# The Dice of Our Judgement

## *Rabelais and the women*

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André Tiraqueau, Rabelais' youthful friend, was twenty-four when he married Marie Cailler, who was less than eleven at that time.[1] This happened in 1512. One year later Tiraqueau published the first version of his masterwork, a study entitled *De legibus connubialibus*.[2] According to its title, this work discusses the questions of matrimonial legislation – that is the rights of the husband. The work made a hit, provoked a multitude of affirmative and critical comments. At the beginning of the Twenties, from when his friendship with Rabelais dates, Tiraqueau was just preparing its new, significantly enlarged edition.[3] This second edition contains already a rhymed Greek dedication by Rabelais. Also, Tiraqueau did not forget to mention and praise his friend's great erudition among his examples and references.

They got acquainted in Fontenay-le-Comte, where Tiraqueau was a lawyer at the district[4] court, whereas the twenty-six-year-old Rabelais became a monk of the Franciscan monastery not later than in October 1520.[5] At that time, a small circle of friends met evenings in Tiraqueau's garden, exchanging ideas about law and moral issues, philosophy and po-

[1] J. Barat, *L'influence de Tiraqueau sur Rabelais*, "Revue des études Rabelaisiennes", 3. 1905. 138.

[2] André Tiraqueau, *De legibus connubialibus*, Paris, Josse Bade, 1513.

[3] Paris, Pierre Vidoue, 1524. This is a radical enlargement: the first edition consisted of 27 sheets, the second one of 276.

[4] *bailliage,* in South France: *sénéchaussée,* the lowest level of jurisdiction and the local center of royal authority.

[5] See Jean Plattard, *L'Adolescence de Rabelais en Poitou,* Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1923. 13.

etry. Rabelais soon became a habitué of this circle and doubtlessly had the opportunity to become acquainted with his friend's ideas concerning the question of women. This was certainly a frequent and preferred subject of these meetings where, by the way, Tiraqueau's father-in-law, the criminal judge Arthus Cailler, was also present. Probably at this time or later Rabelais must also have studied his friend's book thoroughly, since he widely quotes examples and reflections from it in some chapters of the *Third Book*.[6]

Tiraqueau's great merit and probably the reason of his success is having reformulated the question of women's social status and abilities in the context of the new, up-to-date legal-philosophical knowledge. The question itself had already become acute irrespectively of his book, and its publishing was followed by an almost forty-year long debate.[7] This debate basically followed two threads. One developed the traditional controversy between those who praised and those who reviled female nature and character.[8] The other one led to the battlefield of the supporters and enemies of marriage.[9] The obvious philological correspondences between

[6] J. Barat was the first to highlight this coherence (*L'influence de Tiraqueau sur Rabelais*), albeit anybody reading attentively both texts can ascertain that Rabelais' antique examples and references are not of first hand but borrowed from the second edition of *De legibus connubialibus*.

[7] One could not claim truthfully about many contributions to this debate that their authors would have been prompted by the book of Tiraqueau. They were rather the indirect consequences of the questions and thoughts arising in the debate and of the more and more widespread awareness of the actuality of the problem.

[8] There was a traditional tension in France between the culture of the court and the minstrels idealizing the woman and the side-street way of viewing the things of the comic genres, the male-chauvinist naturalism of the "gallism". The 13th century allegoric *Romance of the Rose* serves as an example for both with the tension between its first and second part, written by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meung, respectively. Some important answers upon the book of Tiraqueau, pro: Amaury Bouchard, Τῆς γυναικείας φύττης ἀπολογία, 1522. Jean Bouchet, *Triumphes de la noble dame amoureuse et l'art d'honnestement aimer,* 1530. – against: Gratien Dupont, *Controverses des sexe masculin et faeminin,* Toulouse, 1534. – For a summary of the debate see the pioneer study of Abel Lefranc (*Le Tiers Livre du "Pantagruel" et la querelle des femmes*, "Revue de études Rabelaisiennes"*,* 2. 1-10. 78-109. 1904. Paris, Honoré Champion; Geneva, Slatkine Reprints, 1974.).

[9] E.g. Jean [Giovanni] Nevizan, *Sylvae nuptialis libri sex,* Paris, 1521. This is a work of an Italian author, not by chance published in France. The title of the first two chapters is "Non

some chapters of the *Third Book* and *De legibus connubialibus*, alongside the fact that the "debate of women"[10] had recrudesced immediately before the *Third Book* thanks to the enormous success of Antoine Héroët's praise of women[11], led to a general inclination by the scholars of Rabelais' to interpret its plot – or at least the chapters reporting Panurge's marital dilemma – in the context of this debate. In his classical study quoted above, Abel Lefranc even supposed an immediate causal relation between the debate of women and the creation of the *Third Book*. According to his hypothesis, the first chapters of the book, those set in Dipsody, had been written much earlier. Rabelais resumed his work under the impact of the recrudescence of the debate of women, and added the story set in Poitou about Panurge's marital dilemma[12] as though capitalizing a popular topic.

Rabelais, however, promised already in the last chapter of *Pantagruel* (1532) that he would tell us how Panurge gets married and cuckolded in the very first months of their marriage. Therefore, he hardly needed the debate of women to resort to the popular comic theme of fabliaux and farces, the topic of old husband and mischievous wife. Surely he took into account the beneficial influence of the popular theme on the commercial value of his work, just like he had previously capitalized the success of a recently published shoddy book[13] in the case of *Pantagruel*. So the least we can say is that Lefranc exaggerates when he states that "Rabelais got the popular contagion which thinkers and writers fell foul of around 1545, having no attention for anything else than the dreadful riddles of marriage and women".[14] And when he puts Rabelais' imputed misogynous commitment into a biographical context in the last sentence of his study, stat-

est nubendum" ("Do not marry"), that of the second two is "Est nubendum" ("Do marry").

[10] My translation for the 'querelle des femmes'.

[11] *La parfaicte amye,* Lyon, Pierre de Tours, 1542. It had three reeditions in short term (Troyes, 1542. Lyon, Étiene Dolet, 1543. Rouen, 1543.), and was followed quickly by a counter-attack of Jean Boiceau de La Broderie (*Amye de court,* Paris, 1543.) and a plea by Charles Fontaine (*Contre-Amye de court,* Lyon, 1543.).

[12] Lefranc, 102-103.

[13] *Les Grandes et inestimables cronicques du grant et énorme géant Gargantua, contenant sa généalogie, la grandeur et force de son corps. Aussi les merveilleux faictz d'armes qu'il fist pour le roy Artus, comme verrez cy après,* s.n. s.l. 1532.

[14] Lefranc, 101.

ing that "the monk of Fontenay-le-Comte, the friend of Tiraqueau always lived in him",[15] he contradicts known biographical facts. The time spent in the Franciscan monastery was the hardest period of Rabelais' life, all through which he tried to get rid of the drugget gown and then all the monachal ties.[16] As to the friend of Tiraqueau, he was hardly one at the time he wrote the *Third Book.* (More about this later).

What links then the *Third Book* to the contemporary stage of the debate of women?

In chapter 19 we find the first example which goes beyond the usual comic of cuckolding. Pantagruel advises Panurge to consult a mute as to his marriage, and then asks him whether he would prefer a man or a woman. Panurge gives two reasons why he does not want to seek counsel from a woman. The first is that "Whatever signs, shows, or gestures we shall make, or whatever our behaviour, carriage, or demeanour shall happen to be in their view and presence, they will interpret the whole in reference to the act of androgynation and the culbutizing exercise, by which means we shall be abusively disappointed of our designs, in regard that she will take all our signs for nothing else but tokens and representations of our desire to entice her unto the lists of a Cyprian combat or catsenconny skirmish."[17] And here comes an anecdote borrowed from Antonio de Guevara about the lad of Rome who asked a deaf and dumb woman, "not without a chironomatic Italianizing of his demand", that is with vivid gestures as Italians usually do. The woman (mis)understands only these gestures, happily noticing that the lad wants to go to bed with her, and willingly ful-

[15] Lefranc, 109.

[16] The mendicant orders, among them the Franciscans, were noted for their ignorance. When the theological faculty of the Paris University declared the learning of Greek as harmful following the publishing of Erasmus' commentaries to the Greek text of the Gospel of Luke, Rabelais' Greek books were confiscated by his frates in the monastery. One year later he moved to the Benedictine cloister of Mailezais three miles apart, with the help of its erudite prior, Geoffroy d'Estissac. He did not spend much time even in this monastery, and in the Thirties he doffed even the frock. He depicts the monks in his books as idle, greedy, avid and ignorant layabouts and calls them "hobglobins" (farfadets).

[17] I give all quotations from the works of Rabelais according to the translation of Thomas Urquhart and Peter Antony Motteux (*The Works of Rabelais,* Derby, Moray, 1894.), albeit it is somewhat garrulous, and often two times longer than the original.

fills his wish. This refers clearly to women's lasciviousness, doesn't it? But Panurge continues: the second reason is "if they should chance to make any countersigns responsory to our propositions, they would prove so foolish, impertinent, and ridiculous, that by them ourselves should easily judge their thoughts to have no excursion beyond the duffling academy." This speaks, in turn, about men's lasciviousness. Consequently one can not maintain that Panurge – or the author – would particularly condemn the female nature in this chapter.

In chapter 28, Friar John proposes to Panurge to take Hans Carvel's ring upon his middle finger, if he wants to be assured against being cuckolded. And tells a story borrowed from Poggio:[18] that in his dream, Carvel got a magic ring from the devil, precluding cuckolding – and awakened he found his finger within the "what-do-by-call-it" of his wife. This story, instead of condemning the wife's lasciviousness, makes game of the jealous husband. In chapter 34 we find an anecdote borrowed from one of the most influential misogynous participants of the debate of women, Gratian Dupont, whose work I already referred to in footnote 8. Here the nuns solicit the pope "to grant them an indulgence by means whereof they might confess themselves to one another". It would be difficult for them, answers the pope, to keep the confession secret. Since the nuns protest vividly, he gives them a box, asking them to keep it for him until the next day. He had previously put a linnet into the box, which of course was no more there the next day: the sisters were unable to overpower their curiosity, they opened the box and the little bird escaped. The "female characteristic" at stake is consequently curiosity, and namely its special form: the irresistible desire of the forbidden. The question of curiosity, however, was peculiarly rearranged by the author in one of the previous chapters. There Panurge seeks counsel from Rondibilis, the physician. Opinions are diametrically opposite concerning his role. Pierre Michel says that "regarding this point [i. e. the assessment of women] he seems to be the interpreter of Rabelais' opinion".[19] Mireille Huchon states just the opposite: "Rondibilis enacts in reality a paradoxical declamation, and Rabelais even makes game […] of his person".[20]

[18] *Liber facetiarum*, 1438-1452. "Visio Francisci Philelfi".
[19] Michel, 38.
[20] Huchon, *Rabelais,* 306.

It is not easy to avert the impression that Rabelais himself is amused by his ratiocination, when he anatomizes, in chapter 31, the various methods of abstinence from a medical point of view. Namely this is the last thing Panurge ever intended to do. Especially funny is when he explicates how hard work is beneficent (as to abstinence) and harmful (as to the sexual performance). May I emphasize that this part of the text is veritably crammed with references borrowed from Tiraqueau. As if Rabelais tacitly made game of him, too.

When, on the other hand, in chapter 33 Rondibilis proposes a remedy for the real problem tormenting Panurge, in a certain sense and a certain way he is in fact the interpreter of Rabelais' opinion. Here we meet the rhetoric schema called by Huchon paradoxical declamation: in the frame of an improvised myth he announces regretfully that the deity called Cuckoldry will avoid the home of those who do not respect him duly, whereas will be favorable to those who "mind nothing else but a suspicious espying and prying into the secret deportments of their wives, and how to coop, shut up, hold at under, and deal cruelly and austerely with them by all the harshness and hardships that an implacable and every way inexorable jealousy can devise and suggest". And the reason for that is that women are unable to resist the attraction of what is forbidden. Therefore, the infidelity of wives is the consequence of the jealousy of husbands. The remedy of Rondibilis is accordingly: don't be jealous, because the more jealous you are, the more probable is that your wife will be false to you.

There seems to be a contradiction between all this and the tirade of Rondibilis in the previous chapter about the animal nature put between a woman's legs (i.e. the womb): "When I say womankind, I speak of a sex so frail, so variable, so changeable, so fickle, inconstant, and imperfect, that in my opinion Nature, under favour, nevertheless, of the prime honour and reverence which is due unto her, did in a manner mistake the road which she had traced formerly, and stray exceedingly from that excellence of providential judgment by the which she had created and formed all other things, when she built, framed, and made up the woman. […] For nature hath posited in a privy, secret, and intestine place of their bodies, a sort of member, by some not impertinently termed an animal, which is not to be found in men. Therein sometimes are engendered certain humours so saltish, brackish, clammy, sharp, nipping, tearing, prickling, and most

eagerly tickling, that by their stinging acrimony, rending nitrosity, figging itch, wriggling mordicancy, and smarting salsitude (for the said member is altogether sinewy and of a most quick and lively feeling), their whole body is shaken and ebrangled, their senses totally ravished and transported, the operations of their judgment and understanding utterly confounded, and all disordinate passions and perturbations of the mind thoroughly and absolutely allowed, admitted, and approved of".

The womb as a being able to autonomous movement as an "animal" whose reactions and needs are stronger than the will of the woman, is a popular misogynous commonplace since antiquity, and admitted medical doctrine in Rabelais' time. Ambroise Paré, the greatest medical authority besides Vesalius, wrote: "And finally, in the case of chocking of the womb, the decayed vapors sometimes arise as far as the diaphragm, the lungs and the heart, wherethrough the woman can neither respire, nor expire, those vapors being conveyed not only by veins and arteries, but also by hidden breaches which are in the body. And if the said vapors arise as far as the brain, cause epilepsy, catalepsy, lethargy, apoplexy [palsy] and often death. Since, to make it short, the womb has its own feelings, backs out of the will of the woman, to the extent that one can call it an animal. […] And if it feels like, it flounces and moves, causing a pretty how-de-do to the female who loses her patience and her wits."[21] As we can see, from a "medical" point of view, the hysteria ("the choking of the womb"), which we call today conversion trouble, and the sexual desire of the woman are subject to a similar assessment. The fear of and repulsion at female sexuality by the patriarchal society stigmatized the diagnosis of hysteria – notwithstanding its treatment –, and in turn the female sexuality was stigmatized as hysteria by the same fear and repulsion.

If there is a place in this book where Rondibilis says what Rabelais thinks, then it is his tirade quoted above. At least this is what François de Billon makes us surmise. Having been the secretary of Guillaume du Bellay in Torino at the same time when Rabelais served as his physician, he knew Rabelais well. Appalled by the above quoted tirade, he considered Rabelais to be the leader of the misogynous camp and featured him as

[21] Ambroise Paré, *Oeuvres,* 5. edition, Paris, Gabriel Buon's Widow, 1598. 24. "De la génération", 52. "De la suffocation de la matrice", 975 ab.

such in his *Fort inexpugnable de l'honneur du sexe femnin.*[22] He must have hit the head of the nail, saying that if Rabelais was compelled by the "stinging acrimony" etc. of the animal between *his* legs to write what he wrote about women, then one can eventually suppose that women are also stinged by such an animal.[23] During his long lonely monastic nights, the little François had an abundance of occasions to experience the tyrannical power of corporeal desire. The irresistible drive which, although even in its roughest, least sublimated form is no more animalistic, ties humans most immediately to their inherited animality. The sweeping impetus of Rondibilis' tirade is due to the well-known mechanism of the projection of desire.

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There was a mediocre painter and better critic of art, Étienne-Jean Delécluze, who took the pains to write a whole book about the works of Rabelais only to rough-handle him at the end. After lengthily arguing that Rabelais cannot be considered as a philosopher, he concludes: "His joy is humiliating, the gaiety of his expressions is disconcerting, irritating; his exuberant health makes us painfully feel the loss of our strength. But all these faults are nothing as compared to the pleasure with which he ruins and destroys the laws and all kinds of institutions created so painfully by humans."[24] No wonder, if then we hear that Rabelais is almost an animal: "In Rabelais' character there is something of the nature of the monkey which destroys for the love of it and revel in nastiness."[25]

What provokes such vivid anger even after three centuries? What needs such a desperate defense? What is so endangered – or so insecure in itself, so aware of the loss of its strength? What kind of institution is so unable to protect itself, that a book, the third book of Pantagruel, has constituted a never ceasing danger and menace for it for three centuries – or more?

Delécluze feels aright that it was not the female nature and character Rabelais was interested in by writing his *Third Book.* The figure of Panurge

[22] Paris, Ian d'Allyer, 1555. The manuscript was finished back in 1550.
[23] Billon, fol. 19. verso.
[24] Étienne-Jean Delécluze, *François Rabelais,* Paris, H. Fournier, 1841. 77.
[25] *Ibid.*

represents men's impaired sense of security and awareness of their threatened position rather than a man facing the flaws of the woman. Namely the great social rearrangement, having laid the deep foundation of the Renaissance: the loosening of inborn determinations and the growing degree of individual freedom exerted their effects upon the social position and life chances of women, too. One of the most sensitive indicators for that is the appearance of women in literature. Until then the representation of the feelings and desires of women had been exiled by the social censorship to such comic genres as fabliaux and farces. Public expression in the case of a woman was identical to exuberancy and ribaldry, whereas reserved silence was considered chastity and mansuetude.[26] Consequently it marked a significant shift in the position of women – and in turn became itself a catalyzer of this process – that from the Twenties women appeared in public literary space in ever-growing number. When, for example, a daughter of a Lyon rope-maker began to publish[27] sonnets about the stormy emotions of a woman in love, it signified unmistakably that the jinn of emancipation was out of the bottle. The answer of the male society had not to be waited for. The poems had been printed for the first time in 1555,[28] and already in 1557 a popular song[29] pillorized the scandalous behavior of the author, Louise Labé. Pierre de Saint-Julien stated in 1584 that the erudition these poems witness cannot be expected from "a simple woman".[30] And it was Jean Calvin himself who, in 1560, called the author a plebeian whore? (plebeia meretrix).[31] To sum up shortly: Louise Labé was either a whore, or she was not (her poems were written by a man). This latter assumption has

[26] Susan Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade in Sixteenth-Century France,* Aldershot, Ashgate, 2002. 72-73

[27] To make public, in the case of women, did not mean necessarily printing. For the reasons mentioned earlier, female authors preferred the limited publicity of friendly circles, parlours, their manuscripts went from hand to hand even several years before being printed. See Kirk D. Read, "Women of the French Renaissance in Search of Literary Community: A Prolegomenon to Early Modern Women's Participation in Letters," *Romance Languages Annual,* 5. 1993. 95–102.

[28] Louise Labé, *Oeuvres,* Lyon, Jean de Tournes, 1555. 1556.

[29] "Chanson nouvelle de la Belle Cordière de Lyon".

[30] Pierre de Saint-Julien, *Gemelles ou pareilles,* Lyon, Charles Pesnot, 1584. 323.

[31] *Gratulatio ad venerabilem presbyterum dominum Gabrielum de Saconay, praecentorum ecclesiae lugdunensis.*

been repeated over and over until nowadays, when right up a biographer of Rabelais', Mireille Huchon, consecrated a book to it,[32] with what professionals defined a poorly founded and not much convincing argumentation. The sole expert who made a stand for her hypothesis was Marc Fumaroli.[33]

It is true that this kind of imposture would not have gone for a novelty. In the case of a book attributed to a female author, also printed in Lyon in the same period,[34] one can take more or less for sure that it was written by men. It is symptomatic, as in the dedication of the book the authors themselves belittle the merits of their creature: "This is the work of a woman, therefore could not be so polished as when made by a man experienced in writing." Of course the fact of the counterfeit is in itself a proof of the growing popularity of female authors.[35] One could say that the falsifiers simultaneously capitalized this popularity and adjoined to the camp of those vilipending female writers. Their commercial expectations seem to be fulfilled, since the book, both in original and abbreviated version, was reprinted three times.[36]

It is sure, on the other hand, that a poetess called Pernette du Guillet really lived in Lyon. Not too long, it's true: she fell victim of a plague epidemic at age 25. In 1536, Pernette, who was 16, met Maurice Scève, then 35, the leading figure of the loose group known as "the Lyon poets". She began to write poems under his influence and of course fell in love with him. She was married off when she was 18. Her poems, inspired by her desperate love, have been published posthumously by his husband, who deserves our respect for that.[37]

Now it is well known that Lyon was an important scene of Rabelais' life, too. He worked there from the spring of 1532 until February1535,

[32] *Louise Labé, une créature de papier,* Geneva, Droz, 2006.

[33] "Louise Labé, une géniale imposture", *Le Monde,* 11 April 2006.

[34] *Comptes amoureux par madame Jeanne Flore : touchant la punition de ceulx qui contemnent et mesprisent le vray amour,* Lyon, [Denys de Harcy, 1531.]

[35] See more in Leah L. Chang, *Into Print: the Production of Female Authorship in Early Modern France,* Newark, University of Delaware Press, 2009.

[36] *Comptes amoureux…* Paris, Arnoul l'Anelier, 1543. *La Pugnition de l'amour contempne, extraict de l'amour fatal de madame Jane Flore,* Lyon, François Juste, 1540. Paris, Denis Janot, 1541.

[37] *Rymes de gentille et vertueuse dame, Pernette du Guillet,* Lyon, Jean de Tournes, 1545.

with an interruption of a few months, as physician at the Hôtel-Dieu, and edited antique and medieval medical works for the printer Sebastian Gryphe. Since his affiliation and collaboration with Gryphe continued also in the Forties,[38] it seems quite sure that he frequently returned to the town counting at that time fifty thousand inhabitants, and inevitably contacted its well organized literary world. Hence he could have a personal experience as to the breaking through of women in literature, for which Lyon served a particularly favorable ground, thanks to its geographical location facilitating social and cultural mobility, to its rich bourgeoisie and not least to the Collège de la Trinité, the first coeducated establishment in France.[39]

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It is quite probable that the very first, timid initiatives of emancipation have been apprehended – duly – as menaceful to the male domination. From the very beginning there was something more at stake than the – purposedly trivialised – question, who wears the hat. The authority of the husband and the paterfamilias contains the roots of the fine structure of domination and control, informing the whole of society – and constituting, in fact, its organization –, which cannot be simply dissolved or substituted. Perhaps this is why the reaction of males, menaced in their sense of prepotency, is no less ardent today, albeit the emancipation of the woman has made a great progress in the past centuries. Because they *have* still a sense of prepotency which can be menaced.

Several connoisseurs of the book consequently recall that Panurge sought counsel not only from Hippothadee, Rondibilis and Trouillogan, but also from Bridoye.[40] However, though invited to the banquet with the other three, Bridoye was not present, because he – the judge – had to appear before his judges. Panurge will never have the possibility to seek

[38] Huchon, *Rabelais,* 279-281.

[39] Kelly Digby Peebles, "The Other Voice", a foreword to Jeanne Flore, *Tales and Trials of Love,* A Bilingual Edition and Study, Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Univ. of Toronto, 2014.

[40] E. g. Lefranc, 103. and Huchon, *Rabelais,* 301.

advice from him. It turns out, on the other hand – in the course of many, today not too amazing juristic chicaneries –, that Bridoye decided the processes long ago by throwing a dice. Pantagruel, the wise prince, asks the judges to acquit him, and then tells a story about the doubtfulness of human judgment. By doing this, he fits the episode of Bridoye into the row of Panurge's inquiries, which is from the beginning nothing else than *the representation of the doubtfulness of human judgment*. The text has been already haunted by the throw of the dice as the *risk* of assessing human relations.[41] By opting for the real dice instead of the dice and doubtfulness of judgment and guessing, Bridoye on the one hand averts the responsibility and odium of risky judgment, and on the other hand opens up a space to the divine providence, if it exists, to manifest its will through the chance.

And this is more or less the same as the counsel Pantagruel gave to Panurge at the beginning: to take a decision "with shut eyes, bowing your head, and kissing the ground […] in recommending the success of the residue to the disposure of Almighty God".[42] Pantagruel here, as elsewhere, is the mouthpiece of Rabelais' Evangelism. Both major ideologies of the Renaissance, Neoplatonism and Evangelism, affirmed man's liberty and ability for goodness, and made it his personal concern. While, however, the former was very optimistic as to man's possibilities,[43] the latter bewared of seeing in human mind an omnipotent tool for this ambition. For this latter, the notion of providence contained all circumstances influencing beyond his own will the results of the actions of an individual assured in his will. Now the more obstacles this will encountered historically, the more strength the awareness of human mind's limited competence gained. The Evangelism was from the beginning disposed to some scepticism, considering it a convenient weapon in the battle against dogmatic thought. In

[41] Panurge flattering Pantagruel in chapter 5: "l'amour que de vostre grâce me portez est hors de dez d'estimation"; Epistemon appraising those invited to the banquet in chapter 29: "Je ne diz seulement touchant les perfections d'un chascun en son estat, lesquelles sont hors tout dez de jugement". Both allusions to the dice are missing from Urquhart's much praised translation.

[42] Chap. 10.

[43] "We have been born into this condition of being what we choose to be" – Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity ofn Man,* translated by A. Robert Caponigri, Chicago, Regnery Publishing, 1956. Original: *De hominis dignitate,* 1485.

the course of time, this scepticism became more and more explicit, to that extent that the Evangelists who did not convert to Protestantism neither retreated back to Catholic dogmatism became almost without exception Pyrrhonians.[44] This process will culminate in the *Essays* of Montaigne, but the *Third Book* shows that already Rabelais did not remain untouched. In the person of Truillogan he even puts up a caricature of a Pyrrhonian philosopher, almost sickly refraining from any clear-cut answer upon Panurge's questions. We ought not to forget, however, that it is impossible to give an answer upon the second question of Panurge (namely whether he will be cuckolded or not). And upon his first question (namely whether he should marry or not) there is no general answer. There are only concrete answers, involving all the risk of a personal decision. Perhaps these two chapters are the most amazing ones for a present day reader. Rabelais is veritably rioting in comic turns – but Truillogan is essentially right.

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I began with Tiraqueau, let me finish with him. In 1546, when the *Third Book* left the print, he published the fourth edition of his *De legibus connubialibus*, as it happens, by the same Paris printer, Michel Fezandat, who will publish the last autograph edition of the four books of Pantagruel. Tiraqueau made a nice carrier since we saw him the last time in the friendly circle of Fontenay-le-Comte. In 1541 he became a councillor of the Big Chamber of the Parliament of Paris.[45] From this new, fourth edition of his book he omitted not only the dedicatory poem by Rabelais, but also cancelled all hints and allusions to the former friend. The Forties in France was the time of the divergence of the roads. Did Tiraqueu's thinking and opinion change? Or his status and position did not allow him to commit himself with such a friend? Or did he simply get a cold feet?[46] Can we discern these motives at all? Especially when freedom is shrinking?

[44] Protestantism in turn – evidently generalizing the same social experience – contested even the existence of man's free will. The watershed between Evangelists and Protestants was just the debate of Erasmus and Luther about the free will.

[45] Jean Plattard, *L'Adolescence de Rabelais en Poitou,* 28.

[46] Étienne Dolet, familiar to both of them, was burned in this very year.