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Glimpsing the Divine:
Prophets in Sixteenth Century French Literature

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Abstract

Glimpsing the Divine : Prophets in Sixteenth Century French Literature

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This project looks at literary representations of prophets from Rabelais to Montaigne. It discusses the centrality of the prophet to the construction of literary texts as well as the material conditions in which these modes of representation were developed. I analyze literature's appropriation of Hebrew and Classical sources to establish its practices as both independent and politically relevant to the centralizing French monarchy. I propose that prophets are important to the construction of literary devices such as polyphonic discourse, the lyric subject, internal space, and first-person prose narration. The writers discussed in this project rely on the prophet to position their texts on the edge of larger socio-political and religious debates in order to provide a perceptive, critical voice. By participating in a language of enchantment, these writers weave between social and religious conceptualizations of prophets to propose new, specifically literary, roles for prophets. I look at François Rabelais' prophetic genres – the almanac and the prognostication – in relation to his *Tiers livre* to discuss prophecy as a type of advice. I then turn to the work of the Pléiade coterie, beginning with Pierre de Ronsard, to argue for the centrality of the prophet to the formation of the lyric subject. The second Pléiade member that I discuss, Robert Garnier, puts prophets on the stage to interrupt the temporality of the dramatic action and direct the audience's gaze toward the king as the embodiment of the divine on earth. I conclude with a reading of one of Montaigne's essays in relation to contemporary descriptions of religious ceremonies as haunted houses. This allows me to pinpoint the formal literary constructions that arise in sixteenth century approaches to the representation of prophets.

Introduction

This project looks at literary texts' complex juxtaposition and re-articulation of religious, political, and social changes through representations of prophets. As prophecy took on new forms through print culture and changing theatrical practices in the sixteenth century, literary engagement with prophets similarly required the development of new genres and discursive practices to interact with a world that could no longer be understood through medieval forms.

Medieval mystery plays frequently portrayed prophets as integral to religious history. The fifteenth century play, *Le Mistère du siège d'Orléans*, which uncharacteristically portrays a contemporary historical event, is a helpful point of comparison to look specifically at the shift in literary conventions used to represent prophets that occurred during the sixteenth century. The play portrays Joan of Arc's prophetic intervention during the 1428 – 1429 English siege of Orléans. Victorious French battle scenes, prayer, and divine visitation are juxtaposed with the false astrological prophecies of the occupying English. Charles VII kneels and prays. He asks God to come to his aid in Orléans for he fears he will lose his kingdom. The Virgin Mary speaks to him first, affirming his belief in France's right to their territory:

> C'est le royaulme qui tout soustien
> crestienneté et la maintien
> par la vostre divine essense,
> ne autre n'y doit avoir rien :
> au roy Charles luy appartien,
> qu'il est droit heritier de France.[1]

The fate of France is bound to Christianity, creating continuity between the outcome the Hundred Years' War and religious Providence. Saint Euvertre appears next, followed by Saint Aignan. Finally God himself appears, responding to and arguing with Mary's intervention. Mary and the saints finally convince God to save France. He sends the archangel Michael to bring a mission to a "pucelle" who is "toute doulceur/ bonne, juste et innocente, / qui m'ayme du parfont du cueur, / honneste, saige et bien prudente."[2] Joan will represent God's virtue against French pride and help them to reclaim their territory. A young maiden is prophetically inspired to lead France to victory. Theological time and historical time intertwine as God intervenes in the Hundred Year's War to assure the preservation of the French nation as the vanguard of Christianity, and of Charles VII as the rightful heir of the nation. Joan of Arc metonymically embodies France, which metonymically brings forth Providence.

This literary representation of a contemporary event juxtaposes political, religious, and historical concepts to help spectators understand their present moment. Joan of Arc, as prophet to the French, is the nexus where these concepts converge. Medieval representational conventions allowed for the coexistence of the realistic and the supernatural, particularly in the romance or adventure, as equivalent things that happen.[3] The divine and the earthly are represented with the same literary conventions. Contemporary political figures and divine figures both speak in octosyllabic verse and share the stage. Both Jesus and the Devil can appear on the stage with cobblers and drunken fools.[4] The staging of mysteries followed similar conventions, however, it was unusual for a mystery to portray contemporary events. This medieval mystery weaves the

[1] Folio 168v
[2] Folio 171r
[3] Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinki. *The Strange Case of Ermine de Reims*. 2015.
[4] Graham A. Runnalls. *Les mystères dans les provinces*. 2003.

specificity of contemporary history into large-scale theological history. Unlike most mystery plays, *Le Mistère du siège d'Orléans* not does not stage a biblical story or a hagiography. Contemporary people and historical events take the place of traditional religious stories to fulfill the same narrative function. As the play avoids any significant change in historical conception – this episode of French history is part of a larger theological arc – the literary conventions of a more traditional religious history continue to work.

Joan of Arc continued to be a symbol for sacred French nationalism throughout the sixteenth century.[5] However, literary representations of prophets took new forms and significantly changed the way in which religious history and political history intersected. The anonymous *Tragédie de sac de Cabrières*, published in 1566, like *Le mistère du siège d'Orléans*, takes a contemporary historical event for its subject. It tells the story of the religiously motivated massacre of Protestant in a stronghold at Cabrières in 1545. The play opens with a prophetic dream, which causes the commanding Catholic military leader to hesitate, as it suggests he rely on the strength of language, rather than the sword. The dream is not sufficient to prevent the massacre and a Protestant chorus in return prophetically sings of punishment for Catholics and martyrdom for Protestants. The Greek chorus formally marks a departure from the medieval form of the mystery. *Tragédie de sac de Cabrières* adapts the classical form of the tragedy, reworking the way prophecy relates to larger representations of religious and political history. A prose account of the massacre, *Histoire memorable de la persecution et du saccagement du peuple de Mérindol et Cabrières et autres circonvoisins, appelez Vaudois*, written in 1554 by Jean Crespin, pulls together historical documents for the glorification of God, again formally shifting the way religious history relates to contemporary politics.[6]

Peter Burke has proposed that the Middle Ages do not end until the educated elite cease to take prophecy seriously.[7] While the bans on medieval mystery plays, beginning with the 1548 ban of Jean Michel's *Passion Notre Sauveur* in Paris did not target representation or content but rather the violent social behaviors that had become prevalent in these large outdoor gatherings, literary shifts led to a decline of the mysteries but not to representation of religious subjects and figures, including prophets.[8] Moreover, prophetic rhetoric became increasingly divisive and explosive throughout the century. Prophecy's position between politics and religion made it volatile and ambivalent.

Many of the ways in which religious prophets intervened in political conflicts during the late middle ages continued to structure the incendiary ambivalence of sixteenth century prophets. Social forms of prophecy that developed during the Great Schism (1378 – 1417) to negotiate between competing papal authorities persisted and developed throughout the sixteenth century. An early example of fifteenth-century possession clearly illustrates the two sides of prophecy : unparsed noise and interpretation. The case of Ermine de Reims and her confessor, Jean le

[5] Even today, the Front National champions Joan of Arc today as an origin point for messianic protectors of French territory. In a speech given to commemorate the 600th anniversary of Joan of Arc's birth, Jean-Marie Le Pen describes the apocalyptic conditions of contemporary France conjures Joan of Arc's spirit to lead a new rebellion against injustice and strive for an ideal France: "Fille du ciel, mais aussi de la terre, celle des siens, les Français occupés, opprimés, divisés, qu'elle venait arracher à la menace de la servitude et à la misère et qu'elle appelait à combattre pour que Dieu leur donne victoire… Vive Jeanne, Vive Marine, Vive la France!" Four months before the presidential election, Le Pen metonymically places his daughter as the embodiment of France through Joan of Arc. 6 January 2012, Paris, Place des Pyramides.

[6] See introductory material and notes in Daniela Boccassini's edition of *Tragédie du sac de Cabrières*. *La Tragédie à l'époque d'Henri II et de Charles IX*. Vol. 4

[7] *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. p. 273.

[8] Graham A. Runnalls. *Les mystères dans les provinces*. 2003.

Graveur, shows how a "holy couple" arises between the possessed nun and her interpreter. Ermine de Reims experienced demonic battery and divine intervention during the Schism. Her confessor, Jean le Graveur interpreted her erratic movements and strange sounds as divine intervention, clarifying God's will made manifest, through Ermine's body, in a time of politico-religious crisis.[9] Several issues emerge from the example of the "holy couple." First, interpretation must accompany a divine message; that is, the divine word must be translated into applied teachings. Traditionally it is understood that the prophet must edify the community, either through clear speech or the interpretation of speaking in tongues : "I would that ye all spake with tongues but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."[10] Scholastic prophecy was an act of interpretation, the clarification of divine word. According to the Pauline tradition, the gift of prophecy from God was intended to keep a community in proper relation to one another and to their appointed path, it thus maintained divine order in the world.[11] Joachim of Fiore, a twelfth century monk, established a method of biblical interpretation that allowed scholars to read the contemporary world through a theory of concordances between the Hebrew Bible and the Gospels. The scholarship of Marjorie Reeves illuminates the continued influence of Joachimite thought throughout the early modern period.[12] As the *Mistère du siège d'Orléans* demonstrates, correlation between contemporary history and large-scale theological history gave meaning to otherwise isolated events by relating the French (or the Protestants, in *Tragédie de sac de Cabrières*) to the chosen people. Medieval prophets – including the prophecies of Merlin and the Mélusine legends - were also reread throughout the sixteenth century, including Saint Bridget of Sweden who had prophesied deaths in Rome. Past prophecies were used to help understand the present.[13] Many of these historical prophecies were forged to justify contemporary events.[14]

The second issue raised by the "holy couple," is how oral (and aural) prophecy is authorized as the word of God. In the case of a possessed nun, her confessor is authorized by the church, as an institution, to read the word of God (through the female body). Divine missions, such as the case of Jeanne d'Arc, similarly ensured that a people divided found the right course, but brought together the reception of a divine noise and its interpretation within a single body. Prophecies were preached, performed on stages and in town squares. Without an institutionally authorized confessor or scholar to sanction a reading of the unparsed noise or enigmatic sign, the prophet was responsible for authorizing his or her message. Unparsed noise, or even clear speech, that was believed to bring news raised not only the question of interpretation but also of the authority sanctioning the interpretation. Prophets in the Renaissance needed to establish their authority to speak, to delineate the group receiving the message temporally, geographically, and socially, and to find a form to deliver the message. The sudden appearance of a messenger often followed the tradition of John the Baptist.[15] In late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Italy

[9] Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinki. *The Strange Case of Ermine de Reims*. 2015.
[10] I Corinthians 14: 5 (King James Version). "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." I Corinthians 14: 2- 4.
[11] Colette Beaune. "Jean le Gand, prophète et bienheureux." *Prophètes et prophéties au XVIè siècle*. pp. 13 – 28.
[12] *The Influence of Prophecy in the Later Middle Ages : A Study of Joachimism*. 1969.
[13] Ottavia Niccoli. *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy.* 1990.
[14] Jacques Halbronn. "Les prophéties et la Ligue." *Prophètes et prophéties au XVIè siècle*. pp. 95 – 134.
[15] Beaune. p. 13

itinerant hermits preached in public squares wearing costumes based less on John the Baptist than on stock characters such as the wild man. These prophets brought politically relevant messages, the most prestigious and successful of these prophets in Florence was Savonarola, whose prophecies led up to and coincided with the French invasions of Italy. Savonarola brought together politics, prophecy, and preaching together to advocate for social change.

In sixteenth century France, validating a prophet's claims became increasingly problematic and held higher stakes as the Catholic French monarchy struggled to maintain its authority throughout the religious troubles. Literary writers engaged with prophecy's ambivalent status, both taking advantage of prophecy's political power and exposing the dangers of this power. The poet Mellin de Saint-Gelais, who found favor at Francis I's court but later developed tense relations with the rising Pléiade coterie, describes the problem of prophetic legitimacy in terms of representation and usage :

> Il fault avoir grande discretion, pour scavoir separer le vray du faulx et ne se laisser decevoir par l'apparence de l'affinité que les ars reprouvées semblent avoir avec les permises. Le prodigue ne se doit prendre pour liberal, ny le temeraire pour le hardy, ne l'hypocrite pour le religieux. Aussi ne doyvent le Necromantien, Geomentien, Chromantien et autres telz par astrologien, combine que tous se servant des noms et figures de l'astrologie; ainsi comme les singes se peuvent vestir de robbe, bonnet, et chausses d'hommes, qui neantmoins demeurent singes.[16]

Saint-Gelais couches false prophecy in the language of costumes and deceit but quickly turns to comparisons which turn on authorization. The "ars reprouvées" are contrasted with those that are allowed. The multiple definitions of "ars" rely on this language of legitimacy to cleanly break into two camps : forms and methods of knowledge and science are validated and the condemned arts become ruse, artifice, witchcraft, and even "engins de guerre."[17] Subsequently, Saint-Gelais validates astrology by denigrating necromancy, geomancy, and palmistry. The ability to distinguish true from false prophets requires an ability to see beyond appearances, to see who is producing the signs. Saint-Gelais' example of monkeys wearing clothes suggests not only that keen perception is necessary, but further that one must be authorized to wield certain signs. Just as the monkey does not become human by putting on human clothes, the false prophet does not become legitimate by using prophetic language. However, as Saint-Gelais emphasizes, it is not immediately clear to all reader how to see past the costume: "grande disrection" is needed to make the distinction. The problems of prophetic language is brought up repeatedly in theoretical tracts and pamphlets. Pontus de Tyard returns directly to the problem of astrology raised in Saint-Gelais' *Advertissement* in a philosophical dialogue, *Mantice*, published a decade later.[18] Both of these texts intervene in larger debates over the literary-astrological works published by Nostradamus. In spite of, and in many cases because of, the ambivalent status of prophets in the sixteenth century, literary texts engage with prophetic rhetoric, represent prophets, and construct new possibilities for literature from the complexities prophecy presents. This project seeks to expose some of the ways in which major literary texts intervene in sixteenth century reconfigurations in religion and monarchical power by representing prophets in new ways.

Although frequently discussed in early modern intellectual texts as a vestige of medieval superstition or as a precursor to modern scientific theories, prophecy was historically relevant

[16] *Advertissement sur les jugemens d'astrologie*. Published in Lyon by Jean de Tournes, 1546. pp. 270 – 271.
[17] "art." Robert Martin, Dictionnaire du Moyen Français. atilf.atilf.fr
[18] *Mantice : discours de la vérité de divination par astrologie*. 1558.

and active across French demographics. An alternate history of mystical power runs parallel to scholarly theories of disenchantment and secularization.[19] This project aligns with that alternate history. I will show that literature, unlike philosophy and scientific theory, continued to self-authorize through discourses and forms appropriated from the social and religious practices of prophecy in early modern France. Far from evacuating the divine, literary texts reworked and condensed prophetic authority to help bolster the social and political relevance of literature to the French monarchy.

New material and textual resources became available to writers in the sixteenth century, which expanded the ways in which literature represented prophets. The rise of the printing press allowed for mass distribution of new forms of prophecy, including almanacs, prognostications, and pamphlets. In a study of Renaissance prognostications in the German tradition, Jonathan Green argues that "the prophet is, first and foremost, a media phenomenon."[20] The sixteenth-century saw extensive publication of prophetic genres in print, including the almanac, the prognostication, the centuries and prophecies of Nostradamus, the kabbalistic writings of Guillaume Postel, and extensive prose and verse pamphlet and broadsheet productions, made possible by the printing press.[21] Demonological treatises, astrological guides and agricultural manuals all turned to prophets to promote political ideologies. Vernacular translations of religious became more widely disseminated, moving religious discourse out of the monasteries and into the business sector: religious publications were among the most profitable to print.[22] Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples' 1528 vernacular translation of the Vulgate brought the Hebrew prophets and the Gospels into French participated in Humanist philological projects that lead to the development of new conceptions of history. Marsilio Ficino's Latin translations of Plato's dialogues on prophetic inspiration and poetry entered into France, merging Christian and Greek conceptions of prophecy. As Humanists delved into philology and disrupted many of the interpretive practices of Scholasticism, the church no longer resounded as a singular voice

[19] Prophecy was used extensively as a hidden form of power, a means of access to the necessary power to advance oneself within a hierarchical society. For example, political prophecies proliferated around Francis I's bid during the election of the Holy Roman Emperor; voyages to the New World were often coded as divine missions to find Eden and bring about the apocalypse; during the height of the religious troubles, the Catholic League attempted to gain control of and resacralize the French monarchy culminating in the divine missions of regicide in 1589 and 1610; the possession at Loudun in the early seventeenth century became a spectacle to rival Louis XIII; the *Affaire des poisons*, which gave women at court power over their husbands and even the king, relied on alchemical conjuring; the rebellions of the Camisards relied heavily on prophetic rhetoric after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, to challenge absolutist monarchy of Louis XIV; Jansenist convulsionists continued to perform miracles in Saint-Médard well into the eighteenth century. Hidden forms of power thus were politically volatile. The stakes extended to the political stability and control of vast territories. André Vauchez, *Prophètes et prophétisme*. Paris : Seuil, 2012; Gisèle Chautant, *Croyances et conduits magiques dans la France du XVIIè siècle d'apres l'Affaire des poisons*, 1998; W. Gregory Monahan, *Let God Arise : The War and Rebellion of the Camisards*, 2014; Lionel Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm : Prophecy and Religious Experience in Early Eighteenth Century England*, 2015; Michèle Bokobza-Kahan, *Témoigner des miracles au siècle des Lumieres: récits et discours de Saint-Médard*.

[20] *Printing and Prophecy*. 2012

[21] Jacques Halbronn. *Le texte prophétique en France : formation et fortune*. 1999. Denis Crouzet. *Les guerriers de Dieu : la violence au temps des troubles de religion vers 1525 – vers 1610*. 1990.

[22] Runnalls. *Etude sur les mystères*. Runnalls lists the publishers who continued to print medieval mysteries even after they were no longer published. Among these publishers is Nicholas Odet, who was one of the founding publishers of the Bibliothèque bleue, which included many religious texts as well. Religious publications sold well in the colportage market.

issuing a unified explanation of God's will. The Reform movement further displaced church authority.

Voyages to the New World further displaced medieval representations of prophets. The travel narratives of Jacques Cartier, André Thevet, and Jean de Léry reported on new types of prophets, which they represented in complex manners to accommodate their understanding of religion, history, and political authority. New types of prophetic authorship were developed: for example, Christopher Columbus wrote prophecies in conjunction with his Spanish travel narratives and readings of Seneca's *Medea*.[23]

Access to new materials, newly translated literary and philosophical sources, and new discoveries affected the literary representation of prophecy, which asks not only who speaks and by what authority, but also to whom, to what community, defined in what manner. Jacques Halbronn's extensive archival research seeks to identify and trace the development of prophetic genres from the late medieval period forward. He divides prophetic texts into three categories : *programme*, *recueil*, *oracle*. The *programme* charts God's plan from start to finish, frequently focusing on the Pope as Antichrist and deployed as Protestant religious propaganda. The *recueil* gathers multiple texts that support a cause (such as the *Satyr menippée*) and is used politically to support the French monarchy. The *oracle* (most notably Nostradamus' *Centuries*) is characterized by obscurity; a message transmitted through a text but requires interpretation, if not deciphering. Halbronn associates this third category of prophetic text with literary production, including almanacs and shepherds' calendars.[24] Halbronn's work suggests that literary form shares a lineage with prophetic rhetoric. This project looks at significantly more canonical texts but nonetheless argues that prophecy was not only central to theological, political, and historical conceptions of the French monarchy in the sixteenth century, but furthermore, that prophecy was a significant influence in the construction of literary forms.

Emerging literary discourses and forms engaged with and appropriated the radical authority of religious, historical, and literary traditions of prophecy. This dissertation looks specifically at prophets in sixteenth-century French literature from the enthusiastic Humanist engagement with church reformers before the 1534 *Affaire des placards* through the skeptical writings of Montaigne immediately preceding the 1589 regicide of Henri III. By focusing on canonical Catholic texts, I look at how prophets in literary texts work at the intersection of political, religious, and historical concepts of community formation. How did new and revived literary genres navigate the ambiguous and politically volatile status of prophecy during the religious troubles? How did these texts make new meaning and extend existing worldviews into new territory where it often clashed with the phenomena represented? How did prophecy, in turn, affect the development of new literary forms and techniques : first-person narration, fictional motors, the author function, the rise of internal space.

Literary models of prophets

Although influenced by contemporary social tensions, literary representations of prophets drew significantly from classical and biblical models. I will focus on three major classical models, which structure the specific interventions of the writers presented in this project : Cassandra (discussed in Chapter 3), the Sibyl of Cumae (discussed in Chapter 1), and Orpheus (discussed in

[23] Watts, Pauline Moffitt. "Prophecy and Discovery: On the Spiritual Origins of Christopher Columbus's 'Enterprise of the Indies'." *The American Historical Review*, vol. 90, no. 1, 1985, pp. 73–102; Crouzet, Denis. *Christophe Colomb : Héraut de l'Apocalypse*. Paris : Broché, 2006.

[24] *Le texte prophétique*. 1999

Chapter 2). Then I will look at Christian models of prophecy represented in the Hebrew bible and the Gospels.

Cassandra, the disbelieved and often enigmatic prophetess of classical tragedy, introduces unparsed noise into an otherwise legible text. In Aeschylus' *Agamemmnon*,[25] Cassandra qualifies the Chorus' comparison between her and the nightingale:

> Chorus : You're mad – godstruck, godswept, godnonsensical
> and you keep making that sound, it's not musical.
> Like the nightingale who wails her lost child, you're inexhaustibly wild.
> Sorrow this, sorrow that.
> Sorrow this, sorrow that.
> Kassandra: But yes think oh think of the clear nightingale –
> gods put round her a wing
> a life with no sting
> but for me waits
> *schismos*
> of the double-edged sword: *schismos* means
> a cleaving a cutting a splitting a chopping in two.[26]

The nightingale – the transformation of Philomela whose tongue was cut out to prevent her from naming the man who raped her – mourns the past, juxtaposing two mutually exclusive time frames. Cassandra's speech is not musical; she describes her language as *schismos*. The prophet's language, in comparison to the mourner's, brings the future into the present. Her language is not only unwanted, it is inhuman. Clytemnestra compares Cassandra to a swallow (in most translations) : "Does she talk only "barbarian" – those / weird bird sounds?"[27] Cassandra's speech is wild, disruptive, other. Moreover, her speech is divided from itself, representable only through various comparisons to the language of birds, strangers, the wild and uncivilized. This splitting introduces a critical gap within the narrative, not only through a doubling of dramatic action – everything Cassandra foresees is recounted a second time once it has occurred[28] – but also through a folding of the group. Cassandra's speech introduces a gap within the civilized world. Partitioning Cassandra off as a speaker of tongues, the Chorus does not attempt to interpret her speeches although they frequently and comically acknowledge how clearly they grasp her meaning. Cassandra's alterity is both rejected and understood by her audience. Cassandra reveals language to be a system of signs that is simultaneously of the community that relies upon it and unknown.

In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Cassandra models the political risks of prophecy. She is depicted as a fury capable of mobilizing a population. Precisely because of her doubled language, Cassandra is able to introduce the possibility of alterity, or change into a community. In book five, at Juno's urging, the goddess Iris disguises herself as Beroë, one of the women mourning Anchises' death. As Beroë, Iris tells the women that the "ghost of Cassandra came to [her] in dreams" and told her to burn the ships and simply resettle Troy in Sicily.[29] When the women recognize Iris and see her rainbow, "they are dumbstruck, driven mad by the sign / they scream" and set the ships on fire.[30]

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[25] Charles Toutain published his version of Seneca's Agamemnon in 1557.
[26] Anne Carson translation v. 840 – 850. *An Oresteia*. 2009.
[27] v. 717 - 718
[28] Michael Wood reads the doubled language of prophecy as double time: the foretelling of the story becomes part of the story. *The Road to Delphi*. p. 17
[29] Robert Fagles translation Book 5 v. 703. *The Aeneid*. 2006
[30] Book 5 v. 729

When the men return and the women come to their senses, "Juno is driven from their hearts."[31] Cassandra is further split from herself through her appearance as a ghost, her appearance in a dream, a dream reported by a goddess disguised at the request of a more powerful goddess. Cassandra becomes the abstract concept of splitting. Cassandra's story introduces madness and disruption, unsolicited linguistic division and violence within a group. But she also inspires political mobilization. The women take control of the mission to refound Troy, introducing alterity within what claimed to be a cohesive group, and questioning the path that group is following. Cassandra presents a model of linguistic division and critical distance in tragedy.

In comparison, the Sibyl of Cumae, most importantly portrayed in book six of Virgil's *Aeneid*, helps the Trojans stay on their determined course and assists in the construction of empire by guiding a hero. Aeneas is instructed by his father's ghost to seek counsel from the Sibyl of Cumae, who speaks with a hundred mouths. The Sibyl calls out upon seeing God - "The god, look, the god!" – making him visible through her speech.[32] The god is seen through her bodily change: her hair flies loose, she is frantic, frenzied, her voice becomes inhuman. All of the signs point to the god's presence, beyond the world of signs, rather directly referring to their material form, in this case the Sibyl.[33] The Sibyl, like Cassandra, has direct contact with Apollo, who must tame her like a horse. She is able to serve as a reliable guide into the underworld, telling Aeneas which gifts to bring and explaining what they see as they descend. With her help, Aeneas is able to learn the future of the Roman Empire from the future heirs whose souls are preparing to reenter the world. History is presented as predestination : a march of rulers to come. Prophecy again doubles the narrative but to a different end. Instead of introducing a critical gap, the Sibyl provides a model of a prophet sanctioning communal action.

Aeneas' descent to the underworld legitimizes him as a hero and as a leader of the Trojan people. Throughout the Trojans' journey, as a community, Aeneas carefully consults the gods, receives their signs and dreams of their will, to steer their course correctly. He repeatedly receives confirmation that his course is approved by the gods. In book three, he knows not to found the city where the earth bleeds, and where a plague blights the land. With the God's assurance, they "take the better course - / the god shows the way!"[34] Aeneas again receives a full vision of the future (or history) or Rome, when his mother, Venus, has the fire-god ("well aware of the seers and schooled in times to come") make a shield for him.[35] The future, which Aeneas saw in the underworld, is confirmed by the illustration on the shield. Prophecy serves as a guide, authorizing Aeneas' choices and affirming the Roman empire.

When Aeneas returns from the underworld, however, he comes "through the Ivory Gate."[36] This gate is "ivory, radiant, flawless, / but through it the dead send false dreams up toward the sky."[37] As Penelope describes this gate, in book nineteen of the *Odyssey*, it is "cleanly carved" but the dreams that come through this gate "are will-o'-the-wisps, their message bears

[31] Book 5 v. 751
[32] Book 6 v. 58
[33] Michael Wood describes the role of the pythia as physically mediating the encounter between the one seeking advice and the god responding. The pythia makes visible signs from the invisible message moving through her. "The Lord whose oracle is at Delphi neither speaks nor remains silent, but gives signs… we might say the god doesn't legislate or give orders, and he doesn't hide things or behave secretively. But his messages, whatever their medium, have a meaning." p. 59
[34] Book 3 v. 228
[35] Book 8 v. 740
[36] Book 6 v. 1036
[37] Book 6 v. 1033

no fruit."[38] Something slippery is associated with the act of prophecy, rather than with Aeneas himself. Whereas Cassandra's prophecies are presented as true but problematic in their communication and reception, Aeneas' visions here are thrown into question suddenly and almost unnoticeably. While there are false prophets, like Caeano, a prophet of doom, true prophecy retains something of the enigma or double-edged quality of Cassandra's speech. As the battle for Rome develops in the second half of the *Aeneid*, it becomes clear that fate is not fixed. The gods compete against one another and do not all have the same vision for the fate of Rome. The doubt surrounding prophecy opens a space for Augustus, for whom the epic was written, to intervene and fulfill Virgil's vision of the Roman Empire portrayed in the epic.[39] The epic simultaneously authorizes the empire with prophecy *à rebours* and describes an ideal for which the empire might strive. Just as Aeneas is both sanctioned by prophecy and brought into question, so Rome is authorized and pushed to live up to its ideals by the epic.

Orpheus presents a model for much of Renaissance poetry as the inspired poet-prophet of the *Orphic hymns* and the mystery cults. In book ten of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Orpheus descends to the underworld after Eurydice steps on a snake and dies from its venom. His song doubles the narrative of Eurydice's death as he begs the Fates to lend him his wife. (The story of Orpheus and Eurydice is itself doubled in book eleven as "The Shade of Orpheus" descends to the underworld once again where he walks with Eurydice.) Orpheus' song stops the gods and the myths, suspends their narratives, and causes the Furies to weep. The power of Orpheus' song lies in his ability to interrupt time and alter the natural order of the world. In book eleven, Ovid tells how Orpheus "charmed the woodland trees / and souls of savage beasts; even the stones / were held in thrall by Orpheus' tender tones."[40] The women of Thrace, angry at Orpheus' rejection of their sexual advances, murder the poet, dismember his body and scatter his limbs. They throw Orpheus' head and lyre into the river "and (look! a thing of wonder) once your stream / had caught and carried them, the lyre began / to sound some mournful notes; the lifeless tongue, / too, murmured mournfully; and the response / that echoed from the shores was mournful too."[41] Orpheus' head and lyre continue to correspond with the natural world; they mirror and harmonize with one another. The sacred mysteries of Bacchus move through Orpheus' sounds bringing the divine and the earthly worlds into alignment with one another.

The power of Orpheus' song to sway and order the world is attested to in Plato's *Ion*, where Orpheus is identified as the first poet, in Apollonius of Rhodes' *Argonautica*, where Orpheus plays his lyre to drown out the seductive and deathly song of the sirens, allowing Jason and the Argonauts to reach Colchis, and in Virgil's *Georgics*, where the story of Orpheus and Eurydice is told as an explanation for the death of Aristaeus' bee colony, which lacks art and love in spite of the bees' devotion to the common good, the king, and labor. Orpheus is affiliated with the success of the city-state as well as with dangerous prophetic frenzy. His ability to order the world according to the secrets of nature is both necessary and potentially disruptive, disordering, to the state.

Ovid attributes the practice of Greek homosexuality to Orpheus: "Indeed, he was the one who taught / the Thracian men this practice: they bestow / their love on tender boys, and so enjoy / firstfruits, the brief springtime, the flowers of youth."[42] Orpheus is disconsolate after losing

[38] Robert Fagles translation Book 19 v. 636. *The Odyssey*. 1996
[39] William Franke. *Virgil, History and Prophecy*, 2005. pp. 75 – 77.
[40] Allen Mandelbaum translation Book 11 v. 2 – 4. *The Metamorphoses of Ovid.* 1993
[41] Book 11
[42] Book 10 final strophe. *The Metamorphoses*.

Eurydice and refuses all women who approach him. He disrupts reproductive models of the state, wandering alone and relating to the natural world rather than the social world. Gender is central to prophecy in literature but, as Carla Freccero might say, prophecy "queers" gender.[43] Female prophets' gender is not defined in relation to sexuality or to male counterparts. Female prophets live alone and relate to the (often male) god through moments of frenzy and possession. Reproduction and marriage are outside the prophetic experience. The virginity of both Cassandra and the Sibyl of Cumae is intimately tied to their prophetic powers.[44] Language and sound often eclipse the physical body; as is the case with Orpheus, only the voice remains. In the classical tradition, gender and language are troubled through prophecy. As this project shows, classical influence structures much of the side of prophecy associated with unparsed noise. The prophet brings excess meaning to the literary text, which points beyond – without negating - his or her edifying and ordering message.

The Hebrew prophets were important influences on the representation of prophets in early modern France. Biblical prophecy often shaped readings of classical prophets: according to Natal Conti's *Mythologiae*, the Sibyl could be read as a prophet foreseeing the coming of Christ.[45] In contrast to Greek prophecy, female prophets are rare and are frequently used to discuss the problem of false prophecy and witchcraft, as in the example of the Witch of Endor.[46] The Hebrew tradition emphasizes teaching, large-scale theological history, and the definition of an historical people through a male prophet.

The tradition of the Hebrew prophets emphasizes the narrative of fall, exile, and return both on earth and from the divine. An apocalyptic resolution consistently calls for the end of history and a reforging of both heaven and earth. Isaiah speaks the word of God : "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind."[47] This is not to say that the Hebrew prophets don't have an earthly message, to the contrary, the prophets are sent to warn the Israelites of a coming judgment so that they might change their ways and receive salvation. Prophecy only serves as a warning, a preparation. Zechariah explains that when Jerusalem is made into a rock, prophecy must end and those who were prophets will now say, "I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth."[48] All prophecies and oracles must cease, then, with the birth of Immanuel, as Isaiah prophecies : "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The

[43] *Queer / Early / Modern*. 2006.
[44] Two different stories account for Cassandra's prophetic gift. In one version, she and her brother spend the night in Apollo's temple and snakes lick their ears in the morning. In another version, Apollo makes a deal with Cassandra, offering her the gift of prophecy in return for sleeping with him. When Cassandra refuses to follow through on her end of the deal, Apollo curses her prophecies such that she will never be believed. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, book fourteen, similarly describes a deal between the Sibyl of Cumae and Apollo, who offers the Sibyl as many years as the number of grains of sand she can hold in her hand in exchange for her virginity. When she refuses to follow through he lets her body whither until only her voice remains since she did not specify that she would like to remain young throughout her years.
[45] Book 4, Ch. 10 : On Apollo. "there were times when oracles got it right and weren't attempting to deceive anyone; in fact some of the Sibyls even spoke the truth. For Apollo predicted Christ's death and the Sibyl prophesied the miracles Christ would perform before He died." p. 294
[46] *King James Version*, I Samuel 28
[47] Isaiah 65.17
[48] Zechariah 13.5

mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."[49] The world will be healed and history will end. Kings are critiqued against the ideal king, corruption and idolatry are denounced, but the end battle will be heavenly and the outcome has already been balanced and weighed by a monotheistic authority.

Because of this singular, certain authority, Yahweh's prophets present themselves as more interpretable than prophets in the classical tradition. There are still false prophets and prophets still struggle to be heard and believed, but the act of prophecy isn't as intimately tied to doubt as it is with the Greek tradition. In the Hebrew tradition, the prophet is a mouthpiece for God's judgment, an agent of change for the people. He is called to be a prophet, told to speak to the rebellious tribes of Israel and to tell them they have sinned, to warn them of God's coming judgment. The later prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel) speak to populations exiled from Jerusalem, but all the prophets insist on the destruction of Jerusalem and its rebuilding. The eighth century prophets, including Hosea, Amos, Obadiah, list Israel's faults, threaten judgment, and promise restoration to the deserving. God tells Amos that he has sent famine, rain, locusts, plagues, "and yet" he concludes rhythmically, as a refrain, "you [the Israeli people] did not come back to me." God sends signs, warns the people through prophets, threatens total destruction and judgment. Malachi reassures that Elijah will have warned the people and those who have listened will be spared. The Israelites are difficult to sway. God tells Ezekiel "Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house."[50] God tells Isaiah that the Israelites "make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes."[51] Jeremiah is ridiculed, flogged and put in the stocks, because the people don't want to hear God's message.[52]The prophet's role is to bring God's word to the "rebellious" people but also to help read the signs of God's judgment, that is, to see the first cause behind secondary causes. Hebrew prophets must teach their people.

Prophetic speech, however, as it is for for Cassandra, is double-edged and cleaving. God says to Ezekiel, "And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house."[53] Ezekiel's mouth is sealed with a sweet bun, when God first appears to him and calls him to prophecy. Isaiah's mouth is burned clean.[54] From this point on, his mouth belongs to God, as does his body. He undergoes physical tortures, lying on one side for over a year, and then on the other, trembling. The prophet is compared to a watchman, who warns the people by blowing a trumpet, or rather by being blown as a trumpet. He becomes an instrument who is responsible for sinners; those who don't receive his message become his moral weight. The prophet takes on the responsibility of the community's debt to God. His speech then, divides him from himself and simultaneously binds him to both God and his people. In spite of his double-edged speech, the prophet's role remains pedagogical. Daniel is the most prominent example of a prophet who both receives visions and interprets cryptic language for his people.

[49] Isaiah 9.6
[50] Ezekiel 12.2
[51] Isaiah 6.10
[52] Jeremiah 20
[53] Ezekiel 3.26 – 27
[54] Isaiah 6.6 – 7

Christianity claims to be the culmination of the tradition of Hebrew prophets. The Gospels introduce Jesus Christ as the last prophet who resolves the debt of original sin through his sacrificial debt. Luke tells how the Holy Spirit came to Jesus in the form of a dove, after John baptized him, and said to him, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."[55] And John, whose parents Mary stayed with after the angel Gabriel came to her, sees the dove and recognizes Jesus as "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."[56] He echoes Isaiah (who speaks between prophesying God's judgment and the new Jerusalem), denouncing any prophetic ability, stating only "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias."[57] Christianity does not foreclose the possibility of prophecy, however. The book of Revelation, a prophecy brought by the angel of Jesus Christ to John, restructures the narrative of fall and restoration by positing a final judgment. The second coming reopens history to a messianic future : "Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings."[58] Through a series of intricate visions, the apocalypse and then the new heaven and earth are foreseen. Symbolic images, such as the whore of Babylon, are clearly decoded and presented as narrative. Two particularly powerful prophets will herald the seventh and last horn that will be blown before the earthquake and final decimation of the current world. The visions are prolific and varied but, like the visions of the Hebrew prophets, are always backed by monotheistic authority. There is no hesitation or possibility for discussion of interpretation. Nonetheless, prophetic language remains strange and problematic. The first angel who arrives is covered in signs, including "out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword."[59] The two-edged sword distinguishes between those who will be spared and those who will be condemned but also serves as a reminder of the linguistic and narrative doubling of prophecy. Paul's letter to the Corinthians serves as a consistent reminder that the interpretation of even the most cryptic religious language must edify and unite the community of believers.

The eschatological aspects of Christianity allow the world to reopen to prophecy even after the Incarnation. The oracles remain open for those who believe they live in end times. In early modern France the questions of how prophecy works, who is a true prophet, and what signs the people can be taught to read, influence the literary representation of prophets. In the early modern period, apocalyptic rhetoric was frequently used to negotiate new concepts of historical time as Humanists moved away from Scholastic models.[60] As early modern writers engage with biblical and classical sources they are not only looking back to historical approaches but, further, trying to find ways of understanding their own changing world.

Early Modern writers often combine classical and biblical sources in unexpected ways. Whereas the epic tradition pairs a prophetic guide (such as the Sibyl) with the historical function of the prophet (as seen particularly in the later Hebrew prophets), my discussion of Robert Garnier's play, *Les Juives*, shows how the Hebrew prophet's historical function is instead paired with Cassandra's disruptive language to suspend historical time. Hebrew prophets' warning calls of how to live in accordance with divine will are paired not with an Orphic attention to divine harmony, but, as I discuss in my chapter on François Rabelais, with the Sibyl's more

[55] Luke 3.22
[56] John 1.29
[57] John 1.23, and Isaiah 40.3
[58] Revelation 10. 11
[59] Revelation 1.16
[60] Arthur Williamson argues that secular categories were not always easily accepted nor were they considered the more reasonable categories for understanding history. *Apocalypse Then*.

traditionally epic guidance. Finally, my discussion of Ronsard, as an Orphic poet, shows how the lyric voice crying in the wilderness becomes a means of building credit for an attempted national epic. The writers presented in this project rework literary tradition to engage with the volatility of prophecy in the sixteenth century. Classical and biblical sources both lend authority to literary writers and allow writers to manipulate this power, frequently for the benefit of the monarchy.

Disenchantment, secularization, and literary discourse

Some scholars have proposed that literature acted as a secularizing or disenchanting social force during the sixteenth century religious troubles, encouraging the separation of church and state. This project stands in contrast to these theories by proposing that literature is not secularizing or disenchanting during the sixteenth century in France.

Taking off from Friedrich Schiller, and later, Max Weber's pronouncements that the modern world is disenchanted, several important critics have written recently at length about the historical trajectory that would produce the disenchantment of modernity. Marcel Gauchet's book, *Le désenchantement du monde* presents one of the most influential and controversial arguments in the French intellectual tradition. Gauchet proposes that the axial religions, and Christianity in particular, are predicated on a concept of divinity as Other, such that the historical process of Christianity gradually disenchants the world. According to Gauchet, primitive societies were continuous with the divine, refusing a separation between divinity and humanity. These religions, he argues, were egalitarian and depended on transmission of ancestral law. The axial, and largely monotheistic religions, in contrast, place divinity at a distance, allowing human control, interpretation, and hierarchy, to influence the transmission of law. Religion becomes a means of mediating the relation between the earthly and the divine, rather than a means of manipulating divine energy coexisting in society.[61] Gauchet argues against theories of secularization that posit a separation of social practice from religion in the Early Modern period by suggesting that Western religion itself is a secularizing mechanism.[62]

Carl Schmitt, Karl Löwith, Hans Blumenberg, and other major participants in discussions of secularization, have worked according to a model in which political structures appropriate and replace religious structures.[63] Joshua Landy distinguishes between theories of secularization that claim modernity is enchanted, unbeknownst to itself, theories that claim secularization arose through the labeling and marginalization of certain social practices and beliefs as superstitions, and his own working theory that posits a fully secular modernity deliberately developing strategies of re-enchantment.[64] Machiavelli's reading of the Roman use of chicken-men shows the difficulty of adhering to any one of these theoretical categories. Machiavelli notes that by

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[61] One of the specific examples Gauchet presents is a comparison of the Tupi-Guarant prophets and the Hebrew prophets. Whereas the Hebrew prophets critique the world, allowing for human agency and change to make the earthly realm align with God's intentions, the Tupi-Guarant can only lead their people to refuse the world. For the Tupi-Guarant the world is necessary as it is, divinely created, and cannot be separated from itself (151). *Le désenchatement du monde*. 1985.

[62] Transcendence inherently leads to the evacuation of the divine, for Gauchet (47). Disenchantment is a fundamentally religious rupture rather than a social move away from religion (231). *Le désenchantement du monde*. 1985.

[63] Carl Schmitt proposes that modern political concepts are secularized versions of theological concepts. *Political Theology*, 1922. Karl Löwith argues that progress is not a legitimately modern concept because it is a secularized version of medieval Christian eschatological ideas. *Meaning in History*, 1949. Hans Blumenberg responds by suggesting that this is not a question of illegitimacy but a new way of addressing persistent questions from earlier historical periods. *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 1985.

[64] Introduction to *The Re-enchantment of the World : Secular Magic in a Rational Age*. 2009.

relying on a popular augur – chicken-men who determine the outcome of battles based on whether or not chickens eat – Roman military generals were able to accommodate their own plans to build confidence in their troops, "from which confidence victory almost always arose."[65] Machiavelli's interpretation of Livy's example, both acknowledges the effectiveness of the augurs (both in the classical and in the early modern world) while simultaneously marginalizing such beliefs and encouraging their use as a means of re-enchanting the world to imperial advantage. Theorists of secularization and disenchantment alike agree that the Early Modern period was pivotal in a social change that made the discussion of religion as religion possible.[66] Religion becomes more interior, centered around the individual, institutionally hierarchical, and focuses on transforming the physical world.[67]

Denis Crouzet's extensive archival research persuasively argues that sixteenth century France did not yet exhibit characteristics of a secularizing or disenchanting society. Crouzet documents the extent to which the French Catholic League, in particular, was a social body that claimed to be continuous with the divine. He further finds that many of the monarchist approaches taken to counter the League relied on enchanted practices : Politique pamphlets called for the exorcism of a possessed League and League pamphlets called for theatrical, eschatological violence.[68] According to Crouzet's reading Protestantism arose as a means of coping with the intensity of apocalyptic anxiety indistinguishable from daily life.[69] Denis Crouzet's work argues that both folk culture and belief and erudite culture allowed for enchanted beliefs to be socially effective in sixteenth-century France.[70] This project takes Claude Lévi-Strauss' threshold for magical action in his *Structural Anthropology* as sufficient for enchantment, rather than the pure primitive religion posited by Gauchet.[71] However, the focus of these readings is less on the *histoire de mentalité* or cultural history of the period and instead turns to the specificity of literary discourse.

Northrop Frye suggests a classification of language uses in relation to religious belief. The Bible, he suggests, is written as an exhortation foregrounding the relation between subject and object while destabilizing their positions. Exhortation, as the highest level of oratory, is *kerygma*, preaching, or oracle. Frye distinguishes *kerygma* from poetry, which he reads as metaphoric language, in which a plurality of gods embody the various elements of the world. Poetry continues to work even as other historical linguistic regimes arise. Metonymic language uses figuration to draw the world toward a single point. Frye ties metonymic language to

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[65] *Discourses on Livy*. Book 1. 14.
[66] Victoria Kahn. Introduction to Representations Vol 105 No 1. Winter 2009
[67] Gauchet, p. 126 - 7
[68] *Les guerriers de Dieu*. 1990. Ch 14.4
[69] "La violence au temps des troubles de religion (vers 1525 – vers 1610)." 1989.
[70] In contrast, Jonathan Pearl has suggested that demonological discourses were primarily political productions, rather than beliefs, intended to advance the interests of the Catholic League. *The Crime of Crimes : Demonology and Politics in France, 1560 -1620.* 1999.
[71] Claude Lévi-Strauss, comparing a ritual witchcraft healing ceremony to psychoanalysis, in *Structural Anthropology*, explains that in the traditional ceremony, "[m]agic readapts the group to a predefined problem through the patient, while psychoanalysis readapts the patient to the group by means of the solution reached" ("The Sorcerer and his Magic," p. 183). Practices such as exorcism or theatricalized massacres fall easily into this former definition, in which the group is healed and realigned with their law through the treatment of the individual. Again, Crouzet notes that a common reading of Protestantism, among Catholics, was that this heresy arose when a people had forgotten their God, a heresy that could be purified and eradicated in preparation for Judgment. Gauchet, in contrast, proposes a pure definition of enchanted religion in which the visible and invisible orders are fully mixed within a single world (24). For Gauchet, the primacy of the Edenic or womb-like pure primitive religion prevents all later periods from participating in anything but a stage of disenchantment.

monotheism; language does not directly reference God as an object, but leads towards something beyond itself, by substituting attributes. Descriptive language, as a third phase, requires correspondence between signifier and signified. Subject and object are firmly defined and truth is established when language logically obtains, or signifies correctly.[72] According to this schematization, Marcel Gauchet's theory of pure and disenchanting religions could be read as positioning monotheism in this third phase of linguistic development, marking a strong distinction between humans and God, "le Tout-Autre," who is fundamentally not of the linguistic order of objects.[73]

This project emphasizes the metaphoric and metonymic use of language still operating in sixteenth century French literature. The medieval tendency to mix magic and daily life, in particular through the adventure or romance, persists in sixteenth-century literature, even as new forms and theories of literature develop. While language use literalizes and describes in many discursive practices in the sixteenth century - including emerging historiographies, new scientific tracts, political and philosophical writing – literature stands against this type of referentiality, emphasizing glimpsing the divine through language.

Glimpsing the divine : the social role of prophets and literature

Prophets work at the intersection of shifting authorities and interpretive practices. Prophecy asks not only who speaks and by what authority, but also to whom, to what community, defined in what manner. Because of their strange marginal status, prophets do not belong to any group of "others" nor do they belong or not belong to their own group. The prophet is a marginal social presence who contains the alterity inherent in the community itself. Max Weber's sociological study of the function of religion, proposes that the prophet's separation from institutional structures allows him to both renew and found a community. In contrast to a priest who is authorized by the church to direct his congregants along the proper path, the prophet must self-authorize.[74] The prophet is both necessary and sacrificial within the community because he or she (re)introduces what exists within the bounds of the community by standing on the boundary. In this sense, the prophet inhabits a space of critique, capable of both speaking against and reinforcing existing social power structures.

The prophet interrupts daily life at a time when history has become impossible, presents an impossible future, and through a double negation, scandalously breaks the world to make time possible again.[75] Prophecy creates a momentary state of alienation within the historical process, the possibility of a turning point. Prophecy negotiates a crisis. Terence Cave describes such a crisis in *The Cornucopian Text* : by Rabelais' *Quart Livre*, "time is out of joint; the structure of the world has been dislocated."[76] Prophecy introduces a disruptive form of language that nonetheless edifies; it is an alternate way of using language. Northrop Frye proposes that prophecy is a form of narrative between wisdom and gospel, that is, between what is continuous and stable and what is scandal and news.[77] By playing with the interpretive boundary between literal and figurative, prophecy reworks other socio-political discourses.[78]

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[72] Part I. Language I. pp. 21 – 48.
[73] Gauchet. p. 27
[74] "The Prophet." *The Sociology of Religion*. Part IV.
[75] Maurice Blanchot. *Le livre à venir*. 1959. pp. 98 – 107.
[76] p. 207
[77] Part II. Typology II. p. 128.
[78] Michel Jeanneret positions the Sibyl of Panzoust at the crux of an interpretive crisis in the 16th century, which displaces the question of a message's authority onto the speaker. The coherent method of interpretation, propounded

The prophet's relation to the king is particularly important because of prophecy's ability to politically mobilize subjects. What dangers and advantages does this figure present to those in power? The tradition of the monarch God's divine representative on earth, as discussed in Ernst Kantorowicz's seminal *The King's Two Bodies*, was still being made visible in the sixteenth century as the monarchy centralized.[79] The coronation ceremony of the French king was comparatively more religious than many other Catholic monarchies, fusing church and state through the monarch. Although much of the symbolic language of the French king's near-divinity was incomprehensible to lay people, the French king was *rex christianissiums*, *le roi treschrestien*. The French king was the anointed king, processing through the city with relics before wars and increasingly displaying his religious authority throughout the civil wars.[80] Literary discourses that made visible the king's authority elevated both the centralizing monarchy and the writers producing works in his honor.

Prophets in the Renaissance needed to establish their authority to speak, to delineate the group receiving the message temporally, geographically, and socially, and to find a form to deliver the message. Prophets were useful models for writers reconsidering their own social role. In many of the texts discussed in this project, literature takes on the mediating function of the prophet in order to disrupt, question, and even rewrite other social discourses. This project looks at canonical literature that participated in nation building by using the linguistic and narrative possibilities offered by prophets to authorize the Catholic monarchy. Scholars have suggested that prophecy's dangerous mobilizing force was contained and diminished by integrating prophecy into institutional literary forms such as the omniscient narrator, the transcendent self, and figures of destiny.[81] This dissertation proposes that prophecy was not only intrinsic to the development of institutional literary structures as literary but that it further transferred power to the institutions that authorized literary discourse. Literature did not sap the power of prophecy but redirected away from popular culture and custom and into institutions of power, specifically, the Catholic monarchy and literature. My project looks at the role of prophets in the construction of literature as a politically significant discourse, worthy of royal patronage. It further considers the role of prophets in specific texts in order to show the importance of prophecy to the texts' construction. Prophets are not merely thematic elements, they introduce formal features of the

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by the Church Fathers and Scholastics, is thrown into question. A multiplicity of readings, generated in part by Humanist interest in philology, can only be resolved by an emphasis on charitable reading. "La crise des signes et le défi de l'étrange." St. Augustine's interpretive advice, presented in his "On Christian Doctrine," becomes one guide among many.

[79] Gauchet argues that between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, political power became representative of divine power (200).Whereas this form of representation is frequently read as a religious conception of government, Gauchet argues that representation is further proof of the fundamental separation between the divine and the human. Christ as the perfect mediator between the earthly and the divine becomes further proof of the gap (une béance) between the two worlds (189, 195). The repetition of the Eucharist ceremony further reinforces the absence of the past and the perfect mediation that occurred (191). The king will only be a repetition of perfect mediation, underscoring the absence of lost unity. *Le désenchantement du monde*. 1985.

[80] Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion 1562 – 1629*, 1995. Nancy Lymna Roelker, *One king, one faith : the parlement of Paris and the religious reformation of the sixteenth century*, 1996. Barbara Diefendorf. *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth Century Paris*, 1991.

[81] See in particular Marie-Madeleine Fragonard's conclusion to the conference publication *Prophètes et Prophéties*, pp. 231- 246. Sophie Houdard has similarly proposed that prophecy became an internal, private matter. Her readings of French Jesuit writers proposes new forms of spiritual interiority in the early seventeenth century as a means of moving away from the theatrical violence of the religious troubles. "De la prophétie aux motions du cœur. Spirituels de cœur et de cour dans la premiere moitié du XVII^{e} siècle." 2001.

text such as internal space, polyphony, authorial voice, and allegorical discontinuity. Prophecy allows these literary texts to point beyond, or exceed, what they explicitly state – their surface – in order to suggest a connection to that which cannot be said. Prophets in literary texts push the boundaries of linguistic expression even as they bring authority to the subjects they represent.

My first chapter brings together the almanacs and prognostications, which Rabelais wrote in the interim between publishing *Gargantua* in 1534 and the *Tiers livre* in 1546, and the episode of the Sibyl of Panzoust, in the *Tiers livre*, to look at prophecy as advice. I argue that audience is central to how prophecy works across Rabelais' texts. Prophetic advice is based on what an individual or a group needs to know in order to properly play their role. Consequently the way in which prophecy is read is both exposed and dismantled by reading fiction : widely circulating discourses are made visible to disentangle literal and figurative uses of language and referential meaning is thrown into question. Prophetic rhetoric is dissected and put forth as a politically powerful, though volatile, discourse. The writer, modeled on the prophet, mediates the relation between religious and political authorities in order to ensure that the community can cohere and maintain its relation to the divine. A polyphonic discourse allows the community to be as inclusive as possible.

I then look at Pierre de Ronsard's efforts to move prophecy into the domain of enchanted and divinely-authorized poetry. The mid-century Pléiade revitalization of classical forms introduced praise genres such as the ode and the hymn to France. The prophet as Orphic praise singer, rather than adviser, seeks to order and elevate the institution of the monarchy. By learning the secrets of the divine order – a gift acquired from the gods - and carefully cloaking their transmission to readers, the poet establishes the correct place of the monarch in relation to a natural and social world order. I focus on the development of the poet-prophet in Ronsard's *Hymnes*, in particular, to show how poetry presents itself as a source of authority. Literature takes the religious role of the church to legitimize the monarch by appropriating prophetic rhetoric from the biblical and classical traditions.

My third chapter looks at Robert Garnier, another member of the Pléiade and the major theatrical writer of the late Renaissance. I look at Garnier's last play, written at the height of the religious troubles in France. Garnier's only play with a biblical subject, *Les Juives* considers the proximity of the prophet and the historian. Although tragedies are frequently read with a focus on models of kingship and the history of a people as embodied by the king, I suggest that the prophet embodies history in this play and directs the mourners' gaze to the king in a final forward moving gesture. I look specifically at the role of the prophet's fragmented and often ghosted body in bringing history to a community. The elided voice of Cassandra and the gendered language used to describe embodiment introduce a formal (and classical) alterity into the Hebrew subject. My reading focuses on the formal elements of allegory and the temporality of prophecy that make history visible such that it saturates the present, suspending teleological models of history. Prophecy, while supporting the monarchy, creates a moment of pause and critical distance within a nonetheless cohesive community.

To conclude the project, I begin to tie together threads presented in the preceding chapters. I look at the literary construction of internal space, first-person narration, and the reworking of theatrical discourses through prose. I isolate a haunted house scene in one of Montaigne's late essays, "Des Boyteux," in which children imitate apocalyptic speech emanating from inside a church. I show how this common ruse structures the essay's ability to propose a new form of public speech. This reading also opens a new discussion focused on false prophecy,

fiction, and deception. The proximity of religion, finance, and theater (or ruse) is reworked in Montaigne's essay, to show that prose writing can construct an alternate public sphere, experienced in private through reading.

Early modern Catholic French writers turn to prophets to construct literary forms and discourses which in turn mediate between religion and politics to strengthen the monarchy and authorize literature as a significant, though othered, socio-political discourse. The prophet's claim to both found and refound a political body creates a feeling of newness, as if literature were suddenly born in the sixteenth century. This works to the advantage of writers like the Pléiade poets, who assert that literature can privilege and exclude certain modes of reading. Literature can then offer itself as a parallel structure to the centralizing French monarchy. However, the prophet introduces mystery into earthly discourse, allowing the literary texts discussed in this project to consistently offer new interpretations.

A Prophet for Panurge: The Problem of Divine Advice in Rabelais' *Tiers livre*

François Rabelais' engagement with prophecy is widespread and varied throughout his writings : from Pantagruel's birth to the "énigme en prophétie" which concludes *Gargantua*; from Rabelais' parade of prophets in the *Tiers livre* to his fictional prognostication and scholarly almanacs and horoscopes. In particular, Pantagruel's noble birth and accompanying prophecy define a community and structure its narrative arc. Yet, in contrast, Rabelais' almanacs and prognostications for the common reader create a static, repetitive time addressing the reader's daily life. The form of the *Tiers livre* brings together the reading conventions of prophecies for commoners and for princes through Panurge's attempt to receive advice about his individual future. Panurge is certainly not noble but he refuses to read according to the conventions set forth for commoners in genres such as the almanac. How do Panurge and his companions navigate the reading of the prophetic signs they generate through their quest? What reading conventions do they work with? The juxtaposition of discourses and interpretive modes, in the *Tiers livre* and particularly in the episode of the Sibyl of Panzoust, emphasizes what Michel Jeanneret calls, opaque signs.[1] These signs point beyond themselves, to a divine that language can gesture toward but cannot circumscribe. By looking at Rabelais' almanacs, prognostication, and horoscope, I will develop significant questions that are then raised by Panurge's encounter with the Sibyl of Panzoust: how does an individual relate directly to the divine outside of devotional modes; how can divine signs be read; how does a relation to the divine drive action? My focus on Panurge's quest for his own prophet aims to add to the scholarly debates over interpretation in Rabelais' work by raising questions about who generates claims to be interpreted, how these claims are made, and for whom they are made.

Critical context

In most scholarly work on Rabelais, apocalypse is privileged over prophecy in order to pay particular attention to scenes of interpretation. Most notably, Denis Costa and David Quint look at the question of apocalypse by focusing on passages in Rabelais about community and collective interpretation. In his book, *Irenic Apocalypse*, Denis Costa clearly distinguishes the apocalyptic from the prophetic through the question of interpretation : the apocalyptic is an indirect, written, symbolic representation of God's will, whereas the prophetic is God's will received directly through speech.[2] He sees the prophetic as a slippery slope to false millennialism and literal reading. In Costa's reading, a prophet risks laying claim to an end, which is not his to know, by alluding to eschatological events; in contrast, apocalyptic writing asks readers to live expecting the end within a community. For Costa, reading and interpreting Rabelais' apocalyptic books are everyday acts of patience and work rather than alarmist announcements.[3] The modern reader participates in this pious, communitarian consumption by reading and interpreting, continuing the work done by Rabelais' contemporary readers.

David Quint further underscores the community of interpreters in history through his reading of the magical herb Pantagrulion and human progress in his chapter "Rabelais : From

[1] "La crise des signes et le défi de l'étrange." in *Le défi des signes*. 1994. Jeanneret identifies a shift in interpretive practice during the Renaissance, which refuses to reduce the world to a certain and legible message from a God. This is a proto-Enlightenment reading of a God beyond logic and human comprehension. More importantly, for Jeanneret, opaque signs prevent the problem of blocked, or anesthetized, narration by repeatedly returning to the question of whether to read literally or figuratively.

[2] *Irenic Apocalypse : Some Uses of Apocalyptic in Dante, Petrarch, and Rabelais,* 1981. p. 19

[3] "Daily Bread : The "Horrible Mysteries" of Rabelais." *Irenic Apocalypse*. pp. 107 - 138

Babel to Apocalypse" in *Origin and Originality*.[4] Quint's readings show the ways in which Rabelais' books both represent and create a community of readers by teaching rigorous interpretation. Quint, like Costa, is deeply concerned with the thinness of the line between prophecy and millennial fanaticism. For Quint, the prophetic mode of speech must be accompanied with interpretation to limit the risk of fanaticism. Quint cites Paul's suggestion that those with the gift of prophecy remain silent if there is no teacher to interpret this gift, so that fanaticism and misinterpretation do not run rampant. Both Quint and Costa see continuity between the scenes of community in Rabelais' work and the community of Humanist interpreters that has received his work through history.

In this chapter, I further this discussion by looking more closely at the community of interpreters constructed through Rabelais' prophetic writings. By looking at prophetic discourse, found in Rabelais' almanacs and prognostications, as well as his journalistic account of the birth of Louis d'Orléans, in addition to scenes of interpretation, I will argue the interpretive community is marked by social distinctions. In contrast to Quint and Costa's debating but nonetheless homogenous community of interpreters, which evolves over time, I propose heterogeneity among the reading conventions available to the interpreters in Rabelais' works. These disparate works set up reading conventions through which the individual reader learns to manage his affairs practically. These readers are not inherently part of a collective process, they can isolate their reading in order to take action in their lives. While I will argue that the prince's education and assumption of his governing role is directly tied to the formation of community, the relation of community to individual is often blurred in almanacs for the common reader whose interaction with prophecy appear individual even while maintaining the stability of the community by fulfilling his role.

The hierarchical distinction between princes and commoners is dramatically complicated in the *Tiers livre* by Panurge's repetitive quest. Panurge, a common man, not a giant or a prince, would like to use prophecy to answer a singular question : if he marries will he be happy or will he be cuckolded? Panurge is not only a common man, but further appears to have no lineage, no clear occupation or social role, and very little interest in social cohesion and stability. Following a debate over debts, the *Tiers livre* progresses as Panurge consults a series of authorities. Pantagruel, Panurge, Epistémon, and Frere Jan are repeatedly divided on their interpretations of the answers these authorities give. It is often unclear where the characters are, geographically, and there is no cohesive narrative arc to the story. Questions of authority and knowledge supersede the formation of community. The structure of the *Tiers livre* has most frequently been compared to the rhetorical exercise of pleading a fictional cause. Panurge is interested in personal destiny and individual gain. Panurge's focus on the authority of the speaker, rather than the message, highlights the underlying problem of reading in discussions of authority and community. This chapter discusses the problem of direct contact with the divine as it relates to reading, authority, and community. It further distinguishes between differing methods of reading for commoners and kings to consider the use of prophecy to form public persons within a cohesive communal body. That is to say, action works through the individual body but is for the corporate communal body.[5]

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[4] *Origin and Originality in Renaissance Literature : Versions of the Source*, 1983 pp. 167 - 206

[5] Joanna Picciotto argues the sacred corporate person was "published" from the cloister and into the world, making the public possible. The Enlightenment desire to erase difference through this publication helps explain a tendency to elide class discussion within a community of interpreters. *Labors of Innocence in Early Modern England*. 2010. pp. 1 - 30

Prophecies for Princes : Community formation and narrative arc

Astrological reading can produce prophecies for the community through a prince's foreseen path. The good king, who governs for others and leads by example – a living portrayal of God, according to Erasmus, - creates a path for the community through his own life.[6] Rabelais most notably wrote the horoscope for the birth of Louis d'Orléans as he describes it in his 1549 *Sciomachie* – an account of the celebration of the prince's birth. Rabelais begins his report with a brief mention of his astrological reading of the prince's future : "un si grand Prince destiné à choses si grandes en matiere de chevalerie, et gestes heroiques, comme il appert par son horoscope, si une fois il eschappe quelque triste aspect en l'angle Occidental de la septieme maison."[7] Astrological reading and prophecy are tied together in a single interpretive-declarative act. The *Sciomachie* provides a narrative account of the mock-battle and festivities surrounding the birth of Louis D'Orléans.[8] Whether or not the description of the prince's birth ceremony was intended to elevate the French monarchy above rival monarchies, astrology is used to elevate the prince's importance to the king without inciting popular superstition and unmanageable misinterpretation. While published significantly after Rabelais' early works focused on community, this genre of political narrative structures Rabelais' fictional construction of community through his giant princes, Pantagruel and Gargantua.

Rabelais uses prophecy when writing about community formation in his fictional works. *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua* are princely narratives, driven by each giant's birth, education, and eventual assumption of political leadership of his community. These are narratives about the formation of community through the prince's actions; in other words, prophecies about the prince also determine the path the community will take. Pantagruel's birth is legible as a pre-determined narrative arc :

> Et parce que en ce proper jour nasquit Pantagruel, son père luy imposa tel nom : car *Panta*, en grec, vault autant à dire comme *tout*, et *Gruel* en langue Hagarène, valut autant comme *altéré*, voulent inférer que à l'heure de sa nativité, le monde estoit tout altéré. Et voyant, en esperit de prophétie, qu'il seroit quelque dominateur des altérez.[9]

A terrible drought is temporarily relieved when one day the earth exudes large drops of water, like sweat, and like sweat, the water is salted. On this day, Pantagruel is born, troubling the world, making the world thirsty. It is his father, who in a prophetic moment, sees that his son will become ruler of a people defined by trouble and thirst. The narrator and father are of one mind in their reading of the day and the princely birth. There is a clear, singular perspective setting up a coherent, sequence of events that progress historically, within a determined community. The prophetic moment arises not only to mark Pantagruel as a heroic character but also to delimit the community that he will rule. Erasmus compares the king's path to astrological patterns

[6] "One ought to be born a King or a Fool." 1515

[7] p. 960 Mireille Huchon Gallimard edition 1994.

[8] Published in Lyon with Sébastien Gryphe. According to François Moreau, the *Sciomachie* was not intended for general circulation beyond the king's court. Mireille Huchon further notes in her monograph, *Rabelais* (2011), that Rabelais published his medical, astrological, and philological texts with Sébastien Gryphe, whereas he published his fictional books and almanacs with various other publishers in Lyon, including Claude Nourry, François Juste (122). The *Pantagruline prognostication* is also published with François Juste. While he remained faithful to Gryphe for his erudite humanist publications, Rabelais published the *Tiers livre* in Paris. By the time the *Sciomachie* (Gryphe) is published, there is a clear divide between the types of texts he is publishing, their intended audiences, and the printing houses they are emerging from.

[9] *Pantagruel*, Ch. 2

themselves. The stars can misalign and destroy the health of a body politic. If the prince veers off course, the body politic will follow suit.[10] The prophecy, then, as Paul would specify, is for the community, through the individual, not for the good of the individual or even to establish an illegible relation between an individual and God.[11] Pantagruel's divinely arranged birth follows this form of prophecy for a community through the dual body of a king.[12] Gargantua's prophetic moment, when he names his son, sets a course for his son, establishes his role as leader of a specific people : "des alterez." The prophecy given at Pantagruel's birth sets up the narrative form that follows.

Pantagurel's decision to marry stays within these narrative conventions. At the end of the *Tiers livre*'s thorough examination of the legal, medical, and religious arguments surrounding Panurge's possible marriage, Pantagruel considers marriage for himself. When Pantagruel asks for his father's permission to travel to the Dive Bouteille, Gargantua responds by presenting another factor in marriage : parental consent.[13] After considering socially pertinent questions relating to marital practices and laws, and the potential pain of losing a son or daughter to a bad marriage, Gargantua wishes his son a happy marriage. Gargantua promises to find Pantagruel a good wife and wishes the crew safe travels on their quest. At this juncture, when Pantagruel's marriage is announced and the travelers have coalesced into a small but cohesive community, Pantagrulion, the herb that spurs on discovery and progress, is introduced. The plant is directly tied to Pantagruel's birth and follows in line with the narrative prophecy arc of princes, which largely structures *Pantagruel* and to a slightly lesser extent, *Gargantua*. The Pantagrulion episode further shows the interpretive extension made possible by a princely prophecy. The prophecy, originating with the prince, structures a community well beyond its historical bounds. This can further be seen in a pamphlet printed a full thirty years later in Poitiers, recounts the prophecy of Mélusine, as she speaks to France. This pamphlet, part medieval legend, part political cri-de-cœur, includes Mélusine's warning to all of France, by way of her conversation with Raymondin:

> Crois France à mes propos, tu ne seras deçeüe,
> Si jadis des Troyens Cassandre eut esté creüe
> Les Pergames dix ans par eux bien defendus
> En une seule nuit n'eussent ésté perdus.

Although Mélusine speaks to Raymondin, he acts as an entry point to all of France (which could easily be read trans-historically), an intermediary between a fantastical creature prophesying and the rest of the community. The prophecy is not about Raymondin but works through him.[14] Princely prophecy works in relation to the figurehead or embodiment of a people to help form a community, which as Quint and Costa have shown, can stretch interminably through textual interpretation.

<u>Prophecy for the common man : community preservation and repetition</u>

Unlike Pantagruel, Panurge holds the unique position of a common man without a clear social role, a self-interested, self-flattering and quite modern man. The narrative of the *Tiers livre* results from his quest, to find out whether or not he will be cuckolded if he marries, but does not

[10] "The Education of the Christian Prince." 1516. p. 280 Rummel ed.
[11] I Corinthians 1:12
[12] The natural body and the political body. Ernst Kantorowicz. *The King's Two Bodies*. 1957
[13] Chapter 48
[14] *La complainte et lamentation ou prophétie de Mélusine à la France*. Jean Richer publisher, 1575. BnF YE-55531.

follow a clear arc, nor does it help to define a community. Panurge consults a series of prophets, wisemen, and societal authorities, and, after much debate with Pantagruel, Epistémon, and Frere Jan, arrives at the same interpretation after each consultation. Multiple prophetic discourses are paired in this composite form, each of which is read through the interpreter's particular social role. Panurge maintains that the authorities tell him what he wants to hear : that he will be happily married; Pantagruel consistently interprets the authorities' messages as a warning : that Panurge will be cuckolded. This repetition isn't a stalled version of the narrative arc of the prince - a story that fails to advance. The narrative does not follow the development of a prince.[15] The *Tiers livre* is focused on a common man's singular question, which, as Terence Cave notes, should not necessarily have been asked in the first place.[16] Prophecy does not work the same way it did for Pantagruel. I will turn to other forms of prophecy in Rabelais' work in order to discuss the shift between the early community-driven narratives and the more fragmentary *Tiers* and *Quart livre*.

During the interim period between the publication of *Pantagruel* (1532) and *Gargantua* (1534) and the less narrative *Tiers livre* (1546), Rabelais published several almanacs in addition to his earlier *Pantagruline prognostication* (1533). The almanacs and prognostication participate in the formation of generic conventions for texts that prophesy directly to the common person, rather than to the prince. Erasmus describes the prince as a physician or the head of a body, maintaining the health of the rest of the body politic.[17] These prophecies do not shape the community through an exemplar who models and manages but rather directly address each member, instructing individuals on the maintenance of their own health and social role, giving them responsibility to maintain the health of their small part of the body politic. The almanac instructs readers on the formation of a public body that will maintain the cohesion of the corporate body. Before turning to Rabelais' unique intervention into the formation of the almanac genre, I will briefly discuss the primary source texts with which Rabelais engages.

Anyone, including the king, can learn his or her future in an almanac. Although frequently considered a "popular" genre, the almanac was developed from a highly stylized set of literary conventions. One major example is *Le Compost et kalendrier des bergers*, first published in 1491 (although earlier editions have been suggested by archivists). This is a much more involved almanac than the yearly pamphlet production that Rabelais participated in. The *Compost*, a book meant to be kept for many years, teaches the reader how to calculate the "nombre d'or" (to determine when there will be a new moon), the "lettre dominicale" (to determine the dates when Sundays will fall that year), and the "lettre tabulaire" (which determines Easter). The reader can plan each year independently, calculating when religious holidays will fall and when agricultural cycles ought to begin and end. Further reminders are given through illustrations : each calendar month is illustrated with woodcuttings of the saints and appropriate tasks for that month. January, for example, shows a man drinking a bowl of soup whereas August shows a man holding a scythe, harvesting wheat. Sections on practical medicine and astrology similarly help the reader to fulfill his daily tasks effectively and healthily. Almanacs helped plan the coming year by pulling together knowledge from these various

[15] Edwin Duval argues that the episodes of the *Tiers livre* nonetheless follow a design, which gives Panurge a clear message : "know thyself." Duval, "The design of Rabelais' Tiers livre de Pantagruel," 1997. André Tournon has clearly shown that this symmetrical form is skewed. Tournon, *"En sens agile,"* 1995.

[16] "Panurge and Odysseus." Cave further notes that the repetitive structure of the *Tiers livre* is not unlike the initial meeting between Panurge and Pantagruel in *Pantagruel*, in which it is Pantagruel who asks too many questions rather than reading charitably.

[17] "The Education of the Christian Prince." pp. 271 – 272 in *The Erasmus Reader*. Ed. Erika Rummel

domains into a singular guide. The reader is given a stable view of the year as a cyclic set of activities while simultaneously providing resources to handle any difficulties that threaten to destabilize this regular calendar cycle and helping the reader determine the precise timing for the specific tasks and holidays that keep this cycle stable from year to year.

The *Compost* helps its readers plan while reminding them of their individual fates in order to promote moral behavior. Prophecy serves to establish pious, healthful living habits, as well as a good crop. Sections on Christian vices and virtues are illustrated with reprints of Guy Marchant's "danse macabre" woodcuts. The moral lessons provided in these publications depend on the reader identifying with a type or category of person, often an occupation. The "danse macabre" woodcuts, stage a specific confrontation with death for each category of person, modeled on Lazarus' account of the punishments he witnessed in Hell while dead. Death, as personified in the woodcuts, is specific to each social role, altering his skeletal appearance to mirror the death awaiting each specific category of person. Death strikes a different posture for each person, often mirroring a pose or wearing a similar garment. This ultimate prophecy allows each reader to identify with his station or social role and practice relinquishing it, by seeing how he will be disrobed in death.[18]

This type of reader-identification is developed extensively in the German *Narrenschiff*, written by Sebastian Brant during this same time period and quickly translated into French. Readers are similarly grouped by social role to encourage moral improvement and proper comportment within this role, each of which is accompanied by a woodcut illustrations. The *Narrenschiff* groups readers both by occupation and by character traits, including "Attention to the Stars," which directly denounces the use of calendars. The common approach to grouping individuals by their actions – whether occupational or moral – along with an illustration, which provided a series of possible scenarios with which the reader could identify. This identification was tied directly to a change in action : learning to follow good advice, not prattling on in church, and so forth. The almanac, unlike other literary forms, was originally a how-to manual, intended to inspire action. Consequently, the almanac has consistently run the risk of becoming pure propaganda.[19] However, both the *Compost* and the *Narrenschiff*, unlike the yearly almanacs, represent a stable universe in which roles are maintained year after year. Rabelais' own almanacs, as I will discuss, are firmly anchored in this tradition of social preservation through a reading practice, which encourages the reader to identify with his or her social role. Like the prince, the commoner receives advice that orients his or her individual body for the betterment of the corporate body. However, in contrast to the prince, the commoner's individual body does not determine a narrative path.

Prophecy for the common man : conflation of roles in the Louvain almanacs

A series of Louvain almanacs, in particular, spread fear and paranoia about political and religious turmoil.[20] Unlike the *Compost*, these almanacs are published yearly with advice and forecasts

[18] Fein, David. "Text and Image : Mirror Play in Guyot Marchant's 'Danse macabre.'" 2014. Hans Holbein's danse macabre features a much more aggressive set of skeletons, often forcibly removing the figure's possessions and clothes from his body.

[19] The reform idea that a vernacular bible would allow the word of God to speak directly to the people, in combination with a common theatrical practice of religious and prophetic monologues, allowed the almanac, along with related broadsheets and pamphlets, to become a media phenomenon, as Jonathan Green calls it.

[20] Koopmans, Jelle. "Rabelais et la tradition des pronostication." 1997. Koopmans emphasizes that the prognostication was a highly formalized set of literary conventions that various writers played with and adapted. It was a literary discourse, however, not a form of popular literature. The dramatic form was spoken in the second

specific to the given year. These almanacs read the stars in relation to specific countries as well as to contemporary political and religious leaders, such as "Charles, duc de Gueldre" and "Françoys Treschretien et tresredoubté Roy de France."[21] Henry de Fine's 1518 almanac, published in Louvain, is a strong example of a text that ties astrological inquiry to a specific ruler, blurring the boundaries between politics, people, and prophecy.[22]

The 1518 almanac is dedicated to the soon-to-be Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. This alone is a political statement of allegiance, tying astrological inquiry to a specific ruler.[23] The almanac opens with a customary religious caveat : by this prognostication "on pourra counoistre ce qui il nous peult advenir ceste année par le cours du firmament et du ciel, que ces effectz seront causes après dieu tout pouissant qu'il peult remedier par sa bonne volunté."[24] The astrologer can only read effects, caused by God, who ultimately can change effects as he sees fit. The astrologer gives a detailed account of the constellations he has considered before determining that Saturn will rule the sky this year. He uses the sententiae of other astrologers, including Haly Habenragel and Albumasar, to authorize and validate his interpretations. He reads each season : winter will tend towards snow and great winds, spring will be windier and colder than is its nature and rain will come towards the end of April, summer will be ruled by Mercury, and autumn will be cool. He then proceeds to give detailed readings of each month, including the cycles of the moon and weather predictions.[25] After describing these patterns that primarily affect agricultural labor, the almanac turns to "De paix et de guerre de ceste année." Fine's reading is based on the primary constellation, Saturn, which predicts "destruction du peuple, guerre, discorde, pillerie, occisions et autres choses semblables." He further notes that this violence will extend to kings, who will fight, break agreements and leave their countries (presumably to go to war). Murder and mayhem will follow Jupiter's ascension. France will not fare well but the Venetians will do better. Universal peace could come from a treaty in Rome but not without treachery amongst the people, leading most likely to regicide by poison. Here, political turmoil is placed on an equivalent footing with weather patterns; both provide information necessary to plan the year.

Regicide is part of universal peace just as proper snowpack presumably brings good soil. Instead of grouping the weather forecast with agricultural and medical advice, a grouping seen in

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person. She further reminds readers that referring to "fols astrologues" is a convention found in all almanacs, not a sign of secularization. This is logically consistent with the denunciation of false prophets in biblical writing.

[21] Henry de Fine, La Grande Prenostication de Louvain pour ceste presente année Mil cinq cens et xviii

[22] As reproduced in M.-A. Screech's 1974 publication

[23] Charles V was well reputed to use almanacs to legitimate his political authority, as François Moreau (along with many other scholars) mentions in his notes to the 1994 Pléiade edition of Rabelais' works. p. 1702

[24] This is a common opening remark, but Fine takes it less seriously than other astrologers, such as Rabelais.

[25] Generic conventions work as mix and match modules but tend to follow a consistent order : how the weather will affect sales and agriculture, how various artisanal groups will fare, conspiracies against the king by country, a calendar with dates of religious festivals, what days to plant, what days are good for bleeding. The calendar uses fairly consistent pictograms to distinguish which days are good for bleeding, indifferent for bleeding, generally bad aspect, plant and seed, and planting. Jacques Vivian 1519 Geneva broadsheet almanac (Besson, Lausanne n. 164 available digitized from the Bibliothèque nationale de la France GLN-5770; Gilles Hugnetan 1534 Lyon almanac includes predictions about the Turks FC115 Lyon; Antoine Crespin dict Nostradamus de Marseille en provence *Prognostication avec ses presages pour l'an 1571* (includes which precious stones will be on sale for affordable prices and how the fruit market will be affected but otherwise remains similar to the earlier almanacs). The Louvre catalog *Les effets du Soleil : almanachs du règne de Louis XIV*, Maxime Préaud 1995, includes engravings with much more propagandistic imagery of the monarchy's foreign policy success as well as a fascinating 1690 mix of the witch of Endor and Dom Juan but all keep the calendar with astrological symbols for the zodiac, agricultural recommendations and the medical-astrological body.

the stabilizing world of the *Compost*, Fine's almanac pairs weather with political events. Although we could generously read the prediction of regicide as an uncontrollable condition, like the weather rather than as a recommended action, like agricultural or medical practice, the rhetoric of these political predictions is blurred. The generic similarity to the *Compost* - in which the reader is asked to find the month in the *Compost* which he is currently experiencing and follow the practical advice given for that month – creates a confused reading of regicide in Fine's almanac. Is the reader supposed to identify his own fear with the turmoil he reads about and act as the almanac suggests, through murder, or is he supposed to simply be aware of this inclement climate?

The rhetorical problem of agency in the 1518 almanac is evoked in the use of the word "peuple." France is posited as a body affected by the stars, in much the same way that "grant personnages" will be affected. This blurring of "peuple" and "roy" under the title of a specific country creates a fluid sense of nation. The corporate body, or body politic, is not clearly located within the king's dual body, nor is it clearly related to the *corpus mysticum* of the Church.[26] The "paix universelle," for example, which could come from Rome (a city, not the papacy, legislators, or the people specifically), will not come to pass "sans quelque tromperie entre le peuple." A detailed explanation of this "tromperie" follows : Venus and Saturn "signifient mortalité de quelque grant[s] personnages, de poyson ou des autres choses semblables etc."[27] Almanac readers are given a specific, practical interpretation, justified by the astrologer's knowledge of the planets, but are grouped vaguely. Unlike the *Compost* or *Narrenschiffe,* which use "danse macabre" woodcuts, the reader is suddenly asked to identify as a citizen of a specific nation rather than as a type of worker or personality trait. This precarious placing of a metonym (Rome) within a series of personifications - Jupiter as war-bringer, Saturn and Venus as poisoners – collapses large complex groups into singular but ambiguous political bodies. These new bodies are both easy to identify with and at a remove from the reader. The reader could engage with politics, much as he engages with his agricultural practice, by learning the forecast and acting accordingly. However, the reader's ambiguous identification with the group, "peuple," keeps him at a distance from the consequences. He may not reap what he sows.

Fine's mocking reference to the Scots, who will be unable to avoid the melancholy illnesses, further exemplifies this blurred identification. By characterizing a people by their temperament – tied to their weather and geography much more than to any political unifier – the reader floats between a familiar character-trait form of identity, melancholy, and a regional identification based on both weather and a potential political claim to governance. These are not political bodies (Scotland) but rather a group of moody farmers fearing the plague. Should the reader identify with the Scots if he is a moody farmer?

The reader's ability to identify with a group is further destabilized when Fine breaks the community into a new series of groups based on planetary influence, which loosely corresponds to profession, returning to a more traditionally established convention of reader identification. He quickly returns to predictions for individual kings, kingdoms, and eventually cities. The prediction for France blends together the prediction for the king with the prediction for the kingdom. This constant grouping and regrouping throws the delineation of communities into question. Not only is a reader able to ally with a wide range of groups (his profession, his region, his temperament), he is further able to act independently in each of these spheres based on the tendencies with which he identifies.

[26] Kantorowicz. p. 195. "The Church as the mystical body of Christ"
[27] "De paix et de guerre de ceste année"

The almanac teaches reading conventions that affect how readers understand community and belonging. Readers are grouped as citizens one moment and as part of a moral group the next, grouped with the king's actions and then duly separated as common laborers. These shifting identifications affect readers' conceptualization of their own political status. Are commoners under the sign of the Moon, politically engaged by the new information they have acquired about their potential place on the national stage or merely more susceptible to fear? At the intersection of these multiple and potentially analogous predictions – weather, profits, politics - lies the individual body. The almanac reader is first given information that will help him to regulate the care of his own body : weather patterns that will affect his daily comings and goings and illnesses he may face. The reader is further responsible for his household : how the weather will affect his agricultural business and price fluctuations he may expect in the coming year. This advice on how to better live daily life, however, is intermingled with threats of potential political turmoil and wars that could affect the reader's land. No explanation is given, however, as to how, for example, if Maximilian's wealth increases this year and if his "esperit est incline à guerroyer pour resister à l'encontre de ses ennemys et avoir victoire contre eulx," the almanac reader should tend to his land or his body.[28] This is not the same type of claim in relation to the readers body as the claim that the beginning of July will be "fort chault." These are two different types of knowledge forced into proximity, eliding both differences in agency and in causality. The crops will certainly be affected by a heat wave, they may or may not be affected by foreign affairs. The public, or social, body and the physiological body – which eats, seeks shelter, falls ill – are conflated without a theoretical framework to mediate between the two.

The further conflation of "[l]e royaulme de France" with "Françoys, Treschrestien et tresredoubté Roy de France, duc de Millan, seigneur de Gennes, etc" blurs the boundaries between the king's body, the body politic, the household, and the reader's individual body :
De divers royaumes et duchez. Et premier du Treschretien Roy de France :

> Françoys, Treschrestien et tresredoubté Roy de France, duc de Millan, seigneur de Gennes, etc. : sa royalle Majesté sera ceste année bien fortunée, mais Mars luy promect aucun dommage en aulcunes de ces possessions par feu. Le royaume de France aura ceste année à souffrir de gens d'armes et de diverses maladies, parquoy auncuns auront pestilence et autres maladies semblables; mais pourront bien venir à quelque paix par bon conseil. Ilz auront entre eulx discord et discension; toutefoys il n'y aura nulle effusion de sang.

The title of the section announces the problem of conflation immediately : this section of the almanac will address various kingdoms, that is to say, political bodies; it will begin with the king of France. While this transition affirms the king's two bodies as a political theory, the bodies are neither coherent nor in the king's control. The subsequent paragraph explains how the king unifies several regions (Millan, Gennes, etc.) under his title. His body is subject to planetary influences in the same way the reader's individual body was subject to planetary influences. The narrative abruptly shifts, however, to refer to the kingdom as a suffering body separate from the king's natural body. While the king will suffer some property damage, the kingdom will be afflicted by war and sickness.[29] These are clearly two different bodies, not the nation and its earthly embodiment coexisting within the king. The kingdom is a separate collection of bodies,

[28] "De l'estat de divers grans princes. Et premier de l'imperiale Majesté tousjours auguste"
[29] For Kantorowicz, the problem of the king's property is precisely where the theorization of his two bodies arises (p. 219). This legal question is not in any way resolved in discourses like Fine's almanac.

which receive advice separate from the king's "par bon conseil." It is unclear where this advice, arriving through the passive voice, comes from. It seems likely that it comes from the wise almanac seller.[30] The kingdom is further fragmented by the subject pronoun and its reinforcement : "Ilz auront entre eulx." Separate bodies make up the kingdom and have independent agency that can be properly united through "bon conseil."

This slippage - between the many bodies that make up the kingdom and the king who is a dual containing body - is eliminated in Henry de Fine's 1533 almanac, as it is in another 1533 almanac from Louvain, written by Jehan Laet.[31] Both of these later almanacs predict "nulle guerre entre les crestiens." Fine simplifies his section on kingdoms to "monarques roys et princes crestiens" and, referring specifically to the king of France, predicts that the only possible war would be against the Turks, defining the corporate body as more clearly Christian. Laet similarly writes "ceste année ne aurons aulcune guerre, sinon à ce mauldit Turcq." The first person plural verb conjugation is the only indication of a collective body and is quickly followed by a prediction of good fortune for the king of France, maintaining agency in his body and reestablishing the king's two bodies within a single earthly body. This tightening of political language repositions knowledge about war and peace within the scope of knowledge of weather. Politics is completely beyond the agency of the almanac reader but nonetheless allows him to make provisions.

Rabelais' response to the Louvain almanacs

When Rabelais writes his own almanacs, he pushes against the tradition I have just outlined. Rabelais further tightens the boundaries around bodies and simplifies reader identification. He restricts the place of the almanac reader, separating him from the political sphere through a prophetic discourse of limitation. Rabelais' 1535 almanac delineates groups by political station clearly and without ambiguity :

> Je dis, quant est de moy, que si les Roys, Princes et communitez Christianes ont en reverence la divine parole de Dieu, et selon icelle gouvernent soy et leurs sujets, nous ne veismes de nostre aage année plus salubre és corps, plus paisible és asmes, plus fertile en biens, que sera cette-cy:

The king is included in this prescriptive reading of the stars, placed on equal but separate footing with the people he governs. There is no blurring of the groups; the king is clearly separated from the "communitez." The calendars that follow give the same instructions for members of the Christian community and for its shepherds. Rabelais' calendars eliminate political prophecies entirely, focusing on liturgical dates, astrological information pertinent to agriculture, and medical advice. These categories intersect : the calendar aligns the church year with the seasons and weather patterns, which influence one's health. "Les jours caniculaires," for example, are marked by precise dates, are astrologically determined as the least harmful, and come with

[30] The counterbalance to this sudden confused empowerment of the almanac reader, however, is the specific type of advice he is given. The astrologer himself, under the sign of Mercury with other messengers, "auront cesté année bonne prosperité et seront loyaulx et fideles l'un à l'autre." Whereas the commoners, under the Moon, "auront ceste année à soufrrir par maladies et mortalité. Et il est à doubter que les roys et princes tailleront fort leur peuple." Clearly the astrologer will turn a profit from the sale of the almanac and has reinforced the business of his fellow astrologers. The common man, who has read of his coming ailments in detail and the war that will affect his land is left concerned about the state of the world and slightly poorer, having purchased the almanac.

[31] A ban issued thirty years later suggests that the almanac is increasingly perceived to be a politically volatile genre.

medical advice : “on ne doibt seigner ne prendre medicine laxative.”[32] This unified world works within the limits imposed on the reader’s sphere of public action.

This unified but limited knowledge is further reinforced by the calendar’s form. The almanac, often in broadsheet form, can hang on the wall. Each day is marked by various symbols, showing whether to bleed, whether to plant, any liturgical holidays, and phases of the moon. The almanac sheet is divided into three columns, which Alain-Michel Boyer categorizes as religious, celestial, and bodily.[33] The symbols for the phases of the moon, or for whether or not to bleed, not only communicate as much information as the written words given for Christian holidays, they furthermore participate in a syncretic how-to manual.[34] In comparison to the 1518 Louvain almanac, however, Rabelais has significantly curtailed the analogic fluidity of the world. Rather than blurring boundaries between groups, Rabelais’ almanacs set up hierarchical categories, which relate to one another through rigorous logic. Clear instructions are given with clear causal connections from the stars to the weather to the body : celestial alignments indicate a heat wave which means you should not take a laxative. This almanac has more in common with the *Compost* than with the Louvain almanacs : the reader can clearly see his place in a stable universe.

Rabelais’ *Pantagruline prognostication*, published from 1532 to 1542, engages with the political rhetoric of the Louvain almanacs directly. Rabelais’ 1533 *Pantagruline prognostication*, much like the Louvain almanacs from the same year, predicts “nulle peste, nulle guerre, nul ennemy.” Naturally, Rabelais goes further, adding “bren de pouvreté, bren de melancholie.” This scatological reading of common afflictions brings the reader back to the troubles in his own sphere, delimiting the reader’s experience within his daily, cyclic concerns. The almanac reader is put in his place through comedy but is still given the information he might need to govern his affairs.

In the *Pantagruline prognostication*, an almanac and continuation of the tales of Pantagruel, Rabelais’s narrator, Alcofribas, reads the Louvain prognostications as abuses that mislead the curious public : “La plus grande folie du monde est de penser qu’il y ayt des astres

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[32] 1544 almanac

[33] Boyer argues that these three categories represent equivalent forms of knowledge, in accordance with Foucault’s analogic reading of sixteenth century epistemology. “Les architectures du lisible.” 1987

[34] For Boyer, this unity of daily religious practice with farming and medical practice places the almanacs in a neo-platonic lineage with the philosophical writings of Marsilio Ficino. It further erodes the distance between oral and written culture, bringing popular culture into the literary field. As many archival studies have shown, however, the conventions of the almanac, while based on the topoi of agricultural life, were written for a highly educated audience. Natale Conti’s *Mythologiae* ties Apollo and his prophetic children to a long line of metaphorical shepherds, tying them to the ancient practice of referring to kings as shepherds who guide their flock. This is also seen in biblical writings to refer to both God and Christ : in the Hebrew bible, the psalms, the prophetic books, the gospels. Jelle Koopmans’ research has consistently refuted this analogic claim by arguing that the conventions determining almanac production are too rigid to be considered popular. Koopmans’ extensive genre-based research convincingly argues that the almanac is neither a popular genre nor are Rabelais’ interventions into the genre directly satirical. The dismissal of “fols astrologues,” for example, is a convention used repeatedly by almanac writers. The *Grand Compost et Kalendrier des bergers* (1488) follows the same categories and rhetorical conventions as the *Prophétie ou prediction perpetuelle* published by the 17th century *Bibliothèque bleue*. In fact, Nicolas Oudet, one of the largest almanac publishers in the 17th century, continued to publish scripts of medieval mystery plays at this time. This is not to say that almanacs were not politically important, in 1534 the Faculté de medecine at the Sorbonne issued a parliamentary request to censure unqualified astrological predictions. A survey of almanacs and astrological political predictions, including pamphlets by Jean Lemaire de Belges, shows a varied landscape of satirical and serious pamphlets aimed at provoking laughter and leading apocalyptic riots.

pour les Roys, Papes et gros seigneurs, plustot que pour les pouvres et suffreteux, comme sy nouvelles estoilles avoyent este créez despuis le temps du deluge, ou de Romulus ou Pharamond, à la nouvelle creation des Roys."[35] Alcofribas identifies several problems with the Louvain prognostications, beginning with the direct application of stars to individual rulers. If each king gets a star, then each lowly person would also get a star. This would require the world to be rebuilt continuously. Rabelais' narrator begins the world three times : with the flood (from the book of Genesis), with the birth of Romulus (founder of the Roman empire), with the birth of Pharamond (legendary king of the Franks). This over-determination reinforces the association of temporal origin and political community. If each imperial lineage receives its own arc, it becomes absurd to begin the arc anew for each ruler, as if he did not belong to a larger divinely instated arc. By setting aside these political divisions, Rabelais is able both to reduce multiple arcs into one and to reserve them as earthly arcs in contrast to a larger religious arc (the politico-religious community of Christendom). There is no annual horoscope for the king nor is he given an individual character beyond his role within the stable corporate body of Christendom. "King" becomes an occupation, in this way. Each king does not receive a new narrative arc, nor does he define a new people. The "gens de bas estat" are grouped by planet as the *Compost* and *Narrenschiff* group by temperament, occupation, and character flaw. Alcofribas lists occupations and character traits: "usuriers", "hermites", "bourreaux", "putains", etc. There is no regrouping of these groups. The fates of the roles are tautologically reinforced : the jealous, suspicious, melancholic, won't have what they want; thieves will have more money than they need, much as in his chapter on sickness, the blind will see very little, the deaf will hear badly, and the mute will hardly speak; the rich will do a little better than the poor, and the healthy better than the sick.[36] In a direct contradiction of Isaiah 35:5, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped," the messiah, and the end of the world will not arrive in the coming year.[37] Individuals have predetermined roles within a narrative arc, defined only by Christ's body, that continue in the way such roles ought to continue.

Alcofribas' joking tone hints that there is some logic, beyond common sense, at play in the maintenance of these roles and the type of information needed to play one's role properly. This logic, however, is not the primary concern of the almanac reader or writer. Unlike the Louvain almanac, which begins by presenting the seasons (as external actions to which the reader could react), Rabelais' prognostication moves outward from the individual body. The seasons come at the very end of Rabelais' prognostication. The progression of topics moves directly from astrology to the health and affairs of men and ends with climate. He ends with a prediction for next winter :

> En hyver, scelon mon petit entendement, ne seront saiges ceulx qui vendront leurs pelisses et fourrures pour achapter du boys. Et ainsi ne faisoient les Angiques, comme tesmoigne Avenzouar. S'il pleut, ne vous en melancholiez : car tant moins aurez vous de pouldre pour chemin. Tenez vous chauldement. Redoubtez les catharres. Beuvez du meilleur, attendans que l'Aultre amendera. Et ne chiez plus doresnavent on lict. [O O poullailles faictes vous vos nidz tant hault?][38] FINIS.

[35] Ch. V : De l'estat d'aulcunes gens.

[36] "Ch. 3 Des maladies de ceste année," my paraphrase

[37] Natale Conti quotes the Sibyl in Book 4, Chapter 10 (p. 294) as a truth-teller prophesying Christ's miracles : "And the Sibyl: 'Soon the bodies of the dead will arise; the lame will stride swiftly; the deaf will hear; the blind will see from afar; the mute will speak.'"

[38] M.A. Screech has found that this last sentence, which I have bracketed, appears intermittently in various versions of the prognostication. It is not present in the first edition (1533) but is included in the 1542 edition.

The passage does not begin with the weather itself; it begins with a reaction. Alcofribas has done the calculations and has found that next winter, the wise man will not sell his pelts and furs to buy wood. The information provided is proscriptive and remains within the strictures of personal agency. We know it will be cold implicitly, but the prognostication never explicitly describes the weather. The chance of rain, "S'il pleut," is only one possibility. The circumstances are not as important as the reactions, which are visible and within the reader's control. Through elision and hypothetical language, Rabelais has displaced information that the reader does not need in favor of instructions on how to act. Rabelais moves from suggestion to the imperative. This shift from what one will do, to what one did do, and then to a set of instructions establishes an abiding set of reactions to a changeable, unknowable climate. This constant interaction with the reader, the second person monologue, is followed with a (similarly performative) enigmatic joke before the almanac ends.[39] The prognostication's send-off is enigmatic and ridiculous, similar in tone to the end of the preface to the *Tiers livre*, which mocks the reader and chases him away. If there is a hidden meaning, the narrator will not help the reader solve it. The world beyond concrete advice and actions is withheld. Although ostensibly a text that tells the future, the almanac tells only the future that is regular and repetitive. Alcofribas only suggests actions : stay warm, try not to get sick, drink well. The future of our actions, as the prognostication represents it, is continuous and regular, much the way these actions are presented in the *Compost*, a reference to be used year after year. The reasons for these actions are kept sealed. Unlike in the Louvain almanacs, there is no blurring of the distinction between informative and proscriptive information; a blurring which might imply that we had some control over the course of history. Instead, Rabelais' prognostication sits firmly in a world that is fictional but that nonetheless provides advice on how to live from one day to the next.

The *Pantagruline prognostication*'s insistence on its fictional nature – through references to the characters and narrator of Rabelais' *Pantagruel* – underscores the prognostication's literary form. As scholars have shown, the prognostication and the almanac were highly formalized literary productions, despite many of the popular claims made by these conventions.[40] Rabelais' *Pantagruline prognostication* pulls the discursive conventions of the almanac into his fictional world. In this world there is no fixed meaning to a given phrase. For example, the phases of the moon, a common feature in all almanacs, becomes a play on words : "En toute ceste année, ne sera qu'une Lune, encores ne sera elle poinct novelle."[41] The word "new" is separated out from its idiomatic usage (the new moon as the beginning of the next lunar cycle) and turned into a clever pun through literalizing the adjective (the new moon as newly created). This calls attention to a rigid discursive practice while simultaneously emphasizing the underlying stasis of the astrological universe. The moon may have cycles but it certainly does not change. As Michael Randall argues, in his work on analogy, signs in Rabelais frequently point to a space beyond signs, rather than to other signs.[42] In contrast to Boyer's analogic reading of the almanac – in which there is a continuity between the celestial bodies, the weather, and the human body - , Randall suggests a looser analogy. Much as Alcofribas suggests proper reactions to winter rather than specific conditions one might react to, we can similarly read a discussion of the entire visible world as an indication of causes beyond our sphere of comprehension.

[39] Jelle Koopmans has noted this performative dialogue is common among almanac conventions. "Rabelais et la tradition de la prognostication." 1997

[40] Jan Miernowski, Jelle Koopmans, Michael Randall, and many others.

[41] Chapitre vii : Des quatre saisons de l'année.

[42] Ch. 5 "From ius gentium to Gaster : A Rational Rabelais?"

Rabelais' prognostication is not a simple satire, but rather a disruption of the process of reading. The absence of causal information - withheld in the *Pantagruline prognostication* but postulated in many other almanacs and prognostications – draws attention to the cause-effect structure used in the almanac genre. By placing his prognostication inside his fictional world, Rabelais not only pulls prophetic speech further back from political action, but also is able to draw attention to the discursive practices used in almanacs and the political implications of such practices. The reader is forced to see the astrologer's claims as discursive practice, a way of speaking which mediates the relation between people and their world.

Rabelais' emphasis on the astrologer's reliance on generic conventions to establish his authority further draws attention to one of the basic problems in prophecy : who speaks is more important than what is said. Alcofribas notes in the opening of the prognostication,

> ce n'est pas legier peché de mentir ainsi à son escient, et ensemble abuser le povre monde qui est curieulx de sçavoir choses nouvelles… Ce que nous voyons encores de jour en jour par France, où le premier propos qu'on tient à gens fraischement arrivez sont : « Quelles nouvelles ? Sçavez-vous rien de nouveau ? Qui dit ? Qui bruit par le monde ? » Et tant y sont attentifz que souvent se courroussent contre ceulx qui viennent de pays estranges sans aporter pleines bougettes de nouvelles, les appellant veaux et idiotz.

The people are drawn to newness and news, much like the pun on the new moon. The narrator, however, is first and foremost focused on truth-telling and the credibility of his testimony. Max Weber has argued that this is the primary distinguishing characteristic of a prophet : the prophet has a gift and must prove that he has it.[43] The prophet's testimony is further qualified by its newness; this brings us back to the play on words of the new moon. There is a specific type of news that he must bring, a type that is expected and almost predetermined. This news should be from other people, and should be about who is speaking, who is making noise in the world. The people are looking for news that relates to foreign policy : what is happening in other countries that will make its way here. The people are so intent on this particular type of news that they will easily anger if they do not receive what they expect. The narrator goes on to give the example of his "bon maistre Pantagruel" who ensures that the news that people receive is truthful and who rules his prosperous country well. Alcofribas, as astrologer, performs a similar task. The role of the writer is intimately tied to narrative expectation and convention. He does not bring news from traveling but rather from his scholarly work : both scientific and historical :

> Voulant doncques satisfaire à la curiosité de tous bons compaignons, j'ai revolvee toutes les pantarches des cieulx, calculé les quadratz de la Lune, crocheté tout ce que jamais penserent tous les astrophiles, hypernephelistes, anemophilaces, uranopetes et ombrophores, et conferé du tout avecques Empedocles, lequel se recommande à vostre bonne grace.

The responsible astrologer-prophet-narrator informs the reader that he has created a truthful account, cross-checked and verified by classical knowledge, of the news a people needs to know that will satisfy their thirst for foreign news – even if he ultimately only brings platitudes. News comes from weather and astronomy, from those who love stars, who study the clouds and the wind, who carry shadows. Scholars (not explorers) mediate meteorological (not socio-political) knowledge.[44] It is in this context that I propose we frame Rabelais' stylistic use of tautology. The

[43] *The Sociology of Religion, Ch. 4 : The Prophet*

[44] The Holy Spirit, Ruach, is literalized in the *Quart livre* on the island of Ruah, where people survive and die on wind alone. The wind becomes a point of debate, at the end of the *Quart livre*, when it dies down. The shipmates laugh and band together as a group rather than sacrifice anyone to the gods (in contrast to the sacrifice of Iphigenia,

fact that the blind will have difficulty seeing not only stalls the apocalypse, it indicates what type of information a community needs in order to live well among other peoples.

Rabelais' almanacs and prognostications, in contrast to alarmist almanacs, bring essentially old news. Michael Walzer's reading of the Hebrew prophets argues that the prophet is a reminder. He does not bring new news; he brings old news, again and again.[45] The prophet's news ought to instill in a people that good domestic policy is good foreign policy. The Hebrew prophet works against political involvement by overriding deliberation and minimizing active participatory politics in a messianic moment.[46] Walzer has notably set forth the notion of the prophet as social critic, which might be read anachronistically as a progressive role. However, Walzer argues that by focusing on domestic policy - a return to the morals and rituals laid out in the Hebrew people's covenant with their God - the prophet argues for moral reform at home in order to keep borders safe: if you take care of the oppressed, the hungry, the homeless, God will not use foreign powers against you and you will be safe.[47] In Walzer's reading, the prophet brings people back, through memory, to the basic tenets with which they are already familiar. This becomes a tautological message, reminding the people of the definitions that ground their daily lives. The prophet thus brings old news again and again in clear, ordinary language. Rabelais' tautological language in his almanacs can be read through this framework : the almanac is a written reminder, not just of liturgical dates, good planting practices and healthy living, but of a proper relation to a religious tradition in order to preserve mystery as mystery. Rabelais' almanacs mediate between the generic conventions of the almanac and a long religious tradition of bringing news.

As I have argued thus far, because prophetic speech for the common man is embedded in the genre of the almanac, when Rabelais works with prophetic discourses he is also confronting reading conventions. These reading conventions differ from devotional practices, such as prayer, contemplation, and asceticism, by reworking a direct individual relation to the divine as news. Rabelais' engagement with futurity cannot be read exclusively in terms of interpretation but must also consider the prophetic speaker who manipulates the conventions of prophetic discourse. Whereas the almanacs were written for an educated elite and not for the common people, as we might consider popular literature today, the intended audience was more inclusive than the audience for a royal horoscope. Screech has argued – based on the *Mémoires* of the du Bellay brothers - that Rabelais uses his prognostications and almanacs in the service of the du Bellay family and to promote the stability of the monarchy more generally.

I would like to propose a distinction between the generic conventions used in almanacs and those used in royal horoscopes. As I have discussed, the horoscope positions the prince as an exemplary leader of a community, shaping and directing its path through his own actions. The almanac, however, directs the community through the reinforcement of social roles. Both astrological genres manage the community by establishing proper social roles but the horoscope works from the top down, while the almanac works from the bottom up. By limiting the information available to almanac readers, Rabelais is not pushing a precocious secular agenda,

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at the outset of the Trojan War). Signs work differently in Rabelais' work than in the classical world, by pointing individuals to the maintenance of their role within a group, rather than toward a narrative action.

[45] "The prophet as Social Critic." 1987

[46] In contrast to David Quint's reading of apocalypse and interpretation, this would suggest that prophets, rather than apocalyptic texts, limit participation and stall attempts at progress. This could also be read as a political position of de-escalation of fanatical thought rather than Quint's more optimistic rational pursuit of open discussion.

[47] *In God's Shadow : Politics in the Hebrew Bible*. 2012

but drawing a parallel between what one can know generally and what one can know specifically about the political agenda for the year.[48] The almanac reader is given a calendar to follow with prefatory remarks reminding him that his desire to know more is not a desire the almanac will appease but rather a reminder of his immortal soul and God's omnipotence. Rabelais welcomes kings to read these works as well. A king, however, because of his dual role, is additionally provided with information to help him govern. The astrologer is able to move between the king and the people to help both play their roles properly. The pious reader adheres to the public role described for him or her; this is not an individual fate, but rather, a place within the cohesive community or corporate body that follows a narrative arc in relation to the Christian god.[49]

The Astrological prophet who speaks for princes and commoners

Rabelais' almanacs are presented from the authoritative position of an astrological prophet, a common trope in Renaissance almanacs, calendars, and prophecies. The astrologer-prophet was part of a larger syncretic web, which pulled together classical and biblical associations of divine knowledge, medicine, and pastoral life.[50] By mediating between fiction and knowledge, the astrologer-prophet is able to both conceal and reveal information appropriate to the reader's station. I propose that this syncretic scholarly figure is deeply indebted to the authority of the Sibyl. The trope of a scholar alone in his study at night launches the prophecies of the 1491 *Le Compost et kalendrier des bergers*, of Henry de Fine's Louvain almanacs, of Rabelais' almanacs, and so on through astrologer Pierre de Larivey's 1623 quatrain prophecies. Nostradamus begins his 1555 *Centuries* with an illuminated E, showing a bearded, caped man with a finger raised, as if pointing to the stars. The first quatrain begins :

Estant assis de nuit secret estude
Seul repousé sus la selle d'aerain
Flambe exigue sortant de solitude
Fait proférer qui n'est à croire en vain.

The male scholar, on his bronze seat, can be read as a transposition of the sibyl on her tripod; her cave is transformed into a study. In Nostradamus' second quatrain, the scholar – who is alluded to without the use of pronouns (although other astrologers keep third person male pronouns or first person pronouns) – holds "la verge en main" to prepare the ritualized space in which the divine will come to him. This "verge" is an ambiguous branch or rod that ties the astrological prophet to the multivalent symbols associated with the predominantly female diviners of Antiquity, as cited in Natale Conti.[51] *Le Compost et kalendrier des bergers* opens with a full-page woodcut of a scholar writing in his study. He is surrounded by bound volumes. The Sibyl's books are well represented in Renaissance painting and iconography. The best known examples, the Sibyls of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel, sit before open pages in small domed enclosures

[48] Unlike Pierre Bayle's claim two centuries later, that the king can depend on a vast network of generals and negotiators rather than a Sibyl. P 247 *Pensées diverses sur la comète*, 1682

[49] I Corinthians 12:27. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

[50] Christ, of course, was also a shepherd.

[51] Natale Conti's chapter on Apollo (Book IV, Chapter 10) pulls together Apollo's association of shepherds, weather, and medical healing with his oracle at Delphi, which is visibly marked by the pythia's tripod and the laurel tree. While Conti's chapter is arranged as a series of anecdotal tangents tied together primarily by the intersection of various mythologies related to Apollo, Conti's syncretism has to work hard to pull together the various myths and etymologies that tie Apollo to the golden tripod and the snake lurking beneath. He ends by separating stories about the gods from stories about men in order to claim the former tried to give knowledge about the natural world and the latter tried to provide knowledge about how to act. The *Compost* and the almanac traditions maintain these tensions without separating out these types of knowledge.

much like the one in the *Compost* woodcut.[52] The sibylline scholar is a redactor, as Alcofribas described his labor: "j'ai… crocheté tout ce que jamais penserent tous les astrophile, hypernephelistes, anemophilaces, uranopetes, et ombrophores." Mediating, evaluating, and redacting prophetic knowledge is part of a Humanist's labor.

The accompanying text to the *Compost* woodcut explains that the *Compost* is a compilation of knowledge gathered from shepherds guarding their flocks in the field, who had very little knowledge of the scriptures. The subsequent woodcuts show shepherds out of doors, outside the city, playing music, speaking to one another while their sheep graze. This transition, through the act of reading, into a purportedly oral world, plays into a larger syncretic generic convention, which subsumes oral – and often female – prophecy into formalized literary convention.

The astrological prophet is sibylline in the type of knowledge he produces : he has his own divine knowledge (God does not speak through him) but this knowledge is always incomplete, something is withheld. Even after the Sibyl has spoken something remains unknown. In his work on oracles, Michael Wood argues that knowing and not-knowing can be read as two time frames.[53] When we ask to know the future, we try to overlay a later time frame (knowing) on an earlier time frame (not knowing). This doubling is negotiated by different types of language. Cryptic language provides the fullness of that second time frame but has encoded its information; this means, we can collapse the earlier time quickly into the second by cracking the code. Sibylline language withholds part of the second time frame from the first, continuously deferring the arrival of the second time frame (knowing). Knowledge might be withheld because it is simply not known or because the arrival of that second time frame would constitute a fundamental alteration of the inquiring subject. In the case of apocalyptic knowledge – or even perfect knowledge in death - the arrival of the second time frame annihilates the curious subject who existed in the first time frame, fundamentally altering him while fulfilling the promise of complete knowledge.[54] Sibylline language forestalls an endpoint while still remaining in the spoken register.[55] By offering only some of what he knows, the astrologer-prophet, is able to keep both time frames open.

This game of revealing and withholding can be seen in the introductory paragraph to Rabelais' 1533 almanac, published under his own name. Rabelais lets his readers know that kingdoms and religions are in "mutation." The specific way in which these changes will unfold, however, are "secrets." The reader ought to remain silent and "les adorer en silence," that is, the secrets. Rabelais cites the book of Tobit : "C'est bien fait de receler le secret du Roy," before citing Psalm 44 in which "Roy" is replaced by "Seigneur Dieu" : "Seigneur Dieu, silence t'appartient en Sion." While this parallelism appears to unify the secrets of the king and the

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[52] These books are also part of the large mythology surrounding sibylline knowledge as withheld knowledge. Lactantius writes that it was the Cumaen Sibyl who sold nine books of prophecies to Tarquin but destroyed six, leaving him three for the price of nine.

[53] *Road to Delphi*, 2003.

[54] To distinguish this from the conceptual difference Dennis Costa has provided, between prophecy and apocalypse, sibylline knowledge is not incomplete because it has not been interpreted fully, that would be a cryptic message that exists historically and may or may not be resolved satisfactorily by the community. Sibylline knowledge is intrinsically unknowable because of the message's delivery. It is not a matter of interpretation (or reception) but rather the way in which divine knowledge is delivered.

[55] This distinction between cryptic and sibylline language allows me to discuss prophetic language in Rabelais without attributing all language that forestalls the apocalypse to ritualized, written apocalyptic language. Although I do not disagree with Dennis Costa's distinction, I would like to nuance the category of prophetic language so that it does not get systematically grouped with millenarianism.

secrets of God as a singular sacred endeavor, there is a distinction. The king's secret is something that could be shared but ought to be withheld. In contrast, God's divine knowledge belongs to him alone. The citation from the book of Tobit continues, adding another layer to this distinction : "It is good to keep close the secret of a king, but it is honourable to reveal the works of God."[56] The works, quite literarily, are charitable giving : Tobit has told his son, Tobias, to properly tip his traveling companion. The angel Raphael reveals himself as Tobias' companion, stating, "I will not conceal anything from you," and repeating his previous claim, "It is good to keep close the secret of a king but it is honourable to reveal the works of God."[57] Tobit and Tobias are rewarded for their good works with a glimpse of the divine. Raphael, however, explains that he has been with them through their many trials, although they did not see him. He has watched as they acted piously. His appearance at this juncture reveals the work of God by revealing the meaning of their actions. There is a clear authority, a singular interpretation, and full knowledge at the end of the narrative. However, God remains silent : Raphael doesn't give an intellectual explanation for the good works that were performed, stating only that they were God's works. The slippage between Rabelais' citations can be read as an elision of the difference between the type of withholding of knowledge in the Hebrew Bible and the type of secret a king might keep from his people. Much as Rabelais' almanacs and prognostications focus on human action rather than the cause of these actions, Rabelais' prefaces further elevate this limitation and secret-keeping to a virtue in and of itself.

As Michael Randall suggests, some signs point elsewhere.[58] The angel reveals God's glory and presence without explaining its semantic meaning; Raphael is proof that God is with Tobit and his son. The angel is an image that points out of itself. Michel Jeanneret describes signs that are not clearly literal or figurative as opaque.[59] To receive such signs piously is to recognize them for what they are, rather than to decode them. The preface to Rabelais' 1535 almanac, again published under his own name, further develops the convention of withholding knowledge. Rabelais begins by valorizing human desire for knowledge as proof of the immortality of the soul : "une autre vie est aprez cette-cy, en laquelle ce desir sera assouvi." Our desire to know what is to come is in no way wrong, to the contrary, it is tied to a greater religious truth. The problem, as Rabelais consistently indicates in his almanac prefaces, involves the attempt to sate this desire through speculative prying into the secrets of kings (which he has repeatedly equated with prying into - or scholastically decoding - God's secrets). Rabelais validates but redirects our impulse to know the future away from foreign policy and towards personal piety. Traditionally, sibylline prophecy relates to the nation, not to the individual – unless it is through the king's embodiment of the nation (as seen in the king's horoscope or Pantagruel's birth). The sibyl looks at the entire history of a nation, in which individuals play borrowed roles. The individual is not entitled to more knowledge than is necessary to play his or her role properly. Rabelais elevates this limitation by tying it to the story of Tobit, in the previous example, and simultaneously ties himself as astrologer-prophet to a much larger tradition of the partial nature of divine speech through earthly language.

According to Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, a prophet does not speak in tongues or obfuscating riddles, instead, he pulls together two complimentary gifts from the Holy

[56] Tobit 12:7, King James Version
[57] 12:11
[58] Randall. *Back to the Future*. 1991
[59] p. 98. *Le défi des signes.*

Spirit, : receiving divine knowledge and communicating or teaching the community.[60] Unlike the speaker of tongues who can only help himself, speaking to God in a language others cannot translate,[61] the astrologer-prophet is able to both interpret divine language and proclaim God's message to the people, thus serving the entire community. The prophet speaks to and for the community of believers in a clear language that edifies. Daniel is the Hebrew prophet perhaps most clearly possesses these two gifts, as described by Paul : he both receives and interprets visions from God. He is cited repeatedly in the credentials that astrologers, including Rabelais, list on the title-pages of their almanacs. Daniel, who was given the gift of knowledge of literature and philosophy but also the gift of interpreting dreams and visions, is both an instrument of God's revelation and a scholar. The book of Daniel is divided into a historical account of Daniel's rise within Nebuchadnezzar's court (including his dream interpretation for the king), and Daniel's own apocalyptic visions; both halves of the book solidify Daniel's position as a hinge between political and religious spheres.[62] As the king's counsel, Daniel is able the read the king's dreams, interpreting for the larger community; God reveals the future through both the king's sybilline dream language and Daniel's clear interpretations, which Daniel himself receives in dreams. In contrast, Daniel's own visions, which the angel Gabriel informs him are of the end of the world, position him somewhere between historical and eschatological time, between interpretation and revelation. Daniel is shown a vision but Gabriel comes and tells him to "seal" the vision away, not to speak of it until the end times come. In the 1550 Louvain translation of Daniel 8, this is rendered "signe" – to keep secret, hide, until it is time for full knowledge to be revealed.[63] Again, as in the Book of Tobit, revelation is a gift, rather than an act of intellectual labor and interpretation. The angel Gabriel provides the interpretation of Daniel's vision; there is no discussion within the text. The prophet, who now possesses divine knowledge and its meaning, does not reveal all of it at once. Daniel's only action is prayer. The delay between knowing and not-knowing is extended to death or apocalypse, but the gap is not negotiated by a reader. Incomplete knowledge is kept incomplete until it is time to show, not explain, divine knowledge. The authority points to proof of divine presence through an opaque sign, a glimpse of divine immanence on earth.

This form of piously reading news is neither new nor outside of the community's boundary. The prophet reveals what is known but unrecognized within a community. Erasmus proposes a method for reading the Gospels, which respects the opaque sign of the prophetic text.[64] News comes as an opaque sign, a revelation, rather than as a foreign report on political intrigue. Prophetic news is brings the reader to recognize what he or she knows and consequently be transformed by that knowledge. Erasmus describes this method of reading in his 1516 preface to his edition of the New Testament. He opens with a dismissal of the need for persuasion. Rather than convince a reader through scholastic glosses, wouldn't it be better to let the truth

[60] Chapter 14

[61] One who speaks in tongues must pray "that he may interpret… if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God." King James Version 14:13 and 28

[62] Daniel's faith is tested when Nebuchadnezzar instructs his subjects, including the Jewish exiles to worship a golden statue. Daniel refuses, according to the Hebrew god's commandment against idolatry. Although he is sentenced to burn to death, his god sends an angel to protect him and his friends from the flames, which impresses Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel's ability to explain the king's dreams keeps him in favor at the court. The subsequent king Darius is equally impressed by a similar incident, in which Daniel is sentenced to death in a lion's den, but is again saved by an angel. The second half of the book of Daniel is told in the first person and recounts, in vivid imagistic language, Daniel's visions.

[63] http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb37254842t

[64] From the Greek ευαΥΥελιον (euangelion) or good message, *évangile*, meaning "bonne nouvelle."

stand clearly and simply? Erasmus compares Christ's prophetic ability not to orators, such as Cicero, but to those prophets who transformed their listeners : Mercury (often compared to the sibyls in Medieval texts), Orpheus, Amphion, and so forth. A good vernacular translation will allow the word of God to come through Christ's words and directly into the readers' hearts. Erasmus makes a claim, very similar to the citations from the Book of Tobit, which Rabelais cites frequently in the prefaces to his almanacs : "The mysteries of kings, perhaps, are better concealed, but Christ wishes his mysteries published as openly as possible."[65] Mysteries are not revealed through explanation, through uncovering or interpretative action; mysteries are revealed as impressions made directly upon the reader. The reader is inspired and transformed. The message is validated not through its interpretation but through the speaker's credentials. Much as Tobit and Tobias see the angel and know God, so the prophetic text reveals itself as divine, as the "living image of His holy mind."[66] Religious knowledge is separated from political knowledge, which requires both interpretation and action. Instead, the reader is called to adhere to a covenant or way of life, to recognize what he or she already knows. Prophecy transforms the reader in an emotional, spiritual, but perhaps not reasoned, way.

Prophecy does not provide full knowledge, as Rabelais reminds his readers in his almanac prefaces, but it is the knowledge allotted to us while we live in this world. The prognostication (and almanac), perhaps the most simplistic of the prophetic genres with which Rabelais engages, does not simply provide information, it mediates between the world, the written word, and the reader's reactions. The almanac focuses on reaction rather than causes in order to preserve the sanctity of certain mysteries. In contrast to this type of reading, is an attempt to uncover the king's mysteries. This involves reasoning, gathering news to interpret, and potentially, debates over interpretation – what should be done in response to this information? The *Tiers livre* brings these multiple prophetic discourses intended for different audiences together with different modes of interpreting prophecy, particularly through Panurge's encounter with the Sibyl. Sybilline prophecy is most visible in the *Tiers livre*, where the prophet reclaims her origins and appears as the Sibyl of Panzoust.

A Prophet for Panurge

The Sibyl underpins the construction of the astrological-prophet who writes horoscopes and almanacs.[67] She lies at the juncture between the classical and biblical traditions.[68] The Sibyl of Panzoust is the first authority Pantagruel suggests Panurge consult to begin his quest to find a satisfactory answer to his question : if he marries will he be cuckolded?[69] While I have demonstrated how sibylline language is fundamental to the astrological-prophet of both the almanac and the horoscope, the common man and the prince, I will now turn to the Sibyl in the

[65] p. 97 in John C. Olin edition, *Christian humanism and the Reformation : selected writings of Erasmus*, 1975
[66] p. 106 ibid.
[67] The Sibyl is connected to the horoscope tradition in so far as she predicts for kings and nations. Her image is more frequently appropriated by almanac and prognostication writers, as I have argued earlier in this chapter.
[68] The Sibyl was frequently read as a messanger announcing the coming of Christ to pagan peoples. Rabelais' sibyl brings together characteristics from the sibyl in Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, as well as characteristics of Medea, Odysseus and Penelope. The rise and fall of the sibylline oracles during the Renaissance has been intriguingly documented. Jennifer Britnell, "The Rise and Fall of the Sibyls in Renaissance France" in *Schooling and Society : The Ordering and Reordering of Knowledge in the Western Middle Ages*. Ed. Alasdair MacDonald and Michael Twomey, 2004, notes that the Sibyl was common in the medieval Book of Hours as a prophet to the pagans, foreseeing the coming of Christ but that Humanist research through the dating of the oracles into question.
[69] A question, which Alcofribas has already answered for the reader by announcing that Panurge will marry and be cuckolded at the end of *Pantagruel*, in a prophetic gesture / plot-teaser of his own.

Tiers livre, as particularly suited to mediate the prophetic quest of Panurge. While the Sibyl of Panzoust is not the beginning of this structure – Panurge tries a number home divination techniques first - , she launches the terror that largely structures Panurge's reactions and interpretations for the remainder of the book. More importantly, the episodes surrounding the Sibyl mediate these conflicting reading strategies through sibylline withholding and revelation of knowledge.

Panurge's attempts at answering his question by consulting the verses of Virgil and trying to induce a prophetic dream have resulted in an interpretive stalemate. Pantagruel suggests that Panurge consult the Sibyl of Panzoust. The Sibyl lives in an isolated but mundane house under a large chestnut tree. The space - "mal bastie, mal meublée, toute enfumée" – is analogous to the Sibyl – "mal en poinct, mal vestue, mal nourrie, edentée." It is Epistémon, who has already journeyed to Hell and seen great men humbled in death to common activities, who suggests that the appearance of the Sibyl's house is not surprising since gods live in "maison semblable" just as well as "palais pleins de delices."[70] The humble Sibyl, much like the witch Picrochole meets in *Gargantua*,[71] is old, ugly, female. Her activities in the house are similarly mundane : cooking cabbage, feeding the fire, sweeping.

The description of the Sibyl's house is perhaps the most detailed location since the utopian Thélème – where the *enigme en prophécie* brings together the mundane world of tennis

[70] Ch. 17. Significant work has been done looking at Rabelais' reworking of scholastic analogy. Jan Miernowski's on enigma and prophetic style argues that Rabelais subverts allegory, "In search of a context for Rabelaisian hermeneutics," 1993. Michael Randall's *Building Resemblance*, 1996, considers analogy in relation to skepticism and proposes that language that often seems analogical in Rabelais' texts are often pointing towards something beyond linguistic signifiers.

[71] Picrochole, who wages war against Gargantua, provides an example of how Rabelais' proto-novels rework generic tropes, in this case, the confrontation with death found in the almanac. After losing the battle to Gargantua, Picrochole flees, becomes enraged with his horse and kills it, tries to steal a donkey from a nearby mill but is thoroughly beaten, stripped and given nothing but a work coat to cover himself. Picrochole's community has been scattered and he wanders as if in exile. It is at this point, that the "pauvre cholericque" meets "une vieille Lourpidon" - "Lourpidon" is again found in an earlier, 1496 text by La Vigne, and is further elaborated on as "caroignes et cabas, Ordes guenyppes, ridees et brisees, Poitrons puans, gaulpes mal advisees, Atout les deables j'amenray tout sa bas." This further emphasizes the downfall : treacherous, entrapping, debauched women. The reference to her "poitron" or anus, resonates with the depiction of the Sibyl of Panzoust in the *Tiers livre*. (Frantext) This sorceress tells him his kingdom will be returned to him when the "Coquecigrues" arrive. This is the last anyone hears of Picrochole, although rumors circulate that he still asks strangers about the "Coquecigrues" hoping that the "prophétie de la vieille" will be fulfilled (*Gargantua*, Ch. 49). Picrochole's uncertain livelihood, if he lives at all, is a thing of legends : he is said to wander aimlessly as a "gaignedenier", awaiting what we can only assume is a false prophecy, intended to further punish him. The suggestion that Picrochole now lives without any specific occupation ties this episode to Epistémon's topsy-turvey journey to the underworld in *Pantagruel*, « Tous les chevaliers de la Table Ronde estoyent pauvres gaingnedeniers, tirans la rame pour passer les rivières de Coccyte, Phlégtéton, Styx, Achéron et Léthe, quand Messieurs les diables se voulent esbatre sur l'eau, comme sont les bastelières de Lyon et gondoliers de Venise. Mais pour chascune passagde, ilz ne ont que une nazarde, et, sur le soir, quelque morceau de pain chaumeny. » (Ch. 30). Epistémon emphasizes the poverty and low rank these knights now experience in their afterlife. Those near to princes are not even common: they lack basic occupations. Medieval heroes shuttle devils around the rivers of the Greek underworld, hardly earning moldy bread. A defeated, impoverished, angry man has the same fate as medieval knights who have died. A treacherous prophecy has brought Picrochole into a realm equivalent to death. This is not the prophetic truth of the underworld, as Aneas sees it, nor even the settling of scores Epistémon reports back, it is a purely fictional existence. Interestingly, Picrochole passes into a form of legend or oral storytelling whereas the Knights of the Round Table, having been properly recorded by Medieval romances move into the underworld of the Greeks, equally written and accounted for.

and the apocalypse – or the world inside Pantagruel's mouth.[72] Like the world inside Pantagruel's mouth, the Sibyl's house is a very ordinary, domestic space. Unlike the Sibyl in Aeneas, there is no cave near the entrance to the underworld. It is equally easy to imagine her in the world inside Pantagruel's mouth, buying cabbage.[73] The similarity to *Pantagruel* and the medieval theatrical trope of the hell mouth, are as close to the underworld as the Sibyl of Panzoust comes. The Sibyl, in her common house would fit into the world of the almanacs well. M.-A. Screech has observed that Epistémon's voyage to the underworld uses the same list of professions that Rabelais takes up again in the *Pantagruline prognostication*.[74] This is an ordinary world tied to a world-upside-down trope, frequently associated with witches.[75] Is the Sibyl of Panzoust different from Picrochole's witch?

As Michel Jeanneret has noted, part of the difficulty of interpreting the Sibyl is determining whether or not she is a legitimate authority.[76] The similes and comparisons used to describe the Sibyl attempt to group her alternately with credible prophets and fraudulent witches. Epistémon does not want to go see her, claiming that she is a witch, and comparing her to Medea through his reference to Thessaly, Pantagruel compares her to a sibyl and Cassandra : "Que sçavons nous si c'est une unzieme Sibylle, une seconde Cassandre?"[77] Epistémon suggests the sibyl could be "une Canidie, une Sagane, une Phitonisse et sorciere" concluding that Panzoust is reputed to have more witches than Thessalie. His list of indefinite articles "une, une, une" lists off a series of exemplars, one more of this kind. In contrast, Pantagruel presents the Sibyl as the next of her kind : "une unzieme… une seconde."[78] This debate over the Sibyl's lineage and consequently credibility, is part of the larger divergence between Epistémon and Pantagruel's representation of the Sibyl : her place in relation to power. Epistémon sees the Sibyl as a potential witch, a Medea, one more outsider who can wreak havoc at court. Pantagruel sees her as an outsider with a unique perspective, a prophet who both belongs to the community and to another world : an asset to the court.[79] Pantagruel again takes the position that historically

[72] In this episode, the medieval hell mouth trope is juxtaposed with a form of socio-economic tourism of how the other half lives, again bringing together the domestic and the underworld.

[73] The narrator, Alcofribas, walks into Pantagruel's mouth in Chapter 32 (*Pantagruel*), meets cabbage sellers, earns his wages by sleeping, eats what Pantagruel eats and, much to Pantagruel's delight, excretes in Pantagruel's throat.

[74] *Pantagruel*, Chapter 30 and *Pantagruline prognostication*, Chapter 5 "De l'estat d'aulcunes gens"

[75] Stuart Clark. *Thinking with Demons*. 1997.

[76] "Le défi des signes." 1994. Florence Weinberg, "Written on the leaves : Rabelais and the sibylline tradition." 1990, pulls out each specific associative descriptions made with other sibyls in order to establish the ideological position of each character in relation to the *querrelle des femmes*. Jessica L. Malay. *Prophecy and Sibylline Imagery in the Renaissance : Shakespeare's Sibyls* (2010) includes a reading of Rabelais' sibyl as a witch, akin to Picrochole's witch, and argues this shows a disdain for sibylline prophecy. Britnell similarly concludes that for Rabelais, the Sibyl is a witch.Nadine Kuperty-Tsur, in a talk given at the UC Berkeley French Department in 2010, argued that this accumulation of references indicates the way in which witches were socially constructed in the Early Modern Period. She has been read by many scholars as a parody of Panurge (Weinberg), a parody of superstition (Céard), and of the loss of oral culture (Glauser).

[77] Chapter 16

[78] Panurge's fate does not participate in a larger narrative of the community's trajectory; his is a purely individual trajectory. In theory, this would preclude him from receiving prophetic advice from a Sibyl. Pantagruel's lineage – "une unzieme" -, however, proposes that the Sibyl is a prophet of the present, a prophet somehow adapted to the current situation. She is not the Sibyl of Cumae nor is she a modernized version of a Sibyl, she is simply the next in line.

[79] The Sibyl has often been read as an example of Rabelais' views on women and position in the *querelle des femmes*. However, the Sibyl is certainly not a lady at court; she is distinctly isolated and common. Michel de Certeau, in his *Fable mystique* notes that mystical literary texts often aligned themselves with women, children, or other traditionally oral figures, in order to gain greater authority as mystics. Caroline Bynum has similarly noticed a

relevant prophecy is still possible; these prophets are not false replicas but rather prophets in their own context. The Sibyl, like Guillaume du Bellay, is a contemporary prophet:

> seulement vous veulx ramentevoir le docte et preux chevallire Guillaume du Bellay, seigneur jadis de Langey, lequel on mont de Tarare mourut le 10 de Janvier, l'an de son aage le climatere et de nostre supputation l'an 1543, en compte Romanicque. Les troys et quatre heures avant son decés, il employa en paroles vigoureuses, en sens tranquil et serain, nous praedisant ce que depuys part avons veu, part attendons advenir, combine que pour lors nous semblassent ces propheties aulcunement abhorrentes et estranges, par ne nous apparoistre cuase ne signe aucun present prognostic de ce qu'il praesisoit.[80]

Pantagruel fully situates the scene : the time and place. He describes Guillaume du Bellay's voice. The contents of the prophecy are not included, only the avowal that what he foresaw came to pass. This secondary moment confirmed him as a great man, capable of prophesying.[81]

Panurge is unable to react to the Sibyl as a legitimate authority. He does not follow Pantagruel's interpretation of the Sibyl as a contemporary prophet. He distances himself from the Sibyl by degrees : she doesn't speak "chrétien," her mouth moves like a monkey, he hears Proserpina : "les Diables bien toust en place sortiront." He wants to flee, he renounces marriage, he renounces forever! The increasing focus on the sibyl's mouth as an entrance to Hell, to some other world where the wrong language dwells and emits small devils, is entirely aural. He "hears" Proserpina as noise.[82]

The Sibyl does not give an oral message, however. Panurge's focus on the Sibyl's mouth is misplaced and disconnected from the detailed visual descriptions of the Sibyl and her house. As the *Tiers livre* progresses, Pantagruel repeatedly turns toward the sibylline and Panurge repeatedly avoids all association with the Sibyl and her proximity to the underworld.[83] Unlike Aeneas who asks the Sibyl of Cumae to lead him to the underworld so that the future may be revealed to him, Panurge does not undertake a hero's quest. Panurge consistently skirts the problem by traveling ever further, looking for news from farther away.[84] Panurge's reading does not align with the type of messages he receives.

Panurge reacts to causes he cannot see but unlike Rabelais' almanac readers, he does not have proscribed habits to turn to in the face of an unseen mystery. Unlike the "danse macabre"

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trend in mystical writings from the late Middle Ages, which consider Christ's feminine qualities, equating him with a mother.

[80] Ch. 21

[81] Jean Dupèbe ties this scene to the episode dealing with comets and heros in the *Quart livre*.

[82] Sarah Ferber notes that reading signs as true or false was essential to determining whether or not someone was a witch. The complication lay in the reading of possession: witches caused possession (allowing demons to enter the body) but also were witches because they themselves were believed to be possessed. p. 115

[83] Fear of the underworld continues to terrify Panurge as his quest progresses and a staged mouth of Hell as the site of prophecy recurs throughout the *Tiers livre*. The consultation with Raminagrobis directly links the Sibyl to the underworld, as Pantagruel explains, "[l]e vieux fait la Sibylle" (Ch. 21, *Tiers livre*). As the poet reaches the end of his life, he becomes able to prophesy due to his nearness to the other world, the underworld. Epistémon quotes the blind prophet Tiresias who claims ""[c]e que je diray adviendra ou ne adivendra poinct," to explain that Raminagrobis is speaking in the "style des prudens prognosticqueurs" (Ch 25). Toward the end of the *Tiers livre*, Pantagruel and Panurge decide to go consult "la Dive Bouteille." Pantagruel again wants "quelque Sibylle pour guyde et truchement" but Panurge would prefer their friends and a "Lanterne" from the "pays de Lanternoys" (Ch. 47).

[84] Perhaps more significantly, however, Aeneas must properly bury his shipmate before he can be lead down to the underworld to see his father, who has died. Panurge, as critics have noted, only looks forward. Her Trippa's suggestion of necromancy (after an exhaustive list of twenty-three possible methods of divination he could use to answer Panurge's question) again enrages Panurge, pushing him to denounce the astrologer.

woodcuts in the *Compost* and *Narrenschiff*, which force the reader to identify with one particular death, a relinquishing of a particular social station, Panurge's consultations lead to unrepresented vague underworld terrors. Rather than following the message of one authority, who advises many readers on a wide variety of character flaws, Panurge (with all his flaws) seeks the same advice from multiple authorities. Panurge fixates on authority. Terence Cave has argued that Rabelais' characters, unlike those in classical epics, are not gods in humble disguises. The Sibyl of Panzoust is not a goddess, whom Panurge must simply recognize.[85] The Sibyl of Panzoust is an opaque sign who generates a series of literal and figurative readings when she writes her message on leaves and scatters them in the wind. The question of authority is temporarily suspended to prioritize the reading of signs.

The Sibyl of Panzoust does not give Panurge an oral response to his question. She does, however, write four rhyming couplets on sycamore leaves, which she then scatters to the wind :

T'esgoussera
De renom.
Enroissera,
De toy non.
Te sugsera
Le bon bout.
T'eschorchera,
Mais non tout.

The divinatory message is written in the future tense. There is no active subject and Panurge, the recipient of the message, is referred to through informal direct objets (te) or through a disjointed pronoun (toy).[86]

Panurge and Pantagruel debate the interpretation of the four couplets, focusing on the directionality of the verbs : is the Sibyl proposing an augmentation or a diminution of Panurge's social station? Pantagruel reads the first couplet as the public ruin of Panurge's reputation. Panurge will either be stripped and acquire a bad reputation or his good reputation will be taken from him. In either case, "esgoussera" leads to loss. Panurge, however reads "esgoussera" as a shucking of waste to reveal the underlying, preferable man. The interpretation of the first couplet turns on whether "esgousser" is read as a loss or a gain. Is being stripped painful or pleasurable? Pantagruel reads the remainder of the message in a similarly negative vein. Panurge will be cuckolded when his wife becomes pregnant by another man : "Engroissera / De toy non,"; his wife will steal from him; finally, his wife will beat him : "elle vous battera, eschorchant et meurtrissant quelque membre du corps." Pantagruel reads the Sibyl's message as one of social loss. Much like the "danse macabre," Pantagruel reads Panurge's disrobing as a confrontation with death, the loss of a role. However, Panurge continues to read the couplets from an individual and bodily perspective : his wife will be pregnant "de" the child, reading "de" as

[85] "Panurge and Odysseus." Cave argues that Rabelais' interest in medieval allegory has allowed him to turn allegory into a productive mode of rewriting, in which allegory becomes a model of reading and writing rather than an after-the-fact interpretive strategy. The classical paradigm of disguise and recognition, which advances the epic plot, is reworked in the *Tiers livre* as a series of responses for Panurge to understand.

[86] In comparison, the equally old and near death poet, Raminagrobis, writes a rondeau in the imperative using formal object pronouns : "Prenez-la, ne la prenez pas," in which Panurge's This interpretive debate is one of many that is read as a way to distinguish Panurge from Pantagruel.[86] The prophet, as one of many, is a means to better understanding the principle characters' ideological positions or the broader claims made throughout the book. potential wife is no longer the absent subject but a direct object.

"with" rather than "by"; "Te sugsera / Le bon bout" becomes a euphemism for fellatio rather than as a metaphor for financial ruin, which continues into the final couplet. Pantagruel's interpretations consistently emphasize a positive state being reduced to one of public shame and physical discomfort. In contrast, Panurge starts from an already reduced state – a bad reputation, a physical state that could only be improved upon – and turns the metaphors in a pleasurable direction. Pantagruel consistently reads in a broad social context : social standing, social contract, economic exchange, legal protections for the body. Panurge places the body in a sensate relation to other bodies. In each of Panurge's readings, he is interested in what will come out of the body, whether it is a better version of himself, his progeny, or his own pleasure being literally "sucked" out of his body. These expenditures relate back to his sophistic monologues on debt, which began the *Tiers livre*. Panurge produces by consuming.[87]

Panurge's interpretive strategy is clearly not one of almanac reader-identification, as we might expect from a commoner. However, Pantagruel's charitable, humanist reading anchored in obligation to a larger social group has much more in common with Panurge's social station. Panurge's self-flattering reading elevates him to one worthy of a personal horoscope. His reading aligns him with a bad prince or "stupid king," as Erasmus describes in his adage, "One ought to be born a king or a fool," and in "The Education of the Christian Prince." In the latter text, Erasmus specifically warns the prince against "flattering fortune-tellers."[88] Folly can appear at any age, he continues, leading to self-love and self-flattery. Panurge's propensity for self-flattery makes him a bad reader. Panurge does not properly identify his social station and doesn't read the message he receives charitably. According to Erasmus, this is the reading habit of a corrupt prince governing for himself rather than for others. For the "stupid king," a disturbance in the mind – such as Panurge's terror at the Sibyl's sounds and association of these sounds with the underworld – spreads to the body, including the body politic.[89]

The Sibyl does provide further information, though neither oral nor written. The Sibyl's final gesture before going back inside her house and closing the door is to lift her skirts and show her anus.[90] The Sibyl's gesture plays into the revelatory game of what is inside coming outside. Panurge's interest in his individual sensate body and his unwillingness to govern this body, in accordance with the common good, can be read as problem of moral education. However, Panurge is not a prince, and therefore cannot simply be read as a counter-example to Pantagruel's excellent princely education.[91] The Sibyl's final gesture creates an inter-textual echo with the Greek story of Demeter and Baubo and directly ties to Panurge's misinterpretation of the Sibyl's sounds as Prosperina's voice. In the Greek story, Baubo, an old crone, receives Demeter as her guest, offering her food and wine; Demeter declines because she is in mourning for her daughter, Persephone (Prosperina in Latin):

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[87] Dennis Costa has emphasized that the apocalyptic asks interpreters to work with the everyday while awaiting the end. He compares this work to the process of digestion : the book of Revelation is eaten and digested in the body. He argues that Rabelais' book works in this same way. We, as readers, must consume Rabelais' book in order to interpret and digest the meaning. "Daily Bread" in *Irenic Apocalypse*, 107 - 138

[88] p. 252 Rummel ed.

[89] "One ought to be born a king or a fool."

[90] Epistémon adds to the interpretation by mentioning the Sibyl's gestures and noises in contrast to the laurel branch's silent burning. He cites literary instances in which this was a bad omen. Panurge brushes this aside as indications of the craziness of those consulting the sibyl.

[91] Michel Jeanneret notes that antithesis in Rabelais' later works creates a bipolar structure but ultimately ambiguity takes over. The hierarchy does not establish a firm moral reading of the characters. "Le défi des signes." 1994

> Baubo is deeply hurt, thinking she has been slighted, and thereupon uncovers her secret parts and exhibits them to the goddess. Demeter is pleased at the sight, and now at last receives the draught, - delighted with the spectacle![92]

Unlike Demeter, Panurge does not laugh, he does not accept the Sibyl's hospitality; he flees. Panurge's fear prevents him from valuing community cohesion. Both Panurge and Epistemon are unable to read the Sibyl's gestures as pointing elsewhere, instead literalizing each sound and image in and of itself: Panurge reads unknown sounds as Propserina in the underworld and Epistemon reads an unclear image as Odysseus disguised as a beggar and read as an old woman. Panurge follows Pantagurel's suggestion for how to receive information: Pantagruel suggests the Sibyl will be helpful because it doesn't matter where knowledge comes from, which is why we have "aureilles ouvertes."[93] However, Panurge does not follow Pantagruel's explanation of how to interpret the sounds he receives: "Et peut estre que celluy home estoit ange, c'est à dire menagier de Dieu envoyé, comme feut Raphaël à Thobie."[94] Rabelais again returns to the Book of Tobit to describe sibylline knowledge. Panurge does not look to the message, however, he looks to the authority delivering the message. Rather than receive an opaque sign (such as an angel pointing elsewhere), Panurge receives a literal, and in this case demonological, sign: the authority herself. This scene of mis-reading, of failing to laugh and failing to join together, divides the community. Panurge focuses on the individual body, rather than the corporate body, and the Sibyl scatters her leaves.[95] I will now turn to an additional episode before I fully discuss the Sibyl's gesture and her centrality to Panurge's engagement with prophecy.

Panurge's sibylline transformation : the body as discursive site

Panurge agrees to see the Sibyl by reasoning : "Croyez que vieillesse feminine est toujours foisonnante en qualité soubeline – je voulais dire Sibylline."[96] The play on words between "soubeline" and Sibylline" links the chapter to the very last episode in the *Quart livre*, in which the friends pass the isle de Ganabim, populated entirely of thieves, and Panurge hides below deck until he hears a loud noise and emerges with a "grand chat soubelin." The debate over the meaning of the term "soubelin" ranges from translations such as "Siberian" to "great and mighty" or "beautiful." The *Trésor de la langue française* has even suggested an etymological link to "sublime." Aside from the suggestion of "Siberian," which Philipot summarily rejected in 1907, the translations tend towards the awe-inspiring, verging on totalizing.[97] These contrast dramatically with the partial nature, the incompletion of "sibylline." The slippage and self-correction might be read as a hook that links the episode to Chapter 67 of the *Quart livre*. With this small hook, a number of other similarities between the episodes begin to emerge.

At the end of the *Quart livre*, the companions are still on their quest to find La Dive Bouteille. Frere Jan mocks Panurge's fear of the thieves on the isle de Ganabim, suggesting he go hide with the same Proserpina Panurge thought he heard in the Sibyl's house : "Ou bien va te

[92] Clement of Alexandria's *Exhortation to the Greeks*. Loeb Classics, vol. 92, trans. G.W. Butterworth, p. 43. From the Homeric and Orphic hymns. Also discussed in Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément. *La jeune née*. 1975.
[93] Ch. 16
[94] Ch. 16
[95] Since the Sibyl's prophecy is for the community, it can only be properly be received by a vessel for the community, as I discussed in relation to horoscopes. In the Aeneid, Book 6, the Sibyl initiates Aeneas because he follows her instructions and adheres to the proper customs.
[96] Ch. 16
[97] "Le chat et le singe dans Rabelais, d'après l'ouvrage de M. Sainéau."

cacher soubs la cotte hardie de Proserpine à travers tous les millions de Diables."[98] When Pantagruel orders a cannon rally to salute the island, Panurge misinterprets the sound and smoke of cannons firing for demons and hellfire :

> Panurge, comme un boucq estourdy, sort de la Soutte en chemise, ayant seulement un demy bas de chausses en jambe, sa barbe toute mouschetée de miettes de pain, tenant en main un grand chat Soubelin attaché à l'autre demy bas de ces chausses. Et, remuant les babines comme un Cinge qui cherche poulz en teste, tremblant et clacquent des dens, se tira vers frère Jan, lequel estoit assis sus le portehaubant de tribort, et devotement le pria avoir de luy compassion et le tenir en saulveguarde de son bragmart, affermant et jurant par sa part de Papimanie qu'il avoit à heure praesante veu tous les Diables deschainez.

This description of Panurge, echoes the earlier encounter with the Sibyl of Panzoust. Panurge is not only badly dressed and disheveled ("La vieille estoit mal en poinct, mal vstue, mal nourrie, edentée, chassieuse, courbassé, roupieuse, languoureuse"[99]), he is flapping his lips "comme un Cinge." Panurge asks Epistémon, during their visit to the Sibyl of Panzoust, "A quelle fin fredonne elle des babines comme un cinge?"[100] Panurge continues, claiming, "Les aureilles me cornent il m'est advis que je oy Prosperien bruyante : les Diables bien toust en place sortiront."[101] Panurge misreads the Sibyl's mumbling, in the same way he misreads the cannons in the *Quart livre,* as the underworld rising into his world. Panurge not only reacts to the unknown noise, he also becomes like the Sibyl even as he continues to react to her as if she were outside him. Panurge is inspired and transformed, not by the news he hears, or the word of the Gospel, but by the authority delivering the message. Panurge's mirroring of the Sibyl aligns with the form of reading used in the "danse macabre" (like the woodcuts in the *Compost* and *Narrenschiff*). The Sibyl, as death's representative for Panurge, forces him to confront his eventual demise. However, Panurge's tendency to read for gain and self-flattery, rather than loss, means that he does not read this encounter as a relinquishing of his social station. He doesn't transform by disrobing, he takes on the literal form of the message, conflating the authority, the sign, and what the sign points to. Panurge acquires a variant of horns : a literalized form of cuckoldry. In both episodes his ears ring, "me cornent,"[102] or he is compared to a horned goat, "comme un boucq estourdy,"[103] a multivalent play on the image of the cuckolded husband as horned. In a third movement, Panurge fulfills Pantagruel's interpretation of the Sibyl's prophecy. And finally, in a fourth movement, the literal horns correspond to his own reading of the Sibyl's prophecy as purely bodily, bringing some internal state (his imagination) outside.[104] In a move similar to an inverted possession,[105] Panurge takes his own demonological discourse and

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[98] Ch. 66
[99] *Tiers livre,* Ch. 17
[100] ibid.
[101] ibid. If there is a parody in the Sibyl scene, as Florence Weinberg suggests, I propose it is not the Sibyl parodying Panurge, but Panurge parodying the Sibyl.
[102] ibid.
[103] *Quart livre*, Ch. 67
[104] André Tournon's reading of the "enigme en prohpétie" at the end of *Gargantua* emphasizes the dual play required to read Rabelais' interpretive games. He shows how the enigma must be read both as tennis court and as apocalypse in order to give a complete reading. The enigma as tennis court alone is incomplete, does not account for the entire enigma, but similarly, an apocalyptic reading does not account for all parts of the enigma. *"En sens agile.*"
[105] Sarah Ferber notes that possessed bodies often exhibited external signs of divine presence: bodies became horrible to see, to hear, and stiff to touch. Possession similarly alienated individuals from themselves: they became blind, mute, deaf, and insensate. *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France*. In the case of

becomes a straw-man imitation of the authority, rather than of her message. Unable to be transformed by an opaque sign, Panuge is inhabited by the sign, showing only its most superficial and literal attributes.

Panurge's reaction to the cannon fire goes one step further. Frere Jan smells something and notices that Panurge's shirt "estoit toute foyreuse et embrenée de frays." The narrator explains that Panurge is covered in his own feces because "[l]a vertus retentrice du nerf qui restrainct le muscle nommé Sphincter (c'est le trou du cul) estoit dissolue par la vehemenence de paour qu'il avoit eu en ses phantasticques visions." A fiction can produce a physical reaction. Panurge's reaction might be read as a further fulfillment of the Sibyl of Panzoust's final message:

> Ces paroles dictes, se retira en sa tesniere, et sus le perron de la porte se recourse robbe, cotte, et chemise jusques aux escelles, et leurs monstroit son cul. Panurge l'aperceut et dist à Epistémon : « Par le sambre guoy de bois, voy là le trou de la Sibylle ! » Soubdain elle barra sus soy la porte, depuys ne feut veue.

Panurge again imitates the message. The Sibyl, who in classical sat on a tripod, according to some so that the God could penetrate her, does not give any explanation for her gesture. Her bodily language is obscure, ambiguous, at best. By connecting her gesture to Erasmus' connection between a sound mind and a sound body, however, it is possible to connect these episodes to proper digestion and learning. David LaGuardia has argued that proper learning is frequently discussed in terms of physical health, and in particular good digestion : control of hygiene and diet help to form a prince's moral character.[106] Rabelais ends his preface to the *Tiers livre* with a similar reference to the reader's health :

> Hors d'icy, Caphards, de par le Diable, hay! Estez vous encores là? Je renounce ma part de Papimanie si je vous happe. Gzz, gzzz, gzzzzzz! Davant, davant! Iront ilz? Jamais ne puissiez vous fainter que à sanglades d'estrivieres, jamais pisser que à l'estrapade, jamais eschauffer que à coups de baston!

The narrator chases the reader out, with a series of strange undecipherable noises (much like the sounds Panurge and Epistémon claim the Sibyl makes) renouncing "[sa] part de Papimanie" (just as Panurge "jurant par sa part de Papimanie" claims he sees devils[107]). Alcofribas ends the *Pantagruline prognostication* on this same note : "Et ne chiez plus doresnavent on lict." The proper regulation of the bowels is tied to fictional production. The narrator gives two examples, at the end of the *Quart livre*, to explain how fiction can create terror and work as an enema. Both examples – that of "messere Pantolfe de la Cassine, Senoys" and of "Maistre François Villon"[108] - associate misinterpretations, essential mental fictions, with defecation. The reader's reaction is not interpretive, but rather bodily, a spontaneous "gut" reaction. This extension of Panurge's encounter with the Sibyl models a form of reading that is less about decoding than about involuntary bodily transformation through reading.[109] Unlike Erasmus' spiritual transformation

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Panurge, there is a blurring between the outside and inside of the body such that he is unaware of the limits of his own body.

[106] "Doctor Rabelais and the Medicine of Scatology." 2004.

[107] Quart livre, Ch. 67

[108] ibid.

[109] The scatological aspect of Rabelais' work has been read as separate from his evangelism (Screech), as a social shift from medieval culture to French classical culture (Burke, Greenblatt), and as a reform reading of man's original sin/ man as God's excrement (Loskoutoff, for example). In contrast, Panurge's white shirt in this episode, has been read as a baptism – this reading sees the *Tiers livre* as a conversion narrative. David LaGuardia relates physical purging with spiritual cleansing. David LaGuardia's reading of Gargantua's education shows a parallel between

through reading, however, Panurge's defecation performs a mock corporeal exorcism – or evacuation of the body- , based on fear of an authority and not her message.

Panurge's literalism is not rejected as a counter-example, but rather reincorporated into the movement of narrative-production. Panurge insists on his singular interpretation, maintaining his position in the larger game at play in the novel, and reinterprets the odor in his pants as Spanish saffron. Panurge finally laughs, as he ought to have done when the Sibyl lifted her skirt, enabling community coherence. Emily Butterworth describes Panurge as both scandal, or stumbling block (as Paul describes in I Corinthians), and paradox (against the doxa). Panurge's literal, rather than figurative reading, often divides the community, but his participation in generative interpretive games contributes to the cohesion of community through pleasure.[110] Panurge is neither morally excised nor condoned in his reading, he is a necessary part of the community. André Tournon argues that in order to read the *énigme en prophétie* at the end of Gargantua, both literal and figurative readings are necessary, neither one can account for a full reading of the text.[111] The necessary interplay of figurative and literal reading dominates the episodes of the *Quart livre* leading up to Panurge's sibylline transformation. The crew visits a series of islands, which present issues of perfect communication between the earth and the divine, reading noise, silent signs, and authority. In the episode of the "paroles gelées," Pantagurel interprets the unseen sounds coming from the sea as the auditory divine, messages coming from the other world. Panurge correctly identifies the sounds as coming from a battle and further literalizes by asking if it would be possible to see sounds; this too becomes possible, when the crew see the colorful bursting words.[112] The slippage between literal and figurative language keeps the narrative moving.[113] In contrast with a static scholastic interpretation of the world, the play between literal and figurative generates laughter and helps the corporate body cohere.

Panurge's displaced focus from a transformative divine message to the authority delivering the message, reworks Erasmus' prophetic transformation. The optimistic reform message has certainly become dimmer in the thirty years since Erasmus wrote the *Paraclesis* : the Wars of Religion have begun, Rabelais has faced censorship, and has become more involved with the du Bellay family and foreign politics. Panurge's reading does not transform charitably into a divine message of love but into the unearthly sound of that message trying to come through in a divided and conflicted world. His body reveals only itself. In this sense, Panurge's body ultimately acts as an opaque sign in spite of his misinterpretations and displacements. He creates laughter and communal merriment even as he conflates his individual destiny with a role allotted to him through the corporate body, as he seeks to gain authority rather than looking to where that authority points. Nicolas LeCadet suggests that Rabelais teaches fiction as a site that shows us the consequences of genre blending.[114] Language is not restricted to the domain,

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diarrhea and sophistry in comparison to a well-regulated digestion and defecation associated with a Humanist education. "Doctor Rabelais and the Medicine of Scatology."

[110] "Scandal in Rabelais's" Tiers Livre": Divination, Interpretation, and Edification." 2011

[111] *En sens agile*. 1995

[112] *Quart livre*. Ch. 56. In contrast, the "hypophetes" on the island of Papimanie tell the Papimanes to wait for the coming pope, shifting literalism into idolatry. The Papimanes read the Pope's Decretals as the work of an angel, next in line to a history of prophetic texts. They punish the Papefigures, who laugh at their portrait of the Pope, by putting figs up their anuses (blocking the digestion in contrast to Panurge's excretion).

[113] Michel Jeanneret suggests that Rabelais' *Tier livre* satirizes scholastic interpretive modes that stagnate reading because the end is always known, leaving only the "how." *Le défi des signes.*

[114] " « Beuveurs tresillustres, et vous verolez tresprecieux » : Rabelais et les anagnostes." 2015

whether religious, political, or scientific, in which it was first proposed in Rabelais' texts; it circulates, is picked up by Panurge, and acts contrary to the speaker's intentions. Panurge's (extended) encounter with the Sibyl juxtaposes multiple prophetic discourses : the almanac's interest in tautological advice to a commoner, the horoscope's interest in the individual's future course, the "danse macabre"'s identification-based reading in which the reader sees the image of his death and imagines this end for himself, and finally, Erasmus' theory of prophetic transformation. Panurge distorts and reworks each of these modes of reading without adhering to any one in particular. He destabilizes and appropriates all methods of reading prophecy to better his own image just as he refuses the social roles to which these methods cater. Ultimately, however, Rabelais' form is capacious enough to contain Panurge's misreading within a cohesive community.[115]

The writer takes on the role of mediating between multiple discursive practices, juxtaposing them and showing how they work. By looking at a prophecy for one man in relation to prophetic genres designed to advice individuals, Rabelais' *Tiers livre* shows that the almanac and horoscope, while written for individual readers, can situate the individual as a public person, a member of a corporate body, not as a detached hero on a personal quest. Panurge's attempts to use prophetic discourses for his own use raise questions of how authority and community interact, how signs can be read, and how direct contact with the divine as news brings individual members back to a cohesive corporate body. The opacity of signs in Rabelais' works privilege the reading of signs as opaque indicators, pointing toward the divine rather than as messages to be rationally decoded and acted upon.

Rabelais' fiction can be read as a site that questions the assumptions inherent in the conventions from which those genres are built. The complex constellation of references surrounding Rabelais' Sibyl suggests that the *Tiers livre* requires a different, but perhaps equally salutary, way of reading than the almanac or horoscope precisely because it is able to incorporate and rework their discourses in relation to other discourses. Cohesion is prioritized over excision by the literary form's expansiveness. By looking at prophecy in the *Tiers livre*, we can look at the divisive and dangerous side of interpretation : the generation of prophetic discourse and self-appointment of prophets, which became an increasingly violent phenomenon during the Wars of Religion.

[115] The literalism of prophecy, which Denis Costa identifies, is contained within the community through the literary form. As Sarah Ferber notes, demonism was both peripheral and central to Catholic discourse : it both threatened the community and reasserted the community's ability to conquer Satan, postponing the Apocalypse and Satanic rule.

Authorizing prophecy in Ronsard's *Hymnes*

Pierre de Ronsard, one of the leading poets of the Pléiade coterie, wrote vitriolic denunciations of the abuse of prophetic rhetoric and posturing during the French wars of religion. His 1562 and 1563 *Discours des misères de ce temps* expressed concern over the French people's disbelief of prophetic messages sent by their God: "Obstinez aveuglez : ainsi le peuple Hebrieu / N'avoit point de creance aux Prophetes de Dieu."[1] These messangers, provided by a benevolent God, are not seen because the people do not recognize the authority of true prophets. By focusing on the consequences of the people's blindness, the analogy leaves open the question of who the contemporary prophets might be. The unheeded messages lead to disorder and consequently to an inability to rule. Ronsard decries the desecration of churches during the wars, "Si bien que Dieu n'est seur en sa proper maison."[2] Ronsard's concern with the disordering of the social world stems from a concern over recognition of authority. The rise of monstrous "Opinion" allows for slippage and rejection of both social roles and moral codes.[3] In a short discourse included in the collection, "Prognostiques sur les misères de nostre temps," Ronsard describes false prophets in terms of their appearance. Traveling prophets are associated with costumed, staged performance:

> Long temps devant que les guerres civiles
> Brouillassent France, on vit parmi nos villes
> Errer soudain des hommes incognus,
> Barbus, crineux, crasseux et demi-nus,
> Qui transportez de noire frenaisie,
> A tous venans contoyent leur fantaisie
> En plein marché, ou dans un carrefour,[4]

Ronsard describes the wars as a disordering force with the verb *brouiller*; the wars have troubled, agitated, or dislodged France from its place. However, he places the origin of this agitation significantly before the wars broke out, that is, the trouble is not located only in physical violence. Ronsard further underscores the problem of location and ordered placement with the sudden arrival of undesirable strangers. The wandering prophets use language to transport, or displace, the villagers. This displacement happens within the city, "En plein marché, ou dans un carrefour," at places of exchange. Ronsard's prognostication establishes the origin of the wars of religion within disrupted social exchanges. Ronsard targets spoken prophecy, performed in public spaces. The only authority of traveling prophets comes from their "prophetic" appearance; they look like prophets. In contrast, his own verse is written, dedicated, and published within a much more select audience. The choice to write in decasyllables places this prognostication firmly within Ronsard's Christian imperial poetics, used also in his "Hercule chrestien" and his incomplete epic, the *Franciade*. As the prognostication continues it becomes clear that the poet's verse, in contrast to the wandering prophet's recounting, provides a stable ordering power that not only counters the false prophet's displacement but that, further, has the unique ability to counter the destabilizing effects Opinion has had on sovereign power.

[1] "Discours à la Royne," v. 101 – 102. Citations from *Œuvres complètes*. Ed. Jean Céard, Daniel Ménager, et Michel Simonin. 1994.
[2] v. 181
[3] "Discours à la Royne"
[4] "Prognostiques sur les misères de nostre temps," v. 1 - 7

Ronsard's prognostication continues with a condemnation of the people of France who paid heed to these false prophets. He does not discriminate by religion, emphasizing that the wars of religion stem from the mechanism of gullibility and inflamed belief; religious doctrine itself is not the question. He returns repeatedly to the problem of displacement by citing examples of false prophets who claimed to be figures returned from history: Jean l'Evangeliste, Cesar, the king of the Gauls. Ronsard refutes each case and returns to bodily description of the wandering prophet. He expands upon his first description these men, "Barbus, crineux, crasseux et demi-nus," adding adjectives such as "Palle, bouffi, d'espouventeuse œillade."[5] Each prophet's identity claim is based on his resemblance to an image of a prophet. Their arrival is "tout soudain,"[6] much like the many other monsters and marvels that have been observed in France "tout d'un coup."[7] This temporal interruption or perturbation works against the ordered unfolding of history. Ronsard's structural reading of displacement allows him to reread these sudden appearances not for their content but for their disruptive quality : the world is not properly ordered.

Ronsard reads these external or physical signs not as proof of authority to speak, as do the "idiots" and "fouls,"[8] but rather as proof of a higher, invisible authority. Whereas the crowd believes in costume and reacts to theatrical messages, Ronsard reads the prophets' appearance as mute, signs which merely assert the presence of the divine in the world. The problem of authority is reworked as a problem of transmission. Ronsard hesitates over whether to read the influx of marvels and monsters in France as apocalyptic signs, as signs of God's will, or as signs of demonic interference:

> Je n'en sçay rien: l'homme qui est humain,
> Ne tient de Dieu le secret en la main.
> Mais je sçay bien que Dieu qui tout ordonne,
> Par signes tels tesmoignange nous donne
> De son courroux, et qu'il est irrité
> Contre le Prince, ou contre la Cité,
> Où le peché s'enfuit davant la peine.
> D'exemples tels la Bible est toute pleine.[9]

Ronsard hesitates again when trying to attribute the source of God's anger : has the prince erred or have the people? Ronsard is certain that signs are present in the world but reserves their meaning for divine knowledge. The only message Ronsard concedes is one of a vengeful God, as seen in the Hebrew Bible. The biblical text, in contrast to the spoken word of wandering prophets, communicates the word of God. Ronsard's interest in environmental signs, which appear suddenly and disrupt daily life, shifts the reading of signs onto the problematic of authority and social order. Ronsard is not interested in the interpretation of these signs, in what these signs might signify, but rather in the way that they are authorized to signify. True prophecy is distinguished from false prophecy through the proper recognition (rather than exegesis) of signs, which do not transparently communicate their content.

[5] v. 49
[6] v. 45
[7] v. 63
[8] v. 23, v. 35
[9] v. 79 - 86

Ronsard's work during the wars of religion takes on a clear political tenor, which breaks from his earlier sonnets, odes, and hymns. The discourses similarly allow for Ronsard to take on the role of political prophet through explicit declarations. The *Continuation du discours des misères de ce temps* ends with a strong assertion of prophetic authority : "Ainsi par vision la France à moy parla, / Puis tout soudainement de mes yeux s'en-vola."[10] In contrast to the sudden appearance of a wandering prophet, the suddenness of prophecy moves through the poet's body, taking possession of his faculties, and allowing a message to come through his verse. The vision is national and politically determined, rather than religious in nature. However, religious language is appropriated and re-authorized through the poet's body as politically relevant.

In this chapter, I will argue that the poet as national prophet is not unique to Ronsard's discourses (or epic) but rather develops in his earlier praise poems. By focusing on Ronsard's 1555 – 1556 *Hymnes*, I will demonstrate the ways in which Ronsard shifts the religious functions of prophecy into the poetic field. This not only contains the power of religious language, it provides authority to poetry as a socially necessary voice. I will argue that the proper ordering of social relations is a rhetorical gift, which the poet, bequeathed with the ability to glimpse the underlying order of the cosmos, constructs for the community. Jean Céard has worked extensively on Ronsard's ability to "épier le divin."[11] This chapter extends this work by further discussing Ronsard's construction of the poet's social role. Ronsard relies on the role of the prophet to position and authorize himself to take on this social function in contemporary France.

The authority both to glimpse divine secrets and to weave them into poetic gifts highlights the intersection of gift-giving, economies of praise, the value of poetry, and the complexity of bringing classical forms into early modern France. Ronsard's transposition of primarily classical prophecy onto poetry brings together these related questions, often discussed as separate aspects of Ronsard's poetry in scholarly work. Natalie Zemon Davis has observed this shift in gift-giving exchanges between the king and the city under Henri II, away from the reciprocal exchange of friendship, toward the hierarchical repayment of a city to its benefactor.[12] Ronsard's praise poems participate in a shifting view of gift-giving that corresponds to the rise of a centralized French monarchy. This chapter, on Ronsard's hymns, a genre devoted to the celebration of the gods and creation, discusses the appropriation of religious concepts to build an autonomous, self-authorizing and self-generating poet who directs the people's gaze toward the king's image.

The hymn is a song of praise, usually celebrating a god or creation. The psalms, attributed to David, provide a model for the Christian tradition. Hesiod's *Theogony*, the Homeric hymns, and the Orphic hymns provide models in the Classical tradition. The hymn borrows from and contributes to poetic and religious structures, including praise, myth, and prayer, to reveal a divine, ordering presence saturating the world. The hymns, often described in relation to Orphic Christianity,[13] lie at the intersection of David and Orpheus' lyres. As David's music soothed the

[10] v. 405 - 6

[11] "'Loüer Celluy Qui Demeure Là-Haut': La Forme De l'Hymne Ronsardien." 1987.

[12] She notes that the king's entry into the city had more commonly been marked by a bond of friendship, in which the city memorialized the king with a statue, gave gifts of local foods and artisanal products, and in return the king issued pardons, confirmed titles, and remitted taxes levied by his predecessor. Henri II refused to return the gifts he was given, elevating his status toward God, whose gift of creation can never be fully repaid. As such, taxation became a government need and an obligation whose compensation was peaceful coexistence with the sovereign, rather than part of a gift exchange between friends. *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*. 2000. Chapter 6

[13] Michael J.B. Allen relies on this term frequently in the notes of his translation of Marsilio Ficino.

disordered mind of King Saul,[14] Orpheus charmed even the stones with his lyre. Praise, natural order, and political order are formally linked through the hymn. Both the *Theogony* and the *Homeric Hymns* were written in meters used for epic poetry, underscoring their proximity to political power even as they praise abstract figures and concepts. The hymn reconciles poetry and philosophy without theorizing, in any systematic way, the metaphysical order of the cosmos. Through the hymns, the praised god, or king, and poet can work together to show, rather than explain, a harmonious universe by bringing forth hidden relations.[15] While these features are not exclusive to nor fully contained by the hymn - as Terence Cave's readings of generic contamination, incompletion, and dissipation have shown – the hymn is nonetheless a space in which the poet's role is articulated in relation to praise and harmonious ordering.[16] Ronsard's hymns were not as well received by Henri II as were his sonnets, but they nonetheless formally set up the poet as prophet to the nation and writer of epic.

Praising small things

Ronsard's hymns are expansive, weaving myth and praise together with biography and philosophy. But Ronsard also wrote much smaller hymns, structurally similar to a blason. These smaller hymns were often exchanged among members of the Pléiade, dedicated to one another, and often competitive, as each poet strove to praise an ever smaller part of the natural world. And it is here that the relationship between the hymns and poetic authority can begin to be understood. Several of the poems exchanged between Ronsard and Remy Belleau were published in Belleau's 1556 *Petites inventions*. Belleau's collection of poems follows his translations of Anacreon's odes. Belleau's original poetry both follows Anacreon's model - praising small animals, plants, and even a shadow – and shifts Anacreon's focus on love to a concern with healing (a preoccupation he returns to two decades later with his *Pierres précieuses*). The collection includes hymn-blasons written by Belleau to Ronsard, hymn-blasons written by Ronsard to Belleau, and three sonnets written by Ronsard in French, which Belleau translated into Latin. The publication shows part of a gift exchange, originally started by Ronsard's dedication of three small blasons to Belleau in 1554 : "Le fourmi," "La grenouille," and "Le freslon."[17] Joachim Du Bellay separately published his "Épitaphe d'un chat," an almost anatomical hymn-blason for Belleau, which celebrates and elevates the beauty found in a cat's smallness. Guillaume Aubert dedicated his "Ciron" to both Belleau and Pierre Ronsard, displaying his skill at praising the smallest part of creation he can conceive: a wood worm. Each participant in the collective game of amplifying small objects interpreted the game differently. While many of the participants do not take the game seriously, Belleau is both playful and devotional in his small poems. Belleau's collection is framed by the prefatory elegy by Ronsard explicitly positioning Belleau's poems in relation to his own work and to his conception of the larger Pléiade project. Ronsard reflects on the state of poetry in France, in relation to the Pléiade coterie and their project to reinvigorate French language and literature through the imitation of classical forms. He opens by describing the current state of poetry in France through animal imagery:

> Non, je ne me deulx pas qu'une telle abondance

[14] I Samuel 16: 14 - 23

[15] Jean Céard. "Ronsard à l'écoute des signes," in *La Nature et les prodigies*, pp. 192 - 226. Guy Demerson. *La mythologie classique dans l'oeuvre de la Pléiade*. Françoise Joukouvsky. *Orphée et ses disciples dans la poésie française et néo-latine du XVIè siècle*.

[16] "Ronsard." *The Cornucopian Text*.

[17] Daniel Ménager. "Ronsard, Belleau et les Blasons de 1554 – 1556."

D'escrivains, aujourd'huy fourmille en nostre France:
Mais certes je me deulx que tous n'escrivent bien,
Sans gaster ainsi l'ancre, et la lampe pour rien:
Je dieray, sans mentir, que la plus part ressemble
Aux Grenoüilles de Mars,[18]

He goes on to describe in great detail the horrible sounds coming from the green mouths of these poet-frogs. These lesser poets, who crawl all over France, wasting ink to croak hideously, stand in marked contrast to those who understand that poetry is a gift bestowed upon certain generations. Ronsard's inclusion of both frogs and ants (the abundance of poets swarming France) immediately bring to the forefront his own gifts to Belleau : a poem about a frog and a poem about an ant. The harsh croaking poetry of lesser poets results from an attempt to learn poetry "par force." The "cinq ou six" poets, under the reign of Henry II are compared to a particularly good "moisson d'enfans / Gentilz, doctes, bien-nez."[19] Ronsard recognizes Belleau as the seventh member of the Pléiade, well-born, naturally gifted and ravished by the Muses. Belleau participates in the gift economy as one lit up by a "docte fureur." Ronsard's poem gives authority and legitimacy to Belleau by asserting his position in a good "crop" of poets. Ronsard uses this prefatory poem to reassure Belleau's patron of Belleau's choice to translate Anacreon, rather than Pindar, and to confirm Belleau's status, as one capable of memorializing the patron's memory, "Autant qu'Anacreon a vescu par memoire."[20] Ronsard does not elevate the patron beyond his station, he is not Pindar but then again, "Anacreon [lui] plaist, le doux Anacreon!"[21] Ronsard's framing of Belleau's modest work parallels Belleau's own praise of small objects, lending greater authority to Ronsard without diminishing Belleau's interpretation of poetic practice.

The dynamics of small praise are most visible in the closing poem in Belleau's collection, "Le Ver luisant de nuict," dedicated to the aforementioned Guillaume Aubert. The poem introduces the stakes of the small-hymn form. The pun in the title between worm and verse plays out through the poem as the "ver" is praised for its prophetic abilities, particularly during the harvest. The "ver," is an intermediary between God and the "laboureur," who is subsequently generalized to "noz espritz." The poem begins with the relation between the poet and his muse, "Ma Muse." The possessive adjective is the poet's only appearance in the poem. The poet is not included in the glorification of the "Ver petit," which is immortalized through the Muse's song. The "ver" is a small light in the dark, but specifically an earthly light. The "ver," unlike the stars, guides from its sublunar position; it is at a physical remove from the gods. The "ver" is not only on the earth, it is "sus l'herbe rousoiante." Its light glimmers up through the grass and is inversely compared to the moon, moving across the night sky. Like the moon, the "ver" delivers a message directly related to the seasons and what men must do, as participants in a natural order:

D'un Ver tapi sous les buissons,
Qui au laboureur prophetise,
Qu'il faut, que pour faucher aguise
Sa faux, et face les moissons.
Gentil prophette, et bien apris!

[18] v. 3 - 6
[19] v. 36 - 37
[20] v. 118
[21] v. 83

Apris de Dieu qui te fait naistre
Non pour neant, ains pour accroitre
Sa grandeur, dedans noz espritz.[22]

The "ver" not only signals when to prepare for annual tasks, it also points to its origin. These two referential moves – one towards human action and one towards divine action – reveal the place of the "ver" in cosmic design : "accroitre" God's greatness, or in other words, to "magnify the Lord." However, as the genre indicates, a worm's existence is not sufficient to magnify God's creation. "Ver" must include its homophone, "vers," for the magnification to occur. Without its poetic form (and Muse), beholding and amplifying the "ver" in song, something so small would not be magnified, in the sense of being made large, and made visible. This can be seen in the repeated return to the original syntax of the Muse's song: "Jamais ne se puisse lasser / Ma Muse de chanter la gloire / D'un Ver petit."[23] The poem opens with the Muse's song about a "ver." The "de" structures the poem's syntax until the middle of the second strophe, where the poet abruptly shifts to a second-person address through a chiasmic apostrophe : "Gentil prophette, et bien apris! / Apris de Dieu qui te fait naistre."[24] The two lines hinge on the "ver"'s knowledge, which begins with a designation of the "ver" as prophet and opens onto a discussion of the nature and specificity of this role, which comprises the second half of the poem.

The "ver" as prophet, has the primary function of showing, "montrer." Although the "ver" shows the "laboureur" that the heavens exist, that there is a divine order, it does so without raising the gaze of the "laboureur" upward. The poet negates the necessity of consulting the constellations "Toreau," "Cancre," "Capricorne," and "Belier," associated with spring, summer, winter, and spring, respectively. The "ver," who brings news of the fall harvest, is notably absent in this strophe. Similarly absent, are the Pléiades, which rise during the fall harvest.[25] The fall is withheld as an empty space, able to show the "laboureur" that he has "son ciel dessus la terre," without showing specific knowledge derived from the sky.[26] The "ver"'s knowledge remains firmly in the same land it helps to tend and keeps human sight focused on this same land. The poet praises the "ver" for its glowing interior, its embodied light : "seul aiant la poitrine / Plaine d'une humeur cristaline."[27] This light is transformed into a jewel through a child's game:

… souhaiter
Des petis enfans seullement,
Ou pour te montrer à leur pere,
Ou te pendre au sein de leur mere,
Pour lustre, comme un diamant.[28]

The prophetic "ver" circulates through the wonder of small children. This awe is turned into a gift, which the mother can wear, "au sein," much like the light of the "ver" resides within its own chest. The game has moved an inner light to the surface of things and sent it into circulation to adorn and be admired by larger, more powerful men and women. Its comparison to a diamond, a gem Belleau later praises in his *Pierres précieuses* for its indestructability, gives the "ver" immemorial strength, as the poet initially claimed the Muse was could do for the "ver," in the very first strophe.

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[22] v. 13 - 20
[23] v. 1 - 3
[24] v. 17 - 18
[25] As noted by Guy Demerson in his edition of Belleau's *Petites inventions*.
[26] v. 22
[27] v. 30 - 31
[28] v. 32 - 36

The envoy returns to the frailness of the "ver"'s body, which a passing foot can crush. The poet advices the "ver" to "Choisis le fort des buissons vers" to keep it safe.[29] The closing line brings together the three homophones of "ver," "vers," and "vert." Within this linguistic thicket, the worm will be safe from passing feet and the verse will remain embodied. Belleau's short poem elevates both the form, a small childish game, and the objects selected for these games, by emphasizing embodiment and a Christian, rather than Classical prophetic praise. The anticipation of God's incarnation in a small child replaces the apocalyptic fervor of the second coming circulating in religious discourse amongst both Protestants and Catholics at the outset of the religious troubles in France. Anacreon's neo-platonic love is similarly reworked into the love of a child for his parent. The humility of these reworkings diminishes the poet, and his verse, to a pinprick of light on earth, tending to smallness and gazing at God's creation magnified both in relation to his self-diminishment and by the strength of his verse, which strengthens the body of even a worm.[30]

In Belleau's poem, the worm is prophetic and the poet is able to sing his praises. These various praise poems circulate among the poets. Ronsard's prefatory poem raises the question of both the value and function of the closed economy of the poets' gift exchange of small hymn-blasons. Ronsard's justification lies primarily in the assertion of the Pléiade's exceptional status with regard to contemporary poetry and in their ability to memorialize their patrons. However, Belleau is not praising his patron directly, nor is he describing the patron's heroic deeds. Instead, the praise of smallness, in relation to the "beau style bas," becomes a means of discussing the poet's broad social role. Ronsard positions the Pléiade poets in an imperial tradition of royal and divine praise. He positions himself at the head of this group, comparing himself to Pindar : "Le premier de France / J'ay pindarizé."[31] Ronsard's generous promotion of Belleau also takes the opportunity to establish a hierarchy, placing himself as France's preeminent poet, one capable of authorizing a new poet's work. Ronsard's praise poems diverge from Pindar's work in many significant ways, and yet, as this comparison implies, he is a helpful counterpoint to consider the social function of praise Ronsard constructs. [32]

Leslie Kurke has meticulously described how the economy of praise works in Pindar's odes, in her book, *The Traffic in Praise*. Kurke looks specifically at the *epinikion*, or praise poem, written as an occasional poem to celebrate the winner of athletic games. Kurke positions the *epinikion* at the nexus of symbolic capital: a marketplace for negotiating value between house, class, and city. A competing athlete – from the aristocratic class - leaves home, diminishing his community's value (his house and class). If he wins he will return and enrich the household and reestablish the class dominance. However, the household, which has produced the achievement, cannot produce the value of this achievement, which depends on prestige in the eyes of others, or praise. Further, both the class and household must be reintegrated into the city. The community is then obligated to celebrate the victor just as the victor must receive praise (*kleos* – praise for a famous deed) so as not to be alienated from the community. The poet takes on communal debt and gifts the community with praise, not only compensating for the lost value

[29] v. 40

[30] Ménager's reading of "Ver luisant" emphasizes Belleau's interest in art rather than science, his love of what things can become. He does not consider the poem's prophecy to be of significant scale to make a theoretical claim, as Ronsard's work does.

[31] Ode 2, "A Calliope," in the *Second Livre*.

[32] There has been extensive scholarship on Ronsard's poetic relation to Pindar and the many divergences in what is at stake for each poet. Isidore Silver has written most extensively on the comparison.

but also adding value through prestige. The poet reintegrates the exceptional figure into the community without dissolving the hierarchy of classes. This modulating act adorns the city (among other cities), generates symbolic wealth for the household and class, and maintains both social cohesion and hierarchical distinction among the classes.[33]

The Pléiade's hymn-blason presents a sociological counterpoint to classical praise poems. The hymn-blason creates an economy of praise that lacks a predetermined deed. The value generated by the poets not only circulates amongst the poets, it is further closed by the smallness of the objects chosen. A worm, unlike an athlete, has not incurred a social debt that needs compensation. How can we understand the social function of the hymn-blason, a genre which overlapped with the ode among the Pléiade poets? What does praise do in these poems? Part of the problem lies in the "strained search for theme."[34] Instead of praising victorious athletes, Ronsard's odes turn to war victories or metaphorical battles, against Ignorance, for example. Whereas Kurke explains the mythological references in Pindar's odes as an appropriation of the past by the aristocracy to further assert their status - extending the family's reputation both back in time as a debt to the ancestors and forward to assure their continued status – Ronsard's use of mythology consistently asserts his prophetic relation to the divine, his ability to glean God's secrets and bring his reader into contact with the divine. This stands in stark contrast to Pindar's odes, many of which include hymns, which do heighten the audience's state to bring them closer to the divine through the listening experience but consistently remind them, through proverbs and direct address, that their place is on the earth. The poet himself does not invoke the gods through apostrophe nor does he claim prophetic status. While one could certainly read Ronsard's use of mythology according to Kurke's subtle social analysis, Ronsard's poetry consistently exceeds the social world and turns heaven-ward to generate value.[35] This stands in contrast to Belleau's *Petites inventions*, which do seem content to work on an allegorical level, magnifying signs, which in turn attest to God's greatness.[36] His gift exchange could be read as a closed circuit gift exchange, differentiating a set of aristocratic poets from other lesser poets.[37] However, Ronsard's prefatory poem to Belleau's collection opens the exchange to a more complex function of poetry, not merely of class maintenance, but of divinely inspired magnification, which has a larger aim.

The hymn, unlike the ode, is a gift to god.[38] Although there was significant overlap between the ode and the hymn during the Renaissance,[39] Ronsard consistently turns to the divine to generate the necessary value to magnify his objects. Ronsard's decasyllabic "Hymne de la philosophie," which opens his second book of hymns, describes the movement between reading signs on earth and a gaze up toward the heavens made possible through poetry. The hymn recounts the story of Philosophy's gift to men : seeing that men can not reach the heavens, she detaches the human soul from its body to help it rise, grasp the secrets of the universe – thunder,

[33] *The Traffic in Praise : Pindar and the Poetics of Social Economy*. 1991.
[34] Isidore Silver. *The Pindaric Odes of Ronsard*. p. 23
[35] Ehsan Ahmed argues that Ronsard's use of the ode to open an infinite space, moving the king toward the marvelous, gives the poet the social function of transporting the king. In contrast, J. A. Barrows argues that the ode merely magnifies the king's image, encouraging him to imitate the morally improved and glorified king he sees, thereby bettering himself. In both arguments, the poem moves towards the divine and the poet mediates this transition.
[36] John Frecerro. "The Fig Tree and the Laurel." 1986.
[37] Kurke p. 89
[38] Faulkner and Hodkinson. *Hymnic Narrative and the Narratology of Greek Hymns*. 2015.
[39] Stella P. Revard. *Pindar and the Renaissance Hymn-Ode : 1450 – 1700*. 2001.

the phases of the moon, the rivers of hell, the geography of the earth – and return to bring law and order to cities. Ronsard begins by anchoring the hymn in the Muses' gift:

Si Calliope autrefois de son gré
M'a fait ouvrir son cabinet sacré
Pour y choisir un present d'excellence
Present qui fust la digne recompense
D'avoir servi la troupe de ses Sœurs
Depuis vingt ans par cent mille labeurs :
C'est maintenant que je doy de mon coffre
Le retirer pour en faire un bel offre
À mon Odet,[40]

The poem's dedication to Odet de Colligny, then bishop and an advocate for Ronsard's poetry,[41] emphasizes the monetary aspect of gift exchange. The poem is a gift, "digne recompense," for Odet's twenty years of service. The gift comes from Ronsard's "coffre"; the poet withdraws from his own wealth in order to compensate the man who helped him build his wealth. "Offre" and "coffre" work together to make the poem. Philosophy's gift unhooked the soul from the body so that it can "du grand Dieu la nature espier," bringing a wealth of knowledge to men who are then able to order their city.[42] The poet similarly bestows a gift but the form of this wealth is less noble. Ronsard returns to his financial imperative again in "Hymne de l'or," dedicated to his teacher, Jean Dorat. Knowledge, wealth, and access to the divine are all gifts, which are brought into close proximity and distinguished poorly, if at all. The hymn allows the poet to move between heaven and earth (a hymn dependent on a patron for its construction) and generates value through this movement.

Ronsard's insistence on "docte fureur" illuminating the poet points toward a function of praise that exceeds the social world. If praise functions within the limits of the social order, it can nonetheless exceed the secular world through the body of the poet, who turns to the divine to generate earthly value. The poet, as both insider and outsider, generates value for the community by connecting it to the higher divine order. As Natalie Zemon Davis' study on the gift shows, however, the reciprocal model of gift-giving shifts during the sixteenth-century as the king aligns himself with divine sovereignty.[43] The difference between gifts to god and gifts to the monarch rapidly narrowed under Henri II, bringing the ode and the hymn into even closer proximity. If the king is not bound by a reciprocal obligation of debt to the community, does the poet's social function include debt redistribution in Early Modern France?

Michel Beaujour has suggested that Ronsard's state of possessed fury must not be read literally. He reads Ronsard's "docte fureur" with an emphasis on learning, rather than religious fury: the Pléiade poets are illuminated by classical culture.[44] William Kennedy has furthered this argument in his reading of Ronsard's career arc as a means of building credit to finance and promote his long postponed attempt at epic, the *Franciade*. Kennedy reads Ronsard's early sonnets, in particular, as a means of building credit, or investing to build a readership for his epic. The poem itself generates this credit through imitation. That is, classical culture becomes

[40] v. 1 - 9
[41] Colligny did not join the Protestant cause until the 1560s.
[42] v. 30
[43] Davis. Chapter 6. Ehsan Ahmed discusses this shift as a move toward deification of the king. He proposes that the poet is able to open a space that can "transport Henri to the heavens" (770). "Pierre De Ronsard's Odes and the Law of Poetic Space."
[44] *A New History of French Literature.* pp. 198 – 202.

indebted to Ronsard as he elevates it.[45] Terence Cave's concept of the *pli* reworks an earlier scholarly tradition of reading Pléiade poetry for a theory of poetics.[46] He similarly reads the poem as credit in his reading of Ronsard's "Hymne de l'or," but ties this credit to the patron. For Cave, debt is projected forward, rather than backward, as in Kennedy's reading. The patron must work to redeem his praise, to live up to and compensate the poet's work.[47] The distinction between Kennedy and Cave's readings of poetry and debt highlights the underlying contrast between synchronic and diachronic definitions of community, both of which are at work in Ronsard's poetry. Kennedy's diachronic reading positions the Pléiade in an autonomous, self-generating literary history, in which authority passes from poet to poet.[48] Cave's synchronic, sociological reading, places the poet within an historical community. Ronsard's poetry generates poetry's value through a gift-exchange by slipping quickly between these two sources of credit. I will argue that this slippage (or often conflation), between the historical, the literary historical, and the contemporary social world, is essential when Ronsard praises god and the king in a singular movement through mythical imagery. Praise poems build credit for Ronsard's epic and status as national poet; the poet is divinely inspired and is therefore able to make the king god's representative on earth through praise.

The gift of prophecy

Ronsard's Pindaric "Ode à Michel de l'Hospital," first published in 1552, positions the poet as a divine emissary with a clear political purpose as commissioned by the gods. The ode's structure is poetically closer to the genre of the hymn, in large part due to its extensive borrowing from Hesiod's *Theogony*. It locates the origin of the gift exchange in classical mythology and traces its history through the magnetic transfer of this gift into the person of Michel de l'Hospital.[49] Not appointed chancellor until 1560, Michel de l'Hospital was nonetheless a prominent legal presence in France. A councilor at the Parlement de Paris and prominent advocate of toleration, he was sent as an ambassador to the Council of Trent. William Kennedy has noticed that Ronsard changes the dedication of his poem in later editions to emphasize Michel de l'Hospital's appointment as chancellor. [50] The poem's pliability allows it to exceed its initial dedication, extending its gratitude for Michel de l'Hospital's defense of poetry to allow for broader interpretations based on l'Hospital's new role as the king's advocate in court and in the Estates General. Ronsard begins the ode with an image of the poet as adorner of the elite:

> Errant par les champs de la Grace
> Qui peint mes vers de ses couleurs,
> Sur les bords Dirceans j'amasse
> L'eslite des plus belles fleurs,
> À fin qu'en pillant, je façonne

[45] *Petrarchism at Work : Contextual Economies in the Age of Shakespeare*. Ch. 1 and 2.
[46] *The Cornucopian Text*. 1973. Cave's reading of the "fold" suggests that reflexive discourse can't be extracted and read as theory because it is contaminated and implicated in the individual poem's practice. Terence Cave reads the "fold" a decade before Deleuze's reading of Leibniz, as a reflexive discourse, a theory, which cannot be extracted and used because it is contaminated and implicated in the literary practice it appears in. *The Cornucopian Text.* 1979
[47] *The Cornucopian Text*. p. 232.
[48] Timothy Hampton's work on Du Bellay has similarly shown the connections between the rise of poetry as an autonomous field, virtuosity, and imitation generating profit. *Literature and Nation*.
[49] David Quint's reading of the ode emphasizes the importance of the Muses return to their divine origin, guided by Memory. p. XX
[50] *Petrarchism at Work*. Ch. 1

D'une laborieuse main
La rondeur de ceste couronne
Trois fois torse d'un ply Thebain,
Pour orner le haut de la gloire
Du plus heureux mignon des Dieux,
Qui ça bas ramena des Cieux
Les filles qu'enfanta Mémoire.[51]

The poet wanders near the Theban spring, which sprung up where Dirce died, collecting flowers to construct a crown, twisted in three. Terence Cave's reading of the poem's beginning notes the simultaneous enactment and discussion of imitation.[52] Michel de l'Hospital is elided through a superlative, recreating this same enactment and discussion in relation to praise. As Cave notes in his reading, the ode defers the encomium of its subject to the extent that Michel de l'Hospital becomes text. The textual replica of a living body works in much the same way as the lyre, which substitutes for Orpheus' dismembered body in Ronsard's poem "La lyre." Cave's reading pulls together these disparate texts to emphasize the incomplete and fragmentary dissipation particular to Ronsard's reworking of genre.[53] The first strophe of the ode, further equates praise itself with the work of poetry. By eliding slipping quickly between praise of the one who brought back Memory's daughter and the superlative itself, Ronsard positions praise and magnification as the subject of the ode.

The ode recounts the birth of Memory's daughters, the nine muses, and their immortal songs before beginning the narrative of the Muses' return to see Jupiter, their father. Memory crowns her daughters with flowers before they depart :

Apres avoir relié
D'un tortis de violettes
Et d'un cerne de fleurettes
L'or de leur chef delié : [54]

The floral crowns, like the one the poet is constructing, prepare the daughters to see Jupiter. Again, much like the poet, the Muses walk to a water source in order to swim to their origin.[55] Upon reaching their father's palace, the Muses sing a "Hymne de victoire."[56] The Muses' celebratory song of Jupiter's defeat of the giants pleases Jupiter and he asks them what "beau don" he can reward them with.[57] Calliope speaks on behalf of the Muses and asks their father for the gift to help make princes be seen as gods:

Donne nous que les Seigneurs,
Les Empereurs et les Princes
Soyent veus Dieux en leurs provinces,
S'ils reverent nos honneurs.
Fay que les Rois decorez,
De nos presens honorez,
Soyent aux hommes admirables,

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[51] Strophe 1
[52] *The Cornucopian Text*. p. 230
[53] *The Cornucopian Text*. Part II. Ch. 3
[54] v. 59 - 62
[55] David Quint's reading of water sources and originality emphasizes Ronsard's negotiation of spiritual claims to authority and his desire to be the source of authority for other poets. *Origin and Originality*. pp. 24 – 30.
[56] v. 318
[57] v. 329

Lors qu'ils vont par la cité
Ou lors que pleins d'equité
Donnent les loix venerables.[58]

The Muses request the gift of gifting. They will be able to make people see their kings as gods if these kings honor the Muses. The Muses' reward from Jupiter will allow them to help poets decorate emperors, kings, and princes so that they will be seen as gods, that is, in Jupiter's image. The Muses present a caveat, however. Just as the poet weaves a crown to praise (the elided) Michel de l'Hospital, and as Memory crowns the Muses as they approach their father, the king must find a way to recognize praise itself and those who sing his praise. The gift exchange begins with an *epinikion*, celebrating Jupiter's valiance in war but Jupiter in turn rewards the beauty of their praise. The gift economy is reopened and extended by Jupiter's recognition of the Muses' talents. The Muses return this gift of recognition by requesting the ability to enact this gift exchange on earth, raising earthly kings to resemble Jupiter, and increasing, or magnifying, Jupiter's audience as people on earth learn to praise him indirectly. The gift of the Muses, then, is the ability to see more. The people will see the goodness of the king. The people will see the king as a god. This final request comes at the end of a series of requests the muses make to their father : that their song be immortal, that the natural world respond to their voices, that the many prophetic voices pass through their voices that they may move through the heavens and through hell to reunite human souls with their origin.[59] The poet's dual aspiration, to ground his poetry in an authoritative source and to become the source for other poets,[60] takes on a pious quality through the gift exchange.

Prophecy, both as divine inspiration and as the ability to see the future, plays an important role in the authorization of the Pléiade in the "Ode à Michel de L'Hospital." Jupiter grants the Muses' request to inspire poets such that they will no longer practice art but rather a science polished by the gods' "sainte fureur."[61] Jupiter compares this polishing to the magnetization of iron when it comes into contact with a magnet, "ce fer tiré tire / un autre qui en tire apres."[62] The transference is in the action: the iron is acted upon and in turn can carry out the same action upon other substances like it. Jupiter describes the resulting ravishment of the poet's body as a substance capable of transference. The poet's body trembles, endures agitation, and is shaken as the magnetic charge passes through it.[63] The poet's body, like the iron, both transfers and actualizes the god's secrets (compared to the magnetic charge) : "De mes secrets vous remplira, / Et en vous les accomplira / Sans art, sans sueur ne sans peine."[64] The poet's body is feminized, it becomes a gestation vessel, which provides the necessary matter for the god's

[58] v. 365 - 374
[59] This realignment of the cosmos in connection to the praise of kings, underscores the importance of alignment and order at the heart of the praise poem. Jean Céard's readings of Ronsard's hymns return again and again to the importance of embodied order in the king and of the establishment of harmony on earth through poetry : *La Nature et les prodiges : l'insolite au XVIè siècle en France*. 1977; "Dieu, les hommes et le poète : structure et fonction des mythes dans les Hymnes de Ronsard." 1984; "'Loüer celluy qui demeure là-haut'" : La forme de l'hymne ronsardien." 1987. The idea of alignment and proper physical proportion in the body to reflect a divine proportion is established in Plato's *Timaeus*, and, as I will address later, returns in Ronsard's description of Autumn : Alastair Fowler looks at the numerological organization of poems in the Renaissance to discuss the role of the seasons and time in aligning the cosmos through text, body, and polity.
[60] Quint p. 30
[61] v. 407
[62] v. 411-412
[63] Strophe 14
[64] v. 451 - 454

secrets and imprints this matter with the requisite form.[65] Jupiter furthers this point with a counterexample. Uninspired poets will find their "vers naistront inutis / Ainsi qu'enfans abortis / Qui ont forcé leur naissance."[66] The poet's body shakes and trembles when it receives the god whereas the poet who attempts to learn a craft and produce verse of his own effort will bring forth aborted children, stillborn and premature. All possible reproductive failures are elided in these verses, which nonetheless produce some thing. Divine inspiration is the only assurance of a useful birth.

J.A. Burrow attributes a moral function to praise poetry, suggesting that the amplification of kings through praise presents the king with an ideal image to seek out through his own behavior.[67] This reading of praise as a behabitive illocutionary utterance – speech that evaluates actions - further raises the problem of authority, however.[68] For David Quint, who has written on this poem, there is a constant play between participation in an authoritative source and self-authorizing.[69] The illocutionary speech act is an act of urging, a movement towards something. In order for an utterance to obtain felicitously – or be realized in the world - all social conventions must be in place, all authorized participants must hold the correct ranks, behave appropriately, and feel the right intentions.[70] As Pierre Bourdieu's critique of speech act theory has emphasized, the speech act ultimately operates not in the linguistic realm but in the authorization of the carrier, who represents power. The circumstances are what make the speech act felicitous; rites must be bestowed upon the carrier through authorized institutions.[71] On the one hand, the Muses' gift to poets navigates the complexities of authorization : the king does not need to commission a poem which Jupiter has already commissioned by bestowing his gift upon the Muses. On the other hand, as Quint's reading shows, Ronsard's narrative must contend with its own self-conscious craftsmanship. The poem's discussion of the history of the gift of poetic fury – the artless inspired verse of Homer, the literary and distanced tragedies, the artful work of Roman poets, the dark ages, and finally the return of inspired poetry with the Pléiade[72] – underscores the problem of claiming divine authority in an explicitly self-authorizing fictional history. The poem's ability to persuade morally becomes dependent on the poem's ability to authorize the magnified images it produces.

The other aspect of Jupiter's authorization of inspired poetry hinges on sight and foresight : the poet must be recognizably authorized. Jupiter's speech is entirely in the future tense but reaches its peroration as he sends the Muses down to earth for the first time:

> Ceux que je veux faire Poëtes
> Par la grace de ma bonté
> Seront nommez les interpretes
> Des Dieux, et de leur volonté:
> Mais ils seront tout au contraire

[65] I will discuss this more later in my reading of Ronsard's "Hymne de l'autonne," with particular attention to the cosmological parallels in Plato's *Timaeus.*
[66] v. 471 - 473
[67] Burrow proposes that praise be read as an auxetic speech act, which increases the person being praised. Joel Fineman describes this act as "the meeting of mimesis and metaphor." XX An ornamental trope mediates between a referential and amplifying discourse. *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye*.
[68] J.L. Austin. *How to do things with words.*
[69] Quint. *Origin and Originality*.
[70] J.L. Austin. *How to do things with words.*
[71] Bourdieu. *Language and Symbolic Power*.
[72] Ode à Michel de l'Hospital. Strophe 17 - 19

Appellez sots et furieux
Par le caquet du populaire
De sa nature injurieux.
Toujours pendra devant leur face
Quelque Demon, qui au besoin
Comme un bon valet, aura soin
De toutes choses qu'on leur face.[73]

The strophe turns just before its center, on the question of naming. Jupiter's desire to make poets, to name them and to let them name themselves, of their own volition, interpreters of the gods, does not extend to what the poets will be called by the crowd: crazy. A divide is set up between naming and speech. This gap is mediated by a "Demon," who will serve the poets in some indeterminate way.[74] Jupiter's prophecy, while not mentioned again, silently structures the account of the historical degradation of prophecy over the next several strophes. The magnetism of inspiration weakens inexplicably and poets turn increasingly to art, produce increasingly sterile verse, until the Dark Ages, when the Muses are forced to return to their father. Synchronic and diachronic authorization converge at the moment when the historical narrative of poetry's divine transmission reaches the purported void preceding the Pléiade poets. The literary tradition is paused and a diachronic engagement with religious discourse takes over.

Ronsard breaks the prophetic connection between the god and his ability to inspire with a sudden apostrophe: Jupiter blows the Muses to earth but before the account of their first history on earth, Ronsard intervenes with his own plea to "Jeunesse divine" : "Reschauffez-moy l'affection / De tordre les plis de cest Hymne / Au comble de perfection."[75] Ronsard calls out to the gods to rejuvenate his writing, to be newly inspired mid-way through his praise poem. He turns to the Muses just as they have been blown to earth to distribute their gift for the first time, before their history will unfold. This return to the source not only undercuts the claim of magnetic transmission, it further complicates the genre by introducing a new agenda :

Donnez-moy le sçavoir d'eslire
Les vers qui sçavent contenter,
Et mignon des Graces chanter
Mon FRANCION sus vostre lyre.[76]

What Terence Cave has called a fold - that is, a theory which cannot be extracted from literary form in which it is couched[77] - pulls multiple genres into the ode: the hymn, praising and spying on the gods, and the epic. With his final reference to the project he wants to fund, the epic history of France's Trojan origins (which he will reference again in the same ode), the *Franciade*, Ronsard builds credit through his poem.[78] Ronsard further inverts Jupiter's prophetic program for divine poets by taking up the Muses' instrument, "sus vostre lyre." Rather than embodying the gods' forms and actualizing these forms with his own body, Ronsard proposes that he take the Muses' lyre and play out his own historical song. That is, Ronsard asks that he be allowed to give form through the Muses' material, a fictional mythological world, a literary field. This

[73] Strophe 15
[74] This problem is taken up again in Ronsard's hymn, "Daimons."
[75] v. 511 - 514
[76] v. 519 - 522
[77] Terence Cave reads the "fold" a decade before Deleuze's reading of Leibniz, as a reflexive discourse, a theory, which cannot be extracted and used because it is contaminated and implicated in the literary practice it appears in. *The Cornucopian Text.* 1979
[78] William Kennedy reads Ronsard's ability to build credit through his sonnets in his book *Petrarchism at Work*.

return to synchronic authorization, through literary history, blurs the boundaries between Ronsard and his predecessors, ultimately elevating Ronsard as the embodiment of praise.

Ronsard's poetry manages the problem of authorization in part through the formation of a new authorizing institution. If Pindar's praise worked within the social conventions of panhellenic athletic competitions, Ronsard's praise works within the poetic conventions that he and the other members of the Pléiade develop. Ronsard's self-authorizing takes the form of positing himself as a source for others, that is, instituting forms of authorization and hierarchy within a community of poets. Although the Muses' gift ostensibly authorizes the poet within a religious institution, the choice of pagan gods, presented as a veiled fable, immediately places Ronsard within a newly emerging set of specifically literary conventions, including the use of mythology and classical forms.[79] Joel Fineman suggests that praise is the fundamental move defining poetry, which takes itself as its object and becomes a speaking I/eye. Ronsard's genealogy of the Pléiade poets from a divine origin can then be read as the joining of praising and prophesying : the poet is a seer who speaks and sees himself speaking. Jonathan Culler's reading of the apostrophe as a sign of fiction, which creates a timeless present of all fictional uses of this rhetorical figure, contributes to this reading, by insisting on the fundamentally literary nature of praise (in contrast to a moralizing or religious function). The literary field allows for Ronsard's praise to obtain. While this does not contradict the interplay of authority between the source and original production as Quint describes, it does open the idea of original production beyond the individual writer to the game of mutual authorization simultaneously within Ronsard's own works, within a group of writers and with regard to their patrons.

Following the break in the ode, the Muses return to earth for a second time. This return is both guided and embodied. The Muses bring inspired poetry to France through the body of Michel de l'Hospital. The divine gift is embodied in a guide who will defend the Muses against Ignorance. The return is visible to those on earth:

> A-tant pres de terre eslevées
> Tomberent au monde, et le feu
> Qui flamber à gauche fut veu,
> Fist signe de leurs arrivées.[80]

Michel de l'Hospital arrives as a comet, streaking across the sky. He is both a sign of the arrival of the Muses in France and a way of reading. From a religious perspective, the named prophets of the Hebrew Bible have now been left behind and a Christian god has sent prophecy incarnate to earth. With God's presence on earth, the people turn away from history toward the reading of signs on earth. God's proximity and distance are visible to the guided eye. Ronsard announces the arrival of the Pléiade in relation to prophecy, introducing the possibility of a self-authorizing but Christian poetry, which reads the signs of God's care. The poet's carefully chosen flowers for his woven crown are reworked through the poem to become a way of reading. The poet's ability to adorn and praise is tied to his ability to read the signs of god's presence in the world. By focusing on prophecy in the "Ode à Michel de l'Hospital," the generic importance of the hymn to the structure of this ode emerges. Praise is intricately tied to god's gifts and the poet's unique ability to both see the divine in the world and weave these signs into gifts for the great men he praises.

<u>Embodiment and Recognition of Prophetic Authority</u>

[79] Fineman, *Shakespeare's perjured Eye*. 1986. Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs*. 1981
[80] v. 659 - 692

The problem of recognizing divine messages depends on a correct reading of signs, as Ronsard's *Discours des misères de ce temps* amply explores. One of Ronsard's more unusual hymns, "Hercule chrétien," engages with the role of poetry as a vehicle of divine signs to help readers recognize the correct signs. The poem is written in decasyllables, and, like the "Hymne de la Philosophie," which precedes it, is dedicated to Odet de Coligny. The meter, which Ronsard uses in his epic, the *Franciade*, was often associated with an older Catholic French imperial poetics in contrast to the classically inspired alexandrine.[81] "Hercule chrétien" takes up the history of prophecy on earth through a biblical tradition. Divine incarnation in the Christian world makes possible a Christian poetry through which signs of divine care and presence are magnified on earth. The hymn opens with a question about timing : "Est-il pas temps desormais de chanter / Un vers Chrestien, qui puisse contenter / Mieux que devant les Chrestiennes oreilles?"[82] The opening lines of the hymn posit religious identity as a matter of a firm historical division : before and after. The first line further divides time within the realm of poetry: "desormais" poets will sing Christian verse specifically to please Christian ears. This poetic division is aesthetic rather than historical. The strophe concludes by shifting "contenter" to "digne" : "Le vers Payen est digne des Payens, / Mais le Chrestien est digne des Chrestiens."[83] The temporal divide splits the two groups, but the poetic divide is a question of worth and value. Divine incarnation has brought about the return of the Muses alongside their embodied guide - Michel de l'Hospital in his ode - but it has also brought about a new type of song. That is, the return of the Muses is not a simple reenactment of the original gift exchange, embodiment has changed the type of gift or song worth exchanging.

In "Hercule chrestien," Ronsard approaches the history of prophecy with argumentative verse. Ronsard questions the common comparison between Hercules and Christ by arguing that the Greeks misread and reified prophecies of Christ's arrival into their own mythology. He traces this history, beginning with the Hebrew prophets, "Remplis de Dieu, et certains interpretes / De ta venue, à fin de l'advertir / Que tu devois ta Deité vestir / D'un corps humain."[84] Ronsard returns repeatedly to the idea of divinity dressed in a human body. The sibyls' prophecies are misread and attributed to Jason and Hercules; texts written about these Greek heroes ought to have been attributed to Christ. This misidentification or gap between word and body is again reworked as a question of dress; Christ birth is described as an encasement : "celast sa Déité / Sous le manteau de nostre humanité."[85] The metaphor is extended in a comparison between Hercules' repudiation of his wife for another and the refusal of the Jews to accept Christ :

> Hercule print l'habit de son epouse,
> Et Jesus Christ fist la semblable chouse :
> Car il vestit l'humain habillement
> De son Eglise, et l'aima tellement
> Qu'en sa faveur receut la mort cruelle
> Estant vestu des habillemens d'elle.[86]

[81] Jean Céard, Daniel Ménager, Michel Simonin note in their 1994 edition of Ronsard's *Oeuvres* that Charles IX specifically requested that Ronsard write his *Franciade* in decasyllables rather than the newly instituted alexandrine, with its caesura and two hemistiches.
[82] v. 1 – 3
[83] v. 9 - 10
[84] v. 52 - 55
[85] v. 157 - 158
[86] v. 219 - 224

Hercules accepted the cloak, soaked in centaur blood, his jealous wife Deinaneira offered him, burned his skin severely, and asked his son to burn his body on a funeral pyre. Ronsard proposes that this myth be read as Christ's relation to his people. Christ skillfully dressed "l'humain," himself in his church. Christ was "vestu des habillemens d'elle [the church]," and consequently was read by the Greeks and the Hebrew people as a competing church or heresy, which could be punished. In contrast to Hercules' passive role as recipient of a poisoned cloak, Christ cloaks himself in the church. The act of cloaking is further complicated by the echo between the noun "habillemens" and the adjective, "habillement," which brings artfulness and dressing into the poetics of adornment. Christ's actions as embodied and final prophet approach the poet's actions when read in relation to the "Ode à Michel de l'Hospital" : "De mes secrets vous remplira, / Et en vous les accomplira / Sans art, sans sueur ne sans peine."[87] The poet's embodiment of God's secrets reenacts the incarnation, directly tying the act of the poet-prophet to Christ's own actions. The poet must then cloak these secrets before they can be given to a larger community. Poetry appropriates the actions of church discourse, mediating between God and the people through the incarnation of the divine : a prophet. The interplay of embodiment and cloaking, specifically adornment and ornamentation, is discussed further in the "Hymne de l'Autonne," to which I will now turn.

Ronsard's *Discours des misères de ce temps* suggested that true prophets should not look like prophets. The theatrical resemblance of wandering street prophets to John the Baptist ought to indicate to readers that there is a disturbance in the world order, not that John the Baptist has returned to announce Christ's coming. As several scholars have noticed, cloaking makes real prophecy look grotesque : the proof of prophecy is in its obfuscation.[88] The identity of the prophet, his appearance, and construction, become central to the poet-prophet's authority.

Ronsard discusses the "fabuleux manteau"[89] of fable-spinning and ornamentation in his "Hymne de l'Autonne," a poem, which returns to the lexical field of harvest, that I first discussed in Belleau's "Ver luisant."[90] As I have argued thus far, Ronsard's engagement with Belleau's poetry extends the amplification of praise poetry. Ronsard claims to be the superlative praise singer and winner of the competition : he magnifies more than the others. Ronsard further claims that unlike the others, this is possible becasue he is the magnifying glass itself, that which amplifies. In contrast to Belleau's praise of a prophetic "ver," Ronsard elevates the poet to prophet – earthly interpreter of divine word. The poet's role is amplified from being the observer of God's messengers to being God's messenger : from seeing to being that through which the world is seen. This role is carefully constructed and allows the poet to sing full hymns that show the divine secrets in the grass, just as Belleau's "ver" did. Ronsard's hymn expands upon the themes introduced in Belleau's "Le ver luisant de nuict" but moves the role of the verse out of the allegorical and into the auto-reflexive : praising poetry itself and elevating its social and political role through the construction of the poet's body. By now looking at Ronsard's "Hymne de l'Automne," another harvest poem, I will show the magnification of the child's game - of spying, amplifying, and hiding in Belleau's "ver luisant" - into Ronsard's discussion of fable and inspired poetic formation.

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[87] v. 451 - 454

[88] Olivier Pot. "Prophétie et melancholie." pp. 200- 201. Colette Beaune distinguishes between the scriptural exegesis associated with the Pauline tradition and the humble visiting prophet who arrives in person dressed as John the Baptist. "Jean le Gand prophète et bienheureux." p. 13. *Prophètes et prophéties au XVIè siècle*. 1998.

[89] "Hymne de l'Autonne." v. 82

[90] Terence Cave on adornment and Ronsard's "fabulous mantle" in *Ronsard the Poet*.

Ronsard's "Hymne de l'Autonne" is third in a series of four hymns, written in alexandrines and dedicated to France's four secretaries of state, which praise the seasons. The hymns begin with spring and end with winter. The "Hymne du Printemps" includes the creation of the four seasons and opens the sequence, aligning Autumn with illness. The "Hymne de l'Esté" further adds that Autumn is one of four children born of Nature's affair with the Sun. Autumn is a female, "Qui n'eut rien de vertu ny de puissance en elle."[91] The hymns to fall and winter incorporate fables and open with reflections on the poet's vocation. Whereas the winter hymn focuses on the poet's struggle and toil to attain significant glory and fame, the fall hymn is concerned with the formation of the poet. "Hymne de l'Autonne" moves from the birth of the poet to Autumn's first steps, through her marriage to Bacchus before handing the song over to the praise of Winter. Autumn is the season of both formation and decay, of initiation and illness.

The poem opens with the poet's birth. The poet immediately loses his agency in the caesura of the first line : "Le jour que je fus né, Apollon qui preside." The poet then becomes the object of Apollo's will, in other words, the embodiment of Apollo's design. Apollo guides him, animates him with a subtle and vigorous spirit, makes him love science and honor. Apollo gives him "une fureur d'esprit / Et l'art de bien coucher ma verve par escrit."[92] The coupling of inspiration and writing then shifts from one of formation to gift-giving :

> Il me haussa le cœur, haussa la fantaisie,
> M'inspirant dedans l'ame un don de Poësie,
> Que Dieu n'a concedé qu'à l'esprit agité
> Des poignans aiguillons de sa Divinité.[93]

Apollo has been replaced with "Dieu," but not until he has given the poet the gift of poetry. Once the gift is bestowed, the Christian god's "aiguillons" of divinity intervene in a previously pagan world. The "aiguillon" pulls together multiple concepts introduced elsewhere in Ronsard's imagery: the sting of a tiny bee, the magnetized iron needle of divine transmission, the pain of Eros' arrow, the pious incitement against sin.[94] The classical world is able to bequeath poetry and a literary tradition, which the monotheistic Christian god is then able to authorize. The next strophe replaces the poet with the generic "l'homme" who, touched by these divine "aiguillons," becomes a prophet.[95] The slippage between the Christian and pagan worlds continues as the prophet raises himself "entre les Dieux,"[96] before the monotheistic God returns in the next two strophes. These strophes give a general theory of prophecy as the embodiment of a gift, which allows the poet to reach towards God's secrets.

The poet's character allows him to fulfill this role as prophet capable of receiving and speaking these secrets. The prophet is given an Orphic ability : "Il cognoist la vertu des herbes et

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[91] v. 118
[92] v. 7 - 8
[93] v. 9 – 12 Much like the original scene of gift-giving, the scene of the poet receiving the god's gift of prophetic inspiration is repeated ritualistically throughout the *Hymnes*. The first book opens with the following lines from "Hymne de l'Eternité":

> Tourmenté d'Apollon, qui m'a l'ame eschaufée,
> Je veux plein de fureur, suivant les pas d'Orfée,
> Rechercher les secrets de nature et des Cieux,
> Ouvrage d'un esprit qui n'est point ocieux. (1 – 4)

[94] A directed search through Frantext's digital database emphasizes the frequency with which the word "aiguillon" is used to redirect moral course. Jean Calvin uses the word in his *Institutions* regularly. A thorough digital analysis of the term would help unpack a more exact relation of the religious and classical influences it carries.
[95] v. 14
[96] v. 16

des pierres / Il enferme les vents, il charme les tonnerres."[97] The prophet has an older sensibility of piety, "Dont aujourd'huy le monde a bien peu de souci"[98] ; he fasts, practices penitence, and orates to develop these sciences with his poetic fury. While the absence of art or craft remains absent, as in the "Ode à Michel de l'Hospital," the prophet must nonetheless prepare his body in order to receive the god's gift. His proximity to the natural world and his isolation further detach the poet from the world and move him into a literary world of inherited imagery. Once the poem has moved into this abstracted, imagistic world – which brings together both classical and biblical language – the poet reenters in the first person : the poet's formation begins again with "Je n'avois pas quinze ans."[99] The ensuing fictional narrative weaves together Hesiod's *Theogony* and common Renaissance neo-platonic tropes, found most developed in Pontus de Tyard's *Solitaire premier*, published four years before the season hymns.[100]

Tyard, in contrast to Ronsard, emphasizes the poet's ascent towards the heavens in his endeavor. The preface to *Solitaire premier* compares the poet to "un autre Dédale trop heureux, sinon un second Icare, j'entrepren avec des aesles nouvelles, sortant d'un Labirint Grec et Latin, voler par cest air, et chargé de marchandises estranges, vous apporter choses non jamais veues (que je sache) en region Françoise."[101] The poet is both architect and explorer, builder of wings and daring flyer. Tyard's Solitaire constantly seeks to untangle himself, to escape from a maze of old languages, to fly while carrying collected visions. Tyard's poet, like Ronsard's poet, is sick from enthusiasm and divine fury, must hide divine secrets under fictions[102] but Tyard's prioritizing of neo-platonic ascent, on return to a divine origin, creates a distinctly more philosophical poet. Based on Marsilio Ficino's translations of Plato's *Ion* and *Phaedrus*, Tyard's neo-platonic inspiration uses poetry in the service of a larger religious goal of uniting the spirit with its origin.[103] In contrast, Ronsard appropriates all four of Plato's furies – the priestly mysteries, love, prophecy, and poetry - for poetry. Ficino's own commentary on the Ion suggests a contemporary lineage of prophecy, which ends in poetry. Ficino claims that Phoebus inspired Cosimo de Medici and gave him the gift of prophecy, he then inspired Piero with healing powers, before giving the gift of song and the lyre to Lorenzo de Medici, to whom the 1484 translation is dedicated.[104] Ronsard's poet, as I will show, is more interested in the culmination of inspiration through poetry than in attaining a single union with the divine. The poet's initiation in "Hymne de l'Autonne" most notably fulfills Jupiter's prophecy, which Ronsard has personally elaborated in the "Ode à Michel de l'Hospital." The poet confirms his own prophetic ability to foresee the future by fulfilling his prophecy within his poetic universe. These layers of poetic allusion, including to his own poetry, shift the problem of authorization onto poetry itself. That is to say, poetic discourse is able to self-authorize through the appropriation of religious, classical, and contemporary poetic discourse.

The poet goes out in the evening - "au soir," a crepuscular moment aligned with autumn - to see the nymphs, fairies, and satyrs. He believes that if he can follow in their footsteps he will

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[97] v. 17 - 18
[98] v. 24
[99] v. 31
[100] *Solitaire premier ou Dialogue de la fureur poétique*. 1552. Ed. Silvio F. Baridon. Geneva : Droz, 1950
[101] p. xix
[102] p. 65
[103] Grahame Castor argues that Ronsard's unique contribution to Pléiade poetics is his justification of poetry in terms of itself. (p. 7) He reads Pontus de Tyard's poetic contribution as more restrained than Ronsard's, suggesting that Ronsard elevates the reach of poetry into the social function of religion (p.p. 35 – 36). *Pléiade Poetics*. Ch. 3.
[104] Marsilio Ficino *Commentaries on Plato. Vol. 1 : Phaedrus and Ion*. Trans. Michael J.B. Allen, 2008.

have “l’ame plus genereuse.”[105] The poet is ultimately initiated, rather than trained, in a second set of rituals. The muse Euterpe moves him out of the mortal world by washing him nine times from a rarely visited fountain. These ablutions echo the muses’ own descent, in the “Ode à Michel de l’Hospital,” through the river to return to their father where they receive the gift of bestowing inspiration on poets. There is slippage between the inspiring Muses and the inspired poet. Euterpe charms the poet nine times, blowing across his skin. These external purifications of the body, in contrast to Apollo’s internal initiations – animating his spirit, elevating his heart, inspiring his soul – nonetheless act on his heart : “me remplist le cœur d’ingenieuse erreur.”[106] The ritualistic repetition of initiation, of filling the poet with the uncommon, moves physically outward as the poet matures. At age fifteen, the poet’s inspiration is located on his skin and is read socially as “erreur.” The muse explains the poet’s initiation to him by situating his place even further in the contemporary social world (in contrast to the abstract literary, biblical, and classical world of the first initiation) :

> En me disant ainsi: Puis que tu veux nous suivre,
> Heureux après la mort nous te ferons revivre
> Par longue renommée, et ton los en-nobli
> Accablé du tombeau n’ira point en oubli.
> Tu seras du vulgaire appellé frenetique,
> Insensé furieux farouche fantastique,
> Maussade mal-plaisant : car le peuple médit
> De celuy qui de mœurs aux siennes contredit.
> Mais courage, Ronsard, les plus doctes Poëtes,
> Les Sibylles Devins Augures et Prophetes,
> Huez siflez moquez des peuples ont esté:
> Et toutefois, Ronsard, ils disoyent verité[107]

The muse begins by memorializing the poet. She bequeaths renown upon him, promising that he will not be forgotten. Euterpe remains in the social register as she describes the ostracism the poet will face while living, the misinterpretation that will follow from speaking against what is commonly believed. In the following strophe, the muse directly addresses Ronsard, not an abstract poet, but Ronsard as embodiment of the poet. The muse praises Ronsard, elevating him above other poets by placing him among the most learned poets. Learned poetry is further elevated, syntactically, as equivalent to prophecy, the final point of comparison. Ronsard’s name is repeated at the end of the strophe and does not appear again in the hymn. The significant placement of his name among prophets who are not believed by the people anchors the initiation story between the abstract literary world and the contemporary political world. The muse concludes that the poet will have nothing to fear from the king because he, the poet, will not have material gains, living only for himself and for the Muse. Ronsard’s explicit engagement with his financial needs in the surrounding hymns makes it difficult to read this claim literally. Through the muse, Ronsard negotiates his poetry’s authority as both implicated in and separate from the political world. The poem further navigates between the literary and contemporary social world through the poet’s name. Ronsard bridges an a-temporal, mythical realm with contemporary socio-political conditions. Ronsard builds credit on his name alone. This bridge is further solidified as the poet brings his own biography into the mythical initiation story: “Ainsi disoit la

[105] v. 46
[106] v. 56
[107] v. 61 - 68

Nymphe, et de là je vins estre / Disciple de Dorat, qui long temps fut mon maistre."[108] The first person initiation story moves from the world of the classical gods to Renaissance France, in Dorat's classroom. It is ultimately Dorat who teaches Ronsard how to "bien desguiser la verité des choses/ D'un fabuleux manteau dont elles sont encloses."[109] And it is Dorat who teaches Ronsard how to immortalize, celebrate, and praise great men by giving to them from his poetic-prophetic gift.[110] The initiation frame narrative ends with an enactment of gift-giving : "ainsi que je te donne / Pour present immortel l'Hynne de ceste Autonne."[111] The poet directly addresses Claude de l'Aubespine, taking on the Muse's position in the gift-giving exchange while firmly remaining in contemporary France. Ronsard has bridged multiple worlds not through divine action, but ultimately through the tutelage of Dorat and the power of literary discourse.

Ronsard continues to demonstrate and fulfill his poetic-prophetic gift by spinning a fable for the remainder of the hymn. The "fabuleux manteau" is acted out and does not return to the socio-political world until the envoy to Aubespine in the final strophes. This fable can be read in light of the cloaking metaphor presented in "Hercule chrestien," and with regard to the Muse's ritualistic washing of and blowing across the poet's skin, as a means of teasing out the relationship between embodiment and cloaking. What must happen to the poet's body so that it can move between multiple worlds? How does this body become capable of seeing and ordering the world such that the poet magnifies the divine? And finally, what is the role of sickness and animality in these transformations?

The young Autumn, full of love and mischief, plays childishly with her dolls under the care of her wetnurse who spins. The spinning wetnurse decides to tell Autumn who her parents are, beginning, "Ma fille, dés le jour que tu fus enfantée."[112] The birth narrative returns from the opening frame but the roles of initiator and initiated have been redistributed through the act of spinning and telling a story. Autumn learns that she is of noble birth, that her parents are "une grande Déesse" and "ce grand flambeau que tu vois luire aux Cieux."[113] The wetnurse tells her it is time for her to return to her origins to meet Nature and the Sun, to learn to speak, dance, and seduce, so that she can find a husband and marry. Autumn leaves her wetnurse and sets off to find the wind, Auton, to take her to become who she must be. The wetnurse is quickly replaced in the initiation journey by the monstrous Auton, lurking in her cave. The wind is hot and humid with rivers flowing from her chin and clouds circling her head. Maladie, an emaciated female dog, lies on some straw next to her, licking and nursing her babies. Both Maladie and her babies are compared to multiple animals, demand different lengths of time to grow, but all become speechless before they are sent off to infect people. The murky vapors and waters in which Sickness resides allow Autumn to move from childhood back to her origin before she can marry and fulfill her role.

This liquid initiation[114], of a mother returning her children to their origins figures in the "Ode à Michel de l'Hospital" as well as in the ritualistic bathing of the poet in the frame of "Hymne de l'Autonne." The trope turns on the many avatars of the wetnurse, or τιθηνη, from the

[108] v. 77 - 78
[109] v. 81 - 82
[110] v. 84 - 85
[111] v. 85 - 86
[112] v. 117
[113] v. 133, v. 139
[114] In her book, *De la fantaisie chez Ronsard*, Christine Pigné focuses on the abundance of liquid images used in relation to prophecy and, in turn, the importance of prophecy to the incarnation of the soul. David Quint is similarly interested in images of fountains and water in relation to Ronsard's conception of the source.

verb τιθηνεομαι, to nurse or suckle, which we can trace back to Plato. The wetnurse plays an important role in the second half of Plato's late dialogue, the *Timaeus*, on the rhythmic ordering of the universe.[115] The division of the dialogue into two halves allows for the same idea to be represented through two different narrative strategies: the first (Intellect) mathematical and the second (Necessity) familial. The intellectual representation of the ordering of the universe begins with the construction of the soul from a proportioning of difference and sameness; disordered human bodies strive to regain the original proportioning by seeing and imitating the universe and hearing its harmony. The second representation of the ordering of the universe, through necessity, is generative. The father provides the intelligible form, the mother (also called the wetnurse) provides the receptacle, and the child is that which comes into being. The wetnurse shakes, measures, and portions in order to affix that which is into that which is coming into being. The perpetual motion of the wetnurse, as vessel but also rhythm, meter, and harmony, creates a tentative body that enables the initiation of the child. Thus, the *Timaeus* draws together several fundamental aspects of the poet's or child's formation but through the lens of cosmogony.[116] Yet, as I have argued, the poet's body, through the plasticity of fable, both embodies and cloaks multiple origin stories, binding them together and bringing them to France. This ordered universe, which moves between the wetnurse's and the poet's body, through fable allows the poet to authorize his poetry through cosmological allusions but also communicate a stable political order based on that cosmology. As in the "Ode à Michel de l'Hospital," the poet spies on the gods and brings that knowledge to the political, material, sphere. The poem shows the addressee his place in a larger order by embodying the formative process of this order.[117] As many scholars have noted, for Ronsard, this ordering is fundamentally poetic.[118] That is, poetry, and Ronsard's hymns in particular, are essential to the proper ordering of the Christian imperial state.

The poet's passage through sickness, shaking, and disruption not only mirrors the frenzy of the prophet, seen in both Tyard and warnings to newly initiated poets in Ronsard's own poetry, it forms the poet according to the order of the universe. The poet's body takes on the

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[115] Alastair Fowler argues for the importance of numerological organization in Renaissance poetry in his book, *Triumphal Forms : Structured patterns in Elizabethan Poetry*. He looks at the formal arrangements of triumph poems and their focus on the center. He compares this to royal entries. Fowler's work on how the seasons and time are arranged formally in poems shows a mathematical design similar to that discussed in the *Timaeus*. Cynthia Skenazi's work on Ronsard, in particular, *Le poète-architecte en France*, similarly looks at the similarity between the discursive construction of political unity and the architectural monuments built during the sixteenth-century.

[116] François Rouget's work on Orpheus in the sixteenth century discusses the founding of civilization in the natural world in order to move toward the divine. *L'Apothéose d'Orphée : l'esthétique de l'ode en France au XVIe siècle, de Sébillet à Scaliger (1548-1561)*. The Orphic emphasis on natural knowledge at the beginning of "Hymne de l'Autonne" further reinforces this reading of the hymn as invested in providing a firm unified foundation for France. As Cynthia Skenazi notes in Ch. 5, natural order gives the greatest permanence to the French monarchy. The direct reworking of Hesiod's *Theogony* serves as a literary template for this form of political authorization through natural imagery.

[117] The poet does not teach the king how to act but shows him his place in a larger cosmology. Céard, Jean. "Dieu, les hommes et le poète : structure et fonction des mythes dans les Hymnes de Ronsard."

[118] Terence Cave, in "Ronsard's mythological universe," describes poetic ordering of the universe as a threshold, which brings readers to the limits of "reality." He finds that Ronsard's cosmological ordering in the *Hymnes* allows for a "proper ordering of the state, both politically and culturally, and an understanding of contemporary events in terms of the nation's history and destiny… through poetry, man can gain insight into all the realms of truth" (196). Véronique Denizot, in her book, *"Comme un souci aux rayons de soleil." Ronsard et l'invention d'une poétique de la merveille (1550 – 1556)*, adds that the experience of awe and wonder are essential to establishing the proper ethical stance in relation to this ordering.

proper cosmological proportions through rhythm.[119] The poet's alternate identification with and separation from the wetnurse allows for a slippage that makes him both initiator and initiated. The poet not only receives a gift from the god, he embodies this gift in order to bring it to the people. The rhapsodist, in classical culture, is a song-stitcher, one who weaves or spins together knowledge received from the gods, through earlier poets (usually Homer). The rhapsodist must abandon daily discourse to address god with all artistic embellishment available, to rarify both the song and its singing.[120] The poet's sickness is hard to read, however. Pasithée asks Pontus de Tyard's Solitaire if his health is in decline; does the poet suffer from sickness or enthusiasm, a "secrete puissance divine"? As Jupiter prophesies in the "Ode à Michel de l'Hospital," truly inspired poets will go unrecognized, will be called "sots et furieux / Par le caquet du populaire."[121] The fable both reveals, or proves, the truth of Ronsard's inspiration and obscures the exact message.

Terence Cave's reading of Ronsard's 1569 poem, "La lyre," emphasizes the generic blending of Ronsard's poetry, which allows for a dismanteling and reordering within the formal structure of the poem. Ronsard's collection of poems includes the hymn-blasons of the Pléiade gift-exchange as well as elegies, discourses, sonnets, and formally indeterminate poems of all kinds. Cave argues that this grab-bag section of Ronsard's collected works is both a source of orthodoxy for his other poems and a form of parasitism. "La lyre," centered around Ronsard's praise of a lyre he received as a gift from Jean Belot, to whom the poem is dedicated, reworks the images of the sick poet at home, the body as hollow vessel for the divine, the suddenness of poetic inspiration, and the biographical elements of "Hymne de l'Autonne." Cave's reading of "La lyre" compares the elaborately described lyre to the poem itself, suggesting that they be read as replicas of living bodies, dismembered corpses, akin to the textual production of Michel de l'Hospital's body.[122] The poet-prophet's disrupted body works in the same way as the poem, disjointed, interrupted, and not always legible as one form or another. "La lyre" presents three separate types of fable, which work together within this fragmentary form : the easily lifted veil of allegorical moral, the Silenus box (as proposed by Rabelais), and ornamentation which seduces through story.[123] Unlike the wandering prophets, who are clearly identifiable as versions of John the Baptist, the poet-prophet and his poems are embodied but dispersed, cloaked but interpretable. The hymn is both a fixed form: a clearly defined borrowing from classical and biblical tradition, and a permeable form that blurs with the unspecified "Poëme." The balance between embodiment and permeability allows the poem to self-authorize and self-generate. The blurring of the poet's body with the text extends a cosmic order through the poet's body to the nation. In the "Hymne de l'Autonne," the poet does not simply bring back secrets of the universe's proper order, which he has seen (as in the "Hymne de la Philosophie"), he embodies and creates this order through his textual body.

Over-prophesying

As I have shown, cloaking serves as proof of prophetic authority in Ronsard's hymns, but, as I will now demonstrate, it also protects the poet from disclosing secrets that gods would prefer he

[119] The debate over the emergent alexandrine in contrast to the decasyllable preferred in both Christian and imperial poetry might be important to this idea.
[120] Faulkner and Hodkinson. *Hymnic Narrative and the Narratology of Greek Hymns*.
[121] Strophe 15
[122] *The Cornucopian Text*. pp. 256 - 268
[123] Jean Céard, Daniel Ménager, and Michel Simonin identify these three types of fable, respectively at lines 107 – 120, 273 – 412, and 270 – 271, in the notes to their 1994 edition of Ronsard's collected works.

not tell. I turn now to Ronsard's "Hymne de Calays et de Zethès," which resituates fable as a solution to the problem of over-prophesying, or saying too much. Ornamentation and cloaking forestall the risks of sudden revelation. The opening dedication of the poem immediately raises the problem within the context of the gift exchange. Over-prophesying is related to over-praising, which in turn borders on vulgar monetization. The hymn opens with a desire : "Je veux donner ceste Hymne aux enfans de Borée."[124] Ronsard describes the sons of Boreas, who grew enormous gold and azure wings instead of beards. The boys, "(monstrueux jouvenceaux),"[125] are not only a parenthetical remark, the parenthesis develops into a full hymn, inverting the subsequent claim that the poet knows what he ought to do:

> Je sçay que je devrois, Princesse Marguerite,
> D'un vers non trafiqué chanter vostre merite,
> Sans louer autre nom, et des Grecs estrangers
> N'emprunter desormais les discours mensongers :
> Le vostre est suffisant à quiconque desire
> Gaigner le premier bruit de bien sonner La Lyre,[126]

Ronsard states that he knows Marguerite, Duchesse de Savoye, to whom he has dedicated the first two hymns in his collection, to be worthy of his hymns. Unlike his dedication to Marguerite in his first hymn, "Hymne de l'eternité," which presents a clear transmission of a gift from Apollo to the poet to Marguerite, by way of praising Eternity, this second dedication moves haltingly, changing subject quickly. Marguerite is certainly "suffisant," sufficiently praise-worthy to illustrate his ability to praise. But he cannot begin his praise with Apollo, as he obliquely notes her association of classical references with lies and trafficking. Classical references are described as commodities that can be bought and sold, rather than exchanged as gifts. The use of classical mythology risks moving the poem out of the gift-exchange into the world of commerce. Ronsard further develops this line of self-chastisement, stating that he knows he ought to praise God or risk offending her. She does not want to be praised at all or if she is praised should be praised very little; she does not like excess or flattery. In this bind, which disrupts the gift exchange but does not offer a clear alternative, Ronsard breaks suddenly and turns to a fable about Jason and the Argonauts. This fable does ultimately become a fable about Boreas' winged sons, Calays and Zethés, but the break is sudden. The problem of the dedication sits as a series of sudden turns and problems over the proper way to praise within a gift-exchange. The fable, in the form of an ornament, works against the Duchesse's wishes, disguising its desire to disguise.

Ronsard's initial description of Boreas' sons, Calays and Zethés, might be read as a justification for the return to classical mythology in spite of Marguerite's acknowledged dissuasion. The brief description is crowded with the language of ornamentation : "dorée," "Peinte," "se vestirent," "s'en orna."[127] The boys' wings are described as clothes, painted ornamentation covering their bodies. Like the "fabuleux manteau," the boys' wings enclose something that must not be seen directly but must be ornamented and elevated. Jean Céard notes the contemporary debate over mythological lyric and true religious poetry to suggest that Ronsard's interest in signs helps to bridge this divide. According to Céard, the problem of

[124] v. 1.
[125] v. 3
[126] v. 9 - 14
[127] v. 2, 3, 5, 7

praising the un-nameable, the inaccessible, is akin to reading present but illegible signs : just as God cannot be seen directly, he cannot be praised directly.[128]

The wings of Calays and Zethés ornament the boys' bodies, allow them to rise above the level of ordinary discourse, and cloak secrets that must not be seen. Much like the monstrous signs, misread by the French people during the wars of religion (described in Ronsard's *Discours des miseres de nos temps*), the "(monstrueux jouvenceaux)" must be glimpsed obliquely, as a parenthetical tangent. The winged boys do not deliver a message but rather open a space in which the prophet can speak about the dangers of prophesying, about his own history and the history of his people. The monstrous signs do not bring messages but rather testify to the presence of God on earth and the poet-prophet's inability to praise him directly. Ronsard circumvents the problem of over-praising or mis-praising God by turning obliquely to fable. This does not however, address the problem of economic contagion within the gift exchange. Pontus de Tyard's dedicatory remarks to his *Solitaire premier* similarly bring together flight with the acquisition of riches. He compares the inspired poet to a "second Icare" who flies through a Greek and Latin labyrinth, collecting "marchandises estranges," to bring things never before seen to France. Tyard returns to this metaphor at the end of the text when Pasithée praises the poet-sailors who've voyaged to the Classical world and now can "semer et faire pulluler en nostre France" the riches that they've found. Like Ronsard's "coffres" in his own "Hymne de la Philosophie," classical knowledge and wealth are repeatedly cast in relation to travel and the (New World influx of) gold.

The "Hymne de Calays et de Zethès" presents a fable of Jason and the Argonauts. The crew arrives in Bithynien. Calays and Zethés are the last to leave the boat, their golden hair spreading over their golden wings in the wind. Orpheus disembarks second, after Jason, carrying his lyre, but does not figure in the fable subsequently. Instead, prophecy holds a prominent place through Phinée, who lives in torment on the island. He has been blinded, "(ô cruauté!)," by the gods, "(pour trop prophetiser)."[129] The cause of his suffering as well as the apostrophic call for pity are again noted parenthetically, the first parentheses since the initial introduction of Boreas' sons ("(monstueux jouvenceaux)"). Phinée not only prophesied too much, he directly explains that he made divine will too visible:

> Fussé-je trespassé
> Quand du grand Jupiter le veuil j'outrepassée,
> Par mes oracles vrais rendant trop manifeste
> Aux hommes d'icy bas la volonté celeste![130]

Phinée not only went against Jupiter's wishes, he further revealed too many of the god's secrets. Specifically, Phinée abused his access to the god's knowledge to share god's will with those on earth. Harpies punish Phinée by ruining his food, leaving him only infected crumbs, and terrorize him by making loud clacking noises with their beaks. He is feeble and weak, tormented by the putrid odors of sickness, much like Autumn entering the wind cave. The extreme exposure to rotten odors and withholding of nourishment is an unmaking of the prophet. Rather than being shaken into form, imprinted with the order of the universe, the prophet's body is deprived, exiled, and afflicted such that he can no longer speak and no longer give order to the world. Calays and Zethés intervene on Phinée's behalf, flying up with the harpies when they come to

[128] Céard, Jean. "'Loüer Celluy Qui Demeure Là-Haut': La Forme De l'Hymne Ronsardien." *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance Et Réforme*, vol. 11, no. 1, 1987, pp. 1–14.
[129] v. 162, 164
[130] v. 259 - 262

take Phinée's food. Jason is able to tend to Phinée, feeding and bathing him while the winged brothers distract the harpies. Jason is also able to receive prophecies from Phinée, learning about the challenges he will face in his enterprise and in what ways he must be careful. Phinée hesitates but continues to prophesy:

> Que vous diray-je plus? le Destin me defend
> De vous prophetiser vos fortunes de rang,
> Ny comment vous voirrez vostre vie gardée
> Des arts Hecateans de la jeune Medée.
> J'ay peché lourdement autresfois de vouloir
> Faire aux hommes mortels de poinct en poinct sçavoir
> La volonté des Dieux, qui veulent leurs Oracles
> Estre tousjours voilez de ne sçay quels obstacles,
> Et manques en partie, afin que les humains
> Dressent tousjours au Ciel et le cœur et les mains,
> Et qu'humbles envers Dieu à Dieu secours demandent,
> Quand au sommet du chef les miseres leur pendent.[131]

Much like Ronsard's initial acknowledgement and disregard of Marguerite's reservations about classical references and over-praising, Phinée acknowledges his limitations but then continues to discuss Jason's future in great detail. Phinée further asserts his confusion over why the gods want their oracles to be veiled and incomplete such that they remain humble and ask for help. This concern for piety is simultaneously acknowledged and ignored. Ronsard returns to this double bind in his envoy, after he bids farewell to his classical friends. He continues to assert his will against "Les avares Seigneurs" who do not want to be praised.[132] Those who would rather build palaces than be elevated through poetry – which he again compares to "ces Jumeaux," the winged brothers[133] - will die without honor. Ficino's translation of and commentary on the *Phaedrus* lingers on the image of the winged charioteer pulled by two horses. The image of the chariot frequently blurs with the image of a winged body. Ficino's reading of the *Ion* relates the function of the four furies back to the control of the chariot.[134] Ronsard attributes the diverse functions of the furies to poetry. Poetry steers the course of the vehicle, which continues to blur from chariot to body to nation. The poem concludes with the exhortation: "Ils m'en sçauront bon gré, si l'art industrieux / Des Muses peut monter si haut que jusqu'aux Cieux."[135] The nobility who refuse his services would be grateful to him *if* poetry could reach to the heavens. This "si," which falls in the caesura raises a significant doubt, seen again in the line break, which divides "l'art industrieux" from its qualifier, "Des Muses." In consideration with the main task that Calays and Zethès undertake to distract the harpies, it is unclear how much ornamentation and elevated praise can do beyond veil and distract. However, the poet's clear identification with the prophet, not the ornamentation, which he uses to veil and cloak, suggests that the poet-prophet can be a powerful political ally to the king. If the poet can reveal the king's place in his cosmologically and mythically ordered world, perhaps the fear of classical contamination is ultimately tangential.

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[131] v. 559 - 570
[132] v. 704
[133] v. 717
[134] Poetry tempers and distinguishes the good horse from the bad, the priestly mysteries subjugate the bad horse to the good horse pulling the chariot, prophecy elevates and directs the chariot (or soul) to the driver by foretelling the future, love turns the head (the charioteer) to the divine to fulfill the soul's return.
[135] v. 719 - 720

Ronsard's "Hymne de Henry Deuxiesme," which immediately follows the "Hymne de Calays et de Zethès," is offered as a gift to the king. Unlike Ronsard's earlier ode to Francis I, he chooses the form of the hymn to praise Henri II. Through the hymn, praise and poetry build the king and his kingdom. The poem blurs the narrative of the king's birth with the narrative of the poet's formation as described in "Hymne de l'Autonne." The woodland setting sees the birth of both king and kingdom:

> Adonc toy, fils semblable à ton pere, nasquis,
> Et sans armes naissant un Royaume conquis.
> Lors les Nymphes des bois, des taillis et des prées,
> Des plaines et des monts et des forests sacrées,
> Les Naiades de Seine, et le pere Germain,
> Te couchant au berceau te branloyent en leur main,
> Et dosoyent: Crois enfant, enfant pren accroissance
> Pour l'ornement de nous et de toute la France :
> Jamais tant Jupiter sa Crete n'honora,
> Hercule jamais tant Thebes ne decora,
> Apollon sa Delos, comme ta renommée
> Rendra France à jamais sur toutes estimée.[136]

Mythical creatures of the sacred land and water lay down the newborn king and prophesy that he will decorate the country, more than any other king or god has ever done. The king's ability to rule is tied to praise and ornament. His body becomes a textual fable for France, in which prophecy works through ornamentation, to elevate the nation. This imperial poetics of praise, based on the embodiment and authorization of poetry, is transferred onto the king's body. The poet's ability to cloak becomes an ability to construct. As the hymn concludes, the poet proposes that the king invite him to court : "Si d'un cœur liberal tu m'invites chez toy."[137] The poet's hypothetical offer goes on to list all the advantages of having a court poet, the muses he will bring, the cultivation of France's rich land he will metaphorically provide, avoiding the possibility of dying without a poetic legacy. Ronsard catches himself quickly : "Mais quoy? Prince, on dira que je suis demandeur, / Il vaut mieux achever l'Hymne de ta grandeur : / Car desja je t'ennuye oyant chose si basse, / Puis ja ma voix s'enroue et mon pouce se lasse."[138] The poet expresses concern over speaking too much of the wrong things but quickly reasserts himself by expressing his own fatigue: his voice is becoming horse and his thumb is tired. Much like in the "Hymne de Calays et de Zethès," poetry asserts itself over propriety, showing its own authority, social necessity, and value. The poet sends a form of prayer to the goddess of Victory as an envoy, asking her to favor Henry and watch over him. In this final word, the hymn, while praising the king as divine, establishes the political need for poetic praise. Poetry appropriates the religious function of authorizing political power.

Ronsard merges all forms of fury, whether from disease or divine inspiration, and subsumes them under the broad umbrella of poetry. Michel Beaujour observes that in order to ennoble poetry a certain amount of equal opportunity appropriation was necessary, which came into tension with the hierarchical nature of ennobling.[139] The need to purify the group, as seen in

[136] v. 249 - 260
[137] v. 473
[138] v. 485 - 488
[139] *New History of French Literature*. pp. 198 - 202

Ronsard's prefatory poem to Belleau's first collection of poems, does not appear to extend to much of Ronsard's poetry itself, in which genres and poetic theories blur in favor of an ever-increased production of images. Ronsard's small hymns, scattered throughout his *Poëmes*, like the more developed hymns in his published *Hymnes*, praise the natural world for its ability to show divine presence on earth. Ronsard's poem "Le chat," dedicated to Remy Belleau, concludes that just as God has provided signs of his presence, man is "Des animaux l'animal plus parfait."[140] In this poem, it is the poet's soul, like Belleau's glowworm, that "se monstre et reluist par dehors."[141] The poet's own body, and subsequently text, magnifies divine presence on earth. The expansiveness of poetry, its ability to exceed the human, whether by becoming animalistic or god-like,[142] is a magnifying capacity. It is this magnification which makes it politically valuable. The hymn, as the form of praise poetry most connected to praise of the divine and the traces of the divine on earth, is fragmented throughout Ronsard's poems, where it repeatedly builds the poet's authority to speak as a national poet.

Ronsard's use of praise within the gift exchange fundamentally shifts the way praise poetry works socially. While Ronsard models himself on Pindar he ultimately does not develop a debt economy. Similarly, Ronsard appropriates religious concepts of magnification but dislocates these discourses from their religious function. These discursive appropriations give poetry increased authority and allow it to circulate independently of the contexts these discourses originated in. By taking on the social role of prophecy, poetry is able to order the social, political, and natural world in a new way. His poetics establishes itself as indispensible to governance, even under its aegis, without abdicating its autonomy.

[140] v. 186
[141] v. 42
[142] Ficino's commentary on the *Ion* distinguishes between fury from disease, which leads to a bestial condition, and divinely inspired fury, which makes the possessed god-like. Both forms of fury are dehumanizing.

Embodied History in Robert Garnier's *Les Juives*

Pléiade poet and dramatist Robert Garnier's final play, *Les Juives*, published in 1583, is a tragedy in five acts, structured around a series of rhetorical debates on kingship and tolerance. *Les Juives* is a departure from Garnier's previous theatrical works; it is his first work to take its subject from the Hebrew Bible[1] rather than from classical works. In his dedicatory preface, Garnier explains his decision to present a sacred subject, in order to surpass his earlier tragedies but also to "moins desagreer à sa Majesté."[2] This shift, similar to Ronsard's foray into Christian hymns,[3] is a reminder of the tension within the Pléiade's larger project of creating a literary supplement to royal power. The classical themes and formal models, which lent authority to the Pléiade's project introduced paganism into the French monarchy's image, according to many contemporary thinkers. Garnier states that he has chosen "un sujet & discours sacré"; however, unlike Ronsard in his Christian hymns, Garnier does not use the more "French" decasyllable but continues to use the Pléiade's preferred alexandrine.[4] Garnier's form holds the tension between classical form and sacred subject throughout the play, which shifts the subject's historical framing by disconnecting it from the religious historical framing of the Mystery tradition. Whereas a medieval mystery play would present a similar subject as part of a large arc of theological history – situating a biblical episode within the long-view eschatology of a single Christian people – Garnier's choice of a classical form reframes the historical meaning of the sacred subject. This is not to say that the subject is secularized but rather that it is part of a reworking of conceptions of history during the sixteenth-century. The literary form takes on new authority through its ability to appropriate a religious function and represent history to an audience. In this chapter, I will argue that the prophet negotiates this shift from a theological conception of large-scale history to a more earthly, political conception of history focused on the monarch as God's representative on earth.

Many of Garnier's early works, written during the rise of Hugeunot republican political organizing, deal with the problem of political rebellion and even regicide, by drawing on material from Roman History.[5] *Les Juives* thematically departs from these earlier works by portraying two monarchs with different flaws. In the dedicatory preface, Garnier describes Sedecie, king of Judah, at that time a tributary state of Babylon, as guilty of "infidelité & rebellion contre son superieur" and Nabuchodonosor, the Babylonian king, as possessing a "l'horrible cruauté d'un roy barbare." Sedecie's attempt to ally himself with Nechon, the king of Egypt, and regain independence for his kingdom has been discovered and Nabuchodonosor seeks to punish Sedecie's betrayal. The play begins during the Jewish exile in Babylon; the royal family is being held captive while Nabuchodonosor decides how he will punish Sedecie. The plot unfolds as a series of rhetorical debates and entreaties preceding Sedecie's punishment. Nabuchodonosor consults with his advisor, with his wife, with Amital, the queen mother of

[1] The main sources for the play's subject are 2 Kings 24- 25, 2 Chronicles 36, Jeremiah 29.
[2] p. 40 Ed. Michel Jeanneret
[3] see previous chapter's discussion of Ronsard, specifically in relation to the hymn "Hercule chrestien."
[4] The "discours" most frequently comes from direct citation of the Hebrew bible.
[5] *Porcie*, written during the first civil wars, deals directly with civil war and tyrannicide. Gillian Jondorf notes Garnier's arguments against tyrannicide tend toward the "senseless" rather than immoral or wrong (*Robert Garnier and the Themes of Political Tragedy in the Sixteenth Century*. p. 31). *Cornélie*, Garnier's third play, written after the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, engages more directly with the bloodshed of the massacre and the problem of tyrannicide but avoids the Protestant contention that a legitimate king could become a tyrant. *Antigone* looks directly at politico-religious rebellion against the king.

Judah, and finally with Sedecie. The debates are suddenly suspended with the Prophet's report that Nabuchodonosor is slaughtering the Jewish children before Sedecie's eyes. Sedecie is then blinded. The Prophet opens and closes the play by situating the moment in a larger historical arc, finally prophesying the fall of Babylon. Prophecy not only frames the rhetorical debate on kingship and leniency, however, it is also integral to these argumentative monologues and consistently reworks the historical framing of seemingly trans-historical political debates over what makes a good king. The prophet's ability to reinforce monarchic authority, in the face of disobedience, relies on the prophet's ability to place the king and his subjects in a historical order.

Les Juives in its critical context

Critical readings of *Les Juives* frequently focus on the central debates over clemency and kingship. According to these readings, the play allows its readers and spectators to consider if Nabuchodonosor is a tyrant, if the people have a right to overthrow him, if he is a secular king. As Timothy Reiss has argued, Nabuchodonosor is a modern man.[6] The king acts as an example for the king watching the play, according to the trope of the mirror of princes, but because *Les Juives* stages two very different kings, Nabuchodonosor and Sedecie, there is the additional question of whether a historical shift takes place on stage.[7] Is Nabuchodonosor a representative of modern secular kingship replacing Sedecie's covenant-based kingship or does Sedecie announce the dawn of Christianity? Kingship is the site of history in these critical analyses of *Les Juives*.

Walter Benjamin's proposal of the Trauerspiel - as an allegorical genre specific to Early Modern theater, in contrast to Tragedy which works symbolically to unify the earthly and divine worlds – helps situate the play's form historically but again focuses on the sovereign as site of history. For Benjamin, "[t]he sovereign, the principal exponent of history, almost serves as its incarnation."[8] As several scholars have suggested, however, there is a tendency to anticipate the seventeenth century too quickly when looking at sixteenth-century theater.[9] This is due, in part, to the tidy literary historical trajectory that can be put forth from the earlier Humanist tradition of exemplary history – aimed at educating princes - to a political theater largely influenced by the Cardinal Richelieu in the mid-seventeenth century – aimed at educating the people.[10] Hall Bjornstad and Katherine Ibbett remind Benjamin readers, in the introduction to their French

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[6] Timothy Reiss reads Nabuchodonosor as "the new humanity that is being produced with its new conception of human powers and rights and obligations." This follows a secularizing tradition focused on the sovereign that sees the use of prophets and appeals to the divine as largely failed or in vain. "*Les Juifives* : Possession and the Willful Eye," 1980.

[7] Stéphanie Bélanger suggests that Nabuchodonosor displays vengeful justice to create a just society. Florence Dobby-Poirson argues for a reading of Garnier's theater as engaged, a mirror of his times, focused on the role of the king. C.R. Frankish's early work posits idolatry as the main problem, again focusing on the role of the king in fulfilling a historical contract with God. Frank Lestringant and Timothy Reiss look specifically at the model the kings provide for the king watching the play. Margaret McGowen looks for moral and political lessons through comparisons made between France and Rome.

[8] *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. p. 62

[9] Françoise Charpentier and Gillian Jondorf are particularly careful to signal this as a recurring and problematic tendency in work on sixteenth-century theater.

[10] Sara Beam's *Laughing Matters : Farce and the making of Absolutism in France*, looks at the role of local officials in the selection and staging of plays. Read in conjunction with Deborah Blocker's work on early 17th century theater, this control appears increasingly centralized as the monarchy institutionalizes theater regulations. *Instituer un art : politiques du théâtre dans la France du premier XVIIè siècle.*

Trauerspiel issue of *Yale French Studies*, that Benjamin conceived of his project on the Grande Siècle, to be contemporary with his work on German theater. Directly applying Benjamin's theoretical work on the German Trauerspiel, would therefore create a historical gap, equating 17th century theater with 16th century theater. When leaning on Benjamin's work to consider sixteenth-century theater, I propose not to transpose his categories directly, by looking at the king, but rather to consider the function of the sovereign as the embodiment of history. In *Les Juives*, prophets do much more of the historical work than kings do elsewhere. Prophets articulate how history and religion work together and ask spectators to reconsider their place in the world in relation to the divine. The prophet further fulfills the function Benjamin attributes to the king, as a participant in two worlds, containing two bodies in one.[11] I will show that in the sixteenth century, as playwrights shift theatrical form away from those associated with the church and toward classical models, the prophet is essential to moving divine will into the king's body by re-conceptualizing history.

Prophetic history / Prophecy as historical exposition in *Les Juives*

Prophets in *Les Juives* are presented, both thematically and formally, in relation to communities. They narrate a people's identity based on who they were and who they will be. In Act III, having spoken to both his lieutenant and to his wife (who has already spoken to the queen mother of Judah, Amital), Nabuchodonosor speaks directly to Amital. He does not see any rationale behind Sedecie's betrayal. Amital sets up a distinction between two types of prophecy, to explain the betrayal :

> Las! qu'y eussé-je fait? je ne m'en suis pas teuë,
> Je predis ces malheurs, mais je ne fus point creuë,
> Ny Jeremie aussi, Jeremie à qui Dieu
> Faisoit voir les destins du pauvre peuple Hebrieu.
> Je predis je predis avecques maintes larmes
> Le mal qui nous viendroit de provoquer vos armes.
> Mais la jeunesse ardante & prompte aux changements,
> Tousjours mist sous le pié nos amonnestemens:
> Si que mon fils pousse de leurs voix indiscrettes,
> Et des predictions de quelques faux Prophetes,
> A son dam & au nostre & de nostre Cité
> S'allia de Nechon, dont fustes irrité.[12]

Amital announces herself as an ignored prophet, in the tradition of Jeremiah, and simultaneously denounces the false prophets her son followed in his decision to ally with the Egyptians. True prophets have a lineage, whereas false prophets simply arise periodically. This immediately establishes her association between true prophecy and the history of a community. When Nabuchodonosor finally speaks directly to Sedecie in Act IV, he tries to verify Amital's claim; he asks if prophecy is the cause of the betrayal – without distinguishing true from false - , if the Hebrew god has caused this political crisis :

> Qui t'a mis en l'esprit de faulser ta parole?

[11] Benjamin divides and binds the king into the martyr and tyrant, not entirely dissimilar to Ernst Kantorowicz's division of natural body and social-religious body. Benjamin's division depends on a temporal loop in which the king must descend into tyranny since he has founded the state (leaving no distinction between himself and his authority) and in turn becomes a martyr for his people to atone. It is quite logical to read Nabuchodonosor as the tyrant and Sedecie as the martyr but I find it difficult to read Sedecie as both tyrant and martyr as Fanlo does.

[12] Based on Michel Jeanneret's 2007 Gallimard edition. v. 1039-1050

N'en faire non plus cas que de chose frivole?
De perjurer ta foy? seroit-ce point ton Dieu,
Ton Dieu, qui n'a credit qu'entre le people Hebrieu?
N'est-ce point ce Pontife, & ces braves Prophetes,
Les choses predisans après quelles sont faites?[13]

Nabuchodonosor, who compares himself to the gods from his very first appearance[14], places the Hebrew god on the same political plane as himself : someone capable of directing the action of another king and interfering with foreign relations. Any prophecies would then be retrospectively political, aimed at justifying and glorifying a government. Sedecie, like his mother, does not see prophecy as inherently problematic. In fact, he goes a step further, suggesting that his error was not one of discernment but one of disbelief. Sedecie does not mention false prophets, he valorizes the role of prophets to keep a people from straying from their contract with their god, stating "bien souvent nostre ame est endurcie, / Ne faisant conte d'eux, ny de leur prophetie" (1403-4). Had Sedecie listened to the prophets he would not have betrayed Nabuchodonosor. Sedecie's God is not in competition with Nabuchodonosor; he has anointed Sedecie and is using Nabuchodnosor to punish his chosen people. The betrayal is not a singular decision, as Nabuchodonosor understands it and as the false prophets understood political decisions, but an episode in a larger history of a people defined by their prophetic tradition. Prophecy, while a question of secularization for Nabuchodonosor, is a question of historical understanding for the Jewish people.

Les Juives opens with a monologue from an unnamed Prophet.[15] The Prophet speaks first to God and then turns to address the Jewish people. The Prophet stands outside of time, recounting the history of God's relationship to his people. The Prophet calls to God, from this odd empty space, pleading with God, asking him to return to the child he loved, needed, raised, and protected. He attempts to bargain with God by presenting a hypothetical situation:

O seigneur ô seigneur, vueille prendre pitié
D'Israel ton enfant durement chatié.
Tu l'aurois vainement defendu de ses voisins en guerre,
Vainement defendu de ses voisins en guerre,
Pourneant arraché le fardeau de son dos, (23 – 27)

God's actions, as hypothetical fact, will have been in vain : "vainement," "vainement," "pourneant," he repeats, if God does not take pity on his people. God should take pity on the Jews because he has already begun a relationship with them. To allow his vengeance to destroy his people would re-define all his previous actions. If he doesn't change his course, then the past will have a different meaning.[16] This view of an alternate world, which the Prophet first

[13] v. 1383-1388
[14] "Pareil aux Dieux je marche," Act II v. 1
[15] Gustave Cohen writes that most Medieval Mysteries had a procession of prophets either before or after the play. Maurice Gras suggests that this opening sets up our expectations for the play. In this case, I would argue there is an assumption of continuity with the religious-historical function of the mystery play : showing us how we relate to a long view of history.
[16] Amital tries to use a similar hypothetical logic while pleading with the queen. Trying to explain to the queen that death is not a punishment anymore, Amital presents a hypothetical : "Que je fusse (ha quel heur!) morte en ma primevere ... Je n'eusse veu... Hélas! je n'eusse veu ce que voir me faut ores" (664 – 671). The plea is both to God and the queen, both "let me have died" and "if I had died." I point out the parallel as a potential form of rhetorical foreshadowing.

proposes, is one usually brought to the people. The Prophet is now inverting this structure, bringing the Israelite's history to God. This draws the Prophet out of the initial empty space and brings him more solidly to earth with his community. The Prophet is pleading with God to not let the past lose its meaning. Rather than asking the people to stay faithful to their covenant, the inversion shows the value God places on his people following the covenant: the fulfillment of a specific history that will have a specific meaning. The Hebrew prophet Jeremiah, repeatedly brought God's message to the people "If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt / Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever.."[17] God speaks through his prophet with If/Then logic : if you continue, I will destroy you ; if you change, I will let you continue. The Prophet opens the play by turning this logic back to God : If you continue, you will destroy what you have made. The Prophet does turn to the Israelites by reminding them, in the past tense, that he warned them. He explains to the people that the memory of the retribution they have already endured "[le] remet en fureur."[18] It is the possibility of repetition that is now provoking his prophetic state, not an imperative from God. He sees what their history has been, the entire long view of their history, and this, not God's voice, "[le] remet en fureur." By opening the play with a historical turning point, the Prophet is not delivering a message to the people from their god but bringing God down to earth, to be in direct contact with the people he needs. Whereas the mysteries situated themselves in a homogenous, empty time, claiming to represent one episode of a larger eschatological history, Garnier's Prophet throws large-scale theological history into question by showing its precarious condition.

The Prophet has entered into a purely hypothetical world. It is a world made of potentiality and exchange. This world acts as a hinge between historical worlds : the one God has already created and the one he and the Jewish people are in the process of creating. As the play opens, this move opens the possibility that future actions can change the meaning of past actions, adding a new function to the Prophet's role[19]. Garnier's Prophet does not just warn the people and suffer the consequences of their deafness. Garnier's Prophet intervenes to preserve the meaning of events both past and future. The Prophet concludes his opening monologue by telling the people that those who follow idols become mute like the idols. If the people repent, God will take his claws out of their backs. This more traditional warning, in the form of an if/then statement, is immediately taken up by the chorus, who present the history of original sin as a question to God :if we were made imperfect, then why do you anger so easily? The chorus is able to take up similar language structures and compliment the Prophet's pleas through a form of prayer. They do not fully understand what he is saying but they also do not remain mute. This first act, made up of a pair of long historical monologues, given by the Prophet and the Chorus, slowly moves chronologically closer to the specific situation of the Jewish women : the Prophet presents a larger pattern of interactions between God and the Hebrew people and then the Chorus introduces the story of the Fall, situating the play firmly in historical time.[20] Act I moves the play

[17] Jeremiah 7:6-7, *King James version*.
[18] v. 60
[19] Victoria Kahn proposes that we read Hamlet's speech about Hecuba as an indication that "it is theatrical or aesthetic form which allows for action that is not merely a repetition of the historically given." Literary form might create a pause from repetition ; it might throw into question the oracle's claim to necessity by refusing the complementary redemption.
[20] Benjamin reads the story of the Fall as the "birth of the *human word*" in his essay "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man." He ties this to the muteness of language, as something completely separate from the

from homogenous theological time into fallen, historical time and begins to establish the relation between prophet and people as one of meaning-making in history. History is intimately tied to the strength of the paternal bond between God and the Hebrew people. The Prophet's opening monologue also establishes a precedent for a form of hinging between past and future, that opens up if not a change in action, a change in the interpretation of the present.

Prophetic condensation and fragmentation in the character of Amital

The Prophet's position at either end of the play may not be completely arbitrary; the Prophet creates a frame for the play's reworking of history. Although he is absent in the middle three acts his function is taken up by Sedecie's mother, Amital, who reworks his embodiment of history before returning it to him in the final act. Amital's role has been significantly amplified from her brief mention in the Hebrew Bible story of Sedecie's transgression against the Babylonians.[21] The Hebrew stories only mention Amital in passing : "Zedekiah was twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah."[22] The same language is used in Jeremiah 52:1 and again in Second Kings, to identify Joachas, Sedecie's brother. As Jeremiah's daughter, there is no further indication that Amital posesses the same prophetic abilities as her father. There are no further stories about or references to Hamutal. Mireille Huchon, in her examination of the Maumont text, shows that this source text, on which she argues Garnier relied, amplifies the roles of both the Prophet and Amital. In Maumont's text, Amital does not claim prophetic status, but rather contemplates the contradictions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel's prophecies. Huchon further notes that the Prophet is calqued on the "voix collective" of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel.[23]

Garnier has gone a step further than illustrating a biblical passage. He has expanded Amital's role by introducing classical source texts. Amital has much in common with both Seneca's and Euripides' Hecuba in their *Troades* and *The Trojan Women* and *Hebcuba*, respectively. Similarly, Garnier borrows from his own Hecuba, in his *La Troade*, written a few years earlier, in 1579. [24] Garnier's Amital has deep roots that tie her directly to the prophetess Cassandra (depicted in his previous play *La Troade*). In the opening monologue of Seneca's *Troades*, on which Garnier's version was based, Hecuba bemoans "whatever disaster has befallen us, whatever evils Phoebus' bride, raving with frenzied lips, foretold, though the god forbade that she should be believed, I, Hecuba, big with child, saw first, nor did I keep my fears unuttered, and I before Cassandra was a prophetess unheeded."[25] Seneca's characters frequently

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language-mind in the prelapsarian world, which mourns because of its separation. Mourning is a state inherent to the historical world. This theory works well with the beginning of Garnier's play : the story of the Fall sets the plight of the Jewish women firmly in the historical world and, rather than taking mourning as its subject, is a form of mourning in and of itself.

[21] C.R. Frankish notes that Old Testament and Classical sources were preferable to New Testament sources, associated with the Mysteries. Catholics found the New Testament medieval and Protestants found Christ's portrayal on stage offensive. He does not see a strongly religious choice, however in the subject of idolatry, which was problematic for both Catholics and Protestants. At this point, Garnier had not yet joined the Ligue (which some speculate was primarily a move for a strong authority) and was primarily focused on the political necessity of a strong monarch. "The theme of idolatry idolatry in Garnier's *Les Juives*."

[22] 2 Kings 24:18

[23] "Une source inavouée des *Juifves* de Garnier : un récit pathétique dédié à Catherine de Médicis." p. 1450.

[24] Work has also been done to discount similarities between the two plays. See Wierenga, L. ""La Troade" et "Les Juives" de Robert Garnier. Étude de technique dramatique." 1971, who argues that the two plays are fundamentally different because *La Troade* has a circular structure and *Les Juives* has a linear structure.

[25] Frank Justus Miller, trans.

refer to Cassandra, whose twin boys Aegisthus murdered, as the original prophetess. Amital may be a mourning mother but Garnier has resituated her within this much more potent tradition of mother-prophetess. I will argue that her role, in relation to the Prophet, is central to the play's conceptualization of history.[26] In contrast to the Prophet's initially peripheral role, based entirely in the tradition of the Hebrew prophets, Amital's role, constructed from multiple and varied sources from different traditions, lies at the center of the play.[27]

The layers of Amital's character are first presented in the following passage in Act III. After her plea to the Babylonian queen goes unanswered, Amital pleads with Nabuchodonosor who is reprimanding her people for having gone against him. Returning to the first passage I cited, when Nabuchodonosor is trying to understand why the Israelites attacked him "sans raison," Amital describes her true prophetic powers :

> Las! qu'y eussé-je fait? je ne m'en suis pas teuë,
> Je predis ces malheurs, mais je ne fus point creuë,
> Ny Jeremie aussi, Jeremie à qui Dieu
> Faisoit voir les destins du pauvre peuple Hebrieu.
> Je predis je predis avecques maintes larmes
> Le mal qui nous viendroit de provoquer vos armes.
> Mais la jeunesse ardante & prompte aux changemens,
> Tousjours mist sous le pié nos amonnestements[28]

Amital positions herself in a lineage of true prophets. "Nos amonnestements" groups her with Jeremiah, who was directly appointed by God, in the same way Cassandra is directly linked to Phoebus. Neither Hecuba, nor Amital, are given their prophetic gift by God but the result is the same : they foresee the coming consequences of their people's actions and the people refuse to believe. Amital's relation to Cassandra, however, is substantially diminished. "Je predis ces malheurs, mais je ne fus point creuë" obliquely refers to Cassandra, the prophetess who was never believed, but this reference is immediately sublimated by the comparison to Jeremiah, whose religious tradition is reinforced through the rhyme between "Dieu" and "Hebrieu." Even

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[26] Gillian Jondorf, among others, has read Amital as a grieving mother, but has not written about her claims to prophetic powers.

[27] This stockpiling of sources was not uncommon in the Renaissance. Thomas Greene's seminal book, *The Light in Troy*, discusses the use of *imitatio* to repossess what was lost, namely classical civilization. He looks at a number of contemporary scholarly debates on how to reanimate the past without anachronism; Benjamin's work resonates with Early Modern debates for Greene, who argues that the rising field of philology moved textual practices out of ritualistic repetition and into historical specificity. Imitation was sometimes read as a "form of repairing history," as a way of addressing the sense of loss. Imitation was a pedagogic method, as was theater. Humanists and Pléiade poets debated how best to use imitation. One common strategy, sometimes called *contaminatio*, was based on Seneca's digestive metaphor of the bee collecting many nectars to make its honey. Montaigne, in his "De l'institution des enfants," describes this strategy as follows : "Les abeilles pillotent deçà delà les fleurs, mais elles en font après le miel, qui est tout leur ; ce n'est plus thin ny marjolaine : ainsi les pieces empruntées d'autruy, il les transformera et confondera, pour faire un ouvrage tout sien, à sçavoir son jugement." The fragments of historical sources are collected, considered, and essentially made other through the writer's judgment. There is no resurrection of the past through this form of "repair" but rather an alignment made through careful consideration. This is not a return of the lost world but rather an acknowledgement of that world as lost and of the new work created. Garnier has an entire garden of classical tragedy, Hebrew tradition, and contemporary theater (and poetry) as nectar and although he clearly indicates his sources, he is not extracting a resurrected truth. As many critics have noted, the play is static, stilted, and artificial. Raymond Lebègue's research does suggest, however, that period costumes were even worn when the play was performed at the Odéon in Paris (although others have argued that the play was never staged).

[28] 1039 – 1050

with its classical underpinnings, Garnier's subject is firmly anchored in sacred history.[29] In her plea to the Babylonian king, Amital is not prophesying but rather acting as historian or guardian of collective memory; Amital does not prophesy throughout the play, a role reserved exclusively for the Prophet at the very end of the play.[30] In this scene, Amital does not attempt to change the way her community acts, she tries to bargain with an authority, God's instrument of vengeance : Nabuchodonosor. Just as the Prophet opened with a plea to God, asking him to return to the people he raised and protected, by recounting the history of this relationship, Amital explains to Nabuchodnosor how her people came to ally with the Egyptian king, Nechon ; she explains how her son was misled by false prophets. Amital's lineage and literary layering both underscore her claim that she speaks as a true prophet. And a true prophet works with a people's history to make it meaningful.

Amital situates her prophesying in the past tense : "Las! qu'y eussé-je fait? je ne m'en suis pas teuë, / Je predis ces malheurs, mais je ne fus point creuë."[31] She introduces a hypothetical, in a complementary move to the Prophet : could the past have been different? Amital's plea also echoes Hecuba's opening monologue in Garnier's *La Troade* (1579) :

> Que j'ay cogneu première et première predit
> Nos malheurs que Cassandre a furieuse dit
> Nos malheurs que Cassandre a, de Phebus esmeuë
> Predit pour nostre bien, que nous ne l'avons pas creuë
> J'ay veu, j'ay veu, première hélas! je les ay veus
> De toy, Paris, enceinte, et ne les ay pas teus.[32]

Cassandra is named as the primary prophetess, she is affected (agitated, moved) by Phoebus and speaks furiously. Cassandra lies at the base of Garnier's prophetic layering. The use of "predit" is overdetermined, first by the repetition of "première" and then by the placement of the word – she "predit" the line before she "dit." However, Hecuba, structurally, "predit / Nos malheurs," which Cassandra then, as a subordinate clause, "Predit pour nostre bien" as a result of her agitation. Not only does Cassandra "predit" second, ironically she "dit" before she "predit." Her "dit" is subsumed by Hecuba's "predit" both in the rhyme and in its order. The character of Cassandra is present, however, throughout the first act of *La Troade* and her secondary position is consistently asserted. Hecuba's position is more complex. She joins the community in disbelieving Cassandra, using the plural "nous," only later to separate herself from the community once again through her sight. The constant doubling back in this monologue (première/première, Nos malheurs que Cassandre a – the auxiliary drawn further from its past participle with the repetition, all the way to the next line) takes on a third repetition through Hecuba's sight : "J'ay veu, j'ay veu, première hélas! je les ay veus," and brings the third "première" to splice her sight. Hecuba insists on her primacy despite Cassandra's prophetic status.

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[29] Damon DiMauro, in both his dissertation and his articles, argues that the play is fundamentally religious, not classical. For DiMauro, *Les Juives* should be read as a Christianized fable in which the Old Testament prefigures the New, which fulfills its prophecies. This is to read Garnier as a Joachimite, as Marjorie Reeves dubs Joachim of Fiore's followers. This is a religious reading of the play that goes in a different direction than I am trying to establish.

[30] It is worth noting that this is the only time the Prophet prophesies.

[31] v. 1039-40

[32] v. 55 - 60

If Cassandra's prophecies come from Phoebus, Hecuba's sight comes from her maternity. Cassandra carries the divine fury of Phoebus and Hecuba carries Paris in her womb. Hecuba takes over Cassandra's function in part through her claim to motherhood but not by having given birth to Cassandra. Hecuba asserts that she is Paris' mother. The monologues of Hecuba detail the history of the Trojans and Hecuba claims prophetic primacy through heroic Trojans. If we look at Hecuba's refusal to stay silent, which encases her claim to motherhood in the above citation, the direct object pronoun "les" replaces "nos malheurs" twice. Suffering is accumulated through the monologue but it is grammatically elided and abstracted. Through this streamlining, prophecy is condensed from Cassandra to Hecuba, a single forceful character carrying the weight of her sight. The virgin prophet is replaced by a queen mother. Considering Garnier's works in succession, Amital comes as the most distilled and haunted version of Cassandra. Her son has taken over from his father and is now king himself. Amital's language echoes internally but does not acknowledge her prophetic debt to Cassandra explicitly. The prophet capable of carrying the history of a people is maternal.[33]

Cassandra's historical *Jetztzeit*

Cassandra haunts *Les Juives.* She is sublimated through Amital's direct lineage to Jeremiah, but her words haunt the play. Cassandra underpins Amital's layered borrowing – from Garnier's Hecuba, Seneca's Hecuba, and Euripides' Cassandra. This consolidation of prophecy into a single character is counterbalanced by the accumulation of prophets in Garnier's *La Troade* and in *Les Juives*.[34] By creating a constellation of a number of prophetesses through the character of Amital, Garnier conjures their ghosts. Cassandra's inclusion in and exclusion from Garnier's *Les Juives* shows the allegorical conception of history in the play.

To understand her role better, I will turn to Euripides' *The Trojan Women*. In the play, Hecuba, the wife of Priam, is certain that Cassandra is mad. Cassandra in turn dances, sings of the future and the history of the Trojans, praises her marriage and her imminent vengeance. Although the chorus pities her idiocy, her speech communicates clearly to the audience. Cassandra is also able to see the double sense/non-sense of her own madness, as if she could split in two and watch the god overtake her. Transitioning into a historical monologue, she says "I am ridden by God's curse still, yet I will step so far / out of my frenzy as to show this city's fate / is blessed beside the Achaeans' / For one woman's sake."[35] Cassandra works fluidly between the past and the future but remains fully present. This is not the voice of a god overtaking her body, but rather a wider range of sights she can see and make others see (ekphrastically).

Seneca's *Agamemnon* presents a Cassandra who similarly mourns for Troy. The chorus reports her physical transformation as the god overtakes her and her resistance as she tries to keep her lips closed, "a maenad unwilling to endure the god."[36] Seneca's Cassandra is aware of the god's presence, his use for her and her social function within the community. She continues

[33] I will address the development of the maternal prophetic towards the end of the chapter.

[34] Samuel Junod has read the dispersal of prophetic traits among characters as a sign of the dissolution of prophecy during the Early Modern period. I would like to point out that Garnier has added prophets back into Seneca's *Troades*, by including references to Euripides. Whereas Garnier could easily have continued draining the prophetic from the play he instead amasses more of it. The idea of imitation and history were intimately entwined in this period. I see this stockpiling of sources and its reworking as a historical construction, rather than as an indication of secularization. "La théâtralisation du prophète dans les tragédies française de la Renaissance." 2008

[35] Richmond Lattimore, trans. 365-7.

[36] John G. Fitch, trans. 719

"Now Troy has fallen, what business have I as a failed prophet?"[37] She sees herself not as merely punished, not as a suffering woman, but as a potentially useful Trojan whose usefulness has run out. The time in which she could have helped in Troy has passed and now she turns her eyes to Argos. Speaking in the present tense, she foresees the fall of the house of Argos and draws a parallel to Troy's situation. Agamemnon argues with her later in the scene, refusing to see the equivalence. Here, the structure of the monologue suggests that Cassandra's ability to see the future is tied to her ability to see the past. She has mourned Troy and her inability to help and now sees that the same historical circumstances continue to exist. She is not seeing the future as much as she is seeing the present : nothing has changed, therefore nothing will change. Cassandra turns to the underworld, the repository of all things past, asking it to show itself to the people, but because she is cursed, they see her as mad and do not listen to what she says. If the audience pays attention to Cassandra's speeches, however, they will also see the underworld and the dead who form the basis of their history. In that moment they will have suspended history and be fully in the present, suspending their belief in time's linearity to grasp some meaning in what Benjamin calls Jetztzeit, or revolutionary time.[38] Cassandra calls to "a present that is not present," or rather, like the historian, "prophesies the present mak[ing] it present."[39]

To better connect Cassandra's prophetic function in Euripides to Garnier's prophets in the Early Modern period, I will briefly digress through Jean de la Péruse's slightly earlier (1555), much bloodier *La Medée,* which shows a similar function of the prophet in the very last act. As Medea kills her children in front of their father, Jason, she sees her the ghost of the brother she killed to be with Jason :

> Jupiter qu'est ceci? quells flambeaus noirs m'étonnent?
> Quelles rages d'Enfer de si pres me talonnent?
> Quels feus, et quells fleaux, quelle bande de nuit
> Ainsi de toutes pars siflante me circuit?
> Quel Serpent est ici? quell' horrible Megere?
> Quell' ombre démambrée? ha, ha, ha c'est mon frère,
> Je le vois, je l'entans, il veut prandre vang'ance
> De moi, cruelle soeur, il veut punir l'outrance
> Que je lui fis à tort, il est ores recors
> Que trop bourrellement je démembrai son cors.
> Non, non, mon frère, non : voici ta recompance.
> Jason, traitre, me fit te faire cette offence.
> Voici, voici ses fiz, renvoïe les Furies,
> Renvoïe ces flambeaus, sans que tu m'injuries:
> La main qui te meurdrît même te vangera
> Pour mon frère tué, mon fiz tué sera.
> Tien donc, frère, voici pour appaiser ton ire,
> Je t'offre cors pour cors. Je t'en vai l'un occire.[40]

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[37] ibid. 725

[38] In Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, Jetztzeit can be detached from the continuum of empty, homogenous time (usually associated with the history of the ruling bourgeois class in the 19th century) by the artist's intervention. This moment is saturated with similar moments in history and stands still as a trampoline, ready to help readers leap out into a new historical conception.

[39] I am citing Ian Balfour's very concise, shorthand, formulation of Benjamin. *The Rhetoric of Romantic Prophecy*. 2002

[40] v. 1163 - 80

Medea sees the underworld, feels it digging its claws into her, hears it whistling, sees her brother's ghost rise up to meet her. Her brother has come for justice but she substitutes her children's bodies for her own, by positioning herself as his avenger. She exchanges her son's body for her brother's.[41] The play's ending is unresolved : Medea flies off in a machine. Whether or not her reasoning has appeased her brother's ghost is unclear. In this monologue, however, the past comes into the present, saturating it and demanding that the full present be felt. This includes the weight of history and extends into the future, when justice will be established through present action. In this instance, Medea's speech conjures the underworld; her sight and words operate together, not representing but making the present.[42]

Seneca's Cassandra has a similar conjuring technique in Act V of the *Agamemnon*. She sees what is happening elsewhere, brings a distant present into proximity with the space she shares with the audience. Whether the underworld or another room of the castle, the past or the future, this present tense rhetorical move collapses distance and time into a present that is simultaneously bound together and remains in distinct parts, acknowledging their disjunction. Medea does not resurrect her brother; she resurrects his ghost, as ghost and loss.

Garnier's resurrection of Cassandra in *Les Juives* through the character of Amital has a similar allegorical quality. Cassandra's absence is significantly felt through the echo in Amital's language, which recalls Garnier's Hecuba, in his *La Troade*. The specificity of each character is maintained, even as they coexist unevenly in Amital's body. In her study on history and tragedy in the French Renaissance, Kristen Postert presents a compelling argument for the topicality of sixteenth-century French tragedy. These are plays that are bloody and sentimental and refuse the general. They are focused on the particulars of history and its immediacy.[43] This fragmentary history built through the accumulation of specific instances cannot form a unified whole.[44] This conceptualization of history does not become abstract in order to find a common principle; it accumulates debris and dredges history up to saturate the present.

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[41] This can be contrasted with Amital's sacrifice of the Hebrew children, which is unintentional. Amital believes she has persuaded Nabuchodonosor to release the children and does not understand that she is sending them to their death.

[42] In contrast, Corneille's 1634 *Medée* focuses on the past as a means of ensuring the future. Whereas Péruse's Medea waits until Act IV until she insists on giving her children as a gift to obscure her poisonous intentions, Corneille's Jason is clear from Act I, Scene I, that he is leaving Medea to save his children, his line, and attempt to ground a nation well into the future. Corneille's play uses time linearly, privileging a future aim and sacrificing the present to that futurity.

[43] Postert, Kirsten. *Tragédie historique ou Histoire tragique? (1550-1715)*. 2010.

[44] This historical approach can be seen in Étienne Pasquier's ambitious historical project *Les Recherches de la France.* Written over the second half of the 16th century, in the vernacular French, for the future princes of France, this is a history intended to instruct and form these princes, rather than to provide a reflection of their existing power. That is to say, the history becomes a means of gathering together and making all that has happened count, rather than a retrospective glorification or propaganda machine. His various sections give extensive details on the customs and beliefs of the French people. In his sections on prophetic practices, he notes the use of Virgil and the Holy Bible to divine outcomes, and introduces his own book as a repository for miracles that reason can't explain : "Ce chapitre peut estre sans fin et closture. Je veux qu'il serve de jeu à ceux qui le voudront remplir d'autres exemples" (IV, 29). The history book becomes a place to store evidence of mystery and miracle rather than a place of production for future knowledge. The invisible world is not secularized, but its relation to the visible world is reconfigured, through the historical account. Readers are asked to actively participate and add to the book, but are not asked to use the book to answer their own specific questions. This shift preserves the place of mystery while preventing divinatory practices that would justify action on its behalf. Jean de la Taille suggests that theater has the further ability to "monstrer à l'oeil de tous un des plus merveilleux secrets de toute la Bible." That is, to illustrate the mysteries contained within a book. If the theater seeks to educate, it is more akin to Pasquier's mirror than to the superstitious practice of opening a book to find an answer to a question of personal or even political interest.

Allegorical history in *Les Juives* : the gap between subject and form

Having gone through the layers of the character of Amital in several related plays, I would now like to return to discussing the layers of experience Garnier anticipates his spectators will consider while watching his play. Garnier's dedication emphasizes an allegorical use of history. He justifies his choice of subject through its didacticism and applicability: "Or vous ay-je representé les souspirables calamitez d'un peuple, qui a comme nous abandonné son Dieu."[45] The evocation of past history stands in relation to the present but it is an uneven relation : "comme nous." The analogy is loose and open to interpretation. Before turning to a historical reading, I will discuss allegorical resonance as it plays out in the literary history of the prophets in *Les Juives*. The Garnier is comparative rather than linear, refusing any merging of the Israelites and the French. The unifying function of "nous" is offset by the comparison. The Wars of Religion become, *like* the sacking of Jerusalem, divine retribution for having broken a contract with God. There is an inherent distance established from the outset.[46] This is to say contemporary history is above all being refracted through a constellation of stories about the past.[47] What emerges are not gods descending into the theater, or even universal psychological characters, but rather composite stock-characters specific to the time period and the ghosts of those characters that preceded them.[48] The composite prophets built from both classical and

[45] I am citing from the 2007 edition. *Les Juives*. Ed. Michel Jeanneret. Paris : Gallimard.

[46] In his Preface to the 2007 Gallimard edition of *Les Juives*, Michel Jeanneret proposes we read the Prophet's use of "nous" in his opening monologue to establish cyclical time. For Jeanneret, this "nous" is universal, a set of patterns repeating over history. While it's clear that this "nous" differs from Garnier's use of "nous" in his dedication, it is not clear why the initially explicit historical disjoint would disappear through a character's monologue. As Jacques Rancière, on aesthetic theory (*L'inconscient esthétique, 2003)*, and Victoria Kahn, on Early Modern theater and political theology ("Hamlet or Hecuba : Carl Schmitt's Decision." 2001), have both noted, there is a tendency among critics to read the work of art as of a different order. In this case, that is to suggest, removed from the surrounding texts, as a fundamentally ahistorical (or transhistorical) phenomenon. While I don't think Michel Jeanneret is suggesting this – his preface is brief and to the point – I do want to emphasize that I am not reading the Prophet figure as historically transcendent, speaking to all peoples across time (a universal lesson derived and now applied. Other critics, such as T. Peach, have seen historical continuity played out by a syncretic Chorus, which bridges, or is at least structurally legible to, all of humanity. Peach focuses on the chorus, reading them as humanity fallen from grace at any time. Gillian Jondorf, *Robert Garnier and the Themes of Political Tragedy in the 16th century*. 1969., while agreeing that the characters are stock, argues that the chorus of mourning women are a symbol of compassion. C.R. Frankish, Frankish, C.R.."The theme of idolatry in Garnier's *Les Juives*." 1968., reads the play as a lesson taught by characters sufficiently generic so as not to provoke either Catholics or Protestants. While these scholars all value an intellectual remove on the part of the audience, they nonetheless read a concept of homogeneous history into the play. These readings, perhaps influenced by the prophetic tradition of Joachim of Fiore, which traced patterns from the Old Testament to the New Testament and predicted the second coming, seem reasonable to me, particularly given the apocalyptic climate in which the play was written, but assume a consensus among contemporary historians. History was a problem during the Renaissance.

[47] The *Tragédie du sac de Cabrières*, had already explicitly taken contemporary history as its subject (1566). Garnier's play works with an episode from sacred history and juxtaposes it with contemporary history. This configures the present differently than plays that were taking contemporary history for their subject, to further specific propagandistic interpretations of contemporary politics.

[48] Jean de la Taille's 1572 *Saül le furieux*, a contemporary to *Les Juives*, similarly influenced by the Wars of Religion and the instability of the monarchy, gives a tremendous weight to the prophet, Samuel conjured by the witch of Endor. Mireille Huchon reads Nabuchodonosor as a literary rival to Saul; the play again centers on the sovereign's broken contract with God. Saul is an indecisive king, who eventually commits suicide. God has decided to replace Saul with David, who will better maintain the contract. In this play, Saul cannot decide what course of action to take because he cannot speak to God anymore. He has banished the soothsayers and fortunetellers and now finds himself alone in a very quiet world. His journey to the witch of Endor, who conjures the ghost of the prophet

Hebrew sources challenge a religious conception of history as the unified story of a single people.

Whereas Walter Benjamin differentiates the historical Trauerspiel from the classical tragedy played for the gods in his *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, it is in his later, 1940, "Theses on the Philosophy of History" that he presents a revolutionary concept of history capable of suspending the present and opening it to reinterpretation and rerouting. The following fragment introduces a number of the ideas I'm using to interpret Garnier's conceptualization of history :

> XIV: History is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogeneous, empty time, but time filled by the presence of the now [Jetztzeit].[49] Thus, to Robespierre ancient Rome was a past charged with the time of the now which he blasted out of the continuum of history. The French Revolution viewed itself as Rome reincarnate. It evoked ancient Rome the way fashion evokes costumes of the past. Fashion has a flair for the topical, no matter where it stirs in the thickets of long ago; it is a tiger's leap into the past. This jump, however, takes place in an arena where the ruling class gives commands. The same leap in the open air of history is the dialectical one, which is how Marx understood the revolution.[50]

It would be easy to read "Rome reincarnate" as a universalized state, something trans-historical, returning. However, Benjamin glosses this resurgence with a comparison to fashion. Robespierre isn't interested in abstract revolution, as such, he is interested in the particulars of Rome, in the topical which speak to the present. The relation between Robespierre's Paris and Rome is analogical and superficial : "the way fashion evokes costumes of the past." This comparison, of the type of comparison Robespierre made to fashion imitating costumes, is not only theatrical, it is explicitly imitative. Fashion echoes an older costume by dredging up both the costume's image and its absence in the contemporary fashion world. The constellation that is established is not one of trans-historical resurrection but rather small fragments that realign the way the world is read. This constellation is formed by leaps from one moment to another, which allows the present to be saturated by a precise past and its absence. Furthermore, this leap occurs "in an arena," further reinforcing the importance of the dramatic stage. Ian Balfour reads this historian as a prophet who is able to call towards "a present that is not present."[51] Benjamin's present is a suspension, an opening of vertical time orthogonal to a progressive or empire-driven linear time. This vertical time grasps definite points from the past and holds them in its suspension. In accordance with Rabbinical teachings, today, now, is "the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter."[52] Scholars read this teaching as a trampoline, an imminence of the divine, which

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Samuel for him, only confirms the silence. God is no longer interested in talking to him. Much like Jean de la Péruse's *Medée*, the dead are resurrected into the present, bringing the past and future action together into a fully present present, without altering the shape of the past. The dead remain lost. This is a present,which contains its own meaning and isn't sacrificed to a teleological goal. Samuel, the dead prophet, however is quite clear that God is very much speaking to Saul, through his silence. The silence is God's message : Saul is no longer contracted to God.

[49] Howard Eilend, speaking on a panel at the San Francisco Art Institute on November 8, 2014, emphasized that Jetztzeit is a popular, somewhat denigrated term, which designates a topical present, such as the ephemera in a newspaper.

[50] "Theses on the Philosophy of History." *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zohn. 1968.

[51] *The Rhetoric of Romantic Prophecy*. 2002

[52] Cited in Benjamin's last Thesis, B. This same lesson is found in the Gospel of Mark (13:33-37) : Take heed, watch; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his servants in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Watch therefore--

protects both the past and the future by refusing to sacrifice the present to a, necessarily selective, progress-driven preconception. The space between the past and its return in the presence can further be read as a door, kept open for redemption and the full return of the past.

Garnier's use of prophets as a nexus for this historical conceptualization does not create a redeemed people but rather a people who have the potential to make all of history count. The prophet can suspend the present well enough to make the present (that door which the messiah might walk through) visible to his or her people.[53] Although Christian spectators of the play would not be waiting for the messiah, the idea of waiting is not altogether absent from Catholic (or Protestant) thought at this time. While Christ has fulfilled the prophecies of the Hebrew bible and Christians are not waiting for the messiah, there are strong millennial beliefs circulating at this time about the Second Coming and the final judgment. In this sense there is a difference between the two types of waiting but they are related. In the same way that the audience reads or watches a story "like" their own, they watch a form of waiting "like" their own. This disjunction creates a critical gap, which the audience must navigate. Amital and the Prophet teach the audience how to navigate the gap by constructing new conceptions of history.

Amital's maternal embodiment of prophetic history

Before returning to the problem of audience interpretation, I will discuss the way in which *Les Juives* situates allegory within a maternal body. Amital's body acts as the site of allegorical, historical work. Her monologues and dialogues enact and describe the accumulation of history within her body through the language of mourning and memory. Her prophesying is dependent on past speech, "je predis." She looks back and contains all of history fully bearing the weight of responsibility of her people, in particular in her recounting of her people's suffering to the Babylonian queen. By the end of the play, Amital, in the tradition of Jeremiah who laments with his people, does not leave with an abstract message of salvation but rather an imperative to tend to the dead, through burial : "Or allons de par Dieu, rendons leur ce devoir."[54] This act of burying the dead and enduring suffering by keeping their corpses from being eaten by animals, is a practical action in relation to the future rather than a means of looking to the future. It continues the work of her historical monologues by ensuring past events stay in their proper place. The Prophet begins his opening monologue with a question : "Jusques à quand ... / Jusqu'à quand." Although he answers his question (according to Biblical script but otherwise meaninglessly) at the end of the play, it is Amital who answers the question for the Jewish women. Rather than reading the "jusqu'à quand" as a sincere question, Amital lives out the "until when," the waiting that keeps open a door for the Messiah to walk through, through

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for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning-- lest he come suddenly and find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Watch."

[53] For Benjamin, this is a fallen form of prophecy, in which language has "stepped out of name language... from what we may call its own immanent magic, in order to become expressly, as it were externally, magic." Benjamin. "On language as Such and on the Lanugage of Man." This magical, theatrical, present is different from a truly secular reading of the Early Modern period. Artifice provides a refuge for things that have fallen out of theology, rather than stepping in to create a prelapsarian unity, theatrical rhetoric and artifice tend to the loss. Sigrid Weigel argues that Benjamin walks a fine line between secularism and mysticism. She retranslates Benjamin to show that Agamben has conflated linguistic similarities in Benjamin in Schmitt to show similarities that are not there. Rather than proposing a form of secularism that replaces theological concepts with political concepts (as Hans Blumenberg has suggested), Weigel reads Benjamin as a refuge-maker for what has fallen out of theology. What theology can't account for, literature will take in. It does not assume a slow evacuation of the divine, but rather a lost language, which is acknowledged as lost.

[54] v. 2073

attention to the past and allowing it to enter the present as it is : lost. By living according to the proscribed rites she preserves the meaning of the past, as established by her people's covenant with their god. Amital keeps the community firmly in the present, looking backward but never forward.

In addition to directing the community's action, Amital offers her body in penance for her people's misdeeds. She carries the past and if it is the past that must be punished, her body becomes a substitute for these past actions. The body becomes the earthly, or creaturely, site of this concept of history. She tells Nabuchodonosor that he will feel remorse if he massacres the people. However, her body could stand in for the body of the people:

> Faites moy demembrer, faites moy torturer,
> Faites à ce vieil corps tout supplice endurer :
> Soulez vous en ma peine, & que je satisface
> Seule pour Sedecie, & pour toute sa race.[55]

Amital, who has already claimed to be suffering, "Je suis le malheur mesme," further universalizes her self to clear the debt of her people.[56] In the last line, she asks for her singularity and aloneness to counter the weight of her son and his people. She separates herself from the Jewish women she has both belonged to and represented. Now, having realigned herself with Jeremiah and his prophetic tradition, she is not simply a mourning mother among other mourning mothers, she is a sacrifice whose broken body could contain the sum of God's vengeance against a people she would both substitute and no longer belong to. This maneuver stands in stark contrast to Hecuba's substitution of herself for her daughter in Garnier's earlier *La Troade*. Whereas Hecuba subsumes Cassandra's powers in order to establish her own prophetic primacy she establishes her motherhood through Paris. Hecuba does not maternally carry Cassandra, she incorporates her prophetic abilities in favor of a more heroic, nationalistic historicism: Hecuba announces the Trojan empire's tragedy. Amital incorporates the suffering of her son and her people – a community defined by its wailing women – and asks to be sacrificed for her people's sins.[57] Amital's embodiment of prophecy looks backward and toward the dead by bringing the dead into her own body.

When the king refuses her, on the grounds that she is innocent, she re-implicates herself by claiming to be equivalent to the sovereign, her son : "Punissez donc son crime en moy qui suis luy-mesmes."[58] If the king represents history for Nebuchodonosor, Amital feels able to substitute her own body for the king's. As the king's mother, she claims sovereign power, as the mother of the people she wishes to intercede on their behalf. This parental language emerged initially in the Prophet's Act I monologue, through several references to God raising his children on earth with "un amour paternal."[59] Nabuchodonosor refuses to forgive Sedecie out of respect and love for Sedecie's father. He gives Amital false hope that maternal love will somehow be stronger and she thanks God. While maternal love does not spare her people, it does become the primary analogy for the Prophet in his closing scene. The Prophet describes God's relation to his people as maternal in Act V, when he compares God's retribution "comme fait d'une verge une

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[55] v. 1081 - 84
[56] v. 369
[57] Caroline Bynum Walker's *Jesus as Mother* (1994) looks at the maternal language used in monastic descriptions of Christ during the late Middle Ages. Michel de Certeau has similarly noticed the use in mystical discourse of the feminine spoken voice to give credibility to written mystical discourses in the Early Modern period. *La fable mystique* (1982).
[58] v. 1100
[59] v. 68

prudente mere / Envers son cher enfant, quand une mauvaitié / Qu'il a fait à quelqu'un, veut qu'il soit chatié."[60]. Amital's role in the play, then, is not simply one of lamentation and ineffective negation. She condenses history and prophecy in her body, and eventually transfers these gifts to the Prophet in Act V. Amital's position, moving between each of the major political characters, embodies and enacts the work of saturating the present with the past before handing a now earthly, maternal form of prophecy back to the Prophet.

Moving prophecy out of the female body and into the king

Prophecy, however, is ultimately only legitimated in the body of the male Prophet. Although the work of the prophet has been laid out through the character of Amital, it is the Prophet, who makes the present present for the spectators and readers of *Les Juives*. By Act V, the chorus and Amital both interact with the Prophet, in dialogue rather than block monologues; the people respond alternately to these two prophetic characters, as if being passed from one to the next. The people are not mute – as the Prophet warned them would happen if they followed idols - but are lamenting to God. They are entirely devoted to the Prophet's God. The Prophet speaks to and with the community as a messenger of the present, rather than as a stiff framing device. The Prophet has taken on many of Amital's ambivalent characteristics of belonging in the community; he is in the same historical moment as the Jewish women but his vision allows him to be elsewhere simultaneously. He reports Nabuchodonosor's atrocities as he sees them happening, narrating the execution of the Hebrew children and Sedecie's blinding. Amital's monologues to the queen rhetorically brought her people's past into the present as lost; the Prophet now conjures another, spatially removed present, as Seneca's Cassandra and La Péruse's Medea conjured the underworld.

The Prophet speaks to both the Jewish women and to his God. The prophet first calls on God to witness, as a spectator, what he sees on earth, bringing God to earth. As in his opening monologue, the Prophet inverts his usual function of bringing divine vision onto earth : he is not telling the people what God sees but rather bringing God to what the people must witness, emphasizing the divine's immanence rather than imminence. "Je t'atteste, Eternel, Eternel, je t'appelle, / Spectateur des fortaits de ce Prince infidelle."[61] The Prophet is witness, verification to what God, who sees all, surely sees. This overdetermination might be read as a call to God to come down and intercede, to punish.[62] The Prophet here, though, is acting less as intermediary between the people and God (whose course is set) than between the people and their reactions.[63] He has adopted a role more similar to Amital's, who helped the Jewish women mourn. He reuses language, which Amital has introduced in her pleas to both the king and queen of Babylon. Describing how Nabuchodonosor had the child hostages murdered before Sedecie, the Prophet slides into a collective body :

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[60] v. 2116 – 18

[61] v. 1847-8

[62] Agrippa d'Aubigné similarly uses this form of attestation or testament to plead with God but dissimilarly tries to to hasten the apocalypse. D'Aubigné's call to witness attempts to bring the divine to earth to complete eschatological time. D'Aubigné is also able to ascend to heaven and describe the other world to those on earth. Garnier's Prophet has already brought God's vision to earth and remains firmly planted in a human scale historical time.

[63] J. S. Street has emphasized that sixteenth-century theater does not depend on emotional or psychological identification with the characters. This does not, however, imply that emotion doesn't come into play. Florence Dobby-Poirson, in her book on the *pathétique* in Garnier's plays, looks at how emotions are produced and used in the theater. She considers how spectators are taught to interpret their emotions and how emotions are as important as thinking in forming a world view from a theatrical production.

Quand il luy eut tout dit ce qu'il avoit vouloir,
Il commande aux bourreaux de faire leur devoir.
Lors le coeur nous transit, le sang de nostre face
S'escoula dans le sein, nostre front devint glace,
Tout le corps nous trembla, comme fueilles aux bois,
Au gosier s'attacha nostre muette voix.[64]

This is the collective body Amital has already evoked, the mother's body containing her people. It is a body that comes apart when the people are divided from one another, it shakes as though divinely inspired when witnessing earthly violence. The Prophet's body is now firmly anchored in the people's history. The Prophet's opening monologue : "Ce triste souvenir me remet en fureur" echoes through his current state of suffering.[65] His "fureur" further reverberates with Amital's suffering, in Act II, describing the death of her husband said "Et lors, comme en fureur (je meurs y repensant!) / J'allay contre mon chef mes deux mains elançant, / Je m'esclatay de cris à sa bouche colee."[66] Amital's grief sent her into this frenzied state but her grief was not separate from her larger sense of history. There has been a solidifying of the Prophet's place on earth over the course of the play (during his absence); he now lives in contemporary history rather than being affected by the long view of eschatological history. The Prophet's body is used to conjure and stage a lost story as it is being lost. The Prophet has slowly entered into the action and literally incorporated Amital's prophetic side : the earthly, grief-stricken trembling of embodying a mother's relation to her child, God's relationship to his people.

The Prophet struggles to speak, following the same rhetorical patterns Amital uses in Act II to recount her people's past to the Jewish women and to the Babylonian queen : "mille sanglots qui m'estoupoyent la voix," "Ce triste souvenir m'arreste la parole."[67] There is constant crossover between the Prophet and Amital, who does not take his place but pushes him to fulfill his role[68] :

Prophet
Un silence, un effroy par les troupes se glisse,
Nous pallissons d'horreur, tout le poil nous herisse.
Que je taise le reste, helas! je n'en puis plus :
Quelque autre surivendra qui dira le surplus.
Amital
Achevez je vous pri'.[69]

The terror and silence that the prophet sees around him, as he brings this other present to the Jewish women, affects him bodily, overwhelms him. He would like to remain silent but no one else is capable of speaking. At this point he has assumed the full role of prophet, and is alone responsible for showing the consequences of the Hebrew people's actions, for speaking truthfully about where they are. Unlike Amital, however, the Prophet now speaks fully in the present. Amital's discursive role has been significantly curbed and she now listens and recognizes the Prophet's work from the position of a spectator.

The Prophet is no longer bringing the past into the present, the past has now saturated the present to create a fully present present. The Prophet's final monologues and dialogues narrate

[64] v. 1945-1950
[65] v. 60
[66] v. 413-15
[67] v. 406, 720
[68] There is a maternal element to this scene of transference as well; Amital raises the Prophet.
[69] v. 1951-1955

the social order of the saturated present. The Prophet opens his monologue on the massacre of the Jewish children and Sedecie's punishment by lamenting Nabuchodonosor's cruelty in playing his role as "instrument de la rancœr celeste."[70] Nabuchodonosor must have been gestated by "une Tygre fellone."[71] The relation between monarchy and tigers is expanded when the Prophet reports that Nabuchodonosor has taken Sedecie and the children to the arena where the Syrian kings "quand ils vouloyent s'esbatre, / Enfermoyent les lions, pour les faire combatre."[72] Sedecie, grandson of Jeremiah, is placed in a prophetic lineage through this association with Daniel, who was thrown in the lions' den of Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. Upon seeing the children, Sedecie rushes towards them "hurlant de telle sorte/ Qu'une Tygre, qui voit ses petits qu'on emporte."[73] Sedecie takes on maternal qualities and, through this comparison to Nabuchodonosor (God's instrument, brought forth by a tigress), reworks the notion of maternal care. The Hebrew God of vengeance takes on maternal qualities, however cruel and ferocious, in an attempt to spare the children from the lions. Amital's remarks following the massacre return to this maternal impulse to save the children from wild beasts:

> Il faut auparavant que nostre soin procure
> Que les corps trespasses soyent mis en sepulture,
> De peur qu'ils soyent la proye & des loups affamez
> Et des corbeaux bécus, s'ils n'estoyent inhumez.[74]

Amital urges the Jewish women to help her bury the massacred children to prevent animals from scavenging their bodies. Sedecie is brought closer to the community of Jewish women in this final act as he prays and mourns. His repentance is not possible until the Prophet - who was outside the community and the temporality of the play's action until Amital's character structurally drew him in – narrates Sedecie as a maternal protector of his people.

The monarch's embodiment of Amital's allegorical maternal history culminates in his final dialogue with the Prophet. The Prophet teaches Sedecie, the people's king, to become a monarch capable of leading his people during exile until the fall of Babylon. The Prophet uses the maternal rather than paternal metaphor for God's relationship to his children, to explain to Sedecie why God is angry and why he, Sedecie, must repent. The Prophet enters into a dialogue, negotiating with Sedecie, convincing him that all is not lost. The audience has already seen this rhetorical technique when Amital negotiated with Nebuchodonosor to choose clemency over vengeance but even more prominently, in the Prophet's opening monologue, when the Prophet negotiated with the Hebrew god (O seigneur ô seigneur, vueille prendre pitié / D'Israel ton enfant durement chatié[75]). Sedecie, now blinded, asks the Prophet, "Qui vit si miserable? autour de ceste masse / Voyez-vous un malheur qui mon malheur surpasse?"[76] The Prophet affirms Sedecie's exceptional, unsurpassed suffering but instructs Sedecie, "Il en faut louer Dieu tout ainsi que d'un bien."[77] As the Prophet and Sedecie discuss Sedecie's punishment, the Prophet explains the meaning of this part of the Hebrew people's history to Sedecie, just as he reminded the Hebrew god of the history God himself sought to preserve and give meaning to. Sedecie asks

[70] v. 1840
[71] v. 1838
[72] v. 1895 -6
[73] v. 1915 - 16
[74] v. 2063 - 6
[75] v. 23 - 24
[76] v. 2099 - 2100
[77] v. 2102

why God would punish him through the Babylonian king's cruelty, which has far exceeded his own cruelty. The Prophet responds:

Il use de sa dextre à venger son colere,
Comme fait d'une verge une prudente mere
Envers son cher enfant, quand une mauvaitié
Qu'il a fait à quelqu'un, veut qu'il soit chatié.[78]

The Prophet's paternal metaphor in his opening monologue has become maternal. The Hebrew god of vengeance is a mother, tending to her children. The Prophet continues his explanation by telling Sedecie of the punishment Nabuchodonosor will undergo in due time. Sedecie's role, however, is not to take political action based on the Prophet's future prediction. The monarch brings this maternal relation to his people, as a tigress, but more importantly, as an embodiment of divine maternity. The Prophet transfers this embodied maternal history to the monarch to take on the role of mediating his people's history. The effect of this prophetic work is to bring about lamentation, repentance, and burial. Sedecie's last prayer that shows the effect prophecy has had on the play. Sedecie begs God for mercy and asks that God not allow the people to follow idols, taking on the maternal role previously held by Amital and then the Prophet.[79] The Prophet has shifted Amital's ability to carry the community's history into the monarch, Sedecie.

The Prophet's final prophecy - foreseeing the coming of Christ and the end of prophecy – does not occur until the monarch has learned to mourn. In his final prayer, Sedecie looks to the future not through prophecy but through prayer:

O seigneur nostre Dieu, ton cœur soit adouci
Vers ton affligé peuple, & le pren à merci,
Tire ses pieds des ceps, & clement le delivre,
Ne le souffre long temps les idolâtres suivre.[80]

The monarch holds the people's history and mourns with them, taking his mother's place as historian and interceder. The Prophet then delivers his final monologue, an amalgam of textual citations, which place his monologue back in the homogenous, theological space of the very beginning, leaving behind the space, which Amital's character has reworked to be a historical, embodied space.[81] The final prophecy presents an apocalyptic vision of the destruction of Babylon, the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, and the coming of Christ. This final prophecy, most similar to Jeremiah's prediction of the fall of Babylon, firmly positions the

[78] v. 2115 - 2118
[79] v. 2153- 6.
[80] v. 2153 - 2156
[81] Racine, in his preface to *Athalie*, explains his decision to put a prophet on stage as essential to the dictates of theater : plaire et émouvoir. In this case, the prophecy "sert beaucoup à augmenter le trouble dans la Pièce," effectively improving the quality of the play. Racine reassures his reader that his prophet only speaks through "des expressions tirées de Prophètes memes." In this sense, he has restaged past prophecies, brought them back to life, in much the same way that Jean de la Taille's *Saül le furieux* has the witch of Endor speak to the ghost of Samuel to re-prophesy. The prophecy of the past is brought into the present, within the confines of the stage. This resurrection of the prophet's words stands in contrast to a propagandistic use of prophecy that interprets the present in terms of past prophecies. In the latter, the prophecy remains in the past and a prophet speaks in the present to announce imminent fulfillment in the present. Through the resurrection of the prophet's words in the present, as Racine does through citation, as Jean de la Taille does through a ghost, the past fills the present and coexists, suspending time on the stage. Even as theater moves away from the static rhetorical model towards a psychological, plot-driven model, this temporal disjoint persists in sacred theater. The difference between *Athalie* and *Les Juives* seems to lie in the move toward "text." Christopher Braider reads Racine's plays as the origin of the modern text. In this particular instance, prophecy is being converted into text, as something that can be cited, rather than brought back as lost word-matter.

Prophet in the Hebrew tradition, and realigns him with other male prophets.[82] This prophecy reiterates what the Prophet has already told Sedecie, but repositions biblical prophecy within biblical text. The end of prophecy is the bookend to the Prophet's opening monologue, which began with a reminder of the flood and God's punishment of his wayward people. The Prophet's role as mediator between the people and their god frames the play, reminding spectators of the Mysteries' portrayal of theological time and diverging from the historical time represented in the majority of the play. These bookends also serve as a reminder of the temporal schism between the Christian audience and the episode from the Hebrew Bible they are watching. For the Christian spectators, this final prophecy has come to pass; prophecy has ceased with the birth of Christ. The anticipation of the Second Coming, a widely circulating contemporary belief, allows the Christian audience to be like the Jewish women awaiting the messiah, but preserves a gap. The monarch now embodies divine will and the Jewish women need only look to him. The Prophet's textual amalgam of prophetic claims returns as a past claim, as relic of past discourse in which prophecy might make the world whole again. The Prophet is speaking to an audience who can only receive this message as historical, reminding them of a time now lost. The male Prophet incorporates the ghostly female, and largely classical, presence of Amital and her own many layered female prophetesses. By subsuming the female prophetess in his de-historicized textual body, the Prophet inverts the classical tradition of the pythia in which a female body is taken over by a male God. The Prophet is filled not with a God but with historical prophetic discourses : biblical citation. He is a site of a historical messenger of God. The monarch stands as the only earthly representative of God's will.

"Plays for the mournful" : the king's people

Les Juives is ultimately a play about community and about prophecy's ability to define a group of people. By the end of the play, Amital's main function is mourning, rather than political advocacy. As Amital guides the Jewish women in watching the Prophet and then the king, she leads the audience in their political obligation to the monarch. Amital guides the community away from a concept of history, which leads to political supplication (and future change) toward a historical understanding, which allows the women to bury the dead. The temporal dislocations in the plot, much like the rifts within Amital's and the Prophet's character, require an allegorical form of reading, which Gordon Teskey would argue pushes the spectators to attempt to interpret a destabilized analogy.[83] The elision of the Greek – and largely female - tradition of prophecy enriches the slippage between historian, advocate, and prophet. The Prophet's final monologue is haunted by the specter of Cassandra seeing the destruction of Argos, an allusion that rises to the surface only to establish its absence. The Prophet helps spectators navigate the Hebrew and Classical analogies, proposing a way for them to experience their present even as they grapple with temporal disjuncture. This theater of ideas is emotionally engaged but not through audience identification with the characters. The play creates lamentation by showing the past as past and making the present present through that lamentation.

Les Juives asks its spectators to mourn their own situation without directly representing contemporary events. The play further asks spectators to consider their place in the world without recourse to a much broader eschatological history. The importance of the historical framing of the play is emphasized in Garnier's dedication. Garnier claims that by presenting an

[82] This final prophecy is itself an amalgam of prophetic claims found in the Hebrew Bible : Jeremiah, and the Gospels : Matthew, Acts, Romans, and Ephesiens. As noted by Michel Jeanneret.
[83] *Allegory and Violence,* 1996.

episode from the history of the Jewish people, he is creating a didactic parallel which a modern French audience can use to read their current historical moment : "Or vous ay-je representé les souspirables calamitez d'un peuple, qui a comme nous abandonné son Dieu."[84] This claim raises a series of questions about how the theatrical representation of history will work in the play beginning with who is offering what to whom and in whose name.[85] Garnier dedicates his play to the ultra-Catholic Anne de Joyeuse, "duc, pair, et admiral de France," brother-in-law to Henri III. The title, however, emphasizes its eponymous community of Jewish women, rather than exclusively mirroring models of kingship. Just as *Les Juives* is named for the community of Jewish women in exile, it is read by and performed for those who should be mourning their own situation. The "comme nous" creates a comparison between the Jewish women and "nous" but the *application* is not immediately clear.[86] The performance history of *Les Juives* is difficult to establish but scholars tend to believe the play was mostly circulated in print, rather than on stage, due to the difficulty of mounting plays during the wars of religion.[87] Any representations would mostly have occurred among the bourgeois and lower nobility[88] in Western France, in the Maine, where Garnier was *lieutenent-criminel* throughout his parallel career as a playwright.[89] Turning, then to the textual occasion, the dedication, several scholars have suggested that the play's *application* allows Sedecie to be read as Henri III, Amital as Catherine de Medici, and

[84] I am citing from the 2007 edition. *Les Juives*. Ed. Michel Jeanneret. Paris : Gallimard.
[85] Theater represents something to someone. Déborah Blocker. *Instituer un « art ».* Ch. 3.
[86] Through the *application* (relation of the plot and characters in the play to historical events and abstract concepts about how the world is), the intended audience should be able to relate the represented story to the occasion on which it is represented – the historically particular time, place, and circumstance - as well to a larger abstract idea. The intersection of these two levels of allegory allow the audience to make meaning from the play. Blocker. *Instituer un « art ».* Ch. 3.
[87] As Sara Beam's work has shown, the bourgeoisie were increasingly able to appropriate theatrical practices from the church and mount plays. *Laughing Matters.* 2007. Charles Mazouer has pointed out, however, that these performances were increasingly limited towards the end of the 16th century. *Le Théâtre de la Renaissance*. 2002. Raymond Lebègue's work varies on the performance history of Garnier's plays. In an off-hand comment, Lebègue suggests that *Les Juives* was performed at the Odéon in "costumes antiques." It is unclear which theater Lebègue is referring to in this mention since the Odéon in Paris was not built until the 18th century. "La representation d'une tragédie à la cour des Valois."1946. His later work, however, is much more uncertain about the performance history of the play.
[88] Theater performance shifted significantly after the 1548 ban of Jean Michel's *Passion Nostre Sauveur* in Paris. This corresponded to a larger shift away from medieval forms of theater and to the rise of the Pléiade's new theater. Whereas the older genres (mystery, farce, sottie) continued to be performed and increasingly read, the Pléiade writers proposed new genres (tragedy and comedy) based on classical models. The Pléiade's plays, when performed, continued to use the staging and set design common to earlier theater and were often taken up by traveling troupes in the provinces. Raymond Lebègue's research has found that there were several public performances of this new theater in spite of the difficulties of the Wars of Religion. He hypothesizes that the plays were likely read by lawyers, local officials, professors, and other members of the bourgeoisie. Sara Beam's research further supports this class argument, proposing that much of the transition was facilitated not by the government but by local officials and merchants hoping to shape political patterns through their theatrical decisions. Robert Garnier, of course dedicated *Les Juives* to the king's brother-in-law, and it is clear from the few theoretical writings by Jean de la Taille and Joachim Du Bellay, that there were already ambitions for the more politically powerful theater that arose in the 17th century. This newly proposed social function and the new genres did not, however, supersede or even make a clean break with the popularly-organized medieval theater during the 16th century. Although sacred theater, which once blended the farcical and serious, was essentially eliminated as the profane divided into comedy and tragedy, Charles Mazouer has argued that the sacred remained in the sociological reflection of the comic and in the moral imperative of the tragic. While many early tragedies were strongly propagandistic on both the Protestant and Catholic sides, later tragedies struggled to reconcile their content and form with the Christian world in which they were produced.
[89] Chardon. *Robert Garnier*. 1905.

Nabuchodonosor as the duc de Guise.[90] According to this reading, the Ligue has temporarily subsumed the country, which has lost faith in their monarch; God punishes the country by making it tributary to a tyrant. As Gillian Jondorf points out, this reading is fairly anachronistic, as are the propagandistic readings that mis-attribute Garnier's sudden participation in the Ligue in 1589 as a consistent political position throughout his career.[91]

Closer examination of Garnier's dedication establishes a strong relation between Anne de Joyeuse and Henri III. Anne de Joyeuse was one of Henri III's most favored *mignons*. In 1581, Henri III spent lavish sums on Joyeuse's marriage to his sister-in-law, Marguerite.[92] Anne de Joyeuse was then given governance of Normandy in 1583, the year Garnier published *Les Juives*. Garnier's own province, Maine bordered on Normandy. Garnier's dedication might be read as an indication of his awareness of Anne de Joyeuse's status and closeness to the king.[93] Garnier's treatment of a subject about disobedience firmly reestablishes difference between the aristocratic *minion*, seeking parity at court and the monarch. Garnier's dedication presents his "discours Chrestien & religieux" to Anne de Joyeuse as one who "l'estes autant ou plus que nul autre de ce Royaume." Joyeuse's religious devotion and his involvement in Ligue massacres take on a political dimension when used to frame a subject centered on monarchical disobedience. The pairing of the dedication with the play's subject further enforces the French monarch's title as

[90] Catherine de Medici was frequently read into the characters of powerful, astrologically-inclined queens. Mireille Huchon insists that the character of Nabuchodnonsor ultimately has strictly literary value, to rival Jean de la Taille's Saül. Mireille Huchon, Gillian Jondorf, and discussed in Marie-Madeleine Mouflard's *Robert Garnier*.

[91] Several scholars note the closeness of Garnier to Michel de l'Hospital and to du Faur, both early members of the Catholic but *politique* side of the conflict. Garnier's decision to join the Ligue in the year of the regicide of Henri III appears to be a sudden shift in position, following his wife's death the year before. Jondorf suggests that a more promising direction for the *application* might be found in Henri III's relation to his younger brother, François, duc d'Anjou.

[92] This celebration stood in stark contrast to his refusal to send money to his brother, the duc d'Anjou, then on a military campaign in the Netherlands to assist rebels against Philipp II. The duc d'Anjou could not pay the troops and was forced to leave the regionThe duc d'Anjou's intervention in the Netherlands, as a diplomatic maneuver coordinated with Elizabeth I, also mirrors the occupying force of the Babylonians in Judah. The duc d'Anjou's campaign in the Netherlands was the result of a prolonged "courtship" with Elizabeth I, most frequently read as a series of political maneuvers between the two countries. The relation between the duc d'Anjou and Anne de Joyeuse reminds readers of the French's history in the Netherlands, mirroring the multigenerational conflict between the Babylonians and the Jews. The French had previously been affected by iconoclastic revolts in the Netherlands in 1566, when Philip II sent his troops on French roads to quiet the rebellion. The French Huguenots, fearing military mobilization against them, plotted to free the king, then the minor, Charles IX, from the influence of the ultra-Catholic Guise faction, who received foreign aid from Spain. Ironically, France's foreign intervention in the Netherlands aided a group of Protestants rebelling against Philip II of Spain; similarly, the duc d'Anjou was repeatedly involved in Huguenot politics, particularly in 1575, immediately after Henri III's coronation. Holt. *The French Wars of Religion*. 1995. Letters from Henri III to his brother, from July 1583 onward, suggest that the duc ought to find ways to raise his own money as he was sent to the Netherlands to distance France from its troubles.

[93] Henri Chardon suggests that Garnier's dedication was a means of getting the king's ear. *Robert Garnier : sa vie, ses poesies inédites avec son veritable portrait et un fac-simile de sa signature*. 1905 p. 138. However, Garnier's complete tragedies, published two years later, in 1585, preserves the dedication of *Les Juives* to Anne de Joyeuse and includes dedications and laudatory prefaces to the king only at the very beginning of the volume. By April of the following year (after the publication of Garnier's play but evidence of the continued bond between Joyeuse and Henri III), Henri III writes to his brother : "Se souvenant des plaintes, notamment anglaise et irlandaises, à propos de pillages faits par de précédents navires de son frère, le roi suggère que l'affaire soit remise au duc de Joyeuse en sa qualité d'admiral de France." Letter no. 5320, Tome VI. *Lettres de Henri III, roi de France*. Jaqueline Boucher. 2006.

Treschrestien roi, the most Christian king.[94] The valorization of the monarchy, while certainly Catholic, remains distinct from the Ligue agenda, which often sought to influence or rival the French monarchy. The importance of a strong monarchy, was a political position firmly espoused in Garnier's 1567 "Hymne de la Monarchie," dedicated to Guy du Faur, of the Parlement de Paris. The play can be read as advocating for trust in monarchism. Following a series of plays written during the Protestant formation of republic-like political organization and the many arguments in favor of tyrannicide, *Les Juives* shows political continuity with Garnier's earlier works by promoting monarchy and favoring adherence to a unified embodiment of divine law in the most-Catholic king. Considering the reading public of plays -including local officials, merchants, and aristocrats - the play's violent ending reinforces the monarch's absolute, unquestionable power to punish as he sees fit, through whomever he sees fit.

The *application* still does not map neatly onto the religious troubles, however, mixing signs of heresy across both Babylon and Judah. It does not account for the frequent association of Protestantism with Judaism, nor does it consider the Catholic claim that the ritual murder of children was a mark of heresy.[95] If Nabuchodonosor were to be read as a Ligue partisan, it would be contradictory to then associate him with propaganda used against Protestants. The Babylonish captivity and exile of an entire people is not addressed. Several scholars have accounted for these discontinuities by proposing the play be read as a conversion narrative, in which the Hebrew people are slowly lead to Christianity, primarily in the Prophet's final monologue.[96] While an allegorical reading of the play's religious references to contemporary France certainly emphasizes the importance of governance and obedience, it further raises the question of historical interpretation and specifically, the historical comparison ("comme nous"), rather than a religious positioning of an episode of sacred history (a Joachimite reading of one people within one history).[97] I argue that Garnier's work challenges the Joachimite allegorical reading by disrupting its continuity. The gap between the play and its contemporary circumstances, is essential to a full reading of the play.

Garnier's prefatory claim that *Les Juives* represents a people "comme nous" stands in contrast to a claim of continuity between the French and the Trojans, Garnier makes in the

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[94] Holt's analysis of the Wars of Religion reminds readers of the importance of the anointment ceremony of the French king, which confirmed that he was God's earthly embodiment. Ch. 1. *The French Wars of Religion*. 1995

[95] See *Hatred in Print : Catholic propaganda and Protestant Identity During the French Wars of Religion*. Luc Racaut. Ashgate, 2002.

[96] Damon DiMauro argues for a more unusual fully religious reading of the play but focuses on the Sedecie as the messianic fulfillment of Christian eschatological history. Jean-Raymond Fanlo uses Benjamin to argue that Sedecie while a pharmakon, is not fully Christianized to the same degree that DiMauro proposes. Sabine Lardon sees the king ushering in a new Christain era to replace paganism. Anna Rosenzweig's dissertation similarly focuses on sovereignty and resistance to understand the historical dynamics of the Wars of Religion.

[97] The exact transposition of contemporary events through the lens of Hebrew bible stories was a medieval practice, believed to originate with Joachim of Fiore in the 12th century. Fiore's concordances between the Hebrew bible and the Gospel allow readers not only to see the Hebrew bible as a prophecy of the Gospel, foreseeing the life of Jesus Christ, but further, to read contemporary events in relation to the Hebrew bible as a prophecy of the Second Coming. See the work of Marjorie Reeves. In contrast to this scholarly work, Graham Runnall's research has shown that medieval mystery plays presented a similarly unified view of a Christian people with a single, abstract history. The plays were publically staged over multiple days. They represented huge swaths of Christian history using local officials and guild workers as actors, organizers, set-builders, and financial-backers. There was not a clear separation between the stage and daily life at these outdoor festivals performed on moveable scaffolds. Preachers and prophets similarly spoke from these scaffolds, distributed their pamphlets, and wore archetypal costumes : In Italy in the 1530s itinerant hermits were easily recognized by their dress, calqued on John the Baptist. See Marion Kuntz and Ottavia Niccoli.

preface to his 1579 play, *La Troade*. Unlike the Trojans, "nos ancetres,"[98] the people of Judah are "comme nous." This comparative gap, rather than continuous lineage, highlights a significant attention to historicity, removed from common Renaissance claims of the westward inheritance of empire.[99] *Les Juives* is a rhetorical play, interested less in plot than in discourse, and especially, in the gaps between action and narration. Consequently, the *application* does not sit smoothly with either the characters or the plot. By looking at the prophecy in the play, we can read the play less as a debate about how to govern and more as a debate over historical representation. Prophets are central to historical representation in this play, working with a fragmentary form of allegory, which does not correspond fully to either circumstance or sit clearly within large-scale theological history, which would provide a clear religious structure to determine the episode's meaning. A focus on the prophets in the play, allows for a reading of Garnier's "comme nous," that looks at the gap between subject and circumstance and how the prophet negotiates this gap, creating a new way of conceptualizing historical representation. As the main historical discourse, prophecy articulates the impossibility of a smooth alignment between abstract Christian eschatology, contemporary history, and the specific story represented in *Les Juives*. The classical form of *Les Juives* interacts with its sacred subject to shift historical representation from the authority of the church into an emerging literary field. Literature mediates the inability of classical form to fully return in a new context as well as the inadequacy of medieval forms to represent contemporary history. Garnier's complex layering and elision of prophets – both male and female, classical and Hebrew - in a static, predominantly monologue-driven play, also engages explicitly with the tension between the Pléiade project of using literary production to help build a strong imperial monarchy and the impossibility of continuity with or resurrection of the forms and meanings of earlier empires.

The impossibility of resurrecting the past is an essential tension in the Pléiade's poetic project of establishing literature's importance to political centralization and strength. *Les Juives* shows the unique role prophecy plays within this tension – its contribution to empire as well as its revelation of the impossibility of the project. Reading the formal structure of Garnier's work, which is neither wholly classical nor medieval mystery, Françoise Charpentier argues that Garnier's plays participate in the larger Pléiade project of encouraging the king to use literature for the expansion of his empire. The project of empire and theater's role, in resurrecting and rivaling Classical civilization, was certainly already a prominent idea in sixteenth-century theory. Joachim Du Bellay gives specific instructions to Pléiade poets, including playwrights, about which genres to imitate, in his 1549 *La Défense et illustration de la langue française.* In a

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[98] *La Troade*, dedicatory preface. 1579

[99] In Garnier's dedication to his *La Troade* (1579), he writes :

> je scay qu'il n'est genre de Poëmes moins agreeable que cestuy-cy [la tragédie], qui ne représente que les malheurs lamentables des Princes, avec les saccagemens des peuples. Mais aussi les passions de tels sujets nous sont ja si ordinaries que les exemples anciens nous devront doresnavent servir de consolation en nos particuliers et domestiques encombres : voyant nos ancestres Troyens [...] après le decez de l'orgeuilleux Empire [romain], ceste très-florissante Monarchie [la France].

Garnier establishes a direct lineage from the Trojans to France (Ronsard's *Franciade* had been published two years prior in 1577). Contemporary spectators are watching their own history on stage. This is not a mythical time but rather a progressive historical march into the present. Furthermore, although the present has improved upon the past, the French continue to struggle with the same violence. In *Les Juives*, however, Garnier simply says "comme nous" and does not allude to a historical progression as he did in this earlier preface. Given the significant break in his choice of subject matter, I think it is reasonable to argue that a different conception of history is developed in *Les Juives*.

chapter entitled "Quels genres de poèmes doit élire le poète français," Du Bellay explains the generic shift he envisions will create a new French literature :

> Quant aux comédies et tragédies, si les rois et les républiques les voulaient restituer en leur ancienne dignité, qu'ont usurpée les farces et les moralités, je serais bien d'opinion que tu t'y employasses, et si tu le veux faire pour l'ornement de ta langue, tu sais où tu en dois trouver les archetypes.[100]

Du Bellay emphasizes that it is "les rois et les républiques", as a governing bodies, that ought to determine the use of theater. It is by the sovereign's wish that theater can come to hold the status it once held in the republics and empires of classical society. The lack of distinction between governing bodies further underscores du Bellay's classical vantage point in his exposition of the Pléiade's political role. Du Bellay distances the Pléiade from the older, gothic forms of theater (farces, moralités). The new French language and the new French nation ought to use the classical genres: comedy and tragedy. Charles Mazouer makes this point when he describes a shift in generic axes through the Pléiade's plays : from the sacred and profane to the tragic and comic. Du Bellay emphasizes the form, rather than the choice of subject, in the *Défense*. He is neither promoting nor dissuading Pléiade members from choosing sacred subjects but is advocating for classical formal models to structure the subject. However, it is also clear from du Bellay's suggestion to use classical theater, that French tragedians will be following "archetypes," not replicating classical tragedy. Tragedy is a formal model, a template that must be adapted to a uniquely French political body. The Protestant playwright, Jean de la Taille, further specifies the generic markers of the new French theater in the preface to his 1572 play *Saül le furieux*. Jean de la Taille reminds playwrights of Aristotle's rules of the three unities, of which subjects are worthy of tragedy, of what cannot be shown on stage, and of the importance of the chorus.[101] He echoes Du Bellay's plea for poets to abandon medieval forms, which spoil the French language, preferring that "on y eust adopté & naturalisé la vraye Tragedie & Comedie," so that "les Roys & les grands sçeussent le plaisir que c'est de voir reciter, & representer au vif une vraye Tragedie ou Comedie […] qui jadis estoit en si grande estime pour le passetemps des Grecs & des Romains."[102] These theorists position literature next to royal power. This establishes literary authority next to the king rather than allowing representational strategies to remain exclusively within the church's control. The existing religious function of French theater, which represented a way to read and understand a people's history, must be folded into, or accounted for with, the new form.[103]

The divergence between the classical form and the medieval religious-historical function of theater, prevents a full return of tragedy as envisioned by the Pléiade project. In order for a French empire to rival Greece through theater, the tragic form would have to return intact. A unifying, trans-historical theater would be useful to a nationalist project, but as many critics have shown, these types of works were not often successfully completed in the sixteenth century.[104] Garnier's decision to break from his classically inspired tragedies to work with a Biblical subject

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[100] Second livre, ch. IV

[101] *De l'art de la tragédie*. Ed. Christian Barataud. 2007 p. 17 - 18

[102] ibid. p. 19

[103] Among Humanists, and what we consider canonical 16th century literature, poetry, the dominant form in the 16th century, was practiced, or illustrated, by the lower genre of theater. Early theater was a pedagogical and rhetorical exercise for students. It helped enrich and develop the vernacular language through translation, as well as taught structure and Classical thought. This was preparation for careers in the public sphere.

[104] Pierre Ronsard's unfinished *Franciade*, written contemporaneously to Garnier's final play, is another example of the difficulty of bringing Classical genres in tact into the sixteenth century.

emphasizes the historical function that joins the religious function of the medieval mystery to the emerging theoretical interests of the Pléiade. Charles Mazouer reads the move away from the forms of sacred drama by the Pléiade poets as an implementation of a Humanist project of taking man out of an unchanging, transcendent world order and putting him in history.[105] How this earthly history works, however, is a question for the playwright. *Les Juives* is framed by a Prophet and anchored in the historical context provided by the king's mother, Amital. The Prophet's role mirrors the writer's role by reworking the form through which a people's history is understood. The interweaving of the prophetic characters' monologues ties together the religious and the historical in the play, essentially proposing a historical theater which is far from secular but is must re-conceptualize history because of its new form.

Walter Benjamin's term *Trauerspiel*, describes the form through which Greek tragedy comes back, as a mourning play. In contrast to tragedy, the Trauerspiel is an allegory, a form for the mournful.[106]

> [T]hese are not so much plays which cause mourning, as plays through which mournfulness finds satisfaction : plays for the mournful. A certain ostentation is characteristic of these people. Their images are displayed in order to be seen, arranged in the way they want them to be seen... the Greek tragedy is, in any case, not a repeatable act of ostentation, but a once-and-for-all resumption of the tragic trial before a higher court... The spectator of tragedy is summoned, and is justified, by the tragedy itself; the *Trauerspiel*, in contrast, has to be understood from the point of view of the onlooker. He learns how, on the stage, a space which belongs to an inner world of feeling and bears no relationship to the cosmos, situations are compellingly presented to him.

Mourning happens in historical time. It does not bring back the dead but it can make their ghosts visible, as ghosts, as loss.[107] The play does not provide catharsis or divine redemption, only a space for mourning to play out. Spectators viewing the play do not see the mythical otherworld on stage, but rather their own historical world. Interestingly, this is more similar to the medieval French mystery plays than is immediately apparent. J.S. Street argues that the French mysteries honored God by showing his presence in the world from the point of view of the spectators. The episodic, artificial, idea (rather than emotion)- driven plays depended on the viewers' faith ; the play functioned as a projection of the spectators' faith. The problem of communicating a worldview, or way of understanding a people's history, remained in the Trauerspiel as a functional remnant of the Mysteries, which endeavored to show all of Christian time and man's place in the order of the world.[108] The shift during the Renaissance, then, is less one of function, than of rethinking a relation to history. Eschatological time can develop into progressive time,

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[105] Mazouer, Charles. *Le Théâtre de la Renaissance*. 2002. p. 181

[106] All citations from Benjamin, Walter. *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. Trans. John Osborne. 1998. p. 229

[107] Benjamin develops this focus on excess, pomp, the over-determined visual of the baroque aesthetic, elsewhere as a making immanent, or indwelling, of the divine. The divine is not imminent, in the eschatological sense, but already descended to earth, made into allegory. Ilit Ferber interprets Benjamin's interest in ostentation as a focus on the object, detached from the subject ; the object is lost and mourned. Transcendence has been excluded by being incorporated into the objects, not as a symbol but as a fragmented, fallen marker of what has been lost. Objects do not play as prominent of a role in this particular play, however. This type of excess is found more in the rhetoric of the monologues.

[108] J.S. Street, *French Sacred Drama from Bèze to Corneille : Dramatic forms and their purposes in early modern theatre. 1983.*

providing a blueprint for the future based on the skeletal remains of the past.[109] Beatrice Hanssen's reading of Benjamin, however, emphasizes that "unearth[ing] the debris of human history" is an entirely different way of conceiving history.[110] A pile of debris is made up of specific instances that can only be mourned. Judgment is moved out of the mythic into the historical realm of amassing and mourning. In *Les Juives*, as I have shown, prophets bodily negotiate this shift, moving the faith represented to the audience out of narrative and into the body of the monarch, who should be the central focus of their understanding of God's will on earth. The audience looks backward, to their history, and mourns, while the monarch relates to the future through prayer and the apprenticeship of the Prophet.

Ironically, prophecy can be read as the splinter that brings tragedy back as Trauerspiel. Benjamin almost addresses the relation of prophecy to loss in one passage where he notes the absence of the tragic (of mourning) in tragedy according to Aristotle's *Poetics* :

> Tragedy is a preliminary stage of prophecy. It is a content, which exists only in language : what is tragic is the word and the silence of the past, in which the prophetic voice is being tried out, or suffering and death, when they are redeemed by this voice; but a fate in the pragmatic substance of its entanglements is never tragic. The *Trauerspiel* is conceivable as pantomime; the tragedy is not.[111]

Benjamin does not define prophecy, nor does he specify its exact relation to tragedy. However, prophecy is what allows tragedy to return, much as costume can return in fashion or Rome can return in Robespierre's Paris. The prophetic voice in Tragedy comes back as silence in Trauerspiel. Peter Fenves interprets this silence as an intentional post-modern gesture. For Fenves, Benjamin has two main aims : to theorize a non-nationalist theater and to theorize a divided, plural spectatorship for that theater.[112] Consequentially, Fenves reads prophecy as that which divides tragedy from itself, that which allows it to return but not as itself, and the *Trauerspiel*, therefore, brings back this internal alterity as silence. Everything that returns with the *Trauerspiel*, returns as its loss, is held as lost and is mourned as absent.[113] Like the ghost of Cassandra, prophecy is an internal alterity, which haunts the Trauerspiel in the fallen historical world. Prophecy can be read, in this way, as a splinter within tragedy, which allows the genre itself to be haunted when it returns as Trauerspiel, lamenting and conjuring what is lost without making it anything other than lost.[114]

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[109] This is the subject of many books on secularization, which see a religious substructure to the progressive historical conceptualizations of the Modern period. Löwith, *Meaning in History,* 1949, Blumenberg,*The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 1966, Schmitt, *Political Theology*, 1985.

[110] *Walter Benjamin's Other History*, 1998. Willi Goetschel considers the historical precarity of Heine's messiah, who like Benjamin's reading of Paul Klee's angel, can only look backward. Heine's messiah does not hear what suffering his people have endured on earth until the end of the day. It is after they have suffered that he tries to intervene, but because he is in chains, must wait for the right moment. This waiting and looking back contrasts with Joachim of Fiore's interpretive methods that looked for past patterns and attempted to read current events as signs of what was to come, a way of thinking, Denis Crouzet has argued, still predominant, and exploited by both Catholics and Protestants, in the 16th century.

[111] p. 118-119

[112] This multiplicity within both the spectatorship and the content of the play contrasts with the theatrical politics of *oubliance*, which Andrea Frisch argues will develop in the following quarter century. *Forgetting Differences*, 2015.

[113] Fenves, Peter. "Tragedy and Prophecy in Benjamin's *Origin of the German Mourning Play.*" in Richter, Gerhard. *Benjamin's Ghosts : Interventions in Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory*. Stanford : Stanford University Press, 2002.

[114] In *L'Espace littéraire*, Maurice Blanchot hopes literature might take on this function, giving the example of Orpheus and Eurydice. He suggests that if Orpheus could conjure Eurydice as she is in Hades, not bring her to the surface, but let the surface world see her as she is in Hades, this would be a truer image.

Prophecy in *Les Juives* is central to the mediation of the medieval mystery tradition and the newly imitated classical form of tragedy. An attempt to bring back tragedy brings back a series of gaps. The play is no longer medieval mystery nor is it classical tragedy but both forms, both engaged with the prophetic, which brings back the loss of prophecy in contemporary France. Prophecy in *Les Juives* allows for the Jewish women to live in the present and allows for a larger meaning to be made from history, but it also shapes the form the play takes. The king, while valorized as the embodiment of divine history at the end of the play, is less important than the prophets in conceptualizing history for the audience. Prophecy gathers together and binds the community through their history and loss in order to finally elevate the king at the end of the play. *Les Juives*' particular attention to what is lost and refusal to unify the community through any redemptive use of the past makes it a particularly interesting contrast to Pléiade theorizations of a nationalist theater, showing the difficulties of such a project during the sixteenth-century. The play balances the religious and the political without collapsing one into the other, and its prophets hold that tension. Without a unifying narrative, readers and spectators can wait, suspending their history in mourning.

Les Juives does not promote action during a contentious and violent period of religious war. As Andrea Frisch has argued, the centrality of lamentation in Garnier's keeps the play from being read as propaganda, suspending both time and potential reactive action.[115] The allegory does not resolve, does not provide a coherent message, and therefore allows the present to be saturated with the past, detached from a larger linear arc and potential community action. The prophet acts as a historian, as a result, rather than as a unifying narrator. The prophet gives a description of what he sees but is unable to account for these sights with pre-determined narratives. As a result, the play cannot fit into the church's concept of history. The prophets' reworking of history prevents progressive readings of history and a teleological progression toward salvation, ultimately containing these narratives within the king's body at the end of the play. The prophets further direct the community to focus on the specificity of the present moment and its meaning, quite literally by the absence of plot and static, almost stagnant discursive sitting in the moment, which prevents the present from being sacrificed to the future (the ends can't be used to justify the means). In contrast to the apocalyptic posturing of multiple political and religious factions, at the time of its publication, *Les Juives* uses prophecy to reinforce the monarchy as the means for a people to understand themselves.

[115] *Forgetting Differences : Tragedy, Historiography, and the French Wars of Religion, 2015.* Charles Mazouer's research finds that the Valois did not use the theater as a propaganda machine nor were these plays performed extensively. They were, however performed by traveling troupes, published, and read. The audience was most likely the local officials and bourgeoisie that produced and performed in the mysteries. Denis Crouzet suggests that the reactionary use of prophecy used by propagandists – putting people in a living relation to mythology – ran directly counter to the work of the Pléiade poets. In his extensive tome, *Les Guerriers de Dieu*, he argues that prophetic rhetoric was used by Catholics as a way to show God's presence in the world and in the monarch, whereas the Protestants used prophetic rhetoric methodically to glorify God at strategic moments. In a violent climate, prophecy was used as a weapon to interpret that violence and form some semblance of a worldview. Garnier, a Pléiade poet, turns away from propaganda, in this instance by opening the present to be lived and mourned. The Prophet does not interpret the play didactically for the audience to advocate compliance with authority, nor does he announce man's place in a transcendent religious order. Instead, the Prophet retains a borderline position within a changing world and makes that shift present.

Rethinking Haunted Houses in Montaigne's "Des Boyteux"

Michel de Montaigne's essay, "Des Boyteux," proposes a formal solution to the problematic proximity of religion and theater at the end of the sixteenth century. In the essay, Montaigne tells the story of a boy who successfully pretended to be the voice of a spirit, haunting his own house. The success of this endeavor led him to recruit a girl of the same age, and expand the scope of the ruse by hiding under the church altar at night and calling out with "paroles qui tendoient à la conversion du monde et menace du jour du jugement (car ce sont subjects soubs l'authorité et reverence desquels l'imposture se tapit plus aiséement)." Prophetic language, as Montaigne notes parenthetically, is easy to stage. This casual remark points to a more widespread literary interest. As I will show, haunted houses, as sites of divine authority intervening on earth, were commonly represented in sixteenth-century literature. By reworking a haunted house scene Montaigne's essay shifts authority out of theatrical representation and the religious sphere and into evidence-based, political prose. The literary adaptation of prophetic discourse helps authorize literary discourse but also shifts that same authority out of the religious and political spheres. The haunted house allows the literary text to de-authorize certain ways of relating to the divine, positioning literary discourse as the primary mediator between divine and earthly authority.

The haunted house was a common scene in sixteenth-century France. I will present a few examples that illustrate the salient features of the house topos with which Montaigne engages. I begin with the belief in privileged access to the divine through sound. Erasmus' 1524 colloquy, "Exorcism, or the Spectre," presents a haunted house most similar to the ruse Montaigne describes having seen near his house. The colloquy is a dialogue, which recounts a ruse played on a gullible priest. The priest is tricked into believing a spirit lives near a bridge based on the groans sounds he hears when he passes by, sounds interpreted for him as a haunting. An epistemology based on what is heard is central to the ruse. This ruse is not exclusive to anti-clerical critiques. Marguerite de Navarre stages a haunted house, which depends on the inability to see. The Seigneur de Grignaulx returns home to hear that his house is haunted.[1] Skeptical, he takes his wife home, goes to sleep, and soon feels a breath across his face, followed by a voice calling his grandmother's name. He hears the spirit knocking furniture over but can't see in the dark.[2] It isn't until he devises a scheme to catch physically the spirit's hand and has his wife light

[1] Nouvelle 39, *Heptameron*. 1558

[2] Ronsard's 1555 hymn "Les Daimons" describes bad demons as "Incubes, / Larves, Lares, Lemurs, Penates, et Succubes, / Empouses, Lamiens," which "remuent de nuict bancs, tables et treteaux, / Clefs, huys, portes, buffets, licts, chaires, escabeaux, / Ou comptent nos tresors, ou jettent contre terre / Maintenant une espée, et maintenant un verre" (165 – 168). The disturbance leaves no physical evidence. Spirits can be sensed through the sounds they make. As Ronsard concludes his encyclopedic hymn, he returns to the "Larves, Lares, Lemurs" in a move to exorcise these particular demons from France :

> Ô Seigneur Eternel en qui seul gist ma foy,
> Pour l'honneur de ton nom, de grace donne moy,
> Donne moy que jamais je ne trouve en ma voye
> Ces paniques terreurs : mais ô Seigneur envoye
> Loin de la Chrestienté dans les pays des Turcs
> Ces Larves ces Daimons ces Lares et Lemurs,
> Ou sur le chef de ceux qui oseront mesdire
> Des chansons que j'accorde à ma nouvelle lyre.

a candle that the chambermaid is unmasked.[3] The ruse depends entirely on the premise that the otherworld is invisible but can enter this world through sound.[4] Haunted houses appear more true the less plausible the sounds become. [5]

Literary representations of haunted houses were frequently used to critique religious practices believed to exploit the interpretation of ambiguous sounds. Many haunted house scenes participate in pre-Reformation critiques of the venality of Catholic clergy before the Affair of the Placards : priests-for-hire. Many of these plays and stories portray priests acting in bad faith; in the case of Erasmus' colloquy, priests willingly exorcise staged sounds for financial gain, playing on superstitious beliefs. Pierre de Larivey's late sixteenth-century play, *Les Esprits*, transposes this ruse into a broader critique of financial self-interest and social mobility.

A haunted house ruse drives the action of Pierre de Larivey's 1579 *Les Esprits*, an adaptation of Lorenzino de Medici's 1536 *Aridosia*, itself an adaptation of Plautus' *Aulularia* and *Mostellaria*, as well as Terence's *Adelphes*. *Les Esprits* is one of many Renaissance plots structured around a haunted house ruse designed to extract money from a miserly father.[6] Whereas Lorenzino privileged *Aulularia*, a play focused on avarice, Larivey privileged the other Plautus source text, *Mostellaria*, translated as *The Haunted House* or *The Ghost*. Lorenzino's play followed an anti-clerical critique, much like Erasmus' colloquy on exorcism, including a scene in which a priest-for-hire comes to exorcise the haunted house with holy water, a lantern, and the Latin liturgy. Larivey replaces this scene with a false prophet, M Jossé. Larivey's retitling of the play, and shift in primary source text, moves the focus of the play from the correction of a social flaw – miserliness – to the means of correction, a haunted house.[7] The

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Ronsard ends his hymn with the demons who haunt houses, who are known to make houses shake and quake and rattle. Ronsard chooses this particular type of demon to banish from France. He sends them as a curse on the Ottoman Empire, an established political adversary. In a second move, he sends these haunting demons to those who insult his poetry. The poem itself performs this exorcism and gains value by its power both to summon and to eradicate these rattling demons. Ronsard's imaginative act gives itself additional value and importance by the very act of pulling together historical mediators between the divine world and the earthly world and offering itself as their successor.

[3] Many of the *Heptameron* stories describe corrupt clerics. Nouvelle 22 repeatedly compares a priest, who tries to sleep with a nun, as a "diable."

[4] The belief that the otherworld enters through sound is similarly seen in Rabelais' episode of the "paroles gelées." *Quart livre*, ch. 56. Pantagruel believes that the crew has arrived at a thin place where the other world can come through. This belief is also the premise of the devotional practice of prayer, psalm-singing, and speaking in tongues. People can communicate with their god through sound, even when his presence is invisible.

[5] Virginia Krause has analyzed the belief that the divine can be heard but not seen in her work on legal confessions. Krause argues that the 13th century legal reforms, which replaced medieval law with Roman Canon law, privileged confession, a form of auditory truth. The confluence of the church sacrament and the new legal requirement for proof, led to a firm belief that confession, aurally received narrative, gave access to other worlds. *Witchcraft, Demonology, and Confession in Early Modern France*. 2015

[6] M.J. Freeman finds that Ercole Bentivoglio's *I Fantasmi* is another important source for Larivey's play. "Une source inconnue des *Esprits* de Pierre de Larivey." 1979. Jan Frans Van Dijkhuizen traces the anti-clerical motif of possession and exorcism in the English tradition. He looks at John Jeffere's 1563 *The Bugbears*, adapted from Anton Francesco Grazzini's 1561 *La Spiritata*, itself startlingly similar to Lorenzino's play; Barnabe Barnes' *The Devil's Charter* based on Rodrigo Borgia's (Pope Alexander VI) alleged pact with the devil shifts Van Dijkhuizen's analysis into the specifically anti-Catholic critique of theater and ceremony. *Devil Theatre : Demonic Possession and Exorcism in English Renaissance Drama*. 2007.

[7] Lorenzino's play was written for the marriage of his cousin, Alessandro de Medici, duke of Florence, to Margaret of Austria, the daughter of Charles V, seven months before Lorenzino assassinated his cousin and published an apology claiming that he overthrew a tyrant to bring back the Florentine republic. Anthony Ellis reads *L'Aridosia* as a political allegory about the problem of absolutist control in Florence. "The Comic Old Man in a Medicean Context

secularization of the exorcist further shifts the play from a clerical critique to a critique of bourgeois finance. I will discuss this play in some detail to draw out the role of publicly performed interpretation in the functioning of the haunted house ruse.

In the play, Severin is the miserly- and severe- father of two sons and a daughter. As the play opens, Severin's son, Urbain, has hedonistically spent the entire weekend in his father's town house with a woman, wasting money and ruining property instead of coming up with the money he owes a friend. Severin arrives at the house with the sole intention of leaving his purse for safekeeping; he intends to use the house to store rather than spend money. Frontin, Urbain's servant, quickly mediates the encounter, reinterpreting the sounds he hears : the merrymaking, crashing sound of property damage, noises, all indicate that the house is full of devils. The interpretive move is effective because Severin's only concern is financial loss. Frontin suggests that Severin hire a magician to exorcise the house. The play unfolds as a series of financial redistributions, resulting in sufficient dowries for all Severin's children and happy marriages by the end.

The action of *Les Esprits* is driven by two primary means of redistribution, both of which are based on interpreting the noises in Severin's house as spirits. The first opportunity is theft. Severin cannot leave his purse in his house if it is haunted, he must leave it elsewhere (he chooses to dig a hole near the house and bury it). Desiré, who wants to marry Severin's daughter, lurks in the shadows and notes the location of the buried money. But because the house is haunted, it is no longer available to store money. The second opportunity is fraud. Frontin tells Severin to get "un sorcier ou un nigromant pour les [the devils] conjurer et contraindre sortir de leans." Frontin assures Severin that he will find an inexpensive sorcerer. The haunted house now generates profit by instigating action.

Frontin stages the exorcism of the house, directing the sorcerer, M Jossé and playing the role of the demons himself. M Jossé arrives with a stick and a booklet. Severin claims that the Latin liturgy is beyond him and most likely, beyond the devils. M Jossé concurs and recites a series of lengthy verse vernacular conjuring spells. The devils, played by Frontin, propose three forms of proof that they have in fact vacated the house : the complete destruction of the house, Severin's ring (conveniently worth the sum that Urbain owes his friend), or the possession of Severin's body. With great difficulty, Frontin and M Jossé convince Severin to give up his ring, which provides payment for both Urbain and the sorcerer's services. Even after the ruse is complete, M Jossé insists that Severin wear a blindfold to enter the house, keeping the spirits firmly in the aural world.

The ruse orchestrates a redistribution of wealth that not only benefits the servant and his friend but that also socializes and corrects the miser. The miser has further been punished for his religious devotion to money, making him an exemplar of false religion. The ruse has generated profit from the misplacement of religious sentiment onto money and superstition. The miser has been discredited, but more importantly as the re-titling shows, the spirits have been discredited as a fictional ploy. Demons are theatrical constructs used to turn a profit. The house, at the nexus of this reinterpretation and redistribution, remains firmly in the camp of circulation (both expenditure and profit-generation), rather than savings. The house is used as an explicitly fictional means of correcting false belief. By using visual and material proof to show the absurdity of believing in what the ear receives, the play introduces a critique of auditory proof. The ruse in Larivey's play works because religion has already been eclipsed by a bourgeois

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: Lorenzino, the Florentine "New Brutus," and *Aridosia*." 2003. Larivey's play could then be read as a shift from a politically charged play into a social register, one focused on bourgeois self-interest.

valorization of finance and status over piety. Severin's self-interest is explicit and money drives the haunted house ruse and redistributive exoricsm. False religion is staged in relation to a changing economic order and draws attention to the problem of interpreting the resulting social shifts in a world that still uses religious terms.

The haunted house ruse depends on the convergence of multiple interpretive practices on a single site of incomprehensible noise. When the haunted house moves across the Atlantic it becomes a way to denigrate indigenous religious ceremonies as financially motivated ruses. The haunted house motif pulls together inverted or upside-down religious practices, namely witchcraft and indigenous religion as the main site of financial-religious entanglement. An interpretive crisis is collapsed in the travel narratives in order to make a claim about proper religious practice. That is, a point of confusion is elided with doctrinal assertion. I will briefly look at two examples, which show how the haunted house is used not only as a means of critique but as a means of dealing with difference.

André Thevet published *Les singularités de la France antactique* in 1555 following his brief participation in the founding of a French colony in the bay of Rio de Janeiro. Thevet, a Franciscan monk, devotes several sections of his book to the indigenous religious practices of the Tupinamba. In one example, he describes demonic spirits who persecute the Tupinamba "non seuelement l'ame, mais aussi le corps, les bastant & outrageant excessivsement, de manière que aucunefois vous les orriez faire un cri épouvantable, disant en leur langue, s'il y a quelque chrétien là près : « Vois-tu pas *Agnan* qui me bat? Défends-moi, si tu veux que je te serve et coupe ton bois » - comme quelquefois on les fait travailler pour peu de chose au bois de brésil. Pourtant ne sortent la nuit de leurs logettes sans porter du feu avec eux, lequel ils disent être souveraine défense et remède contre leur ennemi."[8] Thevet's description of the Tupinamba's struggles with demonic persecution slips quickly between reported sound and translation. The Tupinamba cry out. Thevet's report quickly adds in explanatory speech before noting that such an explanation would only be given "s'il y a quelque chrétien là près." An unexplained noise is glossed with a financial interpretation: Thevet suggests that the Tupinamba cry out in order to receive compensation from the Europeans for their labor. The spirit persecutions, which can easily be avoided by carrying fire : "Pourtant ne sortent la nuit," become means of labor negotiation through a remunerative logic: "si tu veux que je te serve." Thevet's narration implies that the worker would not cry out, making disruptive noises, if he did not foresee some possibility of reward. Noise is quickly folded into a larger interpretive project.

Thevet's description of an indigenous religious ceremony again transposes an interpretive agenda onto a site of interpretive difficulty. Thevet relies on the conventions of the haunted house ruse to read the Tupinamba ceremony. He describes the brand-new house, built specifically for the ceremony; he emphasizes the clean white linens laid out, the quantity of food and drink stocked inside, and the virginal girl ready to wash him. Thevet's description emphasizes the expenditure made by the community to receive the prophet's message. A strong correlation is established between this expenditure and the house. Once inside the house, the prophet calls on the spirits and from the outside, a great noise can be heard. Nothing can be seen, but the people hear "quelque bruit et hurlement." In response to the haunted house, the people cry out, exhorting the prophet to consult the spirits on several questions relating to their enemies

[8] Ch. 35 "Des visions, songes, et illusions de ces Amériques, et de la persecution qu'ils reçoivent des esprits malins." Ed. Frank Lestringant, 1998

: the outcome of battles, who will be taken hostage, who will be attacked by a wild beast. The people receive their answers once the prophet leaves the house. The religious communication, the spirits, and the noise, remain sealed in the house. The prophet is compensated for his noisy house performance with gifts : "Et Dieu sait les caresses et les présents que chacun lui fait."[9] Thevet's focus on material exchange has reconfigured a series of questions relating to the security of the community as a series of questions about the security of property. By mocking the expenditures inherent to the people's religious practice, Thevet has reframed the ceremony, moving it from a religious register into a financial one. The Tupinamba are paying for fiction.

Thevet overcomes an interpretive blockage by reading the religious ceremony as a haunted house, as a stage intended for personal profit. This tips Thevet's narrative from a skeptical account of custom to a theological plea. He frames his description with a clear interpretation of the ceremony. Indigenous prophets and healers are "gens de mauvaise vie qui se sont adonnés à server au Diable pour décevoir leurs voisins." These prophets are "imposteurs," associated with distributing poison, with performing "cérémonies et invocations diaboliques." Thevet labels the ceremony an example of "magie abusive" common before the birth of Christ, which has continued in contemporary society with the problem of witchcraft in Europe. Tupinamba religious practices are inverted, fallen practices.[10] Thevet suggests that it is the writer's role not only to make this distinction (between true and abusive magic) but further, the writer can bolster true religious practice : "chercher et contempler les choses célestes, célébrer et honorer Dieu" is a form of "vraie magie." The true writer distinguishes himself clearly from the false prophet. He further establishes his own role as police, de-authorizing false ceremonies and authorizing the legitimate religion. For Thevet, the distinction between true and false prophecy hinges on the writer's ability to recognize the ulterior motive of material gain and a focus on property. Only the writer has the authority to perform this discursive, adjudicating interpretation.[11]

The critique of auditory proof shifts significantly in Jean de Léry's report on a similar ceremony. Léry describes the same Tupinamba ceremony as Thevet, making the same association with witchcraft in Europe, but unlike Thevet, who focuses on false religious ceremony, Léry opposes ceremony as such. Prose is privileged over theater, word over ceremony. Jean de Léry's Protestant account of his travels to Brazil, *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*, was published in 1578, a year before Larivey's play. Léry describes a

[9] Ch. 36. "Des faux prophètes et magiciens de ce pays qui communiquent avec les esprits malins."

[10] Thevet thoroughly explains the Tupinamba's attempts to understand and even try out Christianity. While the Tupinamba's attempt at Christianity is futile – they are unable to resurrect the man they drowned – the story of the successful exorcism confirms that the Christian faith works in Brazil. The efficacy of Catholic ritual is proof of God's immanence on earth. Ch. 28. "De la religion des Amériques." The exorcism serves to prove Christianity's truth and universality, placing the Tupinamba not only "éloigné de la vérité" but further, aligned with the Devil and "les esprits malins." The Tupinamba's false religion, then is not a separate religion but a fallen Christianity, aligned with the Devil and with financial interest. Scholars have noted the use of the "world upside down" trope is used for both indigenous peoples and witches. In particular, Michel de Certeau focuses on the structural similarity in representational strategies in *L'écriture de l'histoire*, 1975, and Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 1997.

[11] Sarah Ferber and Virginia Krause have extensively discussed the unique epistemological access to the divine granted to the interpreter, whether confessor, exorcist, doctor, or demonologist. Possession was frequently read as the body made stage for a religious conflict to play out. Exorcism dealt with this mute spectacle by bringing in expert interpreters, whether priests or doctors. Witch trials depended on confession to make an internal conflict widely available. The evidence used in these trials was therefore discursive. The body of the possessed, the witch, or in this case indigenous group, is either mute or exudes purportedly un-interpretable sounds, which must be interpreted (in this case by the writer). *Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France*. *Witchcraft, Demonology, and Confession in Early Modern France.*

Tupinamba religious assembly in which men, women, and children are separated into three huts. Each hut can hear the noises coming from the other huts but cannot see what is happening. Léry emphasizes his own position, initially in the women's hut, to provide a first-person account. He describes leaving the women's hut, where "enragées" jump up and down, and goes to the men's hut, where he peers through a hole to look outside the hut. He sees prophets dressed in ceremonial garb singing and dancing.[12] The housing has been inverted in this description - the prophets stand outside while the people are separated from view in huts - the women jumping up and down in the hut are as culpable as the false prophets. Frank Lestringant reads the scene in terms of gender : only women are demonic, and similar to the prophets calling on spirits outside the huts.[13] Problematic religious practice is tied to noise, and specifically, to performed noise. Léry compares the prophets to "sonneurs de companes de ces caphards." The false showmanship expands to "affronteurs," idolaters who hold "sabbat" and other "singeries." Women, animals, and indigenous races are brought together through denigrating interpretation. Léry goes on to denounce those who practice "ensorcelement,"and finally "successeurs des prestres de Baal." This final remark directly compares the Brazilian prophets to Catholic priests, situating his interpretation within the framework of the religious conflict in France and propagandistic strategies employed on both sides. Witchcraft is folded into the larger problem of false ceremony and, simply, ceremony as such.[14]

Léry affirms his belief in the reality of demons, interpreting exorcism as an indication that conversion is possible. In one example, an old man asks Léry, who is praying, about his religion. Léry explains that arrival of Jesus Christ brought about the cessation of demons, using the indigenous word for demon "*Aygnan*." The old man responds in turn with a legend passed down by their grandfathers about the coming of strangers who would preach obedience to a new god. Léry tries to find a textual reference for the man's story, considering whether one of the Apostles had made it to Brazil and finally citing, with reservation and some qualification, the text of Revelation : "Voila le texte lequel, quant à la lettre, approche fort du dire et de ce que pratiquent nos *Toüoupinambaoults*." Through this reading, Léry is able to account for the indigenous people's religious practices without placing them in the same temporal moment as the Catholics or European witches. The gospel has not yet spread to this part of the world, but can still account for its existence. Unlike Thevet's broad application of Christian law, which faults the Tupinamba for practicing false religion when true religion is effective in their region, Léry takes an historical view.

Léry's interest in conversion also reconfigures the role he attributes to the writer. For Léry, the writer's role in mediating religious interpretation is to bring divergent worlds closer together rather than to police and excise, as Thevet proposes. Léry is willing to see himself from the perspective of the Tupinamba : they interpret his writing demonstration as sorcery, which Léry concedes is a means to "déclarer nos secrets" over long distances, a gift usually given by

[12] Ch. 16. *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la terre du Brésil*. 1578
[13] Ch. 6. *Jean de Léry ou l'invention du sauvage*. 2005
[14] Well into the 17th century, a Protestant/ Catholic divide over ceremony persists. English accounts of the Loudun exorcisms (1630 – 40), which brought tourism to the Poitou, relate the exorcisms as theater reviews. In one such account, the Catholic church is accused of staging performances to attract followers: *A relation of the devil Balam's departure out of the body of the Mother Prioresse of the Ursuline nuns of Loudun : Her fearefull motions and contorsions during the exorcisme, with the extract of the proces verball, touching the exorcismes wrought at Loudun, by order from the Bichop of Poictiers under the authority of the king.* St. Paul's Church yard and St. Dunstans Church yard in Fleet Street at the shop turning up to Cliffords-Inne : R. Badger, 1636. http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=V15319

the gods. Léry's oblique alignment of prophecy and writing, filtered through the Tupinamba's beliefs, creates proximity between his occasional moments of proselytizing while on the road with the divine speech delivered by the wandering indigenous prophets. Léry sings psalms and is pleased when the Brazilians he is traveling with appreciate the melody and listen to his explanations. By drawing the two traditions together and giving a clear example of proselytizing through discussion, Léry sets up a conversion narrative for the indigenous prophet : from charlatan to true prophet. Frank Lestringant's gendered reading of the Tupinamba ceremony, allows him to conclude that song and dance can be salvaged among men by replacing the indigenous customs with psalm singing. Although Lestringant notes Léry's ultimate pessimism, his inability to enact this conversion or replacement in any sustainted way, the gendered reading of alterity allows Lestringant to call Léry an optimist.[15] Unlike Thévet's legislated truth, Léry's conversion narrative allows for the spread of Protestantism through practices that build from and correct those of the wandering prophets.

As Jean de Léry's haunted house interpretation of a Tupinamba ceremony demonstrates, prose narration can contain and deflate the crowd's enthusiasm during a theatrical event. Michel Jeanneret remarks on the affinity between Léry and Montaigne, with regard to generic markers, as the two writers develop prose into a literary discourse : the emphasis on first-person observation and the ensuing development of a subject, a world ordered by empiricism, and the elevation of description over action.[16] Montaigne read Jean de Léry and derived information on Brazil for his essay, "Des Cannibales," from his travel narrative.[17] As Jeanneret has suggested, there appears to be a shared interest in the formal possibilities of prose between the two writers, as well. As the haunted house example shows, prose can be used to manage specific problems presented by prophetic discourse without losing the narrative momentum prophecy can provide. Whereas Léry's first-person prose traces a conversion narrative out of the haunted house, Montaigne's first-person prose repurpose the haunted house. In "Des Boyteux," Montaigne identifies rumor as an instigator of to social imbalance, much like Erasmus' colloquy, "Exorcism, or the Specter." Rumor creates narrative momentum, rapid spreading and embellishment of unproven claims. Rumor is discursive, oral, and narrative. Virginia Krause's reading of Montaigne's essay, "Des Boyteux," narrows in on an underlying social appetite for new stories. As Krause observes, witches provided new narratives; confession generated plot. The circulation of these stories helps them gain momentum and create as much social disruption as the crowds' singing and dancing in the Tupinamba ceremony. Krause's reading focuses Montaigne's concern with the legal ramification of confession and the demonologist's reliance on discursive evidence to the detriment of any substantive proof.[18] My reading of "Des Boyteux," adds to Krause's perceptive reading of the essay by focusing on the formal innovations that contain the risks of social contagion through rumor and narrative excess.

I propose to turn to the idea of the *arrière-boutique*, which Montaigne first presents in "De la solitude." I suggest that it develops into a formal strategy, akin to a haunted house, in his later essay, "Des Boyteux." The *arrière-boutique* reworks the haunted house as a textual space that is both private and publicly visible. This reconfiguration of the haunted house allows Montaigne to

[15] Ch. 6. *Jean de Léry ou l'invention du sauvage*. 2005.
[16] "Léry et Thevet: comment parler d'un monde nouveau?" 1983
[17] Timothy Hampton. *Literature and Nation in the Sixteenth-Century : Inventing Renaissance France*, 2001.
[18] Ch. 3, *Witchcraft, Demonology, and Confession in Early Modern France*. 2015

preserve a space for wonder and the otherworldly without risking the inflammation of rumor and social disruption of theatricalized prophecy.

Montaigne frequently returns to the verb *hanter* to describe a form of socializing, or frequenting, in which ideas form. In "Des Boyteux," he claims : "plus je me hante et me connois, plus ma difformité m'estonne, moins je m'entens en moy."[19] In "De la solitude," Montaigne proposes solitude as a means of counteracting ambition, which spreads from "hanter de mauvais compaignie."[20] In "De l'exercitation," "se hanter et pratiquer" become means of learning to speak from one's own position.[21] The verb "hanter" repeatedly engrains habits and forms beliefs. Noël de Fail's 1547 *Propos rustiques* cites the proverb, "hantez les boiteux vous clochez." While the verb *hanter* does not appear to have taken on the supernatural connotation of haunting until the nineteenth-century, the focus on witchcraft and monstrosity in "Des Boyteux" contribute to a lexical field of discursive contagion. Just as the content of rumor spreads through talk, so modes and habits of thinking spread through proximity or visiting. Narrative can skew proper legal conviction, but further, it can unbalance the way people speak in public spaces.

The essay, as a literary form, proposes a formal alternative to public discourse. Instead of physical proximity, visiting, the essay reenacts social discourse through the experience of reading. Montaigne's essay returns again to the underlying problem of rumor, identified by Erasmus, who wrote his colloquy as a dialogue. Whereas the dialogue corrected and counterbalanced the rumor's spread even as it recreated the humorous situation, the essay makes the rumor's construction visible. As Adorno proposes, the essay provides an environment for thought and a workspace for practice and experimentation.[22] The essay, like the "arrière-boutique," proposed in "De la solitude," contains thought, allows it to unfold, turn back on itself to question and reconsider, and can learn to let go of commonly held habits and beliefs. Montaigne describes the "arrière-boutique" as follows :

> Il se faut reserver une arriereboutique, toute nostre, toute franche, en laquelle nous establissions nostre vraye liberté et principale retraicte et solitude. En cette-cy faut-il prendre nostre ordinaire entretien, de nous à nous mesmes, et si privé, que nulle accointance ou communication de chose estrangere y trouve place.[23]

The *arrière-boutique* is separate from outside thought, free of contagion. It is not, however, uniform. The privacy Montaigne describes is from other thinkers, other voices, such that the thinker can learn to take responsibility for his own problematic habits. Montaigne describes this space as a retreat to practice letting go of the social role he plays. "De l'exercitation" posits the essay, as a formal project, as an *arrière-boutique*. The essay, which centers on the attempt to practice dying, moves from a narrative about Montaigne's accidental fall from a horse to an explicit description of the essay project. Montaigne struggles to speak from the position of unconsciousness after he's fallen from the horse. He can only describe his body from the perspective of those watching him. As he attempts to speak from his own position, Montaigne turns to a self-reflective discussion of the essay's form : "Je peins… ce corps aérée… je m'étalle entire… ce ne sont mes gestes que j'écris, c'est moy."[24] The essay works as a textual body rather than as a description of a body. If Léry's narrative modulates theatrical ceremony through textual representation, Montaigne further contains prophetic discourse by creating a textual body for it to

[19] III. ii
[20] I. xxxix
[21] II. vi
[22] "The Essay as Form." 1958
[23] I. xxxix
[24] II. vi

dwell in. Literature does not simply represent and critique ceremony, it appropriates religion's mediating function between the divine and the earthly, creating a new public space. "Des Boyteux" enacts the creation of a literary space as a public *arrière-boutique*.

"Des Boyteux" uses its form to propose a method for the text itself to house the problems raised by haunted house scenes (including the one it depicts) : the proximity of religion and theater, the spread of rumor, and the pleasure of narrative invention. The essay's intervention into the debate over demonology is deeply ambiguous, playing with both the comedic and potentially tragic sides of the prophetic ruse. Critics have interpreted this essay to show it follows Catholic doctrine, emergent secularism, and contemporary liberal sexual politics. Limping has similarly been shown to symbolize the full range of political doctrines from the conservative Catholic to the secular modernist.[25] Ironically, as other critics have noticed, the essay itself calls for a suspension of divisive interpretive claims in its appeal to observation without judgment.[26]

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[25] -- Ribeiro, Brian. "Montaigne on Witches and he Authority of Religion in the Public Spehere." *Philosophy and Literature*. 33.2 (2009). 235-251. Ribeiro reads Montaigne as a quietist. Real knowledge is for God alone: an Augustinian position. Because these claims of witchcraft are not founded in scripture, which would be the only convincing proof of the divine on earth, they are not true miracles. This is a reading of Montaigne as a scriptural adherent. Religion's place in society is irrelevant as long as it is not cruel.
-- Kramer, Kristen. "Performing the Demonic : Witchcraft, Skepticism and Gender Construcitons in Michel de Montaigne's "De la force de l'imagination" and "Des Boyteux." *Gender Forum*. 4 (2003). Kramer sees Montaigne as modern and liberal. He overthrows notions of gender and identifies with all parties involved. He stages himself in all roles and refuses to conform to norms.
-- Renner, Bernd. "A Monstrous Body of Writing? Irregularity and the Implicit Unity of Montaigne's "Des Boyteux." *French Forum*. 29.1 (2004). 1-20. Renner suggests that limping refers to how we are to read : obliquely. He argues that Montaigne believes in absolute subjectivity, reliance on experience, and the acknowledgement of our limits.
-- Genz, Henry. "The Relationship of Title to Content in Montaigne's Essay "Des Boyteux." *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*. 28.3 (1996). 633-5. Henry Genz writes that Montaigne is interested in crippled minds and that titles are only loosely related to the essays.
-- Calder, Ruth. "Montaigne, "Des Boyteux," and the question of causality." *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*. 45.3 (1983). 445-460. Calder does not see Montaigne as compassionate and modern but rather as a skeptic criticizing Bodin's desire for others to accept his beliefs. She sees the issue of causality resolved in "De l'experience" : live in effects, the given world, distrust claims on the unknowable or quests to find the unknowable.
-- Randall, Catherine. ""He doesn't have a leg to stand on." Lameness and Knowledge in "Des Boyteux." *Romantic Review*. 87.3 (1996). 319. Randall sees lameness as the embodiment of healthy skepticism : a way of knowing (epistemological/ judgment-based reading)
-- Wygant, Amy. "Montaigne's Stages and Witches." *Modern Language Studies*. 43.4 (2007). 385-396. Wygant notes that Hugo Friedrich in 1949 started the enlightenment reading of Montaigne and that Alan Boase in 1935 read him as a conservative humanist opposing the credulity of the counter-reformation. She notes that apocalyptic thinking was a local problem that people experienced among their neighbors. She reads this essay as a reflection on spectatorship and how to interact with your community : if all the world's a stage, receive bodies and events and let them go.
-- Krause, Virginia. "Confessional Fictions and Demonology in Renaissance France." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*. 35.2 (2005). 327-348. Krause reads the essay in light of the larger debates on demonology. She argues that the idea of the witch was produced by the academic discourse of demonology. Confessions extracted from women on trial produced a judicial, epistemological truth, which conformed to the discipline's expectations. Only silence was used to resist. Montaigne is critiquing this process of producing narrative knowledge. The confessions are doubtfully produced (as Cave notes) and are not reliable to establish guilt, in any case. Demonology produces the truths it needs to fit its reality. The proverb is an example of a cause provided for an imaginary effect, propaganda's reliance on repetition. She concludes : confession only reaffirms an institution's own narratives. She situates Montaigne as both conservative and modern in the way Cave does, but slightly more to the modern.
[26] Cave, Terence. *Pré-histoires : Textes troubles au seuil de la modernité*. Geneva : Droz, 1999. Cave reads "Des Boyteux" as Montaigne siding with Wier over Bodin. If confessions aren't reliable in court, witches aren't a special

This much repeated call for moderation – from both Montaigne and his readers – appeals to modern readers focused on the historical conditions in which the essays were written. As Father Time limps along, prophecy figures tangentially in the essay, or, put another way, the essay places itself tangentially to a larger debate over the place of prophecy in the political sphere.

I suggest that "Des boyteux," uses the essay form to move the problem of belief out of public arenas, such as the courtroom, the theater, and the church, and into an internal, textual theater. Within the essay, the reader is able to both believe and question a performance. The narrator's stories can coexist as truth and ruse in the reader's mind without public consequence. The reader does not need to take action. Unlike a trial, which makes an individual matter public, the essay is a publically available private forum. As such, the reader's fluctuating response does not affect the storyteller, animating him to add or minimize various elements in his story, nor does it bind spectators in a common ideological reading. This proto-Enlightenment division of public and private belief allows the reader to play with the consequences of various narrative arrangements without publically choosing one interpretive position.[27] This internal theater allows multiple beliefs – both comic and tragic - to play out without affecting public order.

"Des Boyteux is immediately preceded by the essay, "De mesnager sa volonté," in which Montaigne discusses moving toward death and preparing to relinquish his public role. He thinks much further ahead than those who look forward to what they will become next, what roles they will take on publicly. Those who are always following their desires, always thinking ahead to what will be ("s'emporte tousjours devant eux"), conflate themselves with their public person :

> Il faut jouer deuement nostre rolle, mais comme rolle d'un personage emprunté. Du masque et de l'apparence il n'en faut pas faire une essence réelle, ny de l'estranger le propre. Nous ne savons pas distinguer la peau de la chemise. C'est assés de s'enfariner le visage sans s'enfariner la poictrine.

This last sentence, which Montaigne adds in the third version, reinforces the citations by Petronius (cited in Juste Lipse), which opens the paragraph : "Le monde entire joue la comédie." It is specifically in the public sphere that people are subject to this problem of theatricality and belief in what they perform. The public role is only borrowed, however. Just as actors on the stage are replaceable, there is no inherent connection between the player and this role, between the mask and the person. Playing is a job.

In the subsequent essay, "Des Boyteux,"Montaigne fully acknowledges his own theatricality, but does so in the context of storytelling. Montaigne describes entertaining guests and finds that he tends to "bateler par compaignie à traicter des subjects et comptes frivoles, que je mescrois entierement." A bateleur, was a linguistic trickster, a charletan, often called "faiseurs de merveilles."[28] Montaigne enters into this performative role as he tells his story. Montaigne states that, when telling a story, he is frequently moved to hyperbole, whether by the momentum of the story or resistance to his story. This is what we do, he says, but what matters is being able to go back to the truth. This ability to step back from the public theatrical world, to separate out

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case and the question of witches isn't a question of juridical value but rather of the production of opinion. Bodin argues with Aristotle that a demonstration by effects supersedes an analysis of causes. Montaigne turns Bodin's language to doubt belief based on unrealistic effects. Montaigne's doubting of belief, does not however mean he is arguing in the favor of the accused women, for Cave, who argues that witchcraft is a real phenomenon for Montaigne. His doubt and age make him more open to the miraculous but doubtful of these legal claims. "Une justice boiteuse."

[27] I'm thinking specifically the division between public and private opinion in Kant's "What is Enlightenment."

[28] Butterworth, Emily. "The work of the devil? Theatre, the supernatural, and Montaigne's public stage." *Renaissance Studies*. Vol. 22, no. 5 (November 2008). 705-722. p.711

the use of the role from its player, is what allows the to step away from partisan quarrels, or at least to enter into a new ideological position.

It seems then, that what would be required for good judgment is distance from the story being told. Montaigne's first anecdote reorients our notion of distance and reminds us that the subject of the essay isn't judgment or self-management, as it was in the previous essay, but actually is the crippled or lame. Montaigne begins a series of short narratives with one about a Prince who has lost his health to gout. He travels to see a healing priest who puts his legs to sleep to return them to their former state. Montaigne compares the priest's artless word and gesture act to an "ouvrage" and the priest to an "architecte." He has, in a sense, constructed a healing performance. Montaigne notes that the priest was not punished because his act was so simple. If we studied similar acts, we would similarly dismiss them. Distance is deceptive, by bringing something closer we can see it for what it is. Montaigne seems to posit a moderate ground between the telescopic and the proximate, however:

> Je n'ay veu monstre et miracle au monde plus exprès que moy-mesme. On s'apprivoise à toute estrangeté par l'usage et le temps ; mais plus je me hante et me connois, plus ma difformité m'estonne, moins je m'entens en moy.

Habit lives with us in that moderate ground and habit is just as deceptive ("obscure et obtuse," as he formulated our perception with relation to time) as distance. What is close is familiar, loses its strangeness through time. Montaigne suggests that he is an exception, however. In fact, he is the strangest most exceptional thing he's ever encountered in the world. He is monstrous, deformed, in many ways like the sick prince or like a cripple. He is unusual. He accesses this deformed aspect of himself by visiting himself. That is to say, through some form of both travel and theatrical doubling in which he becomes both spectacle and destination. Montaigne has now positioned his own body in the text as a nexus for the unusual, if not supernatural, the deformed part of his form. Montaigne visits or "hante" his own body. However, Montaigne's frequenting of his own body, as a foreign space in which he finds new and strange monstrosities, begins to draw a connection between his body and a house. This body doesn't recognize itself, can become filled with itself as an object, and is distinctly marked as separate from the other bodies in the community. He doesn't walk smoothly, consistently adding space and temporal ambiguity, hiccups that that jolt the reader out of habit when reading. This body seems to be the both the motor and the locus of this undoing. A reading of Montaigne's body as "haunted" is further reinforced by the next anecdote in the essay.

The narrative begins with a distance marker : "à deux lieues de ma maison." The story Montaigne sets up is close enough that he is passing by and far enough that he wasn't there when the event happened (it is not in his house). Montaigne then tells the story of the boy who haunted his own house. The spectacle was stupid. Montaigne can't say it enough, "si niais et si ridicules," he compares there's to a children's game. Montaigne arrives at the cite of the abominable ruse just as the multi-month "miracle" finishes. This event had been drawing crowds; it was a spectacle. Montaigne overdetermines the theatrical element using the words "joué," "badinage," "farce," "battelage," and "sottise," which is not theatrical as much as related to a fool, but echoes with "sottie," a form of comic theater. The "badin" is the flour-faced farce actor, mentioned without his title in the previous essay

Montaigne's focus in "Des Boyteux" turns to the risk of how quickly such ruses can spread. While ostensibly Montaigne is turning to the problem of judgment, this is not an example in which discernment is needed : "On voit cler en cette cy, qui est descouverte." This particular example is not about judging a complex matter; the judicial outcome is settled : "Ces pauvres

diables sont à cette heure en prison, et porteront volontiers la peine de la sottise commune." However, Montaigne does point out the problem of adjudication even in a clear ruse. The earthly decision is that these stupid children will take the fall for the community's stupidity. From this example he concludes that other cases are not as clear and we should suspend our judgment. But why give an example that doesn't illustrate his point? The use of the word "diables," while most likely a pun for the demonization of theater, for the specific disguises they wore (as intentionally false prophets), for their childish mischief. "Diable" is also defined as "chose inquiétante, troublante, ou qui n'est pas ce qu'on attendait." We weren't expecting it. It wasn't following habit, it wasn't continuing the way we thought it would. The problem for Montaigne here, is the expectation. The spectators' surprise that something is not what it seems is what pushes the theatrical into the demonic. Montaigne's use of the analogy is strange. He doesn't think it's easy to determine falsehood from truth, but here he has made it quite clear. He has uncovered, he has seen what happened – after the fact. The problem is being in the middle, where we want to decide quickly but can't because the event is still unfolding. In other words, if we are still living in the haunted body, it is more difficult to judge than if we arrive after a haunted house ruse has been unmasked.

Montaigne's childhood memory of arriving at the Martin Guerre trial just as it finishes (a few paragraphs later and many years earlier) extends this problem by distinguishing the theatrical from the juridical, the stage from the courtroom. The trial of Martin Guerre struck him because the case was not at all self-evident. He proposes that if we can't perceive but "obscure et obtuse," why not render a verdict "La court n'y entend rien"? Wouldn't that be even wiser than the Areopagites, who asked for the court to reconsider the matter one hundred years later? Montaigne emphasizes that no length of time will ultimately resolve a legal question. By considering the case, it can be argued that the problem, again, is not distance, but a rumor given a physical body : the townspeople have heard that Martin Guerre has a peg leg; when a man with a peg leg arrives in court, at the miraculous moment of judgment, a decision is made that this must be the real Martin Guerre.[29] A similar public stage is set up to evaluate a group arrested for sorcery. Montaigne accepts a prince's invitation to examine the group. He saw that they really did look the part.[30] One old woman in particular was "vrayment bien sorciere en laideur et deformité, très-fameuse de longue main en cette profession." The deformity seemed to mark some sign of witchcraft, some otherworldly connection, but even after hearing testimonies, he found they seemed more crazy than daemonic – a conclusion which adds yet another public stage in addition to the courtroom and the church : the medical amphitheater. When presented with proofs and reasons based on experience and fact, Montaigne "les tranche souvent, comme Alexandre son neud." This seemingly empirical, secular logic, is embedded in myth.[31] There are

[29] Virginia Krause's reading of the Martin Guerre example emphasizes that the case was determined based on a confession, rather than on physical proof. My reading emphasizes the presence of limping legs as giving form to these unfounded discursive claims.

[30] It is not clear, however, how much of a problem vraisemblance
would be at this time since the theater very much looked like a theater (it was clearly fake and read as such).

[31] The Gordian knot was first tied to secure the ox-cart of the new king, foretold by the oracle at Telmissus. The new king was a peasant-farmer, not at all what the Phrygians expected from a king, a devil in a way. When Alexander conquered the town, many years later, when Phrygia was a province of the Persian empire, he arrived in the city of Gordium and "saw the famous cart with its lashing made out of the bark of a cornel tree, and heard he story which the natives there believe, that whoever undid the knot was destined to become the ruler of the whole world." (Plutarch's *Lives* section 18)
Alexander either undid the knot by cutting it or by pulling a central pin from the center. Plutarch's narration maintains the either/or with no attempt to determine which method worked ; he undid the knot one way or the other.

wonders that reason can't access, which we should not judge but marvel at. These marvels are moved out of the public sphere – out of legal judgment and action – and into the workings of the mind. Wouldn't it be more logical to see the mind "detraqué" than one of us being "envolé sur un balay, au long du tuiau de sa cheminée, en chair et en os, par un esprit estrangier?" Why assume a body? The witches in his neighborhood find their lives at risk every time people "vient donner corps à leurs songes." It is this tendency toward embodiment that seems to lie at the root of Montaigne's concerns about the proper use of theater. The risk of putting a sense, a dream, some impulse into the public sphere is often a death sentence. "Si les sorciers songent ainsi materiellement [as Prestantius tells of his father dreaming he is a mare and waking to see that he is], si les songes se peuvent ainsi par fois incorporer en effects, encore ne croy-je pas que nostre volonté en fust tenue à la justice." Montaigne has already noted that the witches in his neighborhood find their lives at risk every time someone "vient donner corps à leur songes." Here he extends this problem to suggest that even if this were physically possible, even if the neighborhood women did turn into witches, for example, it would not necessarily follow that this embodiment was true and just. The problem with haunted houses is the problem of embodied belief, and further, the conflation of bodies and houses.

In contrast to the legal theater or even the medical theater, the essay represents these scenes without making a binding interpretation. The essay allows the story to unfold in a literary public space, which allows for uncertainty and suspension of judgment. Montaigne begins sentences with "Il me semble." He notes that he prefers phrases such as "*A l'avanture, Aucunement, Quelque, On dict, Je pense*, et semblables." He argues that this discourse helps us philosophize properly, helps us work towards ignorance. Wonder is the basis of philosophy, asking questions helps us move towards ignorance. We are not working towards judgment, which is merely a tool, a cleaning device. We are also not eliminating real wonder. The problem is not the supernatural, the problem is the stupidity of covering it up with fake wonder. "Iris est fille de Thaumantis" : Thaumas was the first Greek sea god, the god of Wonder. His daughter, Iris, was a messenger, the rainbow that came down from the gods. The rainbow briefly unifies the sky and the earth. This seems to be a reference to Hesiod's *Theogony*, in which Iris's lineage is established.[32] There does seem to be an indication in this detached comment that there is

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Montaigne's use of the verb "trancher" suggests that he favors cutting but then since he is deciding on the issue, taking apart the two sides, and since he is doing this "comme Alexandre," the ambiguity isn't fully resolved in Montaigne either. If "whoever undid the knot was destined to become the ruler of the whole world," Montaigne again allies himself with a tradition of prophecy, not through his rational interpretations and explanations, but through his choice of analogies. Montainge is not Alexander, he is like Alexander ; a distance is preserved between the two terms, not too close, not too far, just enough to be strange. Montaigne's relation to the divine lies under the surface, not as a structured way of understanding the world, but as a problematic current, periodically acknowledged. Just as Montaigne's body has a different relation to time than does the calendar. The relation to the divine consistently falls into the private, non-theatrical realm where philosophy is possible and ignorance is the end result. In his essay "Des Prognostication," after summarily dismissing most forms of prognostication, Montaigne concludes with remarks on Socrates' daemon. Montaigne can see value and importance in this particular claim to a prophetic voice, he even sees traces of it in himself. Although he considers Socrates better prepared to receive what he calls "impulsion de volonté," "inclinations," "and "agitations," Montaigne concludes : "je me laissay emporter si utilement et heureusement qu'elles [les agitations] pourroyent estre jugées tenir quelque chose d'inspiration divine." Montaigne is tapping into something ultimately not tied to rational judgment but to a prophetic relation to the divine at times.

[32] Completely speculative note : In the Aeneid, after the funeral games for Anchises, "Fortune / veered in its course and turned against the Trojans." Juno sends Iris down to the Trojan women who are weeping for Anchises. These women are in exile, sobbing. Iris is "no stranger to mischief" and quickly turns into one of the women, Beroë, and begins to wail with them :

another possibility for real miracles, as he earlier states, were seen in biblical times and recorded in the Bible. Montaigne's preference for hesitant language allows for wonder to persist without presenting a clearly embodied form. Each observation is both put forth and pulled back. This discursive limping minimizes the decisiveness associated with assertion.

Montaigne himself seems to side with Cicero when he cites Cicero's Tusculanus "j'ignore ce que j'ignore." It is a statement of doubt rather than a statement of positive knowledge of the unknown. The essay claims to withdraw formally from the public sphere – to retire - by establishing a new public space in the form of a private house or *arrière-boutique*. Montaigne negates rather than asserting a form, "Ce que je dis, comme celuy qui n'est ny juge ny conseiller des Roys, ny s'en estime de bien loing digne..." : he is like one who, he is not this person, he is only like one, he is not a judge, not an advisor to the king, does not even consider himself worthy of consulting. This long series of negations identifies him in contradistinction to the "homme du commun, nay et voué à l'obeissance de la raison publique et en ses faicts et en ses dicts." Montaigne's essay is outside the public sphere, he is speaking differently, thinking differently, and yet on the edge of the community, supplementing their speech and notion of facts with his own "pensée tumultuaire et vacillante." An actor's body in the public sphere is

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"Oh, my country,
gods of the hearth we tore from enemies, all for nothing,
will no walls ever again be called the walls of Troy?
We're never again to see the rivers Hector loved,
the Simois and the Xanthus? No, come, action!
Help me burn these accursed ships to ashes.
The ghost of Cassandra came to me in dreams,
the prophetess gave me flaming brands and said :
'Look for Troy right here, your own home here!'
Act now. No delay in the face of signs like these.
You see? Four altars to Neptune. The god himself
is giving us torches, building our courage, too."

The women are "dumbstruck, driven mad by the sign" and burn the ships. The end goal must not be action, for Montaigne, it must not be judgment, decision. He is living in a time where false prophets point to signs and masses, "driven mad by the sign," burn towns. This reference to Iris introduces her as part of the process towards ignorance. Rather than avoid situations of trickery, Montaigne emphasizes her lineage from wonder. She comes down to earth on the rainbow and if we follow Montaigne's analogy directly, just as she comes from wonder, so philosophy comes from "admiration." Iris is a part of philosophy, a part of the questioning and understanding ignorance. Montaigne positions himself not with Iris, or the false Cassandra, but as the real truth-teller. Montaigne is Pyrgo, "the eldest... once royal nurse to Priam's several sons." After hearing Iris' claim she calls out to the Trojan women :

"That's not Beroë, you women of Troy –
no Trojan wife of Doryclus!
Look at her beauty, her fiery eyes, immortal marks –
what pride, what features, and what a voice, that stride!
Why, I just left Beroë now, sick and bitter to be
the only one deprived of our lavish rites,
denied her part in the honors paid Anchises."

Pyrgo has been away, tending to the elderly, the sick. She has been separate from the spectacle, with those who are separate. She enters later than the others, comes at the very end, and she sees Iris for what she is : a question born of wonder. This is a very different type of message that she is bringing. Pyrgo points to the contradiction in the prophecy : a dream vision of Cassandra, who always spoke in tongues, was never believed, giving a clear directive? A supposedly old woman who doesn't look old? Because prophecy is the easiest means for imposture to cover itself. It is wrapped in this frenzy that glides over contradiction, stirs masses, brings fire. Montaigne, like Pyrgo, stands on the edge, an alternate model of prophet, and speaks for the wonder itself, for the message of wonder, not a message from a wonderful place. Look what has come to earth, he says, it is something unearthly.

replaced by a textual *arrière-boutique* : "C'est par maniere de devis que je parle de tout, et de rien par maniere d'advis." The essay, like the *arrière-boutique*, is a space for the writer to wander, rather than a set of linguistic directives.

The formal features of the essay allow Montaigne to write in relation to the community without worrying that what he says will incite sudden reactions. Montaigne takes up the problem of storytelling again at the end of the essay. As he has warned the reader, he tends toward hyperbole as he dramatizes his story. He enters into the ostensible subject of his essay : the lame. A common proverb states that "celuy-là ne cognoit pas Venus en sa parfaicte douceur qui n'a couché avec la boiteuse," derived from the Amazonian queen's response to a Scythian, "le boiteux le faict le mieux." Many explanations are proposed : weak thighs make strong genitals, or weak thighs limit exercise and conserve energy for sex, or the uneven walk is appealing, or like weavers, the uneven movement vibrates. Montaigne stops his hypothesis generation to ask : "Ces exemples servent-ils pas à ce que je disois au commencement : que nos raisons anticipant souvent l'effect, et ont l'estendue de leur jurisdiction si infinie, qu'elles jugent et s'exercent en l'inanité mesme et au non estre?" Montaigne presents his first example that effectively illustrates his point, implicating himself in false belief (he believed he felt more pleasure sleeping with a woman who limped). Montaigne is not reporting on his tendencies in storytelling, he is engaged in storytelling though the form of the essay. He is performing a new type of theater acted out by a textual body, rather than physical body in costume on a stage. He has discursively enacted a completely mental experiment. If Montaigne had wanted to teach his readers a lesson wouldn't he have stopped here? Wouldn't he have shown that our judgment is easily swayed, driven by the pleasure of anecdote, strangeness, bodies? But he keeps going, emphasizing the form of the essay over its ostensible theme.[33]

Montaigne experiments within his form, discussing his subject without a visible audience, which he earlier stated could lead him to inflate and exaggerate his story, making much out of something that may or may not be true. Within the confines of the essay, Montaigne does make much out of nothing, performing the narrative inflation he found so troublesome in a social gathering. Tasso says the French have skinny legs from horseback riding. Suetone says Germanicus has big legs from horseback riding. Virgil says loose soil is good to get the rain get down to the roots ; Virgil says tight soil is good to keep groundwater from evaporating. The skeptic Carneades performs a much greater task than Hercules because by taking man's ability to judge ; Montaigne knows why Carneades would do such a thing : to moderate men who believe excessively and try to know – Montaigne knows this is the case, it is his opinion (advis), which he doesn't do, he only produces discourse (devis). "Deviser" can also mean to tell "bonne aventure," "se diviser, se séparer en deux," "ordonner, décider, préciser." For everything Montaigne doesn't do, he also does do. Even when he splits in two he is only one. Returning to Italian proverbs, he writes "Toute médaille a son revers." He ends with a fable from Aesop, the fable as another genre to be looked at, in contrast to theater or essay. Aesop was being sold along with two slaves. The potential buyer asked each one to state his merits. The first claimed he could do a lot! The second claimed he could do even more! Aesop said he could do nothing, they'd claimed it all, knew it all. And so it came about that just as those who knew everything were self-satisfied, so were those who thought they knew nothing. The dialectic precluded all moderation. Montaigne has known nothing, known everything, walked a strange uneven path all the way through the essay when he finally leaves us with : "Afin qu'on ne puisse nier que l'homme ne soit immoderé par tout, et qu'il n'a point d'arrest que celuy de la necessité et

[33] Adorno's essay on the essay further notes that the essay "stops when it feels finished." p. 4

impuissance d'aller outre." Montaigne's decision to end his performance, is not met with any visible reaction. The form of the essay, and subsequent reader-text relation, precludes any further shifts in the writer's performance. The story is contained within the text and can neither take on new forms, through theatrical performance, nor can it be passed on easily by word of mouth.

Montaigne's essay form incorporates theatrical elements into its prose. Theater drives the narrative momentum, allows for wondrous things to unfold, but delays action. The reader can try out judgments without resolving the text; ruses can entertain without bankrupting; hierarchies can be made and unmade to show their contingency. The surprising and the incomprehensible are allowed to circulate freely, rattling and clanking about provided they remain within the experience of reading. The haunted house is reworked into the noisy but textual form of the essay. The essay creates a new form of reticent discourse, distinct from propaganda and imperial poetry, which is nonetheless a public discourse.

Sara Beam's work on the history of farce in early modern France, traces the rise of theatrical censorship in response to the religious troubles over the course of the sixteenth-century. She notes Henry II's preference for neo-classical comedy over religious farce, through his patronage, as well as the direct censorship of student theater in the universities. Legal arguments against theater focused on the problematic size of crowds that performances would draw and the sensitive, and increasingly seditious nature of subjects chosen for plays.[34] As early as 1548, *mystères* were banned in Paris. The Tridentine reforms shifted Catholic practices away from communal festivities and celebration, toward individual devotional practices. Theater was associated with contagion, the spread of heresy.[35] Protestant accusations that the Catholic mass turned the church into a theater, in combination with longstanding associations between the theater and the devil's house, played into a broader debate over the invisible presence of the divine in the sixteenth century, centered on the interpretation of the body of Christ in relation to the community. Ernst Kantorowicz describes a late-medieval shift in the conception of where the body of Christ is located: from the consecrated Eucharist to the *corpus mysticum*, which located Christ's body in the church.[36] During the Reformation, the Eucharist's status as real presence, real body, forming a community became controversial. Catholics read the visible sacrament as proof of divine presence on earth, while Calvinists read the legible text as proof, interpreting the Eucharist as a symbol. For the Calvinists, the church resided with the risen Christ. This controversy became still more complex in the French colony in the bay of Rio de Janeiro. When Catholic ate the transubstantiated body of Christ in the Eucharist, were they cannibals? Frank Lestringant reads the controversy in the colony as a failed Pentecost leading to Babel, which precipitated the fall of the colony in 1560.[37] Léry and Thevet use the haunted house both to discredit religious practices they perceive as fallen or illegitimate and to legitimize their own interpretations of the relation of bodies to the divine. They read contemporary French debates through indigenous practices in order to contain the theatrical.

Montaigne's prose essay formally reworks the haunted house ruse, making it a productive means of generating narrative while containing the theatrical in a private sphere of thinking and re-thinking. Prophecy, once regularly staged as religious rite is redirected into legal and medical theaters, as in the case of the possessions at Loudun, but Montaigne reworks prophecy through literature. Montaigne's textual theatrics limit the enthusiastic communitarian binding of Catholic

[34] *Laughing Matters : Farce and the Making of Absolutism in France*. 2007. pp. 100 – 110.
[35] Beam. p. 112.
[36] *The King's Two Bodies : A Study in Medieval Political Theology*. 1957. p. 195
[37] Ch. 11. *Jean de Léry ou l'invention du sauvage*. 2005

ritual to the personal experience of the reader, grappling with the lack of cohesion of his own mind. In this sense, the development of prose writing might be considered in relation to the containment of theatrical practice and the emergence of use of a so-called private, or internal, sphere in public debates.

Concluding note

In lieu of a conclusion, I present two portions of this project that suggest directions for further development. The first line of inquiry I like to develop is the distinction between sorcery and prophecy. I began examining this problem in my reading on haunted houses. To pursue this further, I would look at the medical and theological texts generated around the interpretation of possession. The juxtaposition of these discourses with the literary construction of prophets studied in this project would open new discussions about the relation of the prophet's body to the social and political body and about the particularity of the literary texts presented here. The second direction, which merited further research, is the influence of Protestantism on the literary construction of prophets during this period. Below, I outline a few Protestant texts that intersect in meaningful ways with the Catholic texts discussed in this project. Protestant prophecy is a particularly important counterpoint to legitimizing function of prophets discussed in this project. Whereas Catholic prophets often reinforce the monarchy, many Protestant prophets, like the ultra-Catholic league, use prophecy to challenge the hereditary monarchy. This direction would examine the ways in which literary prophets could pose a political threat to the monarchy.

1. Possession

As this dissertation has shown, the prophet's body is altered to be able to speak in a new (unearthly) language. Classical examples provide clear interpretive language for this phenomenon : Virgil's Sibyl is driven to a frenzy as "Phoebus whips her on / in all her frenzy, twisting his spurs below her breast" until she speaks with a voice "no longer human;"[1] Orpheus is stoned and dismembered by the Thracian women but his "head and lyre" are carried down the stream while the lyre plays and "the lifeless tongue" prophesies.[2] The relation of language to the body in Early Modern France was constructed through multiple discourses, which both reinforced one another and presented underlying conceptual tensions, between theology and medicine, literature and journalism. Panurge, in his terror at hearing the Sibyl of Panzoust's strange noises, fears she associates with demons. Ronsard's prophetic verse celebrated a king in order to justify the contortions and sicknesses his body underwent to produce such praise. Garnier's female prophet eventually hands over her power to a male prophet and narrator. Montaigne turns to prose to contain the potentially volatile effects of prophetic discourse as it circulates between bodies. The contemporary discourses of possession that described the relation of the divine to the earthly, through individual bodies, largely influenced how prophets were represented in literary texts. Further research into medical and demonological tracts could significantly develop the analyses presented in this project.

The wave of possessions, beginning during the Great Schism and continuing through the late seventeenth century with the Camisard uprisings, reached a peak in the early seventeenth century at the Ursuline convent in Loudun. This could provide an excellent case study to look at how discussions surrounding possession and prophecy shifted after the Edict of Nantes. Michel de Certeau's account[3] notes the media phenomenon that drove a tourism industry reaching to London. According to Michel de Certeau's account, the town of Loudun went back and forth as a Catholic and Protestant city during the Wars of Religion. In 1628 Louis XIII took back La Rochelle for the Catholics, shifting the political dynamics of the rest of the region. The Ursuline

[1] *The Aeneid.* Robert Fagles translation. Book 6 v. 120; v. 62
[2] Ovid. *Metamorphoses.* Allen Mandelbaum translation. Book 11
[3] I am primarily referencing Michel de Certeau's 1980 *La possession de Loudun.*

convent – one of several convents in the Loudun - had been founded in 1628. The plague, which had previously devastated the city in 1603, returned in 1632, killing a quarter of the population. The possession began immediately after the plague's diminution. One way this series of events was read was as a divine message (much like comets, illness indicated divine anger and a warning to put one's affairs in order before divine judgment arrived). The possession at Loudun came at a time when the Reformation and subsequent religious turmoil had thrown into question Catholic tradition and authority, as well as a monarchy, which was only beginning to stabilize under an increasingly absolutist monarch.

The Ursuline nuns initially saw ghosts and smelled odors, but increasingly a bodily language emerged. A complex set of problems was muted into a series of contortions and convulsions, which priests and doctors read a cosmological battle of Satan against God. Witchcraft, which had been read throughout the previous century as both a form of possession and a cause of possession, reemerged as a problem of uncontrolled expression. Urbain Grandier (previously accused of libel against Richelieu and a known womanizer) was accused of being the sorcerer behind the demonic possessions. Laubardemont (previously sent to deal with the mystical reformer Abbé de Saint-Cyran) was commissioned by Richelieu to take care of the situation. Exorcists and doctors were brought in to speak for the mute bodies. Latin was used during public exorcisms, as were religious objects, particularly the eucharist. Certeau reads these exorcisms as a means to reveal a hidden language and confirm that there were two worlds. The translation of the invisible world reasserted a social interpretation of the relation between those two worlds that moved through the authority (and language) of the Catholic church. From a multifaceted problem (sexuality, reformation and counter-reformation, political interests, medical vs. theological knowledge, the use of the vernacular), a reduction was made : women's mute bodies were made to speak by male authorities. Torture was used to provoke confessions, causality was debated, but the emphasis throughout remained on what Certeau calls a "guérison du langage" or a restoration of specific discourses. The theatrical element was also very important, as each exorcism was staged and "pouvoir spectaculaire" was reinforced. When Grandier was tried and executed, there was a purging of the village but no resolution. The possession raised questions about the ability of the monarchy to control the way bodies spoke.

The newspaper – whose origin the city of Loudun attributes to their leading Humanist, Théophraste Renaudot - became widespread.[4] While Renaudot does not publish direct accounts of the exorcisms at Loudun, his choice of subjects appropriate to print, is worth examining in relation to the monarchy's position on the possession. The newspaper became one of many ways of managing the problem of uncontrolled expression. Countless memoirs, plays, travel narratives, and journalistic accounts were published. The possessions played into wider religious debates over the proximity of the theater and the church.[5] In 1636 a pamphlet went on sale in St Paul's churchyard, in St Dunston's churchyard, and in the Fleet Street shop at Clifford's Inn, London. This faithful translation, "with some observations for the better illustration of the pageant," related the "play acted at Loudun by two devils, a friar, and a nun" and bemoaned the lengths to which the Catholic Church would go to produce a miracle for eager spectators.[6] It

[4] The city of Loudun advertises Théophraste Renaudot's house as the site of "la naissance de la presse française." Renaudot founded the *Gazette de France* in 1631, during the exorcisms of the Ursalines nuns (a less advertised point). The *Gazette* began publication a full four decades before the *Mercure galant*. See tourism brochures, city plaques, and www.museerenaudot.com.

[5] see Stephen Greenblatt. "Loudun and London." 1986

[6] *A relation of the devil Balam's departure out of the body of the Mother Prioresse of the Ursuline nuns of Loudun : Her fearefull motions and contorsions during the exorcisme, with the extract of the proces verball, touching the*

further mentions a similar incident in 1625, at Cathedral Church of Our Lady in Paris, in which a Canadian went to be baptized and heard a loud noise came down from the rafters. When the priest cried : Miracle! a paper, still smelling of gunpowder, came floating down, to land gently at the feet of the congregants. The English tale suggests that the man felt he had no choice but to move to England. The theatrics of the possessions provoked criticism. The nuns performed a variety of contortionist positions during public exorcisms. The crowd came and watched, printed reports, started a newspaper, drummed up an excellent and much needed tourism profit in the wake of the recent religious strife. The devils promised to make their exits on specific dates, to leave marks on the nuns as proof of their departure.

In light of monarchic concern, the Catholic Church decided to reconsider their approach. Jean-Joseph Surin, a somewhat unstable clergyman himself, was called to Loudun. Surin, who quickly became the primary exorcist in the case, claimed he took the devil out of Jeanne des Anges' body by transferring and containing it within his own body for decades. He decided on an internal theater for his cure. The textual production of the possessed body, in his writings and in those of Jeanne des Anges, relied on first person narratives to simultaneously write the self and the alien other.[7] Surin's writing, unlike the popular press, produced a mystical reading of the possessed body. Similarly, Jeanne des Anges moved towards internal language to describe her possession. In 1642 Sister Jeanne des Anges, the mother superior of the Ursaline convent in Loudun published her autobiography, thanking God for the misery of her earthly attachments so that she could be lead to find peace through Him alone. She proposes that demons were able to enter her because of her weakness: "It seemed to me that all of Hell was in my body."[8] What authorizes certain bodies as mystical and denigrates others as demonic? What shifts occurred between early sixteenth century stories about the redemptive possibilities of women fallen away from themselves[9] and the redemptive story of Jeanne des Anges' successful exorcism? Later devotional writers, such as Jean-Joseph Surin, suggest inward or internalized forms of religious struggle and conversion. How are these forms different from the devotional writings of those practiced before the religious troubles? Were shifts in medical discourse more significant than those in devotional writings? Eminent doctors confirmed that the Loudun possession was certainly within the purview of the Catholic Church, confirming that supernatural causes were behind the possessions. Nonetheless, they wrote extensively on possession, prophecy, and monstrosity as a sign of divine intervention on earth.[10] The interpretation of these possessions (and the several other possessions around this same time) are interpretations of the body's plasticity and essentially socio-linguistic make-up. The woman's body, as a site of divine

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exorcismes wrought at Loudun, by order from the Bichop of Poictiers under the authority of the king. St. Paul's Church yard and St. Dunstans Church yard in Fleet Street at the shop turning up to Cliffords-Inne : R. Badger, 1636. http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=V15319

[7] *Triomphe de l'amour divin sur les puissances de l'Enfer*.

[8] Jeanne des Anges. *Autobiographie d'une hystérique possédée.*

[9] For example, in the 67th story of the *Heptameron*, a woman and her husband are exiled to a barren wasteland of an island in Canada. She fights off ferocious animals and eventually protects her husband's corpse from these animals after he dies. She slowly wastes away until a ship comes, so that her virtue might be recognized. After living so long on the margin of the empire, of her own body, and of the French language, she is able to communicate by teaching the gospel to children in LaRochelle. A female body, fallen away from itself to the point of nearly becoming feral, gains apostolic importance through the possibility of institutionalized education. That is to say, social reform is coupled with the temporary bodily alienation associated with prophecy.

[10] Ambroise Paré, surgeon to the French kings, emphasized that the body could be modified by what it sees. A pregnant woman could give birth to a furry baby if she were to stare at a picture of a saint in furs. *Des monstres et prodigies*. 1573.

intervention and transformation, is discussed in literary texts, medical treatises, and theological discussions of possession. At the intersection of these multiple discourses is the monarchy's unwillingness to accept the uncontrolled expression of the nuns' bodies. In what ways were the nun's possessions threatening to political power and in what ways did various discourses arise to contain and limit the effect of the possessions? Some of these questions are introduced in this project but substantial research could clarify and deepen the preliminary analysis I've presented here.

2. Protestant Prophets

Whereas Pierre de Ronsard reinforces the legitimacy and universal order of the Catholic monarchy through his poetry, the Protestant poet, Aggripa D'Aubigné, who fought under Henri de Navarre during the Wars of Religion, attacks and undermines the crown. Speaking of Catherine de Medici as "ingratte Catherine," D'Aubigné compares the Queen successively to the furies, a Medusa, and then a witch. According to D'Aubignés description, Catherine de Medici is a false prophet and a destabilizing force in the country : "Elle change en discord l'accord des éléments […]Elle trouble le ciel, elle arreste les eaux."[11] For D'Aubigné, those in power are the source of the disruption of the religious troubles, the cause of disharmony and violence. D'Aubigné describes the queen mother, not as a Catholic, but as a sorceress, a practitioner of black magic, allied with the Devil. She is responsible for the atrocities plaguing France, including infanticide. D'Aubigné marks her as a witch through the sounds issuing from her mouth; Catherine de Medici's destructive impulse is he is heard through her "hurlements," "sifflements," and "cris." She doesn't make human sounds; she makes demonic sounds. D'Aubigné transposes the discourse used to describe witches onto a leading political figure. Catherine de Medici's power is presented as a threat to France; she is someone who can

[11] Elle change en discord l'accord des éléments
En paisible minuict on oit ses hurlements,
Ses sifflements, ses cris, alors que l'enragee
Tourne la terre en cendre, et en sang l'eau changée.
Elle s'ameute avec les sorciers enchanteurs,
Compagne des démons compagnons imposteurs,
Murmurant l'exorcisme et les noires prières.
La nuict elle se veautre aux hideux cimetières,
Elle trouble le ciel, elle arreste les eaux,
Ayant sacrifié tourtres et pigonneaux
Et desrobé le temps que la lune obscurcie
Souffre de son murmur' ; elle attir' et convie
Les serpens en un rond sur les fosses des morts,
Desterre sans effroi les effroyables corps,
Puis, remplissant les os de la force des diables,
Les fait saillir en pieds, terreux, espouvantables,
Oit leur voix enroüee, et des obscurs propos
Des démons imagine un travail sans repos ;
Idolatrant Sathan et sa théologie,
Interrogue en tremblant sure le fil de sa vie
Ces organes hideux ; lors mesle de leurs tais
La poudre avec du laict, pour les condurie en paix.
Les enfans inoncens ont presté leurs moelles,
Leurs graisses et leur suc à fournir des chandelles,
Et, pour faire trotter les esprits aux tombeaux,
On offre à Belzebub leurs innocentes peaux. Agrippa D'Aubigné, *Les tragiques* (Misères 895 – 920)

materially change the world in terrifying ways. In contrast, the poet, who also wishes to be hollowed out and made into a divine vessel, must call on God to bring about the transformation of the earth through final judgment. Only divine power can counteract the terrorizing regime of earthly power. And only the poet can bring the divine to earth. By looking at Protestant prophecy, I would approach the problem of prophecy's threat to the monarchy.

Protestant texts often intersect formally with the canonical texts discussed in this dissertation, however, their focus on witnessing and turn toward alternate government structures – including the republics modeled through the 1573 general assemblies[12] – as well as apocalypse, deserve more prolonged attention than these brief remarks. Protestant representation of prophets relies more heavily on the Hebrew tradition than the classical tradition, emphasizing teaching, exile, and martyrdom over enigmatic speech or narrative disruption. Protestant prophecy flourished as a means of contesting Catholic authority well into the eighteenth century.[13] The Camisard uprisings, following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, were fueled by popular prophecy and radical theology. Much like the Catholic League before them (and Monarchist propaganda seeking to exorcise the Catholic League), the Camisards sought to clean the earth and prepare for Judgment by liberating the king from the clergy.[14] A brief comparison of two apocalyptic sixteenth century writers highlights the divergent uses of the Hebrew prophets. Bernard Palissy's 1563 *Recept veritable* follows the tradition of Jeremiah by teaching readers to build refuges and wait. In contrast, Agrippa d'Aubigné's 1616 *Les Tragiques*, perhaps the best known example of prophetic Protestant literature, is written in the style of the prophet Ezekiel and aims to precipitate the apocalypse. Written at either end of the most explosive phase of France's religious troubles, Palissy and d'Aubigné's texts point toward the richness and diversity of Protestant prophetic writing.

Palissy, who worked in Paris as a ceramicist and engineer, constructed Catherine de Medici's gardens. His *Recept veritable* relies on the topos of the nation as garden to advocate collective work to realign the soul and social practices with the divine. Prophetic work is tied to teaching and building in daily tasks : how we live in the world shapes the world. Palissy structures his narrative in two parts, first as an agricultural manual and second as a hagiography of Protestant martyrs and proposed design for a fortress (based on the anatomy of a mollusk). The two halves complement one another. The water in the garden and the wind flowing through it, literalize the word of God, until our labor and study allow us to see "la face ce de grand Dieu vivant."[15] Prophecy is not static, but rather a living world with which we engage. Rabelais' use of the almanac tradition, discussed in the first chapter, finds a certain amount of common ground with Palissy's approach to prophecy. However, Rabelais withholds information, deemed unnecessary for one's social station, where Palissy freely publishes. Palissy's emphasis on egalitarian communitarianism uses prophecy as a practical counterpoint to monarchic power.

In contrast, Agrippa d'Aubigné abandons a constructive political use of prophecy. D'Aubigné interprets the horrors of civil war as a point of no return. Following this eschatological logic, no earthly resolution is possible. No new community can be formed on

[12] Mack Holt describes in greater detail the state within a state that developed during the religious troubles. *The French Wars of Religion 1562 – 1629*. 1995.

[13] Huguenot refugees continued to emigrate to London, from France, into the early 18th century. These Camisard enthusiasts formed new religious societies focused on the experience of religion, to return to the roots of Christianity and move past sectarianism. Lionel Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm : Prophecy and Religious Experience in Early 18th Century England*, 2015.

[14] W. Gregory Monahan, *Let God Arise : The War and Rebellion of the Camisards*, 2014.

[15] p. 161. Ed. Keith Cameron.

earth. The utopian world d'Aubigné describes, is reserved exclusively for the elect, and is in no way compatible with their time on earth. *Les Tragiques*, begun in 1577 as d'Aubigné lay injured and confined to bed rest, is a long form poem; the poem is violent and graphic, filled with grief, rage and horror. D'Aubigné wants to be a prophet, not a prophetic poet, but a prophet. D'Aubigné's poem is a means of using the formal elements of poetry and Biblical prophecy to make himself into a modern Ezekiel. The poem enables the poet's transformation into prophet. This use of poetry stands in contrast to Ronsard's use of prophecy to authorize poetry, as I discuss in my second chapter. *Les Tragiques* moves through France's suffering, the poet's formation as a prophet, the contemporary martyrs and warning signs of God's coming judgment, and soon moves into the apostrophic creation of the apocalypse. D'Aubigné's speech must no longer come from him, from his religious certainty (and zealotry), he cannot exist anymore as a whole human, he must become in some way divine. His tongue will be replaced, he will communicate organ to organ with others. He will abdicate bodily integration to reach between worlds. The emphasis on physicality, the divided body, the body made instrument for God's will through a dislocation of itself from itself, brings to mind the cleaving tongue of the Hebrew prophets. In this instance the prophet is physically split into a doubled narrative, he will exist near God but also on the earth, if only to minimally embody God's will to make it known. In the final book, d'Aubigné takes a divine perspective and speaks for God. The prophet, having seen what he has seen, must die. His body, already separated, is finally severed from the earth. The poem seeks to magically create the apocalypse that does not arrive, moving its use of language into the revelatory or oracular. Literary form is used to create a contemporary religious prophet.

I would additionally look at Theodore de Bèze's 1555 *Abraham sacrifiant*, a Protestant conversion narrative that establishes many of the theatrical conventions used in the early modern period. Often cited as the first French tragedy, *Abraham sacrifiant* mixes medieval formal elements, such as the staging of Satan and an angel, with classical tragic form. In my third chapter, I discuss a monarchist tragedy that follows many of the formal features modeled by de Bèze. The way Bèze reconciles a Hebrew bible story with a classical form deserves extended consideration in relation to the way prophets are staged throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Further, Bèze's staging of ritual sacrifice and exile raise questions about the ways in which his formal decisions affected the types of literary representation that developed in relation to political power. Finally, Jean de Léry's 1578 travel narrative, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre de Brésil*, (which I briefly discuss in my reading of Montaigne) similarly develops literary structures such as first-person prose narration through an engagement with religious discourses and doctrines. This discussion could be significantly expanded in my reading of Montaigne's use of prose. The diversity of relations between literature and religion in sixteenth century Protestant writing merits developed analysis to properly discuss its influence of the prophet in early modern texts. While this project intersects with some of these writers, it is focused on literature that reinforces, rather than questioning the concentration of political power. Further research could better address the interplay of literary devices intended to legitimize power and those that questioned those same powers.

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