**Reading Group 4 – *Gargantua and Pantagruel* ­- Reporter**

Our group’s discussion for Rabelais’ *Gargantua and Pantagruel* was very beneficial. Our discussion leader Nekai started by giving us some very stirring questions concerning the reading. The first question was asking the following: what was the significance about the abbey found in Rabelais’ story? As well as asking about the importance of how the abbey seemed to go against and disagree with everything the church at the time stood for. Our group agreed that this was meant to be reflection of the renaissance time period, in which this story was written. A time period in which people all over the world were questioning the authority and divinity of the church, and rejecting tradition for traditions sake. This picture of a perfect and holy abbey that we find in the reading is a reflection of this backlash against the static norm. The next question by Nekai was why was the Gate into this abbey so exclusive? We as a group agreed that one possibility is that this is a stab by Rabelais at the Church. The church claims to be welcoming, that all are welcome, until someone within the body disagrees with what the church says, then that person is thrown out of the church and rejected. This gate being very exclusive is Rabelais’ way of saying the church isn’t really welcoming, by making his version of the church exclusive. The last question by Nekai was as to the extreme detail of the story and its purpose. Why was everything so detailed? Other than chalking it up to the Rabelais enjoying explaining his vision with the world, we couldn’t think of anything.

Macy was the Devil’s advocate for our group, she made some very good points about how the so called “monks” found in Rabelais’ church weren’t monks at all according to the definition of a monk, as well as one major flaw in Rabelais’ abbey. People of the abbey were basically good according to Rabelais, and couldn’t do wrong if they followed their nature. Macy’s argument was that people are not entirely good, and that left to themselves a member of the abbey would eventually do wrong and destroy the perfection. Macy also pointed out the complete craziness and absurdity of the “Signing Battle” between two of the characters in the story. This part of the story definitely confused us the most, and we as a group still have no idea as to the significance of this event or what it may represent.

Colby was our creative connecter, and led the last part of our discussion by discussing some similarities between this story and others. He spoke of an episode of *Arrested Development* (television series) and a city that one character had thought up where all of the inhabitants just walked around naked and had sex with each other whenever they felt like it. It was named F\*\*\* City. Another interesting connection Colby made was about the Gate in front of the abbey, and how it was very similar to Dante’s gate to Inferno. Both gates head heavy inscription on them, and stated the rules of the interior territory. And one of my favorite connections was about Pantagruel being born with a parade being similar to the modern idea of “being born with a silver spoon”. The idea that Pantagruel had nearly everything in the world given to him from birth. I found this connection as well as the connection to Dante’s gate to be very helpful, as I did not make either of these connections on my own.

Overall our group had a very good and beneficial discussion, we didn’t disagree on much, but talked about many different ideas and made a lot of good progress concerning the symbolism and connections within the text, and came to some very interesting and meaningful conclusions as a group. I believe it was our best discussion group yet. “10 out of 10 - would group again.”