1991), p. 66.
[49] See Madeleine Lazard, 'Medecins contre matrones au 16e siècle: la difficile naissance de l'obstétrique', in *Popular Traditions and Learned Culture in France, From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Mark Bertrand (Saratoga: Anma Libri, 1985), pp. 25-41.
[50] 'Un Royaume qui perdure sans femmes', p. 197.
[51] E.J. Burns, *Bodytalk: When Women Speak in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: Univesrity of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 13-14.

> seulement ne luy en resteroit la soubvenance. «Couraige de brebis (disoyt il) depeschez vous de cestuy cy et bien toust en faisons un aultre»
> - Ha (dist elle) tant vous parlez à votre aize vous aultres hommes. Bien de par dieu je me parforceray, puis qu'il vous plaist. Mais pleust à dieu que vous l'eussiez coupé.
> - Quoy? dist Grandgousier.
> - Ha (dist elle) jà dieu ne plaise. Dieu me le pardoient, je ne le dis de bon cueur: et pour ma parolle n'en faictes ne plus ne moins. Mais je auray prou d'affaires aujourd'huy, si dieu ne me ayde, et tout par vostre membre, que vous fussiez bien ayse.
> - Couraige, couraige (dist il) ne vous souciez au reste, et laissez faire au quatre boeufz de devant. Je m'en voys boyre encores quelque veguade. Si ce pendent vous survenoit quelque mal, je me tiendray près, huschant en paulme je me rendray à vous». (20-21)

Although Gargamelle expresses the wish that Grandgousier had been castrated so that she could have been spared this suffering, she quickly takes it back, and the two present a united whole. Grandgousier stays close beside her and reassures her that he will come and comfort her if she experiences any pain. His insistency on his proximity indicates a desire and intent to connect with her both emotionally and physically.

Rabelais' emphatic rhetorical brackets '(disoyt il)/(dist elle)' serve to expose the socially constructed gender difference, but in so doing eradicate it by bringing the beings and bodies of Gargamelle and Grandgousier together in the act of childbirth. This goes against the current of critics such as Madeleine Lazard who argue that Rabelais' text simply reinforces a patriarchal division of labour in society: '[c]'est du point de vue masculin et traditionnel que Rabelais envisage les rôles respectifs des conjoints dans la société'.[52]

Grandgousier's incitation to get rid of this child so that they can get on with making another might be read as an expression of male sexual appetite in the face of a woman's labour pains. But we might read Grandgousier's comment differently when we consider it alongside the way in which the narrator describes the mutually pleasing sexual activity that Grandgousier and his wife engage in on their nuptial evening. The social,

[52] Madelaine Lazard, *Images littéraires de la femme à la Renaissance* (PUF: Littératures Modernes, 1985), p. 143.

marital and bodily togetherness in the process of childbirth echoes that found in the joyful conception of Gargantua:

> En son eage virile espousa Gargamelle fille du roy des Parpaillos, belle gouge et de bonne troigne. Et faisoient eux deux souvent ensemble la beste à deux doz, joyeuseuement se frotans leur lard, tant qu'elle engroissa d'un beau filz, et le porta jusques à l'unziesme moys.
>
> Car autant, voire dadvantage, peuvent les femmes ventre porter, mesmement quand c'est quelque chef d'œuvre, et personnage que doibve en son temps faire grandes prouesses. (15)

Considerable critical attention has been paid to the satirical and polemical nature of the assertion that Gargamelle's pregnancy lasted eleven months. But much less critical attention has been paid to the act of love making that precedes this gestation period.[53] Both Grandgousier and Gargamelle participate fully in the sexual intercourse, and they do it 'joyeusement' and 'souvent'. This kind of body that Thomas Laqueur terms a "one-sex body" need not be read as a patriarchal elision of female subjectivity, but rather as a bringing together of bodies that goes above and beyond socially constructed gender difference.[54]

The evening before Gargamelle gives birth, she and Grandgousier both join together in a feast at which 'les tripes furent copieuses'. During the banquet, Grandgousier dissuades his wife from eating too much tripe given her current state: 'Le bon homme Grandgousier y prenoit plaisir bien grand: et commendoit que tout allast par escuelles. Disoit toutes-foys à sa femme qu'elle en mangeast le moins, veu qu'elle aprochoit de son terme, et que ceste tripaille n'estoit viande moult louable' (17). This could be read as an instance of a masculine attempt to regulate a seemingly uncontrollable female body. But one could also take a more sympathetic stance towards Grandgousier's comment, and see it as a further sign of their bodily union; he expresses

[53] See Cathy McClive, 'Menstrual Time and the Moons of Pregnancy', *Menstruation and Procreation in Early Modern France* (UK: Routledge, 2015), p. 173 and Michael Screech, 'Eleven-Month Pregnancies: A legal and medical quarrel', *ER*, 8 (1969), pp. 91-106.
[54] Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

concern about her excessive consumption as if it were his own body. And this union is strengthened during the scene of childbirth in which Grandgousier comes to comfort his wife.

5.2.2. Blocking off the bodies

The arrival of the midwives does not deter Grandgousier, who '[se] tiendray près' whilst the birth runs its course:

> Peu de temps après [son dialogue avec Grandgousier] elle commença à souspirer, lamenter et crier. Soubdain vindrent à tas saiges femmes de tous coustez. Et la tastant par le bas, trouverent quelques pellauderies, assez de maulvais goust, et pensoient que ce feust l'enfant, mais c'estoit le fondement qui luy escappoit, à la mollification, du droict intestine lequel vous appellez le boyau cullier, par trop avoir mangé des tripes comme avons déclairé cy dessus.
>
> Dont une horde vieille de la compaignie, laquelle avoit reputation d'estre grande medecine, et là estoit venue de Brizepaille d'auprès Sainct Genou devant soixante ans, luy feist un restrinctif si horrible, que 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 gauloises, à belles dentz alongea son parchemin.
>
> Par cest inconvenient furent au dessus relaschez les cotyledons de la matrice, par lesquelz sursaulta l'enfant, et entra en la vene creuse, et gravant par le diaphragme jusques au sessus des espaules (où ladicte vene se part en deux) print son chemin à gauche, et sortit par l'aureille senestre. (21-22)

Critics interested in the appearance of the midwives have thus far focused primarily on the fact that they mistake Gargamelle's prolapsed intestine for the child, and have read the scene as a jibe against midwives on the part of Rabelais' narrator and the readers who he brings on his side through the use of 'vous'. The narrator acknowledges that there are different ways of saying 'le droict intestin [...] que *vous appellez* le boyau cullier'. Critics differ in who this 'vous' refers to. Kirk D. Read argues that the 'vous' addressed in the passage is a designated set of learned levelheaded male practitioner readers who Rabelais is distancing[55] from the midwives and the 'horde vieille' from Brizepaille. These readers are, Read suggests, male scholars or doctors like Rabelais the man himself, who are

[55] See Kirk D. Read, 'The Royal Birth Stories of François Rabelais and Louise Boursier', in *Birthing Bodies in Early Modern France: Stories of Gender and Reproduction* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 63.

laughing at the midwives because they are women. As such, Read reduces the episode to another opportunity for misogynistic laughter between Rabelais and his 'fraternal reader'.[56]

But if we look closely at the way in which the narrator describes the actions of the 'horde vieille' we see that what Rabelais' narrator is specifically criticising is not the midwives status as women, but rather the action of tightening and closing off Gargamelle's orifices that she performs. The 'restrinctif si horrible' that the old woman applies causes her sphincters to be 'oppilez' and 'reserrez', which forces the child to find another exit point. The midwife is being criticised because she tries to enclose a body that is characterised by its openness, an openness that is embodied in Gargamelle's name, which means "large throat".

Hampton, however, argues that the 'vous' is the voice of popular culture that has become absorbed into Rabelais' erudite and omnipotent discourse, asserting the narrator's 'mastery' of all kinds of discourse, arguing that this episode opposes 'feminine foolishness' with male erudition.

> [b]y setting the misperceptions and prescriptive folly of the midwives as the logical narrative pretext to the imposition of the narrator's technical jargon on the female body, Rabelais' text offers an allegory of the process through which humanist learning appropriates for literary form the raw material [...] of popular culture.[57]

The confrontation between two types of learning and language is undeniably present in the passage, but we might instead understand this episode not as a confrontation between two types of discourse, but rather as a comingling. When mapped onto a gendered framework of discourse, erudite being the discourse of learned men and popular being that of women[58], then the narrator's omnipotent discourse becomes not

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[56] Ibid. p. 64.
[57] Hampton, p. 172.
[58] Diane Desrosiers Bonin holds that, 'dans l'Œuvre de Rabelais, la voix de la sagesse populaire, associée aux locutions proverbiales, aux dictions et aux sentences, passe souvent par la voix des femmes'. See Bonin (1996), p. 37.

only an instance of mastery but also of androgyny. The narrator's voice is neither masculine nor feminine, but rather moves fluidly between the two.

What is also interesting in the text is that the women are not entirely grouped together into a homogenous hole – the 'horde vieille de Brizepaille' is distinct from the other midwives. And the fact that the misunderstanding demonstrated by the group of other midwives is designated by a collective third person plural, 'pensoient' need not be read as a gendered attack on 'prescriptive folly'. Instead, we might read their collective misunderstanding as a critique of the very notion of universality, both in terms of their knowledge as a group, and of the particular case they have in front of them. The midwives' misunderstanding of what is going on with Gargamelle's body, combined with the 'horde vieille' who steps aside debunks the idea of a uniquely female community who all understand one another.[59] The unease surrounding the question of universal experience chimes with François Rigolot's notion of the sixteenth-century 'crisis of exemplarity'.[60] This crisis, Cathy Hampton has argued, became a particular concern in the realm of midwifery and is most clearly expressed in the work of early modern midwife Louise Bourgeois.[61] From this perspective, then, we might interpret the narrator's insistence on the truthfulness of the story as a scrutinising of the ways in which general rules are applied to individual cases. Rabelais' narrator forces the reader to consider the differences that occur even amongst very similar phenomena.[62]

As a by-product of the confrontational way in which she stages masculine and feminine, Bromilow reads Gargamelle's openness as a further sign that the mother in

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[59] This stands in contrast to Luce Irigaray's essentialising notion of motherhood as something that necessarily unifies the entire female community: 'nous sommes toujours mères dès lors que nous sommes femmes'. Luce Irigaray, *Le Corps-à-corps avec la mère* (Ottowa: Éditions de la pleine lune, 1981), p. 27.
[60] François Rigolot, 'The Renaissance Crisis of Exemplarity', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 59 (1998), pp. 557-63.
[61] Cathy Hampton, 'Unpicking Female Exemplarity: Or, the Usefulness of Body Stories: Reassessing Female Communal Identity in Two Early Modern French Texts', *MLR*, Vol. 102, No. 2, (April, 2007), pp. 381-396.
[62] Rosi Braidotti applauds modern feminism's privileging of first-hand lived experience as an indicator of truth. See 'Mothers, Monsters and Madness', *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, ed. by Katie Conboy (Columbia University Edition, 1997) pp. 60-76 (p. 76).

Rabelais is 'predominantly a bodily opening'.[63] But this need not be read as anti-feminist, because Rabelais loves bodily and textual openings. Although Bromilow is right in saying that the passage is full of 'constant references to the digestive system', her argument that this 'construct[s] the female reproductive organs in terms of their safer parallel in the universal male anatomical bodily model' closes up the interpretative openness that is permitted by Rabelais' text.[64] Rabelais' narrator underscores the fact that the midwife closed off 'tous ses larrys' – the inclusion of all of the sphincters leaves open the possibility that this includes the vaginal sphincter.

At the moment of the actual birth, narratorial focus shifts from the mother's body to the actions of the son whose exit through the ear becomes, for Bromilow, a defiance of the female body and a 'triumph for patriarchy'.[65] But what if the son's exit through the ear is neither a defiance of the female nor a triumph of the male but rather a celebration of the androgynous? The ear becomes the privileged and de-gendered site of exploration and openness that all bodies share, and which is celebrated in the act of naming the newborn:

> Le bon homme Grangousier beuvant, et se rigollant avecques les aultres entendit le cry horrible que son filz avoit faict entrant en lumiere de ce monde, quand il brasmoit demandant, «à boyre,à boyre, à boyre» dont il dist, «que grand tu as», supple le gousier. Ce que ouyans les assistans, dirent que vrayement il debvoit avoir par ce le nom Gargantua, puis que telle avoit esté la première parolle de son pere à sa naissance, à l'imitation des anciens Hebreux. À quoy fut condescendu par icelluy, et pleut très bien à sa mere.

Importantly it is the fact that they heard Grandgousier's exclamation that leads people to claim that he should have that name. Gargantua's name was of course chosen because it was 'la première parolle de son pere', making Grandgousier undeniably important here. But Gargamelle is not written out – we are told that Gargamelle, on hearing the name, is pleased by it. Although Lesa Randall suggests that Grandgousier's comment refers to the

[63] Bromilow (2007), p. 32
[64] Ibid. p. 33.
[65] Bromilow, 'Inside-Out', p. 34.

size of the newborn's throat,[66] the name might equally refer to Gargantua's penis; Grandgousier reads the size of Gargantua's genitalia as an assurance that his lineage will continue.[67] This assertion of patriarchal lineage, however, is mocked in Chapter 11, in which Gargantua's nursemaids conjure up several different words for the young boy's penis:

> Et sabez quey hillotz, que mau de pipe vous byre, ce petit paillard tousjours tastonoit ses gouvernantes cen dessus dessoubz, cen devant derrière, harry bourriquet: et desjà commençoyt exercer sa braguette. Laquelle un chascun jour ses gouvernantes ornoyent de beaulx boucquets, de beaulx rubans, de belles fleurs, de beaulx flocquars: et passoient leur temps à la faire revenir entre leurs mains comme un magdaleon d'entraict. Puis s'esclaffoient de rire quand elle levoit les aureilles, comme si le jeu leurs eust pleu.
>
> L'une la nommoit «ma petite dille», l'autre «ma pine», l'autre «ma branche de coural», l'aultre «mon bondon», mon bouchon, mon vibrequin, mon poussouer, ma teriere, ma pendilloche, mon rude esbat roidde et bas, mon dressouoir, ma petite andouille vermeille, ma petite couille bredouille.
>
> — Elle est à moy disoit l'une.
>
> — C'est la mienne, disoit l'aultre.
>
> — Moy, (disoit l'aultre) n'y auray je rien? par ma foy je la couperay doncques.
>
> — Ha couper (disoit l'aultre) vous luy feriez mal ma dame, coupez vous la chose aux enfans, il seroy monsieur sans queue».
>
> Et pour s'esbattre comme les petitz enfans du pays luy feirent un beau virollet des aesles d'un moulin à vent de Myrebalays. (35)

Following Huchon's suggestion that the nursemaids are playing a range of 'jeux érotiques' with the child, Levilson C. Reis has considered this episode from the perspective of childhood sexuality, arguing that the nursemaids serve to awaken the child's sexual desires and libidinal energy.[68] There is little doubt that this scene disrupts the binary opposition between adulthood and childhood by presenting the child as a sexual being.[69] And it also encourages the reader to think about education and theories of

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[66] Lesa Randall, *The Rabelais Encyclopoedia*, p. 103.
[67] This might at first, then, seem to suppport Freccero's emphasis on paternal lineage in *Father Figures.*
[68] Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, p. 1096 and Levilson C. Reis, 'The Role of Nursemaids in the Awakening of Gargantua's Sexuality', *French Studies Bulletin*, 65 (Winter 1997), pp. 11-13.
[69] On this, see Steven Angelides, 'Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse, and the Erasure of Child Sexuality', *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly*, Vol. 10, Issue 2 (2004), pp. 141-177.

language acquisition, as several critics have pointed out.[70] Yet this scene is also interesting from the perspective of the relationship between women, language and sound. Susan Morrisson has read the alternative names that the nursemaids think up as 'excessive euphemisms', which come to reveal 'the foolishness of euphemisms'.[71] But it is not their status as euphemisms that I am interested here so much as the fact that these women take such great delight in conjuring them up. They derive pleasure from playing not only with the meaning of the words but also with the sounds. Consider, in particular, the sonority of 'mon rude esbat roidde et bas', or, 'ma petite couille bredouille'. The penis gives them pleasure not in an erotic way but rather a linguistic way. And we might note her too that the nursemaids play not only with Gargantua's penis but also with his ears. The passage ends with the word 'Myrebalays'. The town of Myrebalais was, as it is now, famous for windmills.[72] But the reader interested in sounds might also hear 'mie-Rebalais', 'mie' being another word that children would later use in the seventeenth century to refer to their governesses or nursemaids.[73] It would perhaps be taking things too far were I to suggest that Rabelais the writer then becomes a governess or friend telling a story to the reader who is taking their first steps in making meaning through language. But it is very unlikely that a writer so interested in sounds would not have chuckled at this cheeky play on words and his own name.

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[70] Levilson C. Reis, 'The chapters 11,12 and 13 of Rabelais' "Gargantua": The Stages of the Hero's Cognitive and Linguistic Development', *Romance Notes*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Winter, 1996), pp. 201-208; Olivier Zegna-Rata, "L'acheminement vers la parole, ou l'éducation de Gargantua", *ER*, 30 (1995), pp. 7-29; Françoise Charpentier, 'Une éducation de prince: *Gargantua*, Chapitre XI', *ER,* 21, pp. 103-08 and Hope Glidden, 'Childhood and the Vernacular in Rabelais's Gargantua', in *Lapidary Inscriptions: Renaissance Essays for Donald Stone, Jr.*, ed. by Barbara C. Bowen and Jerry Nash, *French Forum Monographs*, 74 (Lexington, KY: French Forum, 1991), pp. 183-94.

[71] Susan Morrison, *The Literature of Waste: Material Ecopoetics and Ethical Matter* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), p. 154.

[72] Huchon, *Œuvres Complètes*, p. 1096.

[73] See Elizabeth W. Harries, 'Simulating Oralities: French Fairy Tales of the 1690s', *College Literature*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (Jun., 1996), pp. 100-115, (p. 113).

Aside from Colette Quesnel, who has argued that Gargamelle's death renders her heroic and ever-present,[74] several critics see Gargamelle's subsequent absence following the birth as evidence that women are purely instrumentalised and then discarded in Rabelais' text.[75] But were that to be the case, Rabelais' narrator need not have reminded the reader of her spectral presence at the beginning of Chapter 37: 'A sa venue ilz les festoyerent à tour de bras, jamais on ne veit gens plus joyeux. Car *Supplementum Supplementi chronicorum* dict que Gargamelle y mourut de joye, je n'en sçay rien de ma part, et bien peu me soucie ny d'elle ny d'aultre. (102) Susan Broomhall has argued that this final remark on the part of Rabelais' narrator provides further evidence of Rabelais' own disregard for women.[76] But this could also be read as a false assertion on the narrator's part, given the amount of women that actually appear in the books that follow, several of whom have featured in this thesis. Whether or not Rabelais the man disregarded women, Rabelais the writer certainly had more time for them than critics like Broomhall suggest.

5.3. Visualising Gargamelle's Labour

The practice of visualising childbirth was widespread in the early modern world.[77] Yet the illustration of Gargamelle's labour is far removed from the anatomical visualisations that appeared in obstetric atlases of the period.[78] The emphasis is primarily placed on the action of the midwives rather than on the physical or bodily aspects of the birth which are the focus of Rabelais' text.

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[74] Quesnel, *Mourir de rire d'après et avec Rabelais*, p. 66.
[75] Consider Charpentier, 'Un royaume qui perdure sans femmes' and Bromilow, 'Inside-Out'.
[76] Broomhall, 'Rabelais, the Pursuit of Knowledge, and Early Modern Gynaecology', *Limina*, Vol. 4 (1998), pp. 24-34.
[77] See, for example, Penny Howell Jolly, *Picturing the 'Pregnant' Magdalene in Northern Art, 1430-1550* (Farnham : Burlington and Ashgate, 2014).
[78] On these anatomical drawings, see Lyle Massey, 'Pregnancy and Pathology: Picturing Childbirth in Eighteenth-Century Obstetric Atlases', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), pp. 73-91.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Fig.6

'Les SAGE-FEMMES- viennent au secours de GARGAMELLE', liv.I, Chap. VI.

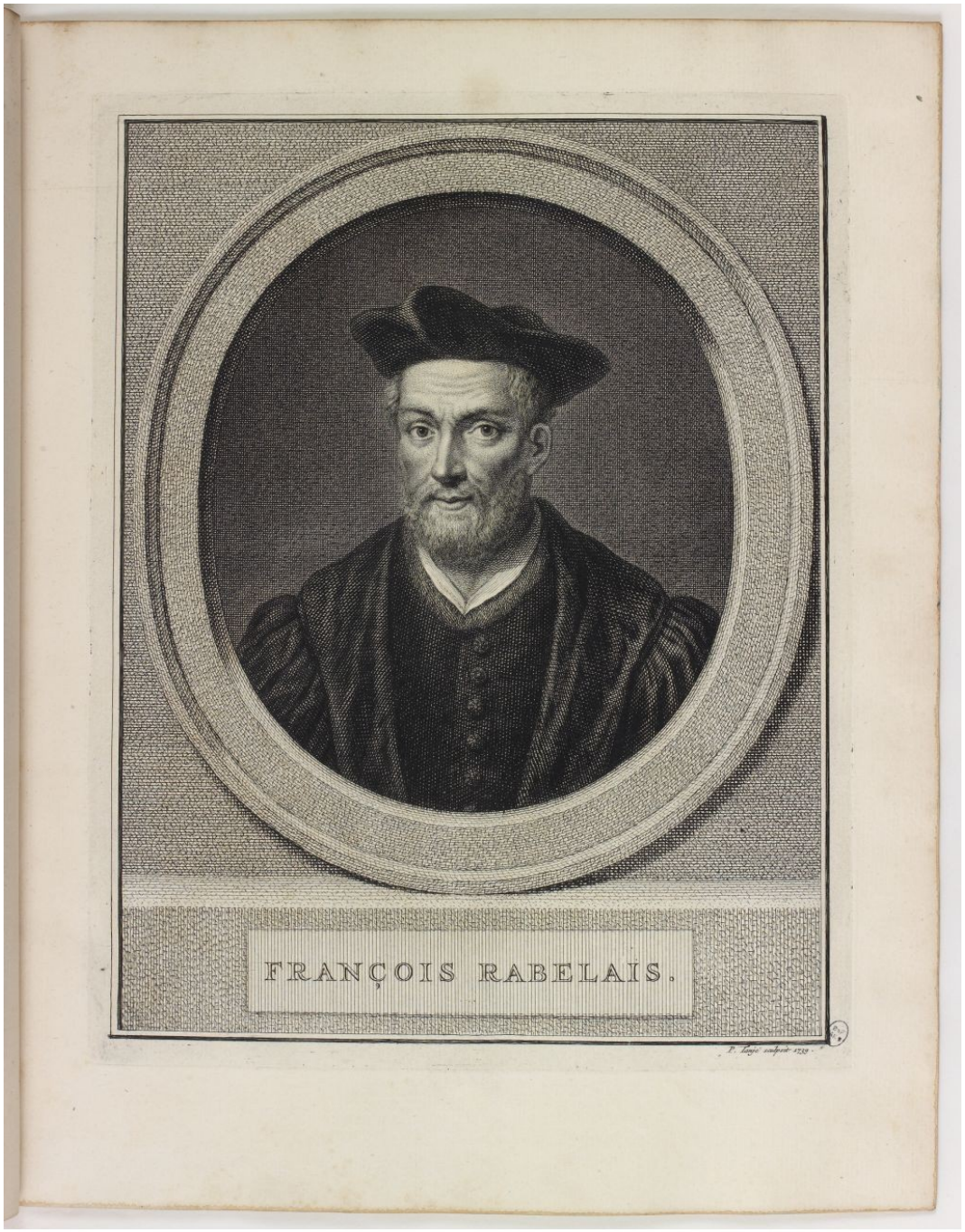
In this sense, then, the illustration supports the analysis offered by scholars such as David Adams and Mary Bellhouse that the field of eighteenth-century illustration witnessed a significant renegotiation and interest in the role and position of women in society.[79] This refocalisation is made clear in the caption underneath the illustration. (Fig. 3).

5.3.1. Picturing (and gendering) Alcofribas Nasier

Whilst the midwives are the most numerous characters in the scene by far, the reader-spectator's attention is drawn first and foremost to the figure occupying the centre of the image. This seemingly male or at least masculine character, and his actions, could be interpreted in a multitude of different ways. One might be tempted to interpret the placing of his hand on Gargamelle's wrist as an offering of comfort, thus identifying him with Grandgousier who comforts Gargamelle in Rabelais' original text, were it not for the fact that Grandgousier is already visualised in the background feasting with his men. And the man in the centre is altogether too small to be a giant!

So if it is not Grandgousier then who is it? Could it be Rabelais the man? Tempting as this might be, the man's face, and, crucially, his hat, are both very different from the visualisation of Rabelais the man depicted in Pierre Tanjé's portrait that appeared on the opening page of the 1741 edition (Fig.4).

[79] See David Adams, 'Text, Image and Contemporary Society', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Volume 31, Issue 3 (2008), pp. 307-313 and Mary Bellhouse, 'Visual Myths of Female Identity in Eighteenth-Century France', *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 12 (1991), pp. 117-135.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Fig. 7. Pierre Tanjé, *Portrait de François Rabelais* (1741)

Nor does the man in the illustration resemble any of the three men that appear just below the map that I considered in Chapter Two. So who is he? A possible clue lies in the cap that he wears which, as noted, is distinct from any of the hats worn by Rabelais in the portraits. Although the illustrations depict scenes from a sixteenth-century work, we need to look to eighteenth-century clothing to unpick the significance of this cap, given the context and time period in which the illustration was produced. This cloth cap

bent slightly to the front resembles the cloth caps worn by alchemists and apothecaries as depicted in seventeenth and eighteenth-century engravings (Fig.5).



Fig.8. Mattheus Greuter, *Le Médecin guérissant Phantasie* (1620)

This extraordinary engraving, which deserves further exploration, serves here simply to show the cap that is worn by the apothecary as he slides his patient into the oven. The apothecary is importantly distinct from the doctor, who is designated by a very different and much grander piece of headwear that is also worn by Rabelais in the portrait of 1741. No apothecaries are present during the scene in Rabelais' original text, but the title page of the second edition of *Gargantua* ascribed the work to 'l'abstracteur de quinte essence' and later title pages in subsequent editions ascribed the work to 'Maistre Alcofribas,

abstracteur de quinte essence'.[80] The title page of *Gargantua* in the edition of 1741 reads 'Jadis composée par l'Abstracteur de quinte-essence'.[81] If Rabelais the man is identified as a doctor in the portrait of 1741 by virtue of his hat, then he is visualised as being an entity distinct from the 'abstracteur'. The apothecary in the illustration, then, might well be understood as a visualisation of Rabelais' narrator, Alcofribas Nasier, who is visualised here as masculine, in contrast to the androgynous narrator that Zegura rightly argues is crucial to a feminist reading of the text.

What, then, is Alcofribas doing in the illustration? There seem to be three possibilities, each of which revolves around a different sense. The first is sight: the apothecary appears to be looking into Gargamelle's ear, indicating that, unlike the midwives, he knows exactly from which orifice the child will eventually emerge. But Gargamelle's thumb is placed just above the top of her ear, covering Alcofribas Nasier's point of vision. And, most importantly, he is looking into her right ear, rather than her 'aureille senestre' that is specified in Rabelais' text.

The second is touch: the apothecary has placed his right hand on Gargamelle's wrist. Since no signs of strain or resistance are visible on Gargamelle's right arm and given that we can see all of the apothecary's fingers, it seems most likely that the hand is being placed upon her wrist as an offering of comfort. In the text, Grandgousier is the one who comes to comfort his wife, 'honestement'. The illustration replaces Grandgousier with the narrator and locates him at the crossroads between what is visualised as Grandgousier's exclusively homosocial world of feasting and the exclusively feminine space of childbirth. The positioning of his left hand is also interesting in so far as Alcofribas Nasier is pointing his index figure to his throat, drawing attention to his voice box. And on closer inspection, we see that Alcofribas Nasier's mouth is slightly open. An open mouth might seem unsurprising for a narrator who is, by definition, the

[80] See Carol Clark's entry, 'Alcofribas Nasier' in the *Rabelais Encyclopaedia*, pp. 2-3, (p. 3).
[81] *Œuvres* (1741) Vol. 1, p. xxx.

one who speaks. The only assurance that the reader of Rabelais' text has that the baby was in fact born out of its mother's ear is the words of Rabelais' narrator: 'L'occasion et maniere comment Gargamelle enfanta fut telle, et, si ne le croyez, le fondement vous eschappe! (22). Hampton argues that this turn to the reader poses a dilemma: either believe what I say and then Gargamelle loses her 'fundament', or don't believe it and lose your own.[82] Rabelais' narrator positions himself as a witness to the scene, but in the illustration Alcofribas Nasier is a participant who steps into Grandgousier's role as comforter, occupying the centre of a scene in which masculine and feminine spaces are divided.

The positioning of Alcofribas Nasier's hands then brings us to the third sense: sound. Alcofribas Nasier is speaking in the illustration, but not to the reader-viewer; he is speaking to Gargamelle who is listening to what he has to say. Gargamelle speaks a considerable amount in Rabelais' original text, but in the illustration her lips are sealed. Grandgousier is also visualised with an open mouth, chatting with his men during their feast. Although the midwives to the far left and the far right have mouths that appear to be open enough to gasp at the scene, it is only Grandgousier and Alcofribas Nasier whose mouths are parted and lips pointed forward as if speaking. The illustration designates speaking as a masculine act, and visualises women as listeners.

5.3.2. Drawing divisions

Aside from the gendered construction of Alcofribas Nasier, the illustration is also remarkable for the way in which it delineates between masculine and feminine spaces. It places Grandgousier at a considerable distance away from his wife, feasting with his men

[82] Timothy Hampton, 'The Fallen Fundament: Jargon, Gender, and Literary Authority in the Birth of Gargantua', *Esprit Généreux, Esprit Pantagruélicque: Essays by His Students in Honor of François Rigolot*, ed. by Renier Leushius and Zahi Zalloua (Geneva: Droz, 2008), pp. 161-76, (p. 166).

in the background, whilst Gargamelle and the midwives are in the foreground. This is in stark contrast to what I have suggested is a collaborative relationship between Grandgousier and Gargamelle in Rabelais' original text. The juxtaposition of Grandgousier's feasting and Gargamelle's labour is brought out in the illustration, allowing the reader-spectator to draw a link, as some scholars have done, between feasting and copulation.[83] But the way in which the illustration separates the two communities by placing a wall in between them leads us to interpret Grandgousier's feasting as indicating ambivalence on his part towards his wife.

The illustration also separates the scene from the bodies within it. With the exception of the phallic shaped branch that casts a shadow over the female figure to the left of the image and the suggestive folds of Gargamelle's skirt, the illustration is void of sexual charge. This is not the case in Rabelais' original text, which, as I noted before, explicitly links the act of conception to the birth that ensues. The illustration shuts down and tames Rabelais' episode, just as the midwife from Brisepaille closes off Gargamelle's orifices in Rabelais' original text. Lianne McTavish has considered the depiction of midwives in the obstetric atlases of the time, which feature, she argues, 'female midwives who intervene to mediate and even prevent male looking [...]'.[84] In the context of an illustrated novel, though, the midwives in the 1741 edition prevent and mediate not only a male gaze, but also a female gaze, creating and capitalising upon a newfound desire to look rather than to listen. We might even go as far as to say that the illustration functions as one of the midwives in so far as it exists as a mediator between Rabelais' open text and the reader-spectator. As go-betweens, both the midwife and the illustration

[83] See, for example, Michel Jeanneret: 'Ici aussi, une séquence biographique s'amorce sur un épisode de festin. Un destin individuel s'ébauche tandis que la collectivité célèbre sa survie dans le retour printanier de la germination. Les énergies vitales, les forces du renouveau triomphent, manifestés par deux actes à peine distinctes: procrérer et manger'. "Ma Patrie est une citrouille: Thèmes alimentaires dans Rabelais et Folengo"', *Etudes de Lettres*, 2 (1984), pp. 25-44, (p. 30).
[84] Lianne McTavish, *Childbirth and the Display of Authority in Early Modern France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 72

symbolise the 'in-betweeniness' that characterised the emerging genre of the novel in the mid-eighteenth century.[85]

The illustrated edition in and of itself also acts as a point of transition between aural reception and visual reception. The illustration bears the traces of the kind of Rabelais we have encountered over the course of this thesis; the phallic branch to the left of the image reminds us of the dildos in the *Ballet des Andouilles* of Chapter One; the man in the centre embodies the conflation between man, narrator and character that were passed down via the anecdotes I considered in Chapter Two; the forest-like setting reminds us of the Rabelaisian intertext in the work of La Fontaine that I considered in Chapter Three; and the silent yet visible midwives that huddle around Gargamelle strike obvious parallels with 'La Femme Muette' that I considered in Chapter Four. Yet the open orifices (of all kinds) that have populated this thesis thus far are absent from the illustration of 1741. The illustration silences the noises that we have listened to, acting as an instance of the transition from an aural culture that invited women like Sévigné in, over to a visual culture that actually contains, curtails and silences whilst creating the impression of accessibility.

5.4. Rabelais in the *Bibliothèque Universelle des Romans* (1776)

The conceptualisation of Rabelais' work as a 'roman' was concretised by the inclusion of an abridged version of the text in the women's journal, *La Bibliothèque Universelle des Romans* in March 1766; this version was itself undoubtedly shaped by the illustrated edition of 1741.[86] The episodes that are narrated in the most detail include Gargantua's labour, the bells of Notre Dame, the battle of the Fouaciers de Lerné, Gymnaste's

[85] Desrosiers-Bonin describes midwives in Rabelais' world as being 'les interprètes de signes, c'est-à-dire des événements prodigieux qui précèdent et accompagnent la venue au monde de l'enfant.' 'Rabelais et la nature féminine', p. 37.
[86] Schmidt, 'the [illustrated] editions themselves bespeak the elevation of the novel from funny but insignificant book to a classic discreetly instructive for an educated public', *Critical Images*, p. 47.

acrobatics, the battle with the Physterre, and, most importantly, the encounter with Bacbuc. Not only, then, did the illustrations reflect the public interest in certain episodes of Rabelais' work, they served to shape subsequent manifestations of Rabelais' corpus for a female readership. This would later be cemented in the *Bibliothèque Universelle des Romans*, which, like the *Mercure Galant* was aimed at a readership that was gendered as Modern and feminine by virtue of its explicit association with the genre of the novel.

The issue of March 1776 included a selection of extracts from Rabelais' work.[87] In this issue Rabelais' work was described explicitly as a novel: '[c]e roman est le premier du genre satyrique qu'on ait écrit en notre langue'. The editors make it clear that they do not regard Rabelais' work as allegorical or historical[88], but rather that they are concerned with presenting their readers with the episodes that are 'amusants et ingénieux'.[89] Towards the end of the entry, the issue draws a parallel between the work of Rabelais and Voltaire: '[c]oncluons (ce qui est bien honorable pour Rabelais) que s'il eut vécu de nos jours, il eut peut-être été l'auteur de Candide & de Zadig'.[90] The *Bibliothèque Universelle des Romans* takes issue with Voltaire's attitude towards Rabelais' work: '[d]ans son Temple du Goût il le réduit à quelques pages'.[91] Nous souscrirons volontiers à ce jugement, pourvu que ce petit nombre de pages puisse donner une idée de l'esprit philosophique, critique, et plaisant de l'Auteur. C'est ce que nous venons d'essayer'.[92] Although critics of Rabelais' reception often cite Voltaire's view of Rabelais' work as an indication that the eighteenth century held an overwhelming disdain for Rabelais, the

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[87] *Bibliothèque Universelle des romans*, March (1776), pp. 81- 128. For a study of how the *Bibliothèque* constructed and conceptualised literature of the medieval period, see Véronique Sigu, *Médiévisme et Lumières : le Moyen Age dans la "Bibliothèque universelle des romans"* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2013). No equivalent study exists for its construction of sixteenth-century literature. Henceforth referred to as *Bibliothèque*.

[88] 'nous ne verrions dans tout le Roman ni allégorie ni allusien, il nous suffiroit, pour justifier l'idée advantageuse qu'on en a toujours conçue, d'en presenter seulement quelques détails à nos Lecteurs'. *Bibliothèque*, pp. 82-83.

[89] Ibid. p. 110.

[90] Ibid. p. 128.

[91] 'les œuvres de Marot et de Rabelais réduites à cinq ou six feuilles' Voltaire, *Le Temple du goût* [1733] (Paris: Droz, 1938), p. 92.

[92] *Bibliothèque*, p. 124.

neglected sources that often stand at the margins of this scholarship, but that have resurfaced in this thesis, tell quite a different story. The entry in the *Bibliothèque Universelle des Romans* further locates Rabelais' work within the context of the novel and the romance plot by emphasising the question of Panurge's marriage:

> Un chapitre plus comique & peut-être au fond plus philosophique [que l'isle des Dipsodes], est celui ou Panurge ayant envie de se marier, & craignant un mal dont on ne plaint personne, alla consulter Pantagruel sur le parti qu'il devoit prendre. Que la réponse de son Maître soit affirmative ou négative, il a toujours quelque si ou quelque mais à lui objecter, & il ne sait comment fixer ses incertitudes.[93]

The entry concludes by offering an excerpt from Panurge's encounter with Bacbuc. The description of the temple is reprinted roughly as it appears in Chapter 45 of the *Cinquième Livre*, with the exception of an interjection which glosses Rabelais' architectural knowledge: 'La description du temple est très-belle, & prouve que Rabelais connoissoit l'architecture, & tous les arts qui en dépendent'.[94] A similar interest in Rabelais' description of the temple is also made visible in the illustration of 1741 (Fig 6).

Although the *Bibliothèque*'s entry remains faithful to Rabelais' description of the temple, the end of the entry makes significant changes to Rabelais' original text:

> «Si vous avez noté, ce qui est lettres ioniques écrit dessus la porte du temple, vous avez pu entendre, qu'en vin est vérité cachée. La Dive Bouteille vous y envoye. Soyez-vous mêmes interprètes de votre entreprise». Pantagruel trouve qu'on ne peut mieux dire, & invite Panurge & les autres à boire. Un enthousiasme bachique les saisit, ils riment tous, & Bacbuc enfin les congédie par un discours, dont la fin mérite d'être rapportée: « Quand les hommes, dit-elle s'adonneront à parfaire seurement Œuvre de sapience, ils trouveront deux choses nécessaires: guide de Dieu, & compagnie d'hommes». Nous ne pouvions mieux finir notre Extrait que par cette citation.[95]

[93] Ibid. p. 109.
[94] Ibid. p. 127.
[95] Ibid. p. 128.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

(Fig. 9) Comment BACBUC accoutre Panurge pour avoir le mot de la BOUTEILLE

The *Bibliothèque* entirely skips over Chapter 46 in which Frère Jean and Panurge discuss the possible meanings of Bacbuc's words, synthesising the chapter into the comment 'ils riment tous'. This is highly significant in so far as it is Panurge's reaction to Bacbuc's

words that make him look like a fool. Bacbuc has encouraged Pantagruel and his men to take responsibility for their futures, 'Soyez vous-mesmes l'interprète de votre propre entreprise'. Pantagruel accepts and seems to understand her advice, but in Rabelais' original text, Panurge remains in denial about his own agency and responsibility:

> - Possible n'est, dist Pantagruel, mieux dire, que fait ceste venerable pontife: autant vous en di-je lors que premierement m'en parlastes. Trinch doncques, que vous dit le cœur, eslevé par enthusiasme Bacchique.
>
> *- Trinquoins, dist Panurge, de par le bon Bacchus.*
> *Ha, ho, ho, je voiray bas culs*
> *De bref bien à poinct sabourez*
> *Par couilles, et bien embourez,*
> *De ma petite humanité.*
> *Qu'est-ce cy? la paternité*
> *De mon coueur me dict seurement,*
> *Que je seray non seulement*
> *Tost marié en nos quartiers:*
> *Mais aussi que bien volontiers,*
> *Ma femme viendra au combat*
> *Venerien: Dieu, quel debat*
> *J'y prevoy! Je laboureray*
> *Tant & plus, & sabourray*
> *A guoguo, puisque bien nourry*
> *Je suis. C'est moi le bon mary.*
> *Le bon des bons. Io pean.*
> *Io pean. Io pean.*
> *Io mariage trois fois,*
> *Ca, ça Frere Jean je te fois*
> *Serment vray & intelligible*
> *Que cest Oracle est infaillible,*
> *Il est seur, il est fatidicque.*[96]

As Jerry C. Nash has argued, Panurge's response demonstrates an unwillingness to take responsibility for his own destiny.[97] In removing this part of the text, the Bibliothèque removes the suggestion that Panurge, and perhaps some of the other men in Pantagruel's company, might in fact misunderstand or refuse to accept Bacbuc's words. The ending

[96] Œuvres (1741) Vol. 2, pp. 303-304.
[97] Jerry C. Nash, 'Rabelais and Stoic Portrayal', *Studies in the Renaissance*, Vol. 21 (1974), pp. 63-82, (p. 80).

of the extract provided in the *Bibliothèque* is also markedly different from the end of Bacbuc's speech as it appears in Chapter 47 of Rabelais' original text:

> Car tous Philosophes et sages Antiques à bien seurement et plaisamment parfaire le chemin de la cognoissance divine et chasse de sapience, ont estimé deux choses necessaires, guyde de Dieu, et compagnie d'homme. Ainsi entre les Philosophes, Zoroaster print Arimaspes pour compagnon de ses peregrinations: Esculapius, Mercure: Orpheus, Musée: Pythagoras, Agleopheme: entre les Princes et gens belliqueux, Hercules eut en ses plus difficiles entreprinses pour amy singulier Theseus, Ulysses, Diomedes, Eneas, Achates. Vous autres en avez autant fait, prenans pour guide vostre illustre dame Lanterne. Or allez de par Dieu qui vous conduie.[98]

Despite having stated that 'la fin [du discours] mérite d'être rapportée', the entry in the *Bibliothèque* in fact omits the ending in which Bacbuc praises Panurge and his men, saying that they have done just as much as Hercules and the ancient heroes of the past by taking 'dame Lanterne' to be their guide. How is the reader to understand the figure of 'dame Lanterne?' Is it one woman in particular? women in general? or the figure of Woman in the abstract sense? Or is it not in fact any kind of woman at all but rather an allegory for truth?

The reader is first introduced to the 'Pays des Lanternois' in Chapter 9 of *Pantagruel*, when we learn that Panurge is fluent in the 'langaige lanternoys' (248). Panurge frequently refers to this country over the course of the *Quart Livre*, but never actually visits it. Huchon has suggested that the term 'lanterne' is a play on the word Lateran, in reference to the Lateran council of 1179 during which Pope Innocent III was made to consider and welcome individuals who interpretetd the Bible for themselves without the guidance of the Church.[99] Margaret Harp argues that, by using the term but never actually depicting the place, Rabelais is highlighting the 'etymological significance of the name'.[100] Harp notes that *lanterne* in the early modern world could signify a toy

[98] *Œuvres* (1741), Vol. 2, pp. 309-310.
[99] Mireille Huchon, 'Archéologie du Vème Livre', *ER* 21 (1988), pp. 19-28.
[100] Margaret Harp, 'Lanternois', in *The Rabelais Encyclopoedia*, p. 142.

lantern, a vain or unimportant matter, or a secretive platform used for spying and that the verb *lanterner* came to mean to behave foolishly. The most important, she argues, is the word's reference to a source of light, which brings with it connotations of enlightenment and learning.[101] But what about the 'dame' in all of this?

Although the allusion to Lucian's 'Lanterntown' in the *Verae Historiae* has been acknowledged by scholars, there is, I suggest, an alternative intertextual reference here that sheds new light on the end of the *Cinquième Livre*.[102] Bacbuc's rallying final speech and her call to follow 'dame Lanterne' bears a striking resemblance to the opening scene of Aristophanes' play, *Ekklesiazusae* (391BCE), or *Congresswomen,* in which Praxagora, leader of a group of women holds up her lamp and praises it as an object that knows women's secrets – it becomes, in A.M. Bowie's words, 'an emblem for the take-over by the world of women of the world of men'.[103] Some critics have read Aristophanes' mobilisation of women in the play purely as satire or comedy.[104] But others, such as William Casement, have argued that although Aristophanes uses comedy, he does so to set out a utopian, communist and gynocratic theory of the state.[105] The suggestion that 'dame Lanterne' may have been a reference to Praxagora is not impossible, given that Rabelais was well-acquainted with the work of Aristophanes.[106] If we consider that 'dame Lanterne' might be Praxagora, i.e. a woman dressed in men's clothes, then Panurge, Pantagruel and his men are being addressed as women, or at least men dressed in

[101] On this, see Georges Matoré, *Le vocabulaire et la société du XVIème siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1988).
[102] Harp, *The Rabelais Encyclopoedia*, p. 142.
[103] A. M. Bowie, *Aristophanes: Myth, Ritual and Comedy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), p. 255.
[104] See, for example, Douglas Parker, "The Congresswomen", in William Arrowsmith, ed. *Aristophanes: Four Comedies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1977), p. 1 and Lois Spatz, Aristophanes (Boston: Twayne, 1978), p. 37.
[105] William Casement, 'Political Theory in Aristophanes' *Ecclesiazusae*', *Journal of Thought*, Winter (1968), pp. 64-79. See also Kenneth M. De Luca, 'Praxagora's lamp', Aristophanes' Male and Female Revolutions: A Reading of Aristophanes' Knights and Assemblywomen (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), pp. 73-76.
[106] On Rabelais' familiarity with the work of Aristophanes, see Linton C. Stephens, 'Rabelais and Aristophanes', *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Jan, 1958), pp. 24-30.

women's clothes.[107] And so we are back to the kind of gender fluidity that we saw in the *Ballet des Andouilles* I considered in Chapter One. By removing the allusion to 'dame Lanterne', and concluding the extract by fore fronting the notion of a 'compagnie des hommes', the *Bibliothèque* removes the gender ambiguity and the interconnected presence of women from Rabelais' world. As was the case with the illustrated edition of 1741, at the same time as inviting a female audience, the *Bibliothèque* in fact disfigures Rabelais' text, presenting it as a homosocial paradigm from which women, broadly conceived, are excluded.

Unlike the 'extraits' I considered in the previous chapter, neither the illustration nor the 'extrait' from the *Bibliothèque Universelle* opens Rabelais' text up to women. Instead, they question the idea that women can be thought of as conversational partners rather than onlookers or objects of a male gaze. Rather than encouraging women to listen to Rabelais' work and to then talk about it, this extract shuts the sound down, explicitly silencing women's voices both inside and outside of Rabelais' text. At a time when novels were becoming increasingly accessible to, and targeted towards women, the stakes of allowing them to access Rabelais' text became higher. Goodness knows what a woman might do if she were to read about the bi-sexual chitterlings alone, or imagine the sound of the woman's postcoital fart following clitoral stimulation as a result of sexual intercourse with a fox's tail. Both of these sources mark a move away from a Rabelaisian world in which women are conversational (or sexual) partners, and paves the way towards a more cautious dialectic of reception: look, but don't listen, gasp, but don't speak, the 1741 illustration suggests. And it might just be best to stay out of it, concludes the *Bibliothèque Universelle* of 1776.

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[107] The gender fluidity within Aristophanes' work has been the subject of recent scholarly attention. See, for example, Katherine McDonald, 'The Sociolinguistics of Gender, Social Status and Masculinity in Aristophanes', *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics*, Volume 2, Issue 2 (2016), pp. 155-188 and Catherine Belsey, 'Disrupting Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies", *Alternate Shakespeares*, ed. by John Drakis (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 166-190

Conclusion

On January 25th, 1785, an opéra-comique entitled *Panurge dans l'isle des Lanternes* premiered at the Académie Royale de musique. The script for the piece was written by Morel de Chédeville with music by André Grétry. The plot centred upon the plight of Panurge's imaginary wife, Climène, who tells the audience of her woes at having been abandoned by her lover. This character of course never features in Rabelais' text, but exists only as a spectral presence of that which Panurge does not have (and is not sure that he wants!) Yet her absence is given a voice, and indeed the most prominent voice, in this piece, which, according to James Arnold, was part of Grétry's 'deliberate campaign [...] to embed comedy into the repertoire of the Académie Royale'.[1] The comedic value of the opéra lies in the fact that Panurge, who has been unfaithful to his wife, is made a fool of and is forced in the end to pledge allegiance to her. The opéra was a storming success, and still attracted large crowds of spectators three years on from its initial performance.[2] Its popularity amongst the Parisian elite is evidenced by a fan dating from between 1785-1791, which depicts scenes and extracts from the ballet (Fig. 8).[3]

On the front of the fan we see three scenes all of which feature exchanges between Panurge and Climène. When read from left to right, the images depict Panurge's

[1] James Arnold, *Grétry's Operas and the French Public: From the Old Regime to the Restoration* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2016), p. 88.
[2] Mark Darlow notes that there were 31 performances of *Panurge dans l'Isle des Lanternes* between 1788-1792. See his *Staging the French Revolution: cultural politics and the Paris Opéra* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 199.
[3] On the eighteenth-century practise of depicting scenes from theatre and opera on fans, see Nathalie Rizzoni, 'Les écrans à main et l'éventail de *Blaise et Babet*, une pièce de Monvel et Dezède (1783)", colloque CÉSAR/Clark Art Institute, *Visions de la scène: théâtre, art et représentation en France, 1600-1800* (Williamstown: Mass., 2008), eds. Mark Ledbury, M. Bannister et J. Ravel, Electronic publication (2009) - http://cesar.org.uk/cesar2/conferences/conference_2008/rizzoni_08fr.html. On the cross-fertilisation between stage, page and object in the period more generally, see Florence Boulerie, ed., *La médiatisation du littéraire dans l'Europe des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Tübingen: Narr Verlag, 2013).

meeting with Climène, followed by their marriage, and concludes with Panurge and one of his men. The 'asiatique' backdrop that is described here, and which we also see depicted in the fan, is typical of rococo fascination with the 'Orient' in the mid-to-late eighteenth century, which firmly grounds this ballet and the objects that it gave rise to, well within the context of eighteenth-century salons. Much more could be said regarding this incorporation of Rabelais' text into this kind of 'chinoiserie', but that is for another time.[4] What I want to focus on here is the fact that the writing on the inside of the fan is quite different in content to that which we see in the images on the front.



Fig. 10 Éventail, la feuille en papier peint gravé de trois vignettes animées de scènes de la comédie
Au revers: titre et chanson de Climène, Monture squelette en os
(Vers 1785, Height 10", Width, 27 cm)[5]

[4] On the vogue for chinoiserie in eighteenth-century France, see Carol Cains, "Chinoiserie in Europe," in *Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices* (Adelaide: Art Gallery of South Australia, 2015).
[5] http://www.art-richelieu.fr/html/fiche.jsp?id=1163459&np=2&lng=fr&npp=50&ordre=&aff=1&r, last accessed 28 September 2018. The description of the object is taken from the auction catalogue from November 25th 2009 (Aponem: Maison de Ventes aux enchères, 2009), p. 14. The fan was valued at between €800-1000.

The description of the object provided by the Richelieu foundation states that on the back of the fan are printed the words of Climène's 'chanson' that she delivers alone on stage after she has been abandoned by Panurge. So what words did Climène sing? And what words would the woman holding this early modern fan have had in front of her?

Act II, Scene 1

Le théâtre représente l'intérieur d'une Salle Asiatique.

AIR

Jeunes femmes, que je vous plains!
Simples, dociles,
Tendres, faciles,
A des ingrats vous livrez vos destins,
Voyez Climene,
Voyez sa peine,
Comme elle, connoissez ces époux inhumains,
Pauvres femmes, que je vous plains!
Simples, dociles,
Tendres, faciles,
A des ingrats nous livrons nos destins.[6]

In contrast to the visualisations on the front, the back of the fan features Climène on her own, in conversation with the women who she implores not to follow her example, and not to give away their hearts to 'les ingrats' as she has done. An appreciation of why this double-edged fan is so significant in the history of Rabelais' reception requires a nuanced understanding of the ways in which Rabelais' text had previously been adapted, appropriated and censored for female consumption over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In light of the findings in this thesis, several things emerge.

Let us think back to the ballets that I considered in my first chapter. In the *Ballet des Andouilles* (1628), we saw how Panurge's battle against the bisexual chitterlings in

[6] *Panurge dans L'Isle des Lanternes* (Lyon: Chez Mlle Olyer, 1787), p. 15.

the *Quart Livre* became mobilised as a way of exploring questions of gender fluidity and divergent sexualities. The two-sided nature of the fan in some senses takes us back to this moment. The fan was an object that was primarily associated with, and used by, women. Thus the holding of a fan became a performance of womanhood, therefore allowing for the possibility that it could be held equally by a woman inhabiting a male body, a or a man inhabiting a female body, just as much as it could be held by an effeminate man, or a woman attempting to hide her masculinity. The image of a woman holding a fan in her hand also has the potential to be deeply erotic. Is she holding it tightly, or she fingering its rib (the *bout*)? Or grabbing on to its shoulder (the *gorge*)? Is she using it to draw attention to different parts of her body, or might she be seductively concealing her face whilst she peeks over the top? Is this sexual behavior for her own pleasure or the pleasure of others? This exploration of a woman's sexuality takes us back to the *Balet de la Sibylle de Panzoust* (1645), in which the Sibyl was transformed into a sexualised being keen to ensure that men knew how to satisfy their wives in the bedroom (or if not, that the wives knew how to satisfy themselves).

The centrality of the figure of Panurge in both the ballet and the fan takes us back to the relationship between Rabelais and his characters that I considered in Chapter Two. I argued that the construction of Rabelais the writer as 'misogynist' and of his text as 'masculinist' stems to a significant degree from the kind of conflation between Rabelais and Panurge that we saw in the seventeenth-century biographical material. In scenes depicted on the fan, Panurge remains the protagonist, but this time he is accompanied by a woman. And on this particular object, her voice is heard over his. To the outside world, the woman who holds this fan might seem compliant with the behaviour of Rabelais' trickster, but her own eyes are focused not on Panurge but rather on his imaginary wife and her reaction. The woman who holds this fan engages in an imaginary conversation with Panurge's imaginary wife and, as such, listens not only to

the sounds but also to the silences in Rabelais' text that this thesis encourages the reader of Rabelais' work to be attentive to.

Fans also provided a practical as well as a cosmetic function in the early modern world. They could of course be used as a way of cooling oneself down, but they could also be used to swat away flies, functioning in the same way as a handkerchief, or 'émouchoir'. This buzzes us all the way back to the figure of Dame Mouche, or the woman as trickster, that I considered in Chapter Three. By paying close attention to the repetition of the word 'mouche' in *Pantagruel*, 15, I argued that the 'fausse vieille' who is dutifully fucked by a fox at the command of a lion is not being violated, but is having a jolly good time. In focusing on the word 'mouche', the woman reader can enjoy the linguistic pleasure that is brought about by repeated rhymes and persistent utterances, and which climaxes in the woman's postcoital fart which neither the lion nor the fox can understand. She is the one who has tricked them into thinking that they are performing a charitable act in cleaning what she knows they will perceive to be a wound, when in fact they are being instrumentalised by the woman for the purposes of her own clitoral pleasure. The inscription on the back of the fan acts as a warning to women not to give themselves away to 'ingrats' such as Panurge. In the hands of Dame Mouche (and we recall that Isabelle de Charrière would later appropriate the title in 1788), this fan might in fact be used to swat away men like Panurge, the archetypal *Maistre Mouche*. We might say that, 'une bonne *esmoucheteuse* qui en esmouchetant continuellement esmouche de son mouchet par mouches jamais *esmouchée* ne sera'.[7]

The importance of listening to sounds, silences, and muted voices has reoccurred over the course of this thesis, and particularly in Chapter Four, in which I offered a rereading of Rabelais' episode of the 'femme muette' who is given the ability to speak. By

[7] I adapt here the phrase in its masculine form which is used originally by the lion as an explanation for why the fox should keep going: 'un bon esmoucheteur qui en esmouchetant continuellement esmouche de son mouchet par mouches jamais esmouché ne sera'. Rabelais, *Œuvres Complètes*, ed. by Huchon (1994), p. 270.

once again paying attention to the aural pleasure of Rabelais' internal rhyme, I argued that we might understand this 'morale comedie' not so much as a warning to men about the incessant tongues of their potential wives, but rather as an invitation to the woman reader to go and have an affair with Rabelais' text. Your husband might not know how to awaken your 'langue' with his 'langue', but Rabelais' text might.

The fan of course conceals just as much as it reveals. In Chapter Five, I argued that the edition of 1741 saw the beginning of Rabelais' text being domesticated to suit the tastes of a changing public. At the same time as the edition seemed to open Rabelais' text out to women readers by presenting it as a novel, the edition also closed down Rabelais' text by including illustrations such as the illustration of Gargamelle's birth. This scene in Rabelais' text is preoccupied with the orifices of the female body, and plays on the reader's desire to catch a glimpse (inside) of them. But the illustration blocks off our view, just as the midwives stuff astringent up Gargamelle's vagina, thus forcing the child to find an alternative route out, namely her ear. The episode in Rabelais' text brings masculine and feminine spaces together, noting, for example, that Gargantua comforts his wife and stays close by during her labour. Yet the illustration draws a clear distinction between these two realms, imposing a division upon 'masculine' and 'feminine' that is not there in Rabelais' original text. This kind of divisive act of appropriation was all the more stark in the 1776 issue of the *Bibliothèque Universelle des Romans*. This entry removed the reference to the figure of 'Dame Lanterne' from the end of the Cinquième livre, and rewrote Rabelais' text to the extent that Bacbuc's final advice to Panurge was that he should surround himself exclusively with the 'compagnie des hommes'. By explicitly reinstating 'Dame Lanterne', who I argued in Chapter Five might in fact be

understood as an intertextual reference to Aristophanes' feminist heroine Praxagoras, the ballet, and the fan, reinstated the women that the *Bibliothèque* had tried to write out.[8]

It might seem odd to conclude a thesis on women's voices with an object that does not speak, as such. But fans do make noises; they rustle as they are unfurled, and they swish as they are fluttered and flapped by a woman's hand. The noise they make is muffled and muted, but it is still there.[9] And not only that, but in the case of this particular fan, the words inscribed on the inside are lyrics, allowing for the possibility that the woman holding the fan may have gone on to perform the song herself, thus exploring her own voice.[10]

Not only do the findings in this thesis help us to think about this fan from 1785, the fan also helps us to think about the findings in this thesis.[11] The woman who holds a fan to her face is of course concealing as much as she is revealing. What is she doing behind the fan? Is she frowning? smiling? smirking? laughing? The woman who peeks out from behind her fan is analogous to the woman reader of Rabelais' work who cuckolds the text by reading above and beyond it.

In my introduction I drew on the work of De Grève, who, it so happens, casts a cursory glance towards the 'coquettes' in seventeenth and eighteenth-century salons who had scenes from Rabelais' work depicted on their fans. But we remember that De Grève goes on to dismiss the salonnières' Rabelais and focuses instead on the Rabelais that was familiar to the seventeenth-century 'érudits'.[12] By examining previously neglected sources, I have attempted to integrate these so-called 'coquettes' back into Rabelais' world,

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[8] In the ballet, Dame Lanterne advises Panurge 'que de toi Climène soit chérie'. *Panurge dans l'isle des Lanternes*, p. 39.
[9] Juliette Cherbuliez, 'The frisson of No-Touch: A Fan's Gallent Allegory of the Senses', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (June, 2014), pp. 18-27.
[10] On this practice in early modern Europe, see Flora Dennis: 'Resurrecting Forgotten Sounds: Fans and Handbells in Early Modern Italy', in *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and Its Meaning*, ed. by Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 191-210, pp. 191-211, (pp. 194-195).
[11] On thinking with fans, see Katherine Ibbett, 'Editor's note', *Seventeenth-Century French Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (June, 2014), pp. 1-3.
[12] De Grève, *La Réception de Rabelais en Europe,* p. 70.

thereby disrupting the pre-existing narrative of Rabelais' reception. I have shown that there is a long history of women interacting with Rabelais' work, and with Rabelais' work being re-appropriated and framed for an audience comprised of 'dames' or 'femmes'. In this thesis I have shown that Rabelais' text engendered a range of different paratextual material over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By drawing together a range of genres and literary forms, I have placed Rabelais' posterity within the context of changing practices of publication and cultural shifts. I have examined the extent to which these instances of adaptation offer new ways of reading episodes in Rabelais' work that have been notoriously problematic for feminist critics.

Although initially visual, the fan in the early modern world also served to encourage social exchange between men and women.[13] Interactions between readers, texts and sounds have emerged as a central preoccupation of this thesis, in which I have attempted to strike up conversations between men and women inside and outside of Rabelais' text. I have advanced the idea that we might think about Rabelais' text as a text that configures the woman reader, broadly defined, as a conversational partner, albeit one who might at times sneer, splutter, fart, giggle, ejaculate and howl. But most importantly, perhaps, I have suggested that the woman reader can take aural pleasure in the text. Rather than a way of avoiding the question of whether Rabelais' text is misogynistic or not, I have argued that focusing on the pleasure of Rabelais' sounds and verbal play is in fact another way of answering that question.[14] Since the work of Freud and Lacan, the metaphor of male sexuality and desire has been drawn on as a way of unlocking Rabelais' text. This thesis has explored the potential of female sexuality, desire,

[13] On friendship in early modern literature and culture, see Lewis Seifert and Rebecca Wilkin, eds. *Men and Women Making Friends in Early Modern France* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

[14] I respond here to Hodges, 'it is far easier for teachers of early modern texts to retreat into a text's pleasure rather than face students' and their own reactions to the inherent misogyny of outrageous episodes like Panurge's proposal to rebuild the walls of Paris by replacing stones with women's genitalia'. 'Rabelais and Feminism', p. 176.

and gratification, to act as an alternative metaphor and tool for critical analysis, and one which comes with its own political and ethical implications.[15]

I hope to have shown that writing women into the history of Rabelais' reception, which we might more aptly think of as the history of reading Rabelais' text, is not about writing men out, but rather about examining the social, cultural and editorial mechanisms that have served to exclude women from 'Rabelais' world'. A consideration of how women's voices were written out in the early modern world might also prompt us to think about contemporary scholarly practices.

Despite the insistence of critics such as LaGuardia and Reeser that Rabelais' work is 'masculinist', the truth is that Rabelais scholarship is full of women reading Rabelais' writings.[16] What is also true, however, is that these scholars are often overlooked when it comes to being included in the *Revue des Études Rabelaisiennes*, for example, with Mireille Huchon being the notable exception.[17] This thesis has drawn on the work of several of these scholars of Rabelais' work who are often sidestepped in favour of Michel Jeanneret, Paul J. Smith, Jerome Schwartz, Edwin Duval, Gérard Defaux, François Rigolot, Terence Cave and E. Bruce Hayes.[18] Although I have of course drawn on the work of all of these scholars too, I have done so partly to show that they have generally solved the 'woman question' by arguing that the episodes in Rabelais'

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15 Feminists have long criticised Foucault's lack of attention to the question of women's sexuality in his *Histoire de la Sexualité* (1984). See, for example, Johanna Oksala, 'Sexual Experience: Foucault, Phenomenology, and Feminist Theory', *Hypatia*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (Winter 2011), pp. 207-223 and Monique Deveaux, 'Feminism and Empowerment: A Critical Reading of Foucault', *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Summer 1994), pp. 223-247.

16 Carla Freccero underscores this discrepancy in "Feminism, Rabelais and the Hill/Thomas Hearings: Return to a Scene of Reading", *in François Rabelais: Critical Assessments*, ed. Jean-Claude Carron (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 73-82. Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, Freccero's voice the only woman's voice that is present in the collection.

17 Huchon's contribution to Renaissance scholarship has been invaluable. The same cannot be said, however, for her contribution to feminist scholarship. Consider her writing out of female authorship in Louise Labé in *Louise Labé: Une création de papier* (Genève: Droz, 2006).

18 In his entry concerning Rabelais in *A New History of French Literature*, ed. Denis Hollier (Harvard University Press, 1989), Edwin Duval cites only male critics. See Duval, 'Rabelais and Textual Architecture', pp. 154-159. This is equally the case in Raymond Geuss' entry, 'Rabelais and the Low Road to Modernity', *A History of Modern French Literature*, ed. Christopher Prendergast (Princeton University Press, 2017) pp. 71-91.

work that feature women have little, if nothing, to do with gender. Perhaps Amy Staples is right in suggesting that women critics constitute a threat to scholars who argue that Rabelais' work is written *for* men, *about* men.[19] Over the course of this thesis I have made a conscious effort to engage with the work of several of these *rabelaisantes*: Rosa Alvarez-Perez, Barbara Bowen, Pollie Bromilow, Elizabeth Chesney-Zegura, Carol Clark, Dorothy Gabe Coleman, Carla Freccero, Alice Fiola Berry, Jane Gallop, Elisabeth Hodges, Ann Rosalind Jones, Constance Jordan, Juliana Kitty Lerner, Jenny Oliver, Mary Rothstein, Amy Staples, Rowan Tomlinson, Florence M. Weinberg, and last but by no means least, Natalie Zemon-Davis, to name but a few.[20] Of course not all of these women readers are concerned with questions of gender in their scholarship. And they all have different voices. But their very existence as women who read Rabelais' work means that pronouncing their names seems like a fitting way of ending the story that I, in my own voice, have told here.

[19] Staples, 'Primal Scenes/Primal Screens', pp. 51-52.
[20] On citation activism, see Sara Ahmed, 'Whose Counting?', *Feminist Theory* 1 (1) pp. 97-103 (2000).

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