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head. Here he is actively transcribing in his open book what Martino may be dictating from his manuscript scroll. The figure on the left, in this scenario, would be either the Italian translator or Didier Christol who takes the same dictation and transcribes it in his own text.

The scene is clearly reminiscent of book production. Indeed, we can see books in the windows that open in on the room, though whether the books are looking in on the figures or simply flying about the sky outside is not entirely clear. However, if we take away the texts and writing desks, we have three figures assembled around a table. Instead of a scriptorium, we now have a banquet hall. What could be taken for an inkpot on the table could just as easily be taken as an *écuelle*, or bowl used to hold liquid dishes like soups and stews, or perhaps as a wine goblet. Another inkpot on the table could be a saltcellar. To the right of this object is an unmistakable one that on the surface has no business on a table designed for writing: just to the left of Platina's right hand is a knife. This knife could conceivably be of the type used to trace lines on a manuscript page or to smooth its surface. In a period before the widespread use of forks, the knife was the primary utensil to be found on banquet tables. Moreover, this knife appears to be the kind often used for cutting trencher plates. Trencher plates are flat slices of stale bread used in place of individual plates in the early modern period. In the banquet iconography of the period, these trenchers are typically rectangular and look similar to open books.[50] In this sense, the knife can prepare the page for writing, just as the trencher knife prepares bread for a meal.

What I would like to draw from this visual reading is that the production of tastes in early modern Europe is closely linked to the production of texts. In this image, we see the evolution from oral, to scribal, to printed traditions in the transmission of texts. Likewise, recipes and other culinary discourses, which began as orally transmitted knowledge, became transcribed in manuscripts and later reworked and revised to suit the tastes of a print-culture public. The Italian and French translations of Platina's Latin text represent crucial moments in the trajectory of this culinary transmission. The fifteenth-century linguistic phenomenon cited by Garin seems to parallel the culinary adaptations that occur during this period within the print culture of cookbooks. Like the vernacular in relation to classical Latin, new cookbooks always look back to those that preceded them. Though new cookbook writers invoke their predecessors' power and authority, the "moderns" still manage to transform the "ancients" into something new and appropriate to the historical milieu in which the former appear. With new texts come new tastes.

[50] See B. Laurioux, *Le Moyen Âge à table* (Paris: A. Biro, 1989).

"Ma Salade et Ma Muse" On Renaissance Vegetarianism

Michel Jeanneret

Judging from bibliographies of Renaissance literature and indeed from this conference's program, the stress in current research is more on feasting than fasting. Whether writing about princely banquets, bacchic festivities, or Carnival, authors celebrate the abundance of dishes and praise the pleasures of the belly. Here I would like to allow those who are more discreet to speak, those who defend an ideal of frugality, those who plead against gluttony and seek happiness in a science of diet which is carefully regulated. Looking more closely, even the most enthusiastic defenders of good food have an ambivalent attitude and sometimes prefer the more modest joy of sobriety to abundance. The struggle between fat and lean, between Lent and Carnival, takes up a goodly place in the imaginary of the sixteenth century, and the winner is not certain. In *Pantagruel* and *Gargantua*, Rabelais opens with gigantic festivities, as full of happiness as they are enormous.[1] Yet in the *Third* and *Fourth Books*, the scale of values is reversed: excessive food becomes a matter for suspicion; gluttony inhibits the mind and leads to violence.[2] There is the same hesitation in Ronsard. In his moments of enthusiasm, the poet represents himself as a follower of Bacchus: he tells of extravagant picnics, of cheerful toasts.[3] Yet in a poem like *La Salade,* he addresses himself to a poet and friend, Jamin, to invite him to go down into the fields to collect wild herbs and be content with a well-seasoned salad for his meal.[4] This is where I found my title, "my salad and my Muse," an incongruous couple, which yet in its context has nothing burlesque about it, for it suggests that poetry and temperance, arts and frugality can live happily together.

[1] See Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World,* trans. H. Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984) and Michel Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance*, trans. J. Whiteley and E. Hughes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[2] See Michel Jeanneret, "Quand la fable se met à table: Nourriture et structure narrative dans le *Quart Livre*," *Poétique* 54 (1983): 163–80.

[3] See Michel Jeanneret, "Banquets poétiques et métaphores alimentaires," in *Ronsard en son quatrième centenaire*, ed. Y. Bellanger et al., 2 vols. (Genève: Droz, 1989), 2: 73–80.

[4] Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Paul Laumonier, t. 15(1) (Paris: [illegible]

In this essay, I have a twofold aim. First, I would like to show what were the values which underlie the case the humanists put for austerity and what these values teach us about the Renaissance, or at least the myth of the Renaissance. Second, I would like to understand what the self-portrait of the writer as a man of small appetite or as a vegetarian shows about the ideal profile of the man of letters.

Although my inquiry is concerned with ideological constructions and imaginary content, it is worthwhile remembering what historians tell us about food and the new nutritional trends in the sixteenth century.[5] The accounts we have of meals and indeed the recipe books themselves allow us to establish that in the Middle Ages the social elite ate few vegetables, whereas bread, meat and fish were consumed in great quantities. What the earth produces is despised and left to the people. From the sixteenth century on, on the contrary, the consumption of meat goes down and the rich start to appreciate vegetables. Meatless dishes become more varied, new species of vegetables appear, and recipes for their preparation become more numerous. While green vegetables are served more often, the consumption of cereals and starchy foods tends to go down. The trend is clear: the social and economic elite of the Renaissance no longer consider vegetables as undignified, but see in them a sign of distinction and a delicacy. As is the case for many novelties, Northern Europe owes this evolution to Italy, which for a long time had given an important place in its menus to garden produce. One can also conjecture that the Counter-Reformation, which reinforces rules about food and promotes the value of fasting, favored this change.

If we now look at the cultural references available at the time, we find that the Humanists are familiar with the arguments in favor of vegetarianism which began in early Greece, and spread throughout antiquity.[6] The most ancient and venerable enemy of meat is Pythagoras, all the more influential because his teaching was transmitted by a legend and spread by a school of followers. Strict Pythagoreans forbid the killing, sacrificing, and eating of animals for two reasons: one, because of the transmigration of souls, which means that we could be eating our like, and second, because animals participate in the universal soul in the same way as humans.[7] Seneca should be mentioned here, among the distant disciples of Pythagoras. He says he practiced vegetarianism in his youth for reasons of both hygiene and religion.[8] Later there comes Porphyry who, in the third century after Christ, writes a long treatise which is the most complete testimony about ancient vegetarianism. *De abstinentia*[9] is indeed a *summa* which combines Pythagorean arguments—the respect for animals—and Neo-Platonic spiritualism, according to which asceticism and the purity of food are conditions for the elevation of the soul and its union with God. The meat eater, Porphyry says, exposes himself to pollution and runs a risk of ingesting the demons which inhabit the bodies of animals. These ideas are all the more familiar, as Marsilio Ficino, who presents himself as a disciple of Porphyry, promotes knowledge of *De abstinentia* by circulating a summary of its principal theses.[10]

But it is Plutarch who is the representative of ancient vegetarianism best known to Humanists. In several chapters of his *Moralia*, he criticizes meat eaters with an extraordinary vehemence.[11] In the main, he invokes the same principles as the Pythagoreans and the Neo-Platonists. It is the eloquence of his diatribe which makes the difference. To swallow flesh is an act against nature, not only because the earth furnishes human beings with everything that they need, but because carnivores, pushed by a bestial cruelty, by a monstrous taste for blood, kill living beings for their pleasure. Plutarch evokes with horror bloody banquets which are also cannibal feasts since animals are endowed with the same soul as people.

Yet the radical theses of a Plutarch or a Porphyry remain isolated. Most Greek philosophers recommend temperance and a certain asceticism, without preaching vegetarianism. Even among the Pythagoreans, a good many eat something of everything, while remaining faithful to the sobriety of their master by adopting frugal menus. This moderate position is also that of Ficino, who in his

[5] My main sources on this point are Jean-Louis Flandrin, "Les légumes dans les livres de cuisine français, du XVIe au XVIIIe siècle," in *Le Monde végétal (XIIe–XVIIe siècles): Savoirs et usages sociaux*, ed. Allen J. Grieco, Odile Redon, and Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi (Paris: Presses universitaires de Vincennes, 1993), 71–85 ; Allen J. Grieco, "Les plantes, les régimes végétariens et la mélancolie à la fin du Moyen âge et au début de la Renaissance italienne," in *Le Monde végétal*, 11–29 ; Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Chronique de Platine: Pour une gastronomie historique* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1992) ; Massimo Montanari, *La Faim et l'abondance: Histoire de l'alimentation en Europe*, trans. M. Aymard (Paris: Seuil, 1995) ; *Histoire de l'alimentation*, ed. Jean-Louis Flandrin and Massimo Montanari (Paris: Fayard, 1996).

[6] See Johannes Haussleiter, *Der Vegetarismus in der Antike*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, 24 (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1935); Georg Wöhrle, *Studien zur Theorie der Antiken Gesundheitslehre*, (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1990); Richard Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate* (London: Duckworth, 1993); Helen King, *Greek and Roman Medicine* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2001).

[7] See Marcel Detienne, "La cuisine de Pythagore," *Archives de sociologie des religions* 29 (1970: 141–62).

[8] Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius*, 108, 17–22.

[9] See Porphyry, *De l'abstinence*, ed. Jean Bouffartigue and Michel Patillon, 3 vols. (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1977–1995).

[10] See *Marsilii Ficini Opera*, 2 vols. (Basle: Officina Henricpetrina, 1576), 2: 1932–39 : *Ex Porphyro De abstinentia animalium, Marsilio interprete.*

[11] I have consulted Plutarch, *Les Œuvres morales et meslées*, trans. Jacques Amyot (Lyon: Estienne Michel, 1579), especially the following chapters : "Que les bestes brutes usent de la raison," "S'il est loisible de manger chair," "Les regles et preceptes de santé ."

treatise on hygiene and diet for intellectuals, *De triplici vita*, advises light dishes and distinguishes between different meats, more or less harmful, but does not recommend total abstinence.[12]

This tendency to a non-dogmatic compromise is the one which seems to dominate among Humanists. One of the *Colloquia* of Erasmus, the *Convivium religiosum*, helps one understand why. Eusebius invites his friends to his country house. "Vegetables only will be served,"[13] he warns, because in order to cultivate the pleasure of the mind the appetites of the body have to be tamed. Before going to table, the diners visit the gardens and the orchard, where they admire the edible plants and medicinal herbs. Simplicity is everywhere, as is the joy of eating the natural products that God gives us. However, there is a surprise: when the meal comes, some meats are served.[14] The menu is indeed sober, but the vegetarian program announced at the beginning is not sustained right to the end. Why not? It is because Erasmus, in the name of evangelical freedom, is hostile to any food fanaticism. To obey a radical vegetarianism would be to recognize the virtue of fasting, the legitimacy of fast days: that is, to accept precisely those superstitions which faith renewed by a return to the Gospel wants to abolish. Worse than that: strict observance of food laws recalls the prescriptions of the Old Testament, the Jewish fundamentalism to which Christ put an end, for true faith does not confine us to obedience to narrow laws, but enjoins on us purity of heart and a religion of the mind. For the same reason, Calvin preaches moderation, but refuses to admit that God has ever forbidden men the use of meat,[15] although by doing this, he is contradicting the lesson of Genesis, as we shall see later. He too claims to free religion from external rites, and, suspicious as he is in relation to the body, does not mean to subordinate faith to religious gesticulations which he judges to be superficial.

All of this seems then to indicate that giving value back to vegetable produce does not necessarily entail the rejection of meat, which remains an exception. As a consequence, I am going to speak less about vegetarianism in the strict sense, than about frugality and the praise of the fruits of the earth. An ideology is being expressed by this choice, one that is constructed, or at least echoed, by literature, an ideology which contributes to forging the identity myth of the Renaissance, and that also plays a significant role in the self-portrait which the men of letters give of themselves. So what are the values implied by this ideology? What are the symbolic meanings of these choices in food? I will distinguish three of them.

The first is the symbiosis of man with nature and the cult of nature. I have said that few vegetables were eaten in the Middle Ages. Allen Grieco showed that in the vertical vision of those times, the lowly plants which grow in or on the earth are held to be contemptible, only just good enough for the people and the humble. In the ascending perspective of the scale of being, the higher a thing is, the closer it is to God. Fruit is worth more than vegetables, fowl is nobler than four-footed animals, and that is why the menus of the well-off, which are composed according to this hierarchy, make very little use of the products of the earth.[16] In the Renaissance, vertical stratification gives way to horizontal expansion. Man has not forgotten God, but he is looking for him in nature, through sympathy with created things. I am thinking of a naturist feeling, of magical and pantheist beliefs which were prevalent before or on the edges of the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. The secret correspondences between micro- and macrocosm imply that the human body is only part of the Great Whole, although profoundly at one with it, and that in order to remain healthy, that same harmony which regulates the universal order must be maintained in the organism. This principle is that of Hippocratic medicine, which is still dominant at the Renaissance and which teaches that to cure a sick body the balance of humors must be restored in it. Dietetics, that is to say the good use of natural products, allows the internal imbalances to be corrected. Nature re-establishes normal mechanisms through food. *Natura sanat, medicus curat*, as the Hippocratic tradition says. By absorbing natural products, by adjusting a regimen according to the principles which direct the life of the cosmos, the body restores the link with the environment and recovers its health. These foundations of ancient medicine, which I have recalled rather hastily, provide one of the reasons which militate in favor of natural food, that is to say a food which reinforces the communion of the individual with the universe.

Beyond this medical framework, the Renaissance sense of religion, which is still very free, also celebrates nature as the focus of vital energy and the benevolent force that sustains life. This ideal of nature as a mother, a nurse, and a source of renewal is common in the literature of the French sixteenth century, both in Rabelais and the poets of the Pleiade. He who collects and eats the plants of his garden owes his continued existence to the fertile generosity of vegetation. To eat is to ingest the fruit of the earth, to be regenerated, and beyond individual existence to be able to participate in the rebirth of every living thing. Bakhtin showed

[12] See Marsilio Ficino, *Three Books on Life [De Triplici Vita]*, ed. and trans. Carol V. Kaske and John R. Clark, MRTS 57 (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1989).

[13] I have consulted Erasmus, *Cinq Banquets*, ed. and trans. Jacques Chomarat, Daniel Ménager et al. (Paris: Vrin, 1981); see 69.

[14] Erasmus, *Cinq Banquets*, 82.

[15] See Jean Calvin, *Sermons sur la Genèse, Chapitres 1: 1–20: 17*, ed. Max Engammare, 2 vols. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 2000), Sermons 7 (on Genesis 1: 29–31) and 42 (on Genesis 9: 1–3).

[16] See Grieco, "Les plantes."

us that in the Rabelaisian feast the abundance of dishes coincides with the return of spring and the birth of a child.[17] With Rabelais or with Ronsard, especially in the magnificent hymns of Summer and Autumn, the profusion of the fruits of the earth and the impetuosity of the sexual urge go hand in hand. Vegetable growth and reproduction of the species, feeding and procreating, are the same process, in the sense that both reinsert man into the great cycle of fertility.

It is in this context that the link between the two meanings of the word *season*, the noun and the verb, need to be understood. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to season originally meant "to ripen and to render [fruit] palatable by the influence of the season," so to treat the food in order to actualize its qualities by adapting it to the physical environment. *OED* gives this example from 1555: cinnamon and ginger were "not good, because they were not fully seasoned with the heat of the sun."[18] To season one's food is thus to adapt it to the season, to acclimatize it to the conditions around, that is in some way to double its authenticity and its naturalness.

This generous, nourishing nature is that of the Golden Age. Here is my second paradigm: the felicity of the origins, the quality of primitive food offered by the earth create a dream of perfection which also inspires the ideal of frugality. It is a striking coincidence: both traditions, biblical and classical, are in agreement when they attribute purely vegetarian food to the first men. The first chapter of Genesis recounts that on the sixth day of Creation "God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." It is only later, after the Flood, when God makes the covenant with Noah, that he authorizes men to eat meat and fish.[19] The Old Testament tradition thus distinguishes three stages: first the earth of Paradise which supplies all human needs without labor; then, after the Fall, agriculture, which renders the earth productive and which is often considered as the most ancient and the most noble of arts; finally the permission to kill and eat animals.

Graeco-Latin mythology puts forward the same scenario with hardly any difference. Hesiod, Lucretius, Ovid[20] all repeat that in the beginning the earth brought forth fruit spontaneously, plentiful and delicious; there is no question of meat. Later, so the poets and moralists say, abundance and primitive happiness move from myth into history and are to be found among the country folk who till their fields. The famous episode of the old man of Tarentum, in the *Georgics*,[21]

[17] See Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*.

[18] From Richard Eden, *The Decades of the New World of West India* (1555).

[19] See Genesis 1: 29–30 and 9: 3.

[20] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, v. 116–121; Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, 5. 933–944; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 1. 101–112.

[21] Vergil, *Georgics*, 4. 125–146.

shows a peasant who, by contenting himself in joy and in peace with the fruit of his garden, embodies the happiness of an agriculture which is perfectly autonomous. This moral could also be that of another figure, almost legendary, the philosopher Epicurus who, Diogenes Laertius recounts, kept a vegetarian and very austere diet and who had installed his school in a garden in Athens.[22]

Those wise men who recreate around themselves the Golden Age and its perfection try to escape the curse of the human condition and come closer to the divine. To adopt a moderate diet, to abstain from meat, is to eat like the gods, who need only light and aerial food. This is the meaning of Pythagorean frugality, that later was adopted by Neo-Platonists.[23] The man who eats only vegetable food escapes from the weight of incarnation and the indignity of flesh. He recovers the state of Eden, before the Fall, when men and gods communicate in the same purity. This ideal, which already inspires Greek spirituality, is prolonged and enlarged in the Christian tradition, where it is taught that privation and humiliation of the flesh promote union with God. The friends who, in the *Convivium religiosum* of Erasmus, meet in a sort of rustic paradise, round a frugal table, are bringing together the most favorable conditions for meditation on God's word. To impose on the body a light asceticism, to choose poverty, is to free oneself from matter and its contingency in order to meditate, to purify oneself, and to await the arrival of grace. From the very beginning of the Christian church, hermits would seek loneliness in the desert or in the forest, would eat wild fruit, herbs, and roots, and by depriving themselves of food, seek the way to raise their souls to God. Monastic life, as is well known, implies the same sacrifices, as it often makes necessary the renunciation of meat in order to clean the body and its impurities and to recover lost innocence.

Though abstinence may favor a spiritual project, it also is directed by a moral intention. The praise of frugality is then bound by an antithetical system which puts into opposition the excess of some and the wise moderation of others—the opposition, in fact, of *otium* and *negotium*, of measure and excess, which, century after century, has structured a multitude of poems. It is not merely a question here of putting a stop to gluttony and sensuality, but of breaking free from luxury and the torment of social life in order once again to find peace, wisdom, and freedom far from the town and the court. The Horatian *topoi* and the commonplaces of pastoral poetry on the joys of leisure and simplicity are known to everyone. Taking lunch on the lawn, sipping wine or milk, eating cheese or strawberries, all this expresses an ecological worry about progress—or, transposed into our own terms, a deep concern about industrialization and globalization.

[22] Diogenes Laertius, *Vies et doctrines des philosophes illustres*, trans. M.-O. Goulet-Cazé (Paris: Librairie générale française, La Pochothèque, 1999) 1237–1324.

[23] Detienne, "La cuisine de Pythagore."

This stereotyped hierarchy—moderate eaters who look with contempt on degenerate gluttons—has often been used in the service of nationalistic aims. The Romans, to distinguish themselves from their Greek or Oriental rivals, boasted about their traditional austerity. Seneca denounces the fashion for extravagant food which provokes all sorts of illnesses and, together with other moralists, he invites his compatriots to return to the simple dishes of their ancestors.[24] At the Renaissance, the same cliché opposes the people of the South, with a sober and frugal reputation, and those of the North, drinkers, gluttons, and devourers of meat.[25] Italians especially proclaim their attachment to the fruits of the earth, insist on their delicate food, and praise the salad as a national emblem. In the reformed countries of Northern Europe, the rejection of fasting would still further reinforce the opposition between the fat and the thin, the Protestant meat-eaters and the abstemious Catholics.

It remains to invoke a third reason that militates in favor of frugality for the Humanists. This is the diet advised for intellectuals and the regimen promoted as favourable for the operations of the mind. Before coming to the medical theory, it should be remembered that the Platonic tradition taught that the body and the mind, organic functions and mental activities, are not easily compatible. The mind aspires to rise to the sphere of ideas, while the body participates in the weight of matter, so that there exists a permanent conflict between the head and the stomach, between reflection and nutrition. In order to prevent the operations of the flesh harming intellectual faculties, the gods, says Plato, were wise enough to separate the soul, which inhabits the high point of the body, from the vulgar functions, like digestion and sexuality, which are lodged in the inferior regions.[26] This dualist physiology would later have a strong influence on humanist medicine.

More precisely, it is the theory of the spirits, the *spiritus*, which supplies the defenders of a light diet with their best arguments. According to classical medicine, the spirits are corpuscles which are extremely subtle and mobile. They circulate in the organism and operate as agents of all the vital functions. Some communicate information from the senses throughout the body, while others transmit the orders of the brain to the limbs, and yet others are charged with orchestrating digestion. From this, there follows a law which doctors are never tired of repeating. If digestion mobilizes too many spirits at the level of the stomach, these forces are then not available for reflection. Too abundant a meal unbalances the favorable distribution of the spirits which will all be called on

[24] Seneca, *Letters to Lucilius* 95. 15–29. On this topic, see Montanari, *La Faim*, 24–25.

[25] See Montanari, *ibid.*, p. 150–156.

[26] Plato, *Timaeus*, 70e–71a.

in the transformation of what has been eaten. Juan Huarte says this clearly: "It is quite impossible to find two more contrary actions, nor which are more of a hindrance one to the other, than reasoning and the coction of food."[27] Ficino, in his *De triplici vita*, confirms this: "Excessive food recalls all the power of nature first of all to the stomach to digest it. This renders nature unable to exert itself at the same time in the head and for reflection."[28] Ficino points out another difficulty: too much food harms the refinement of the spirits, so that those which get to the brain, thick and heavy, fulfill their intellectual function badly: "As Galen says, the mind that is choked up with fat and blood cannot perceive anything heavenly."[29]

As was pointed out at the beginning, if Rabelais sometimes renounces the praise of good food to defend the merits of frugality, it is because, as a doctor himself, he knows that gluttony is incompatible with liveliness of thought. Let me quote one example. In the retrograde phase of Gargantua's education, with masters who are still plunged in the obscurantism of the Middle Ages, the boy, who is on a "bad diet,"[30] eats too much and falls into a complete spiritual inertia. When on the contrary the modern tutor, the wise Ponocrates, arrives, he orders moderate meals, so as not to harm his pupil's work. And even here he observes a difference: dinner is particularly light, in order not to compromise lessons in the afternoon, whereas supper can be more copious, because the spirits, during the night, will be free to devote themselves completely to the operations of digestion.[31]

That the Humanist organizes his food in order to favor intellectual work will surprise no one. He belongs to a culture which ascribes an enormous power to thought, to knowledge, and to the creations of the mind. This point only confirms one of the features of the identikit portrait of the Humanist: the learned man, with a grave face, who is plunged in reading, reflection, and writing in his study. But this image is only partial. It must be completed by another representation, the one which I have tried to highlight earlier. The Humanist is also the man who dreams of recreating in the open air the country happiness of the lost paradise, and it is, above all, someone who communes with nature, that rich and generous mother who endows humanity with an abundance of gifts. It is rather too quickly forgotten that the pre-modern scholar still maintains an intimate

[27] I have consulted Juan Huarte, *L'Examen des esprits pour les sciences* (1578), trans. Fr. Savinien d'Alquie (Amsterdam: Jean de Ravestein, 1672) ; see 87.

[28] Ficino, *De triplici vita* (1.7), in *Opera* (1576), 1: 499.

[29] Ficino, *ibid.*

[30] Rabelais, *Gargantua*, chap. 22.

[31] *Gargantua*, chap. 23. See also *Tiers Livre*, chap. 13. See Michel Jeanneret, "Alimentation, digestion, réflexion dans Rabelais," *Studi Francesi* 81 (1983): 405–16; idem, *A Feast of Words*, chap. 3.

relation with the earth, with vegetation, and with the rhythms of the seasons. He does not merely spend time in libraries, courts, and presbyteries. He is close to the world of the peasant; he knows the virtues of plants, and he probably tends his garden; he is surrounded by animals and, like everyone else, is at the mercy of nature's caprice. More than that, he perceives in the physical world which surrounds him, in the fields, in the forests, in the flowing water . . . , magic forces, supernatural presences, as well as benevolent or malevolent powers. In short, he participates in a mentality which is peasant, or even pagan: one which our over-intellectual science runs a risk of overlooking.

But all is not lost. In this, the beginning of the twenty-first century, the excesses of industrialization and urbanization have had such disastrous consequences, especially on our food, that a return to the earth and to the quality of natural produce, in other words ecology, become top priorities. Respect for the environment, an agriculture on a human scale and conforming to the rhythms of nature, the multiplication in our menus of fruit and vegetable dishes: all these urgent needs perhaps bring us closer to early modern culture and its care for light and healthy food.

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