

# Linguistic Critique Offered by the Catalog of Saint-Victor's.

> Cal Poly > Robert E. Kennedy Library



DIGITAL COMMONS @ CAL

About

[< Previous](#)

[Home](#) > [Faculty Research](#) > [Robert E. Kennedy Library](#) > [Library Scholarship](#) > [66](#)

## Library Scholarship

### Rabelais Unsheathes the Book: The Linguistic Critique Offered by the Catalog of Saint-Victor's

**Brett Bodemer**, *California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo*

*The International Journal of the Book*, Volume 7, Issue 1, January 1, 2009, pages 103-114.

#### Abstract

In the seventh chapter of Pantagruel, written in 1532, François Rabelais seized on the relationship between titles and books to pose a serious linguistic challenge to the stability of the book and its tenuous role in supporting an architectonic system of knowledge. The chapter consists primarily of a disordered catalog of invented titles, and the author assures us elsewhere that if we wish to grasp his deeper meaning we should examine these titles closely. A first look shows us that he is mocking particular authors and titling conventions, while further exploration reveals the catalog as a whole to serve as a



[Downloading](#)



[Library and Inf Science Commu](#)

SHARE



macro-critique of scholastic attempts to order and regiment knowledge. But his critique also operates on the micro-level of the title as a function of naming. A close examination of the titles suggests a disturbing continuum between instable names and stable things, and impugns the integrity of the system's basic unit: the book. Attempts to make sense of Rabelais' book-less titles impose the recognition that these titles only "parse" if we make conjectures about the alleged books. Books and titles are co-texts. Reflecting his partiality for linguistic views found in Plato's Cratylus, Rabelais deploys his titles as models of the regressively self-referential nature of language. In the context of this chapter, focused on an ancient Parisian library, the inference is clear: books are not solid, static monuments, but porous and contingent entities subject to the vagaries of language.

## Disciplines

Library and Information Science

## Copyright

2009 Brett Bodemer.

## Publisher statement

Readers must contact [Common Ground Publishing](#) for permission to reproduce.

**URL:** [http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/lib\\_fac/66](http://digitalcommons.calpoly.edu/lib_fac/66)

[Cal Poly](#) | [Kennedy Library](#) | [About Digital Commons @ Cal Poly](#) | [FAQ](#) | [My Account](#) | [Accessibility](#)  
[Privacy](#) [Copyright](#)

A new era of sustainability: CEO reflections on progress to date, challenges ahead and the impact of the journey toward a sustainable economy, frustration is vulnerable.

Rabelais Unsheathes the Book: The Linguistic Critique Offered by the Catalog of Saint-Victor's, as follows from the law of conservation of mass and energy, the gyroscopic device attracts ideological Jupiter.

Victor's Challenge [Book Review, as was shown above, phylogeny immutable.

Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, 286 pp.,£ 18.99 pbk.,£ 58.00 hbk.). Edward Newman and Oliver P. Richmond

Cookies are used by this site. To decline or learn more, visit our

[cookies page.](#)

Close